

Halima, Bangladesh



Watch Halima's film

This video contains sensitive themes and may not be suitable for younger viewers. Supervision is recommended.

Halima is raising two young children in a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, while caring for her mother who has a disability. They fled fighting in their home country of Myanmar in 2017, arriving at the camp in Bangladesh with almost nothing.



"In Myanmar, we have always been victims of discrimination. Leaving our homeland and coming to an unknown country for us is just a matter of survival. I felt devastated inside."

During the three-day journey to Bangladesh, with little to eat, Halima walked across mountains and through jungles, fearful of animals, often carrying her mother. She arrived at Cox's Bazar with no way of providing the most basic needs for her children and with no way to protect them from the scorching sun.

Caritas Australia, through its partner organisation, Caritas Bangladesh, provided Halima with a stove and gas, so that she could cook for her family, and helped her to set up a makeshift shelter.

Halima participated in a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) program, learning safe hygiene practices, how to source clean drinking water and to keep her family clean and healthy in the densely-populated camp.

"My life has changed a lot after participating in the WASH program," Halima says. "Before, my kids fell sick two or three times a month. Now I can keep my children clean, educate them and cover expenses for their needs. I can feed them balanced food and ensure our clothes are clean. I can afford a doctor and medicines for my mother."

Around 10,580 people, have benefitted from the program so far.

Halima aspired to 'Be More'. Taking small steps, she made a big difference in daily lives, sowing seeds of hope for the future.

Halima's training became more important as the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

"I was very worried for my family and myself," Halima says. "There was the possibility of it spreading very quickly since we live in a densely-populated camp.

With the help of community mobilisers, like Halima, Caritas Bangladesh and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) worked to minimise the spread of coronavirus by distributing information, hygiene kits, soap, masks and protective equipment, installing hand-washing stations, and conducting training sessions about COVID-19.

In the future, Halima hopes to live a peaceful life, with a secure livelihood - perhaps someday returning to her homeland.

"We are very thankful to Australian people. We pray for their sound health and positivity so that they can keep stretching a helping hand as always," says Halima. "Thank you very much Caritas Australia."

Learning Tasks



Task 1: Discuss

- How do you think Halima and her family felt leaving their home?
- What were some of the challenges Halima and her family faced?
- In what ways did Caritas Australia and their partners help?
- What dangers did Halima face when travelling to Bangladesh?
- How has the WASH program helped Halima and her family?
- What are some of Halima's hopes for the future?
- What surprised you about Halima's story?
- How might Halima's future look?
- What do you think would have been the hardest thing about travelling to Cox's Bazar?
- Explain how as a community we can help people like Halima.

Curriculum: English Year 5: ACELY1703 Year 6: ACELY1713, HASS Year 6: ACHASSK141

Task 2: Deep Dive

What would you pack if you were going on a three-day holiday?

What would you take out or put in if you had to carry everything you needed for this holiday?

- Pack a bag at school for the class, putting in things that as a class you think you would need if you were going on a holiday. Take it in turns throughout the day to carry the bag. Do not leave the bag unattended. Someone must be carrying it at all times.
- What happened throughout the day?
- What was hard about this activity?
- How might Halima have felt having to carry her bag and her family's bags for three days?
- What might Halima have put in her bags?

Task 3: Play Games

Children around the world play games all the time. In many cases, just like Halima's children, games are played with very little equipment. Sometimes drawing from nature, sometimes using recycled materials.

- Research games played by children in the four feature countries this Project Compassion as well as Myanmar, which is where Halima and her children had walked from.

- Spend an afternoon teaching each other games from each of these places
- Write an article for the school newsletter explaining what you did. Don't forget to include some photographs of the afternoon.

Task 4: Catholic Social Teaching

Subsidiarity and Participation: All people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Subsidiarity requires that decisions are made by the people closest and most affected by the issues and concerns of the community.

How is subsidiarity and participation shown in Halima's story?

Who could we talk to, to make sure refugees have the chance to share their opinions and participate in decisions that affect them?

Task 5: RE Link

Read Matthew 25:31-46. What might Jesus say today about refugees? What Christian values do we demonstrate when we welcome the stranger?

As a class, research possibilities and decide what you will do to help refugees.

Task 6: Belonging & Resilience

Halima and her family had to leave behind what they knew to travel to Cox's Bazar. When they arrived they had to find out how to belong and fit in. This would have required resilience.

Watch the movie [The Present](#) (approx. 4 mins) and discuss the resilience the characters in the movie had and the resilience that Halima and her children had. What can you learn from them?

Curriculum: HPE Year 5 & 6: ACPPS051