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**ASSAM RIOT VICTIMS'  
REHABILITATION / DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT (ARRP)**

*Implemented by:*

**LUTHERAN WORLD SERVICE INDIA TRUST (LWSIT)**

*Supported by:*

**NORMISJON**

**Mid Term Review Report**

**November 2011**

**Rainbow Christian Academy Pvt. Ltd.**

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## ***Acknowledgement***

We enjoyed the privilege of facilitating the evaluation of Assam Riot Victims' Rehabilitation / Development Support (ARRP) project and are thankful to the management of LWS for this opportunity. The process of interacting with the staff and stakeholders has been an enriching experience. It was a joy to be welcomed in each village with traditional songs and dances of Bodos and Santhals and warm hospitality. The staff work in difficult circumstances and have shared information about the project with openness.

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We hope the project will continue to reach out to the neediest and make a difference in their lives.

**Dr. Raj Kumar and Priya Rajkumar**

November 2011

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the ethnic conflict between Bodo and Santhal communities in May 1996 and September 1998 in districts of Assam, the Lutheran World Service India Trust (LWSIT) initiated an intervention for riot affected families in three phases – Relief (1996 to 2002), Rehabilitation (2003 to 2008) and Development (2009 to 2013). A mid term review of the period 2009 to mid 2011 was facilitated by two consultants (one male and one female) from Rainbow Christian Academy Pvt. Ltd. The review was conducted during the period 7th to 29th November 2011. The major purpose of the review was to assess the achievements made, challenges faced and make suggestions for the future strategy.

The facilitators, using a participatory approach, developed tools in consultation with the staff, visited the project villages and collected data through interviews and discussions with beneficiaries in the community, government officials, central committee members and project staff. Preliminary findings were shared with the project holders and a draft report prepared. Incorporating the feedback of the project holders, the final report was developed. In all, **389** persons participated in the process of the mid term review.

### MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

#### 1. SOCIAL MOBILIZATION TOWARDS COLLECTIVE ACTION, PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

The functional women's SHGs is a good indicator of community mobilization. The groups have been able to provide money to members in times of emergency. The training given to the SHGs and methods of developing leadership need further strengthening. At this stage, SHGs are not adequately equipped to address social and development issues collectively. Some village development committees are active and contributing to development in different ways. Record keeping of VDCs need to be further reviewed. At this stage the VDC members are not fully equipped to undertake development activities on their own and need to be further equipped. Community centres are a good initiative. They are in common areas, being used for multiple purposes in the community. The community members have contributed to its construction. LWS has made a significant contribution in restoring communal harmony through various means. The riot affected people are still terrified with their bad experiences. It will be useful to continue efforts to build trust. Project staff dealing with the community may be given additional training to strengthen peace and help the community work towards development.

#### 2. ACCESS AND CONTROL OF THE COMMUNITIES TOWARDS NATURAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL RESOURCES, FACILITIES TO MEET THEIR BASIC NEEDS

Tube wells have been constructed within the community and used as common wells. Community members show willingness to repair the wells on their own and share the water with other families, which is appreciable. The social forestry in Patgaon is well maintained and the support in the form of seed and seedlings has been used well. VDCs have been able to access resources from different sources such as Government, LWS, local community resources and used them for maintenance and repair work, engaging in business initiatives, helping the poor and releasing mortgaged land. Grain banks seem to

have addressed the issue of food security with the support of the VDC. The grain bank observed by the evaluation team was well maintained.

### 3. ACCESS TO RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS - PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT

The project conducted two programs in a year for the six zones on Right to Information Act and also interface programs to reduce the gap between government, banks and poor communities. With the help of local community based organizations, LWS have helped to release 365 bigah of land belonging to poor families. The evaluation team met with two persons who had participated in the training on Rights and Legal Aid. They were aware of how to make a complaint to the Government authorities if required. Release of mortgaged land is an important area where further work can be done. Short term programs may not be effective in helping people to become more aware of their rights and exercise them effectively.

### 4. ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES

Through scholarships, the project has given educational assistance to deserving students from poor families. The students have dreams to fulfill and may need further guidance to choose the right career so that they may grow professionally and personally. Starting pre primary school is a good initiative of LWS where children learn together. The teachers are not adequately trained in teaching children, 3 to 5 years old. The teaching aids may also be inadequate. One person may not be able to control a large number of children and provide quality teaching. With most parents not being able to contribute anything towards fees, the PPE centre is not sustainable. The community members have increased awareness of HIV. The CHV training did not work well because it was short term and there is a lack of adequate referral services, indicating the need for linkages between the CHV and available medical services. Male CHVs may not necessarily be approached by women having health problems. The project promotes herbal medicines as well as allopathic medicine through the health check-up camps and CHVs. This conflicting approach to health and healing needs to be clarified.

### 5. ACCESS TO EARNING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH FARM, NON-FARM AND SKILL BASED ACTIVITIES

Pigs, goats, bullocks and cows are provided to the community based organizations (CBOs), to enable them to supplement their income through the rearing and selling of livestock and their produce. Community members are familiar with traditional animal husbandry practices. The rearing of livestock seemed to be more profitable. However death and sickness of animals resulted in losses. The possibility of training SHGs on preventive measures, identifying symptoms of illnesses and simple treatment for sick animals can be explored. Mushroom cultivation, Endi worm and vocational training for youth had mixed results. Adequate planning needs to be done before initiating business ventures, including feasibility studies and marketing opportunities.

### 6. SUSTAINABILITY OF DIFFERENT INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE PROJECT

The grain bank can become sustainable if properly managed. With the help from the community, building of the community centre was a good sustainable initiative. Providing bore-wells and dug wells are also sustainable. However, it is difficult to establish the sustainability of NFE and PPE centres, which can become sustainable if VDC/SHG takes over and mobilizes resources to meet the expenses required

to run them. The CHV's training and experience does not qualify them to provide meaningful health care assistance, and the medical kit given to them did not work well. Neither this initiative, nor the computer training was sustainable. With focused intervention to strengthen their capacity, the VDCs and SHGs can become sustainable.

#### 7. MANAGERIAL CAPACITY OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURES PROMOTED DURING THE PROJECT PERIOD

Most of the self help group members who participated in the group discussions said that they could carry on working independently without LWS help. According to project staff, 69% of the VDCs they have helped to constitute can function independently. Establishing community based organizations, such as SHG and VDC, was a good initiative. Some are active and others may take time to become active. The project has made attempts to build the managerial capacity of social structures. However, in our opinion, the managerial capacity has not developed adequately enough to function independently.

#### 8. INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IN THE PROJECT

The Central committee members felt that development work needs to be started in other parts of the lower Assam area and develop a strategy for non-riot-affected areas for development work. Government officials are supportive to the project. In different ways they participate in the project activities.

#### 9. MANAGEMENT AND USE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES

The project staff was able to mobilize Government resources as well as local resources. The local volunteers play an important role in project implementation activities. At the local level, the village headman has been involved in VDC activities. The VDC was empowered to mobilize resources from the Government, other charitable organizations, agriculture department and forest department. There is a great possibility of mobilizing more resources for community development. Financial resources provided by Normisjn has been used and managed well. This assessment was based on indicators of good project management practices which is discussed in the main report.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reconsider changing the existing plan for the years 2012 and 2013.
2. Focus on strengthening the capacity of community based organizations to take over and sustain the program. This can be done in the area of keeping records, maintaining books of account, developing rules and regulations of CBO's ( Constitution), resource mobilization skills, public relations, problem solving, important laws relating to banking, government policies on development, environment policies, water related issues, certain provisions of Indian penal code , land related matters.
3. SHGs and VDCs do not have written down rules and regulations except resolutions. Consider developing proper documentation on the rules and regulations governing the CBO's.

4. Traditional methods of giving training should be replaced with experiential learning and good follow up. Develop these training modules on a priority basis.
5. Trainers should be carefully selected, having adequate facilitation skill. Give less emphasis on the lecture method.
6. CHV's should preferably be females, with adequate training and continuing education program, and with good referral system. Promote herbal medicine through CHV. CHV should not provide antibiotics. Develop a formal training curriculum for CHV's.
7. PPE training and NFE training should be made substantial, adequate and relevant. These should be run by the VDCs, with the support of SHG members. Train preferably married women if possible.
8. Develop a proper curriculum for NFE and PPE.
9. Focus on development issues and enhancing the community's participation in moving from dependency to interdependency. Conduct programs to empower the community to be able to mobilize resources for the common benefit.
10. Provide in-depth orientation and exposure to the Central Advisory Committee members on development issues and initiatives.
11. Strengthen the capacity of key project staff on development concepts, particularly building their people skills, facilitation skills and knowledge of approaches to community development. The staff have individually identified their learning needs which have been summarized under the following categories –
  - a. Project related knowledge and skills (31 mentions)
  - b. Management related skills (48 mentions)
  - c. Community development issues (34 mentions)
12. Increase the number of female staff in every zone to balance the number of male staff, and to reach out effectively to women beneficiaries.
13. Change the role and functions of existing community volunteers to ultimately facilitate the process of taking over.
14. Working in line with Government officials is highly important because NGOs complement the efforts of the Government. LWS has a good relationship with Government officials, who at times participate in various health and agriculture related activities of LWS. Government health

workers, such as Asha workers, paramedical and medical staff, may closely be involved in project programs on health. Secondly, the support and services of the Government agriculture department can be utilized, such as soil testing. Thirdly, the resources and materials from the Government's educational department can be obtained to benefit the communities.

### **SUGGESTED EXIT STRATEGY**

Beginning from January 2012 to 2013, start the process of helping the community to take over the program and implement it with their own efforts. This can be done in the following ways:

1. It is suggested that the VDC be encouraged and prepared to take over the program. The VDC can be enabled for doing this by building their capacities in key areas such as leadership, teamwork, decision making, problem solving, monitoring, and essential management skills.
2. Give priority to strengthening the capacity of the VDCs in comprehending development issues, effectively mobilizing resources and in project implementation.
3. Self-help groups should be strengthened to manage the groups effectively as well as to effectively network with the VDC in implementing future programs.
4. Make plans in 2012 to empower the VDC and SHG on a priority basis and implement only those major programs which are sustainable, such as community centres.
5. In 2013, provide support to the VDCs for six months, with close observation and frequent visits. For the next three months, minimize the frequency of visits, and for another six months watch from a distance.

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

In the future, greater impact can be achieved by taking up fewer communities and focusing on specific areas. For the years 2014 onwards develop a concept paper on development initiatives, on the basis of which write an integrated project proposal with strong linkages between goals, objectives and activities, incorporating the following. Before

- a. Geographically consolidate the program for greater effectiveness. Work in the selected existing project area and select additional project area with close proximity.
- b. Strengthen the changing role of existing community based volunteers as implementers of the program, with more responsibilities. In this context the full time LWS staff will have reducing role in implementing the project which will ultimately result into community taking over the project. Incorporate exit strategy in the prospective project i.e.2014 onwards.
- c. Ensure that the activities are not too varied, but are clearly focused, result and impact oriented.
- d. Work with existing and recently started CBOs (2009) : SHGs and VDCs and strengthen their capacity to manage the CBO, mobilize the resources and work proactively.
- e. The LWS project implementation methods need to be reviewed by improving the follow up of activities, documentation of project activities, and developing important policies

such as child protection policy, policy on environment, policy on empowerment of women etc.

- f. Work closely with government line agencies and find out ways and means of strengthening the capacity of government at local level to perform their duties effectively.

