

Blog Crucell's Fourth Footprint team in Bangladesh

At Crucell we are working hard to translate our commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into action. This desire led to the creation of **Footprint**, Crucell's exciting CSR outreach program which offers groups of Crucell volunteers the opportunity to participate in development projects in disadvantaged communities.

The fourth group of eight participants (see below), drawn from various Crucell sites and departments worldwide, arrived in Bangladesh this weekend. During their trip, from **Sunday June 26th 2011 to Friday July 1, 2011**, they will visit NGOs Friendship and Max Foundation. They will first visit the great work of Friendship, located in the Northern part of Bangladesh, with a focus on vaccination programs. During the second half of their trip they will visit the Max Foundation, located in the Southern part, which focuses on building water pumps in order to give (remote) villages access to clean water.



From left to right: Alvaro Arroyo (Spain), Amy Chambers (UK), David Betancourt (USA), Catharina Daggelfelt (Sweden), YongShin Lee (Korea), Joanna Bleszynski (Netherlands), Adilson Gondim (Switzerland) and Frauke Groenevelt (Netherlands).

Follow our Footprint team and read their daily blog and learn all about their Bangladesh experiences.

Friday, July 1st - Bangladeshe amander shomoy khub bhalo keteche. Eta khuby shundor desh!*

Waking up this morning had an emotional side to it as it is our last day in Bangladesh and the last day with the eight of us. But we hardly had time to think about it as we hurried to visit a girl's orphanage before returning to Dhaka.

Just like yesterday it was great to see 19 girls who are healthy and, with the help of SLOPB, have a home and get a decent education. They all introduced themselves showing that they also learn English in school, and after our introduction we sang songs to each other. They were very sweet and enthusiastically showed us their bedrooms. Unfortunately we had to leave early because the rain came pouring down.

Our pilot, who had also flown us on the other flights warned us for the turbulence due to the rain, but just like previous times we had a really smooth flight and landing.

At the hotel we first took a - very necessary - shower before we went into Dhaka. This time not for sight seeing but to buy presents for our loved ones as well as some for ourselves as a token of this trip. But to tell you the truth, we do not need tokens, because this trip has made such an impression: it was so adventurous, so inspirational and so much fun. But most of all so unforgettable!

So our advise: if you have not yet applied for Footprint, do it now!

Warm regards,
Crucell's Fourth Footprint Team

* Last greetings from Bangladesh. We had a really great time!

Thursday, June 30th - A day of surprises...

Time flies when you are having fun; this is already the fourth day of our journey. And we are enjoying every second of it! Even though the days are very hot, wet and humid, and our immune system is constantly tested by local food and water, all of us are still in (very) good health and more importantly in a very good mood.

Today started with a visit to the Child Health & Maternity Clinic (CMC) in Kalisuri. We were, yet again, very impressed by the support this clinic provides to the locals (i.e. maternity care, medical check-ups and basic surgery). During our tour we met with a mother who had just given birth to a tiny baby girl. The baby had a black spot on her forehead; this is called a tilok (a paste made from ashes) which is dabbed by the mother on the baby's skin to protect her from the evil eye. After giving birth the mother can stay at CMC with the baby for two days before taking the baby home.

We continued our day with a short visit to a health & sanitation project of a school in Madrasah. The bathroom looked so clean that we all decided to test it (ok maybe the fact that we had to travel for another 1.5 hours also influenced us).

To visit a satellite clinic at Wadel, one of the islands of the Bengal Bay, we had to take a boat. This was a new way of transportation in the south and we loved all 30 minutes of it. While we were sitting on the roof of the boat, we had an amazing view of the landscape and all activities on the river, which emphasized once more the importance of the rivers for the Bangladeshi. The island of Wadel houses approximately 15,000 inhabitants but has no medical support with the exception of the satellite clinic set up by SLOPB. Once a month a doctor visits the island for basic and emergency treatments. It is hard to believe that this only happens once a month - this medical support is a fantastic initiative but clearly there still is a long way to go.

