

## From the Chairman

Until very recently Covid made it difficult for us to organise large fund-raising events, but Trustees have used the time to embark on work which we believe will lay the foundation for a more secure future for the Valerie Taylor Trust.

We have begun to update the website to make it more user-friendly for smartphone and tablet users and accept card payments more easily. With the help of Farhan Masud Khan, a 40 second video has been developed to be shared on social media and possible advertisement on Bangla TV. A 2 minute fund-raising video is being prepared as this Newsletter goes to press and we are currently redesigning our Valerie Taylor Trust leaflet to increase its impact. In parallel with this groundwork, we have managed, with Farhan's help, to attract more support from the British Bangladeshi community than hitherto and have been shown the exceptional generosity of some members of

that community. Both Sheikh Aliur Rahman and Mohamed Jashim Uddin have given £5,000. A single mosque collection in Ashford organised by Dr Sakel, one of our new Trustees, raised £700 despite difficult circumstances. It has also been encouraging to see that new supporters have set up Standing Orders which will underpin our income in the future. We are very grateful to all of you who contribute to VTT in various ways, to new friends as well as those who have been supporting CRP for 40 years, to those who give a little as well as those who give a lot. CRP has had a difficult time financially during the pandemic. It will be great if we can send it more funds than we have been able to in the recent past, enabling it to continue to help rebuild the lives of people with disabilities who cannot afford the full cost of their treatment and rehabilitation.

**Ben Clackson**



According to a report published in 2019 by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), approximately 16.5 million people in Bangladesh (9.1% of the total population) are living with a form of disability. Although in recent years steps have been taken to enhance awareness and include people with disability in mainstream society, these individuals continue to face extensive challenges both from their families and society.



*Valerie presenting at a fundraising event*

The Valerie Taylor Trust is working to extend awareness of our work and engage communities in the UK to join the campaign 'Enable Hope'. The campaign aims to create awareness of these issues through direct engagement with supporters around the U.K. With the support of Farhan Masud Khan, we have been building links with prominent members of British Bangladeshi communities with the aim to forming 'Friends of VTT' groups around the U.K.

So far, we have groups forming in Leicester, London, Walsall and Kent with contacts also being established in Oldham, Portsmouth, Birmingham, Luton and Bedford.

As part of this campaign, several awareness raising events have been held around the country.

To launch our campaign, Sheikh Aliur Rahman graciously hosted a Reception in the elegant surroundings of his London Tea Exchange.

The event also celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the creation of Bangladesh, and Valerie spoke of her own story over that period, from her work as a young physiotherapist in East Pakistan through to

the foundation of CRP in very simple premises in 1979. Videos showed us how much CRP has developed since then.

The guests came from a diverse range of professions and communities. One Head Teacher was inspired to set up a link with the WMTS inclusive school at CRP, and a surgeon decided to take on the challenge of a "Wing Walk" to raise funds for us at [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nurul-ahad](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nurul-ahad).

In addition to hosting the event, Sheikh Aliur has also given £5,000 towards the completion of the new CRP Centre at Moulvibazar.

Over the years Valerie has spoken at an immense number of events in the UK and elsewhere to raise funds for CRP, and we were particularly honoured by the presence of another successful fundraiser, the (then) 101 year old Dabirul Islam Choudhury (aka Dabir Chacha) who originated from Sylhet and helped raise extraordinary sums for charities during Ramadan 2021. He towered over our Trustees in height as well as age!

Other distinguished guests included the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, and Anwar Choudhury, formerly the British High



*Dabirul Islam Choudhury with 3 of the Trustees*



*Valerie and friends at the Chef and Spice Restaurant*

Commissioner in Bangladesh, who spoke warmly of the contribution CRP makes to the treatment and rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

It was good that a Channel-S TV news item reported the event, and we shall be building on that coverage with 40 second TV advertisements of CRP and VTT during Ramadan.

We are very grateful to Sheikh Aliur for hosting it and to Farhan Masud Khan for all the work he did to organise it.

Additional events have continued around the country. Also in October, Mr. Syeed Rahman, generously hosted VTT at his restaurant Chef and Spice in Leicester, providing an excellent meal and venue for our awareness raising event. There were 70 supporters including local politicians, professionals and business people as well as some long term supporters and friends of Valerie. People were inspired by Valerie's presentation, learning about the range of services and innovative techniques used for patients

across the multiple centres in Bangladesh.

