



Newsletter

Spring 2022

FRIENDS OF KHASDOBIR, BANGLADESH, Registered Charity No: 1185262

NEWS IN BRIEF

COVID 19 Update

We are pleased to report that following the lifting of all COVID prevention restrictions in Bangladesh the project is now operating at full capacity. Most of the staff, adults and young people who benefit from the project have received COVID vaccinations.

Our Annual Meeting – Remember to book your place

Please make a note to join our Annual Meeting which will be held on Saturday 2nd July 2021 at 11.30 am in Leicester at the Leicester Unitarians Great Meeting Chapel, 45 East Bond Street, Leicester LE1 4SX

At this meeting, we will be joined live from the project. Come along to hear about recent developments and our plans for the next 3 years.

Please email khasdobir@btinternet.com by Monday 27th June to confirm your attendance. We will then send you the agenda. Car parking is available at the centre and a curry lunch will be provided following the meeting, for which there will be a small charge. We look forward to seeing you!

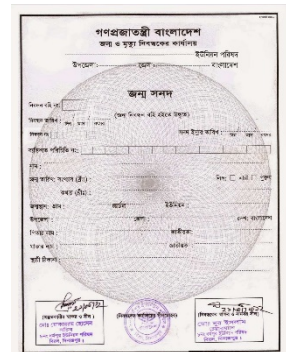
Obtaining a valid birth certificate

Obtaining a valid birth certificate is a big problem for many families we support. In Bangladesh it is now essential to have a valid birth certificate to get admitted to many schools, take exams and benefit from other services provided by the Government. To get a birth certificate for a child a valid birth certificate from the parents is required but this is often a problem for the families we work with. Many have moved from other parts of Bangladesh to Sylhet and many parents were born before formal arrangements for registering births were used. Sometimes parents are separated, and it is not possible to contact the parent who is no longer living with the family. Sometimes there are mistakes on documents that are available.

To highlight the difficulties faced by families obtaining birth certificates for their children our outreach workers have produced case studies about the difficulties and the impact on



children. For example, Bashki, a parent, who lives on the Malnichara tea estate does not have a National Identity card or a birth certificate. She does not have her school certificate or EPI (injection) card. These are necessary to obtain a birth certificate. Without a birth certificate she cannot work on the tea garden. Bashki has 3 young daughters. It is not possible to get birth certificates for these 3 daughters because there are no suitable documents from Baski. Because they are tea workers their financial situation is difficult but because she has no birth certificate Bashki is unable to give financial help to her family. The children are going to school but after class 8 without relevant documents they will not be able to take exams.



To obtain the full report we have produced about the problems families face when trying to obtain birth certificates please email khasdobir@btinternet.com

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NEWS IN BRIEF

New On-line Fundraising Platform

Following some difficulties with their old Golden Giving platform the company who runs it have transferred us to their new People's Fundraising Platform. If you wish to donate online then please use this new platform. We understand that all donors who pay a regular amount will be automatically transferred to the new platform. Remember you can claim Gift Aid when donating on-line. This is the link to the new donations page:

<https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/friends-of-khasdobir>

A date for your diary – our Sylhet Sewing Trek

Following the success of our Tea Garden Trek in 2020 and Education Trek in 2021 we are arranging a virtual sewing trek on Saturday September 3rd, 2022, at 10am. Join our sewing class students past and present and find out what former students have been making in the centres where we have provided a sewing machine. Visit dress making shops in Sylhet. Let us know if you want to join (khasdobir@btinternet.com)

Jumpa and Milai walk over 6 miles every day to attend our centre

Jumpa is 4 years old. She lives with her father, mother, and brothers aged 6 and 10 years old. They live in an isolated house 3+ miles from our Hilwachara centre.



Jumpa walks to school with her mother every day. They leave the house just after 7am and arrive by 9am. Mother stays in Hilwachara and then walks home with her daughter, arriving back home at about 1.30pm.

They enrolled at the school in January. Hilachara is the nearest pre-primary school for Jumpa to attend. Previously there was a school nearby run by another organisation. It had a pre-primary class, but it closed about 3 years ago.

Jumpa likes school and she talks a lot while she is there but during lock down (while the schools were closed) she forgot a lot of what she learnt, and she does not talk so much now.

Jumpa's father is a day labourer, and her mother works in the house. The family has lived in this house for many generations. Jumpa's mother studied to class 5. One brother attends Hilwachara Primary School and the other walks to a High School, 5 km away.

Jumpa's family are worried about walking in the hot and rainy season because Jumpa often suffers with a fever. Two years ago, she had TB. Sometimes it is impossible to go but they always try and sometimes Jumpa's mother carries her part of the way.

Milai is 5 years old. He attends our pre-primary school. He walks to the school every day with Jumpa and her mother. Jumpa's mother told Milai's family about our pre-primary school. Milai has no birth certificate. Milai mainly enjoys playing at school. He also enjoys climbing trees. His father is a day labourer, but he does not find work every day. Sometimes he works in the paddy field. For the last 3 days he has found no work and some weeks he finds nothing. When this happens, the family cannot even afford food. Today he has gone to the wood to gather firewood for heating and cooking.

