



Calcutta Connect Annual Review 2019



Welcome,

It gives us great pleasure to present to you the Calcutta Connect Annual Review for 2019. Once again, the past year has been an extremely busy and successful time for us, on many fronts, and this review aims to capture the many highlights which occurred during 2019.

This year we continued our partnership with PRDS and successfully expanded the number of students we support with them, across three rural communities, to 720. In addition, a wide variety of practical programmes, extracurricular activities and outreach initiatives were successfully implemented throughout the year, benefitting the students, their families and the wider local communities.

Our older student sponsorship

programme continued to grow this year, with increasing numbers of students entering the final stages of their secondary education and progressing on to third level studies, in colleges and training institutions. In 2019 we were delighted to be in a position to support over 180 older students in their secondary and college education.

For the past year, a major goal has been to upgrade the buildings in our Panikhali and Alor Disha Centres and in September were delighted to secure the funding required to carry out these projects. Construction commenced in Panikhali in October, with a full rebuild of the school being carried out, and in mid-November, work started on Alor Disha with an additional multi-use classroom being constructed on the roof of the building. Both developments should

be complete in early 2020, with the enhanced learning environment set to greatly benefit students and staff alike.

As always, none of this would be possible without the incredible support we receive from our many supporters and donors. It is through their generosity and support that we were able to make such a positive and lasting impact on the lives of so many young people and their families in Kolkata during 2019.

Looking forward to 2020 and beyond, we strive to continue to work towards our shared vision of a world where children, young adults and families, regardless of their background, can reach their full potential through education.

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 is that we operate a 100% model, meaning that 100% of all donations we receive go directly towards the projects we support in Calcutta. As we have grown as a charity we are proud to continue this 100% model as a fundamental feature of how we operate. 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.

Highlights of 2019



Rajiv Ganguly Cricket Tournament Champions



25 Students Sponsored in College Education



720 Students in three centres with PRDS



New School Building under construction in Panikhal



Community awareness programmes throughout the year



Staff training and development



Extension to Alor Disha Centre



Programmes focused on student development & empowerment

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.

Committee Review Meeting

Our committee meets regularly throughout the year to discuss all aspects of our work including the projects we support, fundraising and future plans. After the great success of our review meeting in late 2018, where we revisited and reaffirmed our vision, mission and values statements, we decided this year to look at programme plans for the projects we support and the governance of Calcutta Connect here in Ireland. On Sunday, 24 November 2019 the committee gathered for a day-long session where we assessed our current programmes with our partner organisation in India, as well as generating new areas for programme development in



2020. The second part of the meeting we explored the governance of Calcutta Connect in the light of the newly introduced Charities Governance Code, to ensure we are compliant with all the principles outlined in the code. We put plans of action in place to ensure we are fully compliant with the Governance Code by early 2020.

Development Education Training

During our 2018 Annual Review session, we agreed that we needed to continue to improve our awareness, and importantly our ability to raise awareness, about social justice issues – most particularly, those issues experienced by the students and communities we support in India.

With this in mind, earlier this year, committee members Alan McMullan and Alan Irwin attended a nine-week course in UCD in the area of Development Education. Organised by UCD Volunteers Overseas in partnership with Comhlámh, the course was aimed at people working or volunteering in areas dealing with development education or global justice issues and seeks to explore these through a wide variety of media (debate, storytelling, weighted discussions, theatre etc). The overall objective was to provide participants with the necessary skillset to facilitate group discussions and preparatory sessions about social justice and development issues arising in their area of interest / involvement.

Following their successful completion of this course, the two Alans facilitated a development education session with the group of students and teachers in St Colmcille's (Knocklyon). The aims of this session were to: (i) provide insight into the types of development and social justice issues which arise in India; (ii) highlight and discuss the barriers to access to education; and (iii) focus on potential solutions to help resolve these issues. The overall objective was to enable the group to maximise their experience, insights & understanding and importantly what they take away from their upcoming trip to India. It is intended to complete another session with the St Colmcille's group, prior to their departure to India in April 2020, and also to hold similar development education sessions with Coláiste Eanna, together with committee member Emily Lyon, who also has a wealth of experience Development Education and facilitation, early in the new year before they travel to India in February 2020.

Due to the profound impact and success we believe group facilitation sessions on development education has on driving awareness – whether in a school, workplace or other environment - we are committed to utilising this methodology as a key pillar for all similar Calcutta Connect interactions going forward.

