



# Third Quarterly Report

## October 2016

### Continuing to change lives

The summer holidays have come and gone and our students are preparing for their end of year exams. We now have 129 students in Dhaka and 2 in Dubai in their final grade. We are immensely proud of the 12 students that graduated this year, 4 of whom have won scholarships to study in Bangladesh, UK, USA and Canada. These young men and ladies would never be where they are today without the help of our wonderful supporters.

We have seen a big spike in volunteers and visitors going to Dhaka and have started to implement more structured volunteering programmes. Longer-term visitors have carried out workshops on CV-writing and careers amongst others. Cabin crew, who usually visit for an afternoon, has been asked to contribute with healthy snacks for students to take to school or with buying food for vulnerable families. This initiative has taken off successfully and already helped a lot of families.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to GQ Portugal magazine, who awarded me the Woman of the Year award and helped us gain new momentum in Portugal and elsewhere.

Sincerely,

*Maria Conceição*

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## GQ Woman of the Year

**Maria Conceicao the first woman to win the award, normally known as Man of the Year award.**

GQ, one of the biggest men's fashion, culture and lifestyle magazines, recognised Maria for her humanitarian and sports achievements with a Woman of the Year award. The magazine normally gives Man of the Year awards, but GQ Portugal was so moved by Maria's achievements that for the first time in history they skipped the Man of the Year Award and gave it to a woman instead.

Maria dedicated her award to her adoptive mother Maria Cristina, who is the inspiration behind the Maria Cristina Foundation, and to the children of Bangladesh. Quoting her adoptive mother, she said: *"Who feeds six, can feed seven. 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."* She thanked the supporters of the Foundation, who have made it possible to change the lives of children and urged anyone willing and able to help her raise funds for the remaining students.

The award has given the Foundation much-needed momentum and publicity in Portugal and elsewhere. We have seen a big spike in interest in the Foundation and donations have picked up again after a couple of quiet months. It is an amazing honour to be recognised in such a way and we will do our best to make the most of this to continue educating children in Dhaka.



## Stories from Dhaka

**The number of volunteers and visitors to Dhaka has increased.**

A number of our supporters, who sponsor a child, have undertaken the trip to Dhaka to visit the student they sponsor, see their school, where they live and meet their family. These trips have been really successful for both the students as well as their supporters and given both sides a chance to learn from each other. Some supporters have travelled to Dhaka with their children, which has been a wonderful opportunity for them to see how children in a different part of the world live, but also to make new friends. Their stories from Dhaka are available to read on our [website](#).



We have also seen an increase in cabin crew visits. These are normally short afternoon visits, where cabin crew visit the school and children's homes. In order to make these visits more valuable for everyone, we have now started to collect feedback and put in place stricter conditions for visiting to avoid humantourism and to make the experience more memorable for all sides.

Here are some of the activities that volunteers and visitors can get involved in:

- ✦ Carry out workshops on different career paths, CV-writing, being a teenager, letter-writing, English, manners etc,
- ✦ Reward the best-performing students with a meal out or a day trip in Dhaka,
- ✦ Assist the most vulnerable families with house repairs or items such as mattresses,



roofing etc for their houses,

- ✦ Purchase healthy snacks (fruit, nuts, dried fruit) to distribute to students, who can't afford lunch at school,
- ✦ Purchase a month's supply of food (rice, lentils, cooking oil, eggs etc) for families who are struggling,
- ✦ Help a student out with paying for school transport, meals or supplies,
- ✦ Donate mobile phones, blankets, school shoes, plastic sheeting for houses, solar lamps or any other items necessary at the time of the visit (please consult with us before taking any donations with you).



