



FRIENDS OF KHASDOBIR, BANGLADESH, Registered Charity No: 1185262

### ***Annual meeting***

Our annual meeting was held on 3rd July. We had hoped to meet in person but due to continuing restrictions resulting from the covid pandemic for a second time we held our annual meeting by zoom. 32 people joined and we were very pleased that staff from the project could take part. We showed some film clips from the new school shelters including the community garden at Bashbari. Participants saw work completed by the sewing and the computing students and had a report from the "virtual" monitoring visit that was arranged earlier in the year. During the meeting our new trustee, Dulon Miah, introduced himself. He was born in Bangladesh, in the Khasdobir area and attended Khasdobir primary school. He met Peter East and Harun, our founders, when he was small and remembers the first schools under the sky, which were usually under a tree. He decided he would like to be involved to help people from the area where he grew up. Geoffrey Pool, who has now retired as a trustee also shared reminiscences from his first trip to Bangladesh in 1986. He highlighted how much had changed in the intervening 35 years, using photos from his visit and entertaining accounts of his experiences. View the full annual report and accounts of Friends of Khasdobir at [https://khasdobir.org.uk/?page\\_id=53](https://khasdobir.org.uk/?page_id=53)

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**Our next Annual meeting will be held on Saturday 2nd July 2022 so please make a note in your diary.**

### ***News from the Project***

#### ***Schools re-open***

The main news from the project is that after many months government schools that were closed due to the Covid 19 pandemic re-opened in July and our staff have been working to ensure that those due to start at primary school are now taking up their places. Our schools were mainly open with limited numbers during the pandemic but did have to close for a few weeks in accordance with the instructions of the Bangladesh Government. During most periods when schools were closed some home tuition was provided. The schools and training classes have now all re-opened.

During the COVID-19 pandemic every parent's meeting at our schools has discussed how all members of the family, from children to the elderly can stay safe and healthy from the pandemic. At the meetings, the parents were also encouraged to get vaccinated, and our outreach workers helped over 100 people to complete on-line registration for vaccination.



#### ***Sewing and Computer courses***

This year the new courses in sewing and computing had a delayed start due to the pandemic. After completion of the sewing course 40 students received certificates and basic sewing equipment (scissors, shape cut, measurement tape, thread cutter etc.) 40 students also completed the computing course.

They can continue to come to the project office and practice at any time during office hours. This is important because their financial situation means they cannot buy a computer and practice at home. Many are already working alongside their studies, while others have stopped studying due to their personal and family circumstances and are working full time, making use of their training.

***Our outreach workers have continued to help children obtain birth certificates, including 68 children from the Hilwachara tea estate.***



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## Virtual Education Trek raises over £500 to support the project

Following the success of our virtual tea garden trek last year, which was a replacement for the annual London walk, we organised another virtual trek on 11th September with staff from the project. During the trek we visited pre-schools run by the project, the new secondary school built near the tea gardens and two primary schools serving children in the area where the project is located. We heard from the Head Teachers of the schools and children who had attended "second chance" schools for those who had dropped out of primary school. The children we spoke to were introduced to their second chance school by our outreach workers. We also heard from one of our teachers, who was originally a pupil at a "school under the sky".



Above: The new secondary school in Sylhet

Our plan for next year is to organise another virtual trek with a focus on the achievements of our sewing class students including those working from home and those now working in the sewing workshops of Sylhet.

## Case study – Nur Alom, computer class student

Nur Alom is 20 years old and lives in a rented house in Badambagicha, Sylhet with six other family members (father, mother and four siblings). He is a student and now studying to graduate. He is the first child of his parents. His father is a truck driver who is the only earner in the family and mother is a housewife. His father's health is not good. He is often ill meaning that he cannot drive the truck regularly. Since his father could not earn a regular income, it was very difficult to manage all the expenses of the family.



When Nur was a student, he was very upset that he could not manage the exam registration fee necessary to continue his education. At that time, he met one of the Khasdobir Project's outreach staff and found out about free computer training provided by the project. This gave him a glimmer of hope. He realized that computer training is important, and the IT sector is great for generating income by working in the online market as well as in the local market. Nur received computer training from the project from July 2019 to June 2020 and successfully learnt basic computer operating, internet browsing, micro soft office (MS Word, MS PowerPoint & MS Excel), photo & video editing, graphics design (Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator), website design and easy android app development.

