

### Consolidation of activity



*Rimly at work*

Following the decision made earlier in the year to consolidate the work in the Tea Gardens, Rimly has been revisiting Kalighat Tea Garden which was first covered two or more years ago by Mamoni. She has found some new children and babies needing eye treatment, both for glasses or surgery, and these have been taken to BNSB eye hospital for full assessment and professional help.

Since this is a 'revisit' situation she has not found a huge number, but she has been able to provide more education to parents and to give out Vitamins which are so vital for continuing eye health. Moom has also been able to help with this work as well as manage the office.

From January to March a total of 571 tea garden children have been examined in their homes, 84 have been taken to BNSB hospital together with 19 adults, 153 adults have received individual health education and 396 attended group education classes. 264 doses of cod liver oil have also been given to children.



*Moom giving out vitamins*

### Welcome to Lucky



*Introducing Lucky*

After advertising locally, Ivan has appointed Lucky as a new eye healthcare assistant to work alongside Rimly. Lucky is currently studying at the college in Moulvibazar but is able to work full time for Vision for Bangladesh. She is Hindu, from a small Tea Garden close to Kalighat and will be trained over the next few weeks by BNSB hospital staff to enable her to work independently. We are delighted to welcome her as part of the team and trust she will learn quickly and feel at ease working with Rimly and Moom.



*Lucky starting work*

### Kalighat School Sight Testing Camp

In February we were able to sponsor a tea garden eye camp when 438 children's eyes were tested in one day by a team from BNSB. As anticipated, the number of children needing glasses was relatively small (5) but those 5 children will now have long term benefit from seeing the blackboard and reading clearly.

If they couldn't see adequately, they would not have been in school at all. One child needed surgery for cataracts and every child was given cod liver oil for longer term benefit.



*Initial eye screening at school camp*



*Glasses prescribed*



*Using the paediatric eye screener provided by VfB*



*Children can learn to read if problems are dealt with early*

### Non-Tea Garden Patients

In order to maintain a good relationship with the BNSB hospital, the trustees of Vision for Bangladesh have agreed to finance a limited number of eye treatments for local needy children and adults from Moulvibazar district who cannot afford to pay for treatment themselves. 38 children and 80 adults have received medication or glasses so far this year from the district.

### Banking and Finance

Thankfully the difficulties of transferring money to BNSB hospital last autumn appear to have been resolved although how or why is unclear. We are so grateful to all of our regular supporters and to numerous charitable trusts for standing with us during these hard times. The decision to scale back the geographical areas of operation and therefore the expenses has enabled us to refocus our work to make sure we are prioritising the children and babies in the local tea gardens and to do the job well. We are able to maintain contact with mothers in particular but also re-connect with children who were given glasses previously and now need re-assessment and possible adjustment.



*Glasses can help even doing jobs around the home*

### Future plans

We will continue to fund school camps in relatively local and accessible Tea Gardens to ensure education for the children is not hindered because of poor eyesight. Since we have stopped adult camps, which were a huge drain on our funds, we are largely dependent on our team of finding individual patients (both old and young) to take to hospital, and Ivan is actively seeking to recruit a new eye healthcare assistant to bolster the team.

In order to use our trained girls most efficiently, we are debating whether to establish a network of (possibly) older women in their home Tea Garden communities, and for them to receive some very basic training in primary eye assessment. If any needy patients are identified, whether old or young, they might then be referred to one of our fully trained girls for full assessment prior to taking them to hospital. The older women would be sponsored on a part-time basis, and they would not have to travel outside of their own communities. The trained girls could then visit each tea garden on a regular basis to hold eye clinics and group education classes for nutrition, sanitation, personal hygiene, etc. rather than spending a lot of time doing primary assessments from door-to-door as they have done until now.

### Achievements by numbers.

January to March 2023

**1009**

children's eyes examined in the tea gardens.

**122**

children received treatment at BSNB

**99**

adults received treatment at BSNB.

**102**

pairs of glasses were issued.

**549**

adults were given basic healthcare education.

**702**

doses of cod liver oil given to tea garden children

On behalf of the Tea Garden people - thank you for every prayer and every pound. We cannot do this without your continued help.