

Calcutta Connect Annual Review 2018





Welcome

It brings us great pleasure to present to you the Calcutta Connect Annual Review for 2018. The past year has been extremely busy for us on many fronts and this review aims to capture the many highlights for Calcutta Connect in 2018.

We were delighted this year to be able to grow our work with our local partner organisation, Panikhali Rural Development Society (PRDS). Since commencing our collaboration with PRDS in 2017 we have since significantly expanded the projects to now support the education of over 530 students in three rural communities just outside of Kolkata. The highlight of the year with PRDS has been the opening of the Alor Disha centre which has quickly become a source of great pride for us and the local community.

We also continued our long association and friendship with Coláiste Éanna CBS, secondary school in Ballyroan, Dublin, when we welcomed this year's group of students and teachers to Kolkata in February. The group spent an action-packed ten days in Kolkata experiencing life in India and gaining an insight into the work we do, and more importantly, the issues faced by the communities and people we support. We are extremely grateful for the continued support of Coláiste Éanna which enables us to make such a difference to the lives of so many young people in India.

Our student support programme has also grown considerably throughout the year to support even greater numbers of young people in completing their secondary education and beyond to third level studies. This year we are proud to have assisted 120 students in the latter stages of their

secondary education, up from 90 in 2017. We also welcomed nine new students into our college support programme, bringing the total number of college students supported by Calcutta Connect to seventeen.

As always we have maintained a great friendship with another Irish organisation, Friends of Calcutta, and for the fifth year have provided support to their programme in Kolkata with local NGO, the Development Action Society.

None of this would be possible without the incredible support we receive from our many supporters and donors, whom have allowed us to make such a great impact on the lives of so many young people and their families in 2018.

***Thank You,
Brian Kelly
Chief Executive Calcutta Connect***

Calcutta Connect—Who Are We and What We Do

About Us and Who We Are

Calcutta Connect is a non-governmental organisation founded in 2010 by past pupils of the Coláiste Éanna India Immersion Project. Our committee is made up of individuals from a broad spectrum of backgrounds who can draw upon their experience to enhance the work we do. We work towards alleviating poverty by supporting education of children and young people from some of the poorest communities in Calcutta and surrounding districts.

Our Vision

All children, young adults and families, regardless of their background, can reach their full potential through education.

Our Mission

To work in partnership with local organisations to create sustainable change through Education, Vocational Training and Community Development, empowering children and young adults to secure a better future for themselves and their families.

100% Model

One of our greatest selling points to our supporters has been that 100% of all donations we receive go directly towards the projects we support in Calcutta. As we have grown we have been proud to operate a 100% model which means that 100% of public donations we receive go directly towards the projects we support. Administrative expenses incurred (including the salary of our CEO) are met by separate funding, generously provided by a private patron. In short this means that every cent we receive in donations goes straight towards our projects in Calcutta.

Our Core Values and Principles

Partnership

We strongly believe that working with local organisations is the best way to understand, challenge and address the issues faced in underprivileged communities.

Respect

Respect is at the core of how we engage with each other, our stakeholders and the work we do.

Transparency

We believe in being completely open about the way in which we operate and clear about where all funds raised are used and being accountable to all beneficiaries, members, partners and the public.

Empowerment

We see education as a tool of empowerment in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Professionalism

In our work we strive to operate in a professional, honest and ethical manner and adhere to best practices.

