



Newsletter

Spring 2023

FRIENDS OF KHASDOBIR, BANGLADESH, Registered Charity No: 1185262

Visit to KEWDP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Our new online shop

During their visit Moyra and Sue were very impressed with the excellent embroidery produced by the students of the embroidery class. They brought back several items to sell including shawls, cushion covers, bed covers and pictures. All funds raised will support the project. Many items have already been purchased at Peter's 100th birthday event but there are still some left and these can be bought at our new online Sylhet Embroidery and Craft Shop: <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/shop/sylhet-embroidery-and-craft-shop> Visit the site and see the excellent work produced by our students.



Embroidery available in our new shop

February 2023

In February 2023 two of us had a very rewarding, stimulating and positive visit to the Khasdobir project. We were very impressed by the work which SJA and the project team are carrying out.

Pre-Primary Schools



We visited all 11 pre-primary schools. All are now undercover with six of them in purpose built shelters which means that bad weather does not prevent the schools from operating. It also means that teachers can use resources such as posters, storybooks, workbooks, whiteboards, crayons and educational toys which were difficult to keep secure previously.

The standard of teaching was good and classes were interactive, with play, movement and exercise included in the sessions.

The pre-primary schools are very popular and often very busy with many young children and some parents attending each day. We thought that variety in lessons could be developed even further and it might be possible for mothers who attend to become more involved.

Each school now has regular parent/guardian meetings which appear to be well attended.

Sewing and Embroidery Classes

The sewing classes have been going from strength to strength and an embroidery class has been added. Some participants are still at school and the youngest was 14 years old.

Completed articles included embroidered cushion covers, block printed shawls and bedspreads, and tie-dyed material. The standard of work is definitely of saleable quality and we have brought back several items to see what interest they generate.

We met several previous sewing students who are helping to support their families by sewing. One young woman had been given a grant by the Muslim Charity (administered by Sylhet Jubo Academy) to set up a tiny workshop next to her house. The room had been equipped with everything she needed to get started, including a sewing machine and fabric.



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September Trek

We now hold an annual online trek in September, replacing the previous sponsored walk in London. This year our trek will be arranged with students from the computer class. We will visit well known places in Sylhet city and some of the places that are well known to the project. These will include the Rainbow Guest House where our trustees usually stay when they visit, Keane Bridge and the River Surma, The Shah Jalal Dargah, The Book Fair and Shaheed Minar in Sylhet, and Badambagicha, where the project has been working for many years. This year our trek will be held on Saturday 3rd September starting at 10am. To receive the zoom link to attend please email khasdobir@btinternet.com To donate please visit: <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/friends-of-khasdobir> or send a cheque to our treasurer at April Cottage, 12 Church Street, Rothley, Leicestershire LE7 7PD

Annual Meeting

This year our annual Meeting will be held on Saturday 1st July from 10am by zoom. This is the link to join: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85920415571?pwd=VnNFUWxCM1RkR1q3R3VOS0U5SnJUQT09>
Meeting ID: 859 2041 5571
Passcode: 375136

Take part and hear the reports from trustees who have visited the project, find out about our plans for the future, and learn about our financial position. We look forward to seeing you on 1st July.

Computer Classes

The computer classes are also going very well. Approximately 50 students are undertaking the course in five groups. The computer classes are now in a dedicated computer room with a large screen for teaching and each student now has an individual desktop work station with QWERTY and Bangla keyboards. There is a syllabus which covers all of Microsoft Office, email and graphic design. The students were all very engaged, keen to learn and had a good relationship with the tutor.

We met a former computer student who has opened a small shop in Badambagicha, which he set up with funding from Muslim Charity. Since completing the course a year ago, he now provides online booking, printing, scanning and also sells several stationery items. He supports five family members.

Outreach Team

The outreach team was established in 2019. There are now three team members, one of whom is the team leader. Their work is predominantly in the tea estates and slum areas of the city, making contact with families who are often dealing with poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education for their children, and poor housing conditions.

