

ASPIRE

A quarterly OBAT Helpers publication

July 2014

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Scholarship Student Receives Laptop



Mr. Sohel Anwar handing
laptop to Nowsad Alam

In June, OBAT board member, Professor Sohel Anwar, visited the Geneva and Market camps in Dhaka. He toured the coaching and computer center and the water point. Mr. Anwar also participated in a brief ceremony during which he awarded a laptop to Nowsad Alam, a student from OBAT's scholarship program who's college education will greatly benefit from this resource. Thank you to our OBAT family for passing on the gift of learning!

Solar Bottle Light Project in the Spotlight



Visitors from Germany with OBAT staff
& CHANGE representatives

In February 2014, 28 solar lights were installed by OBAT at the NLJ School with the help of a local partner, CHANGE. This project solved the severe electricity problems faced by the school with more than 1,000 benefiting from the venture.

This innovative project has attracted significant media attention with coverage in Bangla Vision TV as well as on Jamuna TV.

Mr. Arne Zocher, (Consultant, Bangladesh German Chamber of commerce), Mr. Jan Sohlmann, (Monitoring Advisor, GIZ,

Ramadan, Charity & Spirit!

OBAT's 30 Day Campaign!



The blessed month of Ramadan is here and we have the opportunity once again to extend our help and support to those who are less fortunate. Our forgotten brothers and sisters in Bangladesh, commonly known as stranded Pakistanis or Biharis, have been living in the camps since 1971, and deserve our Zakat, donations, and prayers this month.

This holy month is an opportunity to solidify our faith, express gratitude, and extend as much help as we can to the forgotten people in Bangladesh. In previous years, your help during these thirty days has been absolutely extraordinary.

This Ramadan, our goal is to raise \$270,000 in order for our projects to grow and flourish, and with the involvement and awareness of our collective networks, we can surely reach, if not surpass, this goal InshaAllah.

With your help, we already have nearly \$70,000 raised, with just about \$200,000 remaining to meet our campaign goal!

How Can You Help?

1) Get your Networks Involved!

Never underestimate the power of sharing. You can help share and spread OBAT Helpers' mission and Ramadan campaign by using the resources (flyer, letter, campaign) found [HERE](#)! Contact us directly for any further information/help.

2) Support our Projects!

- Ramadan Food Distribution:
\$9.00 per family
- Educational Aid & Scholarships:
\$200-1,000 per year will help one student continue his/her education
- Different Educational: \$3,500-\$18,000 per year to the educational project of your choice: preschool, elementary or middle school, tutoring center, education for working children, computer training center, literacy program for adults, vocational training for women, etc.
- Economic Empowerment:
\$250-\$1,000 will help a family become financially empowered
- Family Assistance Program:
\$100-\$600 per year will provide assistance to a family for basic needs

German Development Co-operation), and other organizations recently visited the school to observe this project. After their visit, they met with OBAT staff and partnering organizations' representative, Mr. Sajid Iqbal and explored the possibility of expanding this project in other camps as well.

Tutoring Centers Produce Stellar Results



Jubilant Candidates with some of OBAT's Visiting Team Members

Students undergo coaching at our tutoring centers to receive the help they need to pass their exams with high grades and move on to the next academic level with ease. Recently, the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) board announced the results: sixteen out of nineteen students from OBAT's Dhaka tutoring center received an A+ to A-grade. Eleven out of sixteen students from the Mymensingh tutoring center were recipients of A's.

Global Giving Visits OBAT from Washington, D.C.



Ms. Neeharika Tummala with Dhaka Preschool Children

Various OBAT preschool projects are listed on Global Giving, an international online fundraising platform. In the last week of April, a Global Giving representative from Washington D.C., Ms. Neeharika Tummala visited the prechools and nearby camps. Ms. Tummala enjoyed her time and noted that of all the NGOs she had visited, OBAT was the only one which had its own curriculum. The teachers and students were at ease with her as Ms. Tummala could easily communicate with them. She expressed an interest in providing English Language training to the students and teachers after

- Health Clinic: \$15,000-\$25,000 per year can run/build a facility staffed with part time doctors, registered nurses and medicine to thousands of people
- Cataract Surgery:
\$40 can bring vision back to one sightless person
- Water and Sanitation Facilities:
\$5,000-\$8,000 for drinking water, sewage facilities and construction/rebuilding of bathrooms
- Donate toward any other areas of need!

