

# PROSHANTI



## Introduction to Proshanti

### What is Proshanti?

We are a small but dynamic charity with its heart in East London and its operations in north east Bangladesh. It is our aim to provide high quality ante-natal and post-natal care, education and support to pregnant women, to enable a safe pregnancy and delivery, to reduce maternal and infant mortality in a town called Juri in Sylhet.

### What we do?

We provide regular antenatal visits, both at home and in clinics, medication, blood tests and scans under the supervision of the Proshanti team and support for approximately one hundred poor and marginalised women at any one time.

### Our track record?

Our success rate has been excellent. Over the past five years, we have helped 576 women who would otherwise not have received any antenatal care. We have achieved a 100% success rate in the prevention of maternal deaths and over 98% live births, exceeding both the regional and national average.

The link between medical care in East London and Juri is growing all the time. So too is the scale and level of the Proshanti clinical team and its professional supervision of the work in Juri.

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## Sharing food! Ramadan in Juri for Proshanti patients

In June 2016, Proshanti widened the criteria for food supplement distribution to include all of Proshanti's users. Previously food supplements were restricted only to those who were malnourished. Locals were also faced with flooding in the month increasing everyone's vulnerability. So food donations were appreciated greatly.

Not only did faces light up, but the words of Mumina, who gave birth to a baby boy under difficult conditions echoed the feelings of many other Proshanti clients, "You gave us new life, God will give you peace."



### Words from Lilu Ahmed, Chair of Proshanti

We have recently been able to increase the number of women in our clinic to 100 thereby making some impact on the overwhelming demand for Proshanti's services.

There are no comparable services available in the vicinity and the Government Upazila Health Complex is under construction, so poor women will not receive any care at all.

I am always grateful to all the hard work of our trustees, clinical advisors and staff who continue to save pregnant women from danger. I am relying on the continued support of our funders and monthly donors to keep Proshanti operating to meet basic human needs.

I am also delighted to welcome two new appointees to the Proshanti Team; respectively joining us in March 2016 and May 2016 are Dr Momin, our Programme Consultant and Nurjahan Khatun, our Fundraising Consultant. I am confident we will work together to build on Proshanti's work.

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## Ramadan giving in the UK

### Secure a lasting gift, support a safe birth

Proshanti managed to secure over £1,000 from family and friends through our Ramadan initiative. A huge thank you to everyone who managed to make Ramadan a little more special for our Proshanti clients. We want to be more ready for Ramadan 2017. If you wish to become involved in any way in our Ramadan Campaign please get in touch [info@proshanti.org](mailto:info@proshanti.org)





## A review of Proshanti services

by Dr Momin,  
Programme Consultant

*In the last week of March 2016, I spent a week in Juri with Proshanti staff and patients. It was an opportunity to become familiar with the staff and the area, and to carry out an assessment of the services.*

*To do this, I randomly chose 10 patients who had received services from Proshanti over the last 5 years. I was assisted by Proshanti's midwives as I spent some time gauging their views on the services.*

*All of the patients conveyed their gratitude for the services, and it was clear that over the years, patient services had improved, especially in the area of post-natal care, which had not been available through the government service in the past. A typical comment from the women was "Proshanti gave me new life and without Proshanti's support I or my child may not have survived.*

*Among the 10 patients, I found that most of their children were healthy, but parents had no plans for their education and many families were still destitute, working as day labourers, and were often homeless. Therefore, for many families in Juri, Proshanti continues to make a real difference to their lives.*



A recovering mother, Parul Begum with one of her twin babies

Parul Begum, who comes from a poor family, was married young. She gave birth to two sons, both of whom died, the eldest at the age of five and the youngest at the age of three. When Parul was 32 weeks pregnant, she was feeling unwell. She was financially supported by locals to make an urgent visit to a doctor and was found on ultrasound to be pregnant with twins.

Parul also required further treatment which was not possible without financial support. Parul lost hope. Fortunately, she then heard about Proshanti from a local community leader.

Her condition required a rapid response from Proshanti. Doctors visits were arranged, further medical tests, a blood transfusion and close monitoring.

Over the next two weeks her medical situation continued to deteriorate. At 34 weeks, Proshanti arranged for her to be transferred urgently to The Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital where she gave birth to twin boys by C-Section. Both the administration and hands on support took place at midnight by one of Proshanti's members of staff.

All medical and travel expenses were paid by Proshanti. Parul is grateful and the babies are doing well.