Our Work in 2019

In 2019 we continued our partnership with Panikhali Rural Development Society (PRDS) and further expanded our programme within the three communities where we now support the education of over 720 students, between pre-school and the final years of their secondary education. Our work with PRDS takes place in three rural communities approximately 60km outside of Kolkata and provides essential support to children and their families through the provision of education, and community outreach initiatives, in these marginalised areas.

Our older student sponsorship programme remained one of the key areas of focus again this year, with 180 students in both secondary and third level education receiving much needed support. These sponsorships are essential in allowing students, from some of the most marginalised areas in Kolkata and rural communities outside the city, continue and complete their education and to attend higher levels of study.

We continued our long association with another Irish charity, Friends of Calcutta, by contributing towards their annual budget and also covering the sponsorships of all the students from Classes 9-12 in their four centres, which supports the education of 700 students in four communities.



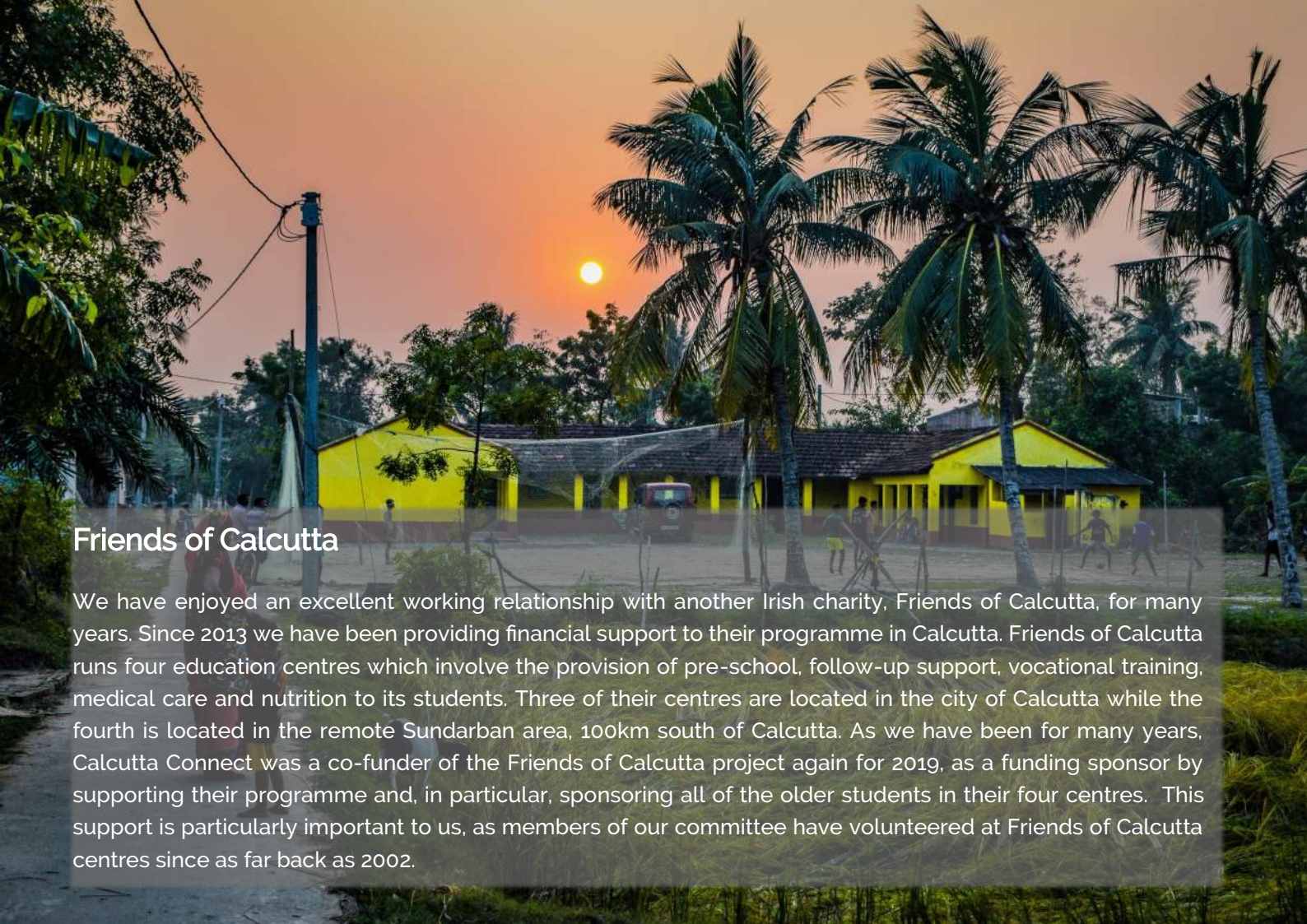


Panikhali Rural Development Society (PRDS)

This year, we entered our third year partnering with PRDS and our work together has continued to expand with ever increasing numbers of students attending our centres. This year student numbers grew to over 720 students, who come to our centres every day to attend the many different classes that take place. This year, in each of our three centres, additional teachers were hired to meet the growing demands due to increasing student numbers.

