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WINTER 2019

FRIENDS OF KHASDOBIR, BANGLADESH, Registered Charity No: 1116316



Newsletter

8 Sheltered Schools Now Open

There are now 8 pre- schools meeting in rented shelters serving the Khasdobir area. Apart from the office school serving Pirmoholla, there are two schools serving the children of the tea gardens and schools serving Badambagicha, Bashbari and Boro Bazar. All the schools have electricity and access to a toilet and washing facilities for the children. There are 30+ children attending each school.

All the teachers took part in 3 days of training at the end of December. Each teacher was provided with a book with teaching techniques for use with the children. At the end of the training the teachers were so enthusiastic about what they had learnt that they proposed extending the school day by an extra half hour so that they could make good use of all the games, stories and songs they had learnt to use during the training.

At the end of December some of the children from each school transferred to local primary schools and we hope to follow their progress in the future.

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Volunteers for Bangladesh

Early in our visit we met volunteer leaders of the Sylhet division of Volunteers for Bangladesh (<http://vbd.com.bd>). This is a young people / students' branch of the Jaago Foundation and calls to young people to help to 'Rebuild our Nation'. We had just visited Badambagisha school and noticed that a small side room would be really useful if it was cleared up and painted.



So in our meeting we asked if VfB might be able to do such painting. They were very keen and a few days later (everything seems to happen straight away in Bangladesh!) they were working with a professional decorator on the little side room, the main room and also on the school room in the office – much more than we had originally imagined. The volunteers painted cartoon characters, handprints, letters, numbers and trees with great enthusiasm.

The children and teachers were very pleased with the results and Volunteers for Bangladesh appeared to be happy to be linked with us and to be approached in future for further voluntary activity.

Editor's corner

Meeting of Trustees took place at 11.30am, Saturday 12th January 2019, Bangladesh Social Association, Loughborough. Some extracts from the meeting is provided below.

Fund Raising

There have been two significant donations recently. £500 was given in memory of Sumon Momen and Trinity URC raised £665. Trustees expressed their gratitude for these wonderful contributions to the work in Khasdobir.

Constitution:

A draft proposal had been circulated to Trustees. Under this model Trustees would appoint new Trustees rather than taking proposals to the AGM. The meeting was in favour of this approach.



Support for the widows continues

Sheltered schools in



Trustees' visit to the Project

Getting to know Sylhet Jubo Academy!

As we have recently changed the organisation who deliver our project a strong emphasis of our visit was to get to know the Sylhet Jubo Academy and the people behind the name.

Sue Simmons and myself, Maureen Haddock made the Trustee visit to Bangladesh in October 2018. Mike Sheriff, Chair of Friends of Khasdobir was already in Sylhet so we joined him at our normal hotel. Mike had sent us a very full itinerary which covered every aspect of our project. Early in the visit schedule we visited the Sylhet Jubo Academy (SJA) office in Sylhet and had a meeting with Faisal Ahmed, the Executive Director and Sabiha Sultana (the project manager for the Khasdobir project). We also met Joynal Abedin who is the accountant for our project. We were shown the accounting processes and records and were very impressed with their thoroughness, cross referencing and apparent accuracy.

We briefly scrutinised the SJA comprehensive policy folder which

contained details of policies on human resources, financial management, fraud and corruption, IT, child protection, gender, transport and travel, and operational systems.

All of these policies are applicable to the staff of the Khasdobir project. (These polices are available on the SJA website as are many photographs of their projects <http://www.sjabd.org>)

Later we met, over dinner, members of the governing body of SJA. They demonstrated an interest in the Khasdobir project and hoped to visit in the near future.

In addition to our work with SJA we visited all the schools currently up and running and were very pleased to see the teacher and teaching assistants hard at work. All the children have lovely books and resources which are kept in a metal lockable boxes which contain books, pencils, crayons etc. A key emphasis in choosing suitable sites for our schools is that they must be covered (so the children can attend during the rainy period) and that they have toilet and hand washing facilities.

It was clear that the SJA team were pleased to be working with Friends of Khasdobir and were committed to providing the elements of our project to a high standard.

Although some of the buildings are not ideal, we are very pleased that all the schools meet these criteria.

The project office is a very nice spacious building which houses the sewing class (which is thriving and growing in numbers) the computer classes, and one of the schools. The building is also used for meetings and administration.

At the end of our visit we were able to make a list of recommendations for both SJA and Friends of Khasdobir all of which focus on the sustainability and further development of our project.

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Please email to khasdobir@btinternet.com



Our Trip



Bangladesh is a beautiful country and we were able to enjoy seeing some of the countryside during our trip out to the Tanga Howa lake near Sunamgani. Students from the computer class, two teachers from the project office and the computer teacher managed to squeeze into the van.

After a long journey we arrived at the lake and went onto the boat. This was the highlight of the picnic. When the boat moored in shallow water the joyful youngsters jumped into the lake for swim. Swimmers included three young women who were fully clothed and Mike who couldn't resist a swim! Such joy and hilarity warmed our hearts. On the way back, we stopped, peeled ourselves out of the van and had a meal in a local small restaurant. We all had a great time despite a long journey and some travel sickness...the boat trip was a resounding success. One of the teachers is now asking for a picnic for all the teachers as a way of getting to know each other!!!



Children at a School (above)

Teachers' Training (below)



Life on the Tea Estates



During the Trustee visit we made several visits to the tea estates. The miles and miles of tea plants are just stunningly beautiful but life is hard for the workers. Women work all day (taking a small lunch with them) picking the leaves. We had a go at picking and there is definitely a knack to it. The bags of tea are weighed and then back they go to pick more. We visited a small tea factory where so much is still done by hand and manual labour - this is where some of the men work.

On a separate visit with SJA we visited a tea estate where a tube well had recently been installed - you will see from the photo the smiling faces and sheer joy at having their own water pump - one pump between two families. The water was fresh and clear and tasted lovely. We have recently opened two new schools on the tea estates and at the time of the Trustee visit only one was open. The photo shows the one at Hiluachara lovely school with really enthusiastic children. Please enjoy your cup of tea and make sure it is Fair Trade!!



coming up next >>>

The Leicester fundraising meal

When: on Tuesday, 16th April 2019, starting at around 6.30 pm.

Where: The Chef and Spice Restaurant on 1 Andrewes St, Leicester LE3 5PG

It is a buffet meal, with a wide variety of courses to choose from, and we have been there some considerable number of times before. The owner, Mr Sayed Rahman, was born in Nobiganj in Bangladesh, and therefore, we are always welcome. The restaurant is large, so there is ample room for normal customers as well, so we are not pushing anyone out by being there. Fund raising for local charities is a feature of Mr Rahman's activities, and this takes place once a week for all sorts of charities. Please contact the host **Geoffrey Pool, Tel: 0116 221 8426** for further information

The Loughborough fundraising meal

When: Tuesday, 26 Feb 2019; The first starting at 6.00pm and the second at 8.00pm.

Where: tandoori empire restaurant, 6 High St, Quorn, Loughborough LE12 8DT

Our AGM

When: Saturday June 29th 11.30 am

Where: Rosebury St Peter's Community Centre, Storer Road, Loughborough, LE11 5EQ

Your chance to learn more about the project and discuss a proposed change to the constitution of Friends of Khasdobir. For catering purposes, please let Kathleen Jackson know you're coming; email: derkat46@ntlworld.com or 01509 557740

Meet at the AGM 2018



You're invited to the 24th Loughborough fundraising event, very popular and informal. The cost is £17.00 per person for the three course meal; of this, £8.00 goes to the project. Contact Kathleen Jackson above.

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