



# ***Annual Report 2018***




## ***1st January - 31st December 2018***

Company registration number: 07108914

Charity registration number: 1137179

Registered office: The Bromley by Bow Centre, St Leonard's Street, Bromley by Bow, London E3 3BT

A close-up portrait of Tony Blair, an older man with grey hair and blue eyes, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a solid dark green.

*'Many women across the world are still denied their basic human right to adequate maternal healthcare. In countries such as Bangladesh, the needs of far too many pregnant women are not met. There are high rates of child mortality and far too many mothers who die during childbirth.'*

*Proshanti provides basic healthcare for mothers and children in a rural district of Bangladesh. With no hospitals nearby, pregnant mothers have to walk many miles just to see a doctor; Proshanti is looking to change this by bringing communities together to act, raise awareness and help.*

*I encourage you to support Proshanti and their upcoming events that are creating links between young people in Bangladesh and the UK and which will raise awareness - and funds - around these important issues.'*

***Tony Blair***

Former Prime Minister of the  
United Kingdom

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[www.proshanti.org.uk](http://www.proshanti.org.uk)

# ***Message from our President***



*Sir Stephen O'Brien  
President, Proshanti UK*

*Sir Stephen has a wealth of experience in healthcare, having been the CEO of London First, the Chair of Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust and Chair of Barts Health NHS Trust, the largest health trust in the UK. Having witnessed for himself the devastating impact of poverty in the Juri area, Sir Stephen has been the President of Proshanti since its inception.*

“Over the past year, Proshanti has made significant strides both in Juri, Bangladesh and in its activities in the UK. Besides our annual Fundraising Dinner – a key event in Proshanti’s calendar – Proshanti has explored alternative avenues of fundraising with some success. Proshanti’s bake sale and Mother’s 4 Proshanti event validate our versatile approach and we aim to explore further fundraising options in the coming year.

Our resolve to create meaningful, lasting change for the mothers and children of Juri is stronger than ever. Already, over 1000 women have directly benefitted from our services since 2011, during which we have expanded our intake to 100 women at any one time. Our stellar results, literally realised in the hundreds of mothers and infants we serve (who, statistically may not have survived pregnancy), our ardent supporters across the globe and our own ambitions for the Proshanti project solidify our resolve to work towards a future where maternal and infant healthcare be freely accessible to expectant mothers around the world.”

*Helen Matthews  
Vice-President,  
Proshanti UK*

*Revd. Helen was a member of the Bromley by Bow contingent that first travelled to Juri in 2009. She has been vital to Proshanti's progress ever since, first as Founder Chair and now in her current position as Vice-President.*



"The extreme deprivation we saw on our 2009 visit to Juri, Bangladesh compelled our group – comprising healthcare professionals, community workers, artists and volunteers on our first visit to Juri – to act. Initially, our visit was designed to forge stronger links with the Bangladeshi community in East London; ten years later, this objective has been realised many times over as a consequence of the powerful presence Proshanti has established in that time, particularly in Juri.

As recently as 2013, 289,000 mothers died of pregnancy or childbirth related issues globally. Many of these deaths were from highly preventable causes and occurred due to a lack of adequate maternal healthcare. Consequently, the poorest communities are at once the most vulnerable to maternal and infant deaths and also the areas where such deaths are most avoidable. Proshanti's exemplary work in Juri provides the template for how the largely avoidable threat of maternal mortality can be neutralised through quality ante and post-natal care and educational programmes for expectant mothers in some of the most deprived regions in the world."

*Lilu Ahmed  
Chair,*

*Proshanti UK*

*A native of Juri, Lilu's unstoppable drive to relieve mothers and children of some of the most tragic symptoms of extreme poverty was one of the major driving forces behind Proshanti's creation, and its continuing impact today.*



Proshanti UK has now been active for over ten years – this simply would not have been possible without the support of our long-standing donors such as the East London NHS Lift Company and our numerous individual donors. Through their support, we can provide a quality service, as validated by our records of no maternal deaths and 98% live births. Our efforts continue to help Bangladeshi achieve its Millenium Development Goals in.