It gave us great joy in January when the cricket team from PRDS, in only their second year participating in the Friends of Calcutta Rajiv Ganguly Sports Tournament, emerged as winners of the cricket tournament in what was a great cause of celebration for all staff and students. It served as a poignant reminder to us of how far we have come with PRDS in such a short period of time.

After a year of planning and searching for donors to construct a new building in Panikhali and increase capacity at our Alor Disha Centre we were delighted in September to receive funding to carry out these two construction projects. The new school building in Panikhali, in particular, is an extremely significant infrastructural undertaking, with four large classrooms, a community meeting room, an office and a library. The work in Panikhali began in late September and Alor Disha in early November and both projects are due for completion in the new year.



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 in Calcutta. 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 Calcutta. As we have been for many years, Calcutta Connect was a co-funder of the Friends of Calcutta project again for 2019, as a funding sponsor by supporting their programme and, in particular, sponsoring all of the older students in their four centres. 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.

Student Sponsorships

Our older student sponsorship programme expanded once again this year, with 180 students being supporting the later stages of their secondary and third level education. For many poor families the cost of education in the final years of school is beyond what their limited means are capable of affording. The support we provide is essential in ensuring these older students can complete their secondary education and progress to college or further training, with the ultimate hope of a brighter future for them and their families.

In 2019, our student sponsorships assisted 156 students in the latter stages of their secondary education and 25 students attending college programmes in Calcutta. These ever increasing numbers are a clear indication that the support we provide is enabling more and more students to continue and complete their education, not just through secondary school, but also to graduate from college.





Tanmoy

This year we were delighted to begin supporting Tanmoy in his college education after he had performed excellently, scoring 82% in his Higher Secondary end of school exams. He is now in first year of college studying English Honours in Sonarpur Mahavidyalaya College.

Tanmoy is also a teacher with PRDS and works in Boria centre teaching the students from Classes V-VIII each morning before he attends college. He uses his salary from his teaching job to support his family and they would not have been able to support him in his college education due to the costs involved. We were very happy to help him in his college education and also to remain on as a teacher in Boria Centre.

He is an integral part of the team in our Boria centre and plays a great role in many of the community meetings where he gives advice and shares his experiences in the meetings throughout the year. Tanmoy is a great role model for the other students due to complete their secondary education and we wish him all the best with his college education.



Priya

We are now in the third year of supporting Priya in her college education. She is attending LJD Law College and studying Law having cracked the entrance exam and has performed excellently since gaining admission to the college.

She comes from the Dhapa area of Kolkata which is home to a large slum community where her family still lives. Her mother in particular has been a great source of support for Priya and is determined to see her daughter complete her college education and becoming a lawyer. She is a first generation learner and the first person from her family to study to such a high level.

Also recently Priya was selected to be an executive committee of the newly formed Friends of Calcutta –Tangra organisation. She is one of the first students from an NGO background to be selected to serve on the board of a local NGO.

She is currently at the half way point of her five year course and we wish Priya all the very best with her studies and look forward to seeing her graduate in a few years time.

A Look Back at 2019

Panikhali Rural Development Society

It was another busy year on the ground with PRDS as we entered the third year of our partnership together. The numbers in the centres grew to 720 and additional teachers were hired to cater for the increased numbers. This is indicative of the high standard of education and extracurricular programmes being run, going from strength to strength again this year. Our vocational training programme for mothers continued to be a great success, with many acquiring skills they can use to generate an income for themselves and their families.

Throughout the year, various additional programmes and events were held in the three communities where we work with PRDS, including community outreach initiatives, health aware programmes, mothers support groups etc, which were designed to further enhance our support to these communities. In addition, a staff appreciation outing to the Sundarbans and a student educational visit to Kolkata were organised and medical and dental camps were held in our three centres.

Over the course of 2019 a large amount of work went into planning our new school building in Panikhali and the extension of our Alor Disha centre. Budgets were made, quotations received from building contractors, architects drawings were prepared and permission received from local government. Thankfully, everything came together at just the right time and the building work commenced in late September in Panikhali.

