

ASPIRE

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Welcoming New Board Members!

We are very pleased to announce the addition of three new members to our board. All three individuals bring a unique skill set, valuable experience and insight and will be an asset to OBAT's board. They participated in this quarter's board meeting held on February 23rd. Please join us in welcoming the following:

Dr. Azfar Malik: Mr. Malik has been a part of Friends of OBAT,

Dr. Victoria Redclift Visits Indianapolis



Dr. Redclift with OBAT Team (L-R): Dr. Maarij Syed, Carey Craig, Tipu Ahmed, Anwar Khan, Dr. Victoria Redclift, Tabassum Ahmed, Monawar Sultan & Arishaa Khan

OBAT Helpers was pleased to host sociologist and scholar, Dr. Victoria Redclift who spent a week in Indianapolis from April 1st to April 6th. Dr. Redclift is a lecturer at the University of Surrey in England and we had the honor to previously welcome her to our projects in Bangladesh during her visit to the camps in 2012. During her visit to Indianapolis, she spoke at the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at IUPUI, Iqra Center, Al Huda, and in various communities including Ft. Wayne. Her research, which is closely related to the issues of citizenship, ethnicity and identity faced by the camp residents, has been the driving force behind her two published works: "Statelessness and Citizenship: Camps and the creation of political space" and "Subjects or agents: Camps, contests and the creation of 'political space'".

We were honored to have her here and look forward to hosting her again in the camps as well as here in

St. Louis chapter. This chapter has been sponsoring Sardar Bahadur Nagar School with Mr. Malik being the key force behind it. Mr. Malik lives in St. Louis and is a psychiatrist by profession. At present, he is the CEO of CenterPointe Hospital.

Mr. Sohel Anwar: Sohel Anwar is currently an Associate Professor at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) in the department of Mechanical Engineering. He is also the chair of graduate education and research committee and director of Mechatronics Research Laboratory. Mr. Anwar holds twelve U.S. patents and has published over eighty-five technical papers in peer reviewed journals and conference proceedings.

Mr. Immad Ahmed: Mr. Ahmed graduated with a public finance degree from Indiana University. He has been working as a business analyst for the government and private sector for the past nine years. After graduating from college, Mr. Ahmed worked in Australia and most recently in Washington D.C. for the Maritime Administration. Immad is also the founder of Empower The Future, an NGO which promotes environmental awareness and social economic development in underdeveloped countries, with a current focus in Pakistan.

New Tutoring Center in Syedpur!



Students at the new tutoring center

A new tutoring center has opened in Syedpur, making the new total number of tutoring centers run by OBAT five. The plan is to gradually grow the center. At present, it offers tutoring to 8th grade students who need to pass their JSC (Junior School Certificate) exam. In April, a new class will be added for 5th grade students who need help with preparing for the PSC (Primary School Certificate) exam.

New Scholarship Fund

With the help of a long time and generous supporter of OBAT who prefers to stay anonymous, a scholarship fund has been established in his departed father's name: Syed Mohammad Junaid Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The first scholarship from this fund has been awarded to Abul Kashem, the first young man from the camps who just started his journey toward becoming the first future medical doctor from the camps. At the end of his degree, the scholarship fund will be used to finance the education of another deserving and hard working candidate from the camps.

We offer our deepest thanks to this donor, whose compassion will light up Abul Kashem's and several other camp residents' futures.

Thank You, St. Louis Friends of OBAT

Indianapolis.

Proud of our "Award Winning" Students



Rangpur students at the park

These stellar performers in the picture above are students of OBAT's Rangpur School who have achieved extraordinary academics! In the PSC (Primary/elementary School Certificate) exams, 40% of the Rangpur School students got an A+, another 40% got an A and 20% received an A-. As a reward for an excellent performance among other government and private schools, the students earned a trip to Swapna Puri, the City of Dreams Park. Congrats students!

