

ORPHAN SUPPORT PROGRAM

There are quite a few orphanages in different areas of Bangladesh. But as you can imagine, in such a poor country the facilities provided to these orphans are almost non-existent. There are at present 85 orphanages run by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh all over Bangladesh. Through these orphanages Ministry of Social Welfare is giving support to around 11,000 children of different age. They are getting shelter, food, education in these facilities till they are eighteen years old. Due to limited resources however, the quality and quantity of services are sadly inadequate.

Based on a series of very constructive consultations with government and orphanage officials in Bangladesh, it is obvious that there are several areas that need immediate attention:

- a) Adolescent health counseling: at the moment there is no counseling facility and, as a result, the teenage boys and girls are facing problems
- b) Health Care (medical, dental, eye care) is extremely lacking
- b) While tutoring is provided to children everywhere in Bangladesh, orphans have no facilities for tutoring – even before major National exams, such as the SSC (Secondary School Certificate), scholarship exam, which is absolutely essential in the education system of Bangladesh.
- c) Due to lack of funds there are almost no extracurricular activities available, so children cannot nurture their inner strengths.
- d) There is a lack of library facilities. This is a major problem because reading plays such a vital role in enriching and stimulating a child's mind.
- e) Vocational Training is lacking. Many children are suddenly entering adult life without first having developed any kind of skill set – making them completely unfit to deal with life outside the orphanage. Vocational training is absolutely essential to overcome this.

In order to help these children be productive citizens of the country, Distressed Children & Infants International (DCI) has established a collaborative joint venture with Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh. The purpose of this collaboration is to help distressed children, orphans in Bangladesh, with a special emphasis on the above mentioned areas through our **Orphan Support Program**.



Girls of the Orphanage

DCI President Dr. Brian DeBroff is visiting Azimpur Orphanage

US volunteers are working in the Orphanage

DCI developed a partnership with the Bangladesh Government Orphanages to provide educational support, healthcare and other essential services to 200 orphans through Orphan Support Program.



Program Goals:

1. Improve the quality of education in the form of tutors and coaching, especially before National Exams like the SSC (Secondary School Certificate), as well as scholarship tests.
2. Provide counseling on hygiene, health & adolescent issues by local & US health workers
3. Provide orphans with medical, dental and eye care, as well as immunization, vitamins, medicine, eye glasses, and any emergency treatment if required
4. Establish library facilities
5. Provide sports equipment and musical instruments; arrange for recreational activities such as outings, trips, special dinners, cultural events etc.
6. Develop vocational training, including life skill/technical training; provide computers and instructors (with particular attention to assisting older children with the transition to life outside the orphanage).
7. Encourage American children to be co-sponsors under the guidance of their parents. This involvement helps to build friendships between Bangladeshi children and American children through direct communication with each other, ultimately bridging cultural gaps and creating long-lasting friendships between two generations of two different countries. One important aspect of our work is to involve American youth and help prepare them to be responsive world citizens, by developing their intellectual and leadership capacities. When young students participate in international humanitarian work, they develop a greater understanding of the role of the United States in world affairs, and of the conditions experienced in developing nations.

Operational Steps:

- (1) Set up a small DCI office inside the orphanage.
- (2) Hire a Program Coordinator and provide him/her with training to manage the program in that orphanage.
- (3) Collect data on children according to age groups and assess the needs of each age group
- (4) Find sponsors in the USA
- (5) Start providing support – giving priority to the most pressing needs for the majority of the children in that orphanage
- (6) Supervise and monitor overall program progress and needs through oversight provided by the Program Coordinator, teachers and officials of Government ORPHANAGES of Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh. The Program coordinator is responsible for reporting on the overall progress of the project to RSC & DCI's main offices in Dhaka and the US. DCI volunteers in Bangladesh and in the US will also monitor the project by onsite visits.
- (7) Establish contact between the sponsor in USA and the orphan in Bangladesh through letters, drawings, and greeting cards.

Financial Support:

The sponsorship fee will be \$20 per month (\$240 yearly) per child. General donations aimed at facilitating the program as a whole are also encouraged; and these monies will be pooled and used to support all the orphans of the orphanage equally. This is done to prevent a sense of unfairness among children who are all in need.



Areas of Support:

1. Adolescent Counseling & Health Care
2. Education Support
3. Extracurricular activities & Entertainment
4. Vocational/Life Skill Training



1. Adolescent Counseling & Health Care:

- Provide counseling about adolescent issues and preventive healthcare.
- Provide Primary and Emergency health care, including eye care and dental care.
- Provide necessary medicines.
- Provide vitamins
- Arrange for immunization for preventable diseases.

2. Education:

- Arrange for coaching facilities by tutors for SSC, scholarship exam students.
- Provide tutors to improve the quality of education. The tutors will look after those students most in need of assistance and help them to complete their homework.
- Arrange for essay competitions, debates, and other types of intellectual development programs
- Establish libraries.
- Establish a resource and information library: DVD/VCD/Documentary.

3. Extracurricular Activities and Entertainment:

- Provide sports equipment, games, and recreation facilities.
- Schedule field trips/outings.
- Establish a monthly dinner.
- Arrange for cultural functions.

4. Training & Rehabilitation:

- Provide vocational training (computer, typing, spoken English and other life skills training) as a form of rehabilitation assistance.
- Create job opportunities.
- Provide assistance with starting a small business.
- Provide assistance and financial support for advanced studies for the most gifted children.

Monitoring and Follow up:

DCI has a strong monitoring and evaluation system. DCI hires Coordinators to oversee the overall progress of each program and then give regular reports to the Dhaka office and the USA office. The report will look into issues such as whether the project has been implemented according to the plan and whether the project activities have been carried out effectively. The scope of recommended improvements, if any, will also be addressed. Finally the report will offer recommendations based on the lessons learned from the project. The lessons derived from these assessments can then be employed in the future. The Orphan Support Program Director will closely supervise the program. DCI officials in the USA and the DCI Advisory Committee in Bangladesh will assess the progress by means of regular onsite reviews and budgetary evaluations.



DISTRESSED CHILDREN & INFANTS INTERNATIONAL

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Assessment of Outcome:

The outcomes of the Project will be assessed by DCI, RSC and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh. DCI Program Coordinator shall be responsible for preparing the first draft report. Thereafter, all the parties responsible for assessment will jointly finalize the assessment report wherein the project activities will be analyzed thoroughly. The report will look into issues such as whether the project has been implemented according to plan, whether the project activities have been carried out effectively. The scope of recommended improvements, if any, will also be addressed. Finally the report will have recommendations based on the lessons learned from the project. The lessons derived from these assessments can then be employed in future.

Message from the Director of Orphan Support Program:



In establishing DCI's Orphan Support Program, our aim is to enhance the physical, emotional, social and intellectual well-being of children living in orphanages in Bangladesh. While our goal is eventually to reach all orphanages in Bangladesh, we have started with the Bangladesh Government Orphanages (Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh), in Azimpur and Tejgaon, Dhaka. There are 300 children living in these orphanages with bare minimum facilities due to very limited funding. With time and ongoing support, we intend to turn these orphans' tears into smiles, and to replace the sadness in their hearts with joy and optimism.

Plases join this effort. I extend my sincere gratitude to all of our existing sponsors, donors, and supporters. Your continued support and generosity will give these very deserving children a priceless gift: hope for a better future. Thank you so much for choosing to make a difference in the life of a child.

*Dr. Sabina Ahmed, MBBS, M.D.
Director, Orphan Support Program*

To sponsor/donate please contact DCI at the following address:

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