Child Centred

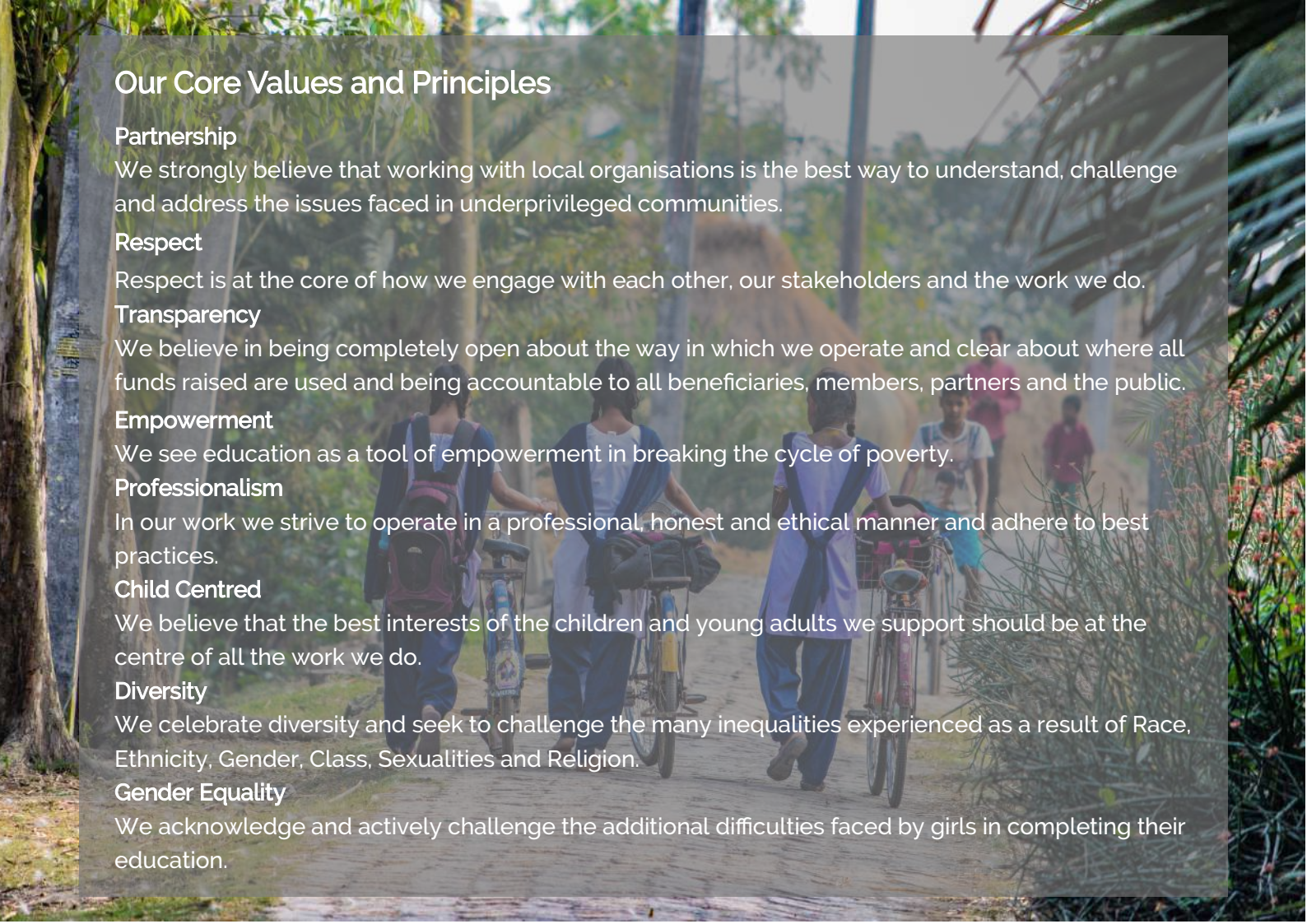
We believe that the best interests of the children and young adults we support should be at the centre of all the work we do.

Diversity

We celebrate diversity and seek to challenge the many inequalities experienced as a result of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Class, Sexualities and Religion.

Gender Equality

We acknowledge and actively challenge the additional difficulties faced by girls in completing their education.



Our Committee

We are a young and energetic group with ambitions to grow in order to maximise our impact in supporting the provision of quality education in underprivileged communities in India. Our committee consists of eight individuals who have all visited Calcutta on numerous occasions and are passionate about bringing about real change to the lives of the young people we support. The committee consists of individuals who draw on their experience here in Ireland and in India to contribute towards Calcutta Connect having the greatest impact possible with the projects we support.

The members of Calcutta Connect's committee are as follows: Chairperson - Brian Kelly, Secretary - Ian Stuart -Trainor, Treasurer - Alan Irwin, Emily Lyon, Alan McMullan, Ciarán Ahern, Shay Ferris and Emmet Wilkinson.

Committee Review Meeting

Our committee meets regularly throughout the year to discuss the projects we support, fundraising and future plans. Having evolved as an organisation in recent years, we identified a need to revisit our vision, mission and values and principles statements. We recognised the need to refresh these statements as a healthy and important exercise that all organisations need to carry out as they evolve. On Sunday 2nd December 2018 our committee gathered for a day-long session in which we worked through all the defining values of Calcutta Connect and defined new versions of these statements which we have included in this review.



