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# An Exodus & 365 Days Later

One Year of Rohingya Response





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by **Christian Aid**

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## Foreword

Dear Colleagues,

It has been over a year since Bangladesh opened its border to host more than a million of the Rohingya population fleeing from Rakhine state in Myanmar, in the face of atrocities being carried out by the Myanmar army.

As the influx began, Christian Aid as one of the largest humanitarian organizations, started responding to the fastest growing humanitarian crisis Bangladesh and the world has ever witnessed.

This coffee table book captures some of the key achievements of Christian Aid Bangladesh in addressing the crisis. Our initial work focused on ensuring that the survival needs of the community-- including food, shelter, water and sanitation were met. We gradually started to recognize the larger challenges people were facing so we shifted our focus to protection, inclusion, accountability and psycho-social support needs.

One of the key highlights of our work has been around Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) work in Jamtoli, which has a population of around 52,000 with more than 60 local and international NGOs supporting the community. It is our responsibility as the CCCM to ensure that the right kind of humanitarian assistance is provided whilst keeping the humanitarian imperatives at the core of our work. One of

the key highlights has been Christian Aid's work around inclusive governance which has brought women into leadership positions in the camp. We have strengthened systems and processes around protection and accountability to ensure that the camp is safe, and the Rohingya people can lead a dignified life.

On behalf of Christian Aid, I would like to thank the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for having confidence and trust in the expertise and abilities of CCCM. We are very thankful to the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission under the leadership of the Commissioner, and supported by the Campin Charge, for facilitating the wider coordination among various actors, to ensure that the needs and aspirations of the Rohingya are central to the decision-making process.

The stories in this book will bring to light the struggles and hardships of the stateless Rohingya population, as well as the concerted effort of the development community to provide them with essential services.

Along the way we have received support from donors, development partners, the international community and the supporters of Christian Aid. Thank you for your constant support.



Shakeb Nabi  
Country Director  
Christian Aid Bangladesh





## Introduction

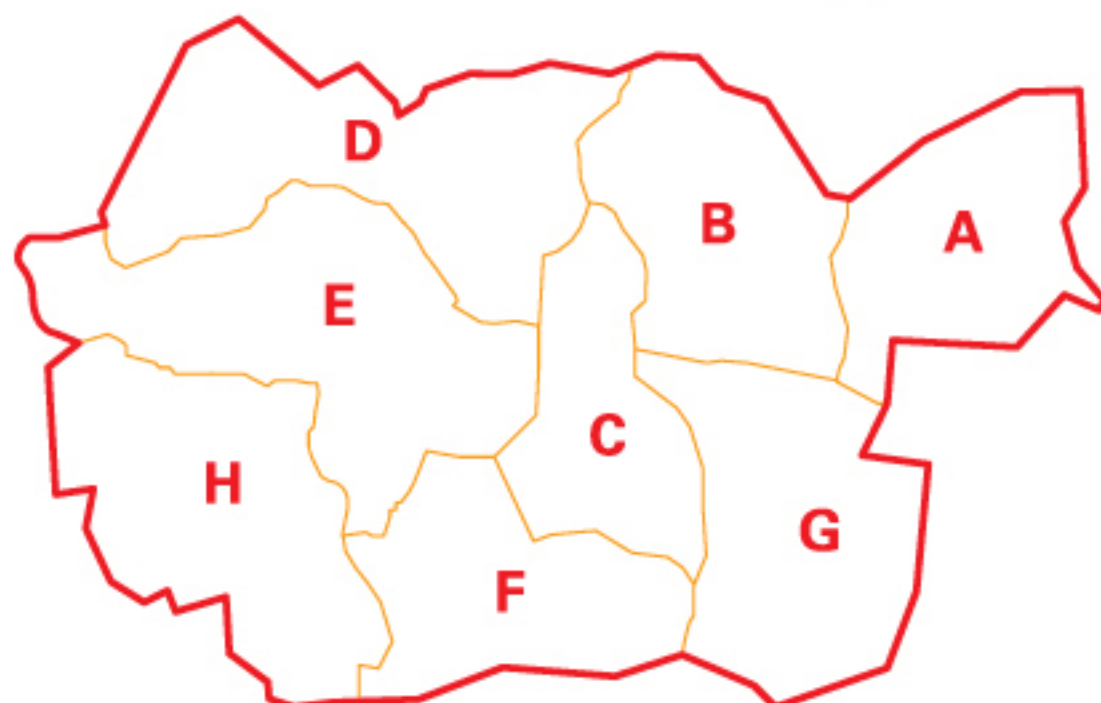
The word 'easy' is not at all commonplace in the milieu of a humanitarian crisis, especially when it involves close to a million people who were forcibly displaced to another country. The plight of the Rohingyas was one of the largest and fastest growing refugee crises the world has ever seen. Bangladesh, a highly populated country itself, opened its borders to grant refuge to these people who fled persecution in their homeland. The rest is still history in the making.

