

BRUCE'S FEEDBACK

Firstly, I must thank all the team members for taking care of me while I was visiting. I was overwhelmed by the warm welcome and genuine friendliness of all.

Getting through the visa section of customs was a breeze, as there were no foreigners lining up to get a visa. They also accepted 200dhs, as I didn't get a chance to get US\$. I used a greeting person who happened to have a mobile phone, so he was able to call Jewel, who was waiting outside the airport for me. At least he could know straight away that I had landed and was on my way through the airport.

I was surprised at how close to the airport, the Project is. Not too far to travel at all. All buildings are within easy walking distance of each other. The other thing I found handy was the fact there is a HSBC bank and Standard Chartered, which means I could use my bank card at the ATM.

I wasn't expecting this in Dhaka!

The accommodation was more than adequate; clean, air-conditioned, spacious apartment with DVD-TV, kitchen, and all at a very reasonable price!

The standard and quality of staff at the project are quite outstanding.

I was impressed with also the outgoing personalities and commitment of the staff. Also, one of the main things that impressed me was the self-sacrifice that some have made to the project; and the joy they have experienced.

A sad event of my visit was to see an example of the poor conditions of the government hospitals. Here I visited a burn victim who is sponsored by the Dhaka Project.

I was able to visit the slums where the families were plucked and then saw where they now live with abundance of fresh water supplies, and upgraded amenities. I was able to visit the 4 buildings currently rented for schooling (*nursery, pre-school, infants and Primary levels*). I was also lucky to be present at a New year celebration full of life, music,

and colour presentations at the school. This was so much fun. It was so difficult to imagine these people were actually previously living in the slums!

Each child gets sponsored for schooling, daily food, school uniforms, clothing donations, vaccinations, family accommodation relocations, dentistry, school clinic.

I spoke with the school doctor who runs the clinic during the day at the school, and then at 6pm does his own patients in his chambers until 10pm!!! He was able to give me a list of items they could use for the school clinic, and well within reach of the Emirates Clinic to possibly sponsor!?! (Who knows!)

One particular thing that haunted my mind is when I heard some of the children crying out 'Maria... Maria!'. It seems when they saw me, they would be looking around, expecting and hoping their beloved Maria to be nearby. This speaks volumes of the impact this project has had on the lives of all involved. One of the most 'senior' staff said to me, '*She (Maria) is family, she is our sister*'. I couldn't help but then realise that the much-loved founder of the Project had a very enormous family..... 700+ lovely children!!!! I am in awe of the accomplishments of such a person, and the wonderful staff behind this amazing project.

I enjoyed every minute of my short weekend in Dhaka and hope to return very very soon.!

Much love and gratitude to all

From Bruce Rogerson