

CEO supports menstrual dignity, education and homeless charity

by [Georgina Barnard Binti Journalist](#) | [binti_period](#) | Binti International

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The number of people sleeping rough on Britain's streets rose by 16 percent in 2016 to 4,134, the sixth consecutive annual increase, according to official government figures.

And the situation is particularly worrying for young people with a recent survey by the charity Centre point showing 15-25 year olds make up a quarter of street sleepers, a figure that's expected to rise as the government moves to end housing benefits for jobless 18-21 year olds.

Leading charities and NGOs have voiced concern over the lack of support in the Spring Budget for organisations that focus on some of the most pressing social problems, including rising homelessness.

But the good news is the growing number of business leaders who are using their influence to help promote causes in dire need of recognition and funding.

Among these are brothers Sheetal and Ricky Kapoor, owners of **The Edinburgh Collection Limited**, a boutique hotel chain in the Scottish capital, and London's **Blackfriars Wine Bar**, who are supporting several charity initiatives, most notably homelessness.

Sheetal will be participating in the annual CEO Sleepout on Thursday March 23rd, a project run by the Action for Children charity across several cities, to raise awareness of youth homelessness.

Each year, top business executives and entrepreneurs spend the night sleeping rough in a symbolic gesture to highlight the growing number of vulnerable young people sleeping on the streets. A fifth of these young people are caregivers and one in three will attempt suicide at some point, according to Action for Children.

This will be Sheetal's fourth consecutive sleepout and he's on course to hit his £10,000 target for the event on Thursday night.

"It's a small gesture to sleep on the pavement for one night ... our specific mission is to eradicate youth homelessness. We try and use our vast networks to create awareness and raise funds. Each CEO is targeted to reach at least £10,000," Sheetal says.

Sheetal raises funds through social media campaigns, email blasts and donations directly from family, friends, business partners and customers of his businesses and also contributes directly.

This isn't the brothers' first foray into the charity sectors. Others include extensive support for **Binti UK**, which was set up by Manjit Gill in 2012, with the aim of securing menstrual dignity for vulnerable, abused and homeless women and young girls in the UK and across the developing world by providing access to proper sanitary products and menstrual education.

The Kapoors met Gill at the Asian Achievers Awards in October 2016 where she was voted "Woman of the Year". Their relationship has grown from strength to strength, with the brothers donating to the charity and hosting a series of events at their London wine bar, most recently a discussion on menstruation and a painting night with all proceeds going to Binti.

Working in fairly male-dominated sectors, Ricky and Sheetal are committed to Binti's mission to help vulnerable females. Ricky told me how shocked he and his brother were to learn that, due to cultural stigma, shame and economic factors, women - both overseas and in the UK - often use rags and even newspapers during their periods.

"We learned of her great work to support young women with basic menstrual hygiene solutions and reproductive education and eliminating the social and cultural stigma surrounding menstruation. We were particularly shocked at hearing the issues and stigma attached to normal bodily functions."

The Kapoors' charity contributions are spreading as they partner Binti and an Edinburgh-based charity in an initiative to help bring menstrual dignity to women in need. As part of the project Binti and the brothers are providing around a hundred women every month with sanitary products.

The Kapoors support another notable charity, **The Loomba Foundation**, set up in 1997 to help widows across the world who are often left facing lifelong poverty and discrimination following the death of their husbands. At the heart of Loomba's work is the education of their children who, without access to education, are often forced into child labour, prostitution and trafficking. Ricky and Sheetal have been working with the charity for over 12 years, contributing annual donations and helping education initiatives for 100 children of widows in Jammu and Kashmir. The brothers

are also involved in the charity's 20th anniversary gala dinner which will be held in London on 23rd June to coincide with International Widows Day.

I asked Ricky why it's so important for business leaders to support charities like Binti and The Loomba Foundation. "Companies supporting charities such as Binti help create much needed awareness through their expansive networks. It is part of good CSR [Corporate Social Responsibility] programmes and we feel we need to give a little back to society."

"It has a positive impact on our staff and customers to show we care, but the real result is the impact on the people and the causes we are supporting."

To help Sheetal hit his target for the CEO Sleepout please make a donation here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Sheetal-Kapoor>

To donate to Binti UK and change a girl's life by providing access to urgently needed sanitary products click here:

<http://binti.co.uk/take-action/>