By the time you will have finished going through this paragraph, and depending upon the time of the day, many excited little faces will have taken their seats at a safe space for children at Balukhali, eagerly waiting for their lesson to begin. Their teacher takes them through the English alphabet, or perhaps even better—a journey inside an atlas to learn about many countries, the names of their capital cities, their currencies, and their famous personalities. At the same time a group of patients have just had their illnesses and ailments treated at a health camp. Pitchers have been filled with safe water for cooking and washing purposes from a gravitybased reservoir.

Elsewhere, an organized group, including a mix of ages, genders and people with disabilities, are presenting concerns that they perceive to be hampering the development of their community block. This governance mechanism enables them, especially women, to openly voice their problems and discuss solutions about risks and gaps in service delivery for the humanitarian actors to take on board. A year into the crisis, these are some of the few areas that Christian Aid (CA) and its partners have been able to impact directly and to bring about change to support the Rohingyas. However, conditions remain difficult in a range of areas, and we remain committed to stand with this community through the vulnerabilities and challenges that are yet to emerge.

What you are holding right now is a selection of stories of individuals that CA has been able to work with during the crisis. We have tried our best to portray them through an intimate lens to bring out the humans that breathe behind the stories—as Rohingyas and refugees.

## Camp-15, Jamtoli



Total population: **51388**



Female: **26894**



Male: **24494**









Total Household: **11491**

Block: **8**

Sub-Block: **100**

### Facilities at a Glance

Shelter	WASH
 <p>Street Light : <b>451</b> Mosque: <b>95</b></p>	 <p>Deep Tube well: <b>846</b> Handwashing Point: <b>799</b> Latrine: <b>3048</b> Bathing Cubical: <b>793</b></p>
Education	Protection
 <p>Learning Centre: <b>211</b> Madrasha: <b>12</b> Moktob: <b>58</b></p>	 <p>Women Friendly Space: <b>11</b> Child Friendly Space: <b>52</b> Adolescence Friendly Space: <b>10</b> Age Friendly Space: <b>01</b></p>
Health	
 <p>Health Post: <b>11</b> Nutrition Centre: <b>03</b></p>	
 <p>Working Organizations: <b>54</b> Mazi: <b>113</b></p>	





## Smiles of Sirazul Mujtaba

Block Development Committee (BDC) member, Sirajul, does not take his role lightly and demonstrates a sense of pride when he talks about it. He is a problem solver, not only for his family of six, but for his community as well.



Everyday Sirajul goes around the block to meet people at their shelters, tea stalls and the mosque. He enquires about their problems as well as events such as births, marriages and deaths. "Complaints about broken latrines and malfunctioning tubewells are most common", he says. He reports the problems at the weekly BDC meetings to CA's Community Mobiliser. If a problem is small, the BDC manages to devise and deliver the solution by themselves. The Mobiliser solicits the involvement of CA and the camp's higher management for more complex issues.

But Sirajul's mandate goes beyond flagging up broken hardware and spreading water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) messages. He solves disputes between people and involves the Majhi (Rohingya community leaders of blocks and sub-blocks), if need be. Sirajul speaks to both men and women about the dangers of child marriage and polygamous marriages. During the monsoon season, Rohingyas lacked information on how to prepare against extreme weather events. Sirajul went door-to-door to train people.

christian  
aid





Christian Aid involves men, women, adolescents, the elderly and the disabled in its block and camp development committees (BDC and CDC). These platforms were developed with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to serve as mechanisms of camp governance to ensure greater accountability and coordination among all actors. There are eight Christian Aid supported BDC hubs which conduct weekly meetings in Camp 15.



## Cooking Facilities at Sahana's Camp

Cooking was an onerous chore when Sahana first arrived in the camp with her three children a year ago. Fuel was in the form of firewood, plastic and old clothes. She reminisces how physically taxing it was to collect firewood from nearby forests and how nauseating the fumes from burning plastic and clothes were. Meanwhile the children would go hungry for hours before meals could be prepared.



