

Why Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world with over half the population living on less than \$1 a day. This densely populated country is crammed into a series of flat deltas which feed into the Bay of Bengal. Consequently the country is prone to flooding, causing further hardship and poverty to an already suffering people.



As always, the ones to suffer most are the children. Many are orphaned, sold into virtual slavery by their parents or simply abandoned by their families who cannot afford to feed them. The lucky ones get taken into orphanages which more often than not are underfunded, cramped, and ill equipped, but at least they are protected. The unlucky ones end up homeless and on the street.

According to the Unicef (UNICEF study on child poverty and disparities in Bangladesh, UNICEF Bangladesh, November 2009 http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/knowledgecentre_5891.htm), of the 33 million children living in Bangladesh over half are living in poverty. An estimated 250 000 to 400,000 live on the streets of the country's capital Dhaka.

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The life of the street children of Dhaka is unimaginable. As well as having to beg and forage for food, they must survive the many criminal gangs that kidnap, maim and mutilate homeless children for forced begging and sex trafficking. They have to survive exploitation, falling victim to drugs and many more horrific crimes. Most deaths go unreported and undetected as these children have no voice and no protection.

We want to make a difference to these children. Even if we manage to take a small fraction of them off the streets and into a safe environment then we will have changed some lives for the better.