After lunch we were told that we would next visit one of Crucell's deep wells. What they conveniently forgot to mention was that we needed another mud bath to reach its location. We braced ourselves realizing that taking this hurdle was the confirmation that we are a true Footprint team! But that turned out not to be the last



Images taken by Footprint team members.



surprise of today. On our way to the next item on the agenda, we ran into a bridge that had collapsed 6 months ago and had left a very deep hole in the road. We had to cross the bridge by foot but unlike previous times we were not picked up by rickshaws but by 6 motorbikes! And because of the rain our drivers sped over the bumpy wet road with us on the back of the bikes without helmets - good thing our loved ones will only hear about this after the event!

This afternoon we also visited a boys' orphanage, providing a home for 20 boys between 5 and 21 years of age. The boys proudly showed us their home and seemed completely happy surrounded by the love from the SLOPB staff. To get to know each other better we ended up singing songs in different languages. When the boys heard about our muddy experiences, they immediately went outside for a match of soccer in the backyard - they were unrecognizable when they returned!

Our final event of today was the cultural show we attended together with around 600 locals! During this show the SLOPB staff, accompanied by musical entertainment, gave the crowd information on hygiene. Apparently, the highlight of the show for the audience was the invitation for us to get up and dance on the stage. Adilson had been talking and bragging about his Brazilian background and dancing skills so much that he had no choice as to go up on stage - in the end 3 of us joined him. It has to be said that we made a lot of fun ourselves and it could not have been a more cheerful beginning to our last night together as a team.

Tomorrow we return to Dhaka, with an incredible number of unforgettable memories - good thing we caught it all on film!

Yongshin & Frauke (and the Footprint team)

Wednesday, June 29th - Our footprints in the mud

Wednesday morning we enjoyed our last breakfast at the Friendship boat and we said goodbye to the team and volunteers. We were sad to leave our Friendship home and our new friends who have shown such great hospitality to us in the last 2 days.

We waved to the village community that had come to see the sea plane. As we flew away and watched the Friendship boat disappear into the distance, we began to discuss among ourselves what great memories we will carry from this experience, and we leave with a deeper understanding of what great work is being done in Gaibhanda.

We traveled down south to visit SLOPB in Kalisuri. As the sea plane came into land on one of the rivers vast numbers of the villagers came out to see us and wave as we landed. There we were greeted warmly by Sumon and Talukder, members of SLOPB.

We then traveled by tomtoms (auto rickshaws) and mini vans to the SLOPB training center and were welcomed with a delicious Bangla lunch. Shortly after this we began our journey to Nalua, traveling by microbus and by ferry, to visit the boring and lording of a deep well. On our way over we got a real taste of Bangladesh rain and combined with the very bumpy road we had to proceed with caution!

The rain was still pouring as we continued on foot and we soon realized the walk would be treacherous and challenging. The path to the well was covered in thick, slippery and mud. We had no choice but to abandon our shoes and tried to walk barefoot (we were advised to dig our big toes into the ground for balance). As we approached the site of the well the local people welcomed us with clapping and cheers! Sumon described how boring of the well functions and we were able to see the man in action.

It is all hard manual work with no machinery but the men working were singing as they drilled. Sumon translated as we made conversation with the local people who were very thankful for the work Cruell and SLOPB (with funding of Max Foundation) are doing together. We all shouted 'hooray' and clapped for Bangladesh!

Back at the office, before our barbecue dinner, Talukder gave a presentation explaining the different projects SLOPB has and showed they are exceeding nearly all of their targets. Following this, a documentary was shown entitled 'Bridging Two Worlds' - the story of Motallib Weijtens and his wife who have dedicated many years of their lives to help the people of Bangladesh. It is with that we reach the end of another eventful and heart-warming day.

Amy and David (& the Footprint team)

Tuesday, June 28th - A rainy but surely unforgettable day!

Our first night on the Friendship guest boat is behind us. Most of us still have to get used to this place and the warmth at night; only Catharina slept like a baby.

