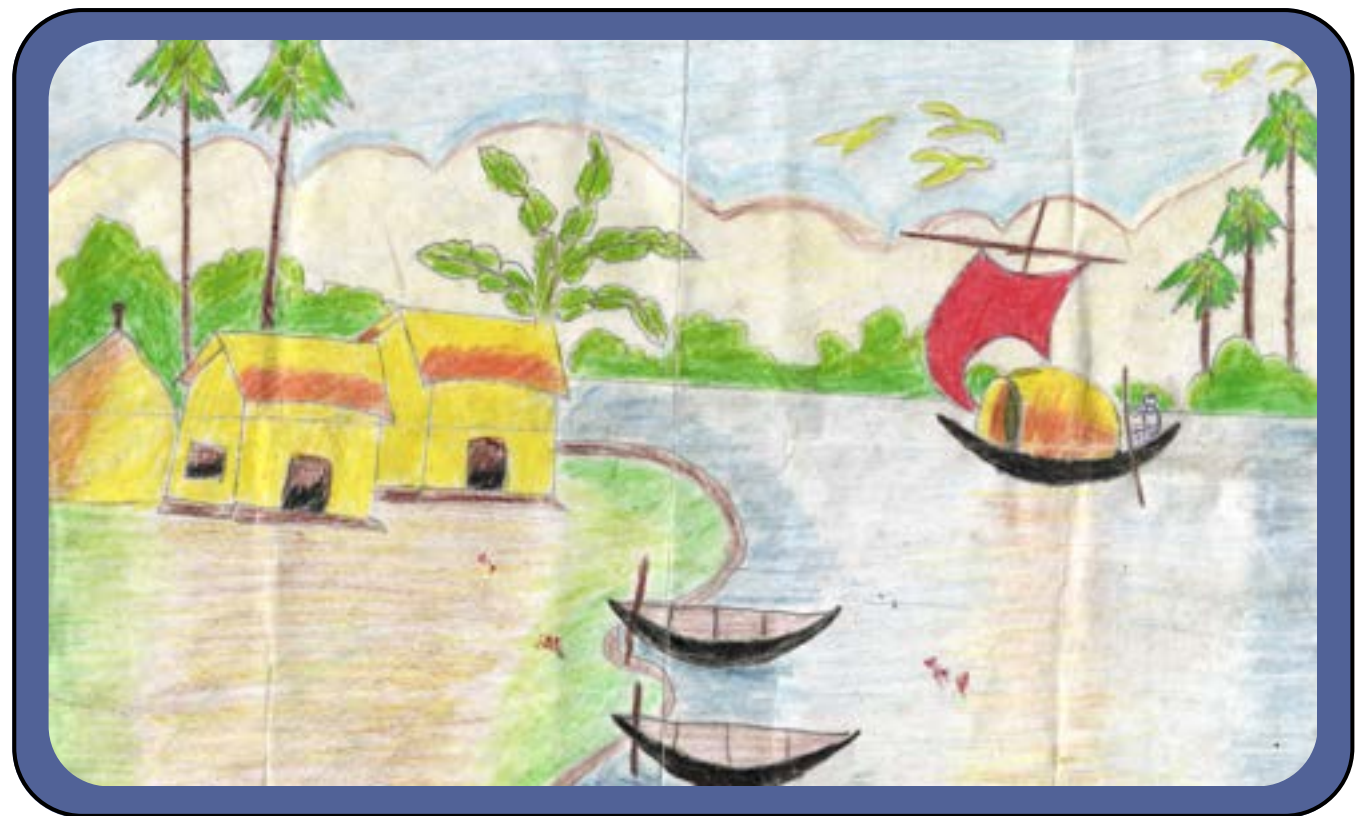




# Annual report 2022





## General data

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<b>Registration number</b>	27173896
<b>Chamber of Commerce</b>	
<b>ANBI status</b>	since 1 January 2008
<b>CBF quality mark</b>	since 1 August 2017
<b>Date of incorporation</b>	6 August 1998
<b>Registered office</b>	Pijnacker

## Colophon

The annual report is written by:  
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***Love, care, appropriate education, information provision, apprenticeship pathways and the promotion of behavioral change are essential elements of our approach, to give children and young people with disabilities a full place in society.***

***Our approach gives children a better self-image, creates a connection between child and environment and brings about a more involved government.***








**Legal form:** In the Netherlands: foundation with a board. Partner organization in Bangladesh: NGO with an executive committee.

**Origin:** Private initiative  
(Antoinette Termoshuizen)

**Registration:** Chamber of Commerce : 27173896  
ANBI status (public benefit organization) : 807284427  
CBF Recognized Charitable Organization

**Distinguishing characteristics:** Specific target group: children and young people with complex disabilities in Bangladesh. Knowledge organization in the field of providing holistic care for people with complex disabilities in Bangladesh.

**Programs:**

-  **Early intervention** : Offer parents support and advice when they think there could be problems in their young child's development.
-  **Education** : Provide a challenging learning environment that is based on opportunities and takes the disability into account.
-  **Paramedical care**: Provide care aimed at improving the functioning of the body, providing aids and adaptations.
-  **Socialization**: Actively promote and encourage the participation of children and young people with disabilities in society.
-  **Nutrition**: Raise parents' awareness of healthy eating and the prevention of underweight and nutrition-related complications.

**Project-based:** The projects are operationally managed by the NGO DRRA and are directed, supported and knowledge is provided from the Netherlands by the Niketan foundation.

<b>Fundraising:</b>	Total	Cost B&A
	2017 : € 237.466	2017 : 2,8 %
	2018 : € 204.189	2018 : 3,2 %
	2019 : € 206.563	2019 : 3,7 %
	2020 : € 248.681	2020 : 2,5 %
	2021 : € 221.797	2021 : 4,3 %
	2022 : € 202.814	2022 : 5,5 %

**Operational costs:** Project costs 203,038 euros in 2021, implementation costs 19,488 euros in 2021

**Financial audit:** BAKKER accountants & adviseurs, Hendrik Ido Ambaccht

**Term:** As long as foreign support is needed in Bangladesh to permanently embed care for people with complex disabilities in government and society.

**Membership of sector organizations:** Partin, a sector organization for small charities in the field of international cooperation and development, and Goede Doelen Nederland, a sector organization for registered charities based in the Netherlands

**Social relevance:** Helping people with intellectual and multiple disabilities in Bangladesh is often seen as too complex by international NGOs. Private organizations and national NGOs are often better able to provide this target group with access to aid and hold the government and international aid organizations accountable for this. Because, as in all countries, it is ultimately a task of the government, together with various other parties, to ensure a safe environment for vulnerable children.

## 2022 at a glance



**576**

Children and young people received support

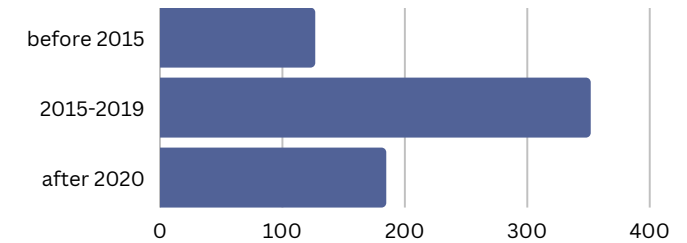
**325** ♂  
**251** ♀



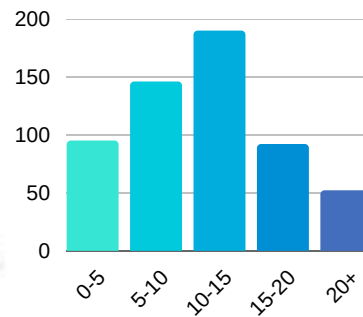
**2.748**

Family members received support

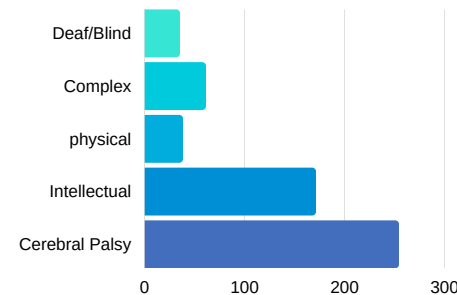
### Support since:



### Age children



### Disabilities



### Development areas of the children



ADL  
**237**



Communication  
**80**



Cognitive  
**382**



Motor  
**341**



Social  
**190**

### Cost per program part



Early intervention  
**13%**



Paramedic  
**9%**



Education  
**49%**



Nutrition  
**14%**



Socialisation  
**15%**



**36**

children have left because of migration, death and/or family problems.