Committee Member Emily Lyon's Kolkata Experience

As a relatively new committee member, February 2018 was my third time to visit the projects supported by Calcutta Connect.

As a committee member, I repeatedly find it an invaluable experience to spend time in Calcutta, both on a professional and personal level. For me, it is the opportunity to meet the partners with whom we work, to meet the students we support, and to see the projects in their day-to-day action; opportunities that aren't possible sitting in a meeting room in Dublin.

Our progress over the past three years has been incredible, but its reality and impact is felt more when meeting the people and local communities that are both benefiting from and implementing the projects on the ground.

As the only committee member who isn't an alumnus of Coláiste Éanna, this trip gave me my first experience of the CE Immersion Trip. A truly immersive trip for both Indian and Irish students, the week the students spent in Calcutta allowed opportunities for intercultural learning and to explore the wider context of global justice issues.

Experiencing the Immersion Trip was particularly important to me, as it gave me further context to and understanding of the work of Calcutta Connect, the organisation's roots and where it all began.

I'm very much looking forward to visiting again soon.



Highlights of 2018



17 College Students Sponsored



530 Students supported in our programme with PRDS



120 Secondary Students Supported



112 members of mothers self help groups



Vocational training to help mothers generate income



Opening of new Alor Disha Centre



Programmes focused on child development



Infrastructure development in all PRDS Centres

What We Supported in 2018

In 2018 we were able to build on the progress we made the previous year with Panikhali Rural Development Society (PRDS) as we expanded our work with them to a third community to bring the number of students we support to 530. Located in rural communities 60 km outside of Kolkata, the centres provide an essential support system to families from marginalised backgrounds. We work with PRDS to provide pre-school, follow up coaching to students as well as forming mother's groups in local communities.

We remain committed to supporting older students in their education by providing sponsorships to students in the latter stages of their secondary education and those who have progressed on to third level. This year we supported 120 students in the final years of their secondary schooling and seventeen who had progressed to higher studies in college.

For the fifth year running, we have been delighted to continue our excellent relationship with another Irish charity, Friends of Calcutta, by contributing towards their annual budget and assisting them in their programme which supports the education of 800 students in four centres.





Panikhali Rural Development Society

After a great initial year supporting Panikhali Rural Development Society in 2017, we had the opportunity to expand the work we do with them throughout 2018 in order to make an even greater impact in the communities supported. More teachers were hired, additional programmes were added and an overall increase in focussing on community outreach was undertaken throughout the year.

A significant development was opening a new centre in a village called Charadakatia. The new centre was named Alor Disha which translates from Bengali as "*Moving in the Direction of Light*". From the very first day the centre has been incredibly successful, with over 200 students passing through its doors each day for pre-school and follow-up tuition.

Throughout the year we were fortunate to receive funding and that allowed us to make much needed improvements to all three centres we support with PRDS. A new roof was put on the Alor Disha centre, kitchens were installed, tables and benches put in place, libraries built and fully stocked and large amounts of educational materials purchased. Thanks to this funding we were able to bring the centres up to a high standard in a relatively short period of time. As things stand at the end of 2018, we currently have 530 students attending PRDS centres on a daily basis and 112 mothers taking part regularly in self-help groups.

Friends of Calcutta

We have enjoyed an excellent working relationship with another Irish charity, Friends of Calcutta, for many years. Since 2013 we have been providing financial support to their programme with Calcutta-based NGO, Development Action Society. Friends of Calcutta runs four education centres which involve the provision of pre-school, follow up support, vocational training, medical care and nutrition to its students. Three of their centres are located in the city of Calcutta while the fourth is located in the remote Sundarban area, 100km south of the city. As we have for many years, Calcutta Connect was a co-funder of the Friends of Calcutta Project again for 2018, as a funding sponsor. This support is particularly important to us, as members of our committee have volunteered at Friends of Calcutta centres since as far back as 2002.



A man with short grey hair, wearing a purple and white checkered shirt, is seen from the back, looking towards a group of students in a classroom. The students are seated at desks, and the background is slightly blurred. A semi-transparent grey box containing text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Student Sponsorships

Supporting older students in their education remains one of the key areas of focus for Calcutta Connect and we are proud that this year we were able to grow this assistance. The cost of education in the final years of secondary education in India is beyond what many families from poorer backgrounds can afford. The support we provide is essential in allowing older students complete their secondary education and progress to college, and ultimately to a brighter future.

