

Kapaeng Foundation

PROJECT REPORT

A. Project Title: Mobilization and Capacity Building of Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh

B. Project Period: April – December 2010

C. Background of the Project:

More than 45 Indigenous ethnic communities with a population of nearly three million have been living in Bangladesh for centuries. The overall human rights situation of the indigenous peoples is far from good. Discrimination and human rights violation is particularly glaring in the indigenous-inhabited regions, where they have continued to suffer from violent land-grabbing and other forms of land alienation. Apart from violation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights, the most serious problems faced by indigenous peoples in Bangladesh include limited access to education and other social services, discrimination at the hands of non-indigenous people, including government functionaries and the imposition of other inappropriate and socially and economically destructive development projects.

Indigenous peoples are often unable to protect themselves against social, political and economic injustices. They face a real threat in exercising their basic rights and surviving as communities. These and other major problems faced by the indigenous peoples continue to be neglected by succeeding governments and are worsened on account of the very limited

participation of indigenous peoples in major decision-making processes particularly in plain land.

Over the years the indigenous peoples experienced a strong sense of social, political and economic exclusion, lack of recognition, fear and insecurity, loss of cultural identity, and social oppression. Mainstream development efforts have either ignored their concerns and/or had a negative impact on them. Often issues and actions that affect them are not discussed with these communities or organizations representing them. Thus they are subjected to stark socio-economic deprivation.

D. Aims and Objectives of the Project

The aim and objective of the project is to promote and protect indigenous peoples' rights in Bangladesh, aiming at-

- a) Strengthening capacity of indigenous peoples and their organizations, and network among indigenous peoples' organizations and with national and international organizations;
- b) Making awareness amongst mainstream population on the identity, rights and culture of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh;
- c) Highlighting true identity, rights and culture of indigenous peoples with an aim to wipe out discriminatory information on indigenous peoples; and
- d) Promoting and protecting fundamental freedoms and human rights of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh.

E. Working area and Beneficiaries of the Project:

Project working area was across the country based in Dhaka. Beneficiaries of the project are all the stakeholders involved in promoting and protecting rights of indigenous peoples in general and the indigenous peoples of the country in particular.

F. Description of the Project Activities:

Activity 1: Bangladesh Adivasi Resource Center:

As part of programme of activities, KF established a resource centre for indigenous peoples naming 'Bangladesh Adivasi Resource Centre' (BARC) from May 2010 in Dhaka. The following set-ups have already been attached with the BARC-

- a) a secretariat as liaison office for networking among indigenous peoples' organisations and national human rights organisations with energetic and dedicated staff;
- b) a modest office space with conference room, computers, telephone, internet facilities;
- c) a library with resourceful book, journals, daily newspapers etc related to indigenous peoples in particular and human rights and development in general;

Kapaeeng Foundation initiated various lobby, campaign and advocacy work from Bangladesh Adivasi Resource Center. On 25th September 2010 different indigenous peoples organization organized human chain across the country demanding constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples of Bangladesh. Kapaeeng played a vital role organizing that event. In addition, on 2 October 2010 indigenous students also organized human chain all over the

county demanding the same. Bangladesh Adibasi Resource Center facilitated the students for making it a successful event.

The resource centre became a source of information for all kinds of research work related to indigenous life and livelihood. It also became a central point for effective networking among the indigenous people’s organizations and other organizations working for the cause of indigenous peoples. At present it has a good collection of book, journal, report etc. related to indigenous peoples issues. Many organizations, institutions and individuals extended their helping hands for making this center resourceful by providing their publications and information.

Out Comes:

- Resource centre for indigenous peoples naming ‘Bangladesh Adivasi Resource Centre’ (BARC) is established
- Library with resourceful book, journals, daily newspapers is set up
- Networking among the indigenous people’s organizations and other organizations is developed

Activity 2: Recruitment of Project Staff and Intern

According to agreed contact with Oxfam, KF appointed project staffs and two batches of following interns (four interns in each batch) to conduct internship in Kapaeeng office for three consecutive months from May carefully maintaining gender, geographical location and ethnicity while selecting interns. In November, with prior consultation with Mr. Saikat Biswas, Program Officer of the Oxfam, we have extended the time period of 2nd batch interns to December 2010.