Panikhali Rural Development Society

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Rajiv Ganguly Sports Tournament 2019

After our students' great performances in the 2018 tournament we were quietly confident of a similar showing in the 2019 event but nothing could have prepared everyone in PRDS for what unfolded over the second weekend in January. The students from PRDS arrived in the city in greater numbers for the tournament with the girls taking place in the Kabadi Tournament for the first time alongside the boy's teams who would take part in the football and cricket events for the second year.

The girls put in a great performance in the Kabadi but eventually lost out to more experienced teams and are looking forward to improving their performance in 2020. The boys football team put on a great showing once again this year and they lost out narrowly in the semi-final to Calcutta Rescue on penalties. The smaller children took part in a wide variety of athletics events and brought home many medals to the delight of all staff and parents.

The cricket team were the surprise package and everyone was overjoyed when they emerged as winners of the grand final of the weekend in the cricket tournament. They performed excellently in all their matches with some terrific individual bowling and batting performances. They beat the Sundarbans team in the semi-final and then emerged victorious in the final in a closely fought match against FOC's Topsia team. Jubilant celebrations broke out after the final and the party continued over the following days with a celebration to acknowledge the excellent performance of all our students taking place in our Alor Disha centre.



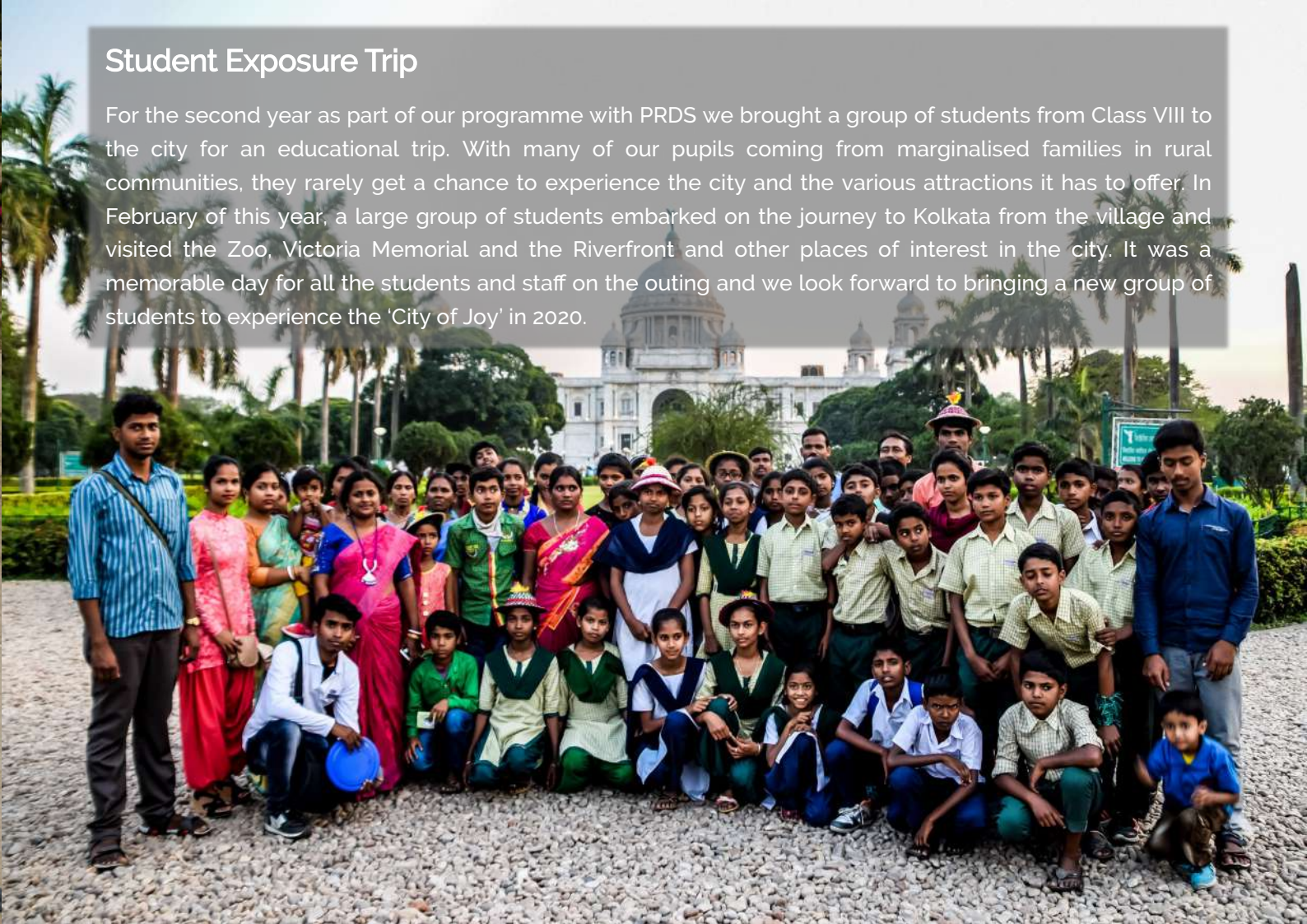
Champions Trophy

As cricket champions of the Rajiv Ganguly Sports Tournament PRDS were designated to host a team made up of students from the three Friends of Calcutta city centres in a newly designed Champions Trophy Tournament. In March the FOC team travelled from the city to our Alor Disha where a mini tournament was arranged between the PRDS and FOC teams on a very warm Sunday afternoon. The FOC team won the series of three matches played 2-1, there was a great spirit between the two teams and we look forward to hosting more teams from the city to future matches and tournaments we can host near our centres.



Student Exposure Trip

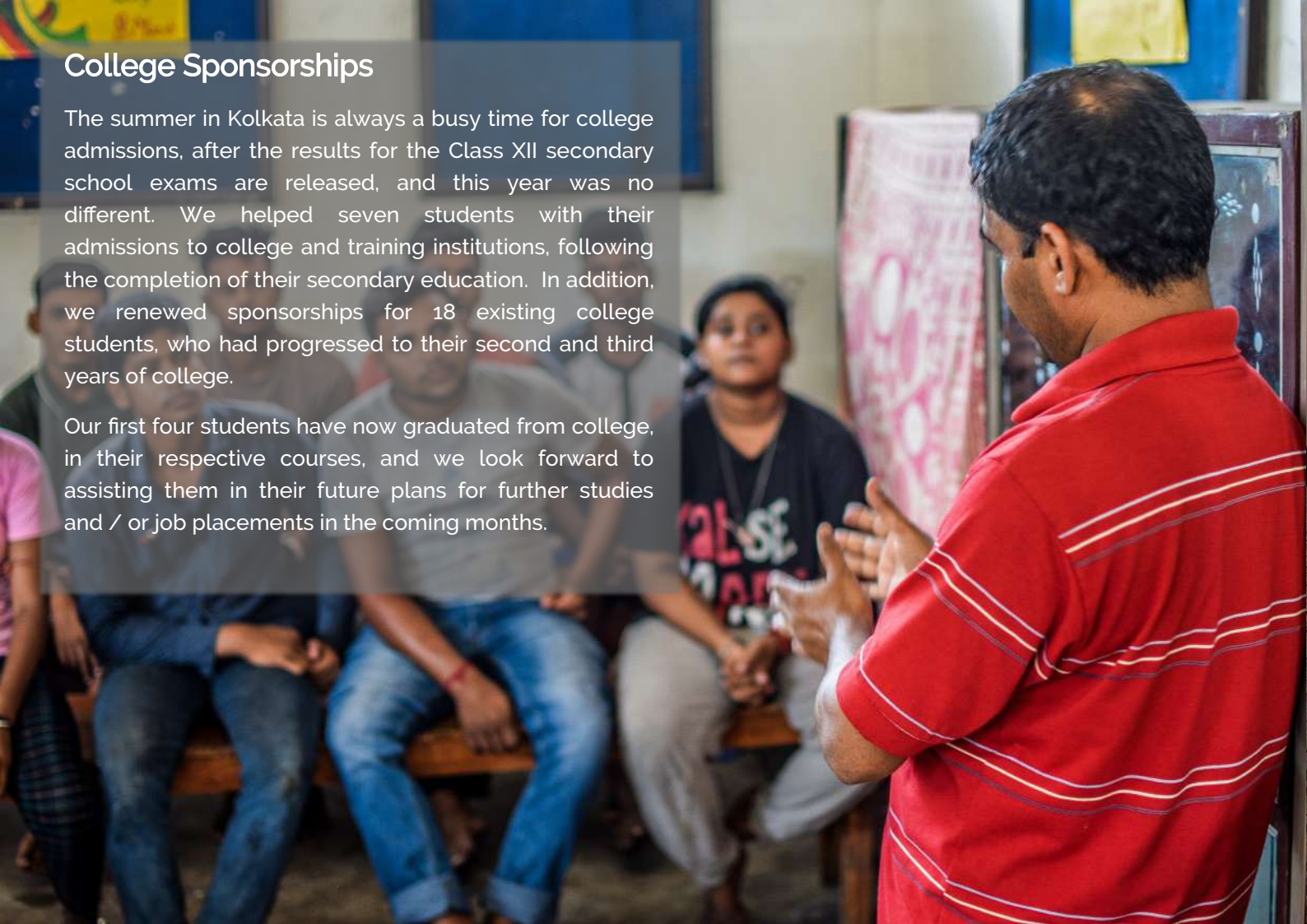
For the second year as part of our programme with PRDS we brought a group of students from Class VIII to the city for an educational trip. With many of our pupils coming from marginalised families in rural communities, they rarely get a chance to experience the city and the various attractions it has to offer. In February of this year, a large group of students embarked on the journey to Kolkata from the village and visited the Zoo, Victoria Memorial and the Riverfront and other places of interest in the city. It was a memorable day for all the students and staff on the outing and we look forward to bringing a new group of students to experience the 'City of Joy' in 2020.