The impact of our support over the years is demonstrated by greater numbers of our students remaining in school, completing State examinations and progressing to third level studies. This year we are proud to be able to support 120 students in the final years of their secondary education.

With nine students completing their final secondary school examinations this year the number of college students we support has grown considerably and we are delighted to feature all of our first and second-year college students in the next section.



Motiur is studying Political Science at Bangabasi College. He completed his higher secondary in Arts Stream and is now pursuing his BA in Political Science



Nasir is studying Political Science at Bangabasi College. He completed his higher secondary in Arts Stream and is now pursuing his BA in Political Science



Piu is studying an Arts degree having completed her higher secondary this year. She will be completing her BA over the coming three years



Sufia is studying an Arts degree having completed her higher secondary this year. She will be completing her BA over the coming three years



Biswanath is studying an Arts degree having completed his higher secondary this year. He will be completing her BA over the coming three years



Anwar has gained admission to study a BCom with Accounts in Heramba Chandra College having scored an excellent 84% in his higher secondary exams



Manju is studying an Arts degree having completed her higher secondary this year. She will be completing her BA over the coming three years



Paltu is in second year studying a Bachelor of Commerce Degree with an emphasis on Accounts having received first class marks in his higher secondary exam in commerce stream.



Mahtab has gained admission to study a BCom with Accounts in Heramba Chandra College having scored an veryimpressive 91% in his higher secondary exams



Priya is in second year of a five year of her law degree She will be completing her LLB in LJD Law College.



Samim is studying for his BCom having completed his higher secondary this year. He will be completing his BCom over the coming three years



Samser is in second year taking a Bachelor of Science degree in Bango Basi College in the city. He is now pursuing his BSc in college.

A Look Back at 2018

Alor Disha Centre

We began working with PRDS in a new community in 2018 after undertaking initial visits and surveys in late 2017. We opened a centre in the village of Charadakatia in January 2018, which has been a success from the very start with large numbers of students enrolling from the local community in the many different programmes. By the end of February 2018, the centre was already at peak capacity with almost 200 students attending. We decided to name the centre “Alor Disha” which translates from Bengali as “Moving in the Direction of Light”.



Panikhali Rural Development Society

In 2018 we entered into the second year of our partnership with PRDS. Following such an incredible first term, our primary objective was to build on the successes and to use our experience to make necessary improvements, where required. We agreed there was a community demand to expand our supports to facilitate even greater numbers of students. So we hired additional teachers and scheduled extra classes to cater for the increase in students. We also expanded the array of programmes being provided, for the first time, we started vocational training for programme, where mothers in tailoring and clothes-making to enable them to generate an income for their families.

We are extremely proud of the progress we have made together with PRDS since 2017 and from small beginnings of assisting them with repair work to one centre in Panikhali, we are now delighted to be working with them in three communities supporting the education of 530 students of all ages.



Infrastructure Development with PRDS

Given the rapid growth of the programmes being delivered at PRDS, we decided significant renovation work and infrastructural investment in PRDS centres was required. We were fortunate enough to secure funding that allowed us to carry out this work, and to act quickly in order to respond to this need.

Thankfully we were able to carry out the required work during the spring of 2018 and this, in advance of the impending monsoon season, and the centres were brought up to a much higher standard. Among the items that were added to our centres were tables and benches for students, kitchen rooms and equipment, fully-stocked libraries and a wide range of classroom equipment. Our biggest single project was in the Alor Disha Centre, where we replaced an asbestos roof which was in poor condition. We installed a flat concrete roof on the centre and the work was completed by the end of May. The new roof has created a much better learning atmosphere in the centre for all the staff and students and allows for potential future expansion upstairs.



PRDS at Rajiv Ganguly Sports Tournament 2018

In January of each year Friends of Calcutta hold the Rajiv Ganguly Sports Tournament where children from NGOs all over Kolkata come to participate in a whole range of sporting events. For the first time, PRDS entered teams in the football and cricket competitions of the tournament and there was great excitement amongst the boys on both teams to be participating for the first time. Both teams performed excellently over the weekend with the cricket team beating the defending champions Bhubaneswari along the way, but just missing out on reaching the final match.

However, the PRDS football team proved to be a formidable side winning all their matches and making it to the final against a great team from an NGO called Durbar. The final was a closely fought contest with PRDS and Durbar evenly matched, though Durbar just edged a tight game. We were extremely proud of the efforts of all of the boys from PRDS and all are looking forward to taking part in the tournament once again in January 2019.





