

Volunteers bring change

The Empowering Left Behind Minority Communities programme in Bangladesh is working to help marginalised groups to access rights and services. Volunteers from different groups who have been excluded from the country's development have received training from Christian Aid's partner organisation Nagorik Uddyog. They have been working in the community to help people understand how they can get help for their needs but also advocate for their communities to local government.

Bhabatosh Bairagi is 28 and lives with his father and younger brother and he is a volunteer in his village. He says, 'When the government declares any weather emergency, we announce those in our area and help people to move to safe places. We have done many works in the Covid-19 pandemic. We have distributed masks in the locality and helped people to maintain safe distancing.'

This kind of practical work can really help to get crucial safety information out to communities who might otherwise struggle to access these messages.

Bairagi also helps members of his community to access government services, and this is work that can have a lot of barriers. To start with, people need to apply for government ID cards and Bairagi helps people to apply for these online. Some people are reluctant to give their personal information to the government and can be understandably suspicious. Bairagi explains the benefits of having official ID and the services they can access with this card.

Since his training with Nagorik Uddyog, Bairagi has some really clear stories of how he has helped people



Bhabatosh Bairagi has been volunteering with the Nagorik Uddyog working in dalit communities.

in his community. A child in his village struggles a lot with their vision, especially at night but the family didn't have the financial resources to help. Bairagi was able to help the family to get additional government income from social services to help with any additional needs and this has made a huge difference.

Bairagi has also helped older people to apply for an allowance from the government that they are entitled to but didn't know about or access.

These volunteers are able to help because they are trusted members of the community who have the trust of the people there. They are then able to hear about the problems people experience and feed these back to Christian Aid partners and to the government to help make sure services are appropriate.

Thank you for all of your support through Commitment for Life which helps no community to be left behind in Bangladesh.

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