From Canada to Bangladesh: Shujaat Wasty Visits OBAT's Projects



Mr. Wasty giving prizes to students on sports day, Mohammadpur camps

Mr. Shujaat Wasty of Canada, one of our valued advisers, visited our Dhaka projects in February. Through his foundation, Mr. Wasty supports cataract surgeries and health clinic. In a correspond to OBAT President, Mr. Anwar Khan, Mr. Wasty wrote, "I'm really so impressed and amazed by your efforts in spearheading everything and how Allah(swt) is making



Students enjoying recess
at SB Nagar school

OBAT Helpers, with the help of Dr. Azfar, Maheen Malik and Dr. Tariq Malik, hosted the Friends of OBAT - St. Louis meeting at the Malik's beautiful welcoming home on February 9th. It is truly a blessing for OBAT to have the opportunity to start such a dynamic chapter in St. Louis with a community that is so active and eager to help these forgotten people. Friends of OBAT - St. Louis currently sponsors OBAT School in SB Nagar Chittagong.

SB Nagar is the largest camp in Chittagong, resulting in this being the largest OBAT school in terms of student enrollment: 520 students (247 girls and 273 boys). Thank you to our hosts and members of this Friends of OBAT chapter, and to Dr. Helal Ekramuddin and Br. Shahbaz for their help in organizing this event.

Our Friends of OBAT chapters are growing with the help of your communities! With all of our supporters, OBAT Helpers continues to make a long-term, positive impact on the forgotten people. Your city can also take part in the movement and make a big difference by starting a chapter. Reach out to us if you're interested in getting involved!

1,000 Students Benefit from Solar Light



Studying under
the solar light!

For the last 26 years, the NLJ OBAT high school has faced serious lighting issues. This has greatly hampered the educational process for the students in these classrooms. In order to address this issue, the OBAT think tank collaborated with a youth organization called CHANGE. Together, they constructed 28 bottle lights within two days for the school. Solar bottles are simple, cost efficient devices that can be built of scrap tin, roof tiles and empty plastic bottles filled with water. The construction is then integrated into the roof and sealed with water proof glue. Through light refraction, the sunlight is then channeled into the buildings. Approximately 1,000 students will benefit from these bottled lights. In addition, this opens up the possibility for local families to hold different festivals at the school such as wedding ceremonies and receptions.

Disabled to Able - Enabling Camp Residents

things better for these people in a tangible way. Over the past 6 years, I've seen a transformation. I really wish more people would be able to go and see the incredible work you/OBAT does." We are very grateful to Mr. Wasty and his continuous work for the forgotten people.

Int'l Women's Day Celebration in Camps



Award winners
Baby Begum &
Shahnaz Begum
with OBAT Team
(Jalaluddin
Ahmad, Murtuza
Khan & Sohail
Khan)

To celebrate women in the camps, OBAT's Syedpur sewing center observed International Women's Day. The event was attended by two Councillors and women from various camps of Syedpur. OBAT women empowerment projects include the microfinance program and the sewing center. Women are also benefiting from other programs of OBAT, including computer training center, non-formal education program and the health clinic.

The Think Tank also held a similar event in Dhaka, awarding two women, Shahnaz Begum and Baby Begum. The two ladies were both faced with extremely adverse circumstances but took charge of their families' well being. They both work tirelessly and gave their children's education the highest priority. The ladies did not allow poverty to hinder their children's future; now their children are either attending schools or universities.

Books for Schools



Disabled to Able

The OBAT Think Tank is gaining momentum and churning out new projects to aid the camp environment and its people. Due to widespread disconnect, many camp residents are unaware of some the facilities that are offered by the government. Among them is providing a monthly allowance, free medical facilities, general education and vocational training to autistic people. In the project, "Disable to Able," one hundred members of OBAT's Think tank will go door to door in six different camps in Mohammadpur, Dhaka to collect data on autistic individuals and dispense information on government facilities available for them. Bangladesh Social Welfare Organization (Ministry of Social Welfare) will partner with OBAT Think Tank to collect this data which maintains information about such individuals.