## Looking for a long-term field volunteer in Dhaka

**We are looking for an adventurous volunteer for a 3-6 month assignment, who is adaptable, a great communicator, gets things done and for whom working in a slum is a dream come true.**

### Responsibilities:

- Act as the main representative of the organisation in Bangladesh
- Liaise between the school, students, families and managers of the organisation (who are not based in Bangladesh)
- Get any information needed from Dhaka for sponsors (thank you videos, posters, school reports, photos of students, legal documents etc)
- Resolve any student issues and report back to us (this can mean anything from student has been sent to work or married off to student's family not having money to pay for transport)
- Visit the community (101 families in a very safe slum) and make sure students are attending school, doing their homework
- Help us establish processes and procedures in Dhaka to enable better monitoring and evaluation of the project.

### Compensation details:

This is a voluntary position, but we will cover your living expenses. Accommodation near or in the slum community will be provided (hot water, Internet access) - we can discuss. Monthly food/transport allowance will be provided to cover some costs.

## News from Dhaka

### ✦ University enrolment.

- Three students, who graduated from GEMS school in Dubai in May have all won scholarships to study in the UK, USA and Canada and have just started their first year.
- 9 students graduated from Milestone College in Dhaka and are now eagerly applying for universities and jobs. One of them has already secured a scholarship to study in Bangladesh and will start his course in January 2017. The others are still on the lookout and some of them are helping us with work in Dhaka.

✦ **Tutoring.** Some of our youngest students, who were enrolled in the Cambrian School and College in January this year have found it very difficult to cope with the curriculum. A group of our older students have formed tutoring groups and taken the responsibility to help the younger ones with their studies. We have rented them a room for this and it is thus far going well for both sides.



## Speaking events

We have had a number of successful corporate and event speaking events in Dubai and Portugal, which have been very motivational for staff and moved a lot of people to do more for us. We would here like to give a special thank you to KG International for their continuous support and encouragement. Maria is available for speaking engagements for a negotiable fee. Please get in touch with us for further details and schedules.

Some copies of Maria's book, **A Woman On Top Of The World** are still available to purchase as well. All proceeds from the book go towards the Maria Cristina Foundation. The book tells Maria's life story and the story of the Maria Cristina Foundation. It makes a compelling read and a great Christmas present.

PASSION FOR COMPASSION, PERSEVERANCE & WILLPOWER

REACH YOUR PEAK WITH

# Maria Conceicao

- Founder of the Maria Cristina Foundation
- 6x Guinness World Record Holder
- 1st Portuguese woman to summit Everest
- Athlete on humanitarian grounds

is here to **MOTIVATE & ENCOURAGE** you

**"The only limit to your abilities is your thinking. You can raise up against all odds"**

Maria, a former Emirates cabin crew turned humanitarian and endurance athlete is an excellent keynote and motivational speaker. She talks with great passion and humility of her journey to break the cycle of poverty in the slums of Bangladesh. This winner of numerous awards and recognition is the epitome of perseverance and determination. Maria shares her experience in the challenging and often misunderstood world of charities.

Maria offers her audience practical advice on what it takes to turn dreams into reality, how to stop your mind from playing tricks on you, how to overcome fear and how to get things done. Her extraordinary experience of going from an air hostess to a charity founder while all odds were against her is one to inspire, motivate and give her audience a nudge to make a change.

## Fundraising

We continue to raise funds through online campaigns, speaking events, interviews etc. However, we also have a number of volunteers that set up their own events and initiatives to help us.

- ✦ Sam Brenkel swam 21 miles from the Catalina Island to California and has so far raised £1,412.47. Sam, along with another supporter Tobias Frenz, took part in the Uberman challenge – known as the toughest challenge in the world. The challenge comprises a 21-mile swim from Catalina Island to Palos Verdes, 400-mile bike ride from Palos Verdes to Death Valley and 135-mile run from Death Valley to Mount Whitney. Samuel undertook the swim and Tobias did the run and the cycling to complete the event. [Their page is still open for donations.](#)
- ✦ We would like to thank our long-term supporter and friend Dorothee Anjos, who travelled to Dhaka with her daughter and has helped us raise awareness of the work we do in Bangladesh.

## Contact details:

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Thank you!