

Newsletter

Our latest news, updates and announcements

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Street Children
Bangladesh**

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Friends of Street Children Bangladesh is a UK registered
charity (charity number: 1171061)



Photo (above): Ms Kent Natasha Sharmin visits the children

Ms Kent 2024 visits the children at LEEDO Peace Home

Our new trustee, Natasha Sharmin, describes her visit to LEEDO. Natasha will be speaking at our programme on 7th July. On 17th, 18th and 19th July she will be taking part in the Ms UK Pageant. We wish her the best of luck at this national event.

As the UK's national Ms Kent 2023/24, I had the privilege of visiting LEEDO's projects in Dhaka, Bangladesh to show my support for underprivileged children. My primary focus is advocating for underprivileged children, and I sought a suitable charity to further this cause. During my visit, I had the

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privilege of expressing my commitment to assist LEEDO in any way I could. This marked the beginning of meaningful collaboration, and I extend my sincere appreciation to LEEDO director Mr. Forhad and the chairperson of 'Friends of Street Children Bangladesh', Mike Sherriff, for facilitating this invaluable visit to Dhaka.

While in Dhaka, I had the opportunity to witness the challenging conditions faced by children at the Kamlapur Railway Station, where many were without basic necessities. Their resilience and affection deeply moved me, prompting me to take action upon my return to the UK. I also visited the local police station near Kamlapur to facilitate the safe reunification of some children with their families.

During my visit, I had the opportunity to observe the remarkable work being done at the shelter home and the first School Under The Sky, supported by Friends of Street Children Bangladesh. Witnessing the children learning early maths and literacy skills was truly inspiring. I had the pleasure of meeting a dedicated teacher who was once a student at the first School Under The Sky, which underscored the potential of underprivileged children when provided with the right support.

Then I visited the LEEDO-inclusive school for children with disabilities, where I was deeply moved by the children's handcrafted products, sold to support the school. The children were also benefiting from specialised instruction from subject-expert teachers.

Lastly, I visited the PEACE home and was touched by the nurturing environment provided to the children. They were not only well-cared-for and well-fed but also received education, including ICT skills in a dedicated ICT room. The day culminated with a delightful cultural performance by the children and a traditional meal.

I am so honoured to share the news with you all that I have been offered the trustee position at the "Friends of Street Children Bangladesh" charity. The cause holds deep personal significance for me, and I am committed to supporting its mission.

I am also involved in collaborating with various charitable organisations to ensure consistent care for children in Guatemala, as well as to provide essential care for Jimmy the Donkey. Moreover, I am dedicated to advocating for terminally ill children to live life to the fullest within the hospice and to securing care and treatment beyond the scope of NHS funding for cancer patients.

I eagerly anticipate the opportunity to collaborate with Mike Sherriff and his team. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mike Sherriff, LEEDO, and Friends of Street Children Bangladesh.



Photo (above): Ms Kent Natasha Sharmin has become our newest Trustee

Our Summer fundraising event - 7th July 2pm by Zoom

Please join us on Sunday afternoon 7th July 2024 at 2pm for our annual summer fundraising event to support the work of LEEDO. This year our programme will include:

- Discussion with young people who live on the streets at the railway station and have now joined a vocational training programme with LEEDO
- Songs from children staying at LEEDO's transitional shelter at the railway station
- Discussion with a young person from the German group "Give One Back" who is volunteering with LEEDO
- Hearing from our new trustee, Natasha about her visit to LEEDO.
- Finding out about our work during 2023-24 and our plans for next year

Please contact us by 6th July at friendsofscbd@gmail.com to confirm that you will attend this on-line event.

Donate to support work with children living at the station in Dhaka at: <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/friends-of-street-children-bangladesh>

Please remember to click "Yes" in the Gift Aid box if we can claim the tax paid on your donation.