Christian Aid (CA) constructed community kitchens to mitigate these cooking-related problems. Each kitchen has four gas stoves which are shared by 25 families. The women take turns while a community member maintains the cue and logs the timing of usage. These facilities also serve as a space for the women to meet, chat and share their stories and challenges. Separate enclosures inside the facilities allow children to play with each other while their mothers cook.

The Block Development Committee (BDC) members trained these women on how to operate the gas stoves as they were uncommon in Myanmar. CA supported 78 such community kitchens in total at Camp 15 and Camp 16 funded by Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen der Schweiz (HEKS) and World Renew.





## Support from BDC Members in Cyclone Preparedness

BDC member Jahangir (50) has a family of five including his wife and three children. They walked for three days from Ghara Phil in Myanmar to arrive in Bangladesh over a year ago.





The Block Development Committee (BDC) acts as a platform to raise both collective and individual voices of the community members. It also trains the BDC members on preparedness and safety against extreme weather events and fires.

He recalls being a sentinel during the monsoon season when he kept a watchful eye on the Bay of Bengal. Jahangir went block to block with a megaphone and raised a flag when the weather signal registered between one and three. When the signals got more intense, Jahangir would raise more flags and get the local mosque to make the announcement, followed by getting schools, hospitals and other facilities to open their doors as emergency shelters. The BDC had also trained members like Jahangir on fire safety, who in turn trained 30 other community members.