1st Batch (May-July 2010)		2nd Batch (August-October 2010)	
Name of Intern	Community	Name of Intern	Community
1. Chanchana Chakma	Chakma	1. Ms. Sujoya Ghargra	Garo
2. Ejilda Tigga	Oraon	2. Ms. Pipika Tripura	Tripura
3. Binoy Azim	Garo	3. Mr. Sushanta Kumar Mahato and Richard Jambil	Mahato / Garo
4. Batayan Chakma	Chakma	4. Mr. Tisel Chakma	Chakma

KF is committed to make them understand the issues and challenges of indigenous peoples of Bangladesh. At the same time KF tried level best to enrich their knowledge on different aspects that influence the life and livelihood of indigenous peoples.

Out Comes:

- Organizational capacity is strengthened.
- Individual capacities such as report writing, human rights report gathering, documenting data and information, monitoring human rights violations are developed.

Activity 3: Documentation of Human Rights Situation

Throughout the year KF conducted systematic documentation of violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and their issues. All related data and

information were collected through media monitoring, information gathering and fact-finding inquiries. In this process KF used its countrywide network.

Out Comes:

- Almost all related incidents related to indigenous peoples are documented in a systematic way
- The data and information is used as advocacy tools.

Activity 4: Launching Website for Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh

As per plan of action, KF already launched a web portal for the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh in the name of ***Bangladesh Adibasi Resource Center (BARC)***. The domain name is ***www.barc-bd.org***. As most of the members and well-wishers have been suggesting to launch the web portal in the name of Kapaeeng Foundation directly instead of BARC, KF may change or rename domain into Kapaeeng Foundation. KF gathered most of the contents for the web site including the following–

- Overall situation of indigenous peoples of Bangladesh
- Brief Description of Indigenous Communities of Bangladesh (ethnography)
- Law, Act, Policy (related to IP rights) in national context.
- Current News/events
- Interview (IP leaders, Civil Society members etc.)
- Statement made by IP representatives at UN
- Statement made by other organization against gross HR violation on IPs
- Important Articles and Report on IP issues (research report, on-site inquiry report etc.)
- Photo Gallery
- Organizational Profile (IPO, NGO, CBO etc.)
- CHT Accord and it's implementation status

Out Comes:

- Web portal is hoisted
- Brief history, ethnical, demographic, cultural and social identity, economical and educational condition are gathered.
- Information on indigenous peoples is available for stakeholders.

Activity 5: Internet Lobby and Campaign

KF always wants to keep people updated by providing fresh information on IP related issues. Hence, KF has been disseminating information on indigenous peoples through internet regularly as part of the lobby and campaign. This internet campaign keeps stakeholders updated on present state of indigenous peoples' situation.

Out Comes:

- Dissemination of information on indigenous peoples through internet is continued
- Stakeholders, such as, human rights organizations, human rights defenders, activists, academicians, researcher, individuals are kept updated on situation of indigenous peoples
- Mass awareness is built up

Activity 6: Rapid Response and Media Advocacy

Media advocacy were conducted to focus indigenous peoples issues to print and electronic media in order to promote and protect fundamental freedoms and human rights of the indigenous peoples. After knowing the particular incident KF initiates to send media team and human rights activists to the spot immediately to conduct on-site inquiry of particular human rights incidents on indigenous peoples. The whole year KF responded four such incidents where rights of indigenous peoples were violated by the miscreants.



6.1 SHITAKUNDA: On 19-21 July 2010 KF sent a media and human rights team comprising reporters from daily Kaler Kontha, daily Jugantor and The Daily Star to Shitakunda for in-site inquiry where about 15 thousand indigenous people from Tripura community have been living in this place for generations. They all are poor and they are not entitled their basic needs. There are no education, health and sanitation facilities for them. At present they all are landless. A group of land grabber from mainstream Bengali people has become the owner of these lands by making fake documents.

