

Not quite 'just another day'

April the 23rd for the last 30 years has seen CO-ID founder Fred Hyde far from home. Fred has lived in Bangladesh every year, for the best part of the year--including April--since his retirement, but this year, a stubborn response from visa bureaucrats in Bangladesh saw Fred make an early return to his home town of Warwick in Queensland. If they had to pick a year to dig their heels in, 2010 was it, with CO-ID management committee member Heather Clark organising a surprise birthday 'do' for the freshly-minted 90-year-old at a former nunnery in Warwick.



Fred woke up to his 90th with a hint that something was in the air. Another member of the committee had hinted at the possibility of a 'pie and something of a pub crawl'.

Instead, Fred enjoyed a rare four course meal, and entertainment from local bush poet Marco Gliori. The cake was a particular highlight of the affair, a hand-crafted star-spangled chocolate cake, was donated for the occasion by renowned Brisbane cake designer Julie Whitehead. As Fred pointed out, the only birthday cake he might have been able to enjoy in the last thirty years in Bangladesh would have been a mud cake--made literally from mud. The evening was attended by family, friends, and the majority of the management committee of CO-ID, some of whom travelled from as far away as Melbourne (at their own expense) to be there.

Some of the things we are planning for Fred's birthday year

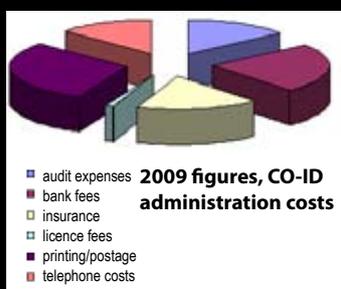
Fred's 90th year will be marked by a number of events in Australia. We are looking at holding a big event in Fred's home town of Warwick, at the King's Theatre, to give locals a chance to show their support--that will probably be in September. We have definite plans afoot for an event in Brisbane and Melbourne, and if anyone in Sydney would like to put their hand up for an event between now and October, let us know (contact details over the page), and we will publicise it through a special edition of the Chronicle later this year). Either way, when dates are finalised, we'll let you know.

Meanwhile, things will also be progressing in Bangladesh a little differently to normal. The rapid growth of our schools network over the last few years, CO-ID has outgrown its storage space, and will, over the next two years, be moving to new quarters near Char Fasson, the southern 'capital' of the island of Bhola, on which CO-ID operates its 41 schools.

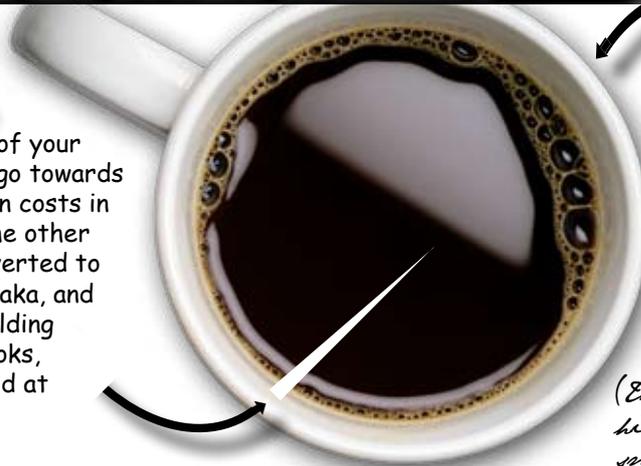
As Fred reports (see over the page), we managed to secure property on which to build the new storage building at way below half the going price. Poor as Bangladesh is, one has to remember land is at a premium: the price of land on Bhola is not dissimilar to the price of land in the suburbs of Brisbane.

How the cookie crumbles

The majority of the tiny slice of your donation that goes to 'admin' costs goes to the just about unavoidable facts of life: insurance, bank fees, audit fees and licence fees. The breakdown is as follows



Around 1.2% of your donation will go towards administration costs in Australia. The other 98.8% is converted to Bangladeshi taka, and buys local building materials, books, and staff, paid at local prices.



A donation of just \$3.50 a week--the price of a coffee, if you like--will buy 9 children full time education at a CO-ID school...

(This is a subtle way of hinting that with us, even small donations make a huge difference!)

Heartwarming backing from Bangladesh

In a country with a population of 160,000,000, it is not easy to obtain recognition, but in the past year CO-ID has achieved that.

The first indication that CO-ID was being noticed occurred when it became necessary for us to buy some land on which to build a storage facility. We were about to lose the occupancy of a house which, for some years, we had used for that purpose. In our vicinity we looked at a few pieces of land that were for sale, and the going price was 130,000 taka for a ghonda, which is, in Australian terms, around \$26,000 an acre. As you can imagine, \$26,000 is an extraordinary amount of money in Bangladesh. I did not approve of any of these sites. I was then approached by an agent who offered me a really good site, well situated in the municipal area for a little over half that price, 77,000 taka a ghonda. I could hardly believe CO-ID's good fortune, and immediately decided to buy.

