

MUNTADA  
AID

Little  
HEARTS  
LIFESAVING CHILDRENS  
HEART SURGERY

# THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIVING

Little Hearts Donor Report Summer 2019

Charity Registration No: 1157117

# YOUR SUPPORT DRIVES US

Maintaining the trust of stakeholders, including our valued donors and beneficiaries is more important than ever during periods of profound change. This is why accountability is one of our core values. As part of this value, we have decided to update our donors and other stakeholders about what amazing changes their donations make in the lives of thousands of people in need.

Poverty over the last few decades has reduced significantly, but there are still vast inequalities across countries, and among the poorer segments of societies. Millions of people, especially children are denied access to health services, education and clean water because of their geographical, cultural and political circumstances.

With your help and support, we are able to provide the most vulnerable children with access to medical care, education and clean drinking water. I am hoping that this edition of **The Impact of Your Giving** will make you feel proud of what you have managed to achieve during our latest **Little Hearts** mission to Qena, Egypt and beyond.

As well as serving people directly during a crisis, your support is helping us to set up permanent health, education and water programmes across Asia and Africa. Our mission is to develop healthy and sustainable communities worldwide. Through implementing our innovative social, economic, education, health and wellbeing programmes, we want to empower those who are denied social justice and human dignity, in order to make a lasting change in the world.



**I thank you for  
your generosity**

Hamid Azad  
CEO, Muntada Aid



# CHANGING PEOPLE'S LIVES

## Muntada Aid's Little Hearts Mission in Egypt

Muntada Aid in June 2019 concluded its latest Little Hearts Mission in Qena, Egypt.

During the course of this operation, we performed 36 procedures and also provided training through workshops to around 100 medical staff. Whilst this endeavour is our 7th Little Hearts mission in this North African country, this marked the first such assignment in Qena.

The mission started on the 28th of June and continued until the 5th of July.

The mission was managed by our Programmes Manager Kabir Miah, who has been leading our health missions across Asia and Africa for the past 6 years, and the medical team was led by Dr Abdullah Erden.

For this mission, we had arranged a team of 8 international paediatric cardiac specialists. These doctors joined us from the UK, Turkey and the Netherlands. We had also constituted a team of 10 Egyptian doctors who assisted our team of experts in Qena.



During our mission in Qena, the team operated on all types of congenital heart defects from aortic valve stenosis, coarctation of the aorta, pulmonary valve stenosis, to other such types of heart defects.

Little Hearts is Muntada Aid's flagship project and was launched in April 2012. we have so far carried 30 missions in various countries. During these missions, we have performed over 2, 300 cardiac interventions and surgeries.



An estimated

# 15 million children

die or are crippled annually by treatable or preventable heart disease in low- and middle-income countries.

Little Hearts provides free life-saving heart surgeries to children with congenital heart defects from underprivileged backgrounds irrespective of gender, race or religion.



Our long-term aim is to build capacity and provide the necessary training required by doctors and other support staff, in order to conduct similar operations on children in Egypt and other North African countries. We have agreed in principle with Mansoura University hospital where we will be providing doctors with training and other related support to practice as paediatric heart surgeons.

# HOW WE DO IT

Carrying out missions of this kind in developing countries can be very demanding



**The satisfying part of the job is seeing the journey of children from being very sick to reaching a stage in their lives where they have the opportunity to live a normal life and do things children are supposed to do... dream about future.**

Kabir Miah.  
Muntada Aid, Programme Manager

Each mission normally takes up to three months of preparation from inception to delivery. After completing the ground research, we generally start communicating with a suitable hospital in the area. The next step of the process is getting in touch with various government departments of that country and local British consulates, should we need their help.

The other part of the logistics is getting medical supplies into that country in advance from different countries. This can take up to a month; “sometimes the deliveries can be very last minute,” said Miah. “Each mission is such a complex operation”.

We need to be very precise with regards to what medical supplies we need to order. Everything has to be perfect. Type of ailment and number of patients that are going to be treated are the details provided to us by the hospital and sometimes, we don’t get accurate lists. That is when it gets really tricky,” explained Miah.

But all of this is worth doing. And we are very fortunate to be in a position to provide this vital service to those who need it the most.

# THE IMPACT YOU HAVE MADE.

Stories of your gifts to a special Little heart

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**We were able to help children and families who otherwise would not have received treatment to their ailments. They would have suffered in terms of quality of life and would have met a premature end.**

Dr Amir Sheikh  
Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon



HANANE MAHMOUD  
IS 8 YEARS-OLD. SHE  
HAD TO GO THROUGH  
AN URGENT OPEN-  
HEART SURGERY

Hanane Mahmoud was suffering from Ventricular Septal Defect also known as VSD - a hole in the wall separating the two lower chambers of the heart.

Hanane comes from the ancient town of Denderah, where her father works as a painter. The family survives on a nominal income, which is often sporadic. Her family had no means to provide Mahmoud with the intervention she so desperately needed.

According to Dr Amir Sheikh who was a part of the team that operated on Mahmoud, her surgery went well and she would be discharged from the hospital very soon. We wish Mahmoud best of luck in all that comes her way in the future.





