



# BORDER CROSSINGS

A Newsletter of the Brackett Refugee Education Fund (BREF)



## Schools in Kutupalong for Rohingya Children

From Children on the Edge (COTE)



### IN THIS ISSUE

**SCHOOLS IN  
KUTUPALONG**

**THE VOLUNTEER ESL  
TEACHER'S PROJECT**

**SCHOLARSHIP  
APPLICATION UPDATES**

Through learning centers in the Kutupalong Refugee Camp in Bangladesh, around 7,000 Rohingya children who are otherwise cut off from learning, benefit from daily access to basic education, play, health inputs, nutritional support and creative opportunities. Their daily digital lessons are projected onto screens in 150 classrooms, breaking down language barriers and enabling children to genuinely understand and learn.

Over the second half of 2022, the program was really gaining momentum, with 400 digital lessons prepared in the Rohingya language being rolled out in every center. Glowing feedback about the digital lessons was pouring in from parents, teachers and children, who were overjoyed to finally be able to understand what was being taught.

Unfortunately, without notice, the Bangladesh authorities decided to require the Myanmar government's Burmese-language textbooks for all schools in the refugee camps in Bangladesh. This singular move, set our education efforts back to square one, negating the hundreds of



video lessons created that were based upon the previously-approved textbooks. The new textbooks are written in a language which very few teachers or students can understand. Changing curriculums has not only been a huge logistical challenge but, with no sign of safe repatriation on the horizon, it means the children have an even lesser chance of using their education to integrate into Bangladesh. Despite this, children have expressed how much they hope to one day go back to Myanmar as educated people. They have heard about the lush, spacious environments their parents used to enjoy in their home country; a stark contrast to the overcrowding and disease in the camp.

**Your donations directly help fund these 7,000 children, their education, curriculum, and opportunity for a better life.**



## A Gap in the Education

About a year ago, we started noticing that there was a gap in the education pipeline. Many teenagers have little to no high school education. If they do, it might not be recognized in their host country. The problem is most severe in Myanmar where schools are not operating, children are not being educated, and intensified conflict makes it more difficult for families to flee in search of better opportunities. With this in mind, we are working on some different ideas to close the gap in the pipeline. BREF already supports many primary and secondary schools, and we also award scholarships for students to study in universities, but for children who have not attended secondary school, we need to find a way for them to continue their education.





Generally speaking, the best way for a student with less education to get into a university is by passing the GED exam. BEAM Education Foundation offers GED PREP courses but they can be difficult to get accepted into, especially for a student that has not attended high school. BREF is very excited about the possibility of closing this important gap and are actively looking for volunteer teachers that can teach basic high school subjects. If you or someone you know might be interested, we'd love for you to reach out to us at [bracketoffice@gmail.com](mailto:bracketoffice@gmail.com) or search for "Volunteer ESL Teachers" on Facebook and join our group!

## Scholarship Application Update

Over the years BREF has had to adapt to challenges inside our Scholarship Program. With fewer boots on the ground we've made some changes to the way we internally evaluate scholarship applicants. This year, we've asked students to submit a video of themselves answering some questions to help us get a better idea of the students' background, education, goals and dreams in life. This is starting to take the place of the in-person interviews and allows our Board of Trustees to take a bigger part in evaluating the applicants. This spring, the Board has been busy watching these videos and reviewing applications and we are really enjoying this personal new touch. We still use Treps to monitor our scholarship students throughout their education and our student's graduation rates are high.



# The Brackett Refugee Education Fund

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[www.brackettfund.org](http://www.brackettfund.org)

The Brackett Refugee Education Fund, established in April 1997, is a small not-for-profit foundation organized to help educate refugees. Currently the Fund is concentrating its efforts on refugees from Burma in India, Thailand and Bangladesh. Our trustees are Russell Brackett (Interim Chair of the Board and Executive Director), Brian Brackett, Penelope Brackett, Paulo Flor, Melinda Jackson, Jenny Jones, John Littleton, and Kathy Sabino. The Fund has 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, EIN 16-1523586. It seeks support from friends, family and foundations. In order to make most efficient use of the money it receives, the Fund has adopted the following policies:

- All administrative and communication costs will be supported by the trustees;
- Living and travel expenses of trustees and volunteers, while on business for the Fund, will be donated by themselves;
- The Fund will not sell or give away the names and addresses of any of its contributors;
- Although the Fund is happy to receive contributions at any time, only one fundraising campaign will be made each year;
- The Fund has no paid employees, so administrative and fundraising expenses are very low, typically less than 4% of total expenditures; and
- Because the trustees donate far more than required for administrative purposes, every dollar you donate will go towards helping people receive an education.