

Feedback From Yara

Yara from the Leo Burnett advertising agency gives us her view.

"My trip to The Dhaka Project has been a truly overwhelming experience. What Maria has done for the Bangladeshis - and is still trying to do - is phenomenal. She is not only helping the population but the economy as well! Had I not visited the project, I would still have had the same image of Bangladesh as the one I hear from people - the poverty, the pollution, the crime, etc... However, after actually going there, I have discovered what a beautiful country it actually is. The nature is simply breathtaking; even the people are extremely friendly and welcoming to foreigners - unlike many other countries in the world!

Maria had been blessed with a magnificent team in Dhaka who always manage to make things happen. It is not easy to run such a project when living abroad and not constantly present every minute of the day; but thanks to her team - namely Soleiman, Rasel, Jewel, Shibli, and Nayan - the project is running smoothly and efficiently.

It is true that she is having a hard time convincing the people that she is not trying to kidnap their children (which seems to be the popular concern at the moment) and trying to gain their trust but the Bangladeshis are, understandably, scared and a little skeptical as to why a foreigner would like to help them. Still, with the aid of at least one of her team members who help her during these missions (especially through the communication barriers), they eventually manage to gain their individual trust.

Maria Conceicao walks down the streets like a saviour sent from heaven. We had visited slum while there and found that it is almost empty! In under two years, she has managed to get fifteen families to join her organization (I actually witnessed the 15th family agreeing to join). She claims not be comparable to Mother Theresa but I believe that with the aid of her team, Maria is almost there!

Well done to the Dhaka Project team! They have my complete support and encouragement!"

Mystery Feedback

The writer of the following feedback has asked to remain anonymous. Sometimes the feelings that come with an experience like visiting The Dhaka Project are too deep and too personal to openly share with the world. Please, read on...

"It is really hard for me to write about my trip to Dhaka. How can I express the feelings and put in words amazing job you did there? I've never seen this much poverty, pollution, congestion and traffic in my life. I don't know how brave you are to start something that never ends, and you are putting your life on it. Dhaka Project is like rose garden in middle of desert and you want to turn whole desert to a big lovely garden. I love your idea and that's I been there.

When on first day we were riding on a rickshaw to Dhaka Project and passing by dirty streets and alleys full of people, unbelievable traffic jam made by humans, rickshaws, tuk-tuks, cars, and air full of dust and pollution, and all kind of sound troubling my ears, I was thinking, "nothing you can do here."

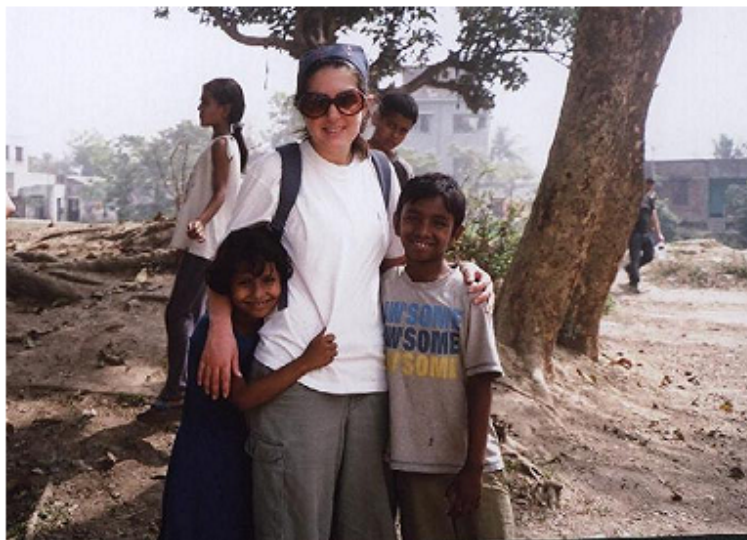
But when we entered the Dhaka Project School, and saw those lovely kids, clean, tidy, well dressed, educated with full of love, energy and desire to learn and live better, I understood how you made it happen. After visiting the slums and seen how people they live out there and you brought many kids and family from there, I appreciated more.

Day by day I learned more and more about the project and realized what a fantastic job you and your team are doing. I love it and will help you and your team to make it better.

Dear Maria, Those kids love you and need you and what you started is small plant coming out of soil, and needs a lot of attention and care in the long term. Please take care of yourself and your health, those kids without you will go back to streets."

Love Story News Update: The news of Nayan's shock wedding last month caused great interest among our Newsletter readers. Now, we have a little more info for you. Nayan's bride is Liza, who he's loved for 14 years but never thought she felt the same way! They were married on March 2nd, and Liza still lives with her parents as she is finishing her Masters degree in Political Science. He visits her once a week, and in two years they plan to have a baby. We still don't have a photo!

Feedback From Zalfa



"My family and friends were all worried about me going to Bangladesh, because of all the stories they had heard about the country.

I however had heard through a friend, about the Dhaka Project, and was unable to believe how good the Project could possibly be, and wanted to see it for myself. I braced myself for the worst, took all my worst clothes with medication, preparing myself for the alien world.

What I actually found in Dhaka, was an immense surprise. The cleanliness and warmth of the people at Zia airport, left me with a pleasant first impression.

But what was the actual surprise, was arriving at the nursery which would be our residence for the next 3 days. What I found was a gorgeous little place, so well thought through, an ideal place for children to gain knowledge, feel at home and feel secure.

The incredible support and warmth of the team at the Dhaka Project is overwhelming. I could never have imagined a group with the same intentions and big hearts, with extreme gentleness towards the kids, providing the much needed stability and security which is not so apparent within those children's lives. Maria hand picked a team of people who share the same ideals, drive and concern and who are pushing the Project to reach its very best.

The Dhaka Project is on the right track. In a country full of life and bustling with activity, I do wish the Dhaka Project all the best. I witnessed the team in action in front of my own eyes, helping a family out of the slums and I hope they are able to continue doing such great activities and help eradicate poverty in the area.

They are giving a chance to extremely intelligent children to make something of themselves. They are educating them on all levels, providing them with social as well as mental skills, enabling them to take these skills with the wherever they might end up in the world, and allow the to survive anywhere.

Much thanks to the team for providing me with an experience I will never forget and which I will carry on with me for the rest of my life, and which I hope to be able to use to educate others about the situation and help the Project in any way I can."

Thanks! We Couldn't Do It Without You...

Virginia La Torre Jeker, Jo Janish, Jane Anderson, Dhaka ground staff, Hemanth Joishy, Christina Alvarez Naves, Samira, Zeenat in Dhaka, Fay Thompson, Fash Shahrokn, Hanif Zackaria, Abdulla Shaeen, Wanda Nicolau, Ana Isabela Solas, Adelaide Collison, Linda Ramadan, Charissa Tinkler, Angelina Ram, Lucy Green, Susie Lliyan, Gabriella Sousa, Alex Alexander... and all our donors! It's you that makes the Dhaka Project great!