I would also like to express my gratitude to our honourable trustees, our clinical advisory team members, volunteers and our supporters; their tireless work has allowed Proshanti to remain the dynamic force it has always been. The Proshanti Healthy Living Centre, designed by the acclaimed Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios architectural firm, has received a donation of land on which we can begin to build. A project conceived along with Proshanti itself, it is a natural evolution from the quality service we have provided into an operational hub with greater capacity and resources and thus, means for affecting change. As a woman from Juri, Proshanti's positive influence is evident; with your continued support, Proshanti's potential is unlimited.



# Our Trustees

■ Our trustees play an essential role in the administration of our Juri project. Most board members were part of the group that first travelled to Juri in 2009. The poverty and lack of basic healthcare for mothers and children they witnessed there are the driving force behind Proshanti's development into a quality service provider and its role in Juri's own progress over the past decade.



*Dr. Rebecca Scott,*  
Trustee

Whilst living in Sylhet from 2011-2013, I learned to speak the local dialect and came to understand the significant impact of poverty in Bangladesh, particularly in remote localities such as Juri. Proshanti's efforts in the area, from our initial maternal clinic to our upcoming Proshanti Healthy Living Centre, have vastly improved the lives of those most in need. Through our educational programmes, women have the opportunity to improve the health of their families and through our delivery service, we have been able to reduce the risk of maternal and infant deaths that have become all too common in this area of the world.



*Dr. JA Momena,*  
Trustee

Proshanti is designed to serve *any* mother in need, regardless of race or religion. This approach is somewhat unorthodox considering the bold divisions that still exist throughout Bangladesh but our positive results have helped to bridge some of these divides. Our service is comprehensive: we provide mothers with antenatal care and education throughout their pregnancy, delivery support and postnatal care. Our project provides a model of cost-effective maternal healthcare projects in developing countries around the world, providing delivery support and appropriate intervention whilst seeking to counter the spiralling caesarean section rates seen elsewhere.



*David Storr*  
Trustee

My own background in healthcare projects in Bangladesh led me to Proshanti UK and, convinced of the excellent progress being made in its Juri project, I joined Proshanti as a trustee in 2016. We are indebted to the tireless efforts of our clinical staff in Juri who serve the needs of our patients with real dedication and passion in their work. Equally, we are grateful to our supporters here in the UK whose confidence in our project has helped us to support hundreds of women who would otherwise have been unable to access any maternity care. In the coming year, we hope to broaden our presence in the UK with greater focus on fundraising opportunities as well as corporate and individual giving.



*Samsul Siddiki*  
Trustee

2018 was an important year for Proshanti; it saw Proshanti transition from the Abdul Aziz Medical Centre to the Adhunic General Hospital, establish an advisory board in Juri as well as the first site visit by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, in preparation for the Proshanti Healthy Living Centre. This was overseen by our Proshanti UK contingent through their periodic visits to Juri and their work in the UK. I would like to thank the Proshanti team in Bangladesh as well as my fellow trustees, volunteers and donors for their invaluable contributions. We aim to broaden our donor base, to expand the reach of our vital services for the poor mothers and families who need it most.

# Proshanti's Background

■ President Stephen O'Brien (centre), Vice President Helen Matthews (centre left) and Chair Lili Ahmed (centre right) pose with locals on an early visit to Juri in 2009. Through this visit, the community at Bromley-by-Bow saw the urgent need in Juri and sowed the seeds of Proshanti's birth.



Proshanti was formed in 2010 following a visit led by the United Reformed Church (URC) in Bromley-by-Bow, with the aim of gaining a greater knowledge and understanding of the Bangladeshi community of East London.

Prior to Proshanti's interventions, many women in Juri had little access to medical help,

especially during pregnancies. In fact, only 47% of women received any ante/post-natal care and only 11% had a skilled attendant present at delivery across Bangladesh (Bangladesh Demographic & Health Survey 2011).