Photo (above): Children at the railway station

Our Annual Report 2023-24

The full copy of our annual report and accounts is available at: <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5091110/accounts-and-annual-returns>

In 2023-24 our total income was £7,145. This included income from donations, sale of our book, fundraising events and a grant from a Charitable Trust. We sent £10,000 in grants to LEEDO to cover costs related to participation by children from their Peace Home in the Street Child Cricket World Cup 2023, to support education on the streets and work at the transitional shelter near the railway station. We separately paid the participation fee (£550) for LEEDO to take part in the Street Child Cricket World Cup that was held in Chennai. During the year our main achievements were:

- The UK launch of our book based on the experiences of children who have used the services of LEEDO. This included input from the Chief Executive of the international organisation that brings together people working with street connected children from across the world.

- The production of 2 newsletters, circulated to over 200 subscribers.
- Fundraising from events including fundraising meals, donations, and sale of our book and copies of prints from the book.
- Supporting LEEDO's successful participation in the Street Child Cricket World Cup 2023 and assisting with the organisation of a reception at the British High Commission in Dhaka to raise awareness about, and gain support for, the work of LEEDO.
- Publicising our work to over 1,300 face book followers, our email circulation list of over 200, and on our web site.

Our plans for 2024-5 include continuing our programme of fundraising events and re-introducing the on-line programme of fundraising that we first initiated during the COVID pandemic. We will continue to use the People's Fundraising platform and encourage more people to donate regularly using the platform.

During 2024-5 our main emphasis will be on raising money to support LEEDO's work at the railway station in Dhaka. We will also continue to support the school at Rayer Bazar. We aim to apply for funds from some of the trusts and foundations that we have not previously approached and to encourage our supporters to raise funds to support the work for example when celebrating special occasions such as birthdays or by organising events. We hope to encourage schools and other organisations to support the work.

We will continue to promote our book through on-line sales and by encouraging community book shops to stock it. We will continue our newsletter and social media activity.



Photo (above): LEEDO Cricket Team at British High Commission in Dhaka

In 2024-25 we hope to recruit at least two new trustees

Thank you to everybody who has supported us in 2024-5. It is only with this support that we can continue to assist LEEDO's work in Dhaka and help to transform the lives of hundreds of children struggling to survive on the streets.

The youngest children at Rayer Bazar Street School

Friends of Street Children Bangladesh supports the LEEDO street school at Rayer Bazar. The children attending do not go to any other school. They usually start attending the street school when they are 6 years old. The oldest girl attending the school is twelve, but most are younger. If possible, the aim is to help the children find a place in a mainstream school. At the school, which meets for 2 hours on 5 days a week, twenty-five children attend and learn Bangla, Maths, English, drawing and human values.

Rabeya is one of the youngest girls at the school. She came to Dhaka 4 months ago

with her grandma, mother, and father. Her grandfather is dead. They now live in one room in a nearby slum, sleeping on the floor and sharing cooking and washing facilities with other families. They pay a huge amount each month in rent for the room.

Rabeya is mainly looked after by her grandmother because her mother was born with physical disabilities and cannot look after her. She begs for money to buy food. Her husband is a rickshaw puller and after paying the rent for the rickshaw he earns less than £2 per day. Rabeya used to have an older brother, but he died one year ago as a result of suffering with diarrhoea.

The family came by bus to Dhaka from Rangpur in the North of Bangladesh where they used to live. They moved because they had no house in their village and struggled to get enough money to live. In the village her father was a rickshaw puller but could not earn enough to support the family. Rabeya preferred life in the village because she had lots of friends there.

Rabeya's grandmother brings her to the LEEDO street school every day. She has now been attending for one month. Rabeya is very enthusiastic about attending the school. She especially likes the Bangla and drawing lessons. Eventually she hopes it might be possible to go to a school with other children but first she will have to get a birth certificate, which she does not have.

Yasin is seven years old. He has been attending the LEEDO school at Rayer Bazar for seven to eight months. He lives nearby in a slum with his mother, who works in a garment factory. His father died when he was very young, and he also had a sister who died. His family are originally from Bhola, an island in the delta of southern Bangladesh. Yasin enjoys coming to the LEEDO school and especially likes drawing. He would like to attend a school with other children when he is older.

This school, which provides the only education available for some of the poorest children surviving on the streets, relies on donations from the Friends of Street Children Bangladesh to continue.