Visit www.obathelpers.org to get more info!

[Ramadan Campaign Video](#)

OBAT Team Visits the Camps!



Bottom front row, from right: Mr. Craig, Mr. Khan, Ms. Khan, Ms. Croucher and Ms. Hussain with students at the Syedpur Sewing Center

In May 2014, the President of OBAT was joined by four individuals in his annual trip to the camps in Bangladesh. This group of six from the United States arrived with their passion and talents in tow and remained busy with meetings and training sessions throughout Bangladesh.

The delegation, along with the exceptional Bangladesh OBAT team, held a great meeting centered on awareness and assistance for this population, with the U.S. Embassy and

USAID. OBAT team members also met with the World Food Program, to seek support in feeding OBAT's school going children. Successful meetings were held with local business leaders, organizations, and youth groups. Following us on social media? Check out #OBATannualtrip! [More about the trip here!](#)

Tragic News from Mirpur Camp

We are deeply saddened and shocked at the inhumane deaths of ten individuals from the Urdu speaking community living in Mirpur, Kurmitola camp in Dhaka

We stand for the well being and safety of the camp residents and strongly oppose any and all terrorizing and discriminatory actions.

OBAT Helpers USA encourages individuals, other humanitarian organizations and local authorities to take the necessary actions to ensure that tragedies like this never occur in the future. Please keep the families affected and the overall well-being of this population in your prayers.

Please visit these links to learn more about this terrible tragedy:

<http://aje.me/UFxllM>

<http://shar.es/PlnZn>

<http://bit.ly/1i00tMX>

OBAT's Decade of Empowerment

returning to the US. Thanks for the visit, Global Giving!

Visitor from Montreal



Ms. Maude Bourassa with OBAT Preschool students

In April, Ms. Bourassa (graduate student Councillor at the École Polytechnique de Montreal in Canada) visited the camps.

Her primary reason to visit was to conduct a workshop in which OBAT also participated. That sparked her interest to visit OBAT's projects in Dhaka including, the preschools. She also visited the Diabetic hospital where she met with and observed the process of the surgeries in the cataract camp. Two new Education for working Children centers were also inaugurated by Ms. Bourassa.

Staying to Date with Developments in Education



Ms. Nighat conducting the training in Dhaka

OBAT aims to keep its teachers updated with the latest developments in curriculum and standards of education followed in the country. During April, a two day training was organized by Mr. Sohail Khan and Ms. Shamim Nighat for the Khulna Preschool and Elementary teachers. Also during April, a daylong teachers training program was conducted for Dhaka English School teachers and volunteers. Training was facilitated by Ms. Shamim Nighat and among the topics covered were competency based questioning, multiple choice questions, etc. The Bangladeshi Government changed the examination systems of Elementary Schools especially for grades four and five, and our teachers are staying on top of it!

A Second ThinkTank Initiated in Chittagong!

We are proud to announce that a second Think Tank has been introduced in the Chittagong community. Just having been



OBAT's special 10th anniversary logo

Since January 2014, we have been releasing monthly special reports on our decade of empowerment! These mini-newsletters offer a unique insight into OBAT and are a great way to learn ten interesting things about OBAT every month. If you haven't had the chance to peruse them so far, here are the links to all the editions for the first half of the year. Don't forget to stay tuned for more in the coming months! Enjoy!

