



### “Smile!”

Dave Dryden — Oakville, ON

We are on Day One of the Sleeping Children Around the World [SCAW] bedkit distribution in Bangladesh. I am the photographer.

Roberta has brought three of today’s 600 children to the photo site and seated them on buckets. As they’ve been instructed, the children put their knees and ankles together and place their hands on their laps. Somewhat bewildered, they look up at me questioningly. Confidently, I ready my finger on camera button, loudly said “Hasho!” and, expecting all the children to smile, I press the button.

What follows is not what I had anticipated. Typically one of the children looks at the next child for a clue as to what they are supposed to do, one gives a little smile, while the third child starts to stand up to come over to me. As it turns out, while the word *hasho* is *smile*, the word *asho* means *come here*. Obviously my pronunciation is less than perfect.

We shift to “Plan 2.” One of the overseas volunteers is asked to say “Hasho!” Although this leads to some improvement it means that the many volunteers close to the photo area chime in helpfully with their own “Hasho!” and the children don’t know where to look. “Cheese!” is also a total failure.

In desperation I turned to “OK,” an expression that I think might turn up the corners of the children’s lips. The children are told to respond to my prompting “OK,” with a loud “OK” in unison. Some children get so excited they even thrust up one or both of their arms with great gusto.

This is quite an improvement. I am so pleased with my efforts and so unsure of my language skills that instead of saying “Thank you,” to the children I clap my hands after taking the picture. In some of your pictures you might see children clapping enthusiastically as they skipped over the smile part and instead, at my “OK” prompt, enthusiastically started clapping.



“Smile!” — Dave, taking the photos in Chakhar Barisal

The pictures you are receiving are the results of my efforts. The children in your pictures are children being children. They are charming in their unpredictability and in their sincerity. Your photograph is a record of their features and their appearance.

After the photo, when the children had their bedkits in their arms, it wasn’t necessary to say “Hasho,” “Smile,”



October 30, 2007: Smiling and ready to go home with her bedkit gift

“Cheese,” “OK,” or anything. All the children were smiling — they were happy.

While taking the children’s pictures I saw the label acknowledgement of each of our donors. It was thrilling to see the names and places and realize that the people of Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia were all sincerely wanting to help the children of Bangladesh.

I am proud of my SCAW team, the Rotarians, Lions Club members, and local volunteers — they represented you well.

### Ramiza says “Thanks.”

Roberta Harris — Scarborough, ON

Hello, kind friends. My name is Ramiza. I am 10 years old and live in a small village in my wonderful country of Bangladesh. Yesterday was the the greatest day of my life and I want to tell you all about it.

A few months ago, my teacher told me that children in my class had been chosen to go to a large city 150 KM away to receive a special gift. An important man in our village would arrange for us to go there on a big bus. I was excited but also nervous because I had never been away from home. My family is very poor and my parents find it hard to give us enough food each day. At night my five brothers and sisters and I sleep in our clothes on a bare mud floor with a rag under our heads.

It was hard being patient but yesterday the big day arrived. We left school at 7 AM in a big bus with two of our teachers. It was such a new experience. I was happy, but scared too. I wondered what my gift would be because I have never had a gift in my life. In fact, I have never had anything new in my whole life. Our teachers gave us some water and crackers during the trip. When we arrived, I was taken into a room just for girls. Friendly young women in beautiful saris quickly helped me out of my shabby clothes and into the most beautiful *salwar kameez* outfit (dress, pants and scarf) I have ever seen.

Then I was led by some friendly volunteers out into the hot sun clutching my old clothes and shown where to line up to get my picture taken. I sat on a pail behind some beautiful clothes and other things spread out before us. Strange pale-skinned people were smiling at us and helping us to sit down.

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### Bangladesh by Number

- Population: 141 million
- Children underweight for their age: 48%
- Population living on less than \$2.00 per day: 83%
- Life expectancy: 60.5 years
- Female adult literacy: 31%
- Male adult literacy: 51% (Literacy being defined as being able to write your own name)
- Year of Bangladesh independence: 1971
- Year women received the right to vote: 1972

### Bangladesh Bedkits

Please see sidebar on the next page for the lists of bedkit items.