**77**

children attend regular education in addition to special education.



**52**

children left the project due to successful intervention.

# Foreword

2022 was the year when COVID seemed to be reasonably under control in our part of the world, Europe. In many countries in Asia and Africa, the crisis situation is far from over. It is taking longer than we had hoped and we now know from our own experience that many things have seemingly changed for good.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February has caused major problems worldwide. Food and energy became scarce and prices skyrocketed. The second year of the coup in Myanmar also led to large refugee flows into Bangladesh again. This shows that the world's close interconnectedness not only leads to economic growth but also to vulnerability.

In Bangladesh, too, the poorest people were hit the most by this. After the pandemic, Niketan was once again able to support the most vulnerable families in our districts. We have been able to continue to run the veranda schools, and the schools that had already been taken over by local people are still running.

To our great sorrow, on 9 March, our master trainer and coordinator of the Amar Joti School passed away completely unexpectedly. Rabeya has meant a great deal to Niketan and DRRA over the past few years in the continued development of the Amar Joti School and we are immensely grateful to her for this and will never forget her.

In August, DRRA Director Farida Yesmin, along with the Minister of Information and the Secretary of Social Welfare, represented Bangladesh at the WHO in Geneva to report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Afterwards, we were able to host them for an informal visit and show several examples of types of care that could also be useful in Bangladesh, when adapted to suit the situation there.

Our work is increasingly seen and appreciated by the government of Bangladesh, which in addition to the above was also evidenced by the awards received this year by Antoinette and DRRA Director Farida Yesmin.

However, we do see that after the pandemic, it has become increasingly difficult to mobilize sufficient financial support for our work. We fear that this will continue to be the case. Fortunately, this has been compensated in part by contributions from local donors in Bangladesh, from businesses as well as individuals. We also work closely with the government at the local, regional and national levels to ensure that recurring activities receive more support from the local and national government, allowing us to focus more on innovation and sharing our experience.

The quality of life of children with intellectual disabilities cannot depend on the government alone. We must involve the immediate social, economic and institutional environment to the maximum extent possible. We must make every effort to make Niketan's extensive practical experience accessible to each and every person capable of contributing to inclusiveness. We need to expand our reach to empower families and make them more resilient in their own environment.

That's why we are all the more committed to getting our disability platform "A Special Child" up and running now. Together with DRRA and other partners, the platform will be launched in the coming year, featuring the existing modules we have already developed with the help of many people in the Netherlands and Bangladesh.

We hope that we can count on your continued support for ongoing care as well as innovation.



Rutger-Jan Schoen, Chairman



*Every day we are committed to ensuring that every child receives love, care and education.*

*In 2022, we put a smile on the faces of 576 children with disabilities and their families, and supported them in taking a step toward a better future.*

*We would like to thank our corporate and private donors, and volunteers for their support in 2022.*





## Our dream and approach

We strive to create an equal opportunity society in Bangladesh where children and young people with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities are accepted and can develop because they receive the care and education they need and thus gain self-confidence.

Niketan takes the individual needs of each child and his/her family as its starting point. Niketan supports the children and gives them space to develop at their own pace. We provide the children with education, a nutritious meal and paramedical care. As they get older, we continue to monitor them and adjust our support to meet their changing needs. We help them communicate better, stand up for themselves and develop their talents to the fullest. We help family, caregivers and teachers understand what the child's needs are and how to deal with them. Niketan thus demonstrates how children with complex disabilities in Bangladesh can receive optimal support and care despite the circumstances in which they grow up.

*"Increasing our impact can only be done through wide-ranging cooperation with all parties: children/young people, their (grand)parents, their living environment, teachers, other NGOs and the different levels of government"*

To end the stigmatization, we organize various awareness activities in mainstream elementary schools and the community. We also make a direct contribution at the district level to the structural quality improvement of all aspects of the children's lives. In doing so, we strive for local initiatives and leadership and sustainable solutions, which in time will make the children less dependent on financial support from private initiatives in the Netherlands and Bangladesh.

Helping children and young people with intellectual and multiple disabilities in Bangladesh is often seen as too complex by international NGOs. Private organizations and local NGOs are often better able to provide this target group with access to support and they hold the government and international aid organizations accountable for this, as also established in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Partnership with DRRA

DRRA is the partner/executive party of a large number of Niketan's projects. It provides qualitative and quantitative care to children with motor, intellectual or multiple disabilities in rural and urban areas in Bangladesh. Niketan is co-owner, facilitator (financial resources and knowledge), supporter (monitoring, evaluation, strategic planning) and quality assurer of the projects. Existing DRRA projects are supported with funds. Niketan also shares knowledge and experience with DRRA as further professional training for their staff and to put the children with their different needs at the center of all their activities. DRRA also carries out projects for other donors and can thus gain and contribute more knowledge and reduce its overhead costs.

Because of the long collaboration that celebrated its 25th anniversary this year, Niketan also seeks to contribute to increasing the knowledge and implementation capacity as well as the professionalization of the organization. And in doing so, Niketan seeks to help DRRA adapt to the changing context. DRRA is one of the key partners in getting the government more and more involved and getting it to take ownership of disability care in Bangladesh.



*In December 2022, DRRA was awarded the Bezum Rokeya National Award by the government of Bangladesh as one of the best organizations working for people with disabilities.*

On 9 March, our master trainer and coordinator of the Amar Joti School passed away completely unexpectedly.

Rabeya found her first appointment as a special education teacher. In the school, she immediately took the lead and blossomed into a coordinator with exceptional talents. Rabeya always put the welfare of the children first and was not afraid to be critical when the government or institutions did not put the best interests of the children first. Her last major campaign was for the right to vaccination for young people with disabilities. A post on social media became national news and the government responded to the request. Less than two weeks later, all young people with disabilities over 18 could get a vaccination against COVID-19 with or without an ID. Rabeya was many different things: she was a true friend or a mother to everyone, she was always there for everyone and had a heart of gold. We are proud of her work and miss her enormously.



## Our commitment

The well-being of children with multiple complex disabilities can only be safeguarded sustainably through wide-ranging and cross-sector collaboration. It is primarily the responsibility of the government, which must work closely with public and private parties from the welfare, education, health and security sectors and local government. The government in Bangladesh is making very small steps in this regard. It ratified the international Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that all children have the right to education, optimal development, protection and health. Niketan, together with its partner DRRA, tries to contribute to these government processes to the maximum extent possible, by sharing experience, knowledge and the materials developed by Niketan.

In addition, the first steps toward sharing our knowledge and materials through online platforms and social media such as Facebook and YouTube are helping Niketan become a good knowledge transfer organization. In its 5-year policy strategy, Niketan has committed to take concrete steps to open up its 25 years of experience to others; to illiterate parents and caregivers elsewhere in Bangladesh as well as (informal) providers of support. Last but not least, we are increasingly working with local village governments in the villages where Niketan operates. In this way, we make the best use of existing local capacity, which can more quickly become independent of external or international funding.

Ultimately, it is also about giving parents and grandparents the knowledge to create a safe environment for their child themselves, within all the constraints of living in a developing country like Bangladesh.