In February 2022, the Ashford Muslim Association organised a fundraising event. Trustee Dr Sakel spoke to an audience of about 300 people, highlighting the clinical and philanthropic activities of VTT in UK and CRP in Bangladesh, with a focus on the substantial number of cases of spinal injury in Bangladesh and how a rehabilitative approach could enhance the quality of life of those people and their families. Other awareness raising events include a mosque collection at the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre, a late night meeting of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs at the Little Raj Restaurant in Ashford, Kent and a lunch meeting with the Edmonton Rotary Club, hosted by Mr Muzahid Chowdhury.

At all events we have been met with warmth, hospitality, enthusiasm and generosity. We are excited to build on this work and supporters can look out for the dates of events in their area via the website and in social media.

# Annual Supporters Meeting 2022

**Saturday 14th May 2022**

**St Paul's Community Centre, 5 Rossmore Road,  
Marylebone, London NW1 6NJ**

**Doors open at 12.30pm – Curry lunch from 1pm**

**Annual Meeting starts 2pm**

**Speakers will include Valerie Taylor**

**If you intend to come please RSVP to our Administrator**

**Email: [admin@valerietaylortrust.org](mailto:admin@valerietaylortrust.org) or Tel: 01622 743011**

## Volunteer Spotlight

I am Tanvir Ahsan and I have been working as a volunteer in the Publications and Communications Department of CRP since 2016. Professionally, I am a Freelance Creative Director working with different media agencies. I have professional experience in video documentation and concept development of publications. I was inspired by the services that CRP is providing to the most vulnerable community of Bangladesh and felt the urge to contribute. For the last 5 years, I have helped CRP to

introduce modern trends when designing their publications including leaflets, posters, banners, newsletters and annual reports. I have also helped with the layout design of CRP's website. Additionally, I assisted with the production of an introductory video for a Mental Health Project at CRP and several others. For now, I am working on few more videos and am just finishing the Annual Report 2020-2021. I am looking forward to continuing my voluntary service and initiating more new things.



*Tanvir with Valerie after completing a previous Annual Report*



# CRP Support Rehabilitation of Conjoined Twins

The birth of conjoined twins occurs once in every 50,000 births. Attachment at the skull is very rare and seen in only 2% to 6% of all cases. Conjoined twins, Rabeya and Rukaiya were born in Pabna in 2017 to a couple who are school teachers. The decision was made to separate them to improve their quality of life. After a 48 hours long surgery by an expert team from Bangladesh and Hungary, the twins were separated in 2019 at Dhaka Cantonment Medical Hospital (CMH). After separation, Rabeya was diagnosed with right side hemiplegia (weakness) and Rukaiya with global delay. Bangladesh Prime minister Sheikh Hasina recommended a referral to CRP for rehabilitation. CRP's multi-disciplinary team, led by Sultana Razia (In-charge, Paediatric Unit) and including a Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist,

Speech and Language Therapist, Orthotist and Supportive Seating Specialist began to provide rehabilitation in October 2019, switching to an online service during the pandemic.

Rabeya made excellent progress in rehabilitation, improving her walking and use of her right hand for feeding and writing. Although Rukaiya had more severe neurological difficulties, she also made improvements. After six months of treatment Rukaiya was interacting more with her environment, had reduced stiffness in her arms and legs and was able to start eating some food. She will continue to receive rehabilitation services from CRP-Mirpur to improve her quality of life.



*Rukaiya during a physiotherapy session*



*Rabeya receiving Occupational Therapy*

# VTT Trustees visit CRP

CRP provided a warm welcome to two VTT Trustees in the last few months. Our Treasurer Sayadul Khaled visited CRP Moulvibazar centre in October 2021 to see progress on the building work there; and

Zahirul Haque, one of our newest Trustees, visited CRP Sylhet in February 2022 and met with staff and patients. He hopes to visit further centres later this year.

## Mechanical Hoist Improves Safety for Staff and Patients

CRP Savar has received a hoist, a device that helps facilitate the transfer of patients, from the Tori Foundation in the UK. It is transportable and will be used by health professionals including ward assistants, nurses and therapists across the inpatient and outpatient services. The Supportive Seating Unit organized a training session to educate all professionals of its usage and

importance. The hoist will be helpful with patients with a variety of conditions including spinal cord injury, Guillain-Barré syndrome and stroke and will allow those patients who are more dependent to move easily and safely from one surface to another. The hoist can also be used by the professionals to practice static sitting of their patients.