### Bangladesh Distribution

Total bedkits: 7,500

#### Overseas Partners:

- Rotary Club of Dhaka
- Lions Club of Dhaka Supreme View

### SCAW Fast Facts

Total bedkits: 905,350

#### Future Distributions

- Kolkata, January
- Chennai, January
- Mumbai, February

## Bangladesh Lions Bedkit

- mattress
- sheet
- blanket
- pillow
- pillow case
- mosquito net
- towel
- pair of thongs
- pajama set: t-shirt and shorts
- backpack
- flask
- raincoat
- sweater
- duffel bag to hold bedkit
- Boys: shorts and shirt
- Girls: shawl and salwar chemise

## Bangladesh Rotary Bedkit

- mattress
- 2 sheets
- blanket
- pillow
- pillow case
- mosquito net
- pair of thongs
- tiffin box
- flask
- pajama set: t-shirt and shorts
- backpack
- native towel
- Boys: corduroy pants and long-sleeved shirt
- Girls: shawl and salwar chemise

### One bedkit

Though your photo may show three children, it only shows one bedkit. This allows us to get in closer to the children's faces and makes for a better photo for our donors.



Ramiza and friends lining up for their photo

A tall, friendly man standing behind a black box on legs told Myna and Abdul my classmates who were sitting on pails beside me, to *hasho* or smile. I tried to, but I was so scared. Then they led me to a table piled high with large bags and a pale-skinned person shook my hand, smiled, gently put one of the bags on my head and said "Goodbye."

When we got back to our bus our bags were put on the roof. Soon we were on the long and bumpy way home. It was more fun going home because we finally had our treasured gifts. We arrived back home very tired.

Last night we used a mosquito net for the first time. I had the best sleep **ever** on the soft mattress and sheets. It was also the first time I had slept in pajamas and on a pillow. It was a dream come true. Now you know why yesterday was the best day of my life. I am so very happy. Thank you, whoever you are, for your wonderful, wonderful gift to me.

With love, Ramiza.

## Million-Dollar Smiles

Arrius Racioppo — Scarborough, ON

The bustling of children was evident among the crowd as they either stood or sat patiently watching as we arrived at the distribution sites. Between 600 to 800 children daily were waiting to receive their new bedkit. Many of them had travelled as far as 200 KM to get to the site. Some had even arrived early in the morning.

The children shifted and twisted to get a better look as they observed us as we set up the photo station and unravelled the contents of the bedkit. We guided the children to the pails propped up for sitting behind the bedkit contents. Some of the kids were frightened and showed it by a serious, concentrated face. Others gladly gave us big smiles showing their shiny white teeth. A few times some of the boys would throw up their hands with excitement and shout "OK!" which was Dave's substitute for "Cheese."



Arrius handing out bedkit to a happy child

Some would say "Thank you" in Bengali and some in English. They had million-dollar smiles as the bedkit was laid gently onto their heads to carry.

Handing out the bedkit personally to a child is when I saw the true happiness that is inside each and every one of the children. They were grateful and some showed it by touching their forehead, their heart, or bending down and touching our feet.

The day after our last distribution, we were taken to a village just outside of Dhaka called Shambhupura. It was a small village and we were the first foreigners ever to visit there. About fifty children in the village had received a bedkit. It was a great experience to see the homes of these children. Their families were so grateful. One little girl was crying as we came to her door. She was so overwhelmed but so happy that we were going to visit her house, because she had been given a bedkit, and it had helped her and her family.

This distribution in Bangladesh is my first time with Sleeping Children, my first experience doing humanitarian work, and my first time so far from home. I have thoroughly enjoyed this trip for SCAW and I will never forget it. I hope to go on many more in the future.

## Bangladesh, the Country

Don Harris — Scarborough, ON



Dhaka, Bangladesh street scene

To most Canadians, Bangladesh is a country they find difficult to picture in their minds. They may even be uncertain as to where to look for it on a map.

Surrounded by India on three sides and the Bay of Bengal on the south, it is the world's most densely populated country. The people are 83% Muslim, 16% Hindu, and 1% Christian and Buddhist. The land is flat except for the south eastern edge where it shares a short border with Myanmar (Burma). Bangladesh has numerous large and small rivers, fish farming ponds, and flooded rice paddies, so its appearance from the air convinces the viewer that over 50% of the land is water.

The "national personality" of Bangladesh includes many virtues developed in the face of adversity. Natural tragedies occur on an annual basis: terrible cyclones during the monsoon season can dump up to two metres of water on the land, drowning livestock and people, and destroying homes by the tens of thousands. In 1970, one storm killed 500,000 people and then a two-year famine followed.