## Which Sustainable Development Goals are we contributing to?







# Niketan in Bangladesh

## Bangladesh

Global warming is causing increasingly extreme weather conditions. Bangladesh is one of the most affected countries, ranked 7th in the 2022 Global Climate Risk Index. It is flooded more and more frequently and the floods are increasingly severe. This year, too, millions of people had to temporarily leave their homes and farmland because of the rising water. Harvests failed, food prices rose.

Even though Bangladesh has become a Lower Middle Income Country, it still ranks 129 out of 191 countries included in the Human Development Index. So Bangladesh still has a huge challenge ahead, but it is one of the more successful countries in South Asia. Despite all this, like the rest of the world, it was severely affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Electricity, gas and petrol are hard to come by. Entire neighborhoods regularly have to make do without electricity for hours. The gap between rich and poor continues to widen. Due to a decline in garment exports, millions of women lost their jobs.

Although considerable strides have been made in raising awareness of equal rights and opportunities for women, they continue to be victims of discrimination and stigmatization. Awareness campaigns mainly focus on cities and rarely reach rural areas. People with disabilities are also still discriminated against and seen as second-class citizens. Language used to describe someone with a disability is negative, based on the disability and not on the person and all his or her abilities. What's impressive is the resilience of the people. Life is accepted as it is, but at the same time you see enormous willpower and strength to improve it, especially among young people.

## The project area

Bangladesh is divided into 64 districts. Niketan operates mainly in the rural district of Manikganj and the capital city of Dhaka. Manikganj is divided into 7 upazilas (subdistricts), 65 union parishads and 1643 villages. Most of Niketan's activities take place in the upazilas Ghior and Daulatpur. The 453 children supported in Manikganj live across 185 villages in 23 union parishads. Since 2020, we have also supported 11 children in 6 villages in the district of Tangail. These are villages adjacent to the upazilla Daulatpur.

The Badda slum in Dhaka is enclosed by the diplomatic districts of Gulshan, Baridhara and Banani. Children attend school for only a few hours and sometimes end up being child laborers at an early age, working in deplorable conditions in which they are often exploited. Moreover, slums are the ideal setting for social problems, such as crime, drug addiction and domestic violence. Niketan provides care and education to 116 children with disabilities in 3 wards in this slum.



*On Sunday 17 November, Antoinette Termoshuizen received an award in Bangladesh from the mayor of Ghior for all her work for children with disabilities in the Manikganj district. According to the mayor, not only did they learn a lot from Niketan, but we also encourage them to make a difference for families of children with disabilities. Our support, the mayor said, has helped them build a more inclusive society.*



**I'm Mahinur Akter. I'm 18 years old. My fellow villagers call me names and they call me 'fool'. But I'm NOT crazy, I just need a little more time to understand everything.**

**I have a learning disability. Girls with disabilities like me should always be wary of men. We are not safe inside or outside the house. Everyone thinks we are easy to abuse because of our disability. One day I was changing my clothes at home when one of my close relatives came in and tried to rape me. Fortunately, I attended reproductive health training that included relationships and sexual violence. I was able to save myself.**

**STOP sexual violence and verbal abuse against women. It's time to raise our voices. Treat us as equal citizens.**





## Care and education

Our care and special education is focused on emotional, physical, cognitive and creative development, as well as learning social, cultural and physical skills. Classes are tailored as much as possible to individual needs using various existing theories and methodologies.

In February, Bangladesh went into lockdown for the last time and we reopened the 54 veranda schools for a month. In March, all restrictions were lifted and the program was able to run as it did before the pandemic. But the virus was far from gone. On 9 March, we suddenly lost our dear coordinator and master trainer Rabeya. She was the key figure of the Amar Joti school in Dhaka. A woman of many talents who not only ran the school in a unique way, but also lent staff, parents and children a sympathetic ear. A tremendous loss within our healthcare and education program. But the team put their shoulders to the wheel and two employees took over Rabeya's duties as best they could and we moved to a new location.

The loss of Rabeya showed how vulnerable and dependent we are on our specialized staff. With only one master trainer on the team, training sessions came to a halt and training new people became complicated. This is a focus area that we will put extra effort into in the coming years.

### Early intervention and children with complex care needs

The first step to a school or facility for children with disabilities is often not easy for parents. There is shame and often young mothers face a lot of opposition from their husbands and in-laws, who think it isn't necessary to invest time in a child with a disability. But without their permission, the mother cannot take her child to our early intervention center or school. That's why we still hear stories of mothers who secretly come to the center, lying to their husbands or in-laws, in order to give their child a chance to develop.

In our early intervention program, we teach parents how to care for their child with complex care needs. How to encourage and support their child. We offer the children physical therapy and have an activity program aimed at improving motor skills and all senses. When children turn five, they move on to our care-development group, special education or mainstream education.

***'At other centers, children cry when they receive therapy. Here my daughter barely notices that she is getting physical therapy. She plays and has fun but gets therapy at the same time. This is how it should be everywhere.'** – a mother*

Children with complex care needs come to our care-development groups three days a week. This involves 37 children with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual and often multiple disabilities, either physical, behavioral or a combination of these. Activities focus on gaining new experiences, and stimulating the senses and motor skills. Finding appropriate activities is not always easy for this target group and we see that this becomes even more difficult as the children get older. Surprisingly, parents keep coming despite the fact that their child can hardly make progress anymore. They indicate that they allow their child to have the fun they have at school. That they enjoy these moments with their child, but most of all that they enjoy sharing experiences with the other mothers and learning from each other.

15-year-old Mobarak has spastic paralysis and begs for money with his mother. Two years ago, he and his family left his village and moved to Dhaka. His mother took him out begging every day. She had no idea what else to do with him and had never been to a hospital or rehabilitation center. One day she heard about the Amar Joti school from a passerby. A day later, she visited the school.

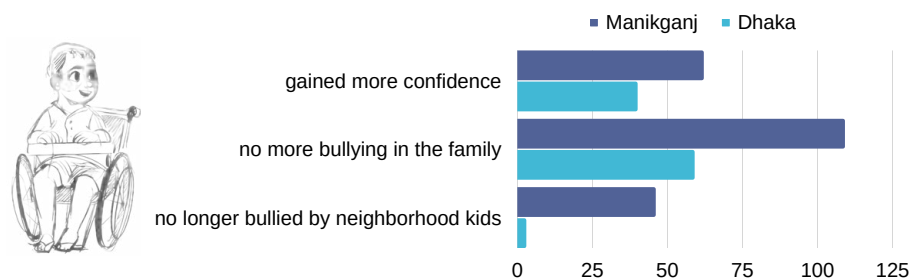
After an intake, she was convinced not to go out begging with him on a daily basis anymore, but to bring him to the school for therapy and special education. Mobarak had no sitting balance, did not dare to make eye contact and had severe motor problems. But Mobarak is developing well. In recent months, he has managed to stay upright while sitting and has been given a wheelchair. He can concentrate better and his eye hand motor skills have improved. We are proud of the progress he is making.



## Special education

In our school in Dhaka and in the Manikganj district, we provide special education to children aged 5 to 15 years in the villages of Ghior and Baniajuri six days a week. The children receive thematic teaching and learning activities. Education is based on the children's potential and takes into account the severity of their various disabilities. This is how we give children the opportunity to develop to their full potential. Niketan uses various existing theories and methodologies. We believe it is important that lesson objectives are adapted to the needs of the children and the society in which they are growing up.

***“When my child names the vegetables, my family members are amazed that she knows so much and therefore she is treated more respectfully. When the child shows improvement in his development, family life improves and there is less violence at home.” - A mother***



The various classes are open three days a week, and the unique cooperation with 20 mainstream schools allows children to also attend three days of mainstream education. This opens up a new world for the child and enables the development of social relationships and interaction with peers who do not have disabilities. Respect and understanding grow when pupils of different abilities and backgrounds play, socialize and learn together. Each year about five of our children make the transition to full-time mainstream (inclusive) education.

