

*“Contribution for charity is an  
act that pleases Allah most”*

## **Kadam Foundation**

Your Contribution is  
a way to

**Empower  
Orphan Girls**

and ensure  
a bright future  
for them.



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## Introduction

Kadam Foundation (KF) is a not-for-profit corporation registered as a Federal organization. 'Kadam' means 'a step forward'; a step towards dignity, equity, justice, a plural society and peace. Kadam Foundation has its programs in Canada and India.

The formation of KF inspired by the work being done by the Centre for Development (CfD) - a not-for-profit charity based in Ahmedabad, India, which strives for the holistic development of



children who need care and protection, coming from the most vulnerable sections of society. KF was founded in (year) by kind-hearted people in Toronto, influenced and touched by the work that CfD has been doing. One of the main objectives of KF is also to support the charitable work that CfD does in India; particularly with orphans and daughters of destitute mothers to support their education, skill development and nutrition.

CfD believes that providing these children quality education is the most important intervention that can transform the lives of these children, equip them with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to move ahead in life. Since its inception in 1996, CfD has been catering to hundreds of children and adolescent girls every year, providing free education, life skills and nutritious food to ensure the development of their body, mind and soul.

*This is a fervent appeal to contribute generously so that the children from the most deprived background can have a bright future. Blessed are those who give from the heart; the act of giving follows from the teachings of the Holy Quran..*

## Heena Kazi (17)

Heena Kazi lives with her mother and 8-year-old sister in the Shah-A-Alam area of Ahmedabad city. Her father abandoned her mother, his second wife, whom he married when she was very young. He left them soon after her younger sister was born, leaving the mother to fend for two young girls all by herself. She took up odd jobs of domestic help in other homes. Heena had no choice but to drop out of school after 8<sup>th</sup> grade to help her mother take care of her sister and because they couldn't afford her school fees.

When Heena was put in touch with the chief counselor at the Kadam Education Initiative at the Centre for Development, they explained how she could resume her education and eventually support her family. Heena met so many young girls like herself who have continued their education and are excelling.

Heena's mother was reluctant initially to undertake that Heena would not be forced into an early marriage before completing her education, but she relented. With KEI shouldering all her educational expenses and providing food stocks for the whole year, she could now focus on providing, while her daughters studied. The volunteers in KEI counselled a nervous Heena. She found a safe space where she was surrounded by books, computers, tutors, internet and spoken English literacy- anything she needed to learn. Additionally, the life skill modules helped her understand herself and her traumatic past to discover her inherent dignity and strength as a human being.

In 2022 Heena successfully cleared the 10<sup>th</sup> grade exam in the very first trial. Happy and proud, she felt confident to register at the National Institute of Open Schooling for higher secondary education. Alongside, she apprentices with the CfD to learn office management, and coordination with KEI programs. She hopes to find a part-time job next year, as soon as she turns 18, so that she can support her own education and her family.

## Misba Patel (13)

Misba Patel comes from an extremely poor family in the congested ghetto of 'Bombay Hotel area'. Her mother, an asthma patient, works in a factory after her husband's death to make ends meet. Her two daughters, Sehera and Misba, also started working in the same factory. They could not manage their studies at the municipal school along with the wage labour, and eventually dropped out.

The staff at CfD and a KEI volunteer visited their home. Their mother wanted her daughters to continue studying but couldn't afford it. When the volunteer told them about how KEI provides free education at least up to the 12th grade, and beyond in some cases, and also supports vulnerable families with food stocks, she felt reassured and decided to enroll both her daughters in KEI.

It was an uphill struggle for Misba. She failed in matriculation (10th grade exam) in her first attempt. The tutors continued to assist her in the weak subjects till she passed in the second attempt. Misba also went through constant body shaming by insensitive people in community and school. Her circumstances affected her foundational education and hence she became a timid girl who gave up hope in life, devoid of dreams or ambitions.

Misba benefitted from counseling, an integral part of KEI's interventions. She realized that she did not have to live up to other people's standards of 'beauty' and capabilities. She realized the inherent worth and dignity she had, and knew that no one would ever be able to take that away from her.

This realization helped Misba concentrate on her studies and she passed 10th grade from the National Institute of Open Schooling. She is now confident that she won't leave her studies till she completes her graduation. Her next challenge is to complete the higher secondary schooling and score enough marks to gain admission to an undergraduate course.

