



Building schools, bringing hope
The CO-ID Organisation

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CO-OPERATION IN DEVELOPMENT

The CO-ID Chronicle

June 2014

Team beat weather to build HQ & teacher training centre in a single dry season

In a climate where the driest season, winter (called 'sheet' in Bangla) lasts for just two months and rain is never far away, building a substantial structure on what amounts to a mud island is a challenge at the best of times. Under the watchful eye of 94-year-old Fred Hyde, a long-planned project to build a HQ for the 41-school CO-ID school network was finally completed earlier this year. The building, which doubles as a central training centre for CO-ID's 170-odd teachers, and triples as a tsunami shelter, replaces an arrangement where the charity has been forced to rent properties near the town of Char Fasson since its founding in 1991. The project has been held up by a legal dispute over the land involving family of the previous owner, which was finally resolved in time for this year's brief dry season. The delay allowed workers to build up the site above the annual flood level, allowing the soil to settle, creating a solid foundation. The island of Bhola is a highly challenging building environment, shifting around 70 metres south every year due to erosion from two relentless rivers, the Meghna and the Tetulia.

"The longer the building was delayed, the more difficult it was becoming for us," CO-ID field director Fred Hyde said. "Every year we take delivery of tens of thousands of school books at Char Fasson and of late we've been forced to store them outside in preparation for distribution to the schools. One shower of rain and it would have been a disaster."



While you can buy a meal on Bhola Island for a handful of coins, land remains a precious commodity, with real estate prices not dissimilar to prices found in Australian suburbia. The prime piece of flat, cleared land, close to the fast-growing commercial centre of Char Fasson, was close to CO-ID's current rented quarters--it was hot property. CO-ID's good local reputation paid off, with a landowner selling the block on which the HQ was built at a heavily discounted price. "When they heard what we wanted it for, I didn't even have to bargain--the owner just volunteered a price lower than I'd even dreamed of."

The building was not without its unusual challenges. Plans prepared in Australia were found to intrude dangerously close to boundaries--because neighbours on Bhola Island are liable to build ponds close up to

the boundary. Such ponds close by building foundations pose a subsidence risk. But some things are easier in Bhola than Australia. One month before Christmas exactly, Fred submitted plans to the local engineer at the council. One day later, the approval arrived, along with the council engineer's requirements for ground floor reinforcement. Such a process can take months in Australia. Before the end of June, a toilet had been built on site, and the site for the building had been pegged out.

The HQ and training centre were not the only major building works for the year. Two pre-schools were also completed (on behalf of donors Beaconhills College and the Coupe family respectively) and a rebuild of one of the older CO-ID schools undertaken while the weather held..

Charity spending on admin in the news

Charity spending on administration and funding costs has come back into the media spotlight, with a special Fairfax media analysis showing that some popular charities are spending as much as half of donations on fundraising alone.



With the 2014 budget slashing Commonwealth spending on foreign aid by \$7 billion over five years, the analysis of how private donations are being spent in the charitable sector are likely to be more closely scrutinised by donors.

The Fairfax report, which was splashed across the range of Fairfax titles, included warnings of a reduction in charitable transparency due to reforms in the not-for-profit sector, so it is timely to remind CO-ID donors that they can request an audited copy of the charity’s financials at any time. “We always table our full financial details at CO-ID’s AGM every year, but are happy to mail out a copy of the audited summary to members and donors who can’t make the AGM,” treasurer Geraldine O’Neill said.

While CO-ID’s figures show that admin costs account for less than 3% of total income, and fundraising costs are close to 0%, the high donation-to-impact ratio of CO-ID does come at a price, Mrs O’Neill noted. “Part of the secret to our success and efficiency is the fact that we are completely run by volunteers. That does mean that things like the mailing of receipts can be a little slower, and if you ring us up, you may have to leave a message.”

Do you know someone in the media?

Part of what helps keep our fundraising costs down (see story left) is that even the cost of printing this newsletter is donated (as well as the labour to fold it and stuff it in an envelope!) However, in order to keep donations flowing to help our ‘big little’ charity going, we also need a continual flow of publicity--and that includes everything from talking to friends, commenting on Facebook, or getting mentioned in the media. If you know someone who is anyone in the media, why not tip them off about CO-ID? There are some incredible stories to tell about CO-ID and its founder Fred Hyde, and the management committee are always ready to help. Get in touch with the chair of the management committee, Olav Muurlink, on 0427-619800 or o.muurlink@gmail.com



CO-ID founder Fred Hyde, around the time of his birthday, 94. ABC Radio Queensland’s Nicole Dyer conducted an interview with Fred Hyde just before Christmas. You can still listen to the interview on blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2013/12/australias-oldest-aid-worker.html

Did you know we had credit card facilities?

Remember that CO-ID donations are fully tax deductible.

Name on card:.....

Your address:.....

Mastercard Expiry date:.....Amount:.....

Visa Card

Card Number □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

Cardholders signature:.....

Monthly auto-payment option

If it is easier on your budget to make a small donation every month, use this option.

YES, I authorise CO-ID to charge this amount to this account on the 15th of every month. Remember, even small donations make a BIG difference to us.

Would you like to attend the AGM?

Our AGM will be held in Warwick, Queensland, Fred Hyde’s ‘home town’ of Warwick. The date hasn’t been set yet. If you think you might like to attend, phone on 1300 731 916 or email coid.secretary@gmail.com to help with car pooling and catering.

Contact details

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