

Students contribute towards backward village



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Jacob Islary 28 July 2016 7431 views

A team of Indian and Irish students from Assam [Don Bosco](#) University ([ADBU](#)), [India](#) and University College Dublin Volunteers Overseas (UCDVO), Ireland are doing a yeoman service in the backward and less privileged villages of Sonapur located in the outskirts of the [city](#) of Guwahati. The team comprises of thirteen Indian and [ten](#) Irish students and is a part of the International [Student](#) Volunteer Exchange Programme between the two institutions of repute.

‘The programme aims at promoting understanding of multicultural issues and appreciation of cultures, practices and traditions at the global [level](#) by creating and providing an environment where volunteers from other nationalities interact, stay and work together in [community](#) with its beauty and challenges’ says Jacob Islary, Asst. Professor of [ADBU](#) and coordinator of the programme. ‘We adhere to the principles and values of participatory development process and take into consideration the involvement of the [community](#) members [as](#) essential stake holders in the process of social and [community](#) development’ adds Dr. Riju Sharma, Head and Director School of Humanities and [Social](#) Sciences.

The students repaired and renovated five anganwadi centers by fitting new GI sheets, painting colourful murals on the walls, provided fans and fitted the floors with vinyl and ser flooring, besides painting murals in two schools and reinstalling a hand pump which is the only source of drinking water to about 200 families of Kachari basti near Sonapur.

The team also organised workshops on health & hygiene, adolescent health, cooperative movement, livelihoods, and mother & child health care for the villagers, and conducted science experiments in the high schools of Kamarkuchi, Sonapur.

While for Ms. Rajkumari Mahato an anganwadi worker of Kailashpur in

Sonapu 'the anganwadi center has received another life from its brokenness' and expresses happiness 'of moving back to the center from the [temple](#) varendha' where she used to organise the anganwadi programmes, for Ms. Sita Rongpi another anganwadi worker of Jargaon village in Kamarkuchi her 'after the colourful renovation of the anganwadi center [level](#) of happiness in teaching increases [as](#) she sees the anganwadi children running and pointing at the colourful walls and read the alphabets and count the numbers.'

According to Ms. [Krishna](#) Boro a youth [leader](#) in Kachari basti 'the reinstalling of water pump is going to reduce the incidents of various waterborne diseases esp. diarrhea in the locality.'

Mr. Colm Flynn an Irish [student](#) commenting on experience of the programme proudly declares that 'the programme has given experiences that have left imprints to last forever in my life' and according to Mr. Mrinal Basumatary and Indian [student](#) 'the experience of the programme has given and understanding to look development from a multidimensional perspective which will help in future programme and project planning.'

The exchange programme is in its third year and has renovated thirteen anganwadi centers, painted murals in three schools, installed a hand pump besides setting up of village groups and movements for sustainable livelihoods and a number of awareness programmes and campaigns through various medium like street plays, puppetry and grassroots comics. The fund of the programme is raised entirely by the students themselves and is audited by a Chartered Accountant. Currently a field survey study is being carried out for planning further projects.



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BY JACOB ISLARY

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