



Building schools, bringing hope
The CO-ID Organisation

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CO-OPERATION IN DEVELOPMENT

The CO-ID Chronicle

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Our CO-ID experience: A little publicity goes a long way...



We loved the Bangladesh experience and felt quite humbled that so many people there extended their hands in friendship to such a foreign group of strange Australians.

Dhaka the capital city is BUSY! Everyone is busy doing something! Riding rickshaws, stacking and sweeping, driving and beeping.

Colourful conversations and early morning prayers sweep you up from the noise in the street to a reflective genuineness about the population who value being the best they can be for Allah.

The schools are small and squishy with many, many little faces in them. Twenty students to a bench where our students would seat four. One teacher for unlimited numbers of children, but very attentive and obedient children.

We hope that they remember that we were interested in learning about their lives and that when we visit in the future we can bring them lots of little blackboards and lots and lots of chalk. Extending the building to make their school bigger will have to happen soon and a toilet for the Littlies.

People have a moral conscience and play fair because their religion

does not tolerate stealing, adultery, cheating or fraud. The lack of contact with western tourists brings a refreshing ease to money transactions and there is a lack of serious humbugging.

The country grows enough food to feed its population in colourful farms along the rivers that are very fertile and plentiful. Big barges and ferries transport the live and fresh produce daily to the city markets. Refrigeration is very limited and power blackouts are things people don't bother about as we do.

Bangladesh does not present as a poverty stricken country, although there is a big divide between the wealthy and the poor. There is a myriad of tradespeople in the city and country areas manufacturing furniture, materials for clothing, metal products, oils and lots of bricks. It functions very well as a sustainable population with everyone being busy in the business of supplying food and everyday needs.

Janice Prince (pictured with staff and children from one of CO-ID's schools) is herself a school teacher from Darwin. She visited CO-ID's project at Char Fassion with her husband Michael last year. This is their story :)

One of the critical moments in the history of CO-ID was the airing, on *Australian Story* of the "In a Class of His Own" episode featuring Fred Hyde--that was in 2001, and to this day, people still talk about the story. If you know of any way to get CO-ID into the public eye, through a contact in the media for example, please do get in touch with a CO-ID committee member.

At the moment, committee member Tony Kent is talking with a Polish film crew planning to do a documentary on CO-ID, sending a crew to Bhola Island itself in October. Plans are for the episode to air across Europe. Committee member Borhan Shafi is, as we go to press, talking with the entertainment show *Ityadi*, one of the longest running and most popular shows on Bangladeshi television--with an audience in the Bangladeshi diaspora worldwide.



Record breaker!

CO-ID's largest single annual fundraiser was held at St Leonard's College in Brighton in Melbourne in May. The event has been run for close to two decades now by students at the school, using everything from 'silent auctions' of donated goods (as in the picture above), through to raffles, and ticket sales. This year, 350 paying guests had a night that included entertainment by former student Nicholas Roy (perhaps best known for his performances on *The Voice*) and Bollywood dancers, and with special guests from another major fundraising school Beaconhills College, Esme and Josh, who told of their experiences during their visit to the CO-ID project in Bangladesh. The total raised was an astonishing \$36,000

Meet the committee

Borhanuddin ('Borhan') Shafi (pictured with his wife Ruma and baby boy Affan), happened to be browsing on the net for a way to give back to his homeland of Bangladesh when he came upon the recently assembled website for CO-ID, put together by committee member Tony Kent. He phoned Tony, and the rest is history. Borhan has gone on to become a key member of the organisation's management committee, bringing with him a wealth of experience in both financial



planning and, equally importantly, grassroots knowledge of Bangladesh. Borhan was born far from Bhola Island, in the coastal city of Chittagong. His energy has created a hive of CO-ID fundraising in Canberra, linking with

a group of enthusiastic locals including local musician Nicholas Lee-Murphy and Greens candidate for the federal seat of Fraser, Adam Verwey. Between them, the informal 'Canberra chapter' of CO-ID, and the group Let's Work for Bangladesh has so far raised around \$85,000, including major grants solicited from local organisations, and grassroots fundraisers in the nation's capital. "What attracted me to CO-

ID was the incredibly low administration costs, through committee members paying for their own expenses, as well as through Fred himself doing everything he has done for nothing. It makes me as a fundraiser feel like I can make a massive difference," says Borhan. "I also felt that CO-ID could be doing more to market itself. Most of the Bangladeshi community in Australia and Bangladesh does not know about CO-ID or Fred....yet."

PRINTING OF THIS BROCHURE KINDLY DONATED BY THE WARWICK RSL CLUB

Apart from almost a series of rolling strikes in Dhaka, and a cyclone in which our schools were left reasonably unscathed, some of the developments here for CO-ID have been quite positive. The government built a really good school building about half a kilometre up the road from one of our schools, recruited three teachers, and then sent the teachers out to recruit students—but managed to recruit none. It is a real testament to the quality of our teaching and the esteem with which our schools are held in the region.

Over the last few days I have had the staff getting things ordered for the building of a preschool at Amulla Pur. We have there 2600 bricks and will, during the coming week, get the site pegged out, the holes dug, the posts stood and the masons doing the brick work.

We have both the masons and the carpenters booked for the job. It's quite an involved process building in this kind of environment with obstacles quite different to what you face

A letter from Fred

in Australia. For example, the loading of materials involves going to various shops in the market picking up and thousands of items needed and eventually the supplies from the office. The administration staff pitch in as well, helping with the loading and checking the quantity and the quality of all items. We only take to the site what is needed. It is very expensive if we find at the site we are a piece of timber or galvanized iron short or that one piece is of quality that cannot be used. If we take down too much it is very expensive to return it to the office.

With the supplies on the site we must have someone there to safeguard them. Often this means one of our staff staying at the site. Till recent times we all would move down to the school building site, live under sheets of galvanized iron propped up against one another, sleeping on the ground and helping with the actual building of the school. This would mean preparing meals out of what could be obtained from the community and cooking under the most primitive of conditions. Hygiene was always a problem.

While I have been sick, it has some advantages, as the staff have enjoyed a lot of the goodies which had been brought in for me! One, the biggest water melon I have ever seen!

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