

# SCROLL STORIES

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## SCROLL STORIES

About fifteen of the MANGRO villages are so-called 'Bangladeshi'. In fact most of them originated in West Bengal rather than Bangladesh, and moved down to Odisha thirty or forty years ago, fleeing famine and a constant struggle against starvation.

They came from West Midnapore, home to a tradition of wandering story-tellers who use scrolls to illustrate the stories which they sing to village audiences. We invited two of these "chitrakars" from Bengal to visit

MANGRO, and commissioned them to make four scrolls. The first was about the community story of migration from Bengal to Odisha. The second was about the importance of the mangrove; a third about the erosion caused by deforestation. The final one was about climate change.

The scrolls are stunning, but Mani and Swarna did not stop there. They performed in schools and villages, and spent time with three of our project workers helping them develop their "chitra" skills. Since then, six schools have been closely involved in creating their own scrolls on themes relating to the environmental work that we have been doing with them. We had a special day when they presented them to each other. The children stood with their scroll, and one or more of them sang the story. Our group of musicians picked up the rhythm, and gradually created an accompaniment, as the story was sung, and the scroll rolled out, illustrating each episode or idea. We had scrolls on all the usual themes, but also on the importance of seedbanks, or using natural composts and pesticides as well. The quality of the work was



*Mani's illustration of a post-cyclone rescue operation in the project area*

amazing. It seems to have tapped into their culture and has been a brilliant teaching and learning tool. It is something which we will continue in our educational work. In addition we are looking at the idea of making cards from some of the illustrations which can be used for fund-raising and publicity here and in India.





# THE MANGRO SCROLL





















# CLIMATE CHANGE

