### **FOREST DWELLERS**

The issue of forest dwellers sustainable program is a complex one. This matter needs to be addressed in the context of Government policies on environment and forest protection. The Government has been taking strong action against encroachers on Government forest lands, even to the extent of burning their homes. Rehabilitation plans may run into various difficulties. There is also the humanitarian aspect, where these communities have no secure homes, no civic amenities such as potable water, roads, electricity, medical care or education. They live deep in the jungle, where no roads, facilities or services exist. Therefore, in this context, we suggest the following:

- a) Conduct an action-based research, with the co-operation of the Government, to understand the environmental and legal issues involved, the struggles that these communities are going through, and the possibilities that can be considered for their sustainable development.
- b) The research process may give opportunities to make the communities aware of their rights as well as their responsibilities, and encourage them to resolve issues in co-operation with the Government authorities.
- c) During the research process, identify potential persons within these communities who can be provided with life relevant skills, including entrepreneurship development, to empower them to explore livelihood opportunities in and around geographical locations which do not violate Government environmental norms.
- d) Some of these locally trained persons can be encouraged to become resource persons for their own communities, to train others with the life skills and vocational capacities that they have acquired.
- e) The project implementers of such a sustainable development project for these communities will require special skills and expertise.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

A violent ethnic conflict between the Bodos and Santhal communities in May 1996 and September 1998 resulted in widespread damage to property and loss of human lives. It also created mistrust and hatred between the two communities.

The Lutheran World Service India Trust (LWSIT) initiated relief intervention for riot affected families living in Government relief camps during the period 1996 to 2002. When these families returned to their villages, the LWSIT implemented a rehabilitation project for them which lasted from 2003 to 2008. The current project (2009 to 2013) was initiated to consolidate the work done, and to strengthen the rehabilitated communities for work towards their own development.

Rainbow Christian Academy Pvt. Ltd. (RCA) was commissioned for a mid-term review of the current project, in order to *“assess the progress of the projects towards its set goal, objectives and intentions... considering the broad areas - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability in the course of evaluation.”* The terms of reference is given in [Annexure I](#).

### **III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

Two evaluators (one male and one female) from Rainbow Christian Academy were invited to facilitate the mid-term review. Their CVs are given in [Annexure II](#). The mid-term review was conducted during the period 7th to 29th November, 2011. The time schedule of the evaluation is given in [Annexure III](#). A list of the documents studied by the evaluators, pre and post evaluation, are in [Annexure IV](#).

Using a participatory approach, the following process was adopted. A preliminary meeting was held with senior project staff to understand the project goals, objectives and local context. In another meeting with project leaders of the zones, tools for evaluation were developed together with a plan for visiting the project areas. These tools for evaluation are given in [Annexure V](#). Another staff meeting was held prior to data collection, in which all 25 staff participated. During this meeting, the lessons learnt, challenges faced, work methods, coordination with unit office, learning needs and future strategy, were discussed. A report of this meeting is in [Annexure VI](#).

The data collection included visits to all six zones of the project. Group discussions and interviews were conducted with the help of interpreters in these project areas. In all, **389** persons participated in this process, including self-help groups (SHGs), village development committees (VDC), and other community members who had benefitted from the project. Members of the Central Advisory Committee and Government officials were also interviewed. A list of the persons who participated in the evaluation is given in [Annexure VII](#).

<b>Group Discussion</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
• 30 Self-help groups		235
• Village development committees	62	2
• Peace building discussion	30	
• Central Advisory Committee members	6	1
• Government officials	6	1
• Project staff	23	1
<b>Individual Interviews</b>		
• Girl students given scholarship		5
• Tube well beneficiaries		2
• HIV AIDS awareness		1
• Youth trained in motor driving	3	
• Pre primary instructors		2
• Community health volunteers	6	
• Tuition teacher	1	
• SHG member		1
• Non formal education (NFE) Instructor		1
	<b>137</b>	<b>252</b>

The preliminary findings were shared with the project staff and also presented to the National Office team in Kolkata. Their inputs were used to develop a draft report and their feedback incorporated before finalizing. See [Annexure VIII](#).

## **IV. FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION**

### **Right to Livelihood and Food Security**

Two activities are undertaken to minimize food insecurity. These are providing information about government schemes, and providing support to improve livelihood opportunities.

Food for work was discontinued in 2010, after the government took up road construction. Computer training was also discontinued due to poor job availability and inadequate course duration.

Three activities were added after 2009. The construction of deep wells to irrigate crop diversification. Practical demonstrations were held by resource persons from the Government

Agriculture Department on the use of fertilizers, and on preparing land for potatoes. The construction of a compost pit was successful in Kochugaon. This activity included demonstration of the compost pit and an amount given to dig the pit. LWS provided bamboo and cement , and community members prepared the compost pit. Vermin compost could not be implemented because of problems in multiplying earthworms.

Other activities are as follows:

- Awareness building on right based issues related to food security. Block development officers hold talks with the community on government schemes related to food security such as availability of subsidized ration. Two such programs are held in a zone for the entire year.
- Interface and contact program with Duty Bearers are conducted in which Block development officers, bank officers, agricultural and health department officials are invited to share information with the community, on how to access government schemes. The program aims to initiate interaction between them and reduce the gap between them.
- Training on Integrated Pest Management by officers from the Agricultural Department who demonstrate the use of natural pesticides such as Neem leaves, and discuss the harmful effects of chemical pesticides.
- Training on Agricultural Development Practice by resource persons from the Agricultural Department provides insight on agricultural methods of paddy cultivation.
- Training cum Promotion of Integrated Farming Approach wherein multi-cropping is promoted. Mustard seeds and potato seeds are provided to the community groups such as VDCs.
- Improvement of Village Link Road/ Tank/Pond/ Excavation/Waste land development through Food for Work program in three villages. Rice and *dal* are provided by LWSI.
- Nutritional gardens are promoted by providing a vegetable seed kit to the VDC, which is later given to families in the community.
- Fruit bearing saplings are provided to VDC for families in the community, to improve nutrition and encourage community members to grow more fruit trees.
- Livestock, such as pigs, goats, bullock and cows are provided to the community groups, to supplement their income through rearing and selling livestock. Community members are familiar with traditional animal husbandry practices. Poor families cannot afford

bullocks to plough their land and even mortgage their land. Some VDCs were given bullocks, for poor families to rent for cultivation.

- Male pigs that are at least a year old can be sold for about Rs. 5000. More than half this amount is given to the beneficiary who has reared the pig. The rest is given to the VDC fund. Pigs usually have a litter of 5 to 10 piglets in a year, which are divided between the VDC and the beneficiary.
- Two young goats are given, which can be sold for Rs 600 to Rs 700 each after five months. Goats produce two lambs, two to three times a year. Investment is minimum, as fodder is widely available.
- Orientation is given on vermicompost pit, to promote organic manure and discourage the use of chemical fertilizers. Locally available leaves, cow-dung, plants and leaves are used and practical demonstrations are given in villages on using earthworms. LWS provides earthworms and supports the construction of vermicompost pit.
- Grain bank support is useful during July to September, a lean period. Paddy stored from the previous harvest is depleted and farmers resort to loans at high interest from money lenders. In contrast, grain banks provide food grain at subsidized rates. These are small huts where grains are stored. LWS provides the initial deposit of grains, such as paddy, to poor farmers during times of crises. This is returned during harvest time with minimum interest. The VDC decides the beneficiaries and amount of grain to be given.
- Essential agricultural implements, such as sickle and spade, are provided by LWSI to poor families who have limited money.
- Training on mushroom cultivation and support is provided to women's groups. This business is profitable, requires low investment, and has a good market. The training is for two or three days, for self-help-group members, and support is for buying mushroom seeds. The groups then construct a mushroom hut and cultivate the seeds. Mushrooms are ready within a month, and are sold in the local market. A kilo of mushrooms sells for Rs. 60 to Rs. 80. Ten to 12 kgs of mushroom is cultivated at a time from November to March.
- Training on computer application is provided for unemployed and educated village youth who struggle to improve their future. LWSI provided course and admission fees for the three months computer course. However, the girls and boys who trained could not find suitable employment, as the duration of training was too short.
- A three-month course on four-wheeler driving was sponsored for young males in the community, who were mostly unemployed. LWSI also helped them procure driving

licenses. About 30 percent of the youth are now employed as drivers, while others are searching for similar employment.

- Bodo families traditionally practiced sericulture, weaving *doknas* (woman's wrap around garment), *gumchas* (male wrap around garment), shawls and bed sheets from silk processed from cocoons of *Endi* worms. *Endi* is the local word for silk worms, which are gathered and reared in the home. They are fed mulberry leaves, available locally. The worms grow and wrap themselves with a brown coloured, silky cocoon which is ready in about a month's time, when the worms are released and the cocoons are sold for around Rs. 300 per kg. The worms are eaten, or sold for Rs. 100 per kg. Silk garments are highly valued in the market and are long lasting. A shawl may sell for around Rs. 2000.

### **Right to Health, Water and Sanitation**

The major purpose was to improve the health status of the community. No study has been conducted on the health status of the community, but the maternal and child mortality rates are very low. Common diseases may be prevalent due to lack of personal hygiene. The project supports the health programs of the government by providing health awareness on immunization, nutrition, family planning, HIV/AIDs, and encouraging good health practices.

- Awareness programs are conducted on health issues such as nutrition, disease prevention and control, water and sanitation. Discussions are held with community groups.
- Awareness on immunization is promoted as previously people were afraid of immunization, considering it harmful for the child. Discussions are held with the community on the importance of vaccination, schedules, and the six killer diseases – tuberculosis, polio, tetanus, measles, diphtheria, and whooping cough.
- Awareness on nutrition is created through discussions on balanced diet, carbohydrate, protein, fats, and the fruits. Girl children are often given less food in quality and quantity, so the discussions emphasize the importance of good nutrition for girl children.
- Awareness on medicinal plants and herbs have decreased due to increasing use of allopathic medicines among tribal communities that have traditionally practiced the use of medicinal plants and home remedies. The project identifies persons in the community who have knowledge and experience in the practice of herbal remedies. These persons then share their knowledge about medicinal plants which are locally available, with the community, to encourage the use and preservation of these plants.

- In a training of trainers, selected persons from the community are made aware about RTI, STI and HIV/AIDS, so that they in turn spread the right information in the community. The resource persons for this program are usually medical doctors. Government records show cases of HIV being detected in areas surrounding the project. Spreading of HIV/AIDS awareness on prevention and protection will help curb the spread. There may be hidden cases of HIV/AIDS in the community.
- Family planning awareness includes condom promotion and gender sensitization, since four to five children in a family is common. Talks on the importance of the girl child are also included.
- Family life education provides guidance to adolescent boys and girls on sexual behavior, preparation for marriage and related health issues. Staff, teachers and others conduct these programs.
- LWS organizes health camps in the community, in which medical doctors and paramedical teams go and check for common diseases, and distribute medicines free of cost. Doctors are given an honorarium, and local people help in logistical arrangements.
- Selected individuals (male and female) from the community are chosen and trained by the VDC. The three-day training by medical doctors covers common diseases and general treatment, as well as medication. They are also given a medicine kit. The CHVs are to sell the medicine at a minimum price and use the earnings to replenish the medicine supply. CHVs were also to facilitate contact between the patients and the doctors. However, due to various reasons this activity was not as successful as expected.
- The communities practice open defecation and have few latrines. Low cost latrines were built with community contribution. LWS provided cement, bricks, construction cost, septic tank, pan and siphon, while the beneficiaries contributed sand, stones and roof for the latrines. This is to discourage open defecation and encourage others to build toilets in their homes.
- Well with platforms are provided by LWS as drinking water is insufficient in some communities. The same water source is shared by many families, and in some cases the distance between the water source and the family residence is large. Community contribution includes sand and stones.
- Tube wells with platforms are constructed, depending on feasibility and community requests.
- While these hand pumps have been installed in homes, they are considered as common property of the village. The VDC chooses the site of the tube well, usually the homes of

poor families that cannot construct hand pumps with their own resources. Repairing of the well is done by the beneficiaries.

- Some existing wells and tube wells in the community are renovated with beneficiary contribution, while cement and labour cost is provided by LWS.
- A three-day training of trainers on tube wells was given to selected persons from different zones. The training included installing and repairing tube wells. Some basic tools were also given for the repair of tube wells. This initiative is expected to generate income. However, due to various reasons, this activity was not very successful as people preferred other experienced repairmen in the area.
- Village cleaning drive and Chlorination of drinking water sources is organized and bleaching powder is provided to the community.