Man-made adversities can be in the form of corrupt government and police personnel, but such corruption is not overlooked. Arrests are made, punishment given, and accountability strengthened. Birthrates have lowered from seven children per family to an average of four children by a persuasive government media campaign.

Unemployment is about 25% and yet the support of family and the ingenuity for survival results in very few beggars on urban streets. High illiteracy levels are being reduced by an emphasis on education for children, especially girls, and providing school availability for rural areas.

### How to donate

If you have access to the internet, you can donate online at our credit card donation page. If you don't have access to the internet, all you need do is mail your cheque to Sleeping Children along with your mailing address for the tax receipt. If the donation is a gift, you should also include the occasion for the gift and the mailing address of the gift recipient. If you wish, we will send an acknowledgement to the gift recipient when we get your letter. Just let us know.

### Zero Overhead

Sleeping Children Around the World is operated by volunteers, from the processing of donations to the distribution of bedkits. All administrative costs are covered by an investment account set up by Murray Dryden. We neither receive nor request funds from any level of government. With zero overhead, SCAW guarantees that: 100% of every \$30 bedkit donation reaches a needy child.

### More Newsletter

Our donor newsletters are only four pages long so we've had to abridge our travelling volunteers' reports. But they had many more photos and much more to say about their distribution. If you have internet access, please read the full-length reports on our website: [www.scaw.org](http://www.scaw.org)

People of Bangladesh are very curious and will gather around a foreigner in a silent staring way, but as soon as you smile, wave, or shake their hand, they relax and smile and attempt conversation with "What country are you from?" and "How do you like Bangladesh?"

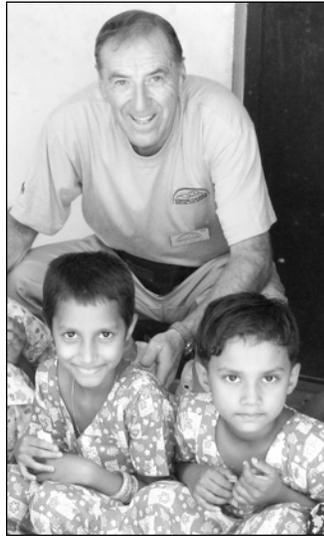
They are a warm-hearted, very hospitable people, who welcome you with gratitude for whatever measure of assistance you may offer towards their country's progress.

You, the donors of Sleeping Children, are entitled to feel a warmth in your heart as you are a supportive part of Bangladesh's present growth and future.

## Making a Difference

Clive Dunstan — Mississauga, ON

As a long-time music teacher, I hoped I was giving my students something to make life a little happier and a little more rewarding. The one sentiment I considered the highest compliment was that I had made a difference in their lives. Now in retirement, my chance to travel to Bangladesh and work with Sleeping Children carries on the same hope: that I can contribute a little something to the lives of thousands of poor unfortunate children.



Clive and children in Dhaka, Bangladesh

With all of the millions of poverty-stricken people throughout this world, you may wonder: why bother, and where do you even begin? It reminds me of the story of two friends walking on the beach. One was frantically picking up starfish that had been washed ashore and throwing them back into the sea. The other friend said, "Why are you wasting your time, there are thousands of them, you can't possibly get them all?" The first man threw another starfish into the sea and replied, "Well I made a difference to that one."

After one of the distributions, a large crowd of children, parents, and friends gathered round me to stare and wonder who this strange creature from another world was. I began to sing the chorus from "O Canada," and they all listened in amazement with smiles on their faces. Suddenly a little girl came forward through the crowd and began to sing the Bangladesh national an-



Lining up in the new bedkit clothes

them. Everyone was astonished and when she had finished they cheered and clapped. I held her hand and gave her the beautiful flowers I had received. She was so proud and happy and so was I for her. I know she will remember this day for the rest of her life. When I stood amongst the parents and guardians of these children and saw the pride in their eyes, I couldn't help but reflect on the fact that we all live in the same world, and under the same sky, and we have the same emotions about our children and grandchildren. Yet life has not been fair to everyone.

