

**From the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh:**Meet **Rojina Begum, Riya Moni and Toyoba Begum** from Cox's Bazar

In August 2017, an outbreak of hostilities in Myanmar triggered the displacement of more than 600,000 Rohingya people, who fled across the border into Bangladesh to seek refuge. Their plight not only affected the lives of Rohingya men, women and children, but also the communities in Bangladesh who became their hosts.

Population density was already high in Bangladesh and resources stretched, when thousands of Rohingya arrived at their doorstep in the flood and disaster-prone district of Cox's Bazar that overnight turned into the world's largest refugee camp complex.

As of 2022, an estimated 541,000 Bangladeshi host community members in Cox's Bazar are known to be in dire need of humanitarian assistance. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is assisting both Rohingya and their host communities to enhance their protection, build new livelihoods, improve shelter conditions, and offer critical camp management support. Meet three aspiring and resilient Bangladeshis who are among the 1.4 million people living in and around the 34 camps established for the Rohingya.

**A Bangladeshi advocate for Covid-19 protection in Cox's Bazar**

'DRC has taught me to reduce exposure to the Covid-19 pandemic and this has significantly changed my lifestyle. I didn't know how to wash hands properly. I didn't wear slippers when I walked outdoor, nor did I cover my mouth while sneezing. All such habits had a damaging effect on the health of my children and myself.'

'Ladies, this is how you make masks, can you try to do it on your own now?' Every day, Rojina Begum (38) is spreading the knowledge of hygiene and safety through mask making during Covid-19 pandemic.

Rojina Begum, a mother of four, is living in the Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh. She and her husband are day labourers and work on agricultural land. The menial wages could barely meet the family expenses and their situation had deteriorated since hundreds of thousands of people suddenly arrived in 2017 asking for refuge and protection. Additionally, when the Covid-19 pandemic started in 2020, like many others in the community, Rojina was facing health risks and had no idea how to protect her family.

Rojina became one of 30 members in her community who empowered themselves with the skills of mask making through Covid-19 awareness campaigns and training provided by DRC's Community-Based Protection Programme.

DRC's Protection Programme encourages the trainees to adapt healthy habits and life skills. Along with the other beneficiaries, Rojina learned from DRC how to perform basic first aid, how to make oral saline treatment, how to measure fever, and how to track height and weight.

Rojina and her peers received fabric and sewing materials from DRC and were trained to make handmade masks that are washable and can be reused.

'We were suffering not only from unemployment but also because we worried about our health and access to help if we got sick. Since we earn so little money, we can't afford to buy masks and sanitisers that we could see were needed.'





Soon after the training ended, Rojina started to spread her knowledge among her family members and friends. Now, she makes masks for her family and offers them to the neighbours, too.

‘I learned how to talk in the community and speak to different people including from the authorities, and we got information about our rights as citizens and most importantly I also became aware of the laws and health risks associated with child marriage practices that are prevalent in my community.’



‘We assist the communities to learn about the importance of hygiene, how it influences our health, and how many diseases can be prevented by simple healthy habits in daily lives.’

- Mohammad Salahuddin,  
DRC Protection Officer, Cox’s Bazar

The Protection Programme is funded by the European Union and supports approximately 20,000 Rohingya and Bangladeshi host community members in Cox’s Bazar.

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