

Newsletter

Our latest news, updates and announcements

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**Contact Friends of
Street Children
Bangladesh**

e. friendsofscbd@gmail.com

w. www.streetchildrenbd.uk

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



Photo (above): Rayer Bazar school

Our Christmas appeal and annual Christmas lunch

This year our Christmas appeal is for funds to support the work of the street school at Rayer Bazar.

This was the first project that LEEDO started with children on the street. Every year we aim to send £2,000 to ensure that it can continue.

The school helps children aged six years plus. Many have recently arrived in Dhaka having come to the capital from poorer parts of Bangladesh such as Rangpur in the north and Bhola, a river island in the south. One of the teachers at the school came to Dhaka himself when he was a child. He survived on the streets but then was allocated a place at the LEEDO Peace Home. He took part in the Street Child

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Cricket World Cup 2019. Now, he lives independently and attends college but is still involved with LEEDO as a teacher at the school.

Please donate to support our Christmas appeal at:

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

The money will help children such as Rabeya who is looked after by her grandmother. The family live in one room in a nearby slum, sleeping on the floor and sharing cooking and washing facilities with other families. At school Rabeya enjoys the drawing lessons. She is also learning Bangla, Maths and human values.

Do try to come along to our annual Christmas lunch and meet our trustees including Chair, Mike Sherriff and Vice-Chair Saif Osmani, author and illustrator of the book “The Street is Not a Home” produced with the children of LEEDO. Meet our new trustee from the world of glitz and glamour, Natasha who is Ms Kent 2024 and who visited the children at LEEDO earlier this year. Also question our trustee Tom about the street child football to be held in the United States in 2026 and how you could get involved. Mumtaz can tell you about her recent visit to Bangladesh and Tony about support available to young people interested in volunteering with LEEDO.

Our Christmas lunch will be held at Omnom restaurant at Islington Square, 116N Upper

Street, Islington, London, N1 1QP, less than ten minutes’ walk from Angel tube station. It is being held at 1pm on Sunday 8th December. To view the menu follow this link: [e5ce38_7c3b24b5f4724dala2ef992be1918769.pdf](https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/friends-of-street-children-bangladesh)

To reserve your place please contact us before 3rd December at friendsofscbd@gmail.com



Photo (above): School under the Sky



Photo (above): Sewing sessions



Friends of
**STREET
CHILDREN**
Bangladesh

YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR

Annual Christmas Lunch

and seasonal appeal for funds

SUNDAY
08
DECEMBER

LUNCH AT 1 PM
Omnom, Islington
Square, 116N Upper
Street, Islington,
London, N1 1Q

**PAY FOR YOUR
OWN MEAL**
+ Make a
donation

Scan QR code
for donation link:



To **confirm your place** please email us before 3rd December at
friendsofscbd@gmail.com
To support our Christmas appeal please go to:
www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/friends-of-street-children-bangladesh
Registered charity number: 1171061

Newham Festival of Stories



We are very pleased that our book, “The Street is Not a Home” was selected to feature in an event at Plaistow Library on 16th November as part of the Newham Festival of Stories. Our workshop featured the story of Fatima who spent her early childhood in Mymensingh one of the districts in Bangladesh adjacent to Sylhet. She came to Dhaka by train and lived on the street before being admitted first to a shelter and then the permanent home for children run by LEEDO. The story was read by our trustee, Natasha. We then had a zoom link with children from LEEDO’s Peace Home in Dhaka who shared some of their experiences, sang a Bengali song and performed a dance.

Finally, participants were invited to take part in an illustration workshop led by the illustrator of the book. This focussed on the story in the book. Those who joined the workshop in person received a free copy of the book. Twenty five people took part. You can order your copy of “The Street is Not a Home” at <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/shop/the-street-is-not-a-home#purchase>

It could be a great gift for a special friend at Christmas!



Photo (above): Art workshop with families at the Newham Festival of Stories

The Rickshaw Run Challenge

Our trustee, Tom, writes about the rickshaw run challenge, which raised over £3,000 to support the work of LEEDO on the streets of Dhaka:

“When Johannes, Domenic, and I decided to take on the Rickshaw Run Himalaya, we knew we were in for a challenge, but nothing could have prepared us for what lay ahead. Back in 2017, we spent several weeks at LEEDO's Peace Home in Dhaka, where we would often visit projects at the railway station or ferry terminals, where many of the street children live. Our daily trips were made by “CNG,” as the three-wheelers are known in Dhaka, and we were immediately fascinated by these small machines. At the time, we dreamed of driving one ourselves—though definitely not in Dhaka's chaotic

traffic! Seven years later, we found ourselves winding up and down mountain roads, mastering the art of shifting gears with just a flick of the wrist.

