

Mother's pledge to raise £30k after trip to Bangladesh



Slum visit inspires run for charity

Photograph: Steve Roberts



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A VISIT to a slum in Bangladesh has inspired a team of 30 to run the Bristol 10k.

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Mother-of-three Saffia Bullock was so moved by her visit to the Jheelpur Slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in February last year, that she has founded a new charity and pledged to raise £30,000.

ARBAN stands for Association for Realisation of Basic Needs, and the aim is to set up a health clinic in the Jheelpur slum with a full-time doctor.

The 37-year-old who lives in Tockington, South Gloucestershire, said: "Jheelpur is a hanging slum where 500 families live on a bamboo platform with raw sewage running underneath."

The charity also hopes to be able to support a health worker and provide outreach to some of the 500 families who live there.

"What I saw there has changed my perspective on life. Unable to walk away and pretend I'd not seen what I did, I shared my experiences with friends, who have also been inspired to help."

Ms Bullock added: "With all the doom and gloom over cuts, we think this is a positive story – our message is that, life may be getting harder in the UK, but compared to others in the world, we have fantastic public services."

"Together, we've started a charity, ARBAN UK, supporting an NGO in Bangladesh by fundraising for a healthcare project."

"Many of us involved are parents and we are very aware of the opportunities our children have that those in Bangladesh will never have."

"We are able to take them to a doctor when they are ill."

Supporters: Run for the Slum team organiser Saffia Bullock with supporters including MP Steve Webb, centre right

"We have clean water and sanitation."

To help kickstart the fundraising, Ms Bullock has gathered 30 friends, family and neighbours, from Tockington, Oldbury and Bristol, to sign up to the Bristol 10k race which takes place on Sunday, May 15. The team are also holding a Taste of Bangladesh evening at Olveston Church on Saturday, May 21 at which

people can taste curries and hear more about Dhaka and the slum.

Entries for this year's Bristol 10k reached record levels and the event, now in its 4th year, is expected to be bigger and better than ever.

Georgette Van Hoof, race director, said: "Entries for this year's race are well over 11,000 – our biggest number of entries yet. We've also had nearly 1,000 entries for the Clark Willmott

Business Challenge this year which is a massive increase over four years showing the popularity of this race within a race."

Many runners are taking part in the 10k to raise funds for the event's charity sponsors; St Peter's Hospice and Comrades of Children Overseas (COCO). For more, visit www.run-bristol.com. For more about ARBAN UK, visit www.arban.org.uk.

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