College Sponsorships

The summer in Kolkata is always a busy time for college admissions, after the results for the Class XII secondary school exams are released, and this year was no different. We helped seven students with their admissions to college and training institutions, following the completion of their secondary education. In addition, we renewed sponsorships for 18 existing college students, who had progressed to their second and third years of college.

Our first four students have now graduated from college, in their respective courses, and we look forward to assisting them in their future plans for further studies and / or job placements in the coming months.



PRDS Staff Outing

In late February an outing was organised for all the staff who work in the three centres we support with PRDS. The group departed early on a Sunday morning for a boat tour of the nearby Sundarbans National Park, the world's largest mangrove forest and home to the largest density of Bengal Tigers anywhere in the world. The day long excursion was a great success with all staff greatly enjoying the outing which also served as a team bonding exercise amongst the staff from all the different centres. Plans are already being made for the 2020 outing with new locations outside of Kolkata being discussed.



Talks to SUAS Group

During the summer we came into contact with this year's volunteer group from SUAS Educational Development, who were spending the summer in Kolkata volunteering at various education projects in the city and rural areas outside Kolkata. The SUAS team leaders were keen for our students to share their experiences with the volunteer group, during their global perspectives week where they came together to get a greater understanding of life and development issues in Kolkata. In late July, two of our longest standing students, Imran and Akbar, who had recently graduated from college shared their experiences from the early years of their education right up to completing college and the highs and lows they experienced along the way with the group. They received incredible feedback from the group afterwards and it was a great experience for them both to speak to all the Irish volunteers.



St Colmcilles Preparatory Trip

In April 2020 we look forward to welcoming a group from St Colmcille's Community School in Knocklyon to Kolkata for the very first time. The group have been busy preparing for their trip next year over the past few months, carrying out fundraising, pre-departure sessions and development education with Calcutta Connect members.

In April of this year our committee member Alan Irwin accompanied three of the staff, who are the group leaders of the St Colmcille's Immersion Trip, on a preparatory visit to Kolkata and to the projects supported by Calcutta Connect. They spent a busy week on the ground visiting the projects and meeting with staff and students. The trip was a great success and paves the way forward for a successful school immersion trip this coming April.

Committee members Alan McMullan and Alan Irwin have also been assisting the group in preparing for their trip in April 2020, and in November facilitated a Development Education session with the students and teachers travelling over. The session focussed on discussing the barriers to access and limitations imposed on education in India, as well as the possible avenues to overcoming these challenges.



Local Staff and Management

On the ground in Kolkata we are extremely lucky to enjoy such a dedicated and hardworking team of staff and management in our project with PRDS. We work in three communities and in each community we have a senior member of management who looks after the running of the school in their community. In Panikhali the PRDS Secretary Subhamoy Khan is always present, in Boria our Self Help Group Manager Arabinda Naskar has a great relationship with the local community and at Alor Disha Pradip Mondal oversees the running of the centre. Our teachers and school cooks work each day to ensure the quality of education and food, given to our students each day are up to the highest standards.

We also employ Baren Mondal as our Calcutta Manager to work closely with PRDS management and with the students from our sponsorship programme. Baren's approach, dignified manner and solid advice has been invaluable to us over the past three years.

