



THE DHAKA PROJECT

Dr. Sabrina's feedback

It was a chance meeting in February 2008 with Maria Conceicao, whose advertisement regarding the Dhaka project my husband saw on the net. It was regarding a volunteer who could manage her accounts in the Dhaka project.

Upon meeting her, she appeared a very young lady and how one sentence which touched my heart that she had a very big heart for the underprivileged children. She was very impressed with my husband CV as he was a retired UN official having more than 26yrs experience with the organisation. When they met, they decided then and there that he would take the accounts and manage it for her. After she had finished talking with him, she asked me what I was doing. When I told her I was a dentist and had been doing a lot of counselling for patients in Africa and India, there was a glitter in her eyes. She asked me if I could be of any help to the project. It had been my long cherished dream to help the underprivileged and orphans.

On 14th of May, we embarked on our trip to Dhaka fully prepared for the outcome we were to face there. We were met at the airport by the volunteer manager who took us to an apartment which was well furnished and we were made comfortable. The next day at 9 am, we were taken to see the office premises of the Dhaka project. In the same building there was a stitching section where women were shown how to cut and stitch and become good seamstress to earn a living. Also embroidery were done on the clothes to make women self sufficient. There was also a beauty saloon.

Next we were taken to my area of interest i.e. the dental and medical section on the 2nd floor of the building. I met both the doctors concerned there and was pleasantly surprised to see a good dental chair and equipment.

Next we were taken to see the nursery and the day-care centre and EK foundation school. To see the underprivileged children having the best education from the Dhaka end was really surprising and hats off to Maria who as a foreigner wanted to help the underprivileged in a different country. During

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our twelve day stay there, I did a lot of counselling for different families. It was a plight to see the children being married off by the age of 12 years as that was the easiest thing for the parents to do as there were so many children. My next venture was the dental section. During my stay there, I did all quality treatment including difficult impactions, minor surgeries, showing the dentist to handle the different stages of the children dentition. Also I realised some things were missing. Upon meeting with Maria and discussing the issues, she gave me the go ahead to order all the things required for the dental unit. I also requested her to have air conditioners put in the dental and medical unit as the machinery was becoming extremely hot in the local weather and many patients suffering from dehydration and vomiting were kept cool by the air conditioning. There was a vaccination camp held where all the children were immunised for all vaccines including hepatitis. On 23rd of May being the founder's birthday, children were segregated according to the professions they wanted to be. There were some who wanted to become a pilot. Louis from Emirates airlines gave a lecture on how to become a pilot. Then there were some who wanted to become a doctor, so I gave lectures to guide them.

To summarise it all, it had been a wonderful experience being associated with the Dhaka project and helping the underprivileged children in our own very small way. We have assured Maria that at any time our services are required, we would gladly and willingly do it.

Hats off to Maria for keeping the project alive and kicking against all odds.

Keep it up Maria.

Sabrina.

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