Our children grow up in lovely houses, have an abundance of healthy food, a reasonable wardrobe of fashionable clothes, and educational opportunities. These children, no less deserving, struggle to exist, yet are also warm and beautiful human beings who just happen to have been born under different circumstances in this underprivileged part of the world. I feel I want to hug them as I do my own grandchildren and show them that others do care.

However you can only make them happy for a few brief moments as you shake their hand and present them with a bedkit and say "Tomar jonno," or "It's yours to keep."

Caring is when an act of love and kindness takes place without any thought of reward or recognition. I

know now I am making a difference and so are you. You the donors, the Rotary and Lions Club members in Dhaka, the many volunteers at home in the Sleeping Children headquarters, my dedicated team members on this distribution: all can be assured that their caring has brought happiness to 7,500 wanting children in Bangladesh in just three weeks.

Samuel Coleridge says that a heart that gives is one that receives many times over. I feel blessed that I have had an opportunity to experience personally the smiles and the gentleness of these children

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"It's yours to keep."



November 6, 2007: Children with bedkits going home from the Sleeping Children bedkit distribution in Joynagar Shibpur

**Our New Logo**

On June 1, 2007, Sleeping Children Around the World adopted a new logo. It will eventually show up on all of Sleeping Children's publications and replace the various versions of the logo that are in use now. It was designed by one of our volunteers, Wayne Cowell, of Stonecroft Design, in Palgrave, Ontario.

The child is of a more appropriate age (6 to 12 years old) than the ones in our previous logos.

The arc over the child reminds one of a globe and also represents the protection of children that is our mission.

The logo will typically appear in black and white in print and in

colour where appropriate. You can see it in colour on our website: [www.scaw.org](http://www.scaw.org)

and will remember for the rest of my life how deeply moved I have felt. I marvel at how happy they can seem with so little and I feel remorse that we have so much in Canada and are never satisfied. I know in their own way they are saying thank you to you for this wonderful gift of cosy pajamas, a soft pillow, a warm blanket, colourful clean sheets, a firm mattress, a mosquito net, and other needed items that enable them to sleep peacefully and comfortably throughout the night.

Thank you, Sleeping Children; thank you forever, Margaret and Murray Dryden; and thank you, donors. May this charity have your support many times over. Good night.

**Bangladesh, the People**

*Judy Dryden – Victoria, BC*

As our team was boarding the Dhaka plane at Heathrow Airport, a young Bangladeshi man gave me a surprised look. He said "Are you going to Bangladesh?" When I said "Yes," he gave me a big smile and said "Welcome!"

I've often wondered what inspired and drove Dad to travel for months at a time when he and Mom founded Sleeping Children. He kept returning to Bangladesh, and it was one of the stops on his final SCAW trip. After just a few days in Bangladesh, I concluded I may have at least part of the answer. The need for bedkits is seen in the obvious poverty, but Dad would have been impressed by the people themselves.

They are very much like him – friendly, positive, and resilient. From the volunteers, teachers, and parents, to the children themselves, they were gracious, helpful, and hospitable. One group of children greeted me with "Good morning, Madame," as I lined them up for their pictures.

Throughout the country, workers are on the streets before sunrise and long after dark. Many work long hours for little pay, but they persevere.

Bangladesh was hit with major flooding this year, and many fields and rice paddies are still under water. This will lead to food shortages. Making the best of a bad situation, the Bangladeshis are now fishing some of these areas. They show incredible spirit even under their difficult living conditions.

Going to Bangladesh has been an amazing journey, and not only am I glad to have been here with my brother, Dave, and the rest of the team, but I'm grateful to have experienced the people of Bangladesh the way I believe Dad did.



*Judy visits the home of a Bangladeshi bedkit recipient*



**SCAW is a Registered Canadian Charity founded in 1970 by Margaret and Murray Dryden.**

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**Thank you for your contribution to the Bangladesh Distribution**

- The **Graham family**, in memory of Ann Graham, the **Zentil family**, and **Darcy Rector** for donating the digital photography equipment and computers.
- **Sam's Club** for donating photofinishing at cost.
- **The Printing House** (Gordy Leong) 5120 Dundas Street West, Etobicoke, ON, for doing our printing at a discount.
- **SCAW's donors and volunteers** for their continuing support.

**SCAW 2007 Bangladesh travelling team**

*(Left to Right): Clive Dunstan, Arrius Racioppo, Don Harris, Roberta Harris, Dave Dryden (Team Leader), Judy Dryden.*