We accompanied the Outreach Team to the two different parts of the Malnichara Tea Garden, Badambagicha slum area and the Khasdobir and Goipara colonies. They had been able to get birth certificates for several children on the tea estates. During the visits the team were frequently surrounded by neighbours and children. They were proactive in checking for other children who didn't have a birth certificate, going through the documents families had and advising parents and guardians of the next steps. In addition to their role, they also talked to people about other concerns.

The team also facilitate Courtyard Meetings to discuss issues of concern. We attended the Gowaipara Courtyard Meeting. Twenty women were present. The courtyard has one open air cooking area for approximately a dozen homes and a water supply twice a day.

A sign informing the community that the meeting was about to start had been suspended above the cooking area.

A key theme on the courtyard meeting was keeping children and young people safe.

Safeguarding

The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults was a key focus for this visit.

There were detailed discussions about safeguarding in all the parents/guardians meeting which we attended, and also in the courtyard meeting and staff meeting.



Moyra Blake and Sue Simmons

Stay with us, Support us!

We are compliant to EU General Data Protection Regulations

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Please email to khasdobir@btinternet.com



100th birthday of our founder Peter East

On 29th April at All Hallows by the Tower in the City of London our supporters gathered to celebrate the 100th birthday of our founder, Peter East. We were joined, through a zoom link, by members of the project meeting at the school named after Peter in Sylhet. Introducing the celebration Mike Sherriff, Chair of Friends of Khasdobir said that the project had now been running for almost 40 years. This had been possible because of the excellent relationships with the community in Sylhet and the support from the UK, including several legacies, which had enabled a long-term commitment to be made to the work and supported the construction of shelters for the pre-primary schools.

During the programme the children at the school performed dances and sang songs including the Bangladeshi National Anthem and We Shall Overcome. People who had known Peter in Sylhet spoke with passion about how he had helped them and how the project had transformed their lives. A member of Peter's family and trustees of Friends of Khasdobir shared their memories and a variety of newsletters and photos were on display. During the celebration there was a simultaneous cutting of birthday cakes in Sylhet and London.



Our Computer Class Student earns his first income from online freelance work

Jakaria is eighteen years old. He joined our computer class in July 2022. He has already learnt about Word, Excel and Powerpoint and is now learning photoshop. Before the course finishes in June, he will also learn about illustrator.

Jakaria is a very enthusiastic student and comes to the office outside class time to practice on the computer. In future he is keen to earn an income by freelancing and has already completed his first freelance work which he found through a contact of his extended family. His main interest is graphics, and he recently designed a visiting card for a client in Malaysia, earning 400 taka (about £4). This was his first success in freelance work.

It has been an ambition of Jakaria to learn computing for some time, but he could not find any opportunity to do so. When he heard about our course from the woman who does the cleaning at the office he immediately applied to join. He is also studying accounting at a local college.

Jakaria lives in Badambagicha, which is in Sylhet city next to the tea gardens. He has lived there for eight years. His mother does housework and his father is a CNG driver (a small three wheeled vehicle carrying passengers). He has one sister who is married and one sister who is studying in class 9. Jakaria previously attended Khasdobir Primary School. Outside school he is keen on playing football and cricket.



Tanish treasures her Teddy

In 2019 when she was just four years old Tanish attended our school located in a large garage in the Khasdobir area of Sylhet. One day during their visit our trustees arrived with some teddies donated by supporters in the UK. Tanish received one of the teddies in a bag.

In 2023 during a visit to one of the slum areas on the edge of the tea gardens in Sylhet Tanish, now seven years old, stepped forward and proudly produced her teddy from its bag. She remembers receiving the teddy and still loves to play with it.

Tanish lives with her grandma. Her mother is disabled, and her father is a labourer. She has one younger sister who also likes the teddy.



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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.

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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.