### **Right to Education**

Illiteracy promotes ignorance and poverty. Literacy level is poor in the communities, particularly among women. Government schools are till primary level. Secondary and higher secondary schools are few. There is one middle school (5th to 7th class) for more than 10 villages. Higher secondary schools are in the towns. Girls are usually not encouraged to study beyond primary or secondary level, since they would have to travel outside their homes. With increase in education level, the number of girls students decreases.

- Awareness programs on education are conducted on the value of education to the community. There is a high level of dropouts among boys and girls due to various reasons.
- Non formal education and pre-primary education (NFE/ PPE) centres are provided reading materials and teaching aids. Around 15 to 20 adult NFE participants are chosen by the VDC. Children aged three to five years are selected for the PPE centres. Since the community children enjoy freedom and are not prepared to adjust to the discipline of school, the PPE centres prepare them to start schooling. These centres are usually in a common area in the community.
- NFE/PPE instructor training is provided to selected educated youth. The three to four days training is held once in a year. The instructors are paid an honorarium of Rs. 600 from LWS. NFE is for adults, mostly women.
- Sports events are held in village schools and prizes are given to the winners. This helps develop a competitive spirit and identify talent in the children.

- Inter school quiz contest is organized at zone level. Zone winners are invited for the central level program to participate in the finals. Winners get prizes.
- Libraries are promoted through youth clubs and books and furniture are provided to schools, primarily high schools, and some clubs. The purpose is to promote the reading habit to enhance knowledge.
- Educational assistance is given to promising students, in the form of a stipend of Rs. 200 per student per month for one year. This is given for tuition, books or other required educational material.
- Uniforms are given to PPE learners, worth Rs. 150 to Rs. 200.
- Village school infrastructure support provides for repair and renovation of existing schools. The schools are initiated and managed by the community and supported by the government. The support includes bamboo walls and tin roof. This has been discontinued in 2010.

#### **Right to Development: Community Capacity Building**

- Awareness seminars on peace building were held, combining three villages for each meeting on peace issues and implication of riots.
- Awareness on community based disaster and risk mitigation program.
- Awareness training on advocacy, lobbying and networking.
- Multi-purpose community centres are constructed to facilitate community gathering. The construction cost is borne by LWS and the community contributes sand, stone, land filling etc.
- Orientation on Community based risk mitigation program.
- Formation and training of task force for CBDRMP.
- Awareness to school/college students and teachers on disaster risk management.
- Gender sensitization programs are conducted in the community on issues such as importance of education for girls, caring for special needs of women and discouraging violence against women.
- Training on entrepreneurship development is given to SHG beneficiaries, by external resource persons, on skills such as bamboo craft and the manufacture and sale of traditional food items. These programs are conducted for two days.

- Sensitization sessions on prevention of deforestation are organized as forests are fast depleting. The dangers of deforestation are stressed and they are encouraged to plant trees. The impact of global warming, climate change and other environmental issues are discussed.
- Important national days such as Independence Day, and special days such as Woman's Day and AIDS Day are celebrated in the community. Resource persons are invited and talk on related issue.
- PRA exercises are carried out in every community, and community profiles are developed with the help of staff and the community. However, the information needs to be further analyzed.
- Participatory planning and implementation of monitoring and evaluation is a training program for community leaders to develop a community action plan. A need analysis is done, needs are prioritized, and a plan is made with budget and timeline to address these needs.
- Leadership training is given to SHG/VDC leaders. In each zone, four to five one-day programs are held in a year. Lectures are given on leadership and how it can be developed. There is no common model and different zones conduct this program in different ways.

#### **Right to Information:**

- Based on the RTI Act of 2005, discussions are held in the community with the help of legal aid professionals to raise awareness in the community regarding how to access information and the procedures involved in getting information from government authorities. Two or three programs are held in a year for every zone. Literate persons are selected from the community, who are representatives of CBOs.
- Awareness on legal aid is created by lawyers who are invited as resource persons to provide information on issues such as how to access legal aid in land disputes, accident cases etc.
- Awareness on right based issues. Discussions on fundamental rights
- Interface programs are held with service providers, such as bankers, government line departments and others. These programs between authorities and beneficiaries give information on government schemes.
- Awareness on the rights of children is a great need and one program for each zone once a year is conducted. Discussions are held for parents and teachers on the rights of

children. The programs are held in schools for teachers and at the zonal level for parents.

## **1. PROJECT PROFILE AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE CONTEXT**

The project<sup>1</sup> works in two districts (Kokrajhar and Chirang) of Assam, in three sub-divisions (Gossaigaon, Kokrajhar and Kajalgaon), where approximately 11070 households have been covered with a population of 57262 (Male 29160, Female 28102). For the purpose of project implementation, the area has been divided into these six zones: Gossaigaon, Kochugaon, Sidli, Balajan, Sapkata, Patgaon. A total of 174 women's self-help groups have been formed in these zones. The project area is mostly composed of Santhal communities (137), followed by Bodo (34), Rabha (3), Uraon (3), Rajbhansi (1) and mixed communities (22)

### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT ON RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT**

The rehabilitated communities have overcome the consequences of the post conflict situation and are prepared to take active part in the process of their own development. The opportunities provided by the project help to strengthen the community and equip them to play a greater role in their own development. The community based groups, such as SHGs and VDCs, play a critical role in this process. The project seems largely relevant to the context.

## **2. SOCIAL MOBILIZATION TOWARDS COLLECTIVE ACTION, PEACE AND RECONCILIATION**

The project has tried to foster collective action through the women's self-help groups (SHGs) and village development committees. The community centres also provide opportunities for common meetings and programs. Peace and reconciliation efforts have reduced the mistrust between community groups. These aspects are discussed below, based on the data collected in the field visits and information from the staff.

### **A. WOMEN'S SELF-HELP GROUPS**

Details of the information collected from women's SHGs are in [Annexure IX](#)

#### **SELF-HELP GROUPS, KOCHUGAON (35 RESPONDENTS)**

Representatives of five women's SHGs were present in the meeting –Jagwar, Mother Sonia, Marsal, Kanchak and Jisingbonta. These members said that LWS had helped in the forming the groups and taught them to save and manage money. They said, "With their help we have learnt things which we will try. Our families will benefit and become better. Earlier, we used to take loans from money lenders and give more interest. But now we get loans from the SHG by giving less interest. Members actively

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from project records

participate in the group functions. Some members find it difficult to participate regularly in the meetings due to family problems.”

#### SELF-HELP GROUPS, DAKSHINMAINAGURI – PATGAON (14 RESPONDENTS)

The evaluation team met with three women’s SHGs which LWS helped to form: Ipilbaha, Chandubaba and Maram. They were formed during the period 2006 to 2011. In Maram group, one of the women died and the group has decided to accept the husband of the deceased woman as a group member. The women said that they had formed the group to receive more information, have discussions and take the support of the LWS as well as the Government. They also wanted to become organized and pool resources for their own development. They said that all the group members participate actively in group functions, including savings and providing loans. Members of the group helped to plough and plant saplings for the community forest.

#### SELF-HELP GROUPS, SUNDARGAON – SAPKATA (25 RESPONDENTS)

Two SHGs and women from the community participated in the discussion from the village called Barjubil (No 2), Sundargaon. The Marsal group was started in October 2011 and has 12 members, of whom seven were present in the meeting. The Rangjali group has 10 members and started in May 2011. Four members from the group were present in the meeting. The women said they had formed the group with the help of LWS. They said, “We women needed help in times of trouble. Now we can get help from the group. Students can continue their education with the help of the group. Usually girls study only till class 8 in our village. We have monthly meetings. LWS has helped to construct tube wells, grain bank, provided scholarships for girls, gave piglets and fruit saplings of mango, guava, coconut. We have planted the fruit saplings in our homes.

#### SELF-HELP GROUPS, GOSSAIGAON (45 RESPONDENTS)

Around 45 women, representing eight groups from three villages, came to participate in the meeting. They said that all the women in the groups participate actively in the group functions. The groups were started during the period 2008 to 2011. The names of the groups are Anjali bima, Phulomi (Bodo and Santhal members), Gwjwnthao, Saganan, Marshal, Avdhamarshal, Sanjandoh and Anjali. The women in these groups come from the villages of Hesper, Anthalbari and Dawaguri. One female respondent said, “At first we did not know anything about what a group is and how it functions. We were living in darkness. We had no money and were helpless when there was an emergency. Now after the groups have started, we borrow from them. Through the literacy classes many of us have learnt to sign.” Sixteen women said they could sign their names. One of them said that they used to feel bad about being illiterate. Now, “When we learnt to sign our names, we felt proud and happy.”

#### **Sajandoh, Gosaigaon**

The group members said that their group was functioning well. They had collected Rs. 3000/- through savings. However, the President and Secretary of the group took the money and disappeared, leaving the group de-motivated. There are no more meetings, but the members are interested to continue functioning as a group.

SELF-HELP GROUPS, GOREGAON SALBARI, SIDLI (14 RESPONDENTS)

The SHG had 14 members and one of them died. The group was formed in 2010 with the help of LWS, and meets twice in a month. Members contribute Rs. 50 every month, and have a savings of Rs. 16,740. Group members are given loans, and even non-members can take loans if required. Interest is charged at the rate of 10%.

SELF-HELP GROUPS FORMED IN 2009-2010, NANGDALBARI, SIDLI (26 RESPONDENTS)

The community includes Santhals, Oraons, Mundas and Karamkars.

Mashal SHG, North Nangdalbari - The group had 13 members, of which 10 are literate. Four persons left the group. In the beginning, group members used to contribute Rs.10 per month, but now they give Rs. 20 a month. The group has been given training in book keeping, and runs an NFE centre. The group will continue even if LWS withdraws.

Ehiri Pipri SHG, North Nangdalbari - The group has 15 members, and 12 are literate. The group attended a one-day training on growing mushrooms. They tried the business and were not successful.

Aben SHG, South Nangdalbari - The group has 17 members, and four are literate. There are plans to give them 1060 kgs of grain to start a grain bank.

SELF-HELP GROUPS – BASUNGAON, BALAJAN (56 RESPONDENTS)

One of the SHGs is called Sulukjama, which means 'stream of peace'. Started in September 2010, it has 11 members. According to the women, the reason for forming the group was to access money in times of need, particularly for their children's education. They also wanted to develop themselves and their families. They said that the VDC and the Government appointed headman had helped them to form the group. Monthly meetings are held and all members participate, unless there is an emergency. Four members have received one-day training on book keeping, on rotation basis. One member participated in training on agriculture, in which potato and pea cultivation was discussed. Pest management was also one of the topics. So far, four women have taken loans from the group and are in the process of repaying. The rate of interest is 5% per month. One woman took a loan to buy medicines for her sickness (Rs. 800/), while another woman took a loan to treat a sick family member (Rs. 500/-). Yet another woman bought 65 kg of rice for Rs. 460 with the help of her Below Poverty Level (BPL) card. Another woman took a loan of Rs. 100 for the medical treatment of a guest who was sick. She said, "Previously we had no money to support our children's education. Our husbands had money. Now we can access money from the group in times of sickness or for other emergencies." They are in the process of opening a bank account. Four of them have visited the bank in this regard. In the meetings, they discuss about money matters and also share their sorrows and joys with one another.

Other SHGs include Charuparvati, Marshal, Jonadadi, Sagansekam, Anjali, Jodasi, Aken, Aauraha from the villages of West Harinaguri, Karigaon, Lapdangguri, Dalegaon, New Laoripara, Doljara and South Harinaguri. These groups were formed in the period 2002 to 2007. The savings amount per month per member is Rs. 20. One of them said that LWS had provided *Endi* worm cultivation training, vegetable seeds and kitchen garden seeds. Another group said that they have also received book keeping training

by LWS staff. They are confident of continuing to work without the support of LWS. The SHG and VDC members said that they work together. They have common meetings and training.