Milai's family live in a rented house. They have lived there for 5 or 6 years. It is close to Jumpa's house.

Milai's mother cannot read or write. She did not go to school herself. Her father is now old and ill. He cannot see.

Milai's family have no tube well. They fetch water from a tank- about 15 minutes' walk away.



Milai receives tuition at home

Sewing machines in our centres

One of the problems for many of the young women completing the sewing training is that they have no sewing machine of their own to use once they have completed the course. Sometimes visiting Friends from the UK have provided a machine to women facing special difficulties and for some women it has been possible to buy a machine with income from clothes that were made by the sewing class and then sold. Sometimes people share a machine or use a machine owned by one of their extended family members.

A recent initiative, supported by fundraising in Sylhet, has been to purchase a machine that can be kept in the centres we have constructed. It is then used on a rota basis by local women, when the pre-primary classes are closed. A pilot initiative was tried on the Lakaturra Tea Estate and proved to be very popular. Since then, an additional 3 machines have been purchased and placed in centres serving either the tea estates or the slums.

Stay with us, Support us!

We are compliant to EU General Data Protection Regulations

Do you receive the newsletter by post now and would you be happy to receive it by email?
Also notify us if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter (by either post or email).

Please email to khasdobir@btinternet.com



NEWS IN BRIEF

The Big Tea Party – Update

During the spring and summer months we are asking our supporters to organise tea parties in their homes and gardens to raise funds for the widows' allowances provided by the project.

The money raised will help women like Khursheda who has lived on the tea estate for over 50 years. Her husband died 7 years ago. She now lives with one daughter who is separated from her husband.

Her daughter earns some money working in other people's houses, but it is not enough for them to live on.

She uses her widows' allowance to buy essential medicine and fruits to eat.



Please contact us at khasdobir@btinternet.com if you are willing to arrange a tea party. We have video clips that can be used at events that are available on the face book page we have set up for organisers. Donations can be made at: <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/fundraising/TheBigTeaParty>

A new shelter for the Malnichara Tea Estate

Malnichara Tea Estate was established in 1849. It is the oldest tea garden in the Indian subcontinent. Many of the families on the tea estate were originally forced to move there to work from other parts of India. This tea estate has been part of the area covered by the project since it started. Families benefited from some of the welfare support we provide but until now we have not run a school on this tea estate.

Our outreach workers have been visiting tea workers in their homes and found many families who needed help with obtaining a birth certificate. They also found many families with young children. After a monitoring visit to the project in March 2020 trustees recommended that we construct a new shelter on the Malnichara tea estate and start a new school there. After discussions with the primary school on the tea estate and with the local community a site was found and building work on the school started this year and was completed by the end of March, in time for the project's Bangladesh Independence Day celebrations to be held there. The completion of this school means that from next year the project will run 11 pre-primary centres. 6 of these were constructed from funds raised by the Friends and 5 are in rented premises.



One of our computer class students starts a small business, with help from Sylhet Jubo Academy

Shahalom was a computer class student from 2019-2020. He learnt office first and then graphic design (illustrator). He studied at Khasdobir school from class 1-5 and then at Nasa Uddin from class 6- 10. He is currently at college studying arts, but it is not possible to learn computing there.



During the computer course his main problem was finding opportunities to practice as he has no computer and no wi fi in the large house his family shares with 5 other families. (We now open the office for students to practice when classes are not running).

Shahalom now works in a call centre to supplement his family's income and he does telesales with an English/Bangla company. He works there from 6.30pm to 2.30 am daily. He travels there by cycle. He hopes to become a freelancer. SJA are seeking some support for him so he can rent a shop with a computer and printer and do on-line form filling, graphic design, stationery sales and document printing.

Shahalom has 3 brothers. His big brother does food delivery. His younger brother is disabled and was attending a special school until it closed. We arranged for him to be admitted to another centre. His father is a CNG driver and mother a housewife.

Shahalom thought the computer class was good. He was most interested in design and especially enjoyed designing visiting and ID cards (he won several competitions) He liked the creative aspects of computing including learning about presentations.

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



YES, I'd like to help...

1 Friends of Khasdobir, Bangladesh Registered Charity No. 1185262

2 Gift Aid Declaration

I am a U.K. taxpayer, and wish the charity to treat all donations that I make as Gift Aid donations from the date below, so that the tax I have paid on those sums can be recovered by them.

Name, including Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms, and first name

.....

Full Address

.....

Postcode Date

Signed

E-mail Address (optional)

Notes:

This declaration is in force from the above date until it is cancelled. It need only be made once.

I confirm that have paid or will pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax (added together) for the current and each following year; 6th April to 5th April, until further notice, that is at least equal to the amount of all the tax that the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts each tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that The Friends of Khasdobir charity will reclaim the tax on my donations to them.

If your financial circumstances change, and you cease to pay income tax or capital gains tax at a level at least equal to the sum that you donate to all charities and CASCs each year, then please let the charity know by writing to the Treasurer.