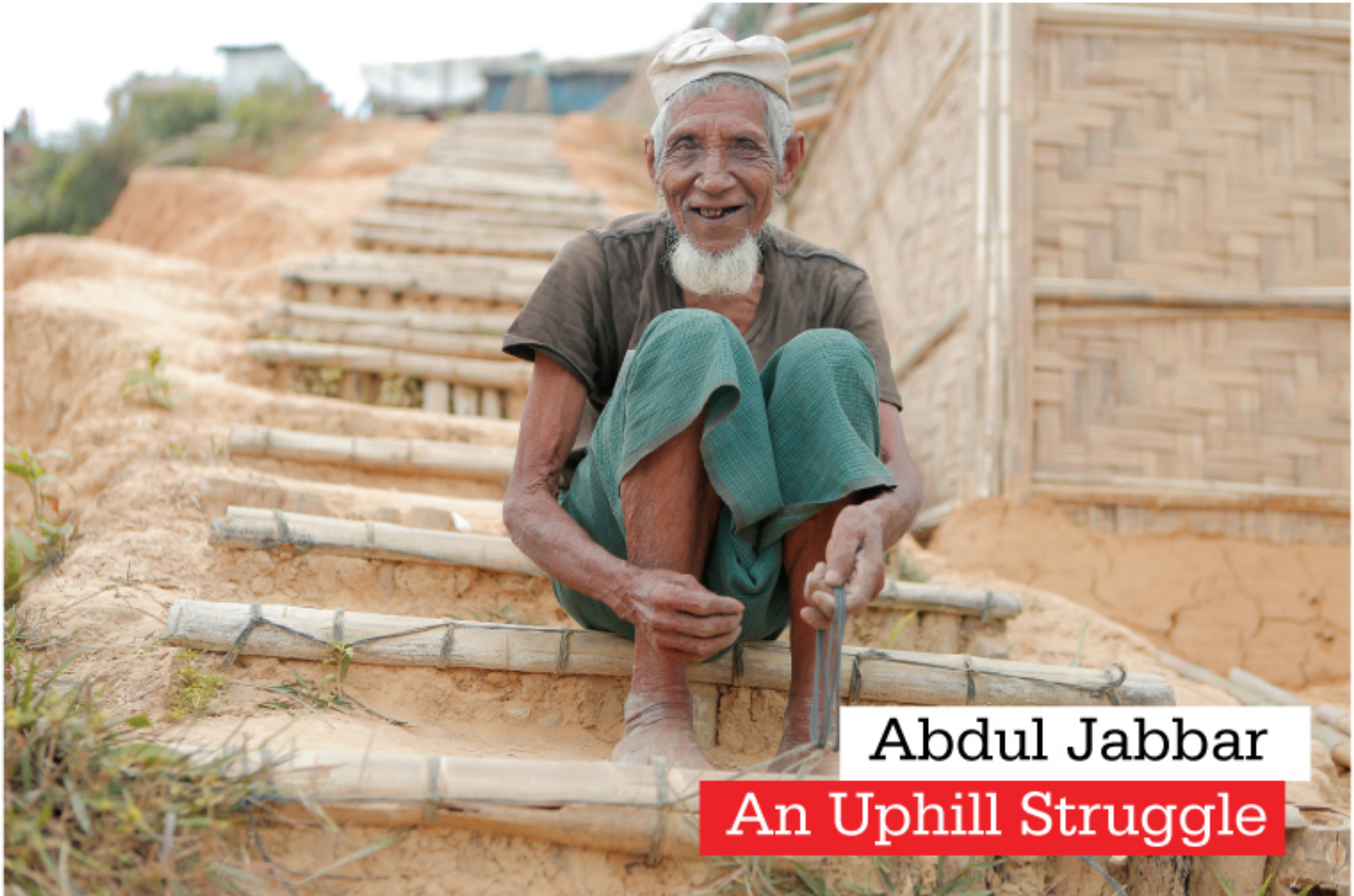




EMOJI HOSSAIN  
১৫

CPP

CAMP  
UNTEER



Abdul Jabbar

## An Uphill Struggle

Abdul is nearly 80 years old. During the monsoon season, the steep walkways were treacherous for him, even with the aid of a cane. He slipped many times and hurt his back. The pain lingers on, even after medication.



**I slipped many times and hurt my back but the pain lingers on even after medication.**

Abdul Jabbar (80)

Abdul could no longer cope with the physical stress and so he informed the local Majhi. The Majhi contacted Christian Aid's Site Management Office for a solution. The office ran a survey to find that there were 30 elderly people living in the same block as Abdul. It took about 22 days for the entire walkway to be fitted with bamboo-laced steps.

Abdul has two children and five grandchildren. His daughter lives downhill from where his shelter is. His daily commute involves walking up and down this incline. He asked for the bamboo steps to be fitted with handrails so that he can hold onto them when going up and down.



Christian Aid has constructed 17 bamboo pathways in Camp 15 for people like Abdul. This solution not only enables safer mobility but also helps to counteract the risk of landslides.



## The Flying Dream of Azizur Rahman

Azizur was carried by his parents all the way from Myanmar to Bangladesh. He contracted polio when he was only three years old.



## I wanted to play with other children but I couldn't.

Azizur Rahman (14)

Azizur's condition was such that he needed help to go to the toilet and his brothers had to carry him to school. His parents reached out to a Community Mobiliser of CA who contacted Handicap International. They provided him with a high commode chair and a crutch. Now Azizur finds it liberating to be able to go to school on his own, without his brothers, and to spend more time with his friends.





There is one Christian Aid supported health post in Camp15, which is run by Dustho Sasthyo Kenrda (DSK). Four others have been started in November 2018 run by Dhaka Ahasania Mission in 4 different camps. These health posts are providing primary health care services to the population. There are also 4 pop-up clinics in camp 12, 13, 15 and 16 run by Dhaka Ahasania Mission.



## Safety Measures through Relocation of Rozia

Around twelve years ago Rozia's (pictured right) husband went missing in Myanmar. She has since raised her son and daughter all by herself. Rozia and her children started their journey to Bangladesh barefooted when the crackdown began. Eleven days later, they arrived at the Balukhali Camp.



At Balukhali they did not have any relatives. Her daughter was young and beautiful which attracted the attention of many men, who did not pass up chances to make advances. Feeling unsafe, Rozia contacted the officials at the Camp in Charge office (CiC) at Jamtoli camp. The officials referred them to the CA Site Management Office. They located some of Rozia's relatives at Jamtoli camp and arranged for her relocation there.

