



THE DHAKA PROJECT

NAIM'S FEEDBACK

In February 2008 I came to know through the internet that The Dhaka Project (TDP) is looking for a volunteer Accounting Coordinator. I, being a retired staff of United Nations with more than 25 years experience, contacted Maria (the founder of TDP) to offer my services. She asked me to meet her. During the course of this meeting in Dubai, she handed over to me all the accounting records of TDP and asked me to take charge of the responsibility to maintain the accounts. Based on the documents received from Maria, I started working...

In my next meeting with Maria, I suggested to her that it would be good for myself as well as for the TDP staff in Dhaka to meet so that we have a better understanding of what is the present situation and what needed to be done to maintain the accounts in a professional way. She accepted the idea and asked when my wife (who is a dentist and would also help the project) and I could travel to Dhaka. After some initial hick-ups, it was agreed that we could travel to Dhaka on 14 May, 2008.

On arrival at Dhaka Ziaur Rehman International Airport, we were received by Mr Jewel (Volunteer Manager of TDP) with a impressive placard saying "Naim & Sabrina - Welcome to Dhaka!" It was dinner time and we were taken straight away to a restaurant to enjoy local food; from there we went to the TDP volunteer guest house. Our flat (out of the project's three) has two bathrooms, air conditioning and a TV. The apartment given to us is named "Khushi green" - and it's exactly that! Although the guest house is located in the slums, it has been kept very tidy. A few minutes after our arrival Mr. Richard Fleming (TDP Project Director) came to see us to make sure if everything was fine and whether we were comfortable. The next day at 9 o'clock in the morning, Mr. Jewel came to the guest house to take us to TDP office. The Dhaka Project Office is in a building named

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Bahar Manjil and is a few minutes walk away from the Guest House. At TDP office we were greeted whole heartedly by the office staff. Mr. Noorul Islam would be taking care of our breakfasts to be had there.

Afterwards Mr. Jewel took us on a tour of the project. First we went to the Sewing and Embroidery training centre and TDP school in the same building as our office. As it was Thursday, The Dhaka Project schools were closed. At the Sewing and Embroidery Centre we met the instructors as well as the trainees. Next Mr. Jewel took us in the TDP owned rickshaws to the Kindergarten school and then the daycare centre run by TDP. The daycare centre has been set up for those mothers who are getting training at the Sewing and Embroidery Centre - this means when women are away from their babies for training their babies can get proper care. At the Kindergarten school we were greeted with loud shouts of "Good Morning!" by the cute children. Later, the kids entertained us with a dance performance. Our next stop was the Emirates College run by TDP with funds donated by the EK Foundation. Again, being Thursday, the school was closed but we met with the principal Mr. Suhail and some other teachers. The cleaning staff were busy cleaning the school and we were very impressed with it's cleanliness and the quality of furniture provided for the students. In the afternoon Mr. Fleming took me out of Dhaka to see a piece of land which the owner which the owner would like, not to be given away, but to be used by any good organisation like TDP for its forthcoming projects.

On Friday afternoon we were invited by Mr. Jewel to attend his sister's wedding. There we had a chance to meet some other TDP staff and enjoy some nice local food. From Saturday 17 May onward we've had several meetings with both the Project and Education Directors and other staff at TDP to discuss ways and means to introduce new systems to streamline functions. We've also visited the grocery shop, donated clothes to the TDP shop and made several suggestions to maintain proper stock records there. On 21 May, Maria also arrived Dhaka. We had several meetings with her to give my views on accounting matters in particular and others in general. I

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went along with the Project Director and Munna to meet official of the Rural Services Foundation (RSF), Dhaka who are providing lots of administrative and technical support to TDP.

May 23rd was Maria's birthday! To celebrate the day, the teaching and office staff as well as the school kids organized a very colourful programme. The day started with the kindergarten children visiting the guest house to wish her a happy birthday. In the afternoon, the EK College children gave an excellent performance to entertain Maria and other guests - soon the teachers and volunteers were having a dance themselves!

We've spent eleven days in Dhaka. This time helped us acquire essential knowledge of the working conditions at TDP and what needs to be done to improve. We will be leaving on 25 May with very pleasant memories. During our stay in Dhaka we got the maximum cooperation from the Executive and other staff at TDP.

We would like to thank every one for their cooperation and hospitality.

Naim

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