

Teaching about Myanmar and the Rohingya through One Man's Eyes

Introduction by EAA Editorial Office

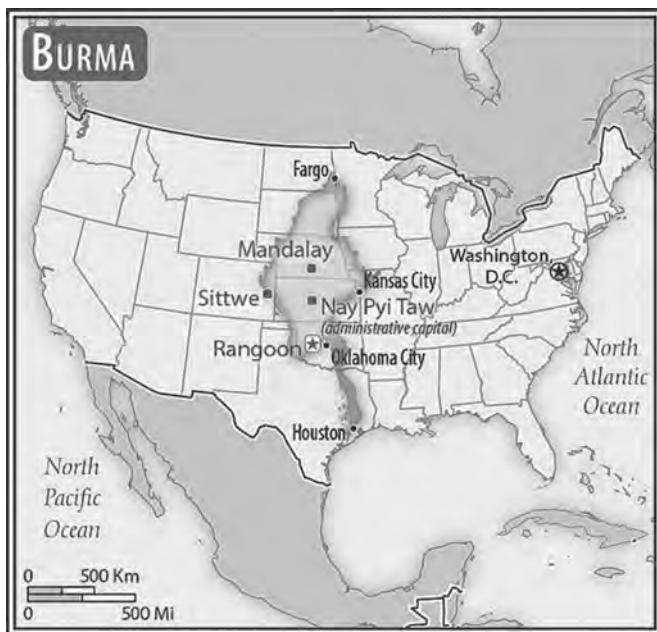


Image 1: Myanmar (Burma) superimposed on the United States. Source: The CIA's World Factbook at <https://tinyurl.com/rm2cywym>.

Background Facts for Teachers and Students

Physical and Human Geography

Myanmar (Burma) is the forty-second of 257 countries in size, encompassing 676,578 square kilometers (approximately 261,228 square miles). Burma is slightly smaller than Texas.

Myanmar's estimated population of 51.5 million makes it the twenty-sixth largest population and slightly larger than South Korea's 51.4 million—clearly a “middle-sized” nation-state population. The Burmese government had estimated a population of 61 million people, but the actual population is almost certainly lower than the 2014 census. There has been substantial labor and forced migration. Myanmar's life expectancy rates are some of the lowest in Southeast Asia, and its infant and maternal mortality rates are among the highest in Southeast Asia.

Buddhists constitute almost 88 percent of the population, with Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Animists, and those indicating “other” or “none” comprising the remaining portions of the population. Muslims constitute 4.3 percent of the population, but now it is estimated the Muslim population is probably approximately 3 percent of the population at most, due to the large outmigration of the *Rohingya* population, almost all Muslim, since 2017.

The bordering countries of Myanmar include Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, and Thailand. Bangladesh is especially important in understanding the plight of the Rohingya.

History

The British colonized Myanmar in the nineteenth century, and the country was granted independence in 1947. The nation contains ethnic Burmans, the dominant group constituting approximately two-thirds of the nation's population, and large numbers of ethnic and religious minority groups. In 1962, General Ne Win seized power, and authoritarian military governments have, for the most part, ruled Myanmar ever since. In 1982, Win listed 135 ethnicities as natives to Myanmar but omitted the Rohingya, a predominantly Muslim (some Rohingya are Hindu) population primarily located in the Rakhine (Arakan) State that borders the Bay of Bengal, from the list and they became noncitizens in their own country. The official reason is they are an immigrant community rather than a group that is native to Myanmar. In 1988, a new military regime came to power, and two years later, the military government permitted an election. When the National League for Democracy (NLD) headed by Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) won a resounding victory, the regime placed her under house arrest for most of the next twenty years. Attracting national and international attention for its oppressive behaviors, the military government seemingly showed more willingness regarding the creation of a more open society, bringing ASSK into the government in 2012 and permitting a 2015 election that resulted in a resounding NLD victory, but the military government staged another coup in early February 2021. ASSK is now in prison for life unless the situation changes.