## Horizontal approach between schools in Manikganj

At our school in Ghior, we had been running into the problem for some time that young people with disabilities were in need of new challenges. But the teachers did not have the capabilities, nor was there room to start vocational training activities.

Since we do have these capabilities and expertise at our school in Baniajuri, the idea arose to bring a group of ten young people from the center in Ghior to the school in Baniajuri once a week. Every Saturday, they follow parts of the Right to Decide curriculum. You can read more about this on page 24.



For several years, our partner organization DRRA has been trying to let the special schools fall under the responsibility of the government. This year it met the requirements to register a piece of land in the school's name. Senior officials from the Ministry of Social Welfare also visited the schools to verify that we are meeting all requirements.

However, it is still not clear whether our schools will be selected for government funding.





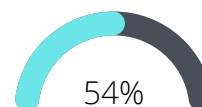
## Community Based Rehabilitation

Because disability has a major impact on the lives of children and their families, and care is scarce in rural Bangladesh, Niketan organizes veranda schools in 19 villages in the upazillas Ghior and Daulatpur. These schools are located in the village where the 179 children live, on the veranda of the house of one of the families. A veranda school is open once a week and on average about ten children attend, in various ages and with various disabilities and needs.

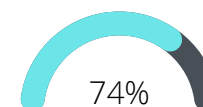
Children receive therapy, learn to play together, get along with others and make friends. Many children have been excluded from social interactions with other children for years. They were bullied, called names or completely ignored. Parents learn what capabilities their child has, they learn to take better care of their child and provide therapy at home.

The veranda schools create visibility, greater understanding among local residents and therefore less exclusion. Children without disabilities learn that children with disabilities have much in common with them. They, too, want to play and have fun. This results in a more inclusive community and acceptance within the family. The child becomes more part of the family. Unfortunately, this does not always succeed. When there is a lot of poverty in the family, the child continues to be seen as a burden on the family.

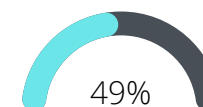
During an intern evaluation with parents and the local government, the wish was expressed for the realization of special education in a veranda school. This involves children who have outgrown the existing veranda schools and are ready for more challenges. These children are not expected to be able to keep up in mainstream education, but can learn more. In 2023, we want to start special education at two veranda schools. The local government has agreed to provide textbooks and other materials.



no longer bullied by  
neighborhood kids



no more bullying in the  
family



gained more  
confidence

We also offer practical help at home for 120 children. This involves children who attend mainstream education and only need physical therapy, children with complex disabilities who no longer go to school or a veranda school, and children who are temporarily unable to go to school due to family circumstances. The care is practical and focused on what the child needs in the home situation.



To raise awareness in the community and foster a more positive attitude towards people with disabilities, 90 people from the community, such as high school and college students, are buddies for children with disabilities. Niketan has nine years of experience with this buddy system. A buddy, a volunteer, spends one to two hours a week with the child. He or she plays with the child, relieves the mother and supports the family. The volunteer also takes the child outside, allowing the child to meet other people. This helps to reduce the negative stigmatization.

We offer these volunteers various training courses, so they become more knowledgeable about the various disabilities, the stigmas and the need for inclusion. They also learn how to support families and develop a trusting relationship with the child.





## Our impact

We asked parents to express in a few words what our intervention means to them.

More confident  
skillful  
Lower costs  
More time to work  
More income  
Less Happiness  
arguing & stronger  
violence  
More social interaction with neighbors  
at home  
Life has more meaning

## The impact of our emergency response during the pandemic

For years, and with varying results, we have been trying to involve fathers in raising their children and get them to understand the importance of therapy for their child. It took a pandemic to really change this. During the pandemic, we offered income-generating activities to 159 families and this led to a real turnaround. Because as it turns out, having income leads to fewer worries, less stress and more involvement. The lack of involvement was not the result of unwillingness, but purely an effect of poverty and the stress that comes with it.

Fathers are now open to the small steps their children make. A greeting, waiting your turn, answering a question. They are spending time with their child, playing football, helping their child do their exercises at home or doing their homework. It has changed family dynamics entirely; the mothers are bullied and abused less, and the children get more attention. Parents, interviews indicate, are now satisfied with the role they play in family life.



*"My father takes care of me! Now that I am showing progress and am able to walk, my father wants to do activities with me. He has now allowed me to go to a special school. He has never been patient with me, but now he talks to me and encourages me to answer his questions." Rifat*

Rifat is 11 years old and has an intellectual disability. His family was very poor. They lived in a small hut and had no possessions. They had no money to take him to a doctor and there were no rehabilitation facilities near him.

Rifat now attends a veranda school and has learned a lot over the past few years. He communicates with others, has made friends and enjoys playing with them. Rifat likes to be well-dressed and has mastered all daily living skills.

Through our family development training his parents learned to save money. We gave them a sheep and training on keeping sheep. We helped them get disability benefits from the government. And slowly they crept out of the depths of poverty and generated more income.





## Nutrition

Many children in Bangladesh are born with a low birth weight. This is also associated with a greater chance of developing a cognitive impairment, speech and language disorder, concentration problems, social difficulties, hyperactivity and learning disabilities.

A neurological disorder interferes with the coordination of eating and drinking skills. Children with neurological disorders (especially those with cerebral palsy) are also more likely to suffer from additional problems such as reflux or constipation. This makes eating and drinking a huge challenge for the child and their parents, which can lead to frustration and a refusal to eat. When eating does not come naturally and the child chokes continuously, we guide parents on how to feed their child better. We teach parents to interpret signs in time. In training sessions with videos, we provide tools to break the negative vicious cycle that can arise around eating.



**258**

children get a healthy meal or snack at school

In all of our centers, we provide 258 children with a healthy meal or snack. Because this can be the extra push that is needed for parents to come to the center/school with their child. It also helps to improve our children's well-being and ability to learn. Healthy and happy children learn better and are more likely to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, while poor nutrition leads to more physical as well as cognitive developmental delays. We remind parents and caregivers of the importance of healthy nutrition for their children and themselves.

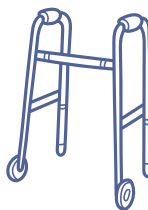
## Training

Because every child has the right to develop (Article 6 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) and parents often do not have sufficient knowledge to help their child develop, Niketan has developed a training program.

One of the training courses is about nutrition. In addition to courses on nutrition, there are courses on gross motor skills and communication. During the gross motor skills training, parents learn how to train head balance or how to teach their child to roll over or crawl. The communication training focuses on stimulating language, learning words. Parents receive training once a month that meets their needs and provides them with both theoretical and practical knowledge. In order to also review the lessons learned at home, parents receive an informative photo booklet after each topic.

Training was given on what bullying does to children, that it causes social and emotional problems that can lead to depression and loneliness. That prolonged bullying can lead to cognitive problems. And finally, parents were also trained on how to deal with agitated or coercive behavior for example. By better understanding the effect of punishments and rewards, parents learn to use them more effectively and to be consistent in doing so.

## Devices and medicines



**79**

children were given an aid, such as: walking frames, splints, wheelchairs or special chairs.



**42**

children were given medication for epilepsy and/or reflux.





*"Due to the many trainings we have received, we are now better off than before. I can take better care of my son and he even goes to primary school now. We are less left out.".* Hasina, moeder van Shihab



# Lifelong learning

Young people with disabilities are usually denied the opportunity to make their own decisions because of preconceived notions and prejudices about their abilities, and sometimes because of barriers in communication. They have developed a negative self-image in childhood and lack self-confidence. To help these young people stand up for themselves and take care of themselves in the long run, Niketan helps them to stand up for themselves more and take more control of their personal lives. We do this with the lifelong learning training package the Right to Decide, which consists of several modules.

