

Clara Mridula Biswas



Clara Mridula Biswas is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church serving as a community worker in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Ms. Biswas works with the 'poorest of the poor' in slum areas and garbage dumps to facilitate their move to relocation and rehabilitation centers. 'To bring hope to the hopeless, bring light to those who are in the dark, bring Christ to the poor and share the love of God' (Luke 4:18-19) summarizes Clara understanding of her service. She sees the objectives of her work as **"sharing the love of God, helping children obtain an education by opportunities to study through scholarship, improving living conditions by providing vocational training, providing medical care and financial support to the ill and with education creating awareness on human trafficking, human rights and domestic violence."**

The program provides for Sunday school and conducts Christmas and Easter programs each year. The education program supports 620 students in public schools by providing classes such as music, computer and art classes. The health program refers patients, as needed, to hospitals and non-government organization health centers. Clara networks with other church and non-government organizations as well as visiting, monitoring and caring for patients. She works closely with a church at one of the dumpsites.

Prior to her commissioning as a GBGM missionary, Clara worked in Bangladesh for the Food for the Hungry International (FHI), a Christian service group based in the United States. As the Community Development Area Manager, Clara served the poor, lower caste, and the oppressed by supervising, managing and monitoring education and development programs from 1983-98. Clara also served as the Program Director of the Christian student center at Sendai City in Japan. She emphasized issues of justice, development, international understanding, worship and equality from a Christian perspective.

"When people are able to get jobs and when they get assurance they can continue to study in higher levels of education, that gives them hope for a better future. It is joyful to watch the faces of happy children as they go to places they had never gone before. Although we bring the Gospel informally, we see the joy of the children singing Gospel songs and performing in dramas depicting Christmas and Easter."

Clara has extensive experience as a volunteer in the Student Christian Movement. Her training in international, cross-cultural and women's empowerment meetings is vast. She speaks English, Bengali, Hindi and Japanese.

Born in Barisal, Bangladesh, Clara holds a BA degree in Social Science and a diploma in Rural Leadership and Development from the Asian Rural Institute in Tochigi-Ken, Japan. She is a member of the Church of Bangladesh.