## Update on CRP-Moulvibazar

Despite the pandemic, good progress has been made on the construction of a permanent centre at CRP-Moulvibazar. Services such as physiotherapy and paediatric therapy are now being offered from the stylish looking new clinic rooms. VTT

would like to thank all those who have supported the development of this much needed divisional centre so far. There is much work still to do and we will be continuing our fundraising campaign to support the next stage of construction.



*Paediatric Therapy Session*

# Income Generating Activities Help Mothers at CRP

During the pandemic, it became increasingly difficult for the mothers of children with disabilities to stay near CRP as family incomes decreased. Many were considering returning home. CRP worked with the mothers to develop a sales centre where they can sell goods and support themselves. The centre was inaugurated by Valerie Taylor on February 2021 and has gone from strength to strength. The mothers sell homemade food and other goods. They also offer a tailoring service and recently started a laundry. CRP has been providing education to the mothers, helping them to understand how to start their own business when they leave CRP and one mother has already done so. There are plans to expand these activities to allow more relatives to have a source of income while supporting loved ones who are receiving treatment at CRP Centres.



*Selling homemade snacks*

## CRP treats 50,000th patient

On the 14th December 2021, CRP greeted its 50,000 patient, a wonderful achievement at the end of a challenging year.



*50,000th patient receiving a souvenir from CRP Staff*



# CRP activities across Bangladesh

Even throughout the pandemic CRP has continued to work to bring its life changing services to all areas of Bangladesh by organising mobile clinics and awareness raising events.

The first mobile clinic post lockdown was run by CRP-Chattogram early last year. Financial and organisational support was offered by Human Rights Review Society Protibondhi Songstha. 154 participants, mostly from remote areas of Feni and Sonagazi received medical and therapy services. Local government officials, political leaders and representatives from other NGOs attended a presentation by CRP-Chattogram Centre's manager. This event has already resulted in increased numbers of people with disabilities accessing CRP's services.

Following this, further clinics have been successfully run by numerous centres around Bangladesh, again with a focus both on treatment and on awareness raising. This included 6 by CRP Pabna, 4 by CRP

Rajshahi-Afsar Hussain, 4 by CRP Chattogram and 5 by CRP-Moulvibazar Afsarul & Aktarul Haque Center. Additionally numerous specific safety awareness meetings have been held around the country by the Community Based Rehabilitation Department, with a focus on topics such as road safety or scarf injury prevention.

The Prosthetic and Orthotics' Department, which is now the biggest service of its type in the country, continues to outreach to those who are unable to access one of their permanent venues. From June 2021 to February 2022 nine mobile camps have been run. Often these mobile clinics require two visits, one to measure and cast the client, and one to fit and train the client in the use of the device.

All these services allow CRP to improve the lives of as many adults and children with a disability as possible throughout Bangladesh, reaching out to those unable to come to them.



*Therapists meet their clients at a mobile clinic*



# Once you start, you can't stop!

Long Term Supporters Darko and Djenana Krznaric have been supporting CRP since 2010, Darko tells their story:

## First visit

Djenana and I arrived at CRP for the first time in February 2010. At the time we were working at Queen's University from Kingston, Canada. Queen's collaborated with Valerie in the 1990s and we went to CRP to explore possibilities for new partnership projects.

The arrival at Dhaka airport was one of those experiences that one remembers forever. After 30-hour trip from the middle of winter in Canada, the sights, sounds and heat were overwhelming. We still remember that first trip - the driver navigating through colourful, buzzing streets full of people, cars and rickshaws. Once we crossed the gate to CRP, a different world opened to us – a calm, orderly, caring, and inclusive place. Everyone greeted us with a smile and welcoming curiosity.

The day we arrived, we met with Valerie Taylor and we were taken on a tour of the CRP. Probably at that point we (un)knowingly fell in love with both the people and the place. What impressed us about people was the optimism of both patients and staff, and their commitment to work together to ensure a meaningful and fulfilling life for persons with spinal cord injury.

## Faces of CRP

We met many wonderful people at CRP. We remember meeting a teenage boy who was left as a baby at the gate of CRP. His name was Prodi. He was non-verbal and used a wheelchair to move around CRP. He showed a lot of interest in computers. For hours he would sit in his wheelchair and carefully observe the teacher using an old desktop to create documents in MS Word.

We also remember a very young pre-school girl, Muni and her mom Poppy. The little girl could not walk or talk and her mom carried her almost daily to CRP paediatrics

department for therapy. After the therapy two of them would spend hours on the grass in front of the hospital entrance. Mom would encourage her daughter get on her knees and keep her balance. The little girl would try and try but often fail and cry. Her mom would also cry but neither of them would give up.