FOR 3-YEAR OLD JANA ADLI, CHILDHOOD SO FAR HAD MEANT WEARING GLITTERING PINK DRESSES FOR MANY OF HER HOSPITAL VISITS

A year ago, Jana was diagnosed with Congenital Heart Disease or CHD. The poor socio-economic situation of her parents meant that Jana was not receiving the medical intervention she needed.

Her father works as a construction day-labourer in Hamadi, which is some 60 kilometres from the historic town of Luxor in Egypt.

Earlier this July, a local doctor informed the family about our Little Hearts Mission that was taking place at Qena University Hospital between 28th of June to 5th of July. The family travelled to the ancient town where Jana was observed by our team of internationally renowned paediatric cardiac specialists. She was admitted to the hospital and went through a successful intervention.

During the course of this operation, Muntada Aid performed 36 lifesaving procedures and also provided training through workshops to around 100 medical staff. Whilst this endeavour is our 7th Little Hearts mission in this North African country, this marked first such assignment in Qena.

## **But not everyone is as lucky as Jana**

An estimated 15 million children die or are crippled annually by treatable or preventable heart disease in low- and middle-income countries. There is a chronic shortage of services and paediatric cardiac specialists throughout the developing world and particularly in Africa. At so many places these missions are the only opportunities for children to be seen by a paediatric cardiac surgeon.

We were only able carry these missions because of your generous support.

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## Volunteer in the field



**The most important thing that I have understood from my experience is that if Muntada Aid didn't start this initiative, these children would have no other avenue of treatment available to them. That is a very scary thought.**

Abdul Razaq  
Volunteer, Muntada Aid



Abdul Razaq (19) is a student of Politics and International Relations at Brunel University London. He recently volunteered with our Little Hearts team in Qena, Egypt.

Recently I keep going back to a poem from Hafiz: 'and still after all this time, the sun never says to the earth, "You owe Me." Look what happens with a love like that, it lights the whole sky.' This verse has gained so much significance for me, especially after travelling to Qena, Egypt with Muntada Aid's Little Hearts team and seeing the valuable work they carry out first hand.

I first came to know about Muntada Aid through the North African society at Brunel. I felt an immediate connection to their flagship programme, Little Hearts, and really wanted to make a valuable contribution. Around 15 student societies from 12 different universities came together for this mission in 2018 and we collectively managed to raise over £60k in donations.





In June, I was fortunate enough to be invited by Muntada Aid to be a part of their Little Hearts mission in Qena, Egypt. During their 7 day-long mission in this ancient city, a team of internationally renowned paediatric cardiologists performed 36 lifesaving procedures and provided training through workshops to around 100 medical staff.

As a volunteer this mission was one of the best experiences of my life. The most important thing that I have understood from my experience is that if Muntada Aid didn't start this initiative, these children would have no other avenue of treatment available to them. That is a very scary thought. During this mission, I had the opportunity to speak to many of the parents of these children. Through my conversations, I began to understand their socio-economic situation and how difficult it would be for them to raise funds for these procedures on their own.



I suppose, like many of us, I have a personal interest in this charity too; until last year, I was completely unaware that my mother also suffered from a congenital heart defect as a child. **She was very fortunate to have access to the treatment that she needed, but so many people are not so fortunate.**

# DOCTOR'S DIARIES



Dr Amir Sheikh is a consultant cardiothoracic surgeon. He works and lives in London with his wife and four children.

The mission to Qena was an eye-opening experience for Dr Sheikh, and highlighted the extreme deprivation of medical facilities in the area: “It was a rewarding and fascinating experience for me. It was astonishing to find that the very basic facilities that we take for granted at the NHS UK hospitals are not present in these hospitals. For example, they didn’t have washbasins and sinks to scrubbing up before the surgery. They even didn’t have washbasins to wash hands in the wards. There was no intensive care nursing monitoring charts and monitors in the ICU were of very poor quality. These things were shocking but not unexpected.”

But despite all the challenges, Dr Sheikh found the whole experience very rewarding on several accounts: “We were able to help children and families who otherwise would not have received treatment to their ailments. They would have suffered in terms of quality of life and would have met a premature end. The benefit this mission brought was very palpable. You can see that satisfaction in the parents’ eyes.”

“The other rewarding experience from this mission was that we tried to train the local doctors to bring up their standards where they can in future treat the simple heart defects.”

“I would recommend this to any doctor in the NHS who can contribute in any shape or form,” urged Dr Sheikh, who is eager to join us on our next mission.

If you are a medical professional and would like to be a part of our next Little Hearts mission, please email us at [info@muntadaaid.org](mailto:info@muntadaaid.org) with your details.

# THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT

**we will continue with providing free cardiac care services  
to vulnerable children in Africa and Asia**



# EVERY HEART DESERVES TO BEAT

To learn more about our upcoming Little Hearts missions and how you can support, please visit <https://www.muntadaaid.org/appeals/little-hearts/>. Alternatively, you can also call us at 0207 188 0777.