With the major construction work in Panikhali and Alor Disha Subho has overseen all the building work and worked closely with Baren on all aspects of both constructions. We are extremely lucky to have them both during this busy period for us.



Committee Members in Kolkata

As always, we were fortunate to have had a number of our committee members visit Kolkata and observe the projects we support first-hand during 2019. Our CEO, 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. The end of the year was a particularly busy time with Brian working closely with our Calcutta Manager Baren and PRDS Secretary Subho and the various construction projects taking place.

In January, Calcutta Connect Company Secretary and Chairperson, Alan McMullan, travelled to Kolkata to link up with Brian to oversee the beginning of the new school year in our PRDS centres and to meet with management in the PRDS. It was a busy two weeks in Kolkata for Alan which he spent visiting all the different projects supported by Calcutta Connect. It was also great for Alan to cap off his trip by being present to witness PRDS win the Rajiv Ganguly Sports Tournament.

In April, our treasurer, Alan Irwin, made his annual visit to Kolkata, together with a group of staff from St Colmcille's Community School in preparation for their immersion trip to Kolkata in April 2020. They had an action packed week visiting all the projects and making plans for the full groups visit next year.

In 2020 we look forward to having a similar presence in Kolkata throughout the year and especially during the times of the Coláiste Éanna and St Colmcille's school immersion trips.



Programme Activities in 2019



Rajiv Ganguly Tournament Celebrations



Community Meeting in Boria



Childrens Day in Alor Disha



Republic Day in Panikhal



Student Sponsorships in Panikhali



Teachers Day Celebration



First Day of School in Alor Disha



Student Performance in Alor Disha

Building for the Future — Panikhali

In January 2017 we entered in to a partnership with Panikhali Rural Development Society and one of the first areas for improvement we identified was to upgrade the existing school structure in Panikhali village. The building was upgraded and served us well over the past two years. However, due to its basic construct, and increasing numbers of students seeking to enrol, we decided at the end of 2018 that our target would be to upgrade the building in 2019 with a brand new school building. During the first half of this year a considerable amount of time was spent on planning and trying to identify potential donors for such a big project.

Late September was identified as the optimum time for construction after the intense rains of the monsoon season had subsided. Just in time in the first week of September we were delighted to have secured the funding from two sources to construct the new school in Panikhali. A few weeks later, in October, we received further funding which will allow us to construct a second level to the school building to even further enhance our work in Panikhali. The main work began in late September and has continued at a rapid pace ever since with the lower level construction completed by mid-November and the upper level work due for completion by January. The finishing work will then be carried out on all the rooms with plastering, electrical and plumbing work being done over the coming weeks.

When finished, the school will consist of four classrooms, vocational training room, office, library and community meeting room that will also serve as a computer room. We expect the lower level of the school building to be fully operational by early January and the upper level by the middle of February. We are extremely grateful to the two sponsors who have supported this work and enabling such a fantastic facility to be in place for all the students we support in this marginalised community.



Alor Disha

In 2018 we began working in Alor Disha Centre and from the very beginning our programme has been a great success here with large numbers of students in attendance in the school building. Last year we replaced the school roof that was in poor condition with a flat concrete roof and the long term plan was that we could further extend the building in the future by constructing an extra room on the roof. Over the past year the numbers coming to the school every day steadily increased and we decided it was time to plan for the extra room. Similarly, to Panikhali we put a plan together and sought funding to carry out the construction. Once again just at the right time we secured the funding from the same donor who was already so generously funding much of the work in Panikhali School. Work began for the extension to Alor Disha in mid-November and like Panikhali has continued at a fast pace, with the new room expected to be open and fully operational by early January. We are very thankful to our funder who has been so generous in enabling us to expand Alor Disha centre to cater for all the students we have there on a daily basis.



Key Programme Areas with PRDS

Each day 720 students pass through the three centres we support with PRDS with a wide variety of classes, programmes and extracurricular activities taking place from early morning and continuing to late into the evening. The following is an overview of the key programmes in PRDS:

Pre-School

Pre-School classes take place in Panikhali and Alor Disha centres each day. In these classes children aged 4-6 are taught the basics of Bengali, English and Maths to prepare them for entry to Government Schools in the locality. Each child is supplied with books and a uniform to encourage the habit of learning and regular school attendance from an early age. After two years in pre-school children are ready for admission to formal government schools.

Nutrition

Every day on completion of pre-school classes, children are given a nutritious meal that is freshly prepared by our school cooks in our kitchens. The meal provides students with much needed nutrients which they normally might not get in their diets in their homes. It also acts as an incentive for children to attend school regularly from an early age.





