

Stories of Inspiration



Rahama finds inspiration



Rahama is a bright 12-year old who arrived in Bangladesh almost 11 months ago and unlike many other girls in the camp, Rahama likes to wear make-up and stay prim and proper. She enjoys playing with her friends and going to school. A year before they escaped Myanmar, their schools were closed down and she could not go to school, meet her friends or play freely. “The mogs (non-Muslim Myanmar nationals) would chase and disturb us when we played outside.” she said.

She likes the school in the camps. In Myanmar, the teachers were different. They gave very little attention to students and would just send them home after lessons. But at the schools in the camps, the teachers are nicer. They give much more attention and care to them and she really likes going to the schools. **“I want to be a teacher when I grow up, but not like the ones back home, but the like the ones in the camps,”** she said. She wants to be the type of teacher who is kind, caring and nurturing.



Story and Photo: Nusrat Daud
Pritha/CARE

Community leader is what Lal Jaan wants to be



Story and Photo: Evelin Jaïta
Kumales/CARE

Lal Jaan (35) came to Bangladesh last year, along with hundreds and thousands of people who fled Myanmar when communal violence erupted in the northern Rakhine state. When the violence spread to their village and people were being abducted and killed, she came away with her husband and four children. They walked for seven days to reach Bangladesh. Once here, they were located to a makeshift shelter in Block A, Camp 16, Potibunia.

“My perception changed a lot when I saw many Bangladeshi women working, studying and going out easily. Initially, we were hesitant but eventually we realized that there is nothing wrong if women to go out to study or work. I was very inspired seeing the apas, so when I got the opportunity to become a Watch Committee member, I immediately took it. Being able to help women overcome their stress and problems is very rewarding.”

Aside from being an active woman in the community, Lal Jaan also wants her children to lead a Professional’s life. “I want my daughters to work as well, so I sent my elder daughters to give interview for BRAC’s sewing courses, which is going to open very soon in the camp”, she stated optimistically. Moreover, her younger daughter and son go to the camp’s school for education on English, Burmese and mathematics.

She is seeing a different way of life in Bangladesh and it has inspired her to work for her community. **“I want to be a female Majhi** (refugee community leaders which are mostly men)”, she said with determination.

Fatema wants to do more



Story and Photo: Nusrat Daud
Pritha/CARE

Fatema Khatun (25) is a resident of Block D4, Camp 1W. Her regular activities include collecting relief, cleaning her small shelter and cooking for the family. Twice or thrice a day, she goes to the tube well site to fetch water, which is just twenty steps away from her shelter. This has been her life for the last eleven months, and it has become quite monotonous for her. **“It would be great if we had some scope to work now. I am good at sewing and so if I got a sewing machine, I could make clothes for others and earn some money.”**

But she realizes that, given the huge number of refugees, it will not be possible to give sewing machines to every household. “I wouldn’t mind going to a common sewing place if there was one.” she added.