Coláiste Éanna India Immersion Project 2018

We have a long connection with the Coláiste Éanna CBS India Immersion Project and once again we were delighted to welcome a group of students and teachers to Kolkata in February. Established in 2001 and still continuing bi-annually the India Immersion project allows pupils from Coláiste Éanna in Rathfarnham visit projects and NGOs in Calcutta and to immerse themselves in Indian culture.

The 2018 group spent an action-packed nine days visiting all the projects and students we support. One of the highlights of their visit was an overnight trip to Bhubaneswari in the Sundarban region, accompanied by the local secondary school and college boys we support. Almost 50 Irish and Indian students spent a memorable weekend together in the remote Sundarban region. This was a unique cultural exchange and an opportunity for us all to sample life in the rural communities of West Bengal. We enjoyed a boat trip along the Sundarban rivers, spent a night in the village school and some lucky individuals spotted a rare Bengal tiger when we visited a tiger sanctuary! Over the nine days, we also visited the Friends of Calcutta centres in the city and the Friends of Kolkata's Elderly home for older people in a rural village. For the first time, a group from Coláiste Éanna visited our projects with PRDS and met our staff and students. The visit to PRDS was all the more memorable as we inaugurated our Alor Disha centre with a very special ceremony involving music, song and dance.

In late May we were delighted to attend the Coláiste Éanna End of Year Awards Ceremony where we were presented with a donation of €28,640 from the school which will go directly towards the projects visited by the students during their time in India. We are indebted to the incredible fundraising work undertaken by the students and teachers as part of their visit and we look forward to welcoming future groups from Colaiste Eanna to Calcutta in the coming years.

Trips to the Sundarbans

For a long time, many of the older students we support had been requesting an outing where they could all enjoy a trip out of the city to the Sundarbans. So this year, to congratulate all of the students for their hard work and commitment to their education throughout the year, we arranged two separate trips to the idyllic village of Bhubaneswari and boat trips along the rivers around the area. One trip was also attended by the Coláiste Éanna India Immersion group. The students on both trips were accompanied by staff from the Friends of Calcutta centres and all enjoyed the trips thoroughly as a chance to experience life in the rural setting of the Sundarbans. A small number of students were even lucky enough to spot a glimpse of the elusive Bengal Tiger in the wild.



Committee Members in Calcutta

As always, we were pleased to have a number of our committee members visit Kolkata and observe the projects we support first-hand. Throughout the year our Chairperson Brian Kelly undertook three visits to Kolkata and spent his time working closely with management from PRDS to oversee all aspects of our work with them. Brian works closely with our Kolkata Manager Baren Mondal on all the projects we support.

In February three members of our committee Emily Lyon, Ciarán Ahern and Emmet Wilkinson travelled to Kolkata to link up with Brian for the Coláiste Éanna India Immersion visit to the city. It was great to have four members present at this time to help the school during their visit and also to spend time visiting the projects and students we support.

In April, our treasurer Alan Irwin made his own annual trip to Kolkata accompanied by a number of friends. The group spent a week visiting all our projects and Brian and Alan were able to spend time with PRDS management and Baren to oversee various matters and discuss our future plans. We look forward in 2019 to once again having a regular presence of committee members in India to support the work done on the ground in Kolkata.



Programme Activities in 2018



Student Capacity Building



Class XI sponsorship



Mothers Meeting on limiting plastic usage



Children's Day Celebration



Health Camp in Alor Disha Centre



Cultural Performance in Alor Disha



Football Tournament between all three PRDS Centres

College Students

The summer is a busy time in Kolkata for college admissions after the results of the higher secondary exams are declared, and this year was the busiest we have had so far. We were delighted to learn that all nine of the students we sponsor passed their exams, with two of the boys Anwar and Mahtab performing particularly well scoring 84% and 91%.

We spent a number of weeks assisting these students with their applications to colleges and by the end of June, all nine of the students had gained entry to courses of their choice. Calcutta Connect now supports 17 college students and we are delighted to see this number growing each year. Over the coming year the first five students we sponsored in college will be completing their courses and we look forward to assisting them plan for their future.



Final Year College Students Q&A

What course and college are you studying in?

I am studying Broadcast Journalism in Derozio Memorial College in New Town

What have you enjoyed most about college?