Currently, Myanmar is experiencing a civil war that began in 2021 with no end in sight. Parliamentary members expelled by the military in late 2020 formed a shadow National Unity Government (NUG)



Image 2: Map of Myanmar (Burma). Source: The University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection at <https://tinyurl.com/2p9e2t9r>.

and created the People's Defense Force (PDF) to fight the military regime. The situation is complicated by the existence of other armed minority groups with various levels of commitment to the NUG and the PDF. Ever since their classification as noncitizens in 1982, the Rohingya population has suffered from military persecution aided by many (not all) Buddhists who live in Rakhine State. The military persecution has included genocide that forced the Rohingya to flee Myanmar.

Even before the latest military coup, in 2017, an estimated 750,000 Rohingya fled Rakhine State into neighboring Bangladesh via the Bay of Bengal. The Naf River that empties into the Bay of Bengal, according to eye witnesses, ran red with Rohingya blood from August to September 2017 with the Burmese military and its supporters killing approximately 24,000 people. As you'll learn from the following interview, Rohingya were forced to stay in their villages and denied higher education opportunities, in what many believe to be the military government and its Burmese supporters' campaign of ethnic cleansing. Between 1978 and 2017, approximately 590,000 Rohingya had already fled primarily to Bangladesh, but also to Malaysia. Currently, almost one million Rohingya—a population larger than the local Bangladesh population—are living in refugee camps twenty miles from Cox's Bazar, a local beach resort area.

It is important to understand that although Bangladesh is a Muslim country, as one of the poorer countries in Asia, the government considers itself unable to accommodate the Rohingya population, and perhaps as important, the Rohingyas speak a dialect that is similar to certain parts of Bengal, but their dialect is unintelligible to many Bangladeshis. These are not immigrants, but interned refugees not permitted outside the refugee camps. The Bangladeshi government will not allow the refugees to construct permanent structures. Authorities will not allow the Rohingya refugees to study the Bangladesh school curriculum and force them to study the Burmese national curriculum. Schooling is limited for refugees by authorities in the Burmese curriculum for ages four to fourteen (class 1 to 9), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) oversees educational initiatives. Various NGOs provide education in the Burmese curriculum in the camps, but teachers are often unqualified. Many refugee students rely on community-run private or religious schools for a proper and formal education, especially beyond the limited Burmese curriculum. In December 2021, the Burmese government began a crackdown on these private institutions. The Bangladeshi government continues to, naively at this point, believe that the Rohingya will return to Myanmar. ♦



Image 3: Map of Rakhine (Arakan) State. Source: The Myanmar Information Unit via ResearchGate at <https://tinyurl.com/3r3nh3me>.

Sources: The CIA's *World Factbook*; "Tunku Vardarajan, 'Unwanted, Stateless, Fenced In,' *The Wall Street Journal*, April 29th, 2023; "Education Milestone for Rohingya Refugee Children as Myanmar Curriculum Pilot Reaches First 10,000 Children," *UNICEF*, May 1, 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/ms6e3weh>; Saif Hasnat and Sameer Yasir, "Bangladesh Shuttles Dozens of Schools Set Up by Rohingya in Camps," *The New York Times*, May 2, 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/ysrtt7e2>.

A Class Captain from Myanmar

Interview by Ann Bayliss

Background: Beginnings of a Conversation

What follows is “Siddique Bin Kasim’s” story, condensed from what he told me via the encrypted communication service WhatsApp this April 2023, from his shelter in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. The names of everyone involved have been changed to protect them, as the junta has been attempting to destroy testimony.

Our conversation traces its origins to a friendship made long before Siddique introduced himself via LinkedIn. I had been selling energy offsets to environmentally aware shoppers at farmers markets in New York City—a part-time job until I could find something better. One Sunday, a black-haired man my age was paired with me. He was studying engineering and was a good colleague for facts on renewable energy and world geography. When he offered to help with any computer issues I might have, we became friends. He came from Bangladesh, the poorest country in the world, he said. Dhaka, its capital, was called “City of Mosques” because it had so many houses of worship.

