



DISTRESSED  
CHILDREN &  
INFANTS  
INTERNATIONAL

**15 million  
children  
are  
orphaned  
due to  
HIV/AIDS**

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# DCI Newsletter

DCI Bangladesh attended a rally, discussion session, and cultural function in recognition of World Aids Day on December 01, 2011. The function was jointly organized by Bangladesh Government and STD & AIDS Network. Our staff members attended the function.



DCI Advocate and famous classical musician Alif Laila visited the children of DCI's Sun Child Home for Orphans



## Actress Babita leaves for Bangladesh after a successful “Journey for Child Right & Sight” in the United States



DCI has been organizing an ongoing, large-scale benefit campaign on behalf of impoverished children called the **“Journey for Child Rights & Sight”**. The most recent phase of the journey was led by Babita, the famous film star of Bangladesh, who is now a Goodwill Ambassador for DCI. She departed the USA on October 25th to return to Bangladesh after a very successful campaign.

As Goodwill Ambassador of DCI, Babita first came to USA on the 1st of September. Babita attended DCI’s Conference on Child Rights & Sight at Yale University and joined many people working to find creative solutions to the poverty faced by the world’s children every day.

The Journey for Child Rights & Sight Benefit Show is a call-to-action to inspire our youth and the global community to support underprivileged children around the world. Each stop on the journey was an evening of celebration and hope.

### **The aim of this campaign is threefold:**

1. To raise awareness of child labor, child poverty, and blindness.
2. To build a stronger network to fight against the exploitation of children, alleviate poverty, and prevent treatable blindness.
3. To promote the protection of child rights worldwide.

The series of events took place in many cities in different states around the USA, including Illinois, Connecticut, New York, Texas, Georgia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and California. Many people came to meet Babita at these programs and were captivated by her dedication and love for underprivileged children.

Babita said, “I was amazed to see that it runs on 100% volunteer support. Another unique aspect of DCI is that it involves youth in all its activities. This connects young Bangladeshi Americans to their roots in Bangladesh. Now I am an integral part of DCI and proud to serve in its mission.”

She also said, “It is truly heartwarming to see that people so far away from here, people from all walks of life, are thinking of ways to help Bangladesh. My resolve to work for the needy has been renewed and strengthened. Please let us overlook our differences and focus on helping the needy. Let’s grow as a nation together.”

**Please sign up for DCI’s online monthly newsletter at our website:  
[www.distressedchildren.org](http://www.distressedchildren.org)**

# Child Maids in Bangladesh Denied Justice



**Domestic servants in Bangladesh are frequently abused by their employers**

Taslima, a girl from an extremely poor family in a village called Chanpur in Nandail of Mymensing district, had a dream to gain admission into a high school after completing her primary education. Her father is a day-laborer without the ability to make his child's dream come true. As a result, Taslima was sent to start her new life as a domestic servant in Dhaka. She was not able to sustain herself in these circumstances for very long. On April 16, 2011, merely four months after she had taken the job in Dhaka, her dead body was sent back to her house by ambulance.

Taslima's death raises some serious questions. Her body was full of brutal signs of torture. To explain the cause of Taslima's death, Mr. Shahidul Islam, Taslima's employer said, "She was suffering from jaundice and kidney disease for a long time." When journalists asked him about the signs of torture inflicted upon Taslima's body, he answered, "Someone may have beaten her."

Taslima's brother, Abdul Motaleb, informed Protham Alo that he was called to negotiate the matter by the employer's family, but Motaleb refused. However, in the similar story of Nurjahan, the daughter of Nur Islam from Shatgora Union of Rangpur district, the death was negotiated under pressure. Nurjahan was sent to the house of Solaiman Mondol, secretary of tax and revenue board, as a handmaid. On July 2010, Solaiman Mondol handed over Nurjahan's dead body to her family and claimed that her death was natural. They mentioned the cause of the death was diarrhea, but according to the postmortem report, her body showed signs of fatal torture. Nur Islam was bound to withdraw his allegation against Solaiman due to the tampering of a former local parliament member. When reporters tried to communicate with Mr. Solaiman over the phone, he simply avoided discussing the matter and said, "I know nothing about this."

These types of incidents are not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. The list of these occurrences is quite extensive, and Taslima and Nurjahan are just two names added to this list. Human rights organizations as well as the police have claimed that people who murder children working as their servants are guilty of these offenses, but they are never faced with the verdict of their actions because of their political, social, and economical power. The sub-inspector of the former police force, Nurul Huda, said, "In the last thirty years of my professional life as a policeman, I didn't find any proper judgment against child servant murderers." This is really horrifying news for our nation.

