



**BOOKS  
UNBOUND**



**TARGETED INFORMAL LEARNING FOR REFUGEES**



## THE EDUCATION CRISIS

Education in refugee camps is a luxury. When resources are stretched thin and families are displaced, education is often neglected. With little formal opportunity to learn, cognitive development is compromised and refugees fall victim to depression. Through targeted services, time in camps can be redeemed to promote educational growth.

## BOOKS UNBOUND

Books Unbound delivers targeted informal learning for refugees. The picture-based curriculum is designed specifically for the ethnic group, making it relatable and culturally sensitive. Whether a self-taught or instructor-based environment, Books Unbound's illustrative curriculum provides multiple avenues to learning.

# BOOKS UNBOUND'S APPROACH

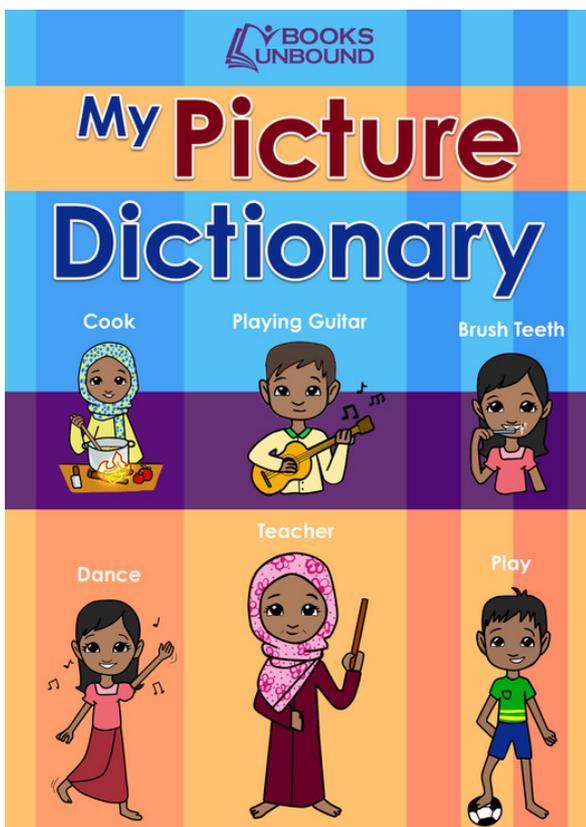
A picture-based curriculum reaches both literate and illiterate individuals, allowing for a more inclusive learning environment. The cultural-specific illustrations target the individual with more relevant learning materials. A more relatable context fosters greater engagement.

## TEACHER PLATFORM

Books Unbound's approach is informal to make it attainable for teachers and students alike. The picture-based curriculum provides multiple approaches to lesson plan designs. An online platform is provided for individuals to share their Books Unbound lesson plan ideas. These are displayed in short video segments of in-classroom demonstrations. The platform is open to anyone who wants to teach, reducing the barriers of entry to teaching and encouraging informal education. This model reaches those who cannot access a traditional learning environment with a qualified teacher and structured curriculum.

## ARTIST PLATFORM

The picture dictionary was developed by volunteers through Books Unbound's online artist platform. This platform was established to collect culturally-specific artwork from individuals around the world. The artists range from young refugees to professional illustrators. All illustrations are digital and kept on an online database, allowing for opportunity to expand into a digital learning platform.



# ORGANIZATION HISTORY

Books Unbound was informally developed to address the needs of a small group of Rohingya refugees who fled persecution in 2015. Separated from their families, they traveled from Myanmar by boat for two months before landing in southern Thailand. They were arrested while hiding in the jungles and taken to a temporary shelter. That's where Sophie Danielson met them.

With an uncertain future, these refugees waited for resettlement to some unknown country. They were bored and hungry to learn English, the language that they would likely need in any resettlement. Few learning materials were available to them, and none were relatable or relevant to their situation. Many lost motivation to learn.

Sophie worked with the Rohingya and other volunteers to create a culturally sensitive picture-based curriculum. A picture of a Rohingya Muslim woman squatting near a fire portrayed the word "cook" instead of a Western woman standing near an electric stove. A culturally specific illustration fostered more engagement. Books Unbound was born.

Sophie used some of these tools to support the refugees during their time in transition, and that foundation helped their successful resettlement to the United States.



