

Report on AustBanglaCareforDental (ABCD) 5-15 August 2014 Initial Visit to Establish the Program

This project has been registered with the Rotary Australia World Community Service Ltd (RAWCS), Project number 51/2013-14. The stated objective of this project is to:

"provide essential dental care/services for the poor people in schools and slum areas in Dhaka and in rural regions of Bangladesh."

Depending on which statistics one notes (as there are some variations on available information), the ratio of dentist to population in Bangladesh can be in the range of 1:30,000 to 1: 40,000. There is a great need to provide coordinated dental care particularly to those who are poor and marginalised.

Identified project partners are:

Australia

Rotary Club of Dee Why Warringah represented by

- Dr Sandra Meihubers (Rtn)
- Dr Nahid Sayma

Bangladesh

Rotary Club of Dhaka (RCD), represented by

- Mr Abu Nawaz Bhuiyan

NGO Forum for Public Health (NGOF), represented by

- Mr Rizwan Ahmed

While not officially a partner of the project, recognition must be given to Dr Sunny Dastagir who will be the Project Consultant.

The purpose of the August visit was to establish the foundations of the project, through running 3 dental camps - one in a slum area in Dhaka, and 2 in a rural location. While providing essential dental care this also gave an opportunity for the new partners to test the future working relationships.

Wednesday 6 August - Team planning meeting in the offices of NGOF

The members were welcomed by Mr SMA Rashid, Executive Director of NGOF, who welcomed this project and provided an outline of NGOF's history and activities.

Present were

NGOF: Mr Rizwan Ahmed, Head of National Resource Centre; Mr Ahasan Habib, Environment and Water Quality Officer; Soyed Asadul Haque, Program Officer WSUP-NGOG; GKM Lutfar Rahim, Regional Manager

RCD: Mr Abu Nawaz Bhuiyan, ABCD Project Manager on behalf of RCD; Mr Shaheed Siddique, RCD President 2014-15

RAWCS: Dr Nahid Sayma (NS), Project Coordinator; Dr Sandra Meihubers (SM), Project Manager on behalf of RAWCS

Dr Sunny Dastagir (SD), Project Consultant

There was general discussion about the upcoming dental camps: in the D Block of Surovi school, Bauniabadh, and in 2 locations in Manikganj: Baniajuri High School and College (1050 students enrolled), and Pancha Kanda High School (700 students enrolled).

It was agreed it would not be possible to provide care for all the students. We agreed to focus on years 6-8, and prioritising initially those students with pain.

Asadul had compiled a registration list of 302 people for treatment at Surovi School. It was agreed to bring them in groups, to stage the numbers attending.

Discussion also focussed on proposed costs, personnel involved, and possible costs of dental supplies.

Thursday 7 August - Purchasing Dental Supplies

Drs NS, SD and SM visited the Modern Dental Supply Company to purchase essential dental supplies and equipment including a pressure cooker steam autoclave for sterilising instruments, which will be used in all future dental camps.

Dr SD offered to bring a dental chair and some dental instruments, on loan from her College. This would supplement the Rotary-produced Totachair portable dental chair brought from Australia by SM, and dental filling materials and mixing machine carried by NS.

Friday 8 August - Dental Camp Surovi School. 250 patients (adults and kids)

"Welcome to our first dental camp".

Dr SD plus 8 of her junior dentists and one senior dentist Dr Arup Kumar Saha, and 2 technicians Ibrahim and Sharif, advised on the set up of the dental camp. Rotary volunteer dentists also attended the camp.

Project team members and local community staff/volunteers worked to manage the patient flow.



Dental queue



Treatment room

Saturday 9 August - Pre camp visit to Manikganj

Rizwan, Lutfar and SM travelled to the 2 schools in Manikganj. A decision was made to identify those children complaining of pain to be the first priority for the camps. Then, time permitting, we would screen the children grade by grade. Representatives from the Socio Economic Development Agency (SEDA), NGOF's local partner, worked with us.

