



Cultural celebration raises £350 to support the work of the project



Teachers performance at cultural programme

On Saturday 10th April supporters joined with the children, young people, parents, and teachers of the Khasdobir Project by zoom for a programme of songs, dance, and poetry.

During the programme children from one of our pre-primary schools sang a song about the rivers of Bangladesh. Children from another school performed a dance. We also saw pictures of the National fruits and flowers of Bangladesh drawn by the children.

The sewing class students performed a dance and song and we viewed some of the clothes patterns they had created from newspaper during the first part of their course.

One of the students of the computer class sang a popular rock song and we viewed business cards and forms created by the students during their class.

A final highlight was a popular folk song sung by teachers from our pre-primary schools.

FRIENDS OF KHASDOBIR, BANGLADESH, Registered Charity No: 1185262

News from the Project

106 children from our centres will transfer to Primary Schools

In January 2021 106 children from our schools completed their pre-primary education. They will now transfer to Government Primary Schools, Primary Schools on the tea gardens and Madrassa (Government regulated schools run by Islamic faith organisations). The children all received a certificate after completing their pre-primary schooling with the Project. Our Project Monitoring Officer liaised with the primary schools to arrange places for the children. Teachers and outreach workers helped parents with the application procedure. The children will all start school as soon as they re-open following the current lock down due to COVID 19 in Sylhet.

The situation regarding COVID 19 in Sylhet

Bangladesh is currently experiencing a second wave of covid 19 with new variants of the virus including those originating in the UK and South Africa. Sylhet City is one of the most severely affected parts of Bangladesh and a stricter "lock down" has recently been introduced with all offices and schools closed. This

includes our pre-primary centres. The vaccination programme is under way in Bangladesh and our outreach team have been helping the parents and guardians of children attending our pre-primary centres to register to receive a vaccine.

Distribution of devices to assist mobility



At the beginning of March the project distributed devices to assist mobility to children in the Khasdobir area who had been assessed as being able to benefit from a device. Our new trustee, Dulon Miah, took part in the distribution ceremony and he also arranged for more devices to be provided through the organisation Sylhet Aid. Jalabad Disabled Rehabilitation Centre, based in Sylhet also funded the purchase of some devices. Some trustees in the UK joined the event by zoom.



If you receive your newsletter by post and we do not currently have your email address it would be extremely helpful if you could provide it to us so that we can communicate with you occasionally about our various on-line events using email. It is still possible to receive a paper version of the newsletter. If you want to stop receiving a paper version of the newsletter and just receive an email copy, then please let us know. You can contact us at: khasdobir@btinternet.com

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www.khasdobir.org.uk

Our Annual Meeting- Saturday 3rd July

Please make a note to join our Annual meeting which will be held on Saturday 3rd July 2021 at 11.30 am in Leicester at the Friends Meeting House,
16 Queens Road,
Leicester, LE2 1WP

At this meeting, we will say farewell to one of our trustees, Geoffrey Poole, who has been involved with the project for over 25 years. We will also be welcoming a new trustee who grew up in the area served by the project and knew one of the founders of the project, Peter East. There will be a report back from trustees about the virtual monitoring visit undertaken this year and an opportunity to catch up with friends over a curry lunch at the end of the meeting.

It will be possible to join the meeting by zoom if you prefer to do so.

Please email khasdobir@btinternet.com by Monday 28th June to confirm your attendance and let us know if you will be attending in person or by zoom. We will then send you the agenda and if relevant the link to join by zoom.



Trustee Virtual Monitoring Visits

In the absence of opportunities for Trustees to visit the project, a series of meetings with the project staff were held in February using Zoom! The purpose was to review recent developments, the impact of COVID and progress in the various areas of work – pre-schools, outreach, vocational training. There is a summary below, and further information will be available at the Annual Meeting.

