

Educate A Child

MARUFA: ONE GIRL DETERMINED TO GO TO SCHOOL

Marufa, a 14-year-old girl from the Korail slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh, is a class five student at Boubazar-1 BRAC Primary School on track to sit the Primary Education Completion Examination. Three years ago, Marufa was in class one and could neither read nor write. She was shy, nervous, and worried about school. Marufa did not participate in class and she disliked school rules and regulations.

However, with the support of the Educate A Child programme, BRAC, a development INGO, has implemented an urban slums schools initiative that has given Marufa the opportunity to flourish. BRAC's primary-education programme is designed to give Bangladesh's poorest and most disadvantaged children access to quality education through innovative teaching methods and community engagement. For instance, while BRAC strives to recruit and train motivated teachers to serve in the slums, the project also makes use of the children's mother tongue, Bangla, as the mode of instruction to encourage greater student interaction with the curriculum. Furthermore, BRAC prioritises community involvement and establishes School Management Committees with parent members to ensure management oversight of schools.



Today, Marufa dreams of being a doctor when she grows up and believes that her dream will come true if she gets the proper support and assistance along the way. Yet her journey through school has not been straightforward. Marufa's father died when she was only five, and her mother, suffering from mental illness, became unable to work. Under such circumstances, going to school is difficult; but Marufa is determined. She says, "No one will value me if I leave my studies. I want to take care of my mother and get her the best treatment. I want to be the strength of my family."

Marufa has three brothers, all of whom work to support the family. They support their sister's education ambitions too. One of her brothers asserts, "We hope that one day she will be able to treat our mother as a doctor, and we brothers are trying our best to fulfil her dreams."

Marufa goes to school every day after her household chores are completed. She is always eager to learn new things. Her teacher, Shumi, says, "She is very inquisitive about everything. I enjoy teaching her because sometimes she really makes me think in a new way." ✖

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