

Jamila, Bangladesh



[Watch the Primary School film](#)



Jamila is a single mother who lives with her daughter and mother in the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh.

Jamila arrived at the Cox's Bazar refugee camp, after walking for five or six days from Myanmar with almost nothing. She had carried her daughter, accompanied by her elderly mother, sister and brother-in-law. Leaving Myanmar was very hard.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people have crossed into Bangladesh since August 2017, fleeing dangerous fighting. Over 1.3 million people remain in the densely populated camps, in desperate need of help.

Cox's Bazar is already one of the most vulnerable districts in Bangladesh due to its increased exposure to natural disasters, poverty, poor education and limited job opportunities. Even before the refugee crisis, 33 percent of residents lived below the national poverty line, 17 percent below the extreme poverty line.

When Jamila arrived at the refugee camp, she was given emergency food and shelter. However, as a woman alone without any job skills, Jamila was facing an uncertain future.

With hope for a better life, Jamila joined the camp's Women Friendly Spaces project, run by Caritas Bangladesh. In this safe, joyful and motivating environment, Jamila felt a sense of belonging. She received support, learnt about health and hygiene, and participated in a parenting program. She also signed up for a sewing workshop to help refugee women to earn an income.

"For the first time in my life, in the camp, I felt cared for and accepted," Jamila says. "The facilitators took care of my daughter, so that I could attend classes. My worries of an uncertain future are disappearing. It was like a ray of hope that spreads in the dark night, through the light of the Women Friendly Spaces," Jamila says.

Jamila now feels like she has a family and a community. She, her mother and daughter feel less alone.

So far, about 280,000 people have been helped by this program, thanks to the generosity of Caritas Australia's supporters.

Just as things were looking up in the camp, COVID-19 hit.

Caritas Australia's partners, Caritas Bangladesh and Catholic Relief Services (CRS – Caritas USA) were able to quickly act, through education and training sessions, installing hand-washing stations, repairing toilets, and distributing soap and masks.

Jamila, her daughter and her elderly mother have remained strong, through their challenges. At the moment, she cannot afford to buy fabric but Jamila hopes to make a living from her sewing in the future.

"Jamila will be able to create a living through her learning from this program," says Ankhi Akter, Program Manager for the Women Friendly Spaces Project.

"I am proud of my potential and strength that was hidden before. I will bring up my 'fairy girl' providing good financial support, I wish to raise her as happy-go-lucky and bring her up with dignity. I will make her a bright life," Jamila says smiling.

Learning Tasks



Teacher Note: Before undertaking any activities on the topic of refugees, please take some time to think about the students you have in your class. Are some of them refugees, in the process of seeking asylum or are they stateless?

Primary Film

We recommend watching the Primary school film to give students a brief introduction to the topics covered.

Task 1: Discuss

- What does it mean to be a refugee?
- What were the challenges that Jamila and her daughter faced?
- How did Caritas Australia help Jamila?
- What do you think the living conditions might be like for Jamila?
- What is one thing that surprised you about this story? Why did it surprise you?
- Why do you think Jamila thought it was better to leave Myanmar than to stay?
- How might Jamila earn an income in the future?
- How might Jamila's involvement in the Women Friendly Spaces project help her and her daughter in the future?
- What problems may have existed if Caritas Australia didn't help during COVID-19?
- What are Jamila's hopes for the future? What are your hopes for the future? How are they the same or different?

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

Task 2: Refugee Prayer Pilgrimage

A pilgrimage is a prayerful journey that people make to a special place— sometimes to a church. This pilgrimage will be a prayerful focus on refugees, “walking alongside” refugees like Jamila who are forced to make very dangerous journeys to find safety and a better life.

Prayer Pilgrimage

Curriculum: Religious Education/ Geography- Y6 ACHASSK141/ Civics and Citizenship- Y5 ACHASSK118, Y6 ACHASSK148, HPE ACPPS051.

Task 3: Refugee Crisis Simulation

A simulation activity inviting young people to follow a family on a journey to safety.

Refugee Simulation

Curriculum: Geography- Y6 ACHASSK14, Civics and Citizenship - Y5 ACHASSK118, Y6 ACHASSK148.

Task 4: Catholic Social Teaching

- How do you see the Catholic Social Teaching of Human Dignity reflected in this story?
- How can treating each other respectfully make the world a better place?

Task 5: RE Link

Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refugees.

Read Matthew 2:13-15.

How might Joseph and Mary have felt when they had to leave home to find a safe place?

Challenge students to tell or write the story from Mary's point of view.