

Newsletter no 4 NGO COMMEET

This is the fourth COMMEET Newsletter, with an update on the developments in our first TVET / Entrepreneurship project in Bangladesh, with news on the preparation of the launch of our second Toolkit, on Migrants and Displaced Persons, and with information on our social media accounts on LinkedIn and Instagram. These accounts are monitored by Joe Culhane in the US and Rick Heijkens in the Netherlands, and they present themselves briefly in this Newsletter. Enjoy the issue, and, above all, have a wonderful, fruitful, healthy, happy and prosperous 2020. We are very much looking forward to the continuation of our cooperation with you!

BALAGRAM (BANGLADESH)

Status main project: Community Development Balagram Union, Jaldhaka Upazila, Nilphamari District (Northwest Bangladesh)

It is with great joy that Rabiul has informed us that the building of *OfP Institute of Science and Technology* (Oist), the polytechnic school in Balagram, is nearly finished. The admission process starts in January and the curriculum will be developed towards July, with the help of *Commeet NGO* and its network.

The embankment of the *Road to the future*, situated between the mainstream and cluster village communities, has been given approval. It needed budgeting (€ 2,500); its construction is now planned and will be finished before the rain season starts in Bangladesh in April.

International Group

Our *COMMEET Partnership for SDG* meets on Skype bimonthly. Participants are

- Ms Vasiliki Kioupi (PhD on ESD candidate, Imperial College, UK)
- Mr Jos Hermans (Chair COMMEET, The Netherlands)
- Mr Sigfried Janzing (Bangladesh Country Mediation, COMMEET, The Netherlands)
- Mr Md Rabiul Islam (Chairman, Oasis for Posterity (OfP), Bangladesh)
- Mr Ali Bukar Ahmad (RCE Kano, Nigeria)
- Mr Jo Spaubeck (Professor, Zuyd University, The Netherlands).

The exchange of information, learning experiences and the like will contribute towards creating creative synergies and adaptation. It will support the implementation of the Agenda 2030 on a local level. In our partnership there are exchanges between RCE Kano (Nigeria) and OfP (Bangladesh). For the partnership we drafted so-called “living rules”, which have to be confirmed by the group members.

Planned visit Bangladesh, July 2020

The next journey of the COMMEET Team to Bangladesh is planned around 12 – 26 July 2020. The draft programme is:

- 2 - 3 days visit to Balagram with ceremonies for the *road to the future* and the *start of Oist semester 1*, dialogues with the community to discuss future local needs / projects and Community Development Agenda (CDA) and visits to Oist / Bluebell School
- Conference @IUBAT SDG-Academy on the implementation of SDGs on a local level
- Visits to Toru Institute of Inclusive Innovation, Dutch Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Yunus Center.

NEW COMMEET TOOLKIT ON THE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS AND DISPLACED PERSONS

NGO COMMEET is preparing the launch of a new Toolkit. After the successful introduction of the first Toolkit on TVET/Entrepreneurship Training we now are aiming at assisting communities all over the world with the integration of Migrants in their society. This Toolkit should work both ways: it should help communities that are receiving migrants in their midst, and the migrants themselves, who are placed in totally new surroundings and have to find their way.

The Toolkit will be a step-by-step methodology to guide communities in their work:

- we are looking for local solutions for local problems; we are not trying to replace government policies
- we are looking for steps that are interculturally viable, so to be used in very different situations; ranging from Syrian refugees in Europe to for Rohingyas in Bangladesh and Malaysia
- it is our aim to offer individual communities a practical hands-on approach to start with integrative actions on the lowest level.

We are looking for two teams of participants:

1. A team of Migrants + Community Members, who can speak from their own experience and help us with defining:
 - what the main problems are with integrating in new-home regions
 - what steps can be taken on the community level to improve the situation for migrants themselves and for their new community.
2. A team of experienced supervisors. These colleagues will guide and monitor the discussions among Migrants and help them coming to conclusions effectively.

We invite all interested people to contact us for participating in one of these teams. We plan to have the discussion finished and the Toolkit presented on our website by July 2020.

COMMEET ON LINKEDIN AND INSTAGRAM

Today's world offers incredible opportunities for people to connect all over the world. Communities across the globe have access to information online or will be in contact with people/organisations that have access. COMMEET aims to inspire and empower those local communities to take action and solve the challenges that they label as most important.

For COMMEET to reach those who would benefit from our toolkits we are currently working on a social media strategy that will be rolled out in the coming months. Regular updates will be posted on LinkedIn, Instagram and our website. Content will largely consist of success stories, inspiring quotes and information useful to those who are undertaking projects.

The success of our social media efforts will be decided by *you*, the fantastic people in the COMMEET network. So please like, share and comment regularly to the updates we will be sharing and help us reach those who would benefit most from being empowered. We believe that together we can achieve great things, so a big thank you in advance!



Joe Culhane

I have been passionate about sustainability for the past 20 years. Recently, my focus has leaned strongly towards environmental justice and equitable access to sustainability education. This has led to a great deal of involvement in educational and community resilience-based outreach that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals and what the core of COMMEET strives to accomplish.

I have held various communications roles and have over 15 years of web and social media experience, including graphic design, blog and article writing, photo journalism, and podcasting.

As a member of NGO COMMEET, I am honoured to be able to lend my services to further develop and celebrate the work that is being done through this organisation. We humans learn about and understand the world largely through stories. I look forward to helping utilizing various digital and online outlets and platforms to use storytelling to share the community empowerment, entrepreneurship, and TVET access that NGO COMMEET is supporting and providing.

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Rick Heijkens

Early December 2019 I met with Jos Hermans and Peter Ramakers. Speaking to them I learned of COMMEET's desire to empower people who are looking to improve their own lives and the lives of those in their communities. They told me of a different way of providing aid; not by telling people what to do, but by asking them how they believe their lives can improve. A simple message with the potential to have a profound impact on people who have come to rely on aid.

COMMEET's message resonated with me as I believe that all humans are innately good and willing to help. Inspired by the concept I have offered my assistance.

I was born in the Netherlands and studied Commerce at Zuyd University of Applied Sciences. During the past 5 years I worked in the United Kingdom as an account manager for an IT company. Before that I spent nearly a year travelling in Australia. I have been very fortunate to meet people from around the world and, having returned back home, I intend to continue to do so. I will be assisting COMMEET with raising funds and developing its social media activities.

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