

Bangladesh: Project «Dakkha Nari»

Social and economic empowerment of women and girls who are affected by gender based violence



Project location
Bandarban District, CHT

Project duration
July 2018 – June 2020

Project budget
CHF 147'000

Background

Dakkha Nari project («Dakkhata O Khamatai Nari» – «Skilled and empowered women») will support a group of beneficiaries that is most needy in the project area of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh – women and girls of ethnic minorities ('Hill Tribes'). The minorities of the CHT are a discriminated and very poor population. Most of them live as farmers on agricultural land that yields little harvest only. The different minorities have their own traditions and customs but all of them are united in a patriarchal social organisation. Women and girls therefore are the most deprived group in the project area. They are not free to decide in personal matters like marriage or divorce and they cannot inherit or decide about the children. A great number of women and girls become victims of gender based violence (GBV). They are victims within their household (domestic violence), often related with alcoholism, and also outside their communities.

The project aims to support women and girls both economically and socially. It therefore offers vocational training to the beneficiaries and supports them to start own small businesses. The beneficiaries are victims of GBV or are from vulnerable households like women-headed families (widows, divorced). It is badly needed to raise awareness on gender equality at all levels of society and to educate women and girls better.

Goals

A safe life in dignity through social and economic empowerment of women and girls who are affected by gender based violence (GBV)

- Women and adolescent girls are capacitated with vocational skills and improve their livelihood
- Women, adolescent girls and community members are sensitised for GBV and group activities combat and prevent GBV

Partner organisation

Ananya Kallyan Sangathon (AKS) established in 1997, is a woman led NGO that stands up for the women rights in Bangladesh.

Vision: Positive change for the indigenous population of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, especially for women and girls.

Thematic focus: Reintegration assistance to gender based violence victims, awareness raising, empowerment, skill development and networking program, promotion of child and woman rights

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Beneficiaries

- 108 participants of skills training courses and business courses
- 590 members of saving groups
- 240 members of watch groups and peer groups
- About 2'000 participants of awareness trainings
- Indirectly around 20'000 village members profit through the project

Activities

- Four institutions provide a variety of courses, for example tailoring, agriculture (poultry, fishery etc.) or weaving. The duration of the trainings is 4-6 months.
- The training institutions are far from the remote villages of the beneficiaries. Therefore board and accommodation are provided.
- Business training for graduates will be provided.
- Successful graduates are supported with tools of trade. It helps them to find a job (sometimes own tools are required) or to start own businesses.
- Saving groups get started, SHC is introduced and collective savings with subsequent investment in micro-projects of the group members is promoted. The groups will set up regulations, leadership structures and shared decision making processes.
- Six Community Watch Groups (CWG) are set up and are active to monitor and combat gender based violence.
- Six girls peer groups are formed with the aim to sensitise the youth in regards to gender questions (early pregnancy, abuse, respect etc.)
- In 50 villages as well as 2 Secondary schools in town (Bandarban) the topic of gender based violence is discussed and debated
- Women-rights days are carried out (4 in total). Women, girls and the communities as a whole are sensitised and know about their rights.

Contribution of stakeholders and sustainability

- The saving groups are set up through personal savings of the female members. The saving groups continue to exist after project ends. The groups enable women to do small investments and offer longterm financial support.
- Through new vocational skills women and girls can find a job or become self-employed. Thus, they can improve their income and livelihood and become independent.
- The community watch group members provide support to conduct the vulnerability mapping and also take part in the selection process for the vocational training course beneficiaries. They are aware of women's rights and continue to fight against GBV after project ends.
- The school authorities, teachers and management committees assist to conduct the awareness sessions in school. The students who attend the sessions are aware about GBV and carry on this knowledge.
- The communities provide the space for conducting awareness sessions. Local government representatives assist in organizing trainings and meetings in the communities. Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC) and Bandarban District Administration (BDA) are the bodies that control and permit the project. They provide suggestions and feedback.

Since the late 1990s CO-OPERAID has been active in Bangladesh. Since 2009 we implement projects in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in partnership with the local NGO Humanitarian Foundation. Dakkha Nari project is the first cooperation between CO-OPERAID and Ananya Kallyan Sangathon.



Many girls marry early and get children before the age of twenty.



Through vocational training women get the opportunity, to earn a regular income.



Women/girl group in a village in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

CO-OPERAID is engaged in the international children's right to education in East Africa and South Asia. The association was founded in 1981, is politically and denominationally independent and ZEWÖ certified since 1998.

Vision: Qualitative good education for children and youths as a basis for a self-determined and dignified life.

Thematic Focus: Basic education and vocation training with complementary elements such as fighting poverty, farming income projects, furthering girls, Aids prevention, health.

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