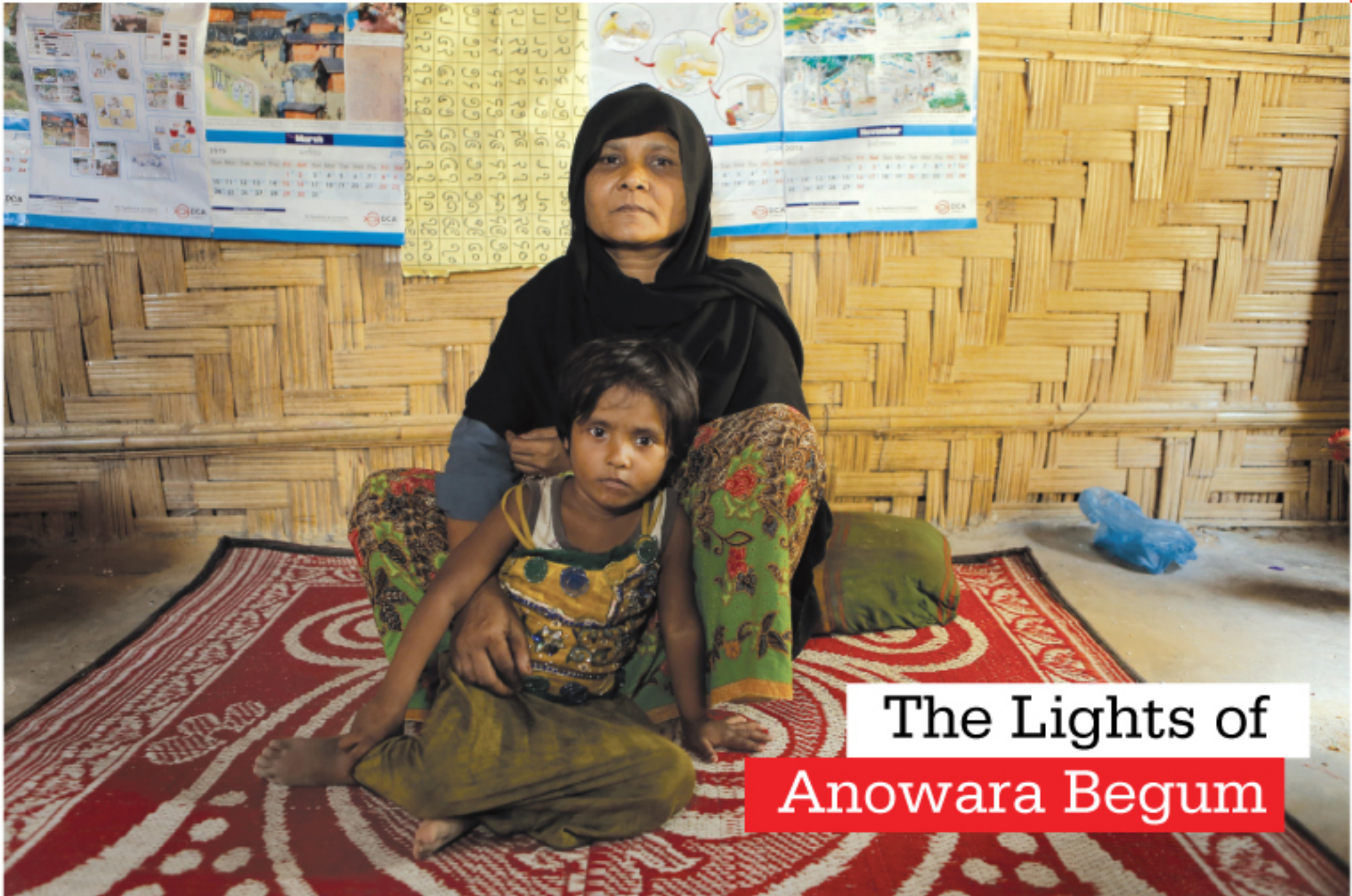
Christian Aid also transferred their names in the World Food Programme's food system from Balukhali to Jamtoli. It took one month for this change, but CA connected them with alternative food supply sources during this period.

Rozia expresses how much safer she feels after the relocation, especially as she has to manage the household on her own.

Up to October 2018, Christian Aid supported the Site Management Programme which has coordinated the relocation process for 152 families at Camp 15, ensuring their safety and security.







## The Lights of Anowara Begum

Fear of the dark was something as real as the breathable air for 40-year-old Anowara Begum. Mother of nine children, her youngest was only four when they arrived in Bangladesh. As darkness fell, movement outside became restricted and an atmosphere of danger encroached. "We couldn't see where we were stepping and would tumble over", recalls Anowara. She would take up night watch duty fearing that child abductors and predatory nocturnal animals would harm her family.



**We couldn't see where we were stepping and would tumble over**

Anowara Begum (40)

Anowara reached out to a Block Development Committee (BDC) member who took the issue to a BDC meeting. Solar lights were soon installed across Camp 15, making the nights safer for all the families. Anowara could finally sleep without worrying about her children's well-being.



With the support of Christian Aid, 551 street lights have been installed in Camp15 to make the nights safer for everyone.





## The Power of Shafiqa's Voice

Shafiqa (37) escaped with her five children along with five other families from her village of Shah Paran in Myanmar.

During the monsoon season, the tarpaulins of her shelter would give way to the elements, and water would leak inside. At other times, the gas would run out at the nearby CA supported community kitchen posing difficulties for Shafiqa.



