

EC Partners

Government of Bangladesh (Ministry of CHT Affairs)

UNDP and 20 NGOs in the field

Facts and Figures

- EC contribution: € 23 million
- Project duration: 2005-2010
- Additional € 24 million foreseen for 2011-2013
- 5 000 small projects (EUR 14 million) designed and implemented by communities
- 450 projects managed directly by women
- 2700 communities managed by Village Committees



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"We, women of Haridayal, used to be very shy and excluded from participation in taking decisions affecting our community. But now all this changed, we can stand up and raise our voices."

Women of Haridayal village in Khagrachari District of Chittagong Hill Tracts



Context

The Chittagong Hill Tracts region is a geographically diverse area inhabited by eleven ethnic groups with different cultures and languages. A twenty-five year long conflict among the local tribes additionally impoverished the area. It ended in 1998 with the signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord broadly recognised as a unique exercise of democracy and commitment to reconciliation by local tribes and the government of Bangladesh. The Accord also opened the way to development by allowing, for the first time, actions in support of local communities to empower them to become the agents of their own development.

Objective

- To promote sustainable development and long term peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region
- To decrease gender inequalities by expanding the role of women in decision making

Impact

- Strengthened stabilization in the region
- Ensured confidence among people and institutions
- Increased credibility of local institutions
- Strengthened trust, negotiation skills and networking among communities

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EuropeAid

Things have changed for the better for women in Haridayal Village

Anti Chakma knows the obstacles women face when participating in decision-making within their communities. *"I remembers being asked as a small girl why I needed education"*, she says. Things have changed for the better recently for Anti Chakma and for all the women living in Haridayal Village. Since the formation of the **Community Committee**, she and others have taken an active part in all aspects of community decision-making. Anti Chakma, herself, was recently elected secretary of the Village Committee and guides the consensual decision making process and participates in planning and executing community projects, including cow-rearing, horticulture, the creation of a rice-bank and the installation of latrines. She is also an active participant in the village women's development groups, which will soon sell lychee seedlings to the Village Community for use in the community fruit garden. The changes enjoyed by women go beyond the profits earned by the project activities. Before the project started, women were not consulted about any important community decision. Now, they stand up and raise their voices.



Women-led group formulating a project