

# VISION FOR BANGLADESH

## SEPTEMBER 2021 UPDATE

The majority of this year has again seen Bangladesh in lockdown, with many months of inactivity regarding hospital surgery. The Tea Gardens, however, have been working as normal within their gated communities, allowing us to continue our work finding the children with reduced vision and educating their parents on all aspects of healthcare.



This year we have added to our fieldwork two Healthcare Advisors. To really help this area of the world with long-term effect it is essential to educate the people, empowering self-help and providing a strong message that will be passed on to future generations. The two Healthcare Workers are Tea Garden girls who have been educated into teenage years and have now received extra training from Ivan (our manager on the ground) and Moulvibazar Eye Hospital.

Their remit is to educate the women in the Tea Garden's on nutrition, sanitation, vitamin and iron intake and general healthcare. They have also had basic training on how to test a child's vision and detect any degree of blindness. The women are given a point of contact should they need help with a child losing vision. One of the main causes of cataract in a child is lack of Vitamin A in the diet. Most of the children are severely malnourished and the mothers' anaemia can lead to total fatigue after a day's work in the field.



In June, Covid-19 restrictions were briefly lifted at the hospital and we were able to do an Eye Camp in one Tea Garden. As a result, 43 adults had their cataracts removed and many more were given glasses or medicine. In total this year (January - June) over 250 patients have been treated for reduced vision, 82 were children/adults with cataract, 102 patients were given glasses to be able to continue school or work and many more received medication for allergies and other conditions.

Last week Covid-19 restrictions were totally lifted in Bangladesh, and we are now hoping to arrange a full Eye Camp every month in different Tea Gardens and school eye-screening camps in various Tea Gardens.



The fieldwork of health and nutrition education will continue as well as the door-to-door knocking to find children going blind.

This program will create an ever-increasing work load for Ivan our field manager. Visiting the Tea Gardens requires high mileage and many physical hours of manpower for him as he oversees the HCW's in different Tea Gardens, miles apart. For this reason we have increased the monthly funding budget that we give to Ivan to enable him to employ a younger man to help him with the physical work. This man (as yet unchosen) will be a Tea Garden man who knows the language and customs of his people and is able to connect with them easily. It is also safer to employ a man, to be out after dark when necessary.



We are so grateful to you for any financial contributions, without your continued support we could not continue. We meet very regularly as trustees in this ever-expanding work, keen to ensure we do our very best with the money given. We hope the photos and the information given above will continue to show the great need for this work and the many sight saving operations we are able to arrange and fund.

*"This is the story of VFB.  
Arkon was totally blind when one of our HCWs found him.  
He now has vision enough to start school and reading."*



These little lives are totally changed by one cataract operation.

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