



THE DHAKA PROJECT

3-11- 2008

GABRIELLE'S FEEDBACK !

An amazing month...

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

It's coming to the end of a wonderful month for me of volunteering at the Dhaka project. I'm writing the blog to thank everyone here, including all the staff, the children and to Maria for having founded such a wonderful project.

Before arriving I had not read the previous blogs and was unaware of the current state of the project and some of the problems that it was experience... I'm glad this was the case as it meant my opinions were not swayed and I had no prior views and expectations. To try and help the Dhaka project along I have noted some of the following. No remarks on any particular persons are intended poorly.

Pre-school

I was meant to spend one week in the pre-school. I grew very attached to the children and staff and recognized the help that they needed and ended up staying for two weeks. There are three teachers in the pre-school, all of which are at very different education standards. This ranges from competent to unable to successfully read, write and converse in english. I held teachers training classes every day. In these I helped to; enforce more creative tasks to aid student learning (*making playdough, painting, drawing, etc*), to make the teachers more phonetically aware (*with help form my good friend Philly Carrick who is studying teaching back in Australia*), I also ran group reading sessions, the improvement over the two weeks was outstanding. The quality of teaching however still remains poor.



The children got fed a breakfast of milk and bread, a banana as a snack later in the day and then a meal of rice and curry at lunch time.

I know that the children could excel in their education rapidly with adequate teaching and I hope that they get given this chance.

The Dhaka Project School (TDP)

I spent my last two week at TDPS. The atmosphere in the school is wonderful. The people are all happy and the children are very eager to learn. Without the extremity of the pre-school I am of the same opinion with the teaching staff.

The children get served bread and banana for breakfast and then some of the children, not all, get served curry and rice for lunch. It's been explained that the children who go without are new students, they get served bread and banana again for lunch. This is all changing and the children are getting sent home for lunch with food. This also includes the EK student who are currently getting bread and



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banana for two meals a day.

Due to the nature of these children I can see them sharing out their food with the the extended family that many of them live with so whether this will work or not I'm unsure.

Unfortunately my time here was not long enough and I was unable to stretch myself out over the 4 schools. Spending two weeks at the Pre-school and TDP school was not enough and I still missed working in the nursery and EK sections of the Dhaka project.

What I've noticed over all:

- *What was a small project increased by 500 students almost overnight. This sudden influx has triggered a domino effect of small problems that all add up.*
- *Staff are constantly coming and going, thus having new members all the time and making it difficult to build up a strong staff and employee network that is crucial for any successful work place.*
- *Teaching standards are poor and children are getting taught incorrectly. This is a general statement as there are a select few who do a wonderful job.*
- *Many students are not attending school on a daily basis. Some student that where on the register did not attend any of the classes that while i was there.*
- *The administrative team have a very laid back, casual approach.*
- *Many staff are afraid to speak of the problems that have arisen between them and Maria as few have already lost their job in doing so. This is their view and what they have explained to me.*
- *The project is till unregistered. When it was a small 100 person project this could have been acceptable, now due to the size it would only make it easier in the long run to register it.*
- *I was invited by a student back to the womens' shelter. It was clean and well contained with 5 students living there along with their house mothers.*
- *On two separate occasions I visited the sewing work shop. Both times it was very quite and on the second we woke a lady who was asleep in front of her sewing machine.*
- *On mentioning my profession in dental care many student approached me with oral problems that had been unseen to.*

My wish list:

- *Improve the quality of teaching staff*
- *Employ a strong, professional administrative team who follow expertly laid out strategies and objectives.*
- *Build the relationship and trust between employees and employers.*
- *Know which children are attending school and which ones aren't so that their places can be taken by children who would thrive on the opportunity.*
- *Build up the intake of volunteer. I for one will be recommending it to as many people as I can. The more volunteers the children are met with with more understanding they gain from different cultures. It is also great to get a variety of people from different fields and professions to broaden our general knowledge.*
- *Register the project*
- *Create a board of decision makers, be it in or out of Dhaka, who visit the project regularly.*

I wish you all the best Dhaka Project and you will be seeing me again!