

Spring
2014

Valerie Taylor Trust

Supporting the work of Valerie Taylor in Bangladesh

Chairman's Notes

The demands placed on CRP last year were unprecedented because of the Rana Plaza tragedy in April 2013. But nearly a year later the work of treating the survivors still goes on. You will read elsewhere in this Newsletter of the significant rehabilitation and social welfare activities that will help so many of the injured to adapt to a new life. Thanks to the generosity of supporters from across the world, the normal work of CRP has carried on throughout this period of major emergency activity.

This Newsletter gives you a snapshot of the very wide range of activities and developments going on at CRP. VTT remains a major financial donor and the UK is a good source of volunteers. – 38 visited Savar last year. Today CRP has over 700 staff and 9 Community Centres excluding Savar – a large organisation by any standards. Good progress is being made towards financial self sufficiency but there are still many patients who are unable to make any contribution towards their treatment. Therefore a key aim of VTT remains subsidising treatment for the poorest patients and so helping them to have a better life.

Thank you for your continuing support

Bertie Woolnough CBE
Chairman, Valerie Taylor Trust



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After Rana Plaza...

On 24th April, 2013 the eight storey high Rana Plaza building collapsed. 1129 people died, 2515 survived.

CRP Savar, just one kilometre from the disaster site, was one of the first on the scene giving medical and nursing care, ambulance support, blood (from CRP staff and students of BHP), dried food for the survivors and cloth for covering the bodies of those who had died.

The world's media reported the disaster but they have long since left. A consortium of five large international and national charities was formed, including CRP, to co-ordinate the total casualty management, identifying those needing long term rehabilitation.



CRP is currently in contact with 485 victims. Six of them are still in the hospital at Savar receiving treatment including, where necessary, fitting of prosthetics/orthotics. The remainder continue to receive therapy and vocational training as out-patients.

CRP has completed vocational training for 160. Of these, 102 have been re-integrated into the community all over Bangladesh. Their training has given them the skills to create a livelihood by running small businesses. For example a general shop or a tea shop, a pharmacy, traditional tailoring, cow raising, etc.

'Each one has a touching story and we have detailed information with re-integration photographs of each one of them. We plan to retrain all 485 and re-integrate them into the community with livelihood support and three months income support from the day they start their business.' said Md. Shafiq-ul Islam, the Executive Director of CRP.

Sculpture from Scrap

Arham ul Huq Chowdhury, a long standing supporter of CRP, has returned again to volunteer his services in Savar. Along with two welders from CRP's workshop staff, Arham is creating many different sculptures using only waste pieces from the metal workshop materials. On their completion, these will be exhibited and sold in Dhaka. This is the second such collection of sculptures made by Arham. There are also a number of his pieces in the grounds of CRP-Savar.



Watch this space...

In the pipeline – plans are afoot to construct a solar powered wheelchair particularly for quadriplegics. Iris, volunteer Occupational therapist and two other volunteer designers, have recently started work on this project.

Updates...

Babul's Manual Lift

Mohiuddin Babul, a wheelchair user of more than 20 years, who has guided CRP in the making of its first manually operated lift for wheelchair users, has recently had the satisfaction of seeing his design used in a school in Dhaka and a private house. More interest is now being shown in the value of the manually operated lift with more demand on Babul's involvement.

Nurses donation

In 2013 CRP's Nursing Institute did not hold their normal celebrations for International Nurses Day on 12th May. Instead they donated the funds towards the cost of care for the Rana Plaza survivors.

York St John

Amy Roy, an Occupational therapy student at the University of York St John, who did a placement at CRP last year, has encouraged a group of other students studying with her to act as peer reviewers for the studies and research activities undertaken by therapy students at CRP.

Volunteering their services in this way will be a unique and most helpful support for staff and students alike at the Bangladesh Health Professions Institute at CRP. We of course hope that it is also something of real interest to those therapy students studying in York.

“...now I can think for a better future”

Aziron

Aziron, a 40 years old woman, working as a garment worker at Fantom Tac, was situated on the 3rd floor of so called Rana Plaza. Her home district is Jinjirpara under Dimla thana in Nilphamari district, Bangladesh. But she was staying at Savar for her work.

On 24th April Aziron was working on the 3rd floor and suddenly the building collapsed and she was trapped. She was rescued that day and brought to hospital for medical management. On 21st May, 2013 she was admitted to CRP with severe low abdominal pain.

She was living a decent life before the accident. But she fell into the midst of uncertainty after the tragedy.