Sunday 10 August - Baniajuri High School and College. 172 patients

The dental camp was well attended and organised.

The school's principal had just returned after 3 months on sick leave, but gave the project his full support. There were some delays in the transport leaving Dhaka, but the teams worked well and caught up with the time.



Screening room



Patient treatment

Monday 11 August - Pancha Kanda High School. 255 patients

Again the dental camp was well attended and organised, and the school principal was also very supportive and helpful (tea and snacks from his team were greatly appreciated!)

At the dental camps Dr Sunny and team provided dental education sessions to the students, as well as providing the necessary treatment. Education support materials were left in the schools, to help the local teachers in education sessions.



Who's the Boss..?



Rotary dental chair being folded

A total of 677 patients were seen in the dental camps.

**Tuesday 12 August Debrief and Planning Meeting, NGOF offices
Rotary Club of Dhaka meeting in the evening**

Present: Rizwan, Ahasan, Sunny, Nahid, Sandra

Discussions on the camps included the following observations:

- good participation by partners
- acknowledgment of tremendous effort put in for the preparation for the camps by local teams and community members
- RCD very willing to provide direct support to the project
- NGOF's efforts so far have been an in-kind contribution to the project
- performance data (ie nos of fillings, extractions, advice etc) are not routinely recorded; this will change and protocols will be put in place for future and ongoing necessary data collection
- oral health conditions in the slum kids were worse than the kids in rural areas - diet? brushing? water? other, we speculate but will work to find out why
- however rural camps in the future will also provide care to adults, so then we'll see the range of conditions.

Future Plans

In all locations, to consider how we can incorporate some local oral health training for relevant health and community staff, to spread our "dental awareness" seeds.

Dhaka

- continue as per the original RAWCS proposal, ie monthly slum visits in Bauniabadh (total population approx 50,000), just need to confirm whether 1 or 2 consecutive days; to rotate visits continuously through the 6 schools in the slum
- 10 times per year

Rural

- overseas volunteer dental teams to provide rural outreach (locations to be confirmed); once or twice per year, depends on local capacity and ability to recruit volunteers
- first os volunteer team for late Jan - early Feb 2015, tbc, with an initial maximum of 6 volunteers
- working with the local dental team of six dentists led by Dr Sunny who is employed on a contract basis by NGOF as the Project Consultant
- for two four-day camps with some sightseeing (tourism!)
- logistics of planning, local transport, accommodation and professional etc registrations for dental volunteers need to be addressed

School Brushing Program

- while not initially identified in the original proposal, there was discussion around the appropriateness of a school based and supervised daily tooth brushing program in the slum schools, as a start
- this activity has been shown in other countries to be effective in reducing the incidence of dental decay in children; we hope the principals and communities will agree
- aspects include ensuring there are adequate water and sanitation facilities in the school; teacher training and involvement including supervising directly the program; safe and hygienic storage of toothbrushes and pastes; adequate and ongoing supply of same; monitoring and evaluating the program
- there is the potential for this program, once developed and documented, to be implemented in other regions, along with the development of appropriate education and training materials.

Management

- there are requirements by the NGO Affairs Bureau that must be satisfied
- NGOF will advise us as to what we need to do
- a draft budget has been drawn up, which needs to be accurately costed; this identifies capital purchases and ongoing expenses
- dental equipment etc will be stored at NGOF's offices
- program protocols to be developed, including requirements of dental team members and others
- once this is done, we can identify which items could be covered by the RCD and/or its members, considering capital items and recurrent costs
- the Australian partners will then manage fund raising for the remainder
- open and honest communications among partners will form the basis of ongoing planning.

Acknowledgments

There are so many people to thank, however we give grateful thanks to all who participated in the project so far. Your generosity, contributions, commitment and hospitality have been humbling and inspiring.

A huge thanks also to the International College of Dentists and the Rotary Club of Dee Why Warringah for funding support, and to GC Australia for the generous donation of dental materials.

Sandra Meihubers, Nahid Sayma
21 August 2014



One of the many team shots