#### STAFF ASSESSMENT OF THE SELF-HELP GROUPS

Project staff made the following random assessment of the number of active self-help groups in their respective zones. (This assessment is not based on any scientific calculations)

Zone	Total Number of SHGs	% of Active SHGs
Gossaigaon	32	75%
Sapkata	24	50%
Kochugaon	47	70%
Patgaon	24	50%
Balajan	14	70%
Sidli	18	70%
	159	64%

#### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT ON WOMEN'S SELF-HELP GROUPS**

The women's SHGs and their functioning are good indicators of community mobilization. The groups have been able to provide money to members in times of emergency. However it seems that the training given to the groups is inadequate. The methods used to develop leadership may be less effective. Group activities are limited to savings, loans, and in some cases doing business collectively. They are not adequately equipped to address social and development issues collectively.

#### **B. THE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES**

VDC's were formed with the facilitation of LWS. A single VDC represents around 35 families. The secretary, president, and members are chosen in a general assembly of all the village members. The development activities of the project are implemented through the VDC's, such as selection of beneficiaries for scholarship, vocational training, mobilizing the community, distributing grain etc.

#### DISCUSSION WITH VDC MEMBERS, SUNDARGAON, BARJUBIL (NO 2), SAPKATA (10 RESPONDENTS)

The VDC has 12 members, 10 male and 2 female. It was formed in 2009 with the purpose of helping the poor and suffering, and for the progress of the village. The VDC is the first organized body in the village. After formation of the VDC, LWS extended its support to the village. The VDC meets once a month to discuss health, agriculture, environment and other issues. The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting are maintained. However, it was observed that minutes had not been written for the past six months. The VDC members contribute Rs. 10 per month, which is spent to help the poor and to release mortgaged land. They also give loans to members on interest. The VDC has 12,000/- rupees, of which they used Rs. 500 as deposit to open the bank account and the rest of the money is lying in cash with the treasurer. As the bank is far away, they do not go to deposit the money in the bank. Members are given loan out of this money. Some members did not remember the training. Four of them said that they had attended the training on book keeping and on how to maintain minutes. LWS gave them a grain bank, fruit bearing trees such as guava and coconut, tube well, low cost latrines, spades and sickles.

#### DISCUSSION WITH VDC MEMBERS OF HESPES, SUKANBAONAI, ALOKJHAR, GOSSAIGON ZONE

Five VDC members<sup>2</sup> were interviewed. The Hesperes VDC has 13 members, of which three are female. The Suknabaonai VDC has 15 members, of which five are female. The Alokjhar VDC has nine members, of which two are female. The village head is also a member of the VDC, which was formed in 2008.

VDC members from three villages stated that LWS has helped them in constructing a road, establishing social forestry, planting coconut trees, putting tube wells with platforms, and making a community centre. The VDC meets every month in the community centre building given by LWS. In the meetings they primarily talk about issues related to village development and ways to progress.

#### DISCUSSION WITH VDC MEMBERS, NANGDALBARI, SIDLI (33 RESPONDENTS)

There are 74 general members of the VDC and 13 are executive members. Seven executive members and 26 general members were present during the discussion. The VDC was formed in 2009 with the help of LWS, to facilitate village development. The executive members were given 1 day and 2 days training.

#### DISCUSSION WITH VDC MEMBERS, BALAJAN (15 RESPONDENTS)

In one VDC there are 12 members, of which five are women. One or two members have participated in training on agriculture, pest management, and Right to Information Act. In Right to Information training they learnt how to register a complaint against a Government authority.

In Basangaon VDC<sup>3</sup>, the executive committee has 11 members, all male. The general body has 28 members. The VDC was formed in 2009 with the help of LWS, with the stated purpose as, "to get help from other sources, to develop the village and come back to the state where the village was before riots." The VDC has no formal constitution, rules or regulations. Nine of the VDC members are literate. LWS has provided the VDC with two tube wells, seeds and seedlings for 24 households, two cows to two persons, and 1080 kgs of grain. The LWS has also given training in agriculture. The VDC meets once in a month, and the members do not contribute money to the common fund every month.

#### PROJECT STAFF COMMENTS ON THE VDCs

VDCs are active in some villages, but not in all the villages. Sometimes the right persons are not chosen. According to the unit manager, leadership change is taking place in the VDC. Some VDC members are not acceptable to all members of the community, and may not communicate essential messages to all the community members. Some VDCs are active and have initiated profitable business activities.

#### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT ON VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES**

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph Murmu from Hesperes, Bolen Hembrom from Hecpec, Nimai Marandi from Alokjhar, Joel Hasdak from Sukna Baonai, Nicholus Tudu from Sukna Baonai

<sup>3</sup> Mondol Hasdak from Asamtola, Mirza Hasdak from Indirapur, Raj Murmu from Dawagudi, Sunen Basmotry from Gursingpura, Govind Narzary from Gursingpura

The village development committees are a good method of facilitating community development. It seems that the VDCs are active and contribute to development in different ways. However, the writing of records may not be adequately done and not all VDCs are actively functioning. ." According to the unit manager, "It is our challenge because the literacy rate of our partner community is very low, we may not achieve this overnight. However, there are VDC's which are functioning very well, they have bank account, monthly subscription register, minutes book, etc. and actively participating with the project and mobilizing resources from other service provider."

The committees need to be further equipped to respond to social and development issues. In our opinion, at this stage the VDC members are not fully equipped to undertake development activities on their own.

### **C. THE COMMUNITY CENTRES**

#### **COMMUNITY CENTRE, RAMPUR, KOCHUGAON**

The community centre at Rampur is under construction, with community participation. Walls have been built but the roof is yet to be constructed. The community contributed sand, stone and land filling till foundation level. LWS has contributed to the cost of labour, bricks, cement etc. The centre will be used for common functions and religious meetings and is built on common land. To build the community centre, a committee of 15 members was constituted with seven Santhal and eight Rabha members in the committee. Among these are five women and 10 men. The approximate cost of the centre is Rs. 3,50,000. LWS prepares challan for bricks and other construction material to be used for the centre and gives the challan to the committee members. However, the President could not recall about this challan, as he may not be familiar with the word challan.

#### **COMMUNITY CENTRE, DAKSHINMAINAGURI, PATGAON**

This community centre was built with the help of LWS. The community contributed labour and sandstone. The centre is used for VDC meetings, cultural program, pre- primary education classes etc.

### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT ON COMMUNITY CENTRES**

The community centres are important in providing a common area for different groups to meet and interact. The centres are being used for multiple purposes and the community members have contributed to its construction. The community center seemed to be a good initiative.

### **D. PEACE BUILDING**

#### **PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES, RAMPUR, KOCHUGAON**

In the group of 35 persons, there were Bodo, Santhal and Rabha community members, representing VDC and SHG. Eighteen of them said they had stayed in the relief camp for nine years, where the food was not good. Some people died due to the riots and others died in the relief camp due to sickness. When they left their villages to stay in the relief camps, they had mango trees, jackfruit and other trees. When they returned everything was gone. They took some eatables in the camp, which finished after

some time. The reported that, “When we came back to our village from the camp we were not able to recognize our house, because everything was destroyed.” At present things have changed and now all the community members live together and sometimes meet together. They also visit each others’ villages. LWS have helped to restore peace through various events such as cultural shows, which brings all the community members together.

PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES, DAKSHIN MAINAGURI, PATGAON

This is a Santhal community and the respondents were VDC members. The VDC has 11 members (two female and nine male), all of whom were present during the discussion, including office bearers such as president, secretary and treasurer.

Most of the respondents said they stayed in the relief camp from nine to 10 years. The women members could not tell how many years they had stayed in the camp. For the first three years, they were provided security in relief camps, which was thereafter withdrawn. One said, “Some of us ran for protection, taking nothing with us, and some people took with them a few things from their household. We were always feeling vulnerable, gripped with fear as we spent our days in the relief camp. In the beginning the Government provided raw material for cooking food, such as rice, dal, oil and spices. However, after a few months, they withdrew the support and provided only rice. We used to go out to do labour work, earn some money and buy necessary food requirements. In the relief camp we experienced sickness, fear, poor food, inadequate space to stay, and no privacy. Some people died in the relief camp with sickness. We did not feel good in the relief camp.”

They further said, “We came back to the village and saw destruction; nothing was there except the trees. The houses were burnt and looted, and we had to start our life from scratch. We did not like the situation. Due to fear of attack, we could hardly sleep in the night. In shifts, people used to be awake in the night and keep a watch. There was no trust. We Santhali’s spent sleepless nights and Bodos also spent sleepless nights due to fear of attack.”

#### *The Role of LWS in Facilitating Peace*

“We have experienced good contribution of LWS in restoring peace and building communal harmony. The various activities arranged by LWS re-established trust between Santhal and Bodos. In some meetings, family planning, immunization and other issues were discussed. During these meetings, Bodo and Santhal women interacted with one another. They were of the opinion that more such meetings should be organized. Periodic community meals were arranged, sometimes in a Bodo village and sometimes in a Santhal village. Thus both the communities ate together, which helped in restoring relationships. Games were also arranged, such as football and Kabaddi, which were also helpful in restoring broken relationships. The Bodo community lives alongside the Santhal community and at times they participate in each other’s community functions, weddings etc. Some members do not like to eat together, while others do.”

PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES, HESPES, GOSSAIGAON

Respondents included 35 women and 20 men from the community. A few persons spoke on behalf of the entire group and said, “We have lived for more than 10 years in the relief camps. A few have lived for three years. We did not like the relief camps. There was limited space. It was an open hall with a verandah and around 500 persons had to live together in limited space. After one week of living in the camp, the Government provided rations. Before this, we lived on what we had brought from our homes when we ran away. However, the food soon finished and we became dependent on Government rations. The tea estate owners provided us biscuits. “

In the difficult period immediately after the riots, one woman named *Chinibistra* gave birth to a child. She said, “There was a jungle area surrounding the camp and I delivered a baby girl there in the presence of my mother and husband. No medical care was available. My little girl lived for only three months. Now I have two sons.”

The respondents said, “In the relief camps, we would go to neighbouring villages to do labour work, do fishing or sell wood to earn a little money. Many of our people died in the relief camps. Children found it difficult to live in the congested space. When we returned from the camps, our houses had disappeared. The whole area had turned into a jungle. We were given Rs. 10,000 from the Government. This amount was soon finished and was used to buy food.

“Now our condition is better as compared to before. We hope that our children will have a better future. Now the Bodo and Santhal people meet together. In some villages, we live together. We also eat together at common meetings. LWS had organized meetings between Santhal and Bodo groups. They explained about peace and how we should live together. In the beginning we were afraid to even talk to each other. Now we relate to each other like before. We understand that we cannot continue to fight and we should live in peace.”

#### PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES, GOSSAIGAON

VDC members discussed LWS peace building initiatives. All the respondents were from the Santhal community. They stayed in Morni tea estate relief camp for one year, where they did not get good food. They were given rice, dal and salt, 600 grams per person per day. The ration was distributed once in a month. Some people would go to do labour work. Some cut wood in the jungle and sold it. Before the riots village life was good, and they had animals, trees, fodder, grain, good house and no communal bad feelings. The respondents said, “After we came back from the relief camp, we felt good, we felt as if we are free now. But we felt bad looking at the destroyed village. We felt bad for what we had lost. Now things have changed, and we are living in harmony, Bodos and Santhal. During festivals we visit each other.”

#### PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES, SUNDARGAON, BARJUBIL (NO 2), SAPKATA (WOMEN)

All the women present (around 30 respondents) said that they had lived in the Habrubil relief camp for around eight years. They reported that food was insufficient in the camps, which were also dirty and there was sickness all around. There were no toilets and they had to use the area surrounding the relief

camp for defecation. There was one tube well and many families shared it. It used to take more than two hours to collect water.