After breakfast we got the chance to visit the Emirates Friendship Hospital (EFH) boat. It is impressive how, with limited space, they are able to facilitate all necessities for a (almost complete) hospital: it houses a registration desk, admission room, a paediatric -, a dental -, an eye -, and a gynae unit, two operating rooms and a pharmacy. There are also supporting facilities like a doctor's prep room, a sterilization room, a pathology lab, a post operation ward (with 8 beds) and a water purification room.

After the torrent, tropical rain had stopped we were able to leave the Friendship boat to visit one of the chars in the Kurigram district, where we witnessed the start of a new EPI program; this program - driven by Friendship - is possible due to the funding from Cruell.

Once again we were overwhelmed by the warmth and kindness of the local people and their children. This visit was short but intense: we met with local governmental officials and, as this was a formal inauguration of the EPI program, we had to take some official photographs.

The children were so excited to see us and most moving was when YongShin took out his Polaroid camera and



started taking their pictures - they were so surprised to see themselves and even more so when they were allowed to keep the pictures.

We left the EPI session to visit a rest house of Terre des hommes in Chilmari. At this location we were invited to the formal inauguration and planning workshop of the Kurigram program. There were various officials from the government, the Kurigram district and Friendship's Director Operations. Frauke was asked to represent Crucell at the head table and was asked to say some words about this new EPI program.

After our lunch we headed towards a primary school (founded by Friendship) on the mainland of Kurigram district. We visited two classes where we distributed the gifts we brought from home: jumping ropes, balls, balloons, bracelets and sweets.

We noticed that not all children from the community were attending the school. Unfortunately Friendship has such limited funding that they are only able to provide schooling for one child per family. The idea is that this child teaches his/her brothers and sisters what they learn at school.

We then visited the adult educational program, where they teach the women of the communities how to read, write basic math.

We continued our day with a visit to one of the vocational training centers of Friendship. At this center women (from the age of 13) are taught how to make scarves and table cloth in order to support themselves. We were shown all steps of the production process, after which we could buy some handmade scarves to bring home as presents.

Due to the rain, headed home later than expected, which meant that, while the sun was setting, we had a 45 minute walk during which the rain returned. As it was such a warm and humid day, again none of us cared - we actually had a lot of fun when we reached the boat all wet and in complete darkness in order to cross the river. The last 500 meters back to the mini van was a small, muddy and slippery path in this complete darkness. Fortunately the locals came out of their sheds with their own torches to light the path.

We then needed to travel another 45 km over the mainland by mini van. One would think that that would take us at max one hour, but here in Bangladesh we needed two hours! But still none of us cared as we are enjoying every minute of this amazing trip!

We had dinner with the entire staff of the EFH, who we met during our tour this morning. When we went back the guest boat we realized that we had to leave this inspirational place in the morning so we did not want to go to bed - we stayed out and enjoyed the surroundings (even in the dark) before getting some sleep.

What will tomorrow bring? We can't wait...

Joanna and Adilson (& the rest of the team)



Monday, June 27th - Quinvaxem® and EPI (Expanded Program on Immunization)

08h15 am: We are in the early morning traffic in a wet Dhaka to be at the airport on time where we are now eagerly waiting for David, who is supposed to land any minute after an unexpectedly long trip from the US.

09h40 am: We are still waiting for David, a little nervous now as our sea plane was supposed to take off 10 minutes ago. Where is David?

10h30 am: At last, David has arrived and we can start our 45 minute flight up North. From the sea plane, we can see that the land below is all green; the reason that the land is so much greener compared to 5 months ago when the previous footprint team was here is because the monsoon season has started.

We follow the river Bramaputra to arrive in the Gaibanda district where the Emirates Hospital boat of Friendship is located. The pilot circles around the boat before he lands the sea plane very smoothly next to the boat. After a warm welcome with tea and biscuits, we are introduced to the staff of the Friendship boat with a presentation about Friendship and all of their great achievements. We set off to visit the first char called Shuker Keranir. For those who don't know Bangladesh: a char is a piece of land which appears and disappears in the water from time to time. This means that the local people need to pack their entire belongings and move to another char every time their char is about to disappear under water.