For the group from Bromley by Bow, it was quickly apparent that Juri was an area of serious

deprivation. (BRAC, 2014)

Though it is often difficult to create lasting change for the poor in Bangladesh, Proshanti was formed with the belief that enough kindness from enough individuals can accumulate into lasting change for generations of Juri villagers.

# *Proshanti's objectives*

Proshanti UK is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Company's 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 the support and establishment of a healthy living centre or centres.

## *Governance of Proshanti*

Proshanti's activities in Juri is governed by its UK based Board of Trustees, some of whom use their clinical backgrounds to perform a clinical advisory role for the Juri project, as well as its Programme Consultant. The Trustees of the Charity are also the Directors of the Company and board meetings take place at least four times a year, along with informal meetings between Board meetings. Our volunteer medical advisers assist the board in setting clinical standards and monitoring clinical practice.

## *Board Members*

- *Lilu Ahmed*, a founding member of the charity and Chair of Proshanti since 2014.
- *Dr. Jaha Afroze Momena (FRCOG)*, has been involved in Proshanti since 2013 and provides clinical guidance on the management of our Juri patients.
- *Dr. Rebecca Scott*, has been a trustee of Proshanti since 2015 and is a clinical advisor for our Juri patients.
- *David Storr*, a trustee with over 30 years of experience in managing hospitals and NHS primary healthcare services, David translates this experience into guidance for Proshanti's activities.
- *Samsul Siddiki*, a trustee since October 2018, he is a Chartered Certified Accountant (FCCA) with over 12 years experience in the finance industry. We look forward to his experience in finance management and expansion translating across into vital work as a Proshanti board member.

## *Other key members of the Proshanti Team*

- **Graham Rowbotham**, a former partnership secretary of Linklaters LLP, he is the company secretary for Proshanti as well as the Bromley by Bow Centre. Graham is essential to the running of Proshanti, responsible for the administration and documenting of Proshanti's essential records.
- **Susan Storr**, our Honorary Treasurer has a long and varied career in helping the most vulnerable in society - she has been a treasurer of the Friends of CRP (based in Savar, Bangladesh) for many years, a role she transitioned from into her current role at Proshanti.
- **Dr. AKM Momin**, our UK-based Programme Consultant oversees the effective administration and implementation of Proshanti's objectives within its Juri project. Having worked in Bangladesh for various national and international organisations (including Care, Oxfam and CRP), he is excellently placed to serve the mothers and children of Juri.

## *Evaluation Report of Proshanti*

*Dr. Setara Rahman, national consultant in maternal services in Bangladesh conducted a review of Proshanti's services in February 2019 in line with the Bangladeshi Government's service protocol.*

*She found that Proshanti is serving the poor in Juri; they are providing quality ANC and normal deliveries and the proportion of Caesarian deliveries is in line with the WHO standard. However, midwives require a continuum of training on new developments, especially on family planning methods and post partum family planning counselling.*

## *Proshanti's Partnerships*

### **Prottoy**

The complicated nature of registering as an independent NGO necessitated Proshanti's association with Prottoy, an existing NGO registered in Bangladesh. Our partnership with Prottoy has brought additional benefits also; Prottoy provide regular support to our Juri project, overseeing our staff and liaising with local government on our behalf.

### **Juri Adhunic General Private Hospital**

Furthermore, our Memorandum of Understanding with the Juri Adhunic General Private Hospital is crucial to our work, allowing us free clinic and office space as well as doctor's consultations for Proshanti patients free of charge.

Proshanti has also worked extensively with the Upazila Health staff, who offered advice and training support for our midwives.

### **Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios**

An architectural and urban design practice with an international reputation for design quality and pioneering environmental expertise, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios (FCBS) have experience creating buildings and spaces that enhance local communities with a foundation in local culture. We are extremely grateful therefore that FCBS have committed to designing the Proshanti Healthy Living Centre. We are incredibly excited to work with studio of such high esteem and we look forward to increasing our impact in modernised and purpose-built surroundings.