The respondents said, “We often left our children to work as daily labourers in the nearby towns. Some went to catch fish and sell. The older children would look after the younger ones. Children would not go to school. When we returned to our village, it was like a jungle, very thick. It took two months to clear the jungle, build our homes and settle down. We feel bad when we think about the days in the relief camp. We visit Bodo villages and Bodos also come to our village. LWS has helped to organized peace meetings, where we learnt to live in peace, send our children to school and maintain cleanliness. We also learned about nutrition, immunization and good health habits.”

PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES, SUNDARGAON, BARJUBIL (NO 2),(MEN)

The discussion was held with VDC members, who said that before the riots they had big houses, animals, property, grain, and schooling facility for students. In the relief camp, they did not have a good experience. They felt bad in the school. There was a foul smell around, food was less, the space inadequate and more people. The rice was not of good quality and timely ration was not given. Sickness and dirt was around and there was no good arrangement to live. Some people died in the camp. In the beginning, they were given rice and dal. Later only rice. They used to go out to work and buy the essential things they needed. When they came back from the relief camp they felt bad. They found it difficult to locate the place where their houses were built. Everything was damaged. The LWS has held peace building meetings near the temple and helped the community to live in harmony with each other. The Bodos do not eat food cooked by the Santhals. But they do eat food in the community with Santhals, if the food is cooked by someone else. According to the unit manager, only a very few orthodox Bodo Hindus do not take food cooked by Santali not even cooked by Bodo Christians.

PEACE BUILDING, BASANGAON, BALAJAN

The respondents were 30 women and 10 men. All the families in the village have stayed in the relief camp from 1996 to 1998, in tents. There were few provisions in the camp. Only rice and salt was provided. There was limited medicine. Two children died of sickness in the camp. There were only three tube wells and around 1000 families. Water was scarce. When they returned to the village after 1998, they said they felt ‘relaxed’, but they were afraid to interact with Bodos. Gradually, over a period of time the fear decreased. Now they visit Bodo villages and interact with the community members. LWS organized a meeting in which they talked about peace and how the community members should live together and share resources.

#### **EVALUATORS’ COMMENT ON PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES**

LWS has made a significant contribution in restoring communal harmony through various means. The riot affected people are still terrified with their bad experiences. It will be useful to continue efforts to build trust. Some social elements with vested interests may possibly create ill feelings among the community. Project staff dealing with the community may be given additional training to strengthen

peace and help the community work towards development. It is important to keep a watch and help the community not to harbor ill feelings.

### **3. ACCESS AND CONTROL OF THE COMMUNITIES TOWARDS NATURAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL RESOURCES, FACILITIES TO MEET THEIR BASIC NEEDS**

LWS has helped to construct tube wells in selected areas, and promoted social forestry is an attempt to increase afforestation. The VDCs have been able to access resources from LWS, Block Development Officer, Forest Department and other Government resources. These aspects are presented below.

#### **A. PROVISION OF TUBE WELLS BY LWS**

Depending on feasibility and community requests, tube wells were constructed in some communities. These tube wells (with hand pumps) have been installed in homes, but are considered as common property of the village. The VDC chooses the site of the tube well. Usually it is installed in the homes of poor families who cannot afford to construct tube wells with their own resources. Repairs of the wells are done by the beneficiaries. (Information given by project staff)

##### **TUBEWELL IN RAMPUR, KOCHUGAON**

Mrs. Hopni, the interviewee, said that a tube well has been installed for her family and two other families (Lodhra and Opna Soren), by Lutheran World Service. Earlier, she was drawing drinking water from another source which was not very far from her house. When the tube well fails to work, they get it fixed on their own without help from the project. They are willing to share this water with other families who need it.

##### **TUBE WELL IN SUNDARGAON, BARJUBIL (NO 2), SAPKATA**

Kandna Soren, the respondent, said that one tube well was provided, benefitting four families. Soren said, "Previously we used to go to the neighbouring Bodo community to fetch water. We used to go there several times a day. It is quite close to our house. Now we have our own tube well, built in 2009. We contributed sand, stone and labour, and LWS constructed the well. Though there is no need for repairing the well, but we will do it together if there is a need. If anyone else from the community needs water, they can take from this well."

#### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

Tube wells have been constructed within the community and used as common wells. Community members show willingness to repair the wells on their own and share the water with other families, which is appreciable.

#### **B. SOCIAL FORESTRY, DAKSHINMAINAGURI, PATGAON**

The VDC is doing social forestry in three and a half bigah of common land. The social forestry is well maintained and they have grown a variety of vegetables, such as carrot, peas and coriander. Trees such as Gamari (200), Seesam (100) and Sagwan (200) are also planted. The wood of all of these trees is valuable. The LWS has given vegetable seeds. Saplings are given by forest department free of cost to the VDC. The VDC takes the responsibility of taking care of the social forestry. According to the president of

VDC, they distribute vegetables in the village and sell the surplus vegetables, with the proceeds from the sale deposited in the account of the VDC to be used for a common purpose.

### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

The social forestry is well maintained and the support in the form of seed and seedlings has been used well. However, there is no water source. The possibility of sourcing water for irrigating social forestry can be explored. According to the unit manager, they have made plans and deep bore well construction is in progress.

#### **C. ACCESS AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES BY THE VDCs RESOURCES MOBILIZED BY THE HESPES VDC**

The VDC members commented that they were able to mobilize resources only after formation of VDC. Through the joint forest management committee, the VDC was able to access funds for road construction, and received eight solar lamps and five pigs. The solar lamps were given to families with children studying in school. The pigs were given to community members for rearing, and 50% of the profit after selling the pigs will go to VDC funds. The Agricultural Department and BDO provided a well, with the BDO also providing for 15 public latrines. They also received two cycles from the Forest Department.

#### **RESOURCES MOBILIZED BY THE SUKNBAONAI VDC**

The VDC members commented that they were able to mobilize resources only after the formation of VDC. A community welfare organization provided them four cycles and 35 mosquito nets. The BDO dug five wells and one tube well. LWS provided two tube wells with platform, and toilets

#### **RESOURCES MOBILIZED BY THE ALOKJHAR VDC**

The VDC members commented that they were able to mobilize the following resources only after formation of VDC: one well, one tube well, two toilets, 18 spades and 18 sickles from LWS. From the Forest Department they received one cycle, one solar light, 22 mosquito nets and 22 spades. The solar light is being used by the village head at present.

#### ***COMMENTS BY VDC MEMBERS***

The members were of the opinion that they can continue working as VDC without LWS support. They want more training to develop the village and to teach others. One comment was, "LWS has been a great help to us and we look forward to assistance from LWS till we are fully equipped. Before formation of VDC we knew nothing. LWS has helped us to know more. Now our understanding has increased through LWS training."

#### **RESOURCES MOBILIZED BY THE BASANGAON VDC, BALAJAN**

The Block Development Officer constructed 17 toilets, and the Government gave a school building in 2009. The community does not have Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards and therefore cannot receive Government benefits. The electricity line has been laid down, but the electricity supply is not connected. The VDC meets once in a month and the members do not contribute money in the common fund every month.

## D. EXAMPLES GIVEN BY PROJECT STAFF ABOUT VDCs ACCESSING AND CONTROLLING RESOURCES

### a. Accessing Government Resources

- In Dablegaon VDC members took the initiative to procure fish fingerlings from the Government and put in the ponds. They have made a profit of Rs. 80,000, deposited in their bank account, which they opened with help from LWS.
- In South Bharatnagar, the VDC purchased five diesel pumps from the Government. They rent these pumps to people who need it and the money received goes to the common VDC fund.

### b. Use of Local Resources

- In Sidli Zone, North Islakata VDC started potato cultivation on common land. They harvested 98 kg of potatoes for which they received Rs. 600. They used this income for turmeric cultivation on common land.

### c. Construction and Repair Work

- In Patgaon zone, three VDCs came together to repair and rebuild a broken bridge. This bridge had been washed away by rain and people could not access Kokrajkar. Now many people are using this bridge.
- The three VDCs of Kochetalo, Bhogamgudi and Tulsizora villages joined together and built an over bridge of bamboo, which helps in commuting. They were motivated by LWS.
- The three VDCs of Sapkata, namely Holdibari, Phulkumari and Pokhihaga came together to build a common irrigation canal which is almost two and half kilometers long. A number of community members benefitted from this canal.

### d. Release of Mortgaged Land

- In Kachugaon zone, Islampur VDC, two families had to mortgage their land due to poverty and lack of resources to pay for their children's school fees. The VDC members gave Rs. 45,000 and released the mortgaged land. The families will now repay the money in installments to the VDC. In this case, the VDC helped to break the bondage of debt in the family.
- In Balajan zone, a poor man named Rafael Hembron had no money to pay for his children's education. He had only five bigah of land which he mortgaged. The VDC observed that the family was suffering due to this decision. The VDC bought back the land by paying Rs. 10,000, and the family will return this amount to the VDC in installments.

### e. Resources from LWS

- In Gossaigaon zone, Alakpur VDC, the LWSI gave two kilos of mustard seeds to the VDC. After cultivation, the seeds multiplied to 80 kg, which were sold and the money was used to purchase

480 kg of paddy seeds. Paddy was cultivated on common land and they started their own grain bank. The VDC then distributed 24 kg of seed to six needy persons from their community.

#### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

VDCs have been able to access resources from different sources. They have also been able to help poor families in the community, and have worked with other VDCs for the common good. Perhaps the more active VDCs can help to strengthen those which are less active.

#### **E. GRAIN BANK SUPPORT**

July to September is usually a lean period, when the paddy stored from the previous harvest is depleted and families dependent on agriculture often fall short of food. These farmers resort to taking loans at high interest rates from money lenders. Grain banks help them get food grains for consumption at subsidized rates. A grain bank usually consists of a small hut constructed in one of the houses in the village and grains are stored in it on a raised platform. LWS provides the initial deposit of grains such as paddy. This is lent to poor farmers by the VDC during times of crises, and is returned by them during harvest time with minimum interest. The VDC identifies the beneficiaries and amount of grain to be given. (Based on information given by project staff)

#### **GRAIN BANK, SUNDARGAON, BARJUBIL (NO 2), SAPKATA**

The community came to know that LWS helps the poor, so they applied and got a grain bank. LWS gave 1080 kg of rice for the grain bank. The community contributed land and constructed the grain bank on it. They also gave a weighing machine for the grain bank. From the grain bank, grain is given as a loan to those who lack food. One Bodo family was given 80 kg of grain, a Santhal family was given 120 kg, and a Rajbansi family was given 40 kg of grain as loan. The recipients return 45 kg for every 40 kg.

#### **PUNKAPURI VDC, BALAJAN**

In Kinkapuri VDC, there are 17 families. In 2010, LWS helped to start a grain bank and provided Rs. 12,000 worth of rice. The VDC lent 100 kg to each family, which they are expected to return with interest of 10 kg for every 40 kg.

#### **UNSUCCESSFUL GRAINBANK, BALAJAN**

In Balajan zone, two grain banks failed because farmers could not return the grain they had borrowed. This was due to reduced rainfall and consequent drop in crop production. (Information given by project staff)

#### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

The grain banks seem to have addressed the issue of food security with the support of the VDC. The grain bank observed by the evaluation team was well maintained.

## **4. ACCESS TO RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS - PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT**

### **Awareness of Rights**

Based on the Right to Information Act of 2005, discussions were held in the community with the help of legal aid professionals. The issues discussed were how to access information, and procedures involved in getting information from Government authorities. Two or three programs were held in a year for every zone. Literate persons from the community and representatives of CBOs were invited for these programs. Interface programs with Government officials and bankers were also organized. (Information given by project staff)

### **Release of Mortgaged Land**

Land is the only asset of families who are dependent on agriculture for a living. In sickness and other emergencies, land is often mortgaged and due to limited resources it cannot be released. LWS and VDCs have helped in the release of 365 bigah of land.