As my course is very hands on I have enjoyed the practical side spending time learning in the colleges media labs. Also we had much outside exposure which has given me experience there.

What was the hardest part of college?

As I came from Bengali Medium Schools my whole life it was difficult for me to make the transition from this to college with all classes taking place in English.

Your favourite thing to do in your free time?

I like to read a lot and have spent a lot of time on English Books trying to improve my English and also I like to read story books and playing hockey as well.

Any advice for other students just starting out in college?

Work hard throughout college and always keep your target in mind of what you want to achieve and you will reach your goal

What are your plans for future once college is finished?

I would like to get a job placement that involves me working in either a newspaper or radio station as these are two areas I have enjoyed the most in college



Rupmoni



Imran

What course and college are you studying in?

I am studying Media Science in Future Institute of Engineering and Management

What have you enjoyed most about college?

I really enjoyed the whole college experience, being able to spend time with friends there and taking part in college events. The part I enjoyed most was following and learning in photography and cinematography two areas I am passionate about.

What was the hardest part of college?

In my family many people were putting pressure on me to work and not to continue with my studies once school was finished as I was the first person to reach such a level of education and they did not understand. But thanks to the help I received from Calcutta Connect it has been possible to continue and complete my college education.

Your favourite thing to do in your free time?

My passion is photography and I always follow my passion whenever I get a chance. I love to get out around exploring Kolkata and taking photos whenever I can.

Any advice for other students just starting out in college?

College is one of the most enjoyable times of your life and so few get the chance to study this far so you should make the most of it if you get the opportunity. Work hard to your goal as a few years' hard work will give you many better years in your future.

What are your plans for future once college is finished?

I hope to get a good job placement in the area of camera work and also to do a specialisation in cinematography to improve my knowledge further. I would like to earn enough to help my family get a better place to live and also help other boys and girls get studying opportunities. My long term dream is to travel the world with my camera in my hand



Salim

What course and college are you studying in?

I am studying a Bachelors in Commerce in New Alipore College

What have you enjoyed most about college?

I have made many friends in college and it has been great to have many memorable times with them over the past few years. In college accounts has been my favourite class and I have enjoyed taking part in that class most

What was the hardest part of college?

I have found economics the most difficult part as there are many formulas to learn however I have worked hard at it throughout the past few years and have passed all my exams each semester

Your favourite thing to do in your free time?

I am a big cricket fan and I like playing cricket with my friends from college and my local area

Any advice for other students just starting out in college?

Do not be afraid to challenge yourself and work hard with your studies and you will be able to achieve your goals

What are your plans for future once college is finished?

As I have been studying a Commerce I plan to pursue a job in this area so will look to work in some financial institution or office related to my studies



Sushanta

What course and college are you studying in?

BSc in Chemistry Honours in Fakir Chand College in Diamond Harbour

What have you enjoyed most about college?

Taking Chemistry, I enjoyed being able to regularly have practical classes in college and being in the laboratory which was a great learning experience for me.

What was the hardest part of college?

As practical classes were important I needed to have good attendance all the time so being in college every day during my time there was difficult while also attending tuitions outside of college.

Your favourite thing to do in your free time?

I like to read books about applied science and how it affects our lives. Also I enjoy reading other types of books such as novels and listening to music

Any advice for other students just starting out in college?

I would advise students to remain focussed throughout their studies and always keep up to date with their work in college. Managing your time is an important part especially when you have a big work load

What are your plans for future once college is finished?

I would like to pursue further studies in the area of Chemistry and if possible in one of the renowned Indian Institute of Technologies. It would also be a goal to have research and publish my own papers in well-known scientific journals.



What course and college are you studying in?

BHM in Hospital Management in Future Institute of Engineering and Management Sonarpur

What have you enjoyed most about college?

For me college was life changing experience as many people dream about studying in college and I got to do it. I really enjoyed my course, meeting new people, sharing new ideas about career paths in the college setting

What was the hardest part of college?

As I am now coming to the end of my life as a student and I have been in school and college for so long making the transition from life as a student will be difficult. I will also miss all of my college friends as I have really enjoyed my time with them the past three years.

Your favourite thing to do in your free time?

I like to be able to catch up with my friends and relatives in my spare time. Also reading some biographical books helps me to relax

Any advice for other students just starting out in college?