We find many similar reports from human rights and legal aid services organizations like Ain O. Salish Kendro (ASHOK), Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST), BRAC Legal Aid Services and Bangladesh Women Lawyer Association (BNWLA). Nur Khan, the managing director of ASHOK said, "Hundreds of children have died but there is no satisfying progression. We find just two justices that apprehended outside of Dhaka. In the last ten years, there was no judgment of child servant murder in Dhaka city."

# Blindness Prevention Program: India

## Bikash Pradhan Receives Free Eye Surgery



Bikash Pradhan, a twelve year old boy from the village of Madhupur, used to go to school, but had problems seeing the black-board. He had congenital cataracts, starting three years earlier and getting progressively worse. Bikash's father Surath is a farmer who barely earns Rs. 3000 every month. On account of his poor eyesight, Bikash did not do well at school and could not even play.

With the help of DCI, Bikash and his family attended an eye camp held by Kalinga Eye Hospital. The ophthalmologist examined Bikash and, promptly recognizing his cataracts, informed his father that the treatment

was a simple surgery, and was in fact free of cost for children like Bikash. On June 17<sup>th</sup> 2010, a Kalinga Eye Hospital bus brought Bikash and his father to Dhenkanal. His cataract surgery in the right eye was scheduled for the following day.

Bikash came to Kalinga Eye Hospital with 5/60 vision in both eyes. After surgery and an intraocular lens implant in his right eye, his vision improved considerably to 6/36. He was able to return home the following day with a clearer view of the world around him. Today, because Kalinga Eye Hospital was able to support his transport, surgery and stay in Dhenkanal, Bikas was able to regain not only some of his lost eyesight, but also some of his lost childhood. Bikash is now able to laugh and play like any other normal child his age.

**Bikash Pradhan's father said:** "Thank God that there are people and organizations like Distressed Children & Infants International (DCI) in this world who work for unfortunate people like us. We are so thankful to DCI. There is such a huge need for this organization amongst the people in villages like ours, and we feel blessed that DCI and its sponsors have invested in our need for eye care. Without this help, so many children, including my own, would be robbed of a proper childhood and quality of life."

**SPECIAL THANKS** to all our contributors, donors, and supporters for your commitment to DCI's programs and mission. Together we can change the world, one child at a time. We welcome you to DCI, and we look forward to working with you in this most important mission.

### **CORPORATE MATCHING:**

Many corporations/companies will match portions of employee donations to charity. Please consult your HR department to determine if your employer will match your contribution to **Distressed Children & Infants International (DCI)**.

# Sun Child Sponsorship Program

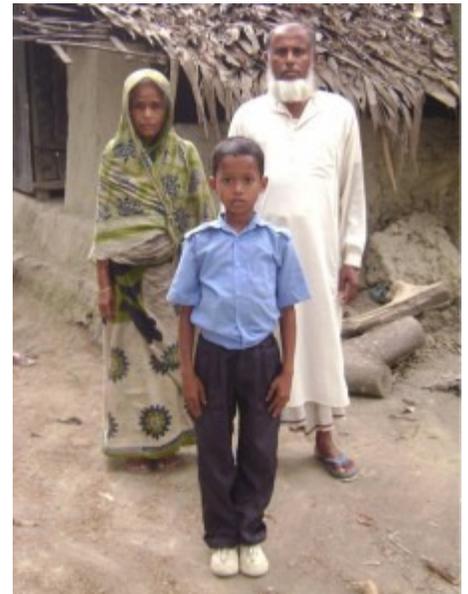
## Mohi Uddin's Story



Mohi Uddin cannot remember his father, because he never saw him. When his mother Nepuli was pregnant his father left them. Having no alternative, his mother returned to her father's home. Her old father was working in a nearby mosque and got some income from local people, but it was too meager an amount to feed four people.

Times were very difficult for them, so Nepuli decided to go to Dhaka to find a job. Through the help of a relative she found work in a garments company, but there she faced a new problem with her child. The company would not allow any children to accompany workers during working time, so two-year-old Mohi had to remain in her father's home in the village and grow up with his grandfather and grandmother. But Nepuli could not continue working because she suffered from epilepsy, so she returned to her father's home again. After few months she died without receiving any medical treatment. Mohi became an orphan.