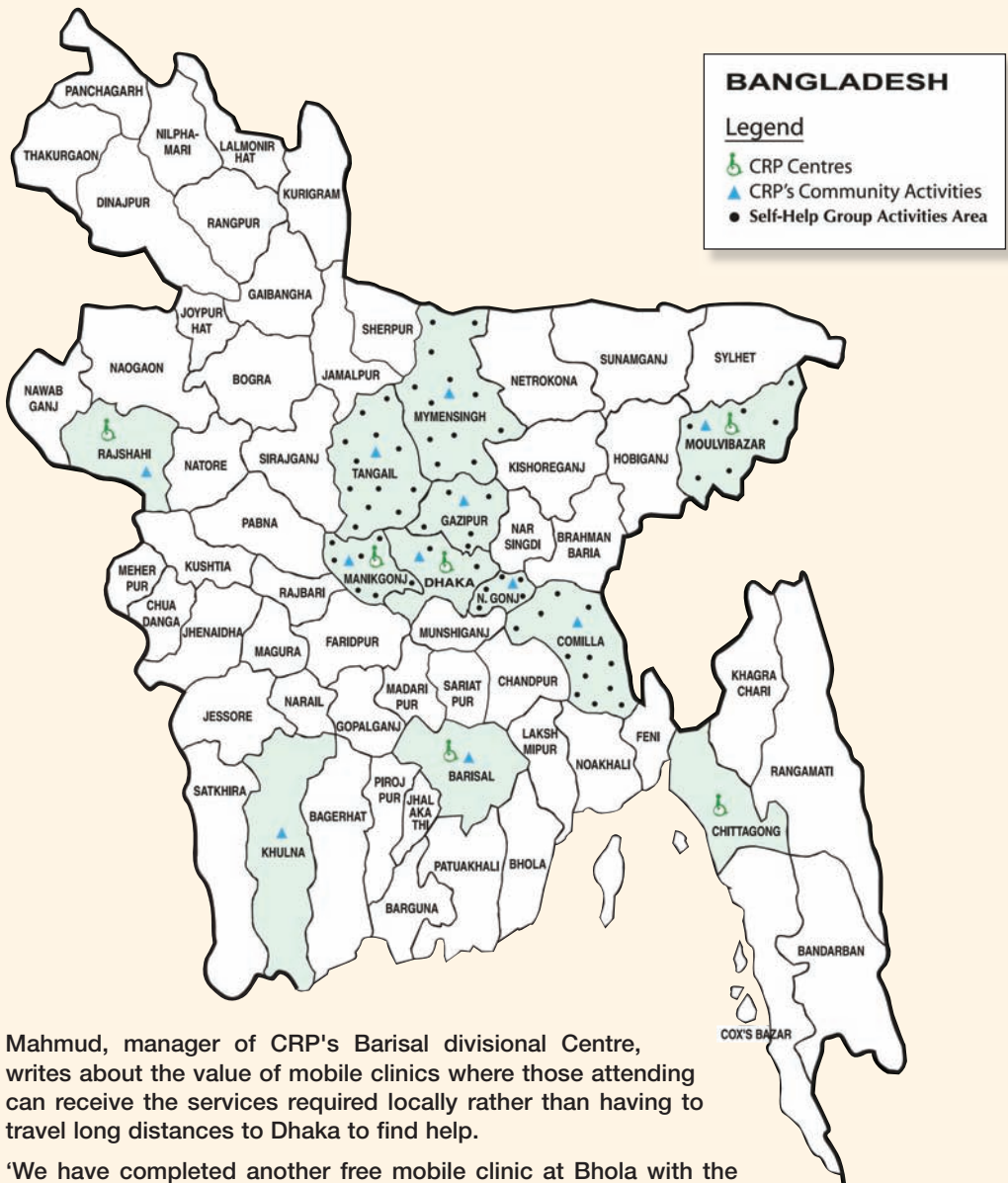


Cattle rearing and shelter support provision by CRP

She took treatment from CRP for 10 days and in the meantime CRP's rehabilitation team assessed her reintegration plan. She was not willing to go back to her previous job as a garment worker. Rather, she wanted to go back to her home district (Nilphamari) and start a business with animal husbandry. CRP's rehabilitation team visited Aziron's home and bought her cattle and also made a shelter for her. The total implementation process was completed on 7th July, 2013.

Now she is happy and we all hope for a better and prosperous future for her.

Highlighting the value of CRP's divisional Centres



Mahmud, manager of CRP's Barisal divisional Centre, writes about the value of mobile clinics where those attending can receive the services required locally rather than having to travel long distances to Dhaka to find help.