The team visited villages of Tripura community and and talked to local administration including Chairman of the Shitakunda Upazila Mr. Abdullah Al Baker Bhuiyan and Union Parishad Chairman Abdur Rouf. The local administration in Shitakunda seems quite aware and even sympathetic concerning the various problems facing the Tripura people. After coming back from Shitakunda the daily Kaler Kontha, Jugantor and The Daily Star published special story on the sufferings and problems of Tripura indigenous people.



6.2 DINAJPUR: On 18-20 August 2010 an 8 member media team visited different adivasi villages under Birgonj, Chirir Bandar, Phulbari, Nababgonj upazila in Dinajpur District.

Mostly Santal indigenous people lives here. The team found that indigenous peoples living in those villages are having different problems including land grabbing, eviction from ancestral land, fabricated cases, physical torture, rape and killing. The team also met and talked with local administration including Additional Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Samshul Alam and Superintendent of Police (SP) Siddique Tanjilul Rahman regarding the issues of indigenous peoples. After the visit all the representatives from print media published exclusive report focusing on different problems of indigenous peoples in their dailies.



6.3 NIAMOTPUR, NOAGOAN: On 29 September 2010 KF sent a media and human rights team comprising reporters

from The Daily Kaler Khontho, The Daily Star and The New Age and representatives from ASK, IED, BIPF, Sammilito Samajik Andolon, SUPRO and KF headed by veteran Pankaj Bhattachariya to investigate Niamotpur incident. A brutal attack was took place upon the innocent indigenous people of Nakoil village under Niamotpur Upazila in Noagoan district on 23 September 2010. The attackers broke open the doors of their thatched houses and beat them up indiscriminately with spears and other sharp weapons, leaving five men and four women injured. The miscreants completely destroy the houses of the victims. As a result, they have to stay in the open sky. With the support of the Oxfam KF also provided the victims some sort of relief materials. Investigation report was published on The Daily Kaler Khontho, The Daily Star and The New Age.

6.3 SRIMONGAL: Indigenous Khasi people have been living at Kailing Punjee and Aslam Punjee near Nahar tea garden in Srimangal Upazila of Moulvibazar district for centuries. They had made this land survival. For generations they have been practicing jhuming betel leaf in their ancestral land. This is the only way of their income generation. But now they are facing serious problem with their traditional occupation and land. A strong and influential group of mainstream people are trying to occupy the land of Khasi people evicting them from their land. With the help of some dishonest officers of forest department they are doing so. That why now the nature and the life of Khasi people is at risk. Considering this crucial situation of Khasi people Kapaeeng initiated to send a media team to the spot and bringing out the real story and help the victimized people to save their ancestral land and their traditional occupation. The team visited the spot on 12 & 13 December 2010. Members of the team, specially the print media covered the real story of the khasi people. National dailies including the daily star, the Prothom alo, the Destiny and the Songbad published detailed report on the aforesaid issue.

Out Comes:

- Media coverage on particular incident of human rights violations are published on national dailies and aired on electronic media
- Local administrations and public representatives are sensitized
- Solidarity between indigenous peoples and mainstream population is strengthened
- Raising of voice against human rights violation at community level is strengthened

6.4 SUPPORTS TO IP YOUTH ORGANIZATION

KF supported four indigenous youth organization namely Jum Literature Young Society, Tripura Students' Forum, Central Committee, HOMCHANG and Tripura Students' Forum (TSF) (Dhaka Metropolitan Unit) for publication of magazine marking the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and celebration of founding anniversary with an aim to strengthen the capacity and solidarity of the organisations of indigenous youths and students.

Tripura Students' Forum (TSF)(Central Committee) Publicarion

Out Comes:

- **Four** publications is printed
- Organizational capacity of indigenous youths and students is developed
- Networking among IP organization is strengthened.

Activity 7: Issue Based Program

Kapaeeng Foundation facilitates the work of indigenous peoples' organization, and occasionally, that of national and international development actors on policymaking and

program planning matters for the indigenous peoples' causes. Therefore, such work requires the holding of several issue-based meetings, workshops, etc. The subject matters of the aforesaid meetings and workshops usually decide the Executive Committee of KF. In the year 2010 KF organized two such issue based programs in Rajshahi and Dhaka.

