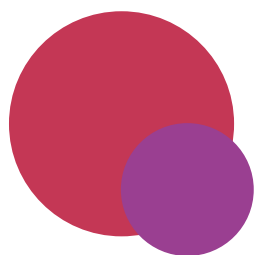


What difference did we make?

UK Bangladesh Education Trust's
2021 Impact Report



UKBET

Education for Change

www.ukbet-bd.org

Introduction



The pandemic has led to rising levels of unemployment amongst the poorest families in Bangladesh. As a result, more children than ever were sent to work instead of school to contribute to their family's income. A recent joint study from the World Bank and United Nations agencies estimated that 1 out of every 10 girls in Bangladesh did not return to school as they reopened after the COVID-19 lock-downs. Instead, they worked long hours in high-risk physical occupations, often vulnerable to abuse.

2021 did not start well for the charity. In January the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office deferred, and subsequently cancelled, an approved grant of £50,000 over two years as part of the UK government's reductions in Overseas Aid.

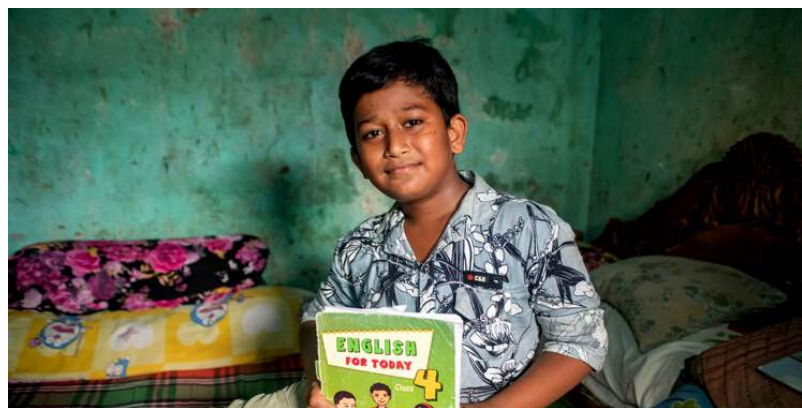
The cut to UKBET's budget threatened the future of the charity. We immediately launched an appeal and extraordinarily, thanks to new friends and old, raised sufficient funds to continue our work throughout 2021 and into 2022. In 2021 we also started a new pilot programme teaching children found daily scouring rubbish tips as a way of earning money.

UKBET's purpose is to use education to radically change and improve the lives of working children and their families. UKBET teachers and fieldworkers bring teaching and learning to girls enslaved in domestic work, to boys in hazardous occupations as well as support for income generating to their families. In 2021 a new pilot programme was started teaching children found daily scouring rubbish tips as a way of earning money. The impact of UKBET's programmes are significant. Working children learn to read, write, use numbers and take better care of themselves. Some return to school, others move into vocational training and safe employment. Families become self-sufficient or are referred to other agencies for support; all enjoy free healthcare. This report is a tribute to the participation and determination of these children and their families.

Finally, the report also offers an insight into the work of our team in Sylhet led by the Director, Md. Sayem. It is their commitment, skills, experience and knowledge that makes the difference – and allows a small charity like UKBET to punch well above its weight.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annette Zera'.

Annette Zera
Chair of Trustees



Our programmes





Doorstep learning programme for **Girls in domestic work**

Doorstep Learning brings basic education, healthcare and support to children forced to work as domestic servants due to family poverty.

Our programme gives children access to education and support to move out of forced labour. It also helps end their family's dependency on child labour.



In 2021 Doorstep Learning worked with:

- 204 young girls and 152 of the families of working children, which in total is over 900 children and adult beneficiaries
- Schools were closed for much of 2021 but in the short time they were open, 48 out of 204 girls left work for school
- 51 younger siblings of working children broke the pattern of following their sisters into work and went to school instead
- 32 young women enrolled into vocational training as an important step towards a new and better future
- 5 awareness-raising programmes were organised for families and other local stakeholders highlighting children's rights and the importance of education
- 30 micro-grants were awarded to help families generate a secure income and reduce or stop dependency on their working children
- 343 family members were supported to get COVID-19 vaccinations and arrangements made with Sylhet Corporation for UKBET children to be vaccinated.



Liza's story

In November 2021 Liza met one of our community teachers, Ms Tuli who convinced Liza's parents and her employer to let her take part in the Doorstep Learning Programme. Liza was then able to develop her literacy and numeracy skills in line with the national curriculum.