We are further indebted to Max Fordham, the services engineers who will be working with FCBS on the PHLC. Max Fordham's unique level of detail in their expertise has allowed them to develop an enviable portfolio of structures. Visit [www.maxfordham.com](http://www.maxfordham.com) for further information.

### **East London NHS Lift Company**

Proshanti's development over the past six years would not have been possible without the continued support of the East London NHS Lift Company (ELNHSC) who have supported us since 2012. In providing yearly funding of £15,000, the ELNHSC have provided the financial foundation for Proshanti's activities year on year.

### **Global One**

Proshanti's partnership with Global One has proved invaluable in our fundraising efforts and programme activities over the past year. Global One has been effective in raising Proshanti's profile in the Juri community whilst promoting the best interests of Juri villagers. We hope to continue this progress with their support in the coming year.

# Proshanti's services



Oporna, senior midwife at Proshanti with various mothers of Proshanti.

## Background of Juri and Current Need

In 2012 almost 5,000 pregnant women were enrolled in the Government run facilities in Juri sub-district alone. For the first five months in May 2013 this figure had already reached 3,000 indicating an increase of 20%. These enrolled women are some of the poorest in the local communities.

Despite being enrolled, the majority do not receive any ante-natal care at all due to lack of resources and shortage of manpower.

Proshanti aims to correct this by serving the diverse range of women and adolescent girls in the local area. This includes Tea Garden workers originating from India, tribal communities such as the Manipuri people, as well as Muslim, Hindu and Christian women. In rural communities such as Juri, women tend to have little control over their own lives. Those who live in extreme poverty are typically uneducated with little confidence to assert their needs. Severe overcrowding, poor housing, poor diet alongside this lack of autonomy can cause disastrous, avoidable consequences for mothers and their young children.

The nearest district hospital in Moulvi-Bazaar is 80 miles away from Juri and always under-resourced. Geographically, the area is surrounded by nine rivers and thus is always susceptible to local flooding which greatly increases the vulnerability of pregnant women. Consequently, the importance of Proshanti's services are greater than ever as mothers have few other options to ensure safe births for their children.

## Proshanti's Clinical Staff

- Two full-time midwives
- One full time outreach worker/Project Officer
- One part-time trainee midwife
- One part time accountant (1 day a week)

*In addition, the Executive Director of Prottoy spends one day a week to monitor the quality of services delivered, as well as liaising with the local government administration and the NGO Affairs Bureau.*

*The Proshanti UK Programme Development Consultant keeps close links with Juri staff as well as the Prottoy Executive Director to ensure Proshanti's work in Juri runs smoothly.*



## Referral Service & Assessment

- Proshanti is well established in the Juri sub-district as a service provider for pregnant women and thus, most of our patients are referred by fellow service users.
- Without community level clinics, Family Welfare Visitors also refer pregnant women to Proshanti.
- Proshanti staff also hold community meetings throughout Juri to raise awareness of its' services.
- Proshanti's criteria for applicants - through means-testing to determine mothers who have no other viable means of affording antenatal care - determines the enrolment process.
- Proshanti Outreach Workers carry out home visits for prospective clients during the enrolment assess to assist in their assessment.
- In 2018, around 300 pregnant women were referred to Proshanti, of whom 171 were enrolled.

## Ante-natal care

- 666 appointments were handled across the 171 mothers enrolled during 2018.
- During these appointments, appropriate blood and urine tests, as well as ultrasound scans, were delivered to mothers. The health of mother and child is constantly monitored throughout this process.
- Proshanti focussed on offering services to 22 high risk patients during 2018. 'High-risk' patients include women who have previously had still-births, high blood-pressure or are rhesus negative.
- Food support was provided to mothers who were found to be significantly malnourished; a small stipend of basic foods greatly increases the chance of safe delivery in these cases. 15-20 received such support every month.
- In 2018, we offered 243 health education sessions to 2,166 pregnant women, their partners and families. These sessions covered key topics such as: nutrition during pregnancy (type and amount of food and the best way to prepare it), personal hygiene, rest, danger signs, birth planning, breast feeding, new-born baby care and the importance of antenatal and postnatal care.
- 3,055 telephone follow-up calls were made to enrolled mothers as they were nearing their due date. This was to ensure that families received timely support for women during labour.
- In 2018, Proshanti offered delivery services to 173 women; Fig. 2 on page 16 details the types of deliveries that Proshanti served,
- 293 post-natal visits were carried out in 2018, during which Proshanti midwives carry out a detailed physical assessment of mother and child. When necessary, Proshanti midwives counselled mothers on various issues relating to their post-natal wellbeing.
- 171 women were discharged from Proshanti throughout the year, of whom 163 had live deliveries. The remaining 10 babies died around the time of the delivery throughout the year.

