



OVERCOMING SUSPICION AND FEAR

Life on the streets can harden even the youngest and make them unsure, at first, of dentistry and the dentists' kindness.

**HANDS TO HOLD
AND**

PETRINA BOWDEN

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he dental clinic is associated with the charity M'Lop Tapang and was established in 2008. It has progressed from a mobile chair, light and cart to a permanent dental facility. Reflecting the improved clinical conditions are the increasing restorative and preventative procedures performed compared with earlier acute emergency treatments. The project receives much needed support from Section VIII Australasia.

Children at this center are from difficult backgrounds. Either extreme poverty and/or abusive circumstances. The ICD generously supported this program. With the funding, a second dental chair has been purchased. During this visit we were able to successfully install our new Chinese made dental chair complete with a new compressor. The second chair allows two dentists to volunteer together, which provides many more children to be treated and also a more enjoyable experience for volunteers.

An unforeseen advantage was the courage it gave the children to walk down to the treatment room in pairs rather than on their own!

TOOTH BRUSHING A PRIORITY

Over a typical week we saw 119 children, did 68 extractions, 71 restorations and 48 prophylaxis in the clinic and one outreach visit. We are looking forward to our first dental therapist volunteer later this year. Many of the children do not have a home; they live on the street, so it is unrealistic to expect regular tooth brushing. They have nowhere to keep the toothbrush and toothpaste we give