This involves young people (boys and girls) over the age of 13, with varying intellectual levels, from normally gifted (with physical disabilities) to light and mild intellectual disabilities. The modules are adapted for each group to the young people's intellectual level and experiences. This means that some groups take longer to complete certain modules. The training takes place at four locations: Dhaka, Baniajuri, Ghior and Daulatpur.

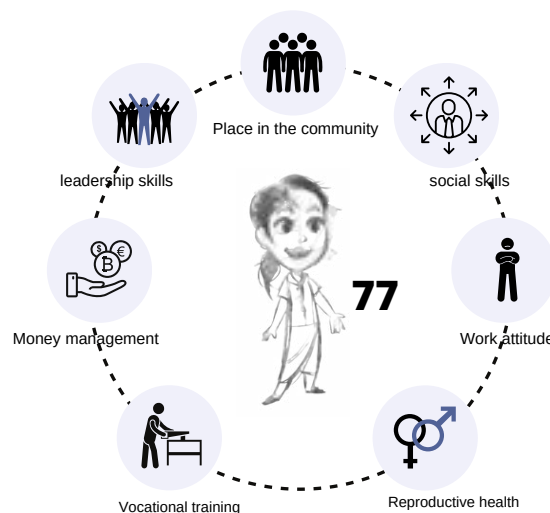
The training was initially conducted after school to groups of young people who came specifically for a specific training course. In 2022, we also started to integrate the modules into our special education program, which has allowed more young people to learn these important skills.

## Training My Way to Work

Young people with disabilities want to be involved in meaningful activities that are both useful and fun. They want a job, which gives them social status and a place in society. But they sometimes misinterpret or misunderstand the social behavior of others. To help young people improve their social skills, we have offered the My Way to Work training since 2016.

This training takes a lot of time, especially the social skills part. But we see young people with intellectual disabilities changing, becoming more empowered, more confident. The training helps them gain a more realistic self-image by understanding their strengths and weaknesses. Their self-confidence grows, they become more part of society and experience that their opinions count.

Their social environment also changes; the simple fact that they know how to greet their families appropriately already earns them more respect from relatives. Being able to answer questions and/or engage in a brief conversation ensures that they become more involved and included in family affairs. They are no longer seen as the 'family fool', but as someone with a name.



The lifelong learning training package 'The Right to Decide' consists of various modules and subject-oriented training courses and aims to help young people find a place in society.



I'm Popy Akter, Saju Mia's sister-in-law. He is an orphan and has Down syndrome. I take care of him.

I received training from Niketan and this really changed my attitude toward him. To be honest, I didn't really care about him, but after the training I understood that he has rights too and that he is not just a burden. Because we ignored him, we didn't know what he was capable of. Saju takes the My Way to Work training. He has become more social and engages in conversations.

I'm glad that Niketan made me realize this and taught me how to get the best out of Saju.





## Training Sexual and Reproductive health and Right education (SRHR)

Intimacy and sexuality are part of every person's life. Yet there is still a big taboo on the subject, especially when it comes to people with intellectual disabilities. In our It's my body training we teach young people how they can see themselves and how to behave accordingly. We teach them about understanding their own body and that of someone of the opposite sex. We teach them which expressions of sexuality are appropriate, so that they are less likely to be victims of sexual violence, and how they can protect themselves. It involves small amounts of information offered in a clear, correct and positive way, but within the context of a country like Bangladesh, by a person they know and trust.

*"I didn't know anything about good or bad touches in my childhood. I'm so happy that I can now teach my students about this." . – Jenia - trainer*

The training is considered a great success by parents, young people and staff. The young people report that they are less shy and scared, and have gained more self-confidence. They understand ill-intended advances and have learned to say 'NO'. Their status in the family has changed, from 'that disabled person' to someone who has knowledge and can help others with issues around puberty and reproductive health. Lessons learned are shared with friends and family, and in doing so, each young person who has done the training reaches at least five others. The young people who have done the training unanimously give it a 10+. They say that it has completely changed their lives.

Especially for girls, the training has a lot of impact. They often come to the training completely veiled and show an insecure attitude. After the training, most veils have come off, they look confidently toward the future and talk openly about their bodies and problems.

Even peers without disabilities find the training very valuable and give it a 10+. In addition to the lessons on reproductive health, they say they learned a lot about disabilities. It changed their ideas and they built friendships with the girls with disabilities.

*"I thought that after my marriage, my body became my husband's property". - Joly*

Over the past five years, 103 young people (21 boys and 82 girls) have done the training. One criticism we heard from both girls and parents was the lack of training for boys. Only when boys also learn about their bodies and reproductive healthcare can society change. In 2023 we therefore want to train more boys..

## Training on my own

Learning to manage money is an important responsibility of a parent to teach children. But because most parents in Bangladesh are barely able to manage their own money, they don't teach their children this important skill. If the children have intellectual disabilities, many parents believe, there is no point at all. The On my Own training includes recognizing the value of money, creating and keeping a housekeeping book, opening a bank account, saving money and making financial plans for the future.

This training gives young people with light intellectual and/or physical disabilities the opportunity to actually take charge of their own lives. The knowledge the young people gain during this training changes the family dynamics entirely. The young people with disabilities often become responsible for the family's money and income and expenses. They are no longer bullied, abused or ignored, but are fully part of the family.

**I'm Anik Hasan, social worker of the CBR project. This is my first job.**

**I enjoy working with children with disabilities and my other responsibilities, such as my involvement in awareness programs. I give the Right to Decide training to young people. I really enjoy doing that. It's great to see them change, to help them gain confidence and make their own decisions.**

**I have had a lot of training from Niketan and frankly, it has also changed my life.**





## Leadership training

Violence against women is a serious social, cultural and economic problem in Bangladesh, where nearly two out of three women have experienced or are experiencing gender-based violence (999 helpline Bangladesh). Violence against women and girls is so socially normalized that women often do not feel that violence against them is taken seriously or worth reporting. Research shows that women with disabilities are more likely to experience domestic violence and sexual assault than women without disabilities (WHO). In addition, women with disabilities are generally also faced with emotional and verbal abuse.

Leadership training helps young people (12) with disabilities gain more respect from their family and community. As part of the training, the young people create a life plan, which helps them dream about a future and break it down into small goals. Another part is writing down and sharing that life story. This creates a lot of emotions. In Bengali culture, people do not normally share negative experiences; they are tacitly accepted. However, the girls find it healing to share these experiences in a safe environment and put them down on paper. Diaries are kept and they encourage each other to speak up. They no longer accept being treated as the 'disabled person' and no longer allow themselves to be abused.

However, not all parents can handle these big changes in their daughter. To prevent escalation, we would like to include parents more in the process in follow-up training.

We asked 77 young people who follow the training 'Right to Decide' about a few important aspects in life.





**My name is Shumi. I'm 16 years old and I have mild spastic paralysis. I was abused by my mother, sister and brother-in-law. They beat me and they didn't give me any food, even though I did all the housework and took care of my cousins.**

**My mother used MY benefits for my male cousin and my brother. I wanted to use that money myself to continue my studies, but my family controlled my life. Now I don't let anyone make decisions about my life. During the leadership training, I learned that I have the same rights as everyone else. I'm a human being and I now know what I'm capable of. I've learned to love myself and I fight for my rights.**

**I let MY voice be heard: STOP domestic violence against women with disabilities.**

**(see also:  
<https://youtu.be/AtUeUr63KVw>)**



## Vocational training

The existing labor market is commercial and competitive, and young people with disabilities often cannot compete for paid employment. There are hardly any vocational training programs, and parents often find it more important that their child can participate in the family than that they invest in an education. Niketan offers training that fits the needs of young people and their parents.

**Agriculture:** On the care farm we grow organic vegetables and teach ten boys to care for the livestock, which consists of sheep, ducks, chickens and cows.