# Overview of services provided in 2018

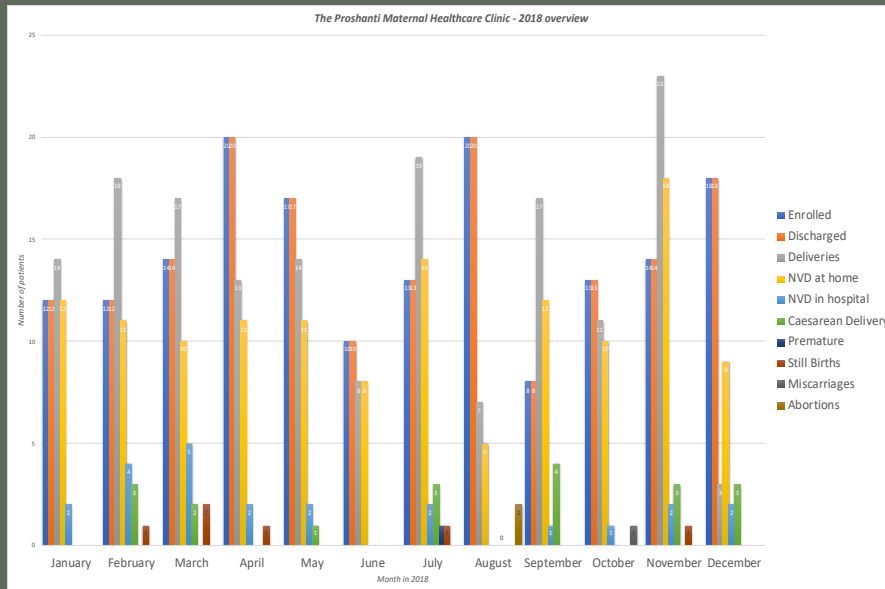


Fig. 1

Throughout 2018, we had 100 women registered with us at any one time and in total, we served 163 women who had a successful delivery and 100 women receiving on-going services.

Figure 1 provides a monthly overview of: the number of mothers who enrolled and discharged from us, the number of normal deliveries (NVDs) which took place at the mother's home and those that took place in hospital and the number of C-sections which took place.

Figure 2 presents this data in a pie-chart format which emphatically demonstrates the disparity between successful recorded deliveries (163 in total, equalling 94%) and unsuccessful deliveries (10 in total equalling 6%).

Furthermore, our 10% rate of Caesarean deliveries is well below the national average of 31% (BDnews24, 2018).

