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Saturday 5 January 2008

Today I went out with Nayan to distribute shoe boxes filled with gifts from the children of the Dubai British School, an activity they repeated after its success last year. A pile of colourful boxes was awaiting me as I entered the school building. The children had no clue what was coming to them. The pre-school children received the gifted boxes and were not to open them until they got home. As there were not enough boxes to give to all the children in the school, Maria had decided to open all the boxes and divide the gifts evenly between all the children. They were so excited! My task was to take picture of the children receiving all the goodies. A bundle of smiles and laughs roared the building. Wherever I came with the camera, I could expect loads of hugs and kisses.



We yelled: Thank You Children of Dubai!!

When I got back to the guesthouse, Maria and Florence were running around being busy and not talking to me about the necessities of the project, I felt brushed aside and a bit useless whilst I also felt that I could contribute in many ways. Late in the afternoon I showed Maria, Firoz and Florence what I have been doing in the north of Thailand in terms of a poverty alleviation project. In that project women create slightly adjusted ethnic products as a secondary income, for which they are paid per finished item.

The outcome after a year and a half of hard work is fantastic and the same could be done here.

This opened the doors to Maria and her team and now the road opened for inclusion of my skills in the Project.

One of the issues not yet solved is the sourcing of a supplier for school uniforms. Florence has started the sourcing, but went to shops and suppliers of materials.

As a business owner in the production of toys and decorative items, both commercially in the world of manufacturing in China and in a poverty alleviation project, I have experience that can benefit the project, so I am happy to jump in and offer my help in sourcing the garments for the children. I immediately start up the internet and search for suppliers in Bangladesh, after all a project that serves the community in Bangladesh in general and Dhaka specifically should also provide the commercial transaction within Bangladesh. No good sourcing uniforms from China to save a little donated money when there is a huge garment industry in Bangladesh that is craving for business. By bringing in money to this nation and having as much of the necessities for the Project made locally we benefit growth and prosperity in all possible aspects. So off we go to face this great new challenge. But before I can set off to do so, there is a very rewarding other thing to do on Sunday...

We conclude the day with a nice dinner which brought us back to the guesthouse well after midnight.

Upon getting to the guesthouse we see the truck ready waiting to be loaded with 3000 blankets donated by Emirates Airlines, which will be distributed to the extreme poor of Sripur and Manikhat, two rural villages, a long way outside of Dhaka. Maria intends to go there soon, to enrol families for her Project. Some of the guys of Maria's staff suggest they'd load the truck with the blankets immediately instead of at 4 AM the next morning. So off they go and I jump in bed for a short night.

Anoesjka Timmermans