# THE ROHINGYA PROJECT

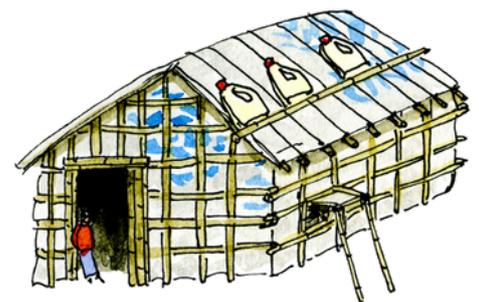
## BACKGROUND

In August 2017, a violent crackdown against the Rohingya Muslims in western Myanmar forced a mass exodus to neighboring Bangladesh. An estimated 1 million Rohingya refugees are currently living in Kutupalong, the world's largest refugee camp. Over half a million children are deprived of education because of a lack of learning resources, quality curriculum, and shortage of qualified teachers.



## SCOUTING TRIP AND INFORMAL PILOTING

Books Unbound started building its team of volunteer artists and developed 100 illustrations. These were informally piloted in Kutupalong in August 2018. This was conducted in both formal and informal learning facilities. The feedback collected established the groundwork for developing a full Rohingya picture dictionary,



# THE ROHINGYA PICTURE DICTIONARY

Vocabulary was collected and narrowed down from Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and throughout the United States. Over 265 Rohingya-specific illustrations were developed by 35 volunteer artists in 16 different countries. All artwork was designed specifically for Books Unbound and contributed voluntarily. These illustrations are all digital and kept on the online database.



## ROHINGYA TEACHERS

Several Rohingya teachers are selected to take initiative for the online teacher platform. Distribution of the Rohingya picture dictionary for the pilot project will establish a foundation for the teachers to develop lesson plans. Short video segments giving in-classroom lesson plans will be developed, laying the groundwork for the online teacher platform. This approach reduces barriers of entry to teaching.



# OUTREACH

## FUNDRAISING

Successfully raised \$15,000 for the pilot project through crowdfunding and public speaking opportunities.



## CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Collected over 265 Rohingya-specific illustrations from volunteer artists through social media.



## AWARENESS

Featured on the front page of the Colorado Springs Gazette.  
15 speaking opportunities in 6 cities.



# PILOT PROJECT: OBJECTIVES

Location: Kutupalong, Bangladesh

## TAILOR THE CURRICULUM

Identify how the curriculum can be tailored to address the most urgent needs. Each illustration must be thoroughly piloted to test efficacy and cultural sensitivity.

## BUILD THE TEACHER PLATFORM

Introduce and establish guidelines for usage of picture-based teaching concept. Collect a database of lesson plan ideas to build the online teacher platform from Rohingya teachers.

## EXTENSION

Determine the feasibility and resources available to extend into a digital learning platform. Continue building database of illustrations through story documentation and increased marketing efforts.

# ROHINGYA REUNIONS: STORYTELLING

In August 2017, Sophie received word from her Rohingya friends in the States about their family members who fled to Bangladesh. She traveled to the refugee camps outside of Cox's Bazar in March 2018, where she found those family members.

There were two resounding requests from the Rohingya. They wanted to tell their stories and they wanted immediate education. Sophie developed the project further and returned to Bangladesh in August 2018 to find more family members. In collaboration with local NGOs, Books Unbound was piloted in temporary learning centers, child friendly spaces, and home-based learning shelters.

Books Unbound is used to educate and break down barriers so that the true stories of the displaced Rohingya can be told. In the past three years, social media has become the tool of choice to reach what is arguably a global Rohingya diaspora. As of this writing, Rohingya residing in 12 different countries have reached out to Sophie to tell their stories.

Throughout the years, Sophie's personal connection with these people has built a trust that fosters candid storytelling. Sophie continues to travel to meet directly with the Rohingya to hear their experiences and share their stories with a global audience through blogging, video shorts, and speaking engagements.

# ROHINGYA REUNIONS

Traveled to over 19 cities in 4 countries to find Rohingya friends and scattered family members.



## STORYTELLING

Documenting the stories of Rohingya friends through blogging, photography, and videography.