'We have completed another free mobile clinic at Bhola with the support of Bhola's Children. We had to continue our screening session till night because of a huge number of patients - more than 270. Most of the patients needed all of our services i.e. medical consultancy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech & language therapy.

I should mention that it was not possible for us to handle this huge number without the enormous support of Mr. M A Ali, founder of Bhola's Children. He provided accommodation, food, venue, volunteer and other logistic support.'

Threat to Patients

When patients at CRP have completed their medical and vocational training and have returned home to their village, often in remote areas, they can experience a constant threat from the local 'quack' doctor.

In the case of Abul Basar the local 'kobiraj' convinced our patient that heat would heal him. Thus very hot cloths were applied to his feet only to give him severe burns due to his lack of sensation following his spinal injury. Photos have been withheld as they are too graphic but this case does highlight the benefit of current technology when mobile 'phones give such easy access for follow up of the patient and digital photographs enable our staff at CRP to assess the situation and progress.

CRP aim to train the local kobiraj so that they can be useful in their locality rather than causing so much extra harm to our patients.

WANTED: A Treasurer

Would you like to
help to run VTT?

Do you like working
with figures?

If so, you might be the person
we need as **Michael Woodley**,
our Treasurer since VTT's formation,
wishes to stand down.

Please contact our **Administrator**
if you are interested

Future Plan

There is a plan to set-up the Vocational Training Institute on the land in Manikganj gifted to CRP in 2003 by Mrs Rehana Mahbub in memory of her late husband.



Karen Heaslip, volunteer Occupational Therapist from Ireland, has returned to CRP very recently with the particular desire to work with cases of mental health problems in the Mental Health Institute operated by the Government.

So far in Bangladesh there are no Occupational Therapists working in this field yet it forms a very large part of their training and expertise.

Pictured left: Karen Heaslip, volunteer Occupational Therapist from Ireland handing over a gift of OT books for the library to Julker Nayan, Head of Occupational Therapy Department at CRP Savar. Karen had raised the money to purchase many of these books while some were given as gifts.

Gardening – therapy, productive pleasure and profit

An accessible garden has been created by two volunteer Occupational Therapists, Fatema Tuj Johra (Iris) from Bangladesh and Karen Heaslip from Ireland. This garden enables Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) patients to work in the garden lying prone on a full length trolley or from their wheelchairs.

Vegetables and flowers have been growing in profusion and the patients recently celebrated in the half way hostel by having a lunch made up predominantly from the vegetables they had grown. There is also an area of the garden for children with disabilities to explore.

A programme has been made by one of the local television channels about the effect of gardening as part of the SCI patients rehabilitation. The creator of this programme

also sent an article to the widely circulated local English language newspaper, The Daily Star, highlighting the value of gardening for paralysed farmers. The making of compost and growing plants in bags, creating a vertical garden, was also included.

Mike Tomkinson writes:

“I first met Valerie in 1974 when I was a VSO working at a Trade School in old Dhaka and I’ve returned to Bangladesh several times since then. On each visit I’ve seen that CRP has grown and become ever more firmly established in the community. It’s been twenty odd years since my last visit and, despite reading every CRP newsletter that has ever been written, when I arrived on site last year I was totally



The accessible garden

shocked at the size and level of development that had taken place. I simply had not managed to assemble an accurate mental picture of CRP's magnificent reality.

The reason for my visit was to introduce CRP to UrbanFarm, a project that my friend David Acton and I had been working on over the last four years. We had spoken to Valerie during one of her UK tours and promised to visit CRP.

David originated an idea to provide an ultra-low cost way of growing fruit and vegetables without land by using vertical grow bags. The grow bags need only tiny amounts of water to sustain growth as we found out during trials in Kenya and the UK. The system rapidly expanded for more general use worldwide but particularly in developing countries.

The low costs and adaptability are perfect for CRP's patients. The bags can be fixed at any height so it's excellent for people who need help with mobility. Bags can be fixed to a building, wall or fence, on a solid flat roof if strong enough to take the weight, tied around the trunk or hung from branches of a tree, fixed to a rope line or length of bamboo or a frame and hence it's adaptable for use at any patient's home.

Being able to grow food helps provide independence for patients and, with enough bags, crops can also be grown and sold to provide an income. Where space is very limited to only a few bags, high value crops, such as chilli peppers, can be grown and the produce sold to buy basic foods. At the social level the system works particularly well to empower women towards independence. Providing vegetables and fruit for a family, it can also encourage enterprise and trade thus helping to reduce poverty.