As we journeyed through the Himalayas, our little rickshaw—a glorified lawnmower on three wheels—proved to be as challenging as we expected. Every day brought its share of surprises, from navigating treacherous, narrow roads with steep drops to frequent breakdowns in the middle of nowhere. Yet, we embraced the adventure, regularly sending videos to our friends and family back home to share our progress and reassure them that we hadn't plunged off a cliff. Those updates helped bring everyone along for the ride, showcasing both the stunning landscapes and the not-so-glamorous moments when we found ourselves knee-deep in mud, trying to fix the rickshaw by the roadside.

Despite the challenges, the highs far outweighed the lows. Driving through the Himalayas gave us the most breathtaking views, from lush green valleys to towering snow-capped peaks. But more than the scenery, it was the people we met along the way who made the journey special. Locals welcomed us with warmth and kindness, offering help whenever our rickshaw broke down and cheering us on as we continued our adventure. Through it all, we felt the support of not only the people we met but also our community back home, all united in helping us raise funds for LEEDO's incredible work with vulnerable children."

Thanks to Tom, Dominic and Johannes for this initiative.



Photos: Our Trustee Tom on the road (top), and with friend in Lachungla, Ladakh in India (below)

Walk and Run Challenge

Our new trustee Natasha, Ms Kent, is aiming to raise £1,000 by taking part in walking and running challenges before Christmas. She writes:

"It is my firm belief that every child deserves to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment. In one of the poorest and most densely populated countries, providing love and protection to children is an immense challenge. The dedicated team at Friends of Street Children Bangladesh is wholeheartedly committed to supporting the most vulnerable members of our society: the street children."

Each day, the tireless street workers of

LEEDO and compassionate street educators brave the streets to rescue children in desperate need of assistance. Through their Transitional Shelter, they strive to understand why these children are without homes and endeavour to reunite them with their families. When family reintegration is not feasible, LEEDO Peace Home opens its doors to provide a new, caring family environment and a promising future for these children.

I am deeply committed to the cause of improving the lives of countless children by ensuring their safety, happiness, and security. Every child deserves the opportunity to fulfil their potential in life.

This belief is at the core of everything I do through my work, and I believe you share this sentiment as well. What better charity is there than Friends of Street Children if you wish to make a profound impact on a child's life? As your national Ms Kent, I am dedicated to raising £1000 for street children, and with your support, I hope to continue my efforts for underprivileged children in the UK and internationally. By participating in a 13-mile walking challenge and a 5K run, I am striving to bring us closer to a world where the remarkable work of Friends of Street Children can reach and save even more children.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story, and I extend my heartfelt gratitude to you for your support!"

Please support Natasha Sharmin, Ms Kent at:
<https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/fundraising/natashas-walk-and-run-challenge>



Photos (above): Natasha taking on the fundraising challenge



Photo (above): Citizens climb a civic building

Change of Government in Bangladesh

Many of our readers will know that on 15th July 2024, students at Dhaka University began a peaceful protest calling for reforms to the quota allocation for government jobs in Bangladesh. The protest met with a violent response from the authorities. A curfew was declared and for a time the internet was closed. In response Friends of Street Children Bangladesh wrote to the Minister with responsibility for Bangladesh at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office asking the UK Government to publicly call on the Government of Bangladesh to take steps to ensure that children and families surviving on the streets were protected during the turmoil.

We wrote at a time when it was impossible to communicate with LEEDO because of the internet closure and curfews. We expressed concern about the position of children and families and for the safety of the staff of LEEDO. We were aware from experience during COVID that when there is a curfew, it is especially difficult for children on the streets. They do not have anywhere to go for shelter, distribution of food is no longer allowed and income sources that are usually available for the children dry up. We also knew that when

there are demonstrations and violence on the streets the children LEEDO work with can easily be recruited by the different parties and placed in the front line when violent incidents occur. The welfare of children during political turmoil can easily be ignored.

Initially we did not get a reply to our letter so at the beginning of August we wrote again following the collapse of the Government led by Sheikh Hasina and the installation of an interim-Government. By this time, it was reported that up to 66 children aged under 18 had been killed because of the political disturbances. The internet was restored, and Friends of Street Children Bangladesh received reports from LEEDO in Dhaka about the impact of the turmoil on the children they support and steps that should be taken. On 25th September we received a reply from the UK Government stating that it was committed to upholding the rights of children, at home and overseas and had been deeply saddened by the violence and loss of life during the protests in Bangladesh, including reports of the tragic deaths of children and reports of children detained during the protests.

On 7th September we held a meeting at the Hasan Raja Centre in London where we discussed the protests in Bangladesh and the impact on children. We were joined live by children, such as Mia and Rabbi, who had been affected by the unrest, and by staff of LEEDO who shared their experience of the difficulties facing the children.

Case study: Hossain

Name: Hossain Mia

Age: 15 years old

Situation of the Family: He has no father. He came to Dhaka City to live a better life.

His statement: During the quota movement protests, a Kamalapur railway station law enforcement officer kicked him out of the station, where he was staying. As there was no way to eat and live, he came out on the streets in search of a livelihood. Then he saw a procession with students. Clashes began between the police and the students. His chest shook at the sound of police gunfire. Many were shot and lying on the streets. It was the most terrifying thing he had ever seen in his life. He felt that he was close to death. When he tried to run to save himself, someone hit him with a brick. In this state he lay on the street. Whispers started all around, a car was on fire, there were gunshots and bombs exploding. He was in a lot of trouble. Now he urgently needs food and safe shelter.



Photos (above): Hossain and his wound

Case study: Rabbi

Name: Rabbi

Age: 16 years old

Situation of the Family: According to Rabbi his home is Mymensingh, a city outside Dhaka. His father is a day laborer. He is the youngest of two brothers. He was separated from his family due to poverty. He works as a porter at the Kamalapur railway station and sends some money to his family.

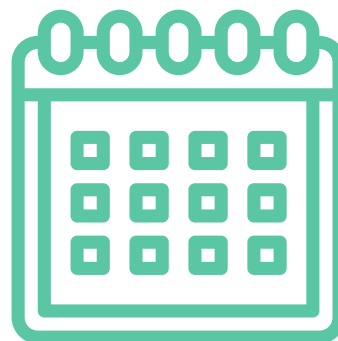
His statement: The anti-discrimination quota movement has been going on in the country since July 23. In the late afternoon, suddenly Rabbi saw two political parties coming from both directions and a chase began. Seeing tear gas and rubber bullets, he started walking towards a shop. But two rubber bullets entered his back and legs. When the environment calmed down, the other children at the station advised him to go to Mugda Hospital. But he was scared and did not go to Mugda hospital until 4 days later. At the hospital they removed the two bullets. Currently he is enjoying all the facilities from the LEEDO School Under the Sky.



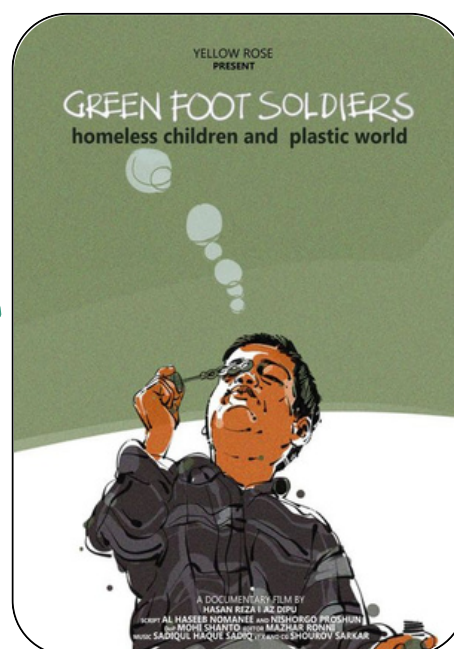
Photos (above): Rabbi and his wound

Dates for your diary:

Sunday 8th December 2024 -
1pm – **Annual Christmas Lunch**,
Islington, London



Saturday 8th February 2025-
2pm - **Online film event** about
children collecting water bottles-
“**Green Foot Soldiers**”. Contact
us to get the zoom link.



Saturday 12th April 2025-
10.30am- Hason Raja Centre,
London E1 5BW– A film for
**International Day for Street
Children** featuring the team
from LEEDO taking part in the
Street Child Cricket World Cup
in India



www.streetchildrenbd.uk