A member of one of the eight Women Friendly Spaces in camp 15, supported by Christian Aid, approached Shafiqah with a voice recorder and asked about any gaps in services. Shafiqah's recording was sent to the relevant humanitarian actors through CA's Site Management Office, and solutions were put into place within the following days.

Pleased with the efficacy of this reporting mechanism, she and others voice many of their pressing problems through this channel--the latest being the need for torch lights so they can spot the wild elephants that often descend on to the camp from the hills at night!

Gathering complaints and feedback from households ensures that the voices and needs of every person are documented and communicated to the humanitarian actors for immediate response.







## Sanitation for Taslima

Taslima (24) used to live a comfortable life in Myanmar with her husband, Nur Mohammad, and three children. They owned a house, land and livestock, and her husband earned a living by driving a rickshaw van. It has been over a year now since they had to abandon all that relative comfort to settle for a tiny shelter in Cox's Bazar.



Taslima recalls how children and the elderly defecated openly around the shelters due to the absence of latrines. For the women, it involved hiking to nearby bushes to attend themselves in privacy.

Taslima and her community reached out to Christian Aid for a solution. A hygienic latrine was soon installed at her block that would serve 10 to 15 families. Over time Christian Aid set up a total of 670 latrines at Camp 15 and construct separate bathing cubicles, with buckets and soap, for men and women.

However, the latrine pits usually fill up every few days and require maintenance which the community manages to do by themselves. The lack of solar lamps in this block also poses challenges in using the facilities during night-time.

Taslima explained with a smile that only a couple more latrines and a nearby tubewell would make life a bit more comfortable for her community.



“Like a Diamond  
in the Sky”

Mohammad Hossain's courage and eleven-year-old legs raged against the dying of the light through ten unbearably long and harsh nights. It was during early September 2017 that he arrived on the shores of Bangladesh with his parents and five siblings.



Hossain is a keen learner. He expresses his eagerness to study more subjects, like science, at the CA supported Child Friendly Space (CFS). He learnt how to draw people and animals but has a fondness for drawing flowers. Besides enjoying English, he also studies the Burmese language, rhymes and life skills.







After school is over, he and his friends from the CFS play football. And when the wind is generous, he soars the skies with his kite – perhaps to remind himself of how far he can take his personal aspirations in this world.

The CFS that Hossain attends supports 38 other children like him. CA has set up six WCFS's (Women and Child Friendly Space) in Camp 15 with these kinds of facilities.



## Emergency Health Services

Nesaru (40) and her family of eleven, which includes seven children, arrived in Cox's Bazar during the heavy influx of Rohingya refugees. Their house was torched, and they saw many neighbours being assaulted or killed during the crackdown.

When she arrived, Nesaru did not have access to health services as the area had no health clinic nearby. Christian Aid opened the only health clinic at Camp 15 through its partner Dustho Sasthyo Kendra (DSK) in Nesaru's block, and word quickly spread around. She received free medicine and health checkups for her fever and cold during the winter. Whenever she or other members of the block fall ill, they know there is one trustworthy clinic that will not let them down.





**I feel really great to be able to contribute here being a student of public health**

Dr. Farhanaj

At times, more than a hundred patients visit the clinic in a day, as reported by Farhanaj Rahman (in picture). She has been working as a medical officer at the facility since June 2018. "Most cases are related to viral fever and vomiting," she adds. The clinic is equipped to give primary medical care, but the officers refer patients to Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) for more complex cases.



Dustho Sasthyo Kendra (DSK) operates the only health clinic at Camp15 which is supported by Christian Aid. In November 2018, Dhaka Ahsania Mission started four of these clinics at other camps with CA's support. They are also managing four pop-up clinics at Camps 12, 13, 15 and 16.



## Cultivating Green Hopes

Amena Khatun (51) seemed transfixed by the memories she was recounting about her home back in Kepudong, Myanmar. She had a very comfortable life with her three children. Amena used to grow potatoes and rice on their 4.6 acres of land.



## I need fertiliser for more produce and bamboos to support growth of the vines

Amena Khatun (51)

Snapping out of her trip down memory lane, she was trying to gather the words to describe her current life. Amena asked Christian Aid to create an open space in front of the nearby community kitchen for her vegetable garden. CA also provided her with seeds, so she can start her farming project. Amena grows gourds and spinach in her garden, and she cooks them for her family of four.





“I need fertiliser for more produce and bamboos to support growth of the vines”, she says. Amena fondly keeps recalling how big her farm was back in Myanmar and the wide variety of crops she used to grow.