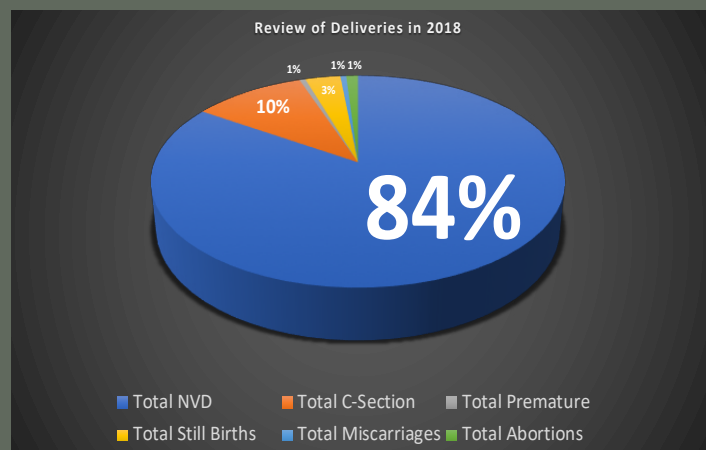


Fig. 2

# Training and Development

## Juri visit 2018

A visiting team from Proshanti UK, consisting of Dr. A.K.M Momin, Lilu Ahmed, Dr. Rebecca Scott, Mahmuda Akther (from Prottoy), Dr. Husna Ahmed OBE (from Global One) and Rachel Sayers (from Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios), conducted the annual visit to the Juri clinic between the 9th and 16th of November. The purpose of this visit was to identify ways in which the antenatal and postnatal service could evolve, to further Proshanti's interests in the Juri area and to initiate the building of the Proshanti Healthy Living Centre (PHLC).

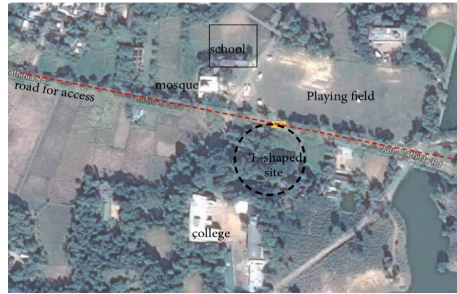
- The delegation met with the Proshanti Healthy Living Centre Committee, a 21 member committee newly formed as a requirement for registration with the Government Social Services Department; they are comprised of local businessmen and women and representatives from the local college and mosque. They will own the PHLC as a Bangladeshi NGO and Proshanti's services will be carried out through them.
- The committee expressed the importance of sourcing an ambulance to transport women to the clinic when in labour, often a trying ordeal given the lack of transport facilities in the area, particularly at night.
- Assessments of Proshanti's practice were positive; it is clear midwives are well versed in the proper protocol and have built strong relationships with their patients. It was found that they perform their work with confidence and correctly understand how to recognise high risk patients and how to refer them on as necessary. The UK delegation stressed the importance of maintaining a high standard of care and seeking advice when unsure about the management of patients.
- Furthermore, the delegation observed a health education session for patients and their relatives; this session covered how families should look after pregnant mothers and the types of work they shouldn't be doing at home.
- Additionally, Dr. Momin and Mahmuda discussed working hours, hygiene standards and increased management responsibilities for the midwives. Dr. Momin also provided training to the Project Co-ordinators and a senior midwives on how to promote Proshanti's work externally and how to collaborate with local NGOs; this is a requirement for NGOs and provides various benefits.
- The delegation visited the Sylheti NGO Shimantik which provides courses in Midwifery, Medical Assistance and Paramedic training. Though informative, it was clear Proshanti would not be able to recruit a midwife through Shimantik due to their high demand and wages, though we hope our own midwives can complete courses there in the near future.
- The UK delegation concluded that its main priorities in the medium to long term were to: expand the accessibility of Proshanti's maternal healthcare service, to provide midwives with better training and employ more highly trained midwives and to develop Proshanti in to a primary health care service with an initial focus on health and nutrition of young children as well as the ongoing health of women supported during their pregnancies.



# Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios' 1st visit to Juri

Rachel Sayers, an architect with Feilden Clegg Associates (those responsible for the design of the PHLC) conducted the first architect's visit to the prospective building site of the PHLC. She gained much throughout a packed couple of days in which she assessed the prospective site, the means by which the PHLC would be built and how it's ultimate aim could be realised.

(Left) Plot of land on which the PHLC is to be built, (right) aerial view of the plot and surrounding area.



Rachel was encouraged by the progress Proshanti had made through ten years of small steps and continuous progress. She thus felt the PHLC was the natural next stage in Proshanti's evolution. She further stressed the need for the Juri community to maintain ownership of the site and ultimately, the PHLC itself. The PHLC will be situated within the Juri community, by a local mosque and school for orphans.