**Woodworking:** In the woodworking group, eight boys are taught woodworking skills through a three-year learning module. The build-up in difficulty allows the boys to continue to develop according to the work competencies they possess. The boys collectively make tools such as standing tables, special chairs and walkers. Sometimes, based on their work competencies and acquired skills, the boys can advance to a workplace outside the organization.

**Sewing:** On the 'horizontal day' (as described on page 16), 12 girls from the various projects come to the center in Baniajuri to learn skills such as measuring, marking off, cutting, hemming and sewing. These are skills that many girls continue to be interested in and can use to generate some income at home.

## Residential group

The residential care farm Afroza's place got a new house mother and house father in 2022 after more than 12 years. A young family with two children with disabilities took on the care of another 15 young adults with disabilities. This is a diverse group of young people who often no longer have parents and whose families cannot cope with their complex care needs. The group of young people form a family with the house parents' family and the other house mother who are all there for each other. At the care farm, they grow organic vegetables and produce enough rice and vegetables to provide healthy meals for everyone in the residential facility. They also take care of the livestock, which consists of sheep, ducks, chickens and a cow.





Parish is a 30-year-old boy with an autism spectrum disorder. According to his mother, his development was normal before his father died. The sudden death of his father completely changed the then 19-year-old Parish. He cried three days in a row and refused to eat. From that day on, he stayed indoors, did not talk to others and gradually developed difficulty walking, going to the bathroom alone and other daily living skills. His desperate family members took him to the doctor for treatment, but to no avail. He became a burden on his family.

They looked for a residential facility for him and found our Afroza Place residential center. Parish couldn't do anything independently. But now, after four years, he is slowly showing some progress. He moves easily and freely on the grounds of the residential facility, walks up the stairs, responds to his name and starts brief conversations.



## Society

Our work in the community in recent years has led to increased awareness and interest from the local environment, both socially and from local government. The local government involves us in budget discussions, in which it determines annually what it invests in children with disabilities and their families. Elementary schools admit children with disabilities, pharmacists do not automatically prescribe them medication, and public transportation and health clinics have reserved spots for people with disabilities. In addition, the local government facilitated training sessions for parents, pharmacists and health workers. The local government has also granted families with a child with disabilities access to various safety net programs (benefits for people with disabilities, widows, orphans, etc.) and solar panels, a sewing machine, blankets and/or land were offered to these families.

An important lesson we have learned over the past ten years is that the program has been a success because we have moved along with and listened to the (needs of the) community, the parents and the children.

### Collaboration with Union Parishads

A Union Parishad (UP) is the smallest administrative and local government unit in Bangladesh. There are 15 UPs in Ghior and Daulatpur Thana. They are supported by committees, consisting of elected representatives of UPs, members of civil society, socially respected individuals and women representatives of that place. They assist UPs in ensuring better services and solving various problems. A UP is responsible for participation of local people and it deals with education, health, family planning, social welfare and disaster management, and agriculture, fisheries and livestock farming. It is also responsible for handing out the so-called Golden Citizen cards (benefits) and resources. Most UPs do not yet have sufficient knowledge of families with a child with a disability, and these families do not know what support they can receive from the local government.



VGF card - structural financial aid from the government



'Golden Citizen card' - entitles you to financial compensation for disability-related costs.



reimbursement of costs of medicines

## Community

Awareness should not only be directed at governments and (government) institutions. We help promote inclusion in the community by organizing:

- **outdoor cinemas:** Once every three months we set up a cinema in a village square, where we show popular movies and show films and share success stories about people with disabilities. We talk about equality and discuss common beliefs such as misconceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities.
- **focus group discussions:** in which we also talk about (gender) equality, about misconceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities, about child marriage, abuse and emotional and social humiliation. These discussion groups include parents, police officers, teachers, local spiritual and political leaders, young people with disabilities, villagers, etc.
- **'anti-violence' committees** in the 22 villages. During our work in the communities, we see less (domestic) violence and fewer child marriages. Villagers now dare to hold each other to account and report (domestic) violence and child marriages to the committee.



**"Union Parishad Chair Boroithia: I'm very happy with the support we get from DRRRA / Niketan.**

**By law, we are required to give priority to people with disabilities, but there are no guidelines or support as to how to do that and what to do. DRRRA helped us with that.**

**We now better understand what it means to have a disability and what support we can offer as a UP".**

**- Union Parishad voorzitter, Boroithia**



## Collaboration with mainstream primary education

Inclusive education means that schools need to be ready to provide individualized services for pupils with various support needs. To this end, Niketan organizes training for school leaders and teachers from 20 mainstream schools to increase understanding about diversity, discrimination and equal rights. This awareness is directed at fellow pupils, teachers, school leaders and parents, so pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities feel welcome and respected.

At the same time, pupils participating in the care-education project are prepared for their transition to a mainstream school. This is a carefully planned process involving both Niketan and the mainstream school, during which pupils with disabilities gradually spend more and more time at the mainstream school. For the time being, we will focus on pupils with minor disabilities.

Over 150 teachers at the 20 elementary schools use the read-aloud book 'My Name is Runa' every Thursday. It is a book about a girl with a disability. The book is changing assumptions and misconceptions. It has resulted in conversations about and with children with disabilities, and what then becomes evident is that they are just children, just like they are. Pupils without disabilities now sit next to pupils with disabilities, they participate in outdoor play, and the children without disabilities stand up for their peers who have disabilities. The book teaches pupils and teachers that people with and without disabilities have the same feelings and dreams. That's an important lesson, because equality leads to greater respect and ultimately a more inclusive society.

***"The training on the Runa book helped us understand disabilities and the challenges children with disabilities face. We didn't really see children with disabilities as equal compared to children without disabilities. We learned that they have the same emotions and dreams. The training and the book helped us change our minds". – teacher at Ulail elementary school***

To further encourage inclusion, inclusive games and sports days were organized in collaboration with UPs and mainstream elementary schools. These inclusive games and sports days are funded by the local government.

***"We organized a quiz competition with 11 elementary schools about stigmatization and the social barriers of disabilities. Three pupils from each school participated. Local government officials reviewed the responses. Because they were enthusiastic about the outcome, they want to organize this competition again next year with more schools and communities". – Dalima Rahman, Coördinator***





**Tamanna has cerebral palsy.**

**Her mother took her to special education in Baniajuri. Tamanna immediately felt at home at the school. Her motor and cognitive skills soon began to improve. Now she can write the Bangla alphabet, and her name and address. She was recently admitted to a mainstream school. She is looking forward to going to that school and is not afraid of being bullied. Her classmates and Tamanna read the book 'My Name is Runa' together in class. The book tells the story of Runa, who, like Tamanna, has cerebral palsy and was bullied by her community.**

**Tamanna recognizes herself in the story and shares her feelings with her teacher and classmates. The book helps teachers start conversations about respecting individual differences.**





# Knowledge sharing

To be able to reach more children and young people with disabilities in Bangladesh, we share our knowledge and enter into various partnerships.

## We Care project

Historically, marginalized and vulnerable groups of people have been left out of discussions about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The interactive curriculum created by the 'We Care' team aims to change that. The curriculum includes several case studies, role-play scenarios and other activities focused on the specific SRHR needs of people with disabilities, young people and indigenous peoples in Bangladesh. It also provides tools to improve information on SRHR and health workers' services to these groups. In 2022, there were several pilots to test curriculum content.

***"I learned that people with disabilities have sexual desires and needs just like anyone else. We should be kind to them and reach out to people with disabilities. Until now, we have excluded them from our services because we did not know this."*** – Kamali Halder – health worker

The curriculum will be integrated into basic and in-service training for health workers, training thousands of health workers. The 'We Care' team has also developed a similar curriculum for health center supervisors. This curriculum, like the other curriculum, will be used by the National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT ) to train thousands of supervisors.