His grandfather and grandmother also became hopeless. *"When I see him I think that he has never got the love of his parents,"* says his grandmother. They have taken care of him with their highest affection, but they could not send him to school because they were unable to provide his basic needs for education. There was a chance Mohi Uddin would become involved in child labor. For this reason DCI enrolled him in the **Sunchild Sponsorship Program**. Now his grandfather says, *"He gets all of his basic needs for education, health, household materials etc. We need not need to worry for him."* Mohi is also happy to get this great opportunity from DCI. Now he is reading well and is in grade two. He can remember his mother. *"I want to be a doctor to be provide health services for the poor. Because my mother died without any treatment,"* he says.



Mohi Uddin's Family

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The success of DCI's projects relies on your passion and generosity. The work that DCI is doing on behalf of impoverished children would not be possible without your support. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

# Orphan Support Program

## Sharifa 's Story



A 5 year-old-girl, Sharifa Khanam, told her life story at Sun Child Homes. She had lived with her mother and four older brothers and sisters in her home district village of Gabrol, district Nilphamari. Her father died before her birth and has no memory of him, growing up with her mother in extreme poverty. She does not know how her mother and elder brothers supported the family or what they did but food was scarce. When she was 4, her mother died. At that time her elder brother got married. With only a limited in-

come he could no longer feed the family and most days they did not have enough food. Sharifa's family then decided to send her away as a domestic servant or to an orphanage.

RSC's field Supervisor Mr. Mozammel Hoque contacted with Sharifa's elder brother and informed about our home. Finally we took Sharifa in at Sun Child Homes, Dhaka. Now she is very happy and safe. She admitted in Kindergarten school. Playing, dancing and enjoying her life.



Sharifa

### Join DCI on Facebook

Stay updated on DCI's programs and current activities.  
Join us on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/DCI.International>

## “My DCI Experience” by Salma Siddique



When I was five years old, I visited Bangladesh for the first time with my family. It was my first international experience, not only unique for that reason, but also because it was a trip to tie me to my roots, so that I could know where my family came from. Among many other firsts, I remember seeing children about my own age lining up next to car windows in the densely trafficked streets of Dhaka and begging for food and money. I had never grasped that children could live in conditions like that until then. During our visit, I went with my mother to a local clinic where she volunteered her time as a physician. Watching how she helped to treat the patients made me feel that she and the other doctors at the clinic were making

an active difference in the lives of the children. At five years old, I could not comprehend why they were living in such conditions, why they had ailments I couldn't diagnose, but I understood that I wanted to be a part of a solution to the problems I saw when I grew up. That was what motivated me to pursue medicine.

During my second year of college, I became involved with Distressed Infants and Children International (DCI) by sponsoring a child in Bangladesh. Reminiscent of what had sparked my desire to pursue a career in medicine, I recently volunteered at DCI's health clinic in the Kolanpur slum in Dhaka. The children in the slum had very little, were plagued with chronic diseases, and yet were happy with what little they had. I was only able to spend a short time there, but in that short time I saw clinical presentations I've never seen in America – kwashiorkor disease, chronic pustular otitis externa, varying degrees of malnutrition, and more. As a medical student, the experience was an eye opening one, giving me a viewpoint on global health, specifically in Bangladesh. The lack of resources in the clinic made me realize that much more had to be done to serve rapidly growing communities like this one. The DCI staff members were so helpful and welcoming. They took us through the slum where we saw the conditions in which the children and their families live. Talking to the children was refreshing. We had more in common than either of us would have imagined and their love for life was truly inspiring.

After volunteering at the clinic, I was able to meet the girl I had sponsored for the past few years. Putting an actual face and personality to the pictures I had seen of her put so much into perspective for me. DCI truly makes a difference in the lives of these children. It is hard enough for children in villages and slums to go to school when they are pressured to start working to help support their families. If they have some financial support, some incentive to stay in school, medical care and basic needs provided, it makes things somewhat easier for them and their families.

Things have changed a great deal since my first visit to Bangladesh so many years ago. It is because of organizations like DCI that change is coming to Bangladesh. There are efforts being made to promote good health and hygiene, clean drinking water, sewage treatment plants, adequate healthcare, and financial support to people who really need it. I am grateful to DCI for allowing me the opportunity to have volunteered with them, and to have been able to see how they are making a difference. Now I am fully committed to continue doing work with DCI in the future; they are truly performing a great service for some of the most deserving in Bangladesh.

I hope that the next time I am able to visit Bangladesh, things will have changed even more for the better, and I am hopeful that DCI will be among the organizations at the forefront of that change.

[www.distressedchildren.org](http://www.distressedchildren.org)