Enjoy your college life and make the most of your quality time with your friends. However, don't forget to work hard to achieve your dreams and never give up. As you have made it to college make the most of your opportunity and work to pursue your goals.

What are your plans for future once college is finished?

I want to gain employment with a reputable organisation working in a well know hospital so I can grow myself and achieve a better future for myself and my family

Baren Mondal

We have known and worked with Baren Mondal for long time and are fortunate to have him as a strong supporter of our work in Calcutta. As our work has grown over the past number of years, and the number of students being sponsored has increased, we decided that we would formally approach Baren to help oversee our projects as our dedicated representative in Kolkata.

We were delighted to appoint Baren as our Kolkata Manager at the beginning of 2018 and he now assists us in our work with both PRDS and with the older students we sponsor. Baren is always on hand to advise us on any issues faced in our work and has an excellent relationship with the management of PRDS with whom he works very closely. During the college admission period, Baren is invaluable to our students by guiding them through the application and admissions process. We are truly lucky work with Baren we look forward to continuing to do so for many years



Subhamoy Khan

"Subho" is the Secretary and founder of Panikhali Rural Development Society (PRDS) which he established in 2006. His aim was to support the education of children from marginalised families in his village of Panikhali, which is located 60 km outside of Kolkata. While he had some initial funding to do this, over time his funding diminished and he was forced to scale back his projects.

We first met Subho in 2016 and were immediately drawn to his enthusiasm and commitment to providing education to children and young people from underprivileged backgrounds, which aligned closely with our own aims. In early 2017 Calcutta Connect entered a partnership with Subho and PRDS to support their work. Since then we have been delighted to expand our work together to three communities, supporting the education of over 530 students. So much of the progress and success we have seen with PRDS is thanks to the inspiring and heartfelt work that Subho carries out on a daily basis by overseeing all areas of the organisation. His dedication and professionalism will continue to ensure the success of our work together.

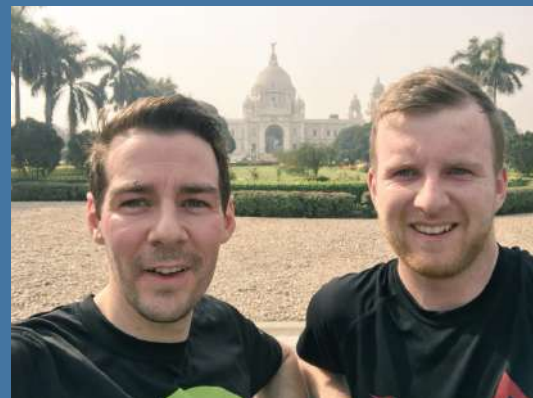


Fundraising

As always we would not be able to do so much work in Kolkata without the help of our incredible supporters and the assistance they give us each year in our fundraising efforts. This year was no different and we were lucky to be able to draw our fundraising from a number of sources . Throughout the year we gratefully receive many one-off donations from supporters of our work and we are particularly lucky to have a number of individuals and families who make regular contributions to our work. A sincere thank you to each and every one of you.

In March our committee member Ciarán Ahern ran the Barcelona Marathon and raised just over €1000 for Calcutta Connect in the process. We received generous donations from Unleash Potential and Total Produce as part of their respective corporate responsibility programmes. St Colmcilles Community School in Knocklyon also made a very generous donation following a colours day held in the school and an education trust based in Dublin "GBS Education Fund" once again also made a generous contribution to our programmes in Kolkata. Coláiste Éanna CBS in Rathfarnham made an incredible donation in May following their trip to Kolkata in February. Our annual quiz take place in November and once again it was a huge success with big crowds turning up for a really enjoyable night raising €3,075 for in the process.

All donations we receive from members of the public go directly towards the projects we support in Kolkata as our administrative costs are covered by a totally separate source of funding. We would like to thank all our supporters for their incredible support in 2018.