7.1 Discussion Meeting on Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh and their 'indigenous' identity: legal and human rights perspectives.

On 7 June 2010, a discussion meeting was held in National Press Club on *Indigenous peoples of Bangladesh and their 'indigenous' identity: legal and human rights perspectives*. Barrister Raja Devasish Roy presented key note paper on this subject. The main objective of this discussion was to accelerate the consciousness about the identity issue of indigenous people all over the country. It is also important to inform the citizen that indigenous peoples have the rights to enjoy their human rights.

Presided over by Justice Mohammad Golam Robbani, Mr. Mangal Kumar Chakma, adviser of Kapaeeng Foundation delivered welcome speech. Abu Sayeed Khan, Sub editor of daily Samakal, Professor HKS Arefin, Masuda Bhatti, Fazle Hossain Badhse MP were spoke as panel discussant while Justice Golam Rabbani presided over the program.

In his Keynote paper Barrister Raja Devasish Roy said, Prime minister Sheikh Hasina, opposition leader of the parliament Begum Khaleda Zia and Chief Adviser of former Caretaker Government Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed mentioned the word 'Adivasi' in their separate messages on the occasion of International day of the World Indigenous Peoples on August 9. So, why the term 'Adivasi' will be questioned in official use, he asked referring to the notice issued by deputy secretary of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs ministry few months ago ordering all government bodies in three hill districts not to use the term indigenous and use the term 'tribal' instead of hill man or adivasi. Barrister Roy said UN agencies, IFAD, IFIC, Danida, World Bank, UNDP, DFID, ADB, NORAD, and IFC etc use the term indigenous instead of tribal.

Media Coverage on this discussion was published on the Prothom Alo, the Independent, the New age, the Samokal, the Kaler Kantho, the Songbad, the Ettefaq, the Daily Star and aired on ATN Bangla, Desh TV, Etv and some other popular channels.

7.2 Discussion meeting on Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh and their rights of Constitutional Recognition



On 5 November 2010 a discussion meeting on indigenous peoples of Bangladesh and their rights of constitutional recognition was held at Rajshahi Camber of Commerce and Industries Auditorium in Rajshahi. This meeting was jointly organized by Jatiyo Adibasi Parishad and Kapaeeng Foundation. Honorable member of the Parliament and central leader of Workers Party of Bangladesh Mr. Fazle Hossain Badsha was the chief guest while Professor Hasan Azizul Haque, Advocate Hamidul Haque,

Professor Fazlul Haque, Mr. Prashanta Saha, Bimal Chandra Rajuar, Mr. Mustafijur Rahman, Mr. Shakti Pada tripura, Anil Marandi et al were also spoke on the occasion.

Adviser of the KF and indigenous rights activists Mr. Mangal Kumar Chakma presented the key note paper on the above mentioned topic. All the speakers urged the government to take the chance to incorporate the rights of indigenous peoples in the constitution without making any further delay. They also urged the leader of the indigenous peoples to continue their movement for constitutional recognition. Referring the contribution of the indigenous peoples and their sacrifices during the liberation war they said, indigenous peoples also have the right to enjoy all the rights of a citizen and live with dignity. And the government is the only ultimate agency to ensure that rights of indigenous peoples.

Media Coverage on this discussion was published on local and national dailies including the Sonali Songbad, the Notun Provat, the daily Sunshine,

Out Comes:

- Mainstream population and indigenous peoples are sensitized on particular burning issues related to indigenous peoples
- Media coverage is published or aired which contributed attracting attention of policy-makers and development actors on particular issues.

Activity 8: Indigenous Youth Conference



KF organized an Indigenous Youth Conference at CCDB-Hope Center in Savar from 1-3 July 2010 with an aim to enable knowledge and understanding of the youth. A total of 60 indigenous youth from 22 communities were attended the conference. Geographical location, gender and community representation maintained during selection of participants.

The main aims and objectives of this Youth Conference were to provide knowledge on indigenous peoples rights and United Nations mechanisms, to facilitate networking among IP youth from various region of the country, to share experience on different issues that confront the indigenous peoples and the indigenous youth in particular, to create mutual cultural respect and understanding among indigenous youth and make young stars understand about different issues and challenges of indigenous peoples.