## Working with CRP

After we had returned to Canada, our initial funding application was unsuccessful. However, we had an idea. The Canadian government of the time was focused on maternal and child health so we consulted with CRP about linking disability with maternal and child health to apply for funds. We developed two multimillion multiyear projects: one on maternal and child health and disability and one on access to health and education for all children and youth with disabilities. Djenana directed both projects, and I managed one. I spent 2011 to 2014 in CRP Savar with Djenana visiting and working frequently in Bangladesh during that period.

In collaboration with the CRP team, we delivered training throughout Bangladesh. During that time, we witnessed spectacular institutional growth of CRP – in infrastructure, in personnel, and the range of services offered. CRP never lost the passion for helping the most vulnerable people in need. The Bangladeshi society has gone through tremendous changes during the last 10-15 years, and while CRP kept pace with these developments it has always worked toward its ultimate objective of a just and inclusive Bangladesh for all.

Djenana also helped the CRP BHPI team obtain funding to develop a regional Master Program in Rehabilitation Science (MRS). This program elevated CRP to a regional rehabilitation education hub. BHPI has graduated 150 MRS graduates from Afghanistan, Bhutan India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Djenana teaches graduate students every year during our visits, as a visiting lecturer.

During the years we spent in Savar we saw Prodip, Muni and Poppy joining a peer support group initiated during the Canadian project. After the completion of the Queen's University project, CRP committed to making the Peer Support program one of its core services. Besides being active in the peer support group, Prodip learnt how to operate a computer and started showing other, younger CRP patients how to use it. Muni, following her therapy treatment at the paediatrics department started walking with assistance and her communication improved significantly.

### **Returning to volunteer**

Once the Queen's University projects were completed, Djenana and I kept returning to Bangladesh and volunteering at CRP, usually one month at a time. Every year, from 2015 to 2020 we were in Savar. During our visits we work with the communication officer, and the research and evaluation department helping them develop project proposals or policy documents to improve mechanisms within the organization. We also work with the peer support group and provide them with additional training and advice. We love the fact that nowadays the voice of persons with

disabilities is much stronger than before – not just in CRP but in Bangladeshi communities as well. There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done, but we have no doubt that CRP can do it

Prodip got a job as a PC Assistant at the peer support group and has got married. He uses his tablet to communicate in either English or Bangla. He was one of the most reliable sources of information about the most recent apps that could be of help in CRP services.

Muni completed the CRP inclusive school and she started high school last year. Every day Muni walks on her own to school. Muni's mom Poppy remains very active in the peer support group, which has expanded significantly and currently has over 80 mothers of children with disabilities participating in various activities.

Djenana and I will continue to volunteer at CRP and will return as soon as circumstances allow it. We are glad to notice that some younger people who were coming to CRP for clinical placements in the past are starting to come as international volunteers. We hope that there will be more of them coming to Savar in the future and that CRP and VTT will work to support this.



*Peer Support Group*

# 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](http://www.valerietaylortrust.org), [www.paypal.co.uk](http://www.paypal.co.uk) or [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com).
- 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:

- I am happy to receive routine correspondence by email
- I am happy to VTT Newsletters by email ☐
- Please unsubscribe me from the VTT mailing list ☐
- ☐

My email address is

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Name and Address

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## PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE VTT ADMINISTRATOR

### Data Protection Statement

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, which were superseded by the EU General Data Protection Regulations 2018 on 25th May, 2018, Valerie Taylor Trust is required to ensure that any Personal Data obtained in connection with membership, making financial donations or giving support to the Trust is held securely, is accurate, is relevant and used only for the purposes for which it was given. By providing your Personal Data to VTT, this is accepted as consent for VTT to use the data for the relevant purposes. Consent for any of these purposes may be withdrawn by writing to the Administrator at the address shown. The full Privacy Statement may be viewed on the VTT website – [www.valerietaylortrust.org](http://www.valerietaylortrust.org)

## Empowering people with disabilities in Bangladesh

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

**Tel:** 01622 743011 **Email:** [admin@valerietaylortrust.org](mailto:admin@valerietaylortrust.org) **Web:** [www.valerietaylortrust.org](http://www.valerietaylortrust.org)

**Valerie Taylor Trust** is a charity registered in England and Wales (number 1122245)

# 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.

## PERSONAL DETAILS

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) .....

Address .....

.....

Postcode ..... Contact Tel No .....

Email .....

## STANDING ORDER DETAILS

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) GB96HBUK40282931225227 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**

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