Nasiha, one of the team members who is in charge of the Crucell-Friendship program, actually told us that one of the chars that was visited by a previous Crucell footprint team no longer exists!

Today an EPI (Expanded Program on Immunization) session is taking place at the Shuker Keranir char, meaning we are actually going to see babies being vaccinated with Quinvaxem! At the same time the EPI team will also be helping women who are currently pregnant by means of a community meeting which is being held to inform the women of the village on health issues and teach them the importance of nutritious food as well as show them how to cook healthy meals. Catharina and Adilson helped the local women with the preparations for one of these meals. During our visit we were constantly surrounded by the children of the char who were so very sweet and seemed to be equally curious to see us as we were to see them.

We returned to the guest boat for a delicious typical Bangla lunch with some of the Friendship staff. We then took the boat to a second char - Montola - where we visited another of the Friendship projects. Friendship has helped local people by creating a plinth - a raised platform of land at a level significantly above the water - on which they are now (re)building their houses in order to keep safe from the floods and to be able to have safe storage of water. Next month Friendship will include this char into the EPI program of the Kurigram district with the help of Crucell.



Just like on the first char, we are surrounded by beautiful, happy children. Adilson, like a true Brazilian handy craftsman, made a bracelet for one of the local girls using the leaves of a plant. We then went back to the guest boat where we enjoyed a beautiful sunset while chatting and getting to know each other better.

When the darkness settled in, we were invited for another lovely Bangla dinner cooked by the Friendship staff. Together with Dr Masud, one of the head doctors of the Hospital boat, who had treated 85 patients today, as



well as Ehsan, Pallob and Nasiha, the Friendship team that were our guides today, we shared the amazing experiences we had during this interesting day.

We go to bed knowing that tomorrow will bring even more excitement!

Warm regards
Catharina & Alvaro (and the rest of the Footprint team)

Sunday, June 26th - Busy, over-crowded Dhaka

Dear colleagues,

Greetings from Crucell's fourth footprint team! We can't tell you how excited we all are to have been selected for this adventure; because an adventure it will surely be. In the coming days we will - in pairs - be sharing stories and impressions from this trip with you, we hope you enjoy reading them!

After our arrival, all from different parts of the world, we headed out to see the city of Dhaka, accompanied by Utpol (one of the team members of the Friendship organization). As we had to wait a while for the mini van to arrive, we witnessed the immense traffic in the streets of Dhaka. The chaos was incredible. Everybody on wheels is driving, or rather zigzagging the streets in a hurry as if their lives depended on it. From public transportation, mini vans and scooters to many bright and colorful rickshaws. And in between this chaos pedestrians crossing the streets as if they were the only ones there. Lying in our beds tonight we will still hear the noise of the intensely used claxons! All of this is not very surprising knowing that Dhaka city has approximately 20 million inhabitants!

At the end of the morning, the six of us went back to the hotel for a quick lunch. After a visit to the Friendship office, we hurried back to the hotel to pick up Alvaro who had just arrived in Dhaka and now as a group of seven, we continued exploring the city. We are waiting for David's arrival tomorrow morning for the team to be complete.

This afternoon we went to an antique shop, followed by a visit to a craft shop to see all the beautiful handmade things known to Bangladesh. At the end of the afternoon we stopped at a local market. Quite an experience; we were welcomed by the smell of spices mixed with a strong fish smell; fruit and vegetables neatly stacked on one side of the market where live goats and chickens were packed in the other corner. This was a perfect place to make some nice pictures, especially when all market vendors kept calling us to take pictures of them. We were of course happy to do so, but were quite surprised when they in turn started making pictures of us.



We ended the day with a lovely dinner with Ayeleen, another team member of Friendship. Ayeleen gave us more insight into the Friendship organization and also introduced us to some lovely Banga dishes!

Although we all agree that this was an exciting first day, we can't wait for tomorrow when we will visit Friendship's program on the chars!

Warm regards,

Frauke (and the rest of the Footprint team)



URL: http://intranet.crucell.com/print/csr_bangladesh_blog_june11
Path: > System pages > Blog Fourth Footprint tea...