



Year 16

BANYAN NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BANYAN TRUST

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Winter 2015



Meanwhile, in Dhaka, the teachers have embraced the new admin and are busy developing programmes for the children and their parents. They are all working with special educators from The Perkins Institute near Boston USA, which is internationally renowned as a teaching centre for children with various disabilities. They educated the amazing Helen Keller and in 1894, her teacher Annie Sullivan, found ways to communicate with the young girl, who was both blind and deaf. You can find out more about this significant relationship on-line. It is a truly inspirational story.



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This has been a very exciting year, as well as more development in Dhaka, the UK trustees have been moving house and exchanging their responsibilities.

Our founding Treasurer Graham Lomax, is now also a Trustee for the UK, and my partner, James Moffett, an experienced traveller, having visited Sanjeevani twice now, has become a new Trustee for the UK, allowing us to remain a team of three. One of our Dutch Trustees no longer remains a trustee for both countries, but still translates information when needed. Having worked together for a good while now, it was appropriate to make a change and we still remain a small hands-on group of trustees, directing our project with consistent funding and informative emails.

Talking of achievement, the consistent loyalty to the Sanjeevani project that many of you have given, is to my mind an achievement, but of a different kind. I get so many requests from charities at this time of year and I bet you do too! Many of you use a monthly direct debit or have created an annual gift at Christmas time for Banyan and that has not wavered even though other requests cannot be ignored. Thank you so much, we can only plan ahead if some of our income is assured – so please stay with us and remember we might not be a big player – but we are relied upon!

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We have had others give us time, expertise and unexpected donations so thank you too - it's all greatly appreciated. Special thanks go to John H. - your cycle ride raised a great sum - and stay fit!



Regular sports events at nearby open spots, that are rapidly becoming more rare in ever growing Dhaka.

Lastly but not least, I have moved from the farm, so The Banyan Trust is now registered at my new address, details below. Meanwhile, with our thanks, we all wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year!

Annie Larner Chairman UK

OUR NEW DETAILS

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OUR EDUCATION

At present our teaching staff at Sanjeevani is broadening its professional horizon through multiple training programmes. This year they have received training in communication skills for special educators. Our teachers have learned how to improve and apply individual education plans. Another training focused on challenging behaviour of pupils. Classroom management was yet another training topic –

definitely useful within the Sanjeevani classroom, where children can be extremely disruptive, demanding, even aggressive and poorly behaved.

These trainings already have a positive impact on the teacher-pupil relationship. The children feel better understood and challenging behaviour has definitely diminished. The individual education plans are more succinct, so the personal aims for each child are clearer.



Teacher Sadia doing a lesson from the workbook.

Group lessons focus on certain themes, aiming to introduce the outside world to the student. Current theme is “The City” for example, where they learn about public services such as the police, post office, hospital, public transport and many other relevant topics.

The students have their own individual “work books” and are responsible for keeping it neat and making sure it is stored properly.



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They are really proud of their own book full of photos, challenges, puzzles and texts with special large letters. The teachers are also enthusiastic – they have noticed a much improved attention span with the pupils.

Other teaching topics are rather practical, such as earthquake and fire drills. The recent earthquakes in Nepal were also strongly felt in Dhaka and prompted the team to ensure proper safety procedures. Drills now take place on a regular basis and the children are well aware of what to do in an emergency.



The curriculum also includes basic computer lessons that can improve the students' attention span and of course their reading and writing skills. Many are fascinated by the computer and absolutely love their sessions.



A one on one lesson with one of the more challenging pupils.

PERKINS

Sanjeevani enjoys ever stronger ties with the Perkins Institute for the Blind from the US.

Annie Lerner, our UK chairman also mentions the fruitful relationship with Perkins in her message on page 1.

Sanjeevani's Director Rabeya Neela received a year's training in the United States, almost fully sponsored by Perkins. Annie visited the venerable institute near Boston when Rabeya was out there and Annie also keeps in regular touch with the Perkins' staff.

Since Rabeya's return Perkins Institute supports our project with valuable teaching materials and various trainings from their worldwide experts. The Banyan Trust's new Bangladesh partner has now also entered into a formal partnership with Perkins International. Together they organise much needed training programmes in special education schools throughout Bangladesh, focusing on early intervention and development through play. Our teachers travel to remote areas to train teachers.

The Perkins manuals are currently being translated into Bengali by our partner organisation and prepared for distribution throughout Bangladesh.



Regular outings to local parks and playgrounds with parents volunteering. The parents also befriend each other at these events. They for example organise chillsitting for each other when they are at work and the children at home.

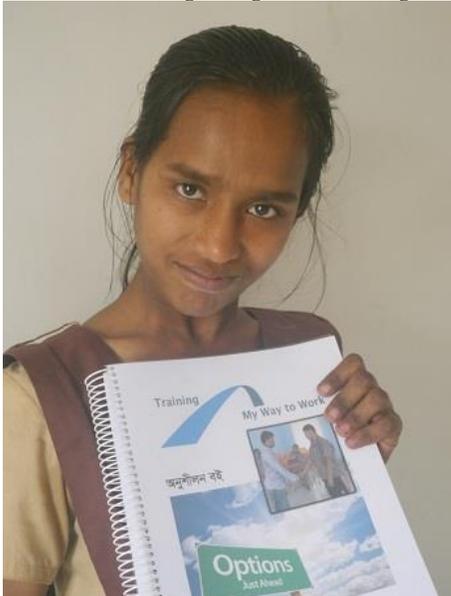
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RUNA

I am Runa and I am 16 years old. My mother was 13 when she became pregnant with me. My birth was very problematic. I suffered from a lack of oxygen and was born with disabilities such as impaired motor skills and learning difficulties.

Both my parents make long days at work, my dad in construction and my mum in the garments industry. I have two younger sisters, already married.

My parents have also attempted to marry me off, but nobody wants me. I live with my parents in the slums of Badda, in a tiny hut above a lake full of garbage and sewage.



As a girl I am extra vulnerable and I need to learn how to be safe, how to protect myself

from bad people.

I attend Sanjeevani three days a week. It's not easy for me to get there, as I have to cross a wobbly bamboo bridge to get to the busy main road. Luckily Sanjeevani staff are always there to help me.

On my photograph I am showing you my personal workbook. I look after it very well and I am learning a lot about the world around me. I hope one day I can help out in a local shop, or maybe even do sewing work.

Now I have many friends, I can see a doctor when I am sick, I get regular meals and the teachers love me. My life is much better now!



Runa and her fellow pupils/friends have baked cakes and cookies for annual "Cake Day", one of the most appreciated festivals by the students. Annual Cake Day is a Sanjeevani feast, not a national holiday!

THE BANYAN TRUST



Our work would not be possible without the consistent and generous support of our regular sponsors.

For more information
please contact The Banyan Trust
01298 687018

Or email to:

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