



Children from the Sundarbans Reserve Forests showcase their lives through art

“The social artwork event was the nicest thing to have happened to me in the past 12 months! The event was a welcome respite from being locked in at home. I tried to paint something nice with my group. I will never forget this event!” – *Ashikur Rahman Siyam*

The COVID-19 pandemic posed as a grave threat to both health and livelihoods of people living near the Sundarbans. The pandemic also impacted children, as they missed going to school for over a year.

Along with support to households, the Sundarbans Management Project II introduced social artwork as a stress reduction tool for children. The paintings exhibited are the creations of students from Joymonir Ghol Government Primary School in Mongla, Bagerhat.

On 16 March 2021, 14 boys and 11 girls between the ages of 11 to 13 years from Classes 5 to 8 painted these beautiful works of art. The students were divided into 5 groups, all named after mangroves in Bangla: Kewra, Baen, Golpata, Khalshi, and Sundri. They were guided by students of Fine Arts from Khulna University. Mr. Md. Enamul Haque, ACF, Chadpai Range, Sundarbans East Forest Division inaugurated the event.

The stories speak for themselves

“My father is a fisherman and he catches fish from the Sundarbans. During lockdown he could not go to the Sundarbans which affected our entire family. My school was closed for more than one year. It all seemed hopeless. The social artwork event was like a tonic to all my depression. It was amazing to take part in such a cheerful event filled with colours. I am so proud of the painting that our group created. This was one of the best things I have ever been involved in!” – *Sagorika Akter*

“I always loved to draw but never dreamt of meeting such great artists from Khulna University and would have the opportunity to paint under their tutelage. I have never seen such a big canvas and so many colors. Our school is closed now. It was amazing to meet other students after such a long time. My friends and I painted the Sundarbans with the help of the artist, and we all vowed to protect the forests. I enjoyed every single moment of this event. It was the most memorable day of my life!” – *Nupur Akter*



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