Distinguished resource person namely Mr. Joytirindra Bodhipriyo Larma, Honorable Chairman, CHTRC; Dr. Sadeka Halim, Information Commissioner, PRB; Mr. Robayet Ferdous, Professor, DU; Mr. Goutom Kumar Chakma, Member, CHTRC; Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, General Secretary, BIPF; Mr. Rabindranath Soren, Chairperson, KF and Mr. Abhilash Tripura, National Coordinator, IPs Program, ILO were present and conducted session in the program.

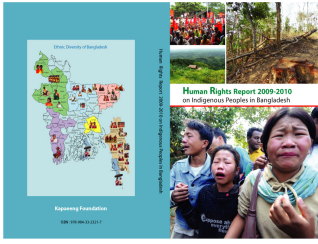
Distinguished guest Mr. M B Akhtar and Abhilash Tripura handed over the certificates among the participants.

Out Comes:

- Mutual cultural respect and understanding is strengthened
- Strong network among IP youth is developed
- Understanding of rights of indigenous peoples among indigenous youth is developed.

Activity 9: Annul Situational Report on Indigenous Peoples (HR Report)

For an unavoidable reason KF could not finished the task of formulation of Annual HR Report 2009. That's why KF published two year report of 2009 & 2010. Through its network and focal persons, KF collected reports on human rights incidents and also investigated acts of violence and attacks against indigenous peoples. In addition, upon publication of reports in various news media, KF also conducted fact-finding, collected relevant documentation, and interviewed victims, witnesses and local authorities. After conducting necessary field visits and in-depth interview with the victims and cross matching the information for ensuring accuracy, finally KF came up with the report. The issues of Identity of Indigenous Peoples, Land Rights and Land Dispossession, Gross Human Rights Issues, Women and Children Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and An Audit on the Implementation of CHT Accord were focused in the Human Rights Report 2009-2010 on Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh.



This report was edited by Dr. Dalem Chandra Barman, professor of Peace and Conflict Studies Department of Dhaka University and Mr. Pallab Chakma, Coordinator of Kapaeng Foundation from contributions by a team of authors, namely, eminent academician Prof. Mong Sa Nu, indigenous rights activist Mr. Mangal Kumar Chakma, General Secretary of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad, Project-in-Charge of Caritas Barisal office Ms. Myentthein Promila, Project Officer of Oxfam-GB Ms. Lina

Jesmin Lushai, Human Rights Coordinator of AIPP Mr. Binota Moy Dhamai, indigenous rights activist Mr. James Ward Khakshi and ILO internee Mr. Sohel Hajong.

The report was unveiled by Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani following a launching ceremony on 11 December 2010 at National Panning Academy Auditorium in Dhaka. Media Coverage on this discussion was published and aired on all national dailies and electronics news media.

Out Comes:

- Human Rights Report 2009-2010 on Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh is published
- Policy-makers and mass people understood the present human rights situation of indigenous peoples
- Print and electronic media published or aired news/coverage with priority which contributed sensitization of policy-makers and development actors regarding human rights of indigenous peoples.

Activity 10: Day Celebration



10.1 Death Anniversary of MN Larma: KF facilitated to observe the 27th death anniversary of Manabendara Narayan Lamrm (M N Larma), a great pioneer of indigenous peoples with due respect and honour. For commemorating the day KF facilitated forming a National Committee for observing the 27th death anniversary of M N Larma, headed by Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani. Other members of the civil society were also included in that national committee. This national committee undertook two day

programs in 9 and 10 November 2010.

It is mentionable that Manabendar Narayan Larma was one of the prime figures in the movements for self-role in Chittagong Hill Tracts. He was the first man who raised the voices of indigenous peoples in the national parliament in early 70s. Mr. Larma fought a long battle until his very last day on this earth to establish the rights of the indigenous peoples. He was assassinated by a group of his party defectors on 10 November in 1983.

