

## Project No. 52

### EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR THE INDIGENOUS CHILDREN OF CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (EPIC-CHT)

**Principle:**

Indigenous children's rights to education be respected and ensured.

**Objectives:**

- To provide basic and fundamental education for the school-aged children of *Adivasi* (indigenous) communities; and
- To contribute to the implementation of Education for All (EFA) initiated by the Government.

**Background:**

The education program for indigenous people of CHTs began in 2005. The present phase of the project is from January 2008 to December 2010.

**Staff Strength:** Total- 1 (Male)

Volunteers- 975 ( Male-787, Female-188)

**Donor:** Caritas Japan.**Expenditure:**

Foreign Partners' Contribution : Tk. 4,226,728

Local Contribution : Tk. 1,074,500

Total : Tk. 5,301,228

**Beneficiaries:**

Direct: 6,111 (Male 3,510 and Female 2,601)

Indirect: 9,770 (Male 5,960 and Female 3,810)

**Target and achievements:**

The major achievements of the project are as under:

Sl. No.	Items/Activities	Achievement as on June 2008	Performance in FY 2008-2009			Cumulative as on June 2009
			Target	Achievement	% of Achievement	
1	Schools	158	155	155	100	155
2	Students:	5,609	1,000	1,940	194	6,111
3	No. of animators	13	13	13	100	13
4	Meeting					
	Central committee	9	2	2	100	11
	Sub committee	34	12	10	83	44
	SMC and guardians	1,751	241	241	100	1992
	Field animators	54	18	18	100	72
	Parents gathering	511	120	100	83	611
5	Monitoring/supervision training for teachers	13	-	-	-	13
6	Basic training for teachers	3	-	-	-	3
7	Subject based follow-up training for teachers	8	1	1	100	9

The above Table shows that during the reporting period a total of 155 schools was covered under this project and in total 1,940 students were admitted into schools. The achievement rate was 194%. During the reporting period one subject based follow-up training and three basic trainings were organized for the teachers.

### **Impacts:**

- Concept of the ownership of schools has developed among the villagers as they continue to donate rice and other crops for the teachers.
- Unity among the villagers has increased considerably as they work together for schools.
- Training programs have brought about positive changes among the teachers. Now they confidently teach their pupils using less expensive educational materials.
- Community people have become more aware of the importance of education. Most of them want their children to be literate. That is why students' enrolment has increased to a great extent. They are expected to grow up as enlightened persons.

### **Conclusion:**

This project has fulfilled the need of the locality since there was no school in the remote area of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The people are very happy to send their children to school where there is a festive and lively atmosphere. In order to create a joyful teaching-learning environment steps have been taken to collect materials from different sources. Some educators also use their handmade materials. The teachers who received training on pedagogy can teach their pupils well. To make others professionally skilled subject base training will be arranged later. School Managing Committee (SMC) members now moderately understand their responsibilities. It is hoped that the children of hilly people would get sufficient benefit by being literate through this program.

## **Sraboni's Dream**

Three years ago there was no scope for *adivasi* (indigenous) children of Manikjan Para of Lama upzila under Bandarban district to become literate. Only some well-to-do families would send their children to remote schools keeping them in hostels. The leaders of the community approached different agencies to set up a primary school in the area. The Catholic Church along with Caritas responded positively to their appeal in order to spread the light of education.

"I was able to send my child to school as 'Education Project for the Indigenous Community of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (EPIC-CHT)' project started Education Program in the Hill Tracts. I am very much grateful to Caritas and Chittagong Diocese for enlightening my child's life," said Nitun Tripura father of Sraboni Tripura (7) who reads in class two.

Sraboni Tripura lives in Manikjan Para under Alikadam Parish of Lama *upzila*, under Bandarban district. Her father is a *Jhum* (slash and burn cultivation) crops grower. She has two sisters and one brother who also go to school. Nitun Tripura maintains a family consisting of six members. It is very difficult for him to bear household expenses with his little income.

EPIC-CHT project is implemented under the joint initiative of Caritas and Chittagong Diocese in some selected areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This project provides support for students and teachers. At present hilly people are aware of their rights and they want their children to receive education.

Sraboni Tripura is a very bright student who attends school regularly. She always secures first place in the terminal and final examinations. She is respectful to her parents, teachers and neighbors. Sraboni wishes to appear at the primary scholarship in 2012 when she will become a student of class five. If her academic result is achieved satisfactorily, she will try to be a doctor or at least paramedic to serve the downtrodden people of the locality. Her family members are also happy to know about her aim in life. They wish to extend every possible support to fulfill her dream.