CRP's experience of UrbanFarm provides a level of expertise that is being transferred, via



Lieutenant (Retd) Ben Mujib, David Acton (Originator of the UrbanFarm project) and two Doctors from the College of Agriculture & Sciences at IUBAT (International University of Business Agriculture & Technology) at the site of UrbanFarm trials in Bangladesh. Note the bamboo being used to create the hanging 'rails' for the grow bags.

patients returning home to villages and towns throughout Bangladesh, and hence to the wider community. It is an extremely low cost method of growing food using locally available materials and this makes it very easy to establish. CRP now sells "starter kits" of bags, compost, and seed as well as giving advice to local citizens. UrbanFarm works well for individuals or groups.

Also for areas of Bangladesh where land becomes unusable due to salt contamination following a sea water flood, 'Urban Farm' can provide a rapid restart to cultivation when conventional land remains unusable for a period. If such flooding is not deep and its height predictable, bags placed at a strategic height can survive a salt water flood whereas conventionally grown crops may not.

Our long term hope is that with patient's knowledge of UrbanFarm, this expertise, when they return home, will help support their independence and provide a very adaptable method for helping to reduce poverty more generally across Bangladesh."

Purple Field Productions helps at CRP

This year Purple Field Productions has found, and provided a very small amount of financial support to, a media volunteer to give additional training for CRP's new videographer, Mukta.

Mukta had been a member of our Wheelchair Users Film Group and received initial training from us, but unfortunately despite showing a good deal of potential, she had to drop out quite early.

The first videographer at CRP was another member of our Group, Meenu - but when she left CRP, she appointed Mukta in her place. Enter Sarah Hunt who went out to Savar last October to give some further training.

Sarah was totally self-funding, but we gave her just a very small grant to provide for anything she felt would add to the training. She came back enormously enthusiastic.

From Elspeth Waldie

Volunteer Sarah Hunt writes:

I am 22 years old and work for the British Red Cross in my hometown in rural England. However, my passion is for filmmaking and, having finished my degree a year ago, I was looking for a positive way to utilise my skills and knowledge. CRP was suggested to me by Elspeth Waldie, founder of Purple Field Productions and a close friend of Valerie Taylor.



Purple Field Productions have worked closely with CRP in the creation of two films to raise awareness of disabilities in Bangladesh: 'Steps, NO! Ramps, YES!', and 'Radio Bhai'.

They also started a Wheelchair Users' Film Group which provided training for seven CRP staff members. My aim was to work with Mukta; one of the members of this group who is now employed as Videographer at CRP. I hoped to refresh her knowledge, give her more practical experience and to develop ways to support her in her job after I had left.

Mukta is such a delightful, high-spirited person and it was such a privilege to work with her. Before her, I don't think I have laughed so much with someone that I knew so little. She, like all those I have met at CRP, was welcoming, warm, and just downright lovely.

Alongside this, my evenings and weekends were spent exploring Bangladesh and unraveling its fascinating culture. Mizan, volunteer coordinator at CRP, made sure we could see everything we wanted to see and provided us with the means to do so. I managed to learn some Bangla, spent time at CRP Sylhet, fabric shopped until I dropped, and drank a lot of cha!

I really cannot express how much my time at CRP has meant to me. I am already making plans for another visit next year.



Mukta videoing the daily school assembly at the William & Marie Taylor School at CRP Savar when the children sing and dance to the Bangladeshi National anthem

The Essential Gift

A pilot scheme is currently running in Scotland which is a new venture for VTT. Let me explain...

Do you know someone who has everything and you just can't think what to get them for their birthday, Christmas, Eid, Easter, Anniversary, or to mark a special occasion? Perhaps you are the one who has everything? Well help is at hand.



You can give an **Essential Gift** to someone who really **needs** it instead.

- Would you like to make someone who is paralysed mobile by the gift of a wheelchair?
- Or replace a limb with a personally made & fitted prosthetic/orthotic?
- Or give a child an educational toy to help their dexterity and cognitive powers?

(Just some of the gifts available)

Then the **Essential Gift** scheme is for you.

Donate the appropriate amount and the chosen gift will be made available to a poor person who needs it to give them a better life. You and the person 'receiving' your **Essential Gift** will have the pleasure and satisfaction of knowing a life has been changed and improved by your generosity.

For full details, including other **Essential Gifts** available, please contact:
Elizabeth Arthur, 51 Burlington Avenue, GLASGOW G12 0LJ
Telephone (evenings only) 0141 339 4273

Three of the prosthetic and orthotic staff in Savar

Glen McGee writes 'This was my third visit to CRP in 5 years. I spend November supporting the Orthotic and Prosthetic department, and was happy to see the expansion of the department, and, at long last, the government approval of the first course ever in the country of the training of Orthotics and Prosthetics which started early this year.