One day, he scrolled on his phone to show pictures of his vacation to a beach with blindingly white sand. “Cox’s Bazar is the longest beach in the world,” he said, and showed a picture of a little girl smiling up at him, with the ocean sparkling behind her.

When he had finished his studies and I had started working as a language teacher at Berlitz a few years later, he had a grim update: the longest, most beautiful beach in the world was now converted into a refugee camp.

It sounded like a temporary solution, but rather alarming. Prone to floods and landslides, the sandy, hilly expanse between Chittagong and the Bay of Bengal is not meant for long-term habitation. Yet in 2013, such a strip of sand was the only place of safety for an increasing number.

Now almost ten years into the future, one evening in 2022, I heard the plink of a “connect” request on LinkedIn. Someone wanted me to know about a school he was running with volunteer teachers. The location he gave was Cox’s Bazar, and he said he had been there since 2017. He and his colleagues, who were not officially authorized to work, were reaching out to the international community. They were members of the Rohingya community who had been “temporarily” on Cox’s Bazar for years, with no end in sight.

I told this man that publishing his story might raise awareness and garner support from the international community, but that it might take a long time. “The longer the wait, the sweeter the victory,” he replied. We share the story now in the hope of creating a movement to change the situation for the better. Journalist Mathilde Cousin of France Télévisions and Matthew Smith of *Fortify Rights* have both met Siddique in the camps. He provided the pictures that accompany the interview.

More detailed methodology is included at the end of the interview.

Part I: School Days in Myanmar

My grandparents were the ones who raised me. They encouraged me to learn, and that is why we are able to speak in English today. When I was little, if I got upset or stressed over something, they would comfort me by telling me that one day I would be an educated man who could fix problems in the community. They would tease me a little saying I would be a doctor who could cure people...well, maybe not quite a doctor, a professor. They would say, “See, Professor! Look at how you

have made everything better for us. Thank you, Professor!” I wanted to get an education, because if we had been educated people in Myanmar, they [the government] would never have been able to do what they did.

My grandmother used to make me laugh by telling the story of *Zabboror Ma Ara Ekbaro Nou Achum*. Once, there was a widow who was a homeowner. One night while she was asleep, a thief entered her house. He crept into the kitchen and started taking everything out of her box. She pretended that her husband was there at first, and said, “Hey, Sawa Sawa Sur! Look—there’s a thief!” She pretended he was sleeping deeply and called him three or four times. But the burglar knew that her husband was dead. When she realized that the man was not frightened, she thought about the small fire in the stove and the pieces of wood inside. Slowly, she tiptoed into the kitchen and took a piece of firewood. She raised it over her head and then before he could turn around, she smacked the thief hard on the back with the burning wood. Then the thief yelled and ran out of the house, saying, “Ow! Zabboror Ma Ara Ekbaro Nou Achum!!!” meaning “Ow! mother of Zabboror, I will never ever come to your house again!!!”

Surrounding our home were goba, mango, and jackfruit trees, with coconut and date palms. When I was around twelve or thirteen, I made a toy car about 1.5 feet long with wheels carved from a type of rubber shoe we call *chancray* and a bamboo frame. In the hills around our village, I found an iron rod to use as an axle so that whenever you pulled the car, it moved. My family thought I would become an engineer.

There were always problems for the local Rohingya within the educational system, though. There were government-appointed teachers from the Burmese government, but they never arrived, so community leaders formed a school committee. They raised enough money from the local families to pay for an instructor. The school was called Saulewdey Dai. Most of the students, maybe 200, came from the Muslim village. About forty-five to fifty came from the Rakhine community (primarily Theravada Buddhist) across the road, and the school educated us together. If any family couldn’t pay, it was OK—you could still go to school.

