



Kailakuri Health Care Project



(Kailakuri & the Institute of Integrated Rural Development, IIRD)

December 2011

Christmas Greetings from Bangladesh

I'm sitting, working, at my table on my verandah at the back of the outpatients' side of the health care project. The noise here is constant. The murmur of voices (adults and children) in the background, the sound of people talking and then a mobile phone goes off and someone's voice gets even louder. It is standard practice here to shout into a mobile phone.

There is also the sound of traffic, though a lot quieter than in Dhaka. I can sometimes hear a bicycle bell as they signal to people (and animals) that they are behind them and coming past. Motorbikes have made their place here recently as a means of public transport and can be heard frequently tooting their horns. Before I came, large trucks transporting pineapple would come through the Project blasting their air horns but that stopped as these trucks made the dirt road in the rainy season unpassable for all including themselves. The road is now in the process of being tarsealed with promises from authorities that the trucks would be provided a loading bay some 1.5km before Kailakuri. This remains to be seen.

I've been sitting here when golshap (lizards) have wandered past, the largest almost 3 feet long. If I'm quiet he moves slowly. The golshap keep the rat and snake population down, so are useful to have around. I've yet to photograph a large one. At night the ground is alive with small toads, also useful. They keep the insect population down and I often find them in my house hopping over the floor along with geckos running across the walls.

My biggest frustration living here is the internet connection, occasionally I am lucky and can get reasonably good access from my verandah but often I need to go elsewhere on the project grounds where the signal might be better.

I spent an hour in the inpatients' office one night on my computer (so far the best place for internet connection) while staff (just around the corner) were stitching a wound on a patient's leg. He seemed to be in so much pain I thought they were

stitching without anesthetic but later learned that he had, had a local and it was the uncomfortable position he was being held in which made him moan. This man was on his bicycle and had been in an accident. I was told he got caught between two trucks trying to pass each other. The villagers have taken the truck driver and truck owner into custody to be tried for the accident. Village justice here is recognised by the authorities so when involved in an accident in Bangladesh it is a case of hit and run as justice meted out by locals can be severe. During the operation the power went off and stayed off for most of the time. The operation continued by torchlight. (I sometimes wonder if these power cuts are a means of torture by the authorities. The power gets shut off at the most inconvenient times especially in the evenings when it can go on and off, two or three times or more.)



Now can I introduce you to Mim? Mim and her mother, Moriam, have been in the nutrition wing of the hospital during September and October. Mim was admitted with malnutrition. Her mother, who has been largely ignored by her

husband who prefers to be with his other wife, lives with her mother who works for another family and often they do not have enough food. Both mother and child are in the hospital to improve their health and gain weight.

Unfortunately the middle of October saw some staff spend time in hospital with severe fever from a flu virus, while many were cared for at home for up to a week. This was along with a financial

crisis caused by the hold-up of funds in the bank, where some staff could not be paid for four days. Finances for many here can be extremely tight and it was found that a few of the staff needed to borrow money in order to buy food. We hope never to have this situation occur again. The financial crises continued on for another month while donations sent from overseas were tracked down and finally transferred into our bank account. Now as we enjoy the cooler weather of autumn and move into winter, the flu virus has abated and we live in anticipation of a more secure financial future.

Christmas comes as a time of hope and joy for many as they celebrate the birth of Christ. For those of you who celebrate Christmas we trust you will all experience the many blessings of the season. Please remember in your prayers and gifts those who struggle with the daily necessities of life, often through no fault of their own.

Christmas Greetings to you all, from the staff of the Kailakuri Health Care Project.

Christine Steiner
Funding and Management Consultant

The “Belgian Gor” (Maternity Building) donated and built by Praubash Baungau (Belgium)

Last year a group of Belgian students spent most of July and August at our project, building this beautiful Maternity Building more commonly known as the “Belgian Gor”. (Gor means house in Bangla.) As you can see it is now in full use and is much appreciated by both staff and patients. The staff here at Kailakuri have fond memories of their time with the Belgian group and often talk about them. We are looking forward to having some of the group come back to visit next year.



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