Like many of the departments in CRP this department has been stretched and tested by the influx of the patients from the Rana Plaza disaster last year. It was evident from my visit that CRP has risen to challenges presented by the nature of some of the injuries sustained by the victims, and the staff have learned much as a result. The Savar centre is developing in all ways and it is so exciting to see how things are changing. It is truly an inspiration to all.'



Extra Training by Motivation Expert

Chris Rushman, an expert wheelchair designer and engineer with Motivation UK, has just arrived for a 10 day visit to CRP. During this time Chris who is returning after a gap of 13 years, will be giving training to both our metal workshop and special seating staff.

He will also be guiding us as to the best lay out for the new mobility aid production centre that is being built at CRP-Gonokbari, with the financial support of the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation in Hong Kong.



Khandakar Mabubuddin Ahmed

We were saddened by the news that Khandakar Mahbubuddin Ahmed died on 1st March at the age of 89. He was the Dhaka lawyer through whose wisdom, vision and brilliant advocacy CRP was able to survive in its early vulnerable days.

In Bangladesh at that time physiotherapists were not recognized for their special skills but categorized, especially by medical doctors, as mere masseurs and treated as such. Even officials at the Ministry of Health said that spending money on rehabilitation of the physically disabled was wasted as the victims of illnesses or accidents were of no benefit to society.

Funds provided by foreign donors for CRP were frozen so that its very existence was in jeopardy. Khandakar took up the case and successfully sued the Government on behalf of CRP and its donors for wrongfully diverting foreign funds.

Later, in an unconnected cause, he was briefly humiliated and imprisoned for standing up for what he believed. Throughout the years during which CRP has been recognized internationally as a centre of excellence, it was always reassuring to know that Khandakar, such a skilful and honourable advocate was accessible with his wise advice if the need arose.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

The disabled poor in Bangladesh continue to need help. The Valerie Taylor Trust supports the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed. This is the only place in the country where the paralysed are given specialist treatment – free of charge for the very poorest.

Support our work by:

- Regular donations by completing the back page of this newsletter – our preferred method.
- Donate on-line to our bank, details overleaf, or via www.valerietaylortrust.org, www.paypal.co.uk or www.justgiving.com.
- Donate by Text to TXTVTT12 £+ the amount (£1 to £10) from any UK mobile phone to 70070. You will receive confirmation of your donation which is deducted from your mobile phone without charge for the text message.
- Please register your donations for Gift Aid if this is applicable.
- Use a VTT Collection Box in the home and outdoors – obtained from the Administrator.
- Make a legacy. All sizes of donations are valuable and are tax-free. Please ask for our leaflet.

Administration

We keep administration costs to a low 2-3% of income. However, as postage costs increase, we want to make maximum use of email. Please tick the following boxes as appropriate:

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Helping the Disabled Poor and their Families

Administration Address: 4 Wilberforce Road, Coxheath, Maidstone, Kent ME17 4HA

Tel: 01622 743011 **Email:** admin@valerietaylortrust.org **Web:** www.valerietaylortrust.org

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DONATE TO THE VALERIE TAYLOR TRUST

- I enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to **Valerie Taylor Trust**
 I would like to join the **Valerie Taylor Trust** (please tick as applicable)

In order to become a member, at least £25 per year, or £2 per month, must be given as a donation. You do not need to be a member to donate to the Valerie Taylor Trust, but being a member entitles you to regular updates on news and information, voting rights at the Annual General Meeting and ensures VTT continuity.

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Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)
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Postcode Contact Tel No
Email

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Your Bank/Building Society
Address of Bank/Building Society
Account Name (usually your own name)
Account No Bank Sort Code -

To the Manager: Please pay to HSBC for the credit of **Valerie Taylor Trust**, Account Number 3122 5227, Sort Code 40-28-29. IBAN (International Banking Account Number) GB59MIDL40282931225227 the sum of

£..... starting on (date) and on the same date each **month / year**

Signature Date

(Bank PLEASE QUOTE _____) (A number will be added by the Valerie Taylor Trust)

GIFT AID DECLARATION

- I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.
 I wish all future donations to VTT to be under the Gift Aid Scheme until I notify you otherwise.

Signature Date

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Please send **all of this form** to: **The Administrator**

Helping the Disabled Poor and their Families

Administration Address: 4 Wilberforce Road, Coxheath, Maidstone, Kent ME17 4HA

Tel: 01622 743011 **Email:** admin@valerietaylortrust.org **Web:** www.valerietaylortrust.org

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