- [Ten Lives You Have Touched](#)
- [What Does OBAT Mean To You?](#)
- [Ten Projects You Have Helped Us Accomplish](#)
- [Ten Little Known Facts about OBAT](#)
- [Ten Ways You Can Help OBAT](#)
- [Ten Life Changing Stories from the Micro-Finance Program](#)

Cataract Surgery for Chittagong Camp Residents



Some patients post surgery with health attendants

With the assistance of the RS Foundation and HCI (Human Concern International) in Canada, a cataract surgery program was recently implemented in three phases in April within the Chittagong camps. Fifty three men and women underwent cataract surgery. These surgeries took place with the partnership of the Diabetic Hospital which is situated

close to the Sardar Bahadur Nagar camps.

Changing Community through Youth



PEC students during their coaching session

In late 2013, OBAT Think Tank initiated the, "Change the Community Through Youth," program. This program's objective was to provide coaching to fifth grade students to enable them to pass the PEC (Primary Education Certificate), which is a public exam. This project started its new batch of students for 2014 in January. It is being run by nine volunteers from OBAT Think Tank. Although seventy-eight applications were received, only

in existence for about a month, this group already has projects underway! One of their first projects included the aid, assistance, and funeral arrangements of an elderly woman from the camp.

Help OBAT while Shopping at Amazon

An easy way to help OBAT is while you are shopping at Amazon! AmazonSmile is a new program through which shoppers at Amazon can donate 0.5% of their purchases to a U.S. based nonprofit. OBAT is listed in the AmazonSmile database, all you need to do is search for it and select it as your favorite non profit. Here is some more information on the program: <http://bit.ly/1kthvTW>

OBAT Receives Grant from Power of One



Bathrooms in Geneva Camp

In May, OBAT received a grant from Power of One, a local foundation in Indianapolis. The grant was awarded to cover the partial expenses of repairing bathrooms in Geneva camp, which are in extremely decrepit conditions.

There are about 35,000 people or 8,000 families living in Geneva Camp - making this the largest camp in Bangladesh.

There are a total of 273 bathroom chambers for the usage of the Geneva camp residents. Sixty-eight percent of these toilets are out of order making only thirty-two percent, or eighty-eight of these bathrooms usable for this sizable population. If you would like to contribute towards the remaining cost of these bathrooms, please reach us via email.

Save the Dates!

July 1st-31st: Photo Exhibit

During July, OBAT's photo exhibit will be featured in the Indianapolis Central Library

September 27th: OBAT TURNS TEN!

Please join us during this celebratory night as we commemorate our last decade together.

[Don't miss out on the fun!](#)

The More You Know

fifty-three could be accommodated due to resource availability. Priority was given to NLJ School students, orphans, and needy children.

The group is divided into two: first group is the Daisy's consisting of twenty-six students; the second group is Magpie's consisting of twenty-seven students. The current batch will undergo coaching until November 2014, which is when they will take their PEC exam. Admissions for the next batch will take place in January 2015.

We are very proud of all the impactful projects the Think Tank has initiated in the camps and all their efforts to produce a much needed change!

OBAT Receives 2014 Top Rated Nonprofit Award!



We are so grateful to all our supporters whose stellar reviews of OBAT on greatnonprofits.org got OBAT an award for "2014- top rated non profit."

Read the reviews that helped OBAT receive this award:
<http://bit.ly/1mCUUaC>

What is your review on OBAT? Don't forget to let us know what you think and what improvements you would like to see at OBAT by writing a review of your own at the link above.

OBAT Bangladesh Conducts Workshop



Sohail Khan with workshop attendees

On April 24th, OBAT Bangladesh was invited to present at a workshop conducted on IDP's (Internally Displaced People) at the Asian University for Women. It was organized by Maude Bourassa visiting from École Polytechnique de Montreal in Canada and covered topics such as: internally displaced people, development aid, and NGO intervention. Sohail Khan, who heads OBAT's Education program in Bangladesh, presented about the situation in the camps and what OBAT is doing to help. Students from Afghanistan, Malaysia, Nepal, Vietnam and Bangladesh attended the workshop.

Where have we been Since April?