After observing Proshanti Midwives in action, Diane, a volunteer midwife from the UK reported,

*"This morning I visited a mother and one month old baby with Aporna (midwife) It was a lovely CNG ride, through a tea garden, along a twisting, undulating road, the gentle hills covered in tea bushes. We came to a household of three mud constructed houses around court yard. On the fourth side stood a colourful temple. We found the baby sleeping peacefully in his bamboo crib, under a pink mosquito net. We distracted the mother and other female relatives from their household tasks. Little ones started returning from school. Aporna examined the baby. He watched her with wide eyes not at all phased by the midwife checking his hips, listening to his heart and lungs. He even allowed her to look into his mouth without making a sound. He was lifted on to the scales to find the little fellow had gained weight, he was all of 3.90kg. Aporna examined his mother as per protocol, checking on breast feeding and talking about her diet. We left a very content and well mother and baby. Well done, Proshanti, staff!"*

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*My life and that of my twins depended on a C-section. God made this possible because of Proshanti. Ami boro kushi (I am very happy).*

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## Q&A with Nurjahan Khatun

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### What made you join Proshanti?

I joined Proshanti because I was able to integrate my passion for community work around working hours (10hrs weekly), suitable for a mother of four and the flexibility to work from home. I couldn't ask for more.

### What did you find special about Proshanti?

What struck me about Proshanti was its wholesome work, a vision of compassion straight from the hearts of the founding members; to poor women around the tea gardens and villages of Juri regardless of their religion (Muslim, Hindus and Christians) or ethnic (local, tribal and internal migrants) background.

### Can you expand on what you mean by wholesome work?

I feel that in many projects wholesomeness is absent. Wholesomeness is a concern for the holistic wellbeing of the human being underpinned by a philosophy where humanitarian values predominate above other more material needs. And yes, huge differences exist in the world and we have different ways of living but everyone can possess a loving heart that can reach many. We need loving, living hearts around which we fit context dependent systems.

### How is Proshanti's work wholesome?

I already mentioned that initially hearts were moved by the need in Juri and then Proshanti was set up and from my experience of being with Proshanti for 4 months now, the system of administration (meeting targets etc) hasn't taken over from that initial compassion which still ignites Proshanti. This I believe may explain Proshanti's achievements to date.

Since its inception in 2009, Proshanti has cared for over 576 women, and to its credit has achieved a 100% success rate in the prevention of maternal deaths. This clearly shows that targeted, small scale wholesome work does make a lifetime difference.

### Is there anything more you would like to add?

I am excited to be part of the Proshanti team. There are challenges but the team are working hard to provide care to women during a particularly vulnerable time. They are supported by individuals who in their different ways (time, money, resources) continue to give to Proshanti and I hope together we can continue the work and carry on making a difference.

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## Proshanti's Finances

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### by Meriel Barclay, Hon Treasurer and Trustee of Proshanti

The Proshanti Trustees have recently approved the Annual Report and Accounts for 2015 so these have now been submitted to the Charity Commission and to Companies House.

The accounts show that our income for the year was £31,500 compared with £43,000 for 2014. After expenditure of £42,700 there was a loss of £11,200. Thankfully there was enough cash in the bank to finance this and the expenditure did mean we could make a significant difference to so many families in Juri.

Our income came from two main sources and we are most grateful to both. Our largest donation was made by the East London Lift Company and we received a grant from the Ummah Welfare Trust. Of course very many others contributed and we are really pleased that we have so many loyal supporters. Since the beginning of this year we have been making a concerted effort to raise more funds and the recent appointment of Nurjahan Khatun as our fundraiser has already made a difference.

**Proshanti**  
*A healthy living partnership*



The much awaited tea party took place on Tuesday 26 July 2016 at the Bromley By Bow Church with the assistance of our young volunteers happily baking cakes and helping out on the day! We could not have done it without them and would like to thank them all for their contribution.

Here are some pictures to share with everyone!

Next year we aim to throw a bigger tea party and will rely on volunteer support to make it happen.

Why not join us now to help us plan it better?



A few words at the tea party from our special guest speaker Reverend Helen Matthews, Vice President and one of the founder members of Proshanti.

“ We visited Bangladesh to increase our knowledge and understanding of the Bangladeshi community in East London. We realised we couldn't change all that was wrong in Juri or in Bangladesh but we can all make a small difference and together it becomes a big difference. And this is how Proshanti started ”

Barts Health NHS Trust chose Proshanti as its main local charity to celebrate the International Day of the Midwife on 5 May 2016 through a bake sale. Over £400 was raised within two hours. We would like to thank each member of staff who took part in honouring Proshanti through this generous gesture and commitment.