One male member from Gossaigaon zone said, "We have benefitted a lot from LWS work. We learnt many new things. Now we can think of the development of our children and the future. LWS has provided tube wells and chlorination of water. They gave us training on cleanliness and health. Before LWS came, we would avoid going to the Government offices. Now we can approach them and we came to know about many Government schemes. We want to go ahead and educate our children for a better future."

### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

The evaluation team met with two persons who had participated in the training on rights and legal aid. They were aware of how to make a complaint to the Government authorities if required. Release of mortgaged land is an important area where further work can be done. Short term programs may not be effective in helping people to become more aware of their rights and exercise them effectively.

## **5. ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES**

Literacy level is poor in the project communities, particularly among women. Illiteracy promotes ignorance and poverty. Government schools in the community are only till the primary level. Secondary and higher secondary schools are few, with only one middle school (5th to 7th class) for more than 10 villages. Higher secondary schools are in the towns. Girls are usually not encouraged to study more than primary or secondary level, since they would have to travel outside their homes. The number of girl students decreases as education level increases.

LWS has started Non-formal Education (NFE) and Pre-Primary Education Centres (PPE) centres in the communities. Reading materials and teaching aids are provided to the centres. NFE participants, which are 15 to 20 willing adults, are chosen by the VDC. For PPE centres, children in the age group of three to five years are selected. Children in the community enjoy freedom and are less prepared to adjust to the

discipline of school. PPE centres prepare children to start schooling. These centres are usually located in a common area in the community.

LWS conducts training for NFE and PPE instructors. Educated youth from the community are selected as instructors, for whom three to four days training is held once a year. They are paid an honorarium of Rs. 600 from LWS. NFE is for adults, mostly women.

Scholarship support is provided for girl students, consisting of a stipend of Rs. 200 per student, per month, for one year. This covers tuition, books or other required educational material. PPE learners are given a uniform worth Rs. 150 to Rs. 200. (Based on information given by project staff). According to the unit manager, Rs. 200 per student per month is common for poor and needy boys as well as girls. The project is encouraging girl students for higher studies (from class XI and above) by giving admission fee and book support.

The following interviews were conducted during field visits by the evaluation team.

#### A. INTERVIEWS WITH GIRL STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

Phulmoni Mardi from Rampur, Kochugaon, is a Santhal studying in class 11. LWS gives money for buying books, admission fee and a stipend. She has an elder brother who is not studying, and a younger sister. They have seven bigah of land. She wants to study as much as possible and wishes to be a school teacher.

In Gossaigaon, three students who received scholarship were interviewed. These are Miss Suchitra Basumatry of village Dawagudi, Miss Jinu Basamatry of village Hespes, and Miss Chitra Basamatry of village Neelajhora. Suchitra is studying in first year for a three year degree course, while Jinu and Chitra are studying in HSC 1<sup>st</sup> year. They were given support in terms of admission fee to the school, and for the books they needed. All three of them have siblings. Suchitra's family is landless, Jinu's family has 2 ½ bigah of land and Chitra's family also has some land, the size of which she is not sure. After completing their studies, Suchitra and Jinu want to be nurses, and Chitra wants to become a teacher.

Abita Beshra is from Janali village, Sapkata zone. She says, "I am now doing my second year of studies, in the 12<sup>th</sup> class, from Jumdwor College. LWS support includes admission fees and books. If not for this support I would have to discontinue my education. My sister studies in class 8. Both my parents died due to disease and now I and my sister stay in my uncles' house. I like to learn Assamese and wish to become a teacher."

#### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

It seems that the project has given educational assistance to deserving students from poor families. The students have dreams to fulfill and may need further guidance to choose the right career so that they may grow professionally and personally.

#### B. TUITION TEACHER, HESPES, GOSSAIGAON

Tarun Kumar is from village Hespes and studying in TDC second year. He conducts tuition classes for 15 students, nine boys and six girls, studying in classes 6 and 7. The tuition takes place from 3.30 pm to 5.00 pm in a primary school building. According to Tarun, the majority of students are weak in mathematics and English. For three days in a week, the tuition is held for class 6 students, and another three days for those studying in class 7. The students pay Rs. 30 per month and LWS contributes Rs. 200/- per student per month.

### C. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION (PPE)

Budh Rai Hasta from village Bodiya Gori, Kochugaon, was interviewed. He has completed class 10 and has no formal training to teach pre-primary students. There are 20 students in the PPE centre where he teaches cleanliness, songs, games etc. The age group of these children is three to five years. He has been given teaching aids such as rope and thread. Sometimes the children in his class fight with each other.

Miss Surajmuni Hasdak is the facilitator for the PPE program in Dakshinmainaguri, Patgaon, started in 2011 in the community centre. She has studied till class 10. There are 23 students (seven girls and 16 boys) between three years to five years. She has no training to teach small children, and teaches alphabets, numbers, games and songs. There are some teaching aids such as books and charts, and games such as foot ball. Class is from 8.00 am to 2.00 pm. Some parents bring their children to the class room, while other children come on their own, walking from their homes to the PPE centre. For Surajmuni, this work is challenging. Some children weep or quarrel with one another. Surajmuni says that she needs training to take care of the children. She wants to learn songs, games and dance, so that she can teach the same to the children. Surajmuni is paid Rs. 600 per month as honorarium. She says that the parents cannot pay fees and some parents would not send their children to the PPE centre if they are asked to pay some money. In this context, the PPE centre is not sustainable. If LWS withdraws its support, the centre will close down.

### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

Starting pre primary school is a good initiative of LWS. The children are brought together and learn together. The teachers are not adequately trained in teaching children, 3 to 5 years old. The teaching aids may also be inadequate. One person may not be able to control a large number of children and provide quality teaching. And with most parents not being able to contribute anything towards fees, the PPE centre is not sustainable.

### **Recommendations**

1. Train the PPE teachers adequately, particularly in child development.
2. Explore the possibility of appointing a care taker for the children, to help the teacher.
3. Explore the possibility of encouraging community members to contribute a small amount of money towards fees.

### D. NON FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE)

LWS has 20 NFE centres in the six zones, with six male and 15 female instructors. The details are given in [Annexure X](#).

NFE teacher Mohila Tudu from Nandalbari, Sidli, was interviewed. She has studied till class 10, and was given a seven-day training, and thereafter refresher courses for similar duration. The NFE had 15 participants, of whom three have left and joined regular school. The NFE classes are held from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. Five NFE members can write their names. In the class, they talk about children, nutrition and SHG contribution. The NFE teacher is paid Rs. 600 per month. The centre was started in the house of teacher, but is now in a common place.

In Kushigaon, the NFE centre had to be discontinued because of irregular attendance. This was because the participants were involved in other chores at home and in the field. They had no time to attend the classes. (Based on information by project staff)

## HEALTH SERVICES

### A. COMMUNITY AWARENESS ON HIV

Community members are given awareness about HIV/AIDs. Government records indicate that HIV cases are being detected in the areas surrounding the project areas. There may be hidden cases of HIV/AIDs in the community. Creating HIV/AIDs awareness will help to curb the spread. Short discussions on HIV are organized, in which the staff talk about HIV and measures to protect themselves from the disease. (Based on information by staff member)

#### *Community Awareness of HIV, Rampur, Kochugaon*

The respondents explained that HIV spreads through unsafe sex, injections and blade. However it is not spread by eating in a common plate along with a person infected with HIV. There is no cure for HIV but it's spread can be controlled through self control.

#### *Community Awareness of HIV, Dakshinmainaguri, Patgaon*

The respondents were community members, SHG and VDC members. They were reluctant to talk about HIV. One of them spoke on behalf of the group saying HIV spreads through infected blood, infected needles and through sexual contact with an HIV infected individual. According to them, the protective measures include use of a new syringe, having a blood test done and also 'controlling' sexual urges. They did not mention the use of condoms.

### B. COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS (CHV)

The VDC selects individuals (male and female) from the community, who are given three days training by medical doctors on common diseases and general treatment, including medication. They are also given a medicine kit. The CHVs are expected to sell the medicine at a minimum price and use the money earned to replenish the medicine supply. CHVs were also expected to help patients in the community to contact the medical doctors. However, due to various reasons this activity was not as successful as expected. (Based on information by project staff)

#### *CHV, Kochugaon*

The CHV is Mr. Barsa Murmu. He received three days training in 2010, and gives medicines for fever, malaria, diarrhea, body pain, burns and skin diseases. He charges 50% of the cost of the medicines, and the remaining 50% from the VDC.

#### *CHV, Hesper, Gossaigaon*

The following three CHVs were interviewed: Mr. Nelson Mohindia of village Hesper (Kormokar community), Mr. Tula Marandi of village Alokjhar (Santhal community), and Mr. David Hemrom of village Sukan (Bawna- Santhal community).

The CHV's were given two days training at Telipara in 2008, by three doctors. They were taught First-Aid and given medical kits, with the understanding that they will give medicines, charge the cost of medicine

and use this money to replenish the medicine kit. The CHV's are charging the cost of medicine and are able to replenish the medical kit. An average of six patients visit the CHV's every day. They are treating patients with minor sicknesses such as fever, body ache and diarrhea, and refer patients to the hospital. The First-Aid kit includes cotton, bandage roll, scissors, thread, antiseptic cream, Burnol, Dettol, and a thermometer.

One of the CHVs showed a note book in which he has written the following medicines he was taught to give: Digene, Metrogyl 400 mg, Spasgun, Merisulide plus, Centroquinol, Aciloc, Almos 500 mg, Paracetamol, Amoxicillin, Cough syrup, Domperidone, Dominoz, Demicin syrup, Mebendazole, Albendazole, and Chloroquine.

#### *CHV, Balajan*

Mr. Zermiah Soren, 19 years old, was interviewed. He lives in village Borsangaon and has studied till class 10. Soren attended three days CHV training in Sidli in 2010. The CHV training gave him information on diarrhea, burns, fever, malaria, headache, stomach pain etc. The CHV was given a medical kit and he distributed medicines free of cost, and thus was unable to replenish the medical kit. Now no one comes to the CHV, and people prefer to go to the Government supported Asha health worker.

#### *CHV, Jakatia, Sapkata*

The CHV from village Jakatia, Mr. Shiv Lall Murmu, was interviewed. He was appointed CHV in 2010, and received training twice, for two days and one day. He gives medicine for body ache, stomach ache, headache, malaria, etc. An average of 12 patients visit him every day. Some are healed and some are referred to the hospital. If the patient is serious, an ambulance is requested by dialing telephone No 108. The hospital is four kilometres away.

#### *SHG Member Supportive of ASHA Worker, Gossaigon*

Sukhila Tudu is a member of an SHG, and is supporting the Government health worker (ASHA worker) in promoting immunization. She encourages mothers to take their children to Gosaigaon PHC for immunization. In Hesper village, there are 86 children under five years of age who are receiving immunization. LWS has encouraged her to be supportive of the Asha worker.

#### *Women's Health Issues, Balajan*

The women may have felt awkward to discuss women's health problems in the larger group. They said that one woman and her child had died after delivery in the community. For delivery they go to Balajan hospital or Karigaon, which is 15 minutes away.

### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

The community members have increased awareness of HIV. However, it seems that they do not wish to mention the use of condoms as a protective measure for AIDs, possibly because of the sensitive nature of the issue and the presence of other community members in the discussion.

CHV training did not work well because it was short term and there is a lack of adequate referral services, indicating the need for linkages between the CHV and available medical services. Male CHVs may not necessarily be approached by women having health problems.

The project promotes herbal medicines as well as allopathic medicine through the health check-up camps and CHVs. This conflicting approach to health and healing needs to be clarified.

## **6. ACCESS TO EARNING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH FARM, NON-FARM AND SKILL BASED ACTIVITIES**

### ***Information about livelihood opportunities based on interaction with project staff***

LIVESTOCK - Pigs, goats, bullocks and cows are provided to the community based organizations (CBOs), to enable them to supplement their income through the rearing and selling of livestock and their produce. Community members are familiar with traditional animal husbandry practices. Most poor families cannot afford bullocks, making it difficult for them to plough their land for cultivation, to the extent of mortgaging their land. Therefore, bullocks were given to some VDCs so that poor families can rent them for cultivation.