The finish line at the Race4Rehma

Fort Wayne Get together:

On April 25th, The Friends of OBAT - Ft. Wayne community shared a meal with us as we updated them about the two OBAT projects they have been sponsoring, Khulna Computer training center and the Dhaka tutoring center. A special thanks to the Ft. Wayne friends of OBAT chapter for their ongoing and

- We are so proud to have Dr. Shujaat Wasty on our Advisory Board. An insightful and thought provoking article written by him on the NGO sector: <http://bit.ly/1j0VLjm>
- Our preschools are thriving and receiving visitors from the US and Canada:
<http://bit.ly/1gaWONe>

How can YOU Help?

[Buy our book, "Forgotten," to support our projects](#)

[Watch and share our new documentary](#)

[Review us here to show your support](#)

[Volunteer](#)

[Intern](#)

[Spread the word](#)

[Donate!](#)

generous support of these two projects!

Race4Rehma:

The next morning after the Ft. Wayne event, the team was back in Indianapolis, geared up for OBAT's third Race4Rehma. The "Rehma" project was formed in 2011 to play an active humanitarian role in the Indianapolis community and gain recognition in the home city of OBAT. Two 5K walks/runs were held in 2011 and 2012 to help the beneficiaries, Second Helpings and Sense Charter School.

[Read more here!](#)

Indianapolis Iftar:

On July 5th, the Friends of OBAT - Indianapolis came together to invite OBAT supporters to a successful Ramadan evening at the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). We were joined by the delegates who visited OBAT this year, along over 300 guests who attended the program! Thanks Indianapolis friends!

Education for Working Children



Students enrolled in the program

Presently, sixty-five students are enrolled in OBAT's, "Education for Working Children Program." Due to extreme poverty, many school going children cannot attend school and have to work to supplement their parents' earnings. Through this program, these kids are able to get basic education before leaving for work

in the morning. OBAT Think Tank has now added two more of such programs in Dhaka. Four volunteers will be teaching in these two new projects. Twenty-five students, aged eight and above will be attending the program for 1.5 hours everyday before heading to work. The duration of this course will be six months. This program aims to fill a dire need in this community.

Youth Group Trains NLJ Students



The BYLC team
outside NLJ School

A team from BYLC (Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center) visited the NLJ School. "Our Dream," is the name of the new project, a three day long training for students aged 12-15 years, that the BYLC has conducted in partnership with OBAT's Think Tank at the NLJ school. The objective was to train students in leadership skills, build their

ambitions and develop reading habits by building a library for them. Unsure of what to do next and without any guidance, many of these students drop out after middle school. To help prevent this from happening, the BYLC built a library and donated books and shelves; they also provided students with cleaning supplies to enable them to implement a school clean up project as they were trained through this workshop.

"Disable to Able" Update

This project was initiated early this year and has picked up further momentum as OBAT has joined hands with another local nonprofit organization, AWARD. The president of AWARD, Mr. Niaz



Volunteers work with
an autistic student

Ahmed visited the NLJ School to identify issues faced by the autistic children studying there. After speaking with the parents of these children, they found out that these kids had never received any treatment or visited a doctor due to limited resources of their parents.

AWARD has arranged for them to receive medical treatment; volunteers from AWARD accompany them on their visits and also provide food and other amenities to the families. The objective is to make these children productive members of the society.

About OBAT

OBAT Helpers is a US based non-profit, 501(C)3 organization committed to providing aid, support, education and economical empowerment to suffering and displaced people. Our immediate focus is the forgotten and ignored Urdu speaking people, commonly known as stranded Pakistanis/Biharis, who have been suffering silently in the many shanty camps across Bangladesh for the past 42 years.

We hope that you will continue your generous support to provide help to these unfortunate and forgotten people. OBAT represents the only hope for them, as they don't receive much assistance and support from anywhere else around the world. Together, we are making a difference in their lives as we help them fulfill their hopes and dreams.

Please pass along this message to others who can
join us on this journey!

We value and appreciate your support
tremendously. For questions and concerns,
please email us at contact@obathelpers.org

Spread the word
&
Donate!

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