Marking the 27th death anniversary of MN Larma, the National Committee to observe the slain hero's anniversary organized a discussion meeting at RC Mojumder Auditorium at University of Dhaka. The discussion was presided over by Justice Gholam Rabbani while President of the Jatiyo Somajtantric Dal Hasanul Haque Inu MP, the editor of the daily sun

Professor Syed Anwar Husain, Presidium Member of the Communist Party of Bangladesh Haider Akbar Khan Rono, PCJSS Organizing Secretary Mr. Shakti Pada Tripura, freedom fighter Rokeya Kabir, General Secretary of Bangladesh Adibasi Forum Mr. Sanjeeb Drong et al discussed in the program.

On 10 November 2010, MN Larma 27th death anniversary observance committee arranged a commemorative discussion program at National Press Club in Dhaka. Speakers paid tribute to Manabendra Narayan Larma on the occasion of his 27th death anniversary. Moderated by Bangladesh Adivasi Forum general secretary Sanjeeb Drong, the discussion was addressed by Gono Forum leader Pankaj Bhattachariya, senior leader of Communist Party of Bangladesh M Morshed Ali and PCJSS leader Mangal Kumar Chakma. The discussion was presided over by writer Selina Hossain.

At the evening different organizations placed wreaths on MN Larma's temporary memorials at the base of Swoparjito Swadhinota on the Dhaka University campus and arranged a voluntary blood donation program. Marking the day KF facilitated to published a poster and a souvenir magazine.

Out Comes:

- Mass people including indigenous peoples became aware of struggle and life of M N Larma.
- Indigenous peoples are inspired by thought and struggle of M N Larma to protect their rights.



10.2. International Human Rights Day: On 11 December 2010 Kapaeeng Foundation arranged a program on ‘Observance of International Human Rights Day and Launching the Human Rights Report 2009-2010 on Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh.’ The program was held in Bangladesh Planning Academy Auditorium in Dhaka. Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani was present as chief guest while editor of the daily Sun Professor Syed Anwar Husain, general secretary of Bangladesh Adibasi Odhilar Andolan Professor Mesbah Kamal, Member of the National Human Rights Commission Ms. Nirupa Dewan, Dhaka University teacher Professor Dalem Chandra Barman and country director of Oxfam Gareth Price-Jones were present as special guest.

Mr. Mangal Kumar Chakma presented the human right report 2009-2010 on indigenous peoples in Bangladesh while Mr. Saikat Biswas from Oxfam delivered welcome speech.

Member of the National Human Rights Commission Ms. Nurupa Dewan said, the National Human Rights Commission was sincere to establish the rights of indigenous community and the commission

has included the indigenous issue in its strategic plan. Discussants criticised the government for the discrimination and negligence towards indigenous peoples. They said that implementation of CHT Accord is needed for ensuring peace and development of the country.

In his speech as chief guest Justice Rabbani said, the constitutional recognition was essential to establish the rights of the indigenous community. He also demanded amendment of Bengal Tenancy Act and establishment of indigenous academy for preserving and development of their cultural heritage.

A good number of print and electronic media published and telecast the report on the aforesaid program. KF published a special magazine marking the international human rights day 2010.

Out Come:

- Human Rights Day is observed by indigenous peoples by organising discussion.
- Policy-makers and mass people understood the present human rights situation of indigenous peoples
- Print and electronic media published or aired news/coverage with priority which contributed sensitization of policy-makers and development actors regarding human rights of indigenous peoples.

Activity 11: Poster and Project Report Publication

KF published three posters focusing three different issues of indigenous peoples of Bangladesh. Through those initiatives KF wanted to bring the issues publicly and raise mass awareness. The three posters subject were as follows-

Poster 1 – Constitutional Recognition

Poster 2 – M N Larma Death Anniversary Souvenir poster

Poster 3 – International Human Rights Day

At the end of the project KF published the project report focusing program activities of Oxfam supported Mobilization and Capacity Building of Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh project.

Out Comes:

- Three posters are published
- Mass people became aware of rights of indigenous peoples.
- Posters are widely circulated and distributed which contributed sensitization of mass people and indigenous peoples regarding rights of indigenous peoples
- Printed report of the project gives us an idea of field of interventions in national level advocacy