Male pigs older than a year can be sold for around Rs. 5000. More than half of this amount is given to the beneficiary who has reared the pig. The rest of the amount goes to the VDC fund. Female pigs usually give birth to five to 10 piglets once in a year. These are divided between the VDC and the beneficiary.

Two young goats are given at a time. After five months, a young goat can be sold for Rs. 600 to Rs. 700, or even more. Female goats usually give two lambs, two to three times a year. They require minimum investment as fodder is widely available.

MUSHROOMS - Mushroom cultivation can be easily taken up by women's groups with short term training. It requires less investment, has a good market, and is a profitable business. Two or three days training is provided to self-help group members and support is given for buying mushroom seeds. Women's groups have been trained to construct a mushroom hut and cultivate the seeds. Mushrooms are ready within one month, and sold in the local market. One kilogram of mushroom is sold for anywhere between Rs. 60 to Rs. 80. Approximately 10 to 12 kg of mushroom is cultivated at a time. However the cultivation is seasonal, during November to March.

DRIVING - A three months four-wheeler driving course was sponsored for young unemployed males in the community. LWSI also helped them to procure driving licenses. Some youth (around 30%) are now employed as drivers immediately after the course. Others are in the process of searching for similar employment.

SERICULTURE - Bodo families have traditionally practiced sericulture in their homes. Through manual weaving, they produced the *dokna* (women's wrap-around garment), the *gumcha* (wrap-around garment for males), shawls and bedsheets from the silk processed from cocoons of the *Endi* worm. *Endi* is a local word for the mulberry tree. Silk worms are gathered and reared in the home. They are fed with mulberry leaves which are widely available locally. The worms grow and wrap themselves with a brown coloured, silky cocoon which is ready in about a month. The worms are then released from their cocoons, which are sold for around Rs. 300 per kg. The worms are either sold or eaten. Worms are sold for Rs.100 per kg. Garments made from these cocoons are highly valued in the market and are long lasting. A shawl made of *Endi* worm silk may cost around Rs. 2000.

### ***Piggery***

- The Hasani group has 11 members. They were given 14 piglets by LWS. Three of these are male and 11 are female. They said that the reason they chose piggery was that other groups were already rearing goats. They would give the members one piglet each. The remaining three piglets would be given to the President and Secretary of the group. The members would rear the pig and when it was sold, she would take 50% and the other 50% would go to the group. At present, all the pigs are alive. If sold after one year, the pigs would sell for Rs. 7,000 each. A pig gives birth to approximately six to eight piglets. The group does not face much difficulty in

rearing the pigs. They are kept in the house and fed leftover food, boiled *kochu* (yam) which is available locally and paddy husk.

- The Marshal group in Kochugaon received 15 piglets from LWS and 13 of them were sold for Rs. 3000 each. The group says that some of the piglets died because they were sick.
- The Ipilbaha and Chandurbaba groups of Dakshinmainaguri, Patgaon, have started piggery. Both groups received 10 piglets each from LWS. The Ipilbaha group gave all the piglets to one of the group members to take care of. However, four piglets died due to unknown reasons. The group then distributed the remaining six piglets to other group members. The Chandurbaba group has 10 piglets, all alive. The piglets are small and need to grow sufficiently to be sold. Group members said that there are problems in feeding the piglets. The *kochu* (yam) plants which are used to feed the pigs have dried up and they have to buy husk to feed them.
- The Anjali group, Gosaigaon, have received 13 piglets from LWS. Two of these died, although with help from LWS, they had got a veterinary surgeon to treat the sick animals. The piglets are small and were received two months ago from LWS. The women were able to name some of the common diseases affecting the piglets, such as loose stools, vomiting etc.
- In Goregaon Salbari, Sidli, the LWS gave 15 pigs to the group. Two pigs died. The group members with their own money bought two pigs. The group has given these pigs to someone else for rearing. From the sale proceeds of the pigs, the SHG gets 20 % of the profit, while the person rearing the pigs gets 80% of the profit. The group feels that pig rearing is a profitable business.

### **Bullocks**

The Mother Sonia group, Kochugaon, received bullocks from LWSI.

### **Goats**

- The Kanchan group, Kochugaon, were given 17 goats, of which six died of sickness and bloated stomach. Now the livestock is insured.
- The Mashal group of North Nanglabedi, Sidli, was given goats. However, they were not given any training on rearing goats and their diseases. They are not aware about cattle insurance and its benefit.

### **Cows**

Two cows each were given to the Champarvati group and to Marsal group, Balajan. The Marsal group sells at least a liter and a half of milk from the cows everyday @ Rs. 40 per litre. The Champarvati group gives the cows on rent for ploughing and charge 320 kg of paddy for this service.

### **Agricultural Labour and Cultivation**

- The Saganan group, Gosaigaon, do labour work in the fields of the community members. Ten women earn Rs. 250 per day, per woman, for labour work, which they deposit in the bank account. They also collect Rs. 50 per month per person. However, this amount varies depending on the current financial status of the members. The total group fund is Rs. 4500.
- The Marshal group, Gosaigaon, have taken land on lease and are doing paddy cultivation. At times they do labour work in the neighbouring village. At present the group savings is Rs. 1700.

- The Phulomi group, Gosaigaon, have Bodo and Santhal members since they live in the same village. They have taken leased land of 5 ½ biga and started jute cultivation. They were able to produce 280 kg and earned Rs. 18000 from this initiative.
- The women's group in Basungaon, Balajan, do agricultural labour for other families in the village, earning Rs. 100 per day, per person. During harvest time, they get work for at least two days in a month. This seems to be a traditional practice. So far, they have collected Rs. 6000.

### **Mushroom Cultivation**

- Salomi Soren of Judasi Garh group, Kochugaon, says, "I have learned to cultivate mushrooms. The training was for one day. The mushroom takes 20 days to grow. I felt happy to teach others how to grow mushrooms." This group of 20 people has received support from LWS to cultivate mushrooms. They earned Rs. 2000 from the business, which they used for giving a loan to one of the members. The interest rate is 20% for those outside the group.
- Group members of Goregaon Salbari, Sidli Zone, also received training in growing mushrooms. Group members said that they will get mushroom seeds from LWS, and from the profit earned they will give loan to group members.
- Ehiri Pipri SHG, North Nanglabadi, Sidli has 15 members. The group was given one day training on growing mushrooms. However, their business was not successful. The group had followed the procedure for planting mushrooms. They had made a hut where mushrooms can be grown, boiled the straw, layered the mushroom seeds in the straw, and put it in a plastic bag. The plastic bag needs to be cut and removed as soon as the mushrooms start sprouting. However, they did not cut and remove the plastic bag on time, which is why the business failed. The group members said that they will not do mushroom business again as they have inadequate knowledge about mushroom growing.

### **Sericulture**

- Group members of Goregaon Salbari, Sidli Zone, received training from LWS for rearing *Endi* worm. This business was not very useful for the group. In one month, they earned a profit of Rs. 400. Group members say that it is difficult to collect leaves to feed the *Endi* worms, and feel discouraged, saying they will not do *Endi* worm business in the future.
- The Anjali, Gosaigaon group has started *Endi* Worm cultivation on their own initiative, without the support of LWS.
- The Phulmoni, Gosaigaon group has also taken up *Endi* worm cultivation and have earned Rs. 2000/- from selling the cocoons and worms. Some of the cocoons are yet to be sold. From the profits earned, they plan to start vegetable cultivation with the help of seeds provided by LWR.

### **Vocational Training for Youth**

- Darota Rava, Kochugaon was interviewed. He has studied till 10<sup>th</sup> class, and learned driving in the 2010 with help from LWS. He contributed Rs. 1500 towards his training in driving, which was for three months. After the training, he has been employed as a driver by a local private car owner for Rs. 3000 per month.

- Mr. Sujit Hasda of Hecpec, Gosaigaon, is 23 years old. He was given support by LWS to learn driving. Sujit has studied till class 9<sup>th</sup>. He learnt motor driving at Bhola Nath Driving School in Bhawragudi. Sujit contributed Rs.1700 towards the training. The rest of the expenses were paid by LWS. The duration of training was three months. However, Sujit does not have a driving license so far and is yet to be employed as driver.
- Mr. Nicholos Soren of Borsangaon, Balajan, was helped to learn four-wheel driving at the Bholenath driving school, Gossaigaon. Nicholos has studied till class 10<sup>th</sup> and has been employed in Meghalya in a private organization, earning Rs. 4000 per month. His father Nicholos Soren was interviewed.

#### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

The rearing of livestock seemed to be more profitable. However death and sickness of animals resulted in losses. The possibility of training SHGs on preventive measures, identifying symptoms of illnesses and simple treatment for sick animals can be explored. Mushroom cultivation, *Endi* worm and vocational training for youth had mixed results. Adequate planning needs to be done before initiating business ventures, including feasibility studies and marketing opportunities. According to the project manager, other than Ehiri Pipri SHG, North Nangalbari, Sidli zone, most groups are doing good mushroom cultivation and *Endi* worm, and earning a good amount of money. The demand of mushroom and *Endi* worm is also very high in the local market.

### **7. SUSTAINABILITY OF DIFFERENT INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE PROJECT**

#### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

The grain bank can become sustainable if properly managed. With help from the community, building of the community centre was a good sustainable initiative. Providing bore-wells and dug wells are also sustainable. However, it is difficult to establish the sustainability of NFE and PPE centres, which can become sustainable if VDC/SHG takes over and mobilizes resources to meet the expenses required to run them. The CHV's training and experience does not qualify them to provide meaningful health care assistance, and the medical kit given to them did not work well. Neither this initiative, nor the computer training was sustainable.

### **8. MANAGERIAL CAPACITY OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURES PROMOTED DURING THE PROJECT PERIOD**

#### **COMMENTS ON SUSTAINABILITY BY WOMEN'S SHGS**

- Five self-help groups from Rampur, Kochugaon, said that they can continue without the support of LWS. However, the Rampur group said that they need LWS support in training and enhancing knowledge. They expect more cooperation and assistance from LWS.
- Three SHGs from Patgaon confidently said that they could continue functioning without the support of LWS in the future.

- Most women from the SHGs in Gossaigaon said that they could continue working without LWS support.

#### SUSTAINABILITY OF CBOs – ASSESSMENT OF STAFF

The project staff made a rough assessment of the number of VDCs which can continue working even after LWS withdraws from the project. According to them, 69% of the VDCs they have helped to constitute can function independently.

Zone	Total number of VDCS	VDCs which can continue to function independently without support of LWS	% of VDCs which can function independently without support of LWS
Gossaigaon	29	15	52
Kochugaon	39	30	77
Balajan	32	25	78
Sapkata	28	21	75
Patgaon	34	20	59
Sidli	38	27	71
	200	138	Average 69

#### EVALUATORS' COMMENT

Establishing community based organizations, such as SHG and VDC, was a good initiative. Such CBOs can become sustainable. Some are active and others may take time to become active. With focused intervention to strengthen their capacity, the VDCs and SHGs can become sustainable. The project has made attempts to build the managerial capacity of social structures. However, in our opinion, the managerial capacity has not developed adequately enough to function independently.

## **9. INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IN THE PROJECT**

### **MEETING WITH CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

In all, there are 11 persons in the Central Committee, which has representatives of the Bodos and Santhals. There are three Bishops, one MLA, four church leaders, two teachers and one homemaker. The committee members felt that development work needs to be started in other parts of the lower Assam area. However, the project focuses only on riot affected people. It is important to develop a strategy to go to non-riot-affected areas for development work. In those areas also there will definitely be people who are riot affected.

Most goals of the project have been achieved, while others have yet to be achieved. Therefore, long term intervention is needed and it will be beneficial to the community. The Central Committee members feel that the staff should identify burning issues and find ways to respond to these issues.