After completing the training Nur joined a food beverage company as a part time data entry operator. He did this in addition to his studies, doing 100-150 data entries every day and earning money to support his and his siblings' education as well as other family expenses. He also saved some money to buy a computer/laptop so that he can do freelance computer work independently and improve his social and economic status.

## Christmas Puppet Show and Songs

Saturday 18th December 9.30am – 10.30am by zoom



Following the success of our Christmas puppet show last year based on the story of the hare and the tortoise we will be holding another puppet show from our newly constructed school at Boro Bazar on Saturday 18th December. The story this year will be about the fox and the crow. The children will also make puppets and sing songs.

We are inviting our supporters, their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren to join the project by zoom to watch this puppet show and take part in some fun activities with the children of one of our pre-schools.

To book your places please email [khasdobir@btinternet.com](mailto:khasdobir@btinternet.com) before **Thursday 16th December** and we will send you the link to join. Please note places are limited and will be allocated to those who book earliest.

The event is free, but we do encourage donations at: <https://www.goldengiving.com/fundraising/Christmaspuppetshow> or by sending a cheque made payable to Friends of Khasdobir to our treasurer Phil Watson, April Cottage, 12 Church Street, Rothley, Leicestershire. LE7 7PD.

We hope you can join us and support the project this Christmas.

## Stay with us, Support us!

We are compliant to EU General Data Protection Regulations

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Also notify us if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter (by either post or email).

Please email to [khasdobir@btinternet.com](mailto:khasdobir@btinternet.com)



## ***Walking the distance to Sylhet***

Congratulations to our team of 15 walkers who have now raised almost £3,000 by walking over 5,000 miles- the distance from London to Sylhet. This has been a tremendous boost to our fundraising during a time when it was not possible to raise funds from fundraising meals. Individual walkers covered distances ranging from 65 to 1372 miles and raised sums from £15 to £414. Some supporters contributed to the effort of all the walkers using the on-line giving link:

<https://www.goldengiving.com/fundraising/KhasdobirWalk>

During the walk many fantastic photos were taken and shared in the face book group. Thanks to Trudi for the photo in this newsletter- one of the final photos of the walk.

We will keep the giving pages for walkers open until January for anybody who still wishes to support this initiative.

**Next year we are planning another, less strenuous, team fundraising event. We will be inviting our supporters to raise funds to support the widows of Sylhet by organising a tea party with their friends.**

Further details will be available in the winter newsletter but please let us know if you are interested in taking part by organising your own tea party. Email [khasdobir@btinternet.com](mailto:khasdobir@btinternet.com)

## ***A new school shelter at Boro Bazar***

Following the completion of the Bashbari shelter the project has now completed a shelter for the Boro Bazar School. This school was meeting in the covered veranda of the home of a local resident of the area who has supported the project since it started. However, space was very limited, and it was not possible to display the work of the children on the walls or play some of the games that are encouraged in the schools. A nearby piece of land was identified and a new shelter has been constructed. The teachers have painted murals on the walls providing visual aids to support the teaching of the children.



There are now 5 school shelters that have been constructed by the project and 5 schools meeting in rented spaces. Recently the bamboo trellis forming the upper section of the wall on the first school shelter that was constructed several years ago (Peter's School) has been replaced (see photo above)

**Trudi's photo from the Khasdobir Walk:**



## ***How our teachers are using the school environment to teach***

Now that all our schools are located in shelters that we have constructed or in spaces that we rent it is possible to create a better learning environment. All of the schools have posters with the alphabet displayed on the walls. In most schools the teachers have painted murals and use these to help with teaching about plants, animals, letters and numbers. Below are some of the paintings on the walls of our schools:



A recent initiative at one of the schools has been to start a small garden with members of the community. Some of the other schools plan to do the same if they have a piece of land available. In schools where there is no spare land plants are being grown in pots inside the school shelters.



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# ***YES, I'd like to help...***



## **Charity Gift Aid Declaration – multiple donation**

### **Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate**

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

### **In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:**

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £\_\_\_\_\_ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to:

**Name of Charity** \_\_\_\_\_

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

### **My Details**

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First name or initial(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Full Home address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Please notify the charity if you:**

- want to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
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If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

*Please send this page to:*

*Phil Watson, April Cottage, 12, Church Street, Rothley, Leicestershire, LE7 7PD*