A few days went by and I did not hear anything further from the agent, but then I got word that the vendor of the land wanted to see me regarding the price. I wondered if the agent had made a mistake, and that the quoted price should have been 177,000, not 77,000 taka per ghonda.

In rather a dismal mood, I went to see the vendor, wondering to what price I would go to for this most suitable piece of land. On arriving, according to custom, we talked about the weather and other incidentals, had a cup of tea, and then he said, "now about that piece of land, there are 11 ghandas in it, not quite an acre. Would you be interested in it at 65,000 taka a ghonda?"

That was 12,000 taka less than the price I had agreed, and just half the going price for inferior land. I am not sure what my face registered, but I was absolutely



The 'company car' parked outside our headquarters in Char Fassion, Bhola Island

astounded. Naturally, I accepted, and when taking leave of the vendor, who is a retired chairman of the area, comfortably off but by no means rich, said "there will be other expenses on the land, like getting it surveyed, so we will take another 10,000 taka off the price.

This gift, which amounts to something like \$15,000 was recognition of what CO-ID has accomplished over the years, and that has only been possible due to your support. That recognition, in effect, is yours. Thank you.

Meanwhile, I can report that the Class Five students of CO-ID schools have been allowed to sit for the national scholarship exams for the first time. These scholarship exams entitle those who pass to fee reductions in high schools. Our students achieved a nationally extraordinarily high 92.5% pass rates. High, but our teachers are determined to improve on that pass rate this coming year.

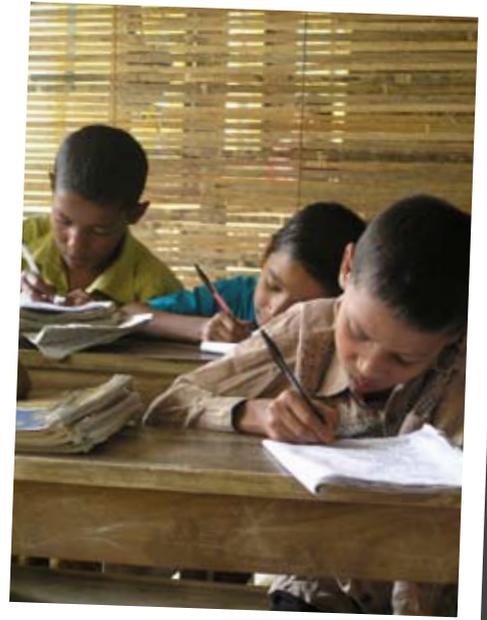
You may recall that last year at this time, 40,000 taka was donated by students of CO-ID schools to the Victorian bushfire appeal to help the rebuilding process. Forty-thousand taka is a stupendous sum for these ultra-poor donors to give. They seldom have as much to eat as they would like, and this donation would have meant they ate even less. It did not receive much publicity, but one person who noticed was Mr Lutfey Siddiqi, a Bangladeshi citizen and managing director of Barclays Capital in Singapore. Realising what this gift really represented, he donat-

ed \$15,000 to CO-ID, and his donation so impressed the chairman of Barclay's Bank Capital Pacific Charity Committee, that Barclay's donated an additional \$30,000.

In Australia we have a number of citizens of Bangladeshi origin, and they have formed an association known as the Bangladesh Australian Association, with branches in many of our major cities. This year, CO-ID has received recognition by this association, and the Canberra and Darwin branches have been very active in their support of CO-ID. The Canberra branch has built a school, and Darwin, in association with the Palmerston High School, is raising funds for a pre-school.

In December, the Bangladeshi organisation, FYFE (For Your, For Ever), at a ceremony held at the Australian High Commission in Dhaka, with his Excellency Dr Justin Hill participating in presenting a crest to CO-ID, inscribed "in recognition and with gratitude for the extraordinary contribution to Bangladesh."

This year, one of our schools, dubbed the "Bangladesh Canberra Friendship School" was sponsored and organized by Let's Work for Bangladesh (LWFB), a Canberra based group. Bangladesh Australia Association, Canberra donated



\$2,000 towards this project. LWFB is actively promoting CO-ID and Fred among the Bangladeshi Community in Australia and overseas.

It's heartwarming that CO-ID is being recognised in this way by the people of Bangladesh. They are really giving what they can, but the problems of this country are inherited from the time of participation of the Indian sub-continent, and were so great that it will take some time and a lot of help from you and I to give them the prosperity they deserve. This is a country that has been working hard and peacefully to solve its problems. Bangladeshis are a highly intelligent people, who just need the benefit of education. This is a nation which has reached a point where it must rely less on agriculture and more on manufacturing, so education will become ever more important. With your continued help, CO-ID will be endeavouring to give this peaceful, hard-working nation the opportunities it deserves.

Fred Hyde

Contact details

CO-ID
PO Box 1061
Warwick 4370 Ph: 1300 731 916
www.fredhyde.org
contact@fredhyde.org

We'd love to save postage by sending you our reports by email in future. If you're on the net, please let us know:

Your name:.....

Your postal address:.....

Your email address:.....

Coming soon,
 Facebook page
 "Fred's Helpers!"