

## Repatriation of Internally Displaced People – BRUs

**Aizawl, Mizoram:** IGSSS along with Jana Unnayan Samity – Tripura is implementing a programme on repatriation of internally displaced people - Brus in Mizoram and Tripura. The programme is supported by the European Union (EU). The Bru community was displaced from Mizoram following the ethnic conflicts with the Mizos in 1997 and since then they are sheltered in camps in North Tripura districts.

For the past three years the programme has been advocating and lobbying for legislative reforms, repatriation and networking with the District Administration in affected areas of Tripura and Mizoram. The advocacy efforts bore significant results, leading to the resumption of repatriation of Bru refugees from relief camps from North Tripura to Mizoram supported by both the Mizoram and Tripura Governments. The process has begun from September 30, 2013 and 750 families in subsequent batches will be repatriated to Mizoram.

Prior to the repatriation process, a four member delegation representing Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF), JUST and IGSSS met Human Rights Commission bodies in Delhi in late September. The meeting was focused on providing access to basic rights and entitlements to the repatriated families once they go back to their own homeland.

### **Meeting with National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)**

The delegation met Ms. Dipa Dixit, member of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), and briefed her about the need to provide adequate education opportunities for the children who are residing in the rehabilitation camps. They also advocated the need for issuance of birth certificate for the children, addressing their health concerns, facilitating water sanitation needs and ensuring food security for the children residing in camps and also for the children belonging to the repatriated families.



- 750 Bru families to be repatriated to Mizoram starting from September 30, 2013
- A Delegation led by IGSSS, Jana Unnayan Samiti, Tripura (JUST) and Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum met National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and National Commission for Minorities and Other Human Rights bodies in Delhi

Ms. Dipa Dixit intimated the team that all the matters raised concerning the development of children will be assessed by the regional arm of the body. The team also met Ms. Ritu Narang, in charge of NCPDR – Northeast, she too assured to take up the concerned issues with District Magistrate, Dharmanagar, Tripura.

## Meeting with National Commission for Minorities

The interaction with Mr. K N Daruwala and Ms. Kar, members of National Commission for Minorities (NCM) resulted in forging collaboration with the NCM to carry out a study in Mizoram and Tripura to bring out a comprehensive report on the existing situation of the Bru families and steps to be taken towards improving their conditions.

## Meeting with Special Commissioner to the Supreme Court on Right to Food

Mr. Harsh Mandar, Special Commissioner to the Supreme Court on Right to Food assured that the cases pertaining to the Bru families and their issues such as lack of access to the benefits of social security schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Public Distribution Scheme (PDS) and Mid Day Meal (MDM) scheme will be taken up with the State Governments.

## Meeting with Human Rights Law Network (HRLN)

Mr. Colin Gonsalvis, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India and Head-Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), India office, during his meeting with the team concluded that the cases of deprivation of rights and entitlements of Bru families can be filed in the Supreme Court for hearing.



*Bru Families living in temporary relief camps*



## Health Camp for the Homeless

**Bangalore:** IGSSS organized a Health camp in collaboration with Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) health department to provide free medical checkup and health related information to 90 CityMakers (Homeless People). Mr. Syed Hashim from BBMP Health Department was present on the occasion.



## Turning Point

**A Case Study from Youth Development Initiative of IGSSS**

Twenty two year old Seiphu Khongsai hails from Simol Village in Senapati district, Manipur. Seiphu lives with his parents and a brother and two sisters. He was born and brought up in a very poor family, he wanted to study in a good school like his friends but his parents were unable to support his education.

In course of time he grew very frustrated and started developing a negative attitude towards life. He started drinking and quarrelling and occasionally beating up his family members. His studies also took a beating and he failed in his Higher Secondary examination.

During this time under the youth development intervention a livelihood programme was introduced in Simol and its neighbouring villages. He received information about this programme but was reluctant to participate. Finally motivated by his friends' experiences, he decided to participate in the livelihood training on poultry farming. He was really inspired to see that how youth eke out a living by adopting livelihood practices such as poultry farming and mushroom cultivation.

He also participated in the life skill education training conducted as part of the programme. He was trained on the World Health Organisation (WHO) modules based on the ten core life skills - self awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication skills, interpersonal relationship, problem solving skills, decision making skills, coping with emotions and coping with stress. This training became the turning point in his life.

He realized his fault and decided to stop drinking and quarreling with family members. Seipu further started mushroom cultivation for the purpose of his family's consumption. He is now able to control his emotions, realized his strengths and weakness and has engaged himself in community development activities like cleaning village roads and constructing dust bin pith etc.

Seipu reappeared and successfully cleared his Higher Secondary Examination. He is now pursuing Graduation from DM college of Arts, Imphal. He was recently elected as Information Secretary of SIMOL Youth club and has also become an active volunteer under the Youth Development Programme of IGSSS.

## Annual Youth Convention



**Srinagar:** The Annual Youth Convention was organized on 26th September, 2013 in Srinagar. The day saw the members sharing their talent through many ways like poetry, photo presentations, and video and photo documentaries. The convention celebrated the debates, discussions, differences, opinions and diversity of the target beneficiaries under the programme.

The Youth Action for Peace (YAP) primarily aims at mobilizing the vulnerable youth and enhancing their awareness contextually to services, entitlements and Rights. This is realized through promotion and formation of Youth Groups, inculcating positive thinking among the youth and engaging them in socio-economic development.



## FRIDAY DAY FRITTERS

IGSSS, in partnership with Apollo Foundation, is implementing integrated livelihood development initiative in five villages in Baroda. As part of this initiative, an exposure visit and training on Poultry Farming was organised for 228 women. Around 20 Women trainees also received certificates on successful completion of the training.

### READER'S COMMENTS on IGSSS WEEKLY ISSUE 4:

"All the 4 pages are quite appealing, especially the picture on last page, which emboldens the credibility of IGSSS. Picking clue from this, I feel, IGSSS may like to include Outcome as an essential part of each of the stories covered in the newsletter. I feel this way, we shall be able to complete the loop of the initiatives IGSSS has taken/ is taking as a part of their vision."

Dr. Govind Bansal - DAPCU Coordinator, Department of AIDS Control, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

"Thanks so much for keeping me abreast of all the eventful happenings at the IGSSS directed towards building a more humane and just society. The intervention at Jhabua was for me a walk down memory lane."

Ms. Bernadette Pimenta - IGSSS Board Member