Follow Up Coaching

After completion of our pre-school students are mainstreamed into local government run schools in the areas. However, their involvement with our centres does not end at this point. Instead they enter what is our biggest programme in the form of follow up coaching for Classes I-XII. With many of our students being first generation learners, providing them with additional support in our centres is essential in enabling them to keep up to speed in school and pass exams. Also during the often lengthy school closures in India our centres remain open, keeping students on track in their different subjects

Mothers Groups

In each community mother's groups have been formed by PRDS with the purpose of discussing issues faced by women, their children and to create awareness on overcoming these issues. Meetings are held monthly and have proved highly beneficial with large numbers of mothers in attendance covering many different topics of benefit to them, their families and the wider community.



Vocational Training

Vocational Training started last year for mothers from the local community in Panikhali to teach tailoring skills to enable early school leavers to learn a vital skill which can help generate an income stream. Already a number of the trainees have acquired good skill-set and started their own small businesses locally. With the construction of the new building in Panikhali, there will be a dedicated vocational training room which will greatly enhance the programme and the outcomes for the trainees.



Fundraising

As always, we would not be able to do so much 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 wider variety of very generous sources. Throughout the year, we gratefully receive many one-off donations from supporters and we are particularly lucky to have a number of individuals and families who make regular contributions. A sincere thank you to each and every one of you.

The year began with Dara Ward a participant of the 2018 Coláiste Éanna India Immersion Project sending us a donation following a Christmas swim he had organised and received sponsorship from friends and family. In March we organised our first ever "Bingo Night" which proved to be a huge success with a large crowd turning up to raise €2,884. For the second year Unleash Potential included us as part of their CSR programme and we were delighted to be presented by Maurice Whelan from Unleash Potential with a cheque for €1,000 in September. The Rathfarnham based "GBS Education Fund" again gave a generous donation to fund our programmes in Kolkata. The year ended with our annual quiz, which as always drew a large crowd packing out Revels Pub, the night was a great success raising €3652. Sudha Rao, a long term supporter of our work, ran the Dublin Marathon this year and as a result of his efforts ended up donating €1000 to Calcutta Connect.

Prior to the departure of the St Colmcilles Preparatory group we received donations from Sonya Beatty, Fiona Kerins and St Colmcilles school itself. All of the funds from these donations were used to buy educational supplies for our centres with PRDS

100% of 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 2019

Bingo Night

For the very first time we organised a bingo night to raise funds and we were very lucky to have Sean Flanagan from comedy trio Foil, Arms and Hog be our host for the night. In the character of our favourite Irish Mammy, "Anne Flanagan", Sean did an incredible job as the bingo host for the night and kept the crowd entertained throughout the night. The event was a great success, raising €2,884 and a special thanks to Sean for giving up his time to host the night for us.



Quiz Night

For the 9th year we held our quiz night in Revels, Rathfarnham Village. Once again the night was a great success with a huge crowd turning up to support us. We would like to particularly acknowledge all the local businesses who support the night by donating so many great spot prizes for the night. In a packed house, we raised a brilliant €3,562 on what was our most successful quiz night to date. Thanks to all our loyal Rathfarnham supporters and to our long-standing 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.



Planning for 2020

As we come to the end of an extremely busy 2019, we look forward to the year ahead and in particular to seeing the completion of both the new school building in Panikhali and the extension of Alor Disha. We have already started making plans with PRDS for 2020 on the programme side and with student numbers set to grow further, we anticipate additional teachers will be recruited once again this year. Additional programmes will be added, such as computer training and expanded vocational training, as well as maintaining all those that have been so successful and well received by staff, students and the local community over the past three years.

In February we will welcome the Coláiste Éanna India Immersion Group to Kolkata for their biannual trip to the city. We look forward to showing them all the projects we support and to see the progress that has been made since their last visit in 2018. April will see St Colmcille's arrive for their very first immersion trip and similarly we have a busy schedule planned for their time in the city. It will be a great privilege for us to assist two local Irish schools with their immersion trips in 2020.

Our long established student support programme will continue and we expect to see numbers increase once again as more and more students are set to progress to the final years of their secondary education and on to third level. We look forward to continuing our association with Friends of Calcutta and supporting them in their work again.

At home we're facing into a landmark year for Calcutta Connect as we enter the 10th year in operation. Plans are beginning to be made for a celebration event in the summer of 2020 and we look forward to welcoming all our supporters and friends to this event in due course.





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