***"There are many things that are completely new in this training. I learned a lot about people with disabilities. Given the context of Bangladesh, people with disabilities are embarrassed or hesitant to come for medical help. They usually do not seek help. But they need not be the only ones to take the initiative, we can also reach out to them, possibly through others."*** - Dr Kaniz, Upazilla Medical Officer uit Khulna, Satkhira

Niketan's support for this project this year was mainly focused on helping to develop a pictogram booklet for health workers. To be used as supportive communication materials for their communication with people with neurological disabilities.



In this project, Niketan collaborates with Dutch partners KIT, Rutgers and RedOrange, and with Bengali partners NIPORT and DGFP.

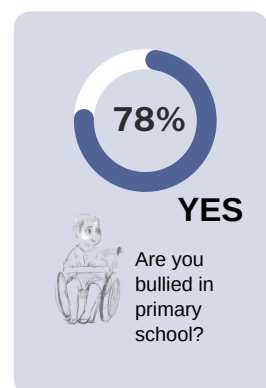




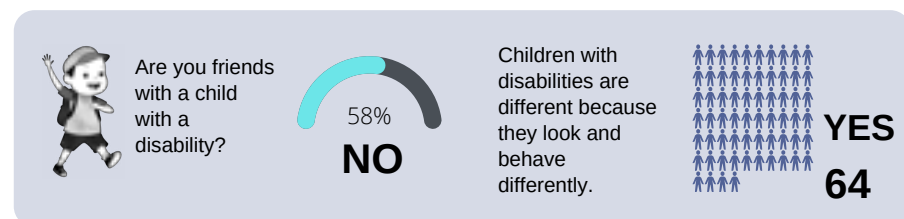
## Stories for Inclusion

Children with disabilities are often marginalized and excluded from mainstream society and education. The biggest barrier experienced by children with disabilities are negative attitudes and low expectations of what they can do. Children without disabilities are usually unaware of the problems their peers with disabilities face because they rarely meet these children. Nor do they encounter these children in the textbooks they use at school or the books they read at home. Even teachers in mainstream schools do not know what life is like for children with disabilities.

In the Stories for Inclusion project, Biblionef Netherlands and Niketan advocate in Ghana and Bangladesh respectively for greater awareness, understanding and inclusion by developing stories centering on a child with a disability. The first story is about Runa, a girl with a disability. Above you have read about how we are using this book in collaboration with 20 mainstream schools.



In ten mainstream schools, we collected baseline data on the availability of inclusive children's books related to children with disabilities. Attitudes toward each other were also discussed with 246 children without and 88 children with disabilities. This year, board member Els Heijnen trained trainers in Bangladesh and Ghana. Subsequently, in Bangladesh, 150 teachers and over 300 parents were trained in how to use the book and the accompanying activity guide.



*"I learned that I should not label a child (e.g. special needs child, autistic child), but just call the child by their name when we talk about them, just like any other child." - trainee in Bangladesh*

The local government in Bangladesh has embraced the project and would prefer that after the pilot, all schools in the Manikganj district start using the children's book My Name is Runa. In Patuakhali (southern Bangladesh), the book was purchased by an NGO and used in several schools. There, too, the book increases inclusion and reduces bullying.

The children's book is also used in Ghana. In 2023, a children's book on autism will be created in Ghana, in which project Bangladesh will also collaborate.







কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম  
ভবন

৬৩নং চকরিচরণ সরকারি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়  
স্থান: ৬৩নং চকরিচরণ  
সংগ্রহসংখ্যা: ২০০৮-২০০৭  
আবু বাকর মোহাম্মদ হোসেন  
প্রিন্সিপাল





## Reaching the Hard to Reach

Every child has the right to develop (Article 6 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). But some need professional help to do so, which is not always available everywhere. That's why Niketan developed the Reaching the hard to Reach program. It consists of instructional videos on nutrition, gross motor skills and communication. This year, in cooperation with PUM, pediatric physical therapist Marianne Smits Majoor went to Bangladesh to help record the modules on crawling, standing and walking and to train the physical therapists in these areas. In 2023, we plan to bring all videos/modules together to create an online training program for parents and semi professionals and make it available on an online knowledge platform.

In Bangladesh, not only our partner organization DRRA uses the videos, but also the LAMB rehabilitation center in Dinajpur and other organizations in Bangladesh. The videos are also watched online and used by parents and semi professionals from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Indonesia and Pakistan.

***"I spoke to a mother today. She told me that she has been going from doctor to doctor for help for her child for nine months and has already spent 2,500 euros. However, what really helped her were Niketan's instructional videos on nutrition."*** – Benjamin Hasda , LAMB rehabilitation center - Dinajpur

To reach target groups outside Bangladesh even better, we have partnered with Enablement and Cerebral Palsy Africa. The booklets that accompany the videos are translated into English and local languages.

The videos are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/@Niketanfoundation> and on our new page 'Disability resources' (<https://www.niketan.nl/en/projects/disability-resources/>)

## Other partnerships

**Unilever Bangladesh:** Unilever Bangladesh is part of the International Unilever Group and is a global leader in the production of food and personal care products. Unilever supported Niketan's Right to Decide project in 2022.

**Gloria Jeans Coffee:** Gloria Jeans Coffee is part of the NAVANA Food Limited Group and owns several restaurants in Dhaka. Gloria Jeans supports Niketan's work with 'cappuccino for a cause'.

**Friendship NGO:** In 2022, talks were held and mutual project visits were organized with various donor organizations to explore ways in which collaboration can be realized. Friendship NGO sees Niketan as a possible knowledge partner for their projects focusing on people with disabilities, while Niketan can learn a lot from Friendship NGO about empowerment and employment of people who are at a disadvantage on the labor market.

**Prakriti O Poribesh Kendra:** This initiative of local volunteers aims to help the poor in rural Bangladesh in a sustainable way. They gave fruit and wood trees to 93 families in our project this year. Thanks to the trees, parents not only have an income but also shade and a healthier living environment.





# Niketan in the Netherlands

## Governance and supervision

Niketan is a non-profit organization with a board consisting of volunteers with professional expertise.



**Rutger-Jan Schoen:** President, policy development and quality assessment. Board member since February 1, 2014 (eligible for re-election). Rutger-Jan works as strategic communications and change management consultant in the field of international cooperation and development.



**Antoinette Termoshuizen:** General Secretary, contact person for Bangladesh and fundraising. In office since August 6, 1998 (eligible for re-election). Antoinette works as a trainer and counselor.



**Joost Kurstjens:** Treasurer. In office since September 1, 2019 (eligible for re-election). Joost is a retired internal auditor and has many years of experience in the finance department of the European Commission in Bangladesh and Azerbaijan, among other countries.



**Marion Elzenaar:** Contact person for the Jostiband (a Dutch orchestra consisting of musicians with disabilities; Niketan ambassador), volunteer coordinator, trainer. In office since April 1, 1999 (eligible for re-election). Marion works as a work supervisor at care organization Middin.



**Els Heijnen-Maathuis:** contact person for cluster 2. In office since February 1, 2020 (eligible for re-election). Els is a senior education consultant with years of experience in several developing countries in Africa and Asia.

Niketan does not have a supervisory body as recommended in the Wijffels Good Governance Code. Since August 2017, Niketan has been a charity recognized by the Netherlands Fundraising Regulator (CBF) ([www.cbf.nl](http://www.cbf.nl)). This means that it meets all the requirements set for this, which are audited annually. The recognition passport is available at [www.cbf.nl/organisatie/niketan](http://www.cbf.nl/organisatie/niketan). The General Secretary of the foundation undertakes all office activities. The Board provides direction for and supervises these activities, and supports their implementation. Board members provide their support without any form of payment. The average time commitment of board members is around ½ to 1 day a week. The General Secretary is involved with Niketan full-time.

