

Newsletter

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Introduction

In March 2004 the international development organisation Vialisa was founded, objecting to structurally improve the future perspective of street and working children (of 15 years and older) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The director (and founder) of Vialisa, Lisa van Gerven, has moved to Bangladesh to start the first project "Social Employment Desk". The Dhaka office was opened in October 2004 en in November we welcomed our first Dutch volunteer.

From Vialisa's Board

After an exciting year this already is our last newsletter of 2004. This has been a year in which our director, our Lisa, has surprised us time and again with her perseverance and flexibility. While tidings of floods, political unrest and hopeless poverty in Bangladesh reached us, and in the Netherlands our spirits were sinking, she continued indefatigably. Again and again she exceeded our expectations. Vialisa's volunteers have also put in a lot of work and enthusiasm, both in the Netherlands and Bangladesh. Thanks a lot everyone!

In this newsletter you can read what Vialisa has achieved in the past months. We would like to thank you for your support! Vialisa's board wishes you happy holidays, and pledges to do our utmost to make 2005 just as fruitful as 2004!

Sarah Dobbe
Chairperson of Vialisa

Results

A list of achieved objectives of the last quarter:

- Found and furnished office space
- Interview first group of children
- Partnership with Ain O Salish Kendra
- Partnership with Good Neighbours
- Partnership with Dacca Home
- Partnership School of Hope
- Partnership Gulshan Literacy Project
- Cooperation with Siemens
- Cooperation with Triton Textile Ltd.
- Search for ambassadors in the Netherlands
- Found employment for first group of children
- Provided part-time non-formal education for 15 children
- Access to school facilities Gulshan Literacy Programme
- Administrative support of Vervoort, Haas & Lamberts Accountants
- Organizing support of Interim Director Eugene van Vught
- Legal support of former state attorney Saskia van der Harten



Lisa talks to street children of a drop-in-centre of ASK



Lisa talks to street children of a drop-in-centre of ASK

Ain O Salish Kendra

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) is the largest human rights organisation in Bangladesh. They do not only fight for improvement of the human rights in Bangladesh, they also provide the underprivileged in Bangladesh free legal aid. In Dhaka they coordinate six drop-in-centres for street children. Here, the children can rest, play and eat. For those who are interested there is an opportunity to participate in free education. However, the children can only go to these drop-in-centres until they are seventeen. After that, they are back on their own.

ASK tries to remove children from dangerous work environments through legal programmes. This only works when they can offer an alternative. Therefore, Vialisa and ASK started a partnership. This means that Vialisa can use ASK's drop-in-centres. ASK's social workers will share the profiles of the children of 13 and older. This will enable us to follow them for a period of time. For the children of 15 and older we will actively search for employment opportunities, to prevent them of having to accept badly paid jobs under bad conditions. We will regularly visit all the drop-in-centres to gain the children's trust, so we can help them optimally when necessary.

Our name sign



Dacca Home

Dacca Home has four shelters for street children, where the children find a roof over their heads, as well as education. Because of a lack of space the children have to leave the house when they finish their education. This causes the children to take more time than necessary to finish their education, because they know they will be homeless again.

Vialisa started a partnership with Dacca Home. Dacca Home's staff will, just like the social workers of ASK, share profiles of all their children of 13 and older. We will also visit Dacca Home regularly to gain the children's trust.

Gulshan Literacy Programme

Gulshan Literacy Programme (GLP) provides free education to children from the slums. They provided space, time, materials and a teacher especially for Vialisa. This enables us to start provisional education to a group of 15 street children, starting in January. The sessions will be every afternoon and will take an hour and a half, in which the children will learn reading, writing and mathematics. Vialisa will pay part of the teacher's wages.

Triton

Triton Textile Ltd. is an international buying house with an establishment in Dhaka. They represent European textile importers. Triton provides sound and good employment with their suppliers for ten children. These children will be trained on the job so they can grow in their work in the future. We will propose children to them and, after placement, we will guide and follow them for at least one year.

Siemens

Siemens works outside of Dhaka on the construction of an energy plant. They announced to be willing to educate a number of boys to junior electrician. At this moment we are still researching the opportunities. We feel things like wages, shelter, transportation and safety clothing need to be taken care of, before we can let children work for Siemens under our guidance.

Atik, our office assistant, and first child of our Social Employment Desk



An introduction... of our volunteers

Recently our team of volunteers has been expanded. From now on, former state attorney Saskia van der Harten will provide us with legal advice.

