



Bangladesh foreign friend and humanitarian Maria Conceicao was declared the GQ Woman of the Year 2016.

Bangladeshi foreign friend declared Woman of the Year

Sir Frank Peters

Bangladeshi foreign friend, humanitarian and sportswoman Maria Conceicao made headlines this week throughout Europe when the prestigious GQ Magazine Portugal proclaimed her Woman of the Year.

Maria dedicated the award to her adoptive mother Maria Cristina (the inspiration behind her Maria Cristina Foundation), to the children of Bangladesh, and to her supporters.

GQ, one of the most successful men's fashion, culture and lifestyle magazines in the world, broke with tradition and instead of honouring a male with its coveted Man of the Year trophy; the magazine honoured a woman instead.

Maria had travelled to Bangladesh many times as a flight attendant

You cannot change the whole world, but you can change someone's world. Maria has changed the lives of hundreds

beneficial to mankind.

In 2005 she made a life-changing decision and quit her job with Emirates and made her first indelible mark of compassion in Dhaka. With little money, no experience, but a heart full of love, benevolence, and compassion, she founded the 'Maria Cristina Foundation', and under the banner of The Dhaka Project she illuminated the area of Gawair with hope (and her infectious smile).

The non-profit foundation set its goal to improve the quality of the lives of underprivileged children in slum areas through education,

and establishing six Guinness World Records. She also attempted to swim the English Channel but was forced to abandon her bid due to overpowering tidal currents.

Upon accepting her GQ award, Maria, quoting her mother, said: "Who feeds six, can feed seven" and it is with this motto that I have managed to educate over 600 children and hope to raise enough funds to put the remaining 131 students through school. This award belongs to our generous supporters, without whom I would not be standing here today."

Maria has proved to the skeptics