

Teacher Resources

Citizens of Nowhere:

Modified copy for kids.

<https://www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/citizens-nowhere-rohingya-refugees>

Five-year-old Jannatul Firdous is deep in thought. How best to describe the meaning of her name? Jannatul Firdous means heaven — the best heaven — so she wants to get it right. “Heaven is a place where children can play.” “There are many flowers,” continues Jannatul. “There is a big pond of water. Heaven is a happy place.”

Jannatul lives in Camp 13 a refugee camp. This is a place for people who need to leave their own country because of brokenness. Some of the people left because they were being persecuted. Where Jannatul now lives, is no heaven. Children play in the dirt, kicking up dust that floats in the hot afternoon air. It’s far from the lush, green countryside surrounding the home she fled in Myanmar. Here, there’s no playful splashing in big ponds. Instead, Jannatul must lug heavy metal water containers from a pump up a steep hillside that leads to her family’s homemade shelter.

In Camp 13, some sweat under a hot sun and smell the stink of diesel fuel. They can hear the sound of clinking shovels and pinging hammers, as people work hard to lay bricks and fill burlap bags to protect the steep hillsides and prepare for the coming rainy season.

Jannatul lives in the world’s largest refugee camp in Bangladesh. Of its nearly 1 million residents, more than half are children.

Meeting basic needs was the goal when World Vision began helping refugees at the camp. Jannatul and Salima were among the first to receive help. “World Vision gave me shelter,” says her mom Salima. The shelters built by new arrivals were put up in a hurry, made from chopped-down trees and covered with tarps handed out by the U.N. Then World Vision provided bamboo poles, cement, and additional tarps to strengthen the shelters against the seasonal rains.

Salima was one of 150,000 people camp-wide who received essentials like hygiene kits and cooking equipment — desperately needed by people who arrived with little more than the clothes they wore.

Water was another essential need. In Camp 13, World Vision installed deep tube-wells, pumps, and outhouses. By the end of 2018, 158,000 people had access to water and sanitation services in Salima’s camp and 12 others.

Urgent health issues were also addressed. World Vision, working in partnership with the World Food Program gave food to more than 13,000 children.

No one had any money, but World Vision gave people jobs so they could build roads, bridges, and drainage systems in the camp. Salima helps fill burlap sandbags that are used to prevent landslides during the yearly monsoon rains that turn the camps into a muddy, hazardous mess.

The money she earns each day, will buy Jannatul something special — a chicken for dinner or bananas to supplement their daily diet of rice and lentils that is provided to all refugees by the World Food Program.

After a long day of work, it’s time for Salima to sing Jannatul to sleep. The best part of the day has arrived, a time to close her eyes and pull her daughter close, tasting heaven for a moment in a place that’s anything but.