

Dhaka Day 6

11th, December, 2007 - After a completely fulfilled previous day, we in at three and a half in the morning, very tired got under the sheets a little (at a half past one). We got up at 6:30 Khadija wept due to having fever, once weather has come early and the children have clothes and blankets. In spite of 5 tons of blankets donated by Emirates Foundation in Dubai to deliver in Dhaka the slums, it has been a daily fight to overcome all the custom formalities and finally get the blankets on 15th December.



turned Sofia earlier when the cold don't having and in to

It's big frustration when we have to face children sleeping unprotected from cold weather. And having the means without being able to use them.

At 9 AM we all had swallowed our breakfast and taken a fast shower that helps us to



wake up (here there is no warm water), once we are already late!

Our first goal was to exchange the money donated by Burjuman from Dubai (1,089 million Taka), by Raahi (33,750 Taka) summing to the 320,000 Taka raised in Portugal.

Saying better, a school bag filled with money (almost 15.000 Eur) that was going to enable us to do the shopping and that has been on Vitor's back all day along, not without some concern...

First negotiation, first frustration, the cost of the sheets, mattresses and mosquito nets was too high for our budget if we wanted to buy all that was in the list.

We left with our hands empty. Maria and Sofia found a gentleman who had fallen down of a train and had a leg in sorrowful condition. Maria sent him to the Hospital in which the Dhaka Project families are treated when they are sick, supported by the donations come from Dubai...

Fast he turned up back saying that he hadn't been attended. Surrounded by a crowd, Maria phoned the doctor to solve the situation and one of us became available to accompany him to the Hospital. When suddenly a lady appeared, saying that she had already seen the lad but she didn't know how to help him and for our surprise offered to accompany him to the Hospital. And she assured that in general a Bangladeshi who doesn't show a kind of recommendation at the reception will not be attended, even in extremely very severe cases.

This very kind lady before leaving us invited us to have a snack in her house and took us on a visit to the church in the quarter. The generosity turns up when we less expect and sometimes it's only needed a small gesture to make it appear. The lady had found an answer to her question. And we still had a well fulfilled afternoon waiting for us! We really hadn't bought anything to our children yet. After visiting several shops we concluded that in such zone of the city we wouldn't be lucky; either it was much expensive or there were no enough quantity of items to be sold.

So we decided to set off to the "Old Dhaka", the old zone of the city 2 hours from where we were !!! So, we got in a "tuktuk", a three wheeled Piaggio bike, keen on facing the chaotic traffic and the pollution of Dhaka.

Halfway, Vítor jumped out of the "tuktuk" (*stopped in the traffic*) due to having seen some fantastic beds and shelves being sold in a hut on the roadside. A great feeling that with Maria's ability to deal, we did great business; 27 nice wooden life lasting beds, for 2000 Taka each (about 20 Eur) ! And 57 pieces of furniture with shelves made of bamboo for 170 Taka (around 1,7 Eur) each !!!

We got crossing the city towards Old Dhaka, in an endless seeming trip, completely suffocated by pollution – that we had to stop to buy masks (that we were not able to keep using to to their unbearable smell).

Finally arrived at that zone, full of markets and all types of merchandising, we started buying! Maria and Sofia were the only women in a radius of kilometres, and once more, we were the only occidental people in a place! But all men were very friendly, we said we were from Portugal and fast they made references about Figo and Ronaldo! The



dealing has been hard, but Maria was the winner most of the times – on the contrary we would go to the following hut! I was necessary to show pictures of the children and the sick people we were helping, appealing to Eid (*time of the Muslim religion in which the charity must be done*) and even begging from those who were standing up keeping an eye on the negotiation. We bought almost everything what we had in the list (*there are still a few items for tomorrow*) and the fact of having gone to buy the things in Old Dhaka permitted us save 29.500 Taka comparing the prices with other locals'.



On the way home, and to recover from the day efforts, we've eaten a pizza in Sheraton with Saif, a friend of Maria and captain with Emirates Airline who had brought a load of donations from Dubai having been a frequent supporter of the Project.