



# THE DHAKA PROJECT

## The Dhaka Project Plan

### The Dhaka Project Objective

To break the cycle of poverty in the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh, through social and educational development of the community.

### Project Overview

The Dhaka Project is a community project that aims to break the cycle of poverty in the slums of Dhaka. The project focuses on giving skills to the adults, both men and women, whilst taking their children from the streets and garment factories into full time education. To help the women get work, there is also a nursery. The project currently has 30 children in nursery, 30 in pre-school and 145 in primary. In addition to their education, we provide these children with 2 meals per day, medical and dental care, school uniform, including shoes, stationary, electric lamps (so they can study at home even with the frequent power cuts). The project also pays the tuition for another 500 children who are in 3 schools in the local area. We also provide these children with all education materials, uniforms, rain coats, vaccinations. Health and education of the children are our top priority. Over 700 children have been vaccinated for Hepatitis B, Typhoid and Polio. The project also provides housing for the families of 25 children, who came from the slums. The project provides this when the children are the income earner for the families, for example if they have sick parents.

One of the unique things about the project is that the money really goes where it is needed. Only Bangladeshi members of the project team receive a salary, all the international volunteers who work on the project do so at their own expense, covering their own flights and accommodation. This means there is no heavy overheads and expensive costs that a lot of NGO/charities have and that the money really gets straight to the people who need it.

### History

The Dhaka Project was conceived in April 2005 by Maria Conceicao, a Portuguese flight attendant, who visited Dhaka for work. She visited the slums and decided there and then that something must be done to help break the cycle of poverty. Maria still maintains a full time job, but since

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then she has spent all her free time and holidays in Dhaka working on the project. It started in the Gawair suburb of Dhaka with two rented rooms for a sewing school for ladies from the slum, shortly followed by an apartment to school 30 children, since then the project has grown enormously. The project focus's on three areas to sustainably break the cycle of poverty: Children Education, Womans Skills and Mens Skills Development Programmes. The Womans Programme involves training woman in beauty skills, tailoring and handicrafts as well as teaching them English. The Mens Programme involves English language school, driving school and the project also has a fleet of rickshaws which the men can use to earn a supplementary income. These development programmes are supported by hygiene, medical and welfare assistance, including housing rent support, from the project.

## Accomplishments

Since April 2005 we have accomplished a huge amount. As of August 2007 here are some examples:

- **44** Families have made the successful transition from the slums of Dhaka into stable housing
- **605** families are being given support with clothing and medical.
- A day care centre was set up with **33** children attending daily
- A pre –school was set up with **28** children attending it daily
- A primary school with a library and computer training centre has been set up with **150** children attending daily
- The same school is utilized for adults to teach general knowledge, hygiene and family planning in evenings.
- A further **500** children are sponsored by the project in 3 local schools, this includes stationary, uniform, shoes, raincoats, books, vaccinations and medical clinic.
- All our children been vaccinated for Polio, Typhoid and Hepatitis B.
- A sewing / handicrafts training centre has been set up with **25** ladies attending daily, so far **88** have been trained.
- A beauty school has been set up, so far **10** ladies have been trained and 2 have been employed in a secure job in Dubai.
- A First Aid Centre was set up (complete with a Doctor and Dentist) which sees about 50 children per day.
- A delivery service was set up delivering **40** meals a day to local offices.
- The project has a fleet of rickshaws to supplement incomes.
- We have clothes shop for the local community.
- The sewing shop produces thousands of bags for the local

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supermarket, now that plastic ones have been banned.

- We have an internet café for the local community
- A metal work/ welding shop has been set up, which provides metalwork items for the project and sells to the local community.
- A carpentry shop has been set up, which provides furniture for the project and sells to the local community.
- A Karchopi (Bangladeshi hand made embroidery) workshop produces high value womans clothing for the local market .
- We have set up a Grocery Store, which supplies the project, but also sells to the local community.
- And lastly, we have two cows and calf!

## 5 Year Project Plan/Vision

### Goals Year 1- 3

- Raise USD \$1million for the project to buy land and build a dedicated school for 1000 children.
- Find more donors to cover the monthly running costs, which will increase as the project grows.
- Find more jobs for the adults from the slums.
- Open a medical centre for the community, covering GP, vaccinations, dental etc.
- Make some roads in the Gawair area – the community will supply the labour for free, we just need to pay the materials.
- Solar panels, generator for the project.
- Covers over open drains.
- Build a prayer room in the school.
- Establish a scholarship trust to send the most gifted students to specialist schools.
- Create a proper system of rubbish collection and disposal.
- Proper kitchens and bathrooms for all the homes
- Women and Mens Social club.
- Sport centre/club.
- Clean the stagnant ponds/lakes, because they have a lot of disease.
- Tourism company

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- Business generation providing jobs and income to support the community and make it self sustainable without outside NGO/charity support.
- Clean Water Supply for the whole community (water wells and piped supplies)
- Transport – bus (for children), mini van for administration and volunteers
- Tree planting
- Zebra crossing
- Public lavatories for the community.

## Goals Year 3- 5

- Mobile medical centre, including dental on a truck to visit other slum areas.
- Cultural Centre focusing on the arts.
- Supermarket
- Hospital specializing in pediatrics and childbirth.
- Hotel to provide jobs and revenue to the project
- Reliable telecommunications
- Reliable Power
- Proper drainage for hygiene and floods during monsoon.
- Community gardens/parks
- Street Lights
- Line down the middle of the road to improve driving of rickshaws and cars
- Eradicate all the slum areas in Gawair area, not by shifting the people, but by building proper accommodation and ground work in the existing slum area.
- Widen the roads
- Scholarships to university
- Apprenticeships in multi national companies

## Sponsorship and donation requirements

To continue running the project at its current level as well as achieve all our future goals, we are always looking for one off donations and ongoing sponsorships. The donations really help us drive the project

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forward, but it is also essential for us to have the sponsorships to ensure we have monthly income to cover all our expenses. A lot of our previous donors have picked an item of development they want to assist with, for which we are extremely grateful, but we also encourage them to come to The Dhaka Project to spend the money they are donating. The donors who have time to do this have a thoroughly enjoyable and fulfilling experience, they get to see first hand how their money is being spent and which people are benefiting from it. It is also wonderful for The Dhaka Project community to meet the donors and sponsors first hand and for some of the team members to work with them on completing the donation project.

## **Who will be responsible for what – i.e. how will it get done**

Maria and her team in Dhaka will be responsible for the operations of the Dhaka Project, including implementation of new projects, with the assistance of qualified/specialized volunteers, such as the Canadian Relief Foundation for the medical centre and Rahima Frooz for the legal side in Bangladesh. The Emirates Foundation will provide administrative support and assistance. Of course, if someone donates money for a particular project and wants to be involved, they are more than welcome. Manuel de Souza, a volunteer in Dubai, will be running the United Arab Emirates operations.

The Dhaka Project will reach out to local corporations to fund the project , as well will target educational institutions to provide instructors , art teachers , vocational training teachers.

## **How money will be spent and how it will be accounted for**

The accounts will be audited every year by an outside auditor. For specific project donations or large value ongoing sponsorship, the donor may request to see monthly expenses in relation to their donation.

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