



Building schools, bringing hope
The CO-ID Organisation

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CO-OPERATION IN DEVELOPMENT

The CO-ID Chronicle

June 2011

Fred's 'long winter' in Bangladesh

First ever
preschools built

Fred has been in Bangladesh for quite a bit longer than usual this year, so he hasn't arrived home this year in time to do his usual report for the COID Chronicle...but I thought I'd take a couple of snippets out of his last letter to the Committee. You'll notice the usual Fred Hyde surprises: how many 91-year-olds do 30 kilometres a day on a motorbike to check on a building project? How many 91-year-olds speak in kilometres, rather than miles, for that matter? You'll note he refers to the completion of one pre-school--more are being built as we speak. This extends the years of education Bhola Island children can get before the economy pulls them into the working world.

A couple of other notes for those of you less familiar with the COID project. Char Fassion is the large (several tens of thousands in population) market centre of southern Bhola Island, and the site of COID's headquarters. Bitumen roads are being built on Bhola for the first time in its history, but doing so is no easy task. Bhola is a mud island, so there is an absolute dearth of stones to use as road base. What the locals are forced to do is ingenious...but back-breaking. They cut the mud into bricks (this is work often done by children, unfortunately), bake the bricks in large furnaces along the river banks, and then break the bricks back down into a kind of red-brick gravel. So the roads of brick that Fred speaks of are really quite pretty--red (not yellow) brick roads, that are eventually compacted and coated with a thin layer of bitumin.

Fred also refers to the increasing cost of registration. This in fact became quite an issue for Fred--and his protests have met on receptive ears. It looks like we may well NOT have to pay the registration fee at all. Fred is a very persistent lobbyist on behalf of COID. On one occasion, I believe he sat at Dhaka airport for days until they waived a fee of less than \$100.

I've included a couple of photos taken during my trip to Bhola in 2009. Fred does this ferry trip (which can take up to 36 hours EACH WAY) several times a year, often just to deal with paperwork issues in Dhaka. He is one tough cookie!

Thanks for your continuing support, which I know Fred does not take lightly.

Olav Muurlink,

Chair,
Management Committee,
Co-Operation in Development.

At present, Char Fassion is not feeling the world recession for there is building going on all around the place. Roadways are being bituminized, a reasonable crop has been harvested, and a second crop planted. The weather has been mild. It is rumoured that

Char Fassion will become a District...with a whole lot more public servants!

We have been having a problem getting a good carpenter on the pre-school we are building at Char Fakira, such is the demand. Never have I had so much trouble on any job! I have been going down there almost every day for the past three weeks--15 kilometres down, and unfortunately, the same back, on a motorcycle. Much of the road is being cut up and strewn with broken bricks to make a foundation for the bitumen road. One welcomes getting on what was previously regarded as a very rough track, along the embankment that has been built to keep back any future tidal wave. Progress comes at a price. I am hoping that we will have the pre-school finished on Tuesday...

The 23rd of April (Fred's birthday) passed much more quietly this year, but the boys did buy some soft drink and some cake, so I did not escape entirely!

The number of copies of documents results in over 170 sheets of paper. Those wonderful inventive public servants have managed to think up quite a few more questions to ask.

Apart from getting a haircut today, that is about all the news!

Fred Hyde
Field Director.



Tomorrow is a holiday--one of many lately--and the following day. I have just completed and posted 335 short letters and photos out to our sponsors. I want to appeal particularly to the small and constant donor. Large donors are wonderful, but we do need that continual drip of funds to keep this project going. With the inflation and expansion down here it is not easy to keep up with everything.

We have been working on our application for re-registration which must be done once every five years. This year, the fee has risen from US \$1000 to \$US 1500, to which I am objecting.



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