Future neighbours of the PHLC: the Juri mosque (left) and a school for orphans (right).



Rachel felt the look and feel of the PHLC would depend on the local materials readily available. Such materials include: brick, timber, bamboo, concrete and architectural metalwork. She held two initial conversations with Proshanti staff during the visit and reassured the staff (who have never been involved in a process such as this) that there are no wrong answers, that design was an iterative process and she was looking to use their feedback throughout.

Rachel Sayers (3rd from right) sits with Proshanti staff members as well as Programme Consultant DR. AKM Momin (2nd from left).



## Funding Support

Proshanti is extremely grateful to the NHS Lift Company who, having been consistently encouraged by our development over the years, pledged £15,000 for the seventh year running.

Our numerous individual donors, including monthly contributors of £5 to £100 pounds and one-off contributors of £500 to £1000, have been played a vital role in Proshanti's development, from its inception to the creation of its specialised Proshanti Healthy Living Centre.

The Proshanti Annual Fundraising Dinner of 2018, a key date in Proshanti's calendar, was enormously rewarding in more ways than one. The total of £10,191 we raised meant that we had achieved the second such sum in as many years. The event itself consisted of speeches from our Trustees, a religious sermon by a local imam, stand-up comedy, singing, dancing, a charity auction and finally the dinner itself, a sumptuous meal of traditional Bengali curries and pilau rice.

Though this was the seminal event in Proshanti's annual calendar, Proshanti has engaged in various other fundraising activities in the local East London community including a recent cooking course in Bengali cuisine by Bengali mothers in the area, held at Wanstead High School as well as a highly successful 'Mothers and Daughters' event for Mother's Day. An evening of singing, dancing, henna and hijinks, mother-daughter bonds were put to the test by various games including the challenge for daughters to correctly dress their mothers in saris, a daunting task for the inexperienced in sari arrangement! These events raised awareness of Proshanti's services in the local community. With ambitions to expand our donor base significantly in the coming years, the positive knock-on effect on our reach and range of services is an exciting prospect for us, particularly for the greater means it will grant us to relieve the many mothers and children of Juri at risk of avoidable deaths.



(Top) Imam Shahenewaz providing a sermon on kinship with the poor at the Annual Fundraising Dinner, (centre) host Mehjabin Ahmed gifting a hamper to the winning bidder and cakes, cakes and more cakes at the Mothers 4 Proshanti event (bottom). Host Mehjabin Ahmed and (name?) auctioning a prayer mat brought over from Saudi Arabia (below).



# Our supporters



Barrister Kalam has been an invaluable supporter of Proshanti's work throughout the past few years. Through his extensive network within the Bangladeshi community in London, he has helped garner widespread support for Proshanti's activities in the UK. Furthermore, he has committed to donating £1,000 to Proshanti every year.

Shahida Chaudhry has proved an important asset in the Muslim community in London. Through her close association with many Muslims throughout London, she has informed them of Proshanti's lifesaving work and garnering support within the community. She has also committed to donating £1000 this year.



Proshanti is extremely grateful to the tireless work done by the Friends of Proshanti. In particular, we are indebted to those individuals based in the UK but born in Juri (some of whom are pictured left), driven by their personal connections to our project to fundraise and garner support for Proshanti within their respective communities.

# Income & Expenditure 2018

## Income

East London LIFT	£15,000
Gift Aid Tax refund	£1,029
Donations	£14,357
Fundraising	£5,818
Bank interest	£30
Total	£36,234

## Expenses

Service Delivery Fees	£15,689
Travelling	£1,312
Volunteer expenses	£249
Printing, postage and stationery	
Insurance	£472
Programme Management & Consultancy fees both in Bangladesh (60%) and UK (40%)	£9,600
Sundry expenses	£431
Bank charges	£222
Total	£27,975

Total Funds available 31/12/18                      £43,959 (inc. Bangladesh & UK)

## *Independent Examiner*

Meer and Company Chartered Accountants  
No 1 Cochrane House  
Admirals Way  
Canary Wharf  
London E14 9UD