Training is an important component and should be given priority. Training of staff, committee members, central committee members and the community is important. We acknowledge that PPE training and CHV training is inadequate. The staff capacity to respond to development issues need to be enhanced. They have the vision for development, but their knowledge may not be adequate. It is also important to pay attention to the competence of the Central Committee members, which needs to be strengthened. Experts can be invited to conduct seminars for the Committee. The Central Committee members are visiting field areas, but they should visit when the staff is at work, to observe their effectiveness. So far, we are happy that we are able to supervise the work. We feel involved. We are monitoring the work and provide guidance. We are privileged to do this. In the future, emphasis should be on development work. The possibility of appointing Christian staff in key positions can be explored. LWS should consider congregation based development programs in the future.

## **MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS**

### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

The meeting was held with some Government officials<sup>4</sup> who are supportive of the project. The medical doctor who attended pointed out that he makes his services available to the project by conducting medical camps and training the project staff in primary health care. The scientist from the Government agriculture department participates in agriculture activities of the project and helps in soil testing.

## **10. MANAGEMENT AND USE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES**

### **EVALUATORS' COMMENT**

The project staff was able to mobilize Government resources as well as local resources. The local volunteers play an important role in project implementation activities. At the local level, the village headman has been involved in VDC activities. The VDC was empowered to mobilize resources from the Government, other charitable organizations, agriculture department and forest department. There is a great possibility of mobilizing more resources for community development.

Whether the financial resources provided by Normisjon has been used and managed well.

In order to respond to this question we raised query with indicators of good project management practices which is given in the [Annexure XII](#). The project management team shared with us the process of financial management and the documents shared with us indicates good financial management and controls. The funds were utilized for the purpose for which it was given. The community contributes in terms of money and in kind for some of the activities which makes the activity cost effective and enhances the community ownership. The cost of implementing the project is estimated to be 28% by the project management team which is good. Any deviation more than 10 % has been approved by the donor partners. The internal as well as external (statutory) audit has been done. The organizational

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<sup>4</sup> Names of the Government officials are given in [Annexure XI](#)

procurement policy is in line with DWS/Geneva procurement manual. Proper checks and balances have been practiced and anti corruption policy of donor partner has been accepted.

## **V. LESSONS LEARNT**

During the process of evaluation, the staff identified the following lessons learnt which may be useful in the implementation of the project during the next phase.

1. Before facilitating a process of groups availing loans from the bank, it is essential to strengthen the capacity of the groups to repay the loans. Non-repayment of loans may result in disintegration of the groups.
2. Repeated awareness building on important issues is essential for the community to comprehend and apply it in their life.
3. Insurance of livestock is necessary to protect the community from loss of animals due to sudden death.
4. Before taking new initiatives, it is essential to explore the availability of raw materials and the feasibility of the initiative. (Vermi-compost was started, but earth worms were not available, therefore the community was encouraged to start compost pit instead of vermi compost.)
5. Adults are motivated and learn more by seeing a successful initiative and effectively learn from co workers who are at the same level. Example: The self-help group members who were unable to maintain clear and good records of their activities were taken to another self-help group where the records were maintained well. This initiative resulted in the first self-help group, taken for the exposure visit, maintaining their records in a better way.
6. No business can be successful without exploring the market for the same business. For example, the business of *Endi* worm was not very successful due to lack of marketing opportunities.
7. To minimize the risk of loss due to death of livestock, it is essential to have adequate knowledge about animal diseases and good contact with the local veterinary doctor for quick treatment of sick animals.
8. Too many sporadic activities may not necessarily create a significant impact on the communities at large.
9. The feasibility of intervention co-relates with the criteria for selection of villages for inclusion in the program. For example, the criteria for selection may be “riot affected village”, but this should be seen in the context of needy, poor and vulnerable communities, and the feasibility of reaching out to these communities.
10. The CHVs training was of short term duration (three days) which did not necessarily equip them to adequately fulfill their responsibilities. It is also important to select the right person with

interest and aptitude for the role of CHV. Providing medicines on credit to the community through the medicine kit did not work well.

## **VI. CHALLENGES THAT MIGHT CONFRONT THE PROGRAM**

1. Relief staff oriented to relief and charity may find it difficult to comprehend what development work is all about and fail to implement the program in a sustainable way.
2. The existing staff in the program is drawn from time to time to implement relief work elsewhere. This may have adverse implications for implementing the program and meeting the set targets.
3. The riot affected community may find it difficult to accept the shift from being at the receiving end to generating their own resources and moving towards interdependency.
4. The existing political instability, insurgency, and intervention of vested interests may cause hindrance in program implementation, resulting in delayed development initiatives.
5. Maintaining of SHG records, where all the members are illiterate, poses a major challenge to enhancing the effectiveness of the group.
6. It is difficult to help youth to channelize their energy towards positive community building initiatives, rather than getting involved in local politics and other means of quick gain.
7. The restored peace may get disturbed again due to 'cold war' and the unseen forces that work towards communal disharmony, resulting in riots again.
8. The attempt by communities to encroach in forest areas not only has an adverse impact on the environment, but it creates conflict with the Government and other authorities. This may possibly result in flaring up of communal feelings and disturb the peace. The Government has initiated a plan to remove these communities from the forest area. However they do not have a good plan for relocating them.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Reconsider changing the existing plan for the years 2012 and 2013.
2. Focus on strengthening the capacity of community based organizations to take over and sustain the program. This can be done in the area of keeping records, maintaining books of account, developing rules and regulations of CBO's ( Constitution), resource mobilization skills, public relations, problem solving, important laws relating to banking, government policies on development, environment policies, water related issues, certain provisions of Indian penal code , land related matters.

3. SHGs and VDCs do not have written down rules and regulations except resolutions. Consider developing proper documentation on the rules and regulations governing the CBO's.
4. Traditional methods of giving training should be replaced with experiential learning and good follow up. Develop these training modules on a priority basis.
5. Trainers should be carefully selected, having adequate facilitation skill. Give less emphasis on the lecture method.
6. CHV's should preferably be females, with adequate training and continuing education program, and with good referral system. Promote herbal medicine through CHV. CHV should not provide antibiotics. Develop a formal training curriculum for CHV's.
7. PPE training and NFE training should be made substantial, adequate and relevant. These should be run by the VDCs, with the support of SHG members. Train preferably married women if possible.
8. Develop a proper curriculum for NFE and PPE.
9. Focus on development issues and enhancing the community's participation in moving from dependency to interdependency. Conduct programs to empower the community to be able to mobilize resources for the common benefit.
10. Provide in-depth orientation and exposure to the Central Advisory Committee members on development issues and initiatives.
11. Strengthen the capacity of key project staff on development concepts, particularly building their people skills, facilitation skills and knowledge of approaches to community development. The staff have individually identified their learning needs as follows:

a. Project related knowledge and skills:

Disaster Management (1), Facilitating change in the community (4), Legal Aid, Right to Information and how to help people lobby for their rights (18 mentions), Livelihood ,sustainable development , animal husbandry, agriculture development , giving Entrepreneurship training. (8 mentions)

b. Management related skills:

Project Management (18), Communication (4),HRD ( 4), PIME ( 2), Reporting system ( 2), Documentation ( 2), Situation analysis, Micro-planning, Problem management, Record keeping, Motivating others, Changing self , Spoken English (3), Computers (10) , How to do networking (3 mentions)

c. Community development issues :

Right based approach, Right to food security climate change and Environment, Peace building, Microcredit for SHG , Leadership training , Right to Education, Capacity building of CBOs such as VDCs and SHGs, Government schemes on food and social security (34)

- d. Increase the number of female staff in every zone to balance the number of male staff, and to reach out effectively to women beneficiaries.
- e. Change the role and functions of existing community volunteers to ultimately facilitate the process of taking over.
- f. Working in line with Government officials is highly important because NGOs complement the efforts of the Government. LWS has a good relationship with Government officials, who at times participate in various health and agriculture related activities of LWS. Government health workers, such as Asha workers, paramedical and medical staff, may closely be involved in project programs on health. Secondly, the support and services of the Government agriculture department can be utilized, such as soil testing. Thirdly, the resources and materials from the Government's educational department can be obtained to benefit the communities.

## **VIII. SUGGESTED EXIT STRATEGY**

Beginning from January 2012 to 2013, start the process of helping the community to take over the program and implement it with their own efforts. This can be done in the following ways:

1. It is suggested that the VDC be encouraged and prepared to take over the program. The VDC can be enabled for doing this by building their capacities in key areas such as leadership, teamwork, decision making, problem solving, monitoring, and essential management skills.
2. Give priority to strengthening the capacity of the VDCs in comprehending development issues, effectively mobilizing resources and in project implementation.
3. Self-help groups should be strengthened to manage the groups effectively as well as to effectively network with the VDC in implementing future programs.
4. Make plans in 2012 to empower the VDC and SHG on a priority basis and implement only those major programs which are sustainable, such as community centres.
5. In 2013, provide support to the VDCs for six months, with close observation and frequent visits. For the next three months, minimize the frequency of visits, and for another six months watch from a distance.

## **IX. THE WAY FORWARD**

The project areas are geographically scattered, making it difficult to follow up and implement the activities effectively. In the future, greater impact can be achieved by taking up fewer communities and focusing on specific areas. According to the rights based approach, the project should reach out to the rights holders and help them access their rights and fulfill their responsibilities as rights holders. The rights based approach also advocates that the project should influence policy makers at the level of the duty bearers. Ways and means can be explored to support the duty bearers so that they may effectively perform their duties. However, due to the current political situation, there may be limitations to access duty bearers and influence policy making.

For the years 2014 onwards develop a concept paper on development initiatives, on the basis of which write an integrated project proposal with strong linkages between goals, objectives and activities, incorporating the following. Before

- a. Geographically consolidate the program for greater effectiveness. Work in the selected existing project area and select additional project area with close proximity.
- b. Strengthen the changing role of existing community based volunteers as implementers of the program, with more responsibilities. In this context the full time LWS staff will have reducing role in implementing the project which will ultimately result into community taking over the project. Incorporate exit strategy in the prospective project i.e.2014 onwards.
- c. Ensure that the activities are not too varied, but are clearly focused, result and impact oriented.
- d. Work with existing and recently started CBOs (2009) : SHGs and VDCs and strengthen their capacity to manage the CBO, mobilize the resources and work proactively.
- e. The LWS project implementation methods need to be reviewed by improving the follow up of activities, documentation of project activities, and developing important policies such as child protection policy, policy on environment, policy on empowerment of women etc.
- f. Work closely with government line agencies and find out ways and means of strengthening the capacity of government at local level to perform their duties effectively.

## **FOREST DWELLERS**

The issue of forest dwellers sustainable program is a complex one. This matter needs to be addressed in the context of Government policies on environment and forest protection. The Government has been taking strong action against encroachers on Government forest lands, even to the extent of burning their homes. Rehabilitation plans may run into various difficulties. There is also the humanitarian aspect, where these communities have no secure homes, no civic amenities such as potable water, roads,

electricity, medical care or education. They live deep in the jungle, where no roads, facilities or services exist. Therefore, in this context, we suggest the following:

- a. Conduct an action-based research, with the co-operation of the Government, to understand the environmental and legal issues involved, the struggles that these communities are going through, and the possibilities that can be considered for their sustainable development.
- b. The research process may give opportunities to make the communities aware of their rights as well as their responsibilities, and encourage them to resolve issues in co-operation with the Government authorities.
- c. During the research process, identify potential persons within these communities who can be provided with life relevant skills, including entrepreneurship development, to empower them to explore livelihood opportunities in and around geographical locations which do not violate Government environmental norms.
- d. Some of these locally trained persons can be encouraged to become resource persons for their own communities, to train others with the life skills and vocational capacities that they have acquired.
- e. The project implementers of such a sustainable development project for these communities will require special skills and expertise.

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