

Proshanti

Newsletter February 2016



“Proshanti brings smiles to many hungry mothers”

Nahida’s story by Proshanti staff member, Fahad Ahmed

The population in the verdant landscape of Juri is over 150,000. The vast majority live below the poverty line and some 30% of this group live under extreme poverty on less than 50p a day. Some survive as day labourers, some as rickshaw or cart pullers while many have no jobs and no regular income. Some breadwinners, living in very poor conditions, have ten people to feed each day with very little or no income. But life doesn’t stop. It goes on with often new members joining the family.

Nahida, is one from that world. She had an arranged marriage to Ripon, a tailor from Bhobanigonj village when she was 15, well before she understood the facts of life. She went to live with her in-laws in a crowded, shanty house with 8 members. The entire household was dependent on an income of Tk.170 (£1.40) a day.

When Nahida became pregnant she was already suffering from severe malnutrition. She didn’t know what to do, what to eat or how to take care of herself. All she knew was that one day she would become a mother fighting against the odds like most other women in her community.



Nahida and her new baby

One day Nahida met Proshanti nurse Oporna in the village who informed her of the free services of Proshanti and advised her to visit the Proshanti clinic. When Nahida told her family they encouraged her to attend.



Masud Siddique was Proshanti’s Programme and Fundraising Manager until December 2015. We are very sad to see him go but wish him well in his new job. There is an interview with Masud on page 2.

Proshanti’s Funders

In the last few months Proshanti has been very pleased to receive funding from the following sources:

East London Lift Company continued to donate unrestricted funding which is used to pay for the salary of our employee in London.

The boys of Sherborne School made a second donation to Proshanti

Individual donors have been very generous either with monthly standing orders or donations via Virgin Money Giving.

If you know of someone who would like to donate £10 each month by standing order then we can do even more! Please contact the Proshanti office for a standing order form – tel 07880 564525 or email info@proshanti.org

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Nahida was enrolled with Proshanti under funding from the Peter Stebbings Memorial Charity in March 2015. She received ante-natal visits, medication, doctor visits, food packages and continuous emotional and mental support from the staff. This increased her confidence and self-esteem despite being a high risk patient throughout her pregnancy. Thankfully she had a normal delivery and gave birth to a lovely boy at the clinic.

Nahida learnt many things attending Proshanti counselling sessions. Now she knows how to raise her child, when to get vaccines and how to feed him. She is extremely happy with the support Proshanti gave her. And her mother thanks God for all the support that made their life easier and brought happiness. She said "Proshanti brings unbelievable smiles to many hungry mothers".

Some Statistics

Deliveries in December 2015	12
The majority of these were delivered in the Clinic or in hospital	
Deliveries in 2015	98
Number of women receiving food supplements	17
Breakdown of 2015 clients	
Muslim	57%
Hindu	11%
Tea garden dwellers	26%
Other minorities	6%

Interview with Masud

How long have you worked for Proshanti? I joined in June 2013



Proshanti midwife, Joni Das, teaching health education at a clinic

Tell us about your new role. I have been appointed by BRAC International, the Bangladeshi NGO and the largest NGO in the world, to be the lead manager in Sierra Leone. This is one of ten countries in which BRAC operates. I will be based in the capital, Freetown, and will be responsible for budgets, programmes in the country, HR etc.

What has given you particular satisfaction during your time at Proshanti? First of all I am so pleased that we have managed to bring happiness to the poorest of the poor families in a very remote area of Bangladesh. We know that children bring laughter and pleasure to families and we have contributed to this by giving families clinical, nutritional and emotional support. Secondly I did what I could to promote the project in Juri and ensure it ran smoothly. I think I earned the trust of the Board so that enabled me to make a difference to the families helped by Proshanti.

What will you miss about your job at Proshanti? I will miss the interaction with programme beneficiaries as I will not have this in Sierra Leone.

Proshanti UK is a Charity registered in England and Wales number 1137179. It is also a company limited by guarantee no 7108914. Its objects are *the relief of sickness and the promotion and preservation of good health, in particular but not exclusively, of people living in the Juri region of Bangladesh, by support and establishment of a healthy living centre or centres.*

For more information visit our website www.proshanti.org or email info@proshanti.org

A VISIT TO JURI

In November 2015 there was an important visit from the UK to our clinic in Juri. Our Chair, Lilu Ahmed, was joined by Proshanti Trustee and Consultant Obstetrician, Dr Momena, and by Jan Blake, a midwife and homeopathic practitioner based in East London. The visitors concluded that the service provided by the clinic had been strengthened by the leadership and management of the Project Co-ordinator, Sarwar. He had introduced excellent health promotion work and the sessions were now a regular part of the ante-natal clinics. **Some key decisions** were made which would be implemented soon.

- ✓ The number of pregnant women would be increased to 100 over the next few months. This would result in an average of 13 deliveries each month.
- ✓ An additional post-natal visit would be added three days after a baby's birth. This is in line with WHO guidelines.
- ✓ Subject to funding, post-natal care would be increased from six weeks to 12 weeks. This should help to support families and to increase awareness of good hygiene practices and parenting skills.
- ✓ Again subject to funding, we hope to provide all pregnant women coming to the clinic with food supplements. Currently only a few women are receiving these. All the women are poor and many are getting well below the recommended number of calories so the food supplements should help their general health and that of their unborn baby.
- ✓ Already in place is the decision to provide every new born baby with a locally made garment.



**The Proshanti team
and friends with the
visitors from the UK.
Juri, November 2015**

Back in the UK, Jan Blake said *"I was very inspired by the high standard of the work being carried out by the clinic staff and by the support being given to the more disadvantage women of Juri. Our visit was very productive and gave myself and Dr.Momena the opportunity to focus on a number of training issues. In particular my visits to some of the mother's homes after delivery enabled me to focus on the problems of the post-natal period, weight gain and monitoring and picking up and recording problems after delivery."*

FUNDRAISING

The UCL Bangla Society is organizing a Bengali drama with dinner to raise money for Proshanti on 2nd March at the Atrium, Bethnal Green. If you would like to host a similar event to raise funds for Proshanti please get in touch with us at info@proshanti.org or on 07880 564525.

NEW PROGRAMME CONSULTANT IN LONDON.

We are delighted to announce the appointment of **Dr A. K.M. Momin** as our new Programme Consultant based in London. Dr Momin is of Bengali origin and has a PhD from the University of Leeds. He has extensive experience of working in the NGO sector and has worked for a number of international and UK national organisations. He lives in East London and you will be able to read more about him in the next issue of the Proshanti Newsletter.