Mr. Shahid uz Zaman from the Social Welfare Organization indicated that previously the organization had not been able to enlist even 10% of the autistic population in the camps but with the design of this project, he feels comfortable that the entire autistic population will get enlisted. The organization arranged a workshop for the youth of the Think Tank on March 9th. The workshop taught the youth how to carry out the survey, how to deal with family members.

A renowned local NGO "AWARD" joined hands with OBAT Helpers in this project. Niaz Ahmed (President of AWARD) announced during a 'Disable to Able' meeting that they will provide all possible assistance for disable and affected by autism people in the camp.

We are so proud of the OBAT Think Tank progress!

Cataract Surgeries at Khulna



The patients get examined at the eye camp

An eye camp has been conducted at the Khulna camp during the month of March. This program took place in partnership with the HCI foundation in Canada and involved conducting eye exams and cataract surgeries on camp residents who are afflicted by vision related illnesses. Seventy life changing surgeries have been done so far.

Dynamic Partnerships benefit Scholarship Students



Fifteen volunteer students from BUET (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology) and IBA (Business Dept. of Dhaka University) provided training to OBAT's scholarship students who are attending different universities. The BUET students conducted eight classes, twice a

The Dhaka English School recently received free text books from the Bangladesh Government. One hundred and ninety-seven books were received for grades 1 to 5. The NLJ High School also received ninety books. We are very grateful to the Bangladeshi Government for this assistance.

Press Conference in Karachi



Mr. Anwar Khan (center) at the Karachi Press Club

President of OBAT Helpers, Anwar Khan, in his visit to Pakistan in January, got the opportunity to speak at a press conference in Karachi, Pakistan. Held at the Karachi Press Club, Mr. Khan highlighted the plight of the forgotten camp communities who are the focus of OBAT's work. Accompanying him was, Mr. Immad Ahmed who we have had the recent privilege of welcoming on to our board.

What have we been up to since January?

Here is where we have been since you last met us through our January newsletter:

February 2nd: Reception of OBAT's photo exhibit, "Forgotten," at St.Luke's Methodist Church. The photos stayed up in their gallery through the end of February.

February 21st: World Thinking Day with the Girl Scouts of Indianapolis

February 23rd: Board

week in science subjects. This group was coordinated by, Mr. Rashalat Ahmed, a fourth year student of BUET while IBA's group conducted their courses under the supervision of Mr. Jenet Bhouya . These students conducted English language and professional training courses for three hours each week.

Non-Formal Education Teachers Training



The workshop in progress

Sohail Khan, OBAT's Project Manager Bangladesh, recently conducted a workshop for the teachers of OBAT's non-formal education program. Other than the teachers, representatives from OBAT's partnering NGO, ISDCM were also present during the workshop. This program aims to educate children in the kindergarten to grade III age group. These children have remained deprived of education due to

severe poverty. The program provides instruction to them so that at the end of the three years, they are able to receive admission into the mainstream education system.

All of the teachers employed at OBAT's schools receive periodic training as an assessment tool and also to keep them abreast with current teaching methodologies. The following topics were a part of the training for the non formal program teachers: Identification of challenges and solutions; class routine and syllabus and teaching methodologies.

In efforts to share teachings and ideas, the teachers of the program seek to benefit from their counterparts at OBAT's Rangpur primary school who plan on visiting them to share their teaching methods and best practices.

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

meeting in the Indiana Interchurch Center

March 5th: Power to Her Conference, a joint project about women empowerment between Ivy Tech and Girl Scouts of Indiana

Save the Dates!



April 25th: Please join us at Friends of OBAT Fort Wayne Dinner. For details and registration, Please [click here](#)



April 26th: Don't miss out on OBAT's 3rd Race4Rehma on the Canal at 11:30 AM! This family friendly event will benefit local refugees through Exodus Refugee. The Race4Rehma is always a memorable time, so be sure to come walk for compassion! [Register you and your family today!](#)

September 27th: OBAT TURNS TEN! Please join us during this celebratory night as we commemorate our last decade together. [Don't miss out on this fun night!](#)

The More You Know

- [A trip back to 1971](#)
- [Camps & the creation of political space](#)

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