Photo (below): Photo of the station by children from LEEDO Peace Home



Regular donations make a big difference

Since Friends of Street Children Bangladesh was formed a few of our supporters have started to give regular donations. These are very helpful because they enable us to be more certain that we can continue to support the work that LEEDO is doing with children surviving on the streets. For example, we were able to make a longer-term commitment to supporting the work with children at the Rayer Bazar street school.

It is relatively easy to set up regular donations and we encourage all our supporters to consider doing so. Simply go to our donations page on the Peoples Fundraising platform:

<https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donations/friends-of-street-children-bangladesh>

Click on the donate button at the top of the page. You will then see a list including options to donate by Direct Debit every week, two weeks, month, three months, six months or every year. Click on the option that you prefer.

You will then go to a page asking how much you want to donate regularly. You will be asked when you want to start the donations and for your details including name, address, telephone number and email address. You will be asked if you want Friends of Street Children Bangladesh to keep in contact with you by post, email or phone (all optional). You will also be asked if you are eligible for Gift Aid. Please make sure you tick the “Yes” box if you are a UK resident who pays enough UK income tax and/or capital gains tax to cover the Gift Aid benefit. This provides a significant boost to your donations.

You are then asked to click a box to confirm that you are not a robot. After completing this form click the Next box and you will be taken to a page to provide the bank details from which the donation is to be made. Simply fill in the details, accept the terms and conditions and click the “Next” box at the bottom of the page. Please note that it will be “People's Fundraising” that will be shown on your bank statements, as they are the platform collecting the donations and claiming Gift Aid for Friends of Street Children Bangladesh. They then regularly transfer the funds donated to our bank account and provide us with the names of donors, the amounts donated and information about whether Gift Aid has been claimed or not.

Please consider this way of supporting Friends of Street Children Bangladesh. It makes a big difference to our ability to support the work of LEEDO in the long-term.



Our screening of the film 'Mighty Afrin in The Time of Floods'

On Saturday 27th April we were please to show, for the first time in the UK, the award-winning film Mighty Afrin in The Time of Floods at the Hasan Raja Centre in Whitechapel, as part of our event on street connected children and climate change.

The film was written and directed by the Greek documentary filmmaker and photojournalist Angelos Rallis. It stars Afrin, who has stayed at Peace Home and was part of the LEEDO Street Child Cricket World Cup team in 2023. It tells the story of her life on a disappearing mud island along the Brahmaputra River. When heavy rainfalls and floodwaters ravage her home, Afrin refuses to surrender to the deadly tides. She embarks on a journey in a wooden boat toward the bustling metropolis of Dhaka, searching for her estranged father among the millions of climate refugees. The film captures the challenges faced by Afrin as she confronts the mysteries of a sinking world, highlighting the impact of climate change and floods in Bangladesh. The trailer can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSHSDL3GFVc>

Attendees at our event were captivated by the stunning cinematography, particularly the portrayal of the monsoon season and river travel in South Asia. Additionally, 'The Street is Not a Home' book was available for

purchase, with prints of illustrations, and images from photos created by children from LEEDO. Forhad, representing LEEDO, provided online updates to visitors, alongside speeches from Amy Neilson Smith and Ms Kent Natasha Sharmin, who recently visited the street children in Dhaka. A delightful surprise awaited attendees outside the Hason Raja Centre with a magically appearing rickshaw!

We hope in future to arrange more opportunities to view films that have been created with children from LEEDO.



Photos (above): Film screening of 'Mighty Afrin In The Time of Floods', and prints from our publication on sale. Held at the Hason Raja Centre in Whitechapel, East London.

For sale- the bi-lingual book
"The Street is Not a Home",
prints of illustrations from the
book and photos taken by
children from Peace Home.

Please remember that you can purchase our
bi-lingual (English and Bangla) book based on
the real lives of children assisted by LEEDO
on-line at

<https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/shop/the-street-is-not-a-home>

You can also purchase prints from the book
and copies of photos taken by children from
LEEDO Peace Home. Book cover is shown
below.



www.friendsofscbd.wordpress.com