## OUTREACH

Speaking opportunities to raise awareness

# THE ROHINGYA PROJECT: TIMELINE

**MARCH, 2015**

A group of Rohingya women and children land in Thailand and are taken to a shelter in Phang Nga.

**JUNE, 2015**

Books Unbound is created at the shelter for the Rohingya.

**JANUARY, 2017**

The Rohingya families from Thailand are resettled to the States, where Sophie reunites with them.

**MAY, 2017**

Sophie finds lost Rohingya family members in Malaysia and Thailand.

**AUGUST, 2017**

The Myanmar military's violent crackdown against the Rohingya causes a mass influx of refugees into Bangladesh.

**MARCH, 2018**

Scouting trip to Bangladesh to find family members.

**AUGUST, 2018**

Informal piloting in Kutupalong.

**SEPTEMBER, 2018**

Project development, established online artist platform. Collected stories from Rohingya friends throughout the States.

**NOVEMBER, 2018**

Fundraising for pilot project through crowdfunding and public speaking opportunities.

**JANUARY, 2019**

Finalized content for picture dictionary, outreach to Rohingya families in the States.

**APRIL, 2019**

Pilot project launch in Kutupalong, Bangladesh.

**JULY, 2019**

Post-pilot project feedback and data collected. Propose graphic design projects with universities for improved project plan.

**AUGUST, 2019**

Reconnect with US-based Rohingya families, align improved project plan with strategic NGO partners.

**2020**

Books Unbound seeks additional funding to launch digital learning platform with strategic partners.

# TESTIMONIALS



Thailand, 2015

## HASINA

Hasina was one of the first students to learn through Books Unbound. After fleeing Myanmar by boat and landing in Thailand, she stayed at the temporary shelter with her mother and siblings for nine months. Hasina was 10 years old when she came to Thailand and had never been to school before. As a Rohingya Muslim girl, Hasina had little opportunity to receive a formal education. With a hunger for learning and desire to be an agent of change, she became the inspiration for Books Unbound. Books Unbound was Hasina's first opportunity to learn, which aided in her successful resettlement to the States.



Wisconsin, 2017

Hasina is now living with her mother and siblings in Wisconsin. She is studying at a public school and has been awarded Student of the Month two times. She credits Books Unbound as her first exposure to learning and advocates for the project to be implemented in the refugee camps in Bangladesh, where her Rohingya friends and family are living. Hasina wants to go to medical school and become a doctor so she can help her Rohingya community.

# TESTIMONIALS

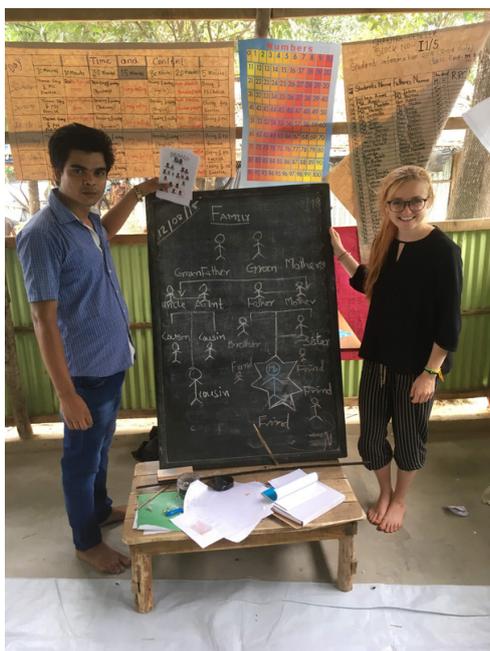
## MURTAZA



Murtaza is Hasina's uncle and currently lives in the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh. He fled Myanmar in August 2017 after the Burmese soldiers invaded and set fire to his village. A chief leader in his village and one of the more educated Rohingya individuals,



Murtaza continues to be an agent of change in the refugee camps. He teaches students on a daily basis at an informal learning center. With just a blackboard and some posters, Murtaza's school has limited learning materials, making it difficult to provide a quality education to the students.



In August 2018, Murtaza was given the Books Unbound curriculum, which he was able to successfully implement into his school. The student feedback on Books Unbound was extremely positive.

# FUTURE PLANS

Books Unbound seeks to extend to other ethnic minorities based upon success of the Rohingya project.



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