

The project helps empower the women of rural India to understand, enact and promote their rights in four key areas: Education, Protection, Health and Nutrition.

Collective Voices

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Collective Voices assists the marginalised indigenous people of Siliguri, West Bengal by providing health, nutrition, education and protection of women, children and youth. It is located in the disadvantaged and marginalised tea plantation communities of the Darjeeling region. They have no access to government services and there is a lack of awareness on issues such as human trafficking, domestic violence and child abuse. The project aims to encourage leadership and collaboration with other community-based organisations to provide welfare, demand basic rights, and educate about issues relevant to the community.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTION

The impact of COVID-19 in 2020 resulted in some project funds being utilised to assist communities in additional ways. Many tea plantations were temporarily closed and the region was in lockdown for several months. The traditional workers had no food or money to support themselves. Assistance provided by the Loreto Sisters' included emergency food and personal protective equipment for families.

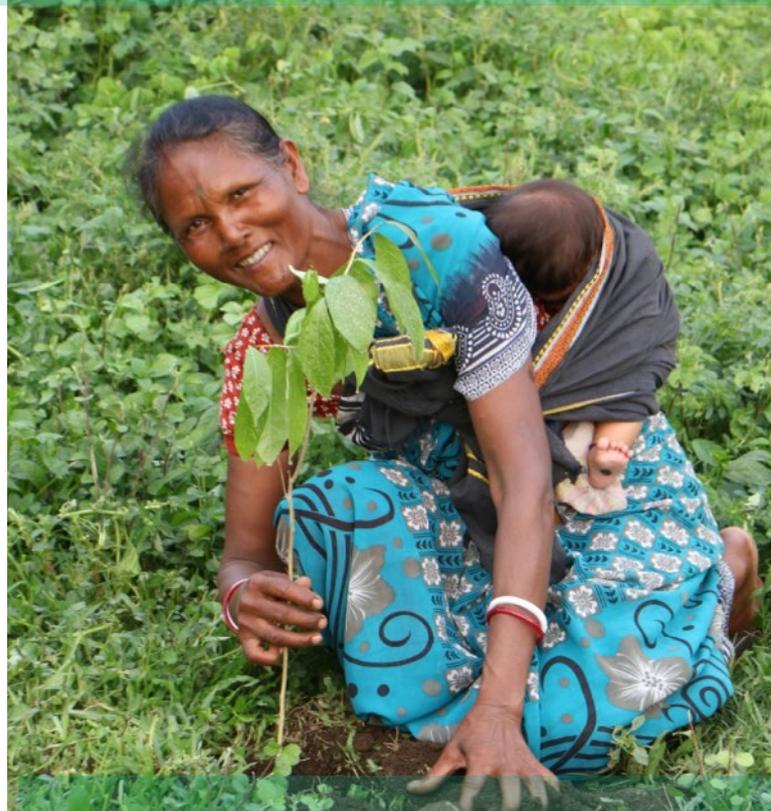
The tea plantations are now operational and the project is expected to proceed as planned.

IMPACT

Women, adolescents and children will directly benefit from the project. Indirectly, their male counterparts will benefit and ultimately the whole community. 550 people have already received food aid, with more people to be assisted in the future.

The items distributed per family have included:

- 5 kgs rice
- 1 kg soya beans
- 1 litre cooking oil
- 1kg sugar
- 1kg flour
- 1kg potatoes
- 1kg chickpeas



ACTIVITIES

- Educate indigenous communities about human trafficking, child abuse, child marriage, domestic violence, alcoholism, child addiction to tobacco and birth registration
- Encourage partnerships bringing key community stakeholders together for participatory planning, action and monitoring
- Assist with obtaining micro-credit to pursue industry
- Facilitate village health programs and eye examinations
- Create awareness about the Coronavirus pandemic through home visits
- Distribution of food parcels and items such as masks, sanitiser, hand wash and gloves
- Referrals to the health centre
- Advocating to the government for necessary community needs