## Mehzabeen Shaikh

Mehzabeen lives in the 'Bombay hotel' area near Narol, Ahmedabad. Their rented house is a very small one-room tenement in a crowded slum where she lives with her mother, elder sister and younger brother.

She was in the 5th grade when she had to start working in a cottage industry where she folded and packed ready-made clothing. Their father deserted them when she was eleven. She used to go to a school nearby, but would be absent most days due to work. After school, they would make flower garlands, do glitter work on clothes, fold scarves or make kites- whatever daily wage work their mother would find via wholesalers. She could not focus on her studies and was branded dull and incapable of learning. The economic condition of the family forced her to finally leave school in 2013 and work in a small garment factory.

Life changed after a Kadam volunteer who had visited her area for a survey talked extensively to Mehzabeen about KEI and its educational programmes for young girls. She joined KEI and took on challenges one by one. She resumed her studies by registering with NIOS, assisted by Kadam's tutors. She had failed in her 10th grade exams the same year before joining the NIOS; but she found the curriculum and pedagogy of the NIOS very interesting. Through hard work she finally passed and moved ahead to join the higher secondary. She will be giving her final exams in 2023, hoping to move on to join a college for undergraduate studies. She also participated in a training programme on managing sales jobs in stores.

Mehzabeen fared better when she was given some concrete jobs to do. In course of her studies in Kadam, she took on work such as office assistance for a charity, quality control supervision of a sanitary pads production unit, ticketing clerk at a movie hall in a mall. Through these different jobs she learned punctuality, efficiency, dealing with customers and to manage long working hours.

She also got the opportunity to work with reputed NGO ChildLine India Foundation (CIF) to work at the Child Help Desk of the Ahmedabad Railway Station. She has been there for almost two years now, working with rescued children who abandoned or found at the railway station. She says it gives her great joy to be of help to these children.

The most important lessons she learned from KEI were self-respect, self-confidence, effective communication and the ability to deal with adversities. This enabled her to become the confident, capable person she is today. She has a functional English and computer literacy. Her job enjoins her to speak to so many unknown people - the police, the railway authorities, the parents of lost children, the general public, the District Child Protection Office and the Child Welfare Committee of the City.

## Shirin Shaikh – a success story of hard work in pursuit of education

Shirin comes from an economically disadvantaged family, headed by her mother, deserted by her father when she and her siblings were very young. She lives in the Bombay Hotel area, a highly congested Muslim ghetto with very poor basic amenities, situated close to the toxic landfill in Pirana on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. For Nazma Shaikh, Shirin's mother, it was a struggle to raise her children. She did very low-paid daily labour jobs. Their father, would storm in occasionally, threaten Nazma, take any saved money and leave.

The eldest child, Shirin started helping at eight to make ends meet. She was enrolled in a school nearby, but could never really attend classes. In 2013, Nazma and Shirin were introduced to KEI. Literate herself, Nazma was offered to manage an Education Centre called LitClub for school drop-out children in the area, and Shirin was inducted into the KEI initiative, thus preventing an untimely, early marriage for her.

Through Kadam, Shirin was able to take advantage of the educational support systems, one of which was the **Kadam Resource Centre for Girls** with a well-equipped educational space with tutorial assistance. She attended workshops on personal development, effective communication, relationships and adverse social pressure management, reproductive health and well-being. The girls also were offered courses in functional English and computer literacy. Food support provided by KEI gave the family the confidence to address their everyday concerns.

Shirin was thus able to focus attention on studies, and passed the Higher Secondary (12th) Board Examination with high grades. Determined, she got into one of the best colleges in Ahmedabad, St. Xavier's College, for a Bachelor's program in Psychology, Gujarati medium. This young girl who would otherwise have been forced out of school, had now become a brilliant student. She's also secured a part-time job in an institution on campus, and thus supported her own studies and part of the family expenses. She graduated in 2019 with a high first class and joined the postgraduate course MA (Clinical Psychology) in the English medium. She continued her brilliant academic trail, and again passed MA with a high first class in 2021 June. She has been absorbed as a full-time staff in the same institution on campus, an NGO, where she has been working part-time during her studies.



*Education transforms life, fills it with meaning and enriches a person spiritually.  
Your donations will be used to bring about this transformation.*

### *For Donation*

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### *Local Partner in India*

#### **Centre for Development**

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