Coláiste Éanna

The roots of Calcutta Connect lie in the Coláiste Éanna India Immersion Project and to this day we enjoy great ties with the school, which has become one of our most important long-term supporters. Established in 2001 and still continuing bi-annually the India Immersion Project sends pupils from Coláiste Éanna to Calcutta to volunteer in the city. As part of their visit, the pupils now spend time volunteering in Calcutta Connect centres getting to know our students, staff and the areas in which our centres are located. This year the group worked incredibly hard undertaking a wide range of fundraising activities prior to their visit in February. In May we were delighted to receive a donation of €28,640 from the school thanks to the hard work of the students and teachers involved. Since 2012 the students of the Coláiste Éanna India Immersion Project have raised an amazing €82,540 for Calcutta Connect



Table Quiz

We have held an annual table quiz in Rathfarnham since 2012, which has become the highlight of the year for us as our largest single fundraiser and as a get-together of so many of our supporters. Each year we receive generous support from many local businesses who donate spot prizes and we always get a huge crowd to Revels in Rathfarnham Village. This year was no exception and with a packed house over the course of a fun evening we raised a brilliant €3075. This was our eighth annual quiz and we have raised a total of €21,000 combined from all the events. Thanks to all our loyal Rathfarnham supporters and to our quiz master Paul Conway.



Get Involved With Calcutta Connect

If you are passionate about helping support the education of young people from marginalised communities in India we want to hear from you. There are many ways to get involved in the work we do from making a one-off or regular donation, to attending one of our fundraisers (or organising your own), to becoming a corporate sponsor or visiting Calcutta with us. We are always open to new ideas and working with new people so please do get in touch if you have any suggestions as to how you might be able to help.

Donate

We are always grateful for any single donation and we also have a large number of ongoing supporters. 100% of all donations we receive go directly to the projects we support. Visit our donations page on our website to see the various ways we accept donations and make a difference

Organise a Fundraiser

A fundraising event is a great way to raise funds and help spread the word about the work we do in Calcutta Connect. No matter how big or small your planned event is we want to hear from you and will support you in the planning of your event.



Corporate Partnership

If you are looking to partner your company with a charity where you can be assured that all of the funds you donate go directly to education projects in India then look no further. We have been lucky to engage with a number of corporates in recent years and are always looking to expand our circle of supporters. Through partnering with Calcutta Connect you will help provide education to some of the poorest communities in Calcutta, while at the same time meeting your own Corporate Social Responsibility objectives. We can attend your offices and present on our work and we have previously arranged visits to our programmes in Calcutta for some corporate supporters. We are happy to work with you to design a programme that would fit best with your company so please get in touch.

School Visits

Our committee members are always available to undertake school visits or speak to other community groups to inform students and all our supporters of the work we do, the projects we support and more generally about development issues faced in India. We can tailor a session depending on the age groups of any students involved and the topics that teachers or group leaders may wish to explore. Please contact us any time to arrange a talk.



Panikhali School Plans

When we began partnering with PRDS in January 2017 our first project was the refurbishment of their centre in Panikhali including important repairs to its roof. With the work complete the centre opened in early 2017 with large numbers of students enrolling in pre-school and follow up classes. Since then our student numbers have continued to grow and the centre has reached capacity in terms of the numbers it can hold each day. The building's present structure is a traditional Indian style with a bamboo frame, fence walls and thatched straw roof. However, with our growing programme in Panikhali, we wish to construct a new building to cater for ever increasing numbers of students. We plan to replace the current building with a concrete building with five fully equipped classrooms, an office and a library. The planning is still at an early stage, but we will be fundraising for this throughout 2019 with a view to beginning construction and opening in late 2019 or early 2020, when Calcutta Connect will celebrate our tenth anniversary.



Planning for 2019

We have already started making plans for 2019 with PRDS and are looking forward to once again expanding our work with them over the coming year. On the programme side, there have been increasing numbers of students progressing in their secondary education so we will be looking to hire an additional teacher in each centre to cater for the needs of older students in Classes IX and X (equivalent to 3rd or 4th year in an Irish secondary school). We have lots of additional activities planned for the coming year for all our students, as well as a well-deserved outing for our staff to thank them for the great work they do in the centres each day.

We continue to grow the numbers of older students we support in the latter stages of their secondary education and through college and this will continue in 2019. Five of the college students we first began

supporting three years ago will complete their courses in 2019 and we look forward to assisting them with the next stage of their lives and careers, be it in further studies or through job placements in their respective fields of study. We are so proud of them all.

We look forward to continuing our long association with Friends of Calcutta and supporting their centres again.

At home, we will host our first bingo night in 2019, with a very special guest host Sean Flanagan aka Hog from Irish comedy trio Foil, Arms and Hog. Our bingo night will take place on Thursday 21 March in The Grand Social on Liffey Street, Dublin 1.

Attendance will be limited and we will be selling tickets in advance so put the date in your diaries!

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