There were also many Muslim and Rakhine girls who were skilled in math and science. They spent so much time studying that they were better than we [the boys] were in math, science, and English. Then my friends and I made a pact to speak only in English to each other [to improve in speaking English]. Anyone using Rohingya language had to pay [the rest of us] 100 kyats, [0.05 USD at the time or the cost of two movies at the movie theater in Maungdaw].

I used to walk to the high school with my friend Hussein. He was funny and liked to get me in trouble. Traditionally, the best student was called the *barik fua*, the toughest in the class. That was me, and I was also Class Captain, one of three who helped lead the school. Hussein liked to pinch me during class. He knew I couldn’t do anything because he was my friend.

Once, I borrowed my uncle’s motorbike to drive to school. My friends were so crazy to learn to ride it that they convinced me to skip class. We drove it to a nearby village and tried to stand up on the bike like [the actor] Fardeen Khan. We spent the whole day falling off and teasing each other: “See, if you hadn’t been trying to be an expert motorist . . . !”



One of Siddique's students on a cousin's motorbike, relaxing before school at Basic Education High School in Yei Dwun Chaung village, in MaungDaw township in Myanmar.
Source: Image courtesy of Ann Bayliss.

The next day, the teacher asked us where we had been, and we all said the same thing: that we had to take an exam for a private class. The headmistress, who is Burmese, loved me too much to punish me. I loved her, too, as a teacher. Sometimes I would bring her fish for dinner because she stayed in the school and had no one to help her. She was fifty and had never married.

Part II: "You Can Just Farm, You Cannot Own."

There are many ethnic groups in Myanmar [Burma]: Burman, Rakhine (Arakan), Burmese Indian, Muslim, Chin, Rohingya. There are many, but the government of Myanmar has not included us [Rohingya] in their list.

Before 1982, there were many Rohingya among the police and the military, but in 1982, the government started a campaign to banish the Rohingya from Arakan State.

I wanted to marry one of my classmates from the Rakhine community. She also liked me very much, but I could not propose to her because if something went wrong, then her brothers and neighbors would kill me.

A religious scholar known as Wee Rha Tho used to preach to the Rakhine women and Burmese women that it is better marrying a dog than a Rohingya.

It is not because of religion, though. Sometimes this is related to religion and sometimes not. Arakan is a very valuable place because there are many natural resources: gas, diesel, platinum, and gold.

At the time of my grandparents' death, we owned a paddy field, a

hill for grazing goats, and a shrimp field. I had the deeds, but the government tried to confiscate everything. They wrote that "You can just farm, you cannot own the shrimp field or the paddy field." Some people gave them their documents, but I kept mine. I brought the documents to Bangladesh and even keep a copy in Google Drive.

I had many Burmese friends who matriculated with me [from high school], and they have by now completed their master's degrees. If I had the chance, I could also have completed a master's degree.

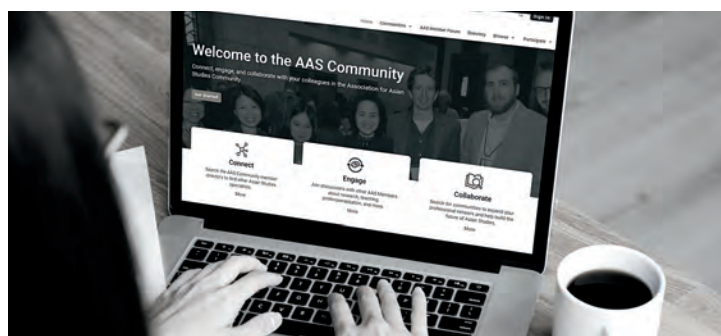
We [Rohingya] could not use mobile phones freely. My friends and I used to go to a place in the northern part of our village, where there is a big banyan tree, to talk and play football [soccer]. Under the shade of the tree, sometimes we would ask each other questions like, "Why is our teacher blind