Eugene van Vught

My name is Eugene van Vught, 44 years old, resident of Doetinchem and currently working as interim director. My duties consist of reorganising badly functioning companies and organisations. That means breaking down things, firing people, squeezing suppliers, in short: a job full of tension and stress. To get rid of the stress I enjoy boating on my motor ship "Cousteau", and I annually find a charity that I offer my skills to. I have been to Indonesia the help build the structure of a hospital complex. Last year I sailed on a hospital ship of "de Zonnebloem" and this year I chose to help Lisa start her organisation for 3 months. You are probably wondering how I found Lisa. While surfing the Internet I found her appeal for volunteers. At the time, I thought she lived in Baarlo, so I proposed to meet her for coffee to see what I could do for her. However, she told me she was in Bangladesh already, and within three weeks I had bought a ticket, packed my toothbrush and swimming trunks (and some Dutch coffee) and

Eugene listens to explanation of the coordinator of ASK



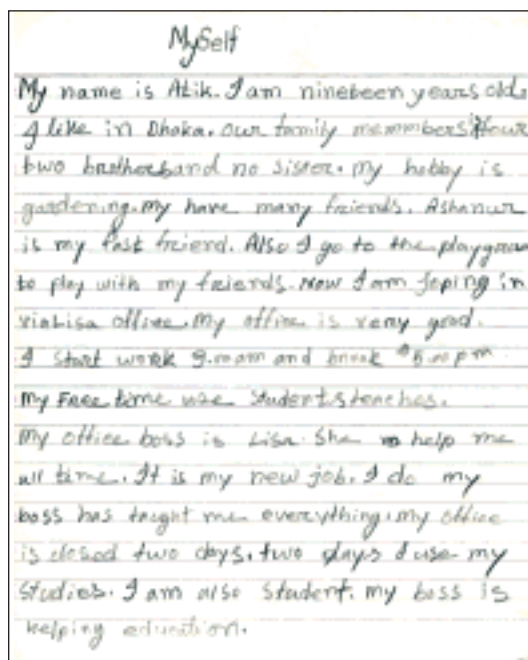
boarded a plane to Dhaka. When I return in three months I hope to leave an organisation that will help Lisa continue her wonderful work. I have seldom seen such a well thought through and well executable plan. It is absolutely necessary for an NGO like Vialisa to do her work here in Bangladesh, because for the street children it really is the only opportunity to find employment. Lisa, like me, never gives up. I am proud to be a temporary part of Vialisa.

Nicolien Maatman

My name is Nicolien, and I translate for Vialisa. I met Lisa while we were in college and trying to make some money working for a big Swedish furniture store. She told me about her plans to start Vialisa and I immediately offered my assistance. That made me Vialisa's first official volunteer. Before and during my Elementary Education studies, I spend a year and half studying and travelling in the United States. I enjoy learning about new languages and cultures. I also enjoy writing and editing. That is why I started editing Dutch texts for Lisa, and translating them into English. It started fairly easy, with plans and informative texts, but it gets more difficult all the time. I even translated official notarial papers into English. I enjoy this work, it makes me think. And it helps Vialisa! In my spare time I enjoy travelling, reading, Settlers of Catan (a very addictive board game) and music. After I graduated from elementary education I decided to study at the Utrecht conservatory, where I am currently majoring in music education. I also work part-time as a secondary school music teacher. Well, enough about me. I hope to work for Vialisa for a long time!

If you are also interested in volunteering, please e-mail vialisa@vialisa.com

Atik's letter to our donors.



Impression Lisa van Gerven

2004 Has been a very exciting year. After intensive preparations in the Netherlands we were finally able to work on the foundations in Bangladesh.

The period February-May was very important for the rest of 2004. In late August we were ready to officially send me to Dhaka. Once I arrived there, things didn't quite go as planned, due to political unrest and weather conditions. Communication with the Netherlands was difficult, sometimes even impossible. But after moving and opening our new office everything moved very fast, also thanks to Eugene's arrival.

But after all the talk, we now had to make things happen. Because of the slow start in August/September the time to book concrete results was limited drastically, which worried me and the board a lot. But working hard paid off and eventually we were able to reflect on good results. In the mean time we are approached by organisations, asking us for help. Within short, but very intensive time, Vialisa's foundation in Bangladesh turned out to be firm. The year 2004 can be described as a year of sowing, and I think 2005 will turn out to be a year of harvesting.

From Dhaka, I would like to thank everybody for their faith in us, and wish you happy holidays.

Sponsoring

Lions' Club Breda donated a new computer and a digital camera to our office in Dhaka. Thanks to the departing manager of Shell Bangladesh we were able to place an air conditioning unit in our office, so we can work comfortably in the sizzling hot summers.

Colophon:

Text: Lisa van Gerven, Sarah Dobbe, Nicolien Maatman, Eugene van Vught, Atik Rahman

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Maatman

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