## Advisory Board

The Advisory Board provides “solicited and unsolicited” advice to the Board regarding Niketan’s activities. The Board and Advisory Board meet once or twice a year. The members of the Advisory Board contribute to Niketan without any form of payment. The Advisory Board consists of:



Felix Piguillet, retired, former President of Niketan and former regional manager for intellectual disability care at Ipse de Bruggen.



Paul de Nooijer, Inspector at the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.



Ella de Voogd, retired, senior policy advisor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



## Fundraising and increasing support

In 2022, we were mentioned in the local and national news several times in Bangladesh with our Stories for Inclusion project and winning the award. The British Council organized a spring party for our children and a Christmas gathering, at which we received a nice donation. Rotary Ramna in Dhaka gave over 50 of our children new uniforms and donated shoes and raincoats. We published an article in Dutch magazine Margriet and on EENET and organized an exhibition at the library in the Dutch town of Pijnacker. We collaborated on a quick guide on sex education in partnership with the Liliane Foundation and DCDD.



## Good governance, risk and compliance

The projects in Bangladesh are implemented by our local partner organization DRRA. In close consultation with Niketan, projects are defined, implemented and evaluated.

We are in daily contact with DRRA managers and employees working on our projects. The financial and content-related reports have always been good and board members visit the projects several times a year. During these visits, we work closely with DRRA staff and management, and personally check with our own eyes the quality of the DRRA employees' work. The best interests of the children in our projects are always at the heart of this.

In addition, Niketan consults with sponsors in the Netherlands and Bangladesh for funding. DRRA reports on progress and expenses incurred semi-annually. When the country reopened, the President, Treasurer and General Secretary visited Bangladesh to evaluate the activities during the pandemic and see how activities have been restarted. NGOs in Bangladesh are monitored by the NGO Affairs Bureau, an organization set up by the government in 1990 to make NGOs more flexible in their operations and help ensure the accountability of their activities. See also: <http://www.ngoab.gov.bd/>

DRRA's internal auditor also audits these local administrative records. In addition, the NGO Affairs Bureau conducts specific audits and reviews. Every six months, Niketan also audits the statements of project expenses itself. It compares them with the budgets submitted in advance and reviews, based on random sampling, whether the expenses were justified and actually incurred. In case of deviations, the parties involved must report on them in writing. DRRA, which also implements projects for organizations other than Niketan, has the financial records of the various projects audited annually by a recognized independent external auditor. Niketan has access to these audit reports.

## Organizational continuity

Niketan is run almost entirely by volunteers. The stability and continuity of Niketan therefore depends heavily on the quality and continued commitment of these volunteers. The Board is aware that with the current way of working, the composition, involvement and expertise of the Board is important for the continuity of the project. In our 5-year Policy Plan Niketan 2020-2025, we have indicated that we will pay extra attention to this. This is all about the continuity of care for the children we have been committed to for such a long time. In line with the development of Bangladesh, which has become a middle-income country in the past year, a part of the care will have to be taken over by the national and local government together with the private sector. Niketan's contribution will then shift more towards innovation and sharing of knowledge and experience among larger societal groups in collaboration with other parties.

### Continuity of our partner organizations

Although Niketan only pre-finances a very small part, it is still important to have a reliable and up-to-date understanding of the continuity of our partner organization DRRA, without losing our independence. To this end, the Board will discuss the financial health of the organization with DRRA's management annually. In addition, the Treasurer will review and discuss available audits with management or auditors.






## Employees Niketan / DRRA

**5** Voluntary  
board members  
in the  
Netherlands

**47** Paid project  
employees  
in Bangladesh

**6** Flexible  
deployable  
volunteers in NL

**1**   
Paid fundraiser

 **+/- 2.643**

hours of volunteer work by board members.

## Risk management

### Currency risk

From the 2022-2023 budget, Niketan has established the contracts and original budgets in taka, and the amount will be transferred in euros at the exchange rate of the day of declaration. As a result, DRRA is no longer exposed to currency risk and the costs incurred in taka are more closely aligned with the exchange rate fluctuation of the taka.

### Risk of insufficient funds

Every year we are faced with the question of whether we can raise enough funds to continue to support the projects. Niketan is pursuing multiple avenues to secure funding:

1. We maintain good contacts with equity funds.
2. Since early 2019, we have been using the services of an external fundraiser.
3. We are focusing more on fundraising in Bangladesh and are increasingly successful at it. The proceeds are deducted directly from the project costs to be paid by us.
4. In recent years, we have been able to build up a financial buffer.

For a steady inflow of funding, we strive for broader name recognition, coupled with interest and social conviction. We will increase the contact between Niketan and its donors and become even clearer in showing results, without reducing our focus on the children.

### Investment risk

Our financial resources are such that we can meet the objectives for about a year and a half. Given this short investment horizon, the Board decided to hold the funds exclusively as immediately withdrawable bank balances (current account or savings account).

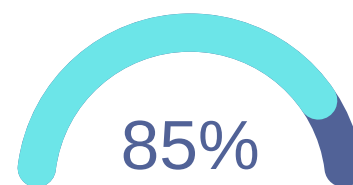
## Financial overview 2022

In 2022, Niketan received an amount of 202.814 euros from fundraising. This is 18.983 euros less than in 2021. The costs of running our program totaled 170.188 euros, so Niketan has spent 32.626 euros less than it received in 2022.

### Benefit

Private person	€ 30.116
Companies	€ 18.543
Organisations	€ 137.965
Third parties	€ 16.190

€ 202.814



Spent on objectives

### Spend



Project :  
€ 164.953



Knowledge :  
€ 5.235



Monitoring :  
€ 1.401



Fundraising :  
€ 7.632



Management :  
€ 11.196

Please see our financial statements for a complete overview of the financial results.





### Lagging impact of COVID

A few of our scheduled projects stopped or were postponed during the two COVID years. Some projects were replaced by other activities, but it also had a moderating effect on costs this year, which translated into a lower budget for Track 1. On the other hand, the costs of some projects (an example of which is the production of videos for training and methodologies in Track 2) were already made in previous years, while operationally the projects are or will be realized over several years.



### Effect of prepaid project costs

In the previous year 2021, Niketan could look forward to a total amount of 65,000 euros paid in advance for activities in 2022. As mentioned in the relevant item of the financial statements, the other half, 32,000 euros, has been reserved for activities in 2023. Part of this amount will be spent on creating a knowledge platform.



### Donor support is shifting

Fundraising for our projects continues to be difficult. During the pandemic we received additional support to meet the biggest needs, but after the pandemic it has become difficult to find sufficient support for some – especially structural – activities. To optimize the child tracking system, in 2023 we will investigate whether a connection to the system being developed by Dutch NGO Enablement offers sufficient possibilities to use that system in the context of Bangladesh. On the plus side, we were pleased to receive an important donation for the Stories for Inclusion project.



### Local fundraising

DRRA is receiving increasing support from Bangladeshi donors, both from individuals and from other organizations and companies (including a significant donation from Unilever Bangladesh). These donations are deposited into the local bank account managed by DRRA. In addition, we are increasingly collaborating with the local and national government, which is sometimes able to cover local costs.

## Niketan received support from:

We thank the following donors:



ChildRight



De Wisselbeker



Elise Spykman



Gloria Jeans  
Coffee



H. Harstra



Hidora



Ineke Feitz



Stichting Jong



Pro Victimis



Reeders stichting



Royal IHC



Serra  
Foundation



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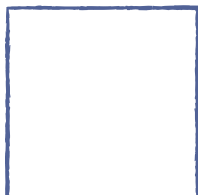
Thom Foundation



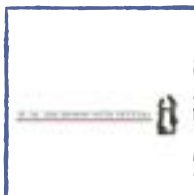
Unilever  
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Wierda Baas



Stichting WE  
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W.M de Hoop



Stille fondsen



We also thank the many loyal private donors and volunteers who support us year after year.