Follow up from last Trustee visit:

There were 16 recommendations made last year and staff from the project provided information and documentation to demonstrate the progress made. Overall Trustees were delighted with the amount of work and dedication shown by all the staff. Clearly COVID has had a major impact but nevertheless preschools have opened for most of the period albeit with reduced class sizes. The building of two new shelters has made a significant difference to the learning opportunities for children in very deprived areas, as have the improvements elsewhere.

The 5 new shelters are starting to be used by the wider community. Training courses continue to provide valuable skills and staff shared examples of students who have gone on to employment or self-employment.

Meeting with Outreach Workers:

A group of Trustees met with the Outreach team to assess the impact of their work and were told work continues despite COVID limitations. The two workers visit poor families in the Tea Gardens and slum areas

of Sylhet to assess needs and raise awareness of benefits available to them. This includes help with obtaining birth certificates that are essential to access many government services, identifying pre-school children for admission to our schools, and helping those who have dropped out of the system to enter Second Chance Schools. Arrangements are made for immunisation and children in need of medical help are referred to Hospital.

Training

We met Sheila, the sewing teacher, and one of her students. The current group of students started in January and the course lasts a year. There are six students in each class to allow for social distancing, and this was their tenth session. They were currently learning hand sewing techniques and one of the students showed us her work - buttonholes and embroidery. She told us she was enjoying the course.

We also met the computer class teacher and heard that the key objective of the computer class is to provide practical learning on computer operations to up-skill poor and deprived students to enable them to apply such skills in employment or as freelancers. There are 40 students on the programme organised into six groups. Each group attends the course two days per week. The age range is 14-30 and there are boys and girls on the course. Most do not have a laptop at home and are therefore unable to practise between classes, but some come into the office to practise when they can. Three students have already found jobs benefitting from the course and the computer teacher felt there are prospects in graphic design and marketing.

Pictures from 1984

This is the third of our series of pictures provided by our supporter John Burgess. It shows children attending a class at what was then the recently constructed primary school at Khasdobir. This was the first initiative supported by the Khasdoir Project.



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Independence Day and Bengali Language Day Celebrations

During February and March each year the children and young people from the project celebrate these important days in the history of Bangladesh. This year celebrations were limited due to the situation regarding COVID 19 but it was possible to organise various games and competitions including drawing pictures and reciting poems.



One of the games played by the children on Independence Day was matching the alphabet with pictures.



We were pleased that our new trustee, Dulon Miah, was able to attend the presentation of prizes to the children.

Passing half-way on the Khasdobir Walk

Our team of 14 walkers have already covered over 2,800 miles on our walk of 5,000 miles - the distance from London to Sylhet. Over £1,600 has been raised to date. The walk marks the 50th anniversary of the independence of Bangladesh and the aim is to complete it by the end of 2021.



Now that spring is here, please consider joining the walk and asking your family, friends, and colleagues to sponsor you.

Every small distance covered including short walks such as collecting the newspaper or walking the dog can help us raise funds to continue supporting the work of the Khasdobir Project. Participants can have their own link to our on-line donation page or simply send money collected by post to our treasurer. If you want to join our walk please email khasdobir@btinternet.com and ask us to send you full details.

If you want to support the event as a whole then please use this link: <https://www.goldengiving.com/fundraising/KhasdobirWalk> Alternatively send a cheque (made payable to Friends of Khasdobir) directly to our treasurer at April Cottage, 12 Church Street, Rothley, Leicestershire LE7 7PD.

Please do not fold the cheques and on the back write that your donation is towards the Khasdobir Walk.



Education trek to raise funds – Saturday 11th September

Following the success of our virtual tea garden trek last year, which was a replacement for the annual London walk, we will be organising another virtual trek in September with staff from the project.

During the trek we will visit educational institutions in Sylhet and find out how they have changed since the project started in 1983. We hope to include the Khasdobir Primary School, a new secondary school, primary schools on the tea gardens and the Khasdobir Project Pre-Primary Schools.

Please join us on Saturday September 11th at 10am.

To receive the zoom link please email khasdobir@btinternet.com

To donate please follow this link: <https://www.goldengiving.com/fundraising/KhasdobirEducationTrek>

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