With Ms Tuli's encouragement and support, she was able to leave child labour and start vocational training to become a caretaker. She has since started work as a primary school caretaker where she earns 150% more doing a job she really enjoys.

UKBET has also provided her unemployed father with a micro-grant to start a vegetable business. Equally important Ms Tuli has helped Liza's younger siblings enrol in school.

UKBET is often recognised for its effective groundwork through our amazing team of community teachers who work so tirelessly to help achieve these real and long-lasting results.

Liza, aged 15
Doorstep Learning programme



Imrana's story



As a child, Imrana's mother left the family, leaving her unemployed, visually-impaired father to raise the children alone. From a very young age Imrana worked with both of her aunts who are domestic workers in different households. Given the desperate need for income to support her family, Imrana soon dropped out of primary school and became a full-time domestic worker.

In 2021 Imrana met one of our UKBET teachers, Ms Bushra, and was inspired to get back into school. As part of our work with the families of working children, Ms Bushra convinced Imrana's aunts to allow her to take part in UKBET's Doorstep Learning Project. When she heard the news Imrana was delighted!

Given a young life full of many struggles, Imrana had lost her hope of a good education. However, now through her classes with UKBET, she has started to feel like she finally has a choice about her life. She is now determined to complete her studies and become financially independent.

Imrana, aged 14
Doorstep Learning programme



Yasmeen

UKBET Doorstep Learning Community Teacher

“

I feel proud to work for an organisation like UKBET. I love my work here. Teaching literacy, numeracy and life skills to children who are forced to become domestic servants, due to their family's financial position is my main work. I don't think there is any other organisation in Bangladesh that helps these children as much as UKBET.

Despite the children having such a harsh life, their eagerness for learning amazes me every time I visit them for our sessions. The thing that gives me the most joy is when these children continue their studies after I help enrol them into school. I hope UKBET continues its work and helps these children to make their dreams come true."

”

Yasmeen Akter, UKBET Teacher

Yasmeen lives in the area where she delivers her classes which enables her to easily identify working children in need and persuade their employers to allow her to teach them.



Education & rehabilitation programme for **Boys in hazardous work**

Our Working Children's programme is for boys employed illegally in hazardous work. Fieldworkers persuade their parents and employers to allow the children to attend 90-minute sessions three times a week at one of our four community-based education centres in Sylhet. Over 200 working children attend every week and develop important literacy, numeracy and life skills. They are also given healthy food and access to healthcare.



The impact of COVID-19 resulted in an even greater reliance on working children, given the instability of family incomes. We saw for the first year in our programme, how much harder it was for children to leave a life of forced labour and return to school, which is shown in the figures below. Despite not as many children enrolling into school, all have made significant progress in their reading and writing in comparison to their baseline assessments.

In 2021:

- 207 children enrolled on UKBET's Working Children's programme
- 8 children left work for school
- 27 siblings enrolled at school rather than following their brothers into work
- 17 families were supported with micro-grants for small businesses
- 3 families received grants for medical support
- During Eid 2021 clothing and food parcels were distributed to 396 working children and their families.



UKBET Teachers' Stories

Mrs O says her biggest regret in life is that she never had the chance to go to school. She believes that with education she wouldn't have been so dependent on others during her adult life. Her dream is for her children to go to school and learn.

However, her husband was strongly opposed to the idea of sending the children to school and beat his wife for her opinions and attempts to help her children learn. He believed his three boys, K, M and J, should work and contribute to the family income rather than “wasting” their time in school.

In 2021 K's employer allowed him to go to UKBET's Beanibazar centre and soon afterwards his mother reached out to Mr. Raju, one of UKBET's community teachers, explaining their situation at home. Mr Raju went to their home and had several conversations with Mr O and helped him understand the benefits of his children receiving an education. Mr Raju also arranged a micro-grant so that Mr O could buy a van to start his own business. With the confidence of a stable income he realised there was no need to send K and his brothers to work.

Last year M sat for his Junior School Certificate exam, with UKBET supporting him with the registration fee. And Mr O himself arranged for his youngest son J to be enrolled into school this year. Now the three brothers are studying hard to fulfil their own, as well as their mother's dreams.

Mr Raju – UKBET Teacher

“ I have learnt a lot during my time at UKBET but the thing I cherish most about my job is that it gives me an amazing opportunity to give back to my community.”

”

Badhon Rai has been working at UKBET since 2016 organising seminars for local employers and for the families of working children. These seminars help to spread awareness of the dangers of hazardous child labour as well as the difference education can make to the lives of children and to Bangladeshi society. Mr Rai visits the families of working children at home encouraging parents and guardians to send their children to school and supporting them to find ways to generate income themselves.

Badhon Rai – UKBET Teacher



Education & rehabilitation programme for **Child waste pickers**

In Bangladesh's urban areas around 400,000 people, mostly women and children, survive by sorting and collecting waste materials at local garbage dumps. They work barehanded sorting paper, plastic, metal and glass and selling what they find to recycling centres. This work is horrible.

With support from the World Sylhet Sommelon (Convention), Jalalabad Association UK, Just Help Foundation UK, and local Bangladeshi philanthropists, UKBET has piloted a project with children working on dumps in Sylhet. The programme provides numeracy, literacy and life skills sessions at learning centres near waste hotspots. Fieldworkers liaise with the parents and encourage children to attend classes three times a week.



The Waste Collection Workers' programme started in October 2021 and by the end of the year, within three months:

- 50 children were regularly attending sessions at local learning centres
- 9 children had started school
- 3 micro-grants had been given to family members
- 98 clothing and food packs were distributed to children and families.





Teacher Training

Since 1999 we have trained over 4,000 teachers in and around Sylhet. We offer a wide range of accredited and non-accredited training workshops and courses for teachers of English and other subjects delivered online, face-to-face or blended.

As well as building local capacity, our teacher training is integral to our working children programmes in several ways. It generates a small income for the charity that contributes to funding our working children programmes and enables us to have access to teachers who help with our work with child labourers.



Online English language course for professionals

60 participants, from Khulna-based NGO Rupantor and other organisations participated in this course. Course fees were donated to our programmes for working children.

Teacher Training programme

Run in partnership with the Rotary Club of Sylhet Sunshine in June 2021. 267 teachers from 108 schools participated in teacher training.

CertPT course - Trinity College London

Organised in partnership with the St. Giles Educational Trust UK, international teacher trainers from St. Giles Educational Trust facilitated online delivery of the 'Trinity CertPT' for English language teachers. Our participants were the first in Bangladesh to have the opportunity to achieve this internationally recognised accreditation.

Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) at Biswanath

UKBET, with support from Biswanath Probashi Education Trust UK, ran a TKT preparation course for 20 English language teachers from 20 different schools and the Institution of Biswanath Upozila. This internationally recognised qualification helps teachers to teach English more effectively in schools and with adult learners.

Other highlights from 2021

Despite spending many months of 2021 in lock-down we still managed to grow the charity and through your help fundraise for our programmes:

- Our Ramadan Appeal raised nearly £7,000 and meant we could distribute Eid gift packs of new clothes and family food packs to 350 working children.
- Supporter Joe Costello successfully cycled up Hong Kong's Tai Mo Shan mountain three times, achieving an elevation of over 3,000m, raising a total of £1,350 for UKBET.
- As Bangladesh went into another lock-down our UKBET ambassador Rokeya – founder and owner of Khanums fundraised to provide 400 food packages and emergency supplies for our UKBET families in Sylhet. Within three days she raised £4,771 which supported 1,935 family members.
- We started our vaccination awareness programme, working to help dispel myths and misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccination. Each week we helped around 250 family members to get vaccinated.
- UKBET partnered with organisations to create a female empowerment course, training women to learn to sew and be trained in beauty and makeup artistry. From the sewing course, 75% of the women have already been employed. All of the women on the beauty course will be given a beauty kit and also trained in Facebook marketing so that they can be self-employed.
- Once again, we were accepted onto the Big Give Challenge and raised £7,210 through match funded donations in one week. These funds will go towards securing the second year of the Doorstep Learning programme for girls.
- The UKBET team were fortunate to be joined in Bangladesh by volunteer Tuhfa Hussain Nova and in the UK by Kickstarter Finn Keatinge.

Thank you to all our supporters

Your donations make a profound impact to the futures of working children. No matter the amount, they are always much appreciated. In 2021 we were very grateful for donations from the following organisations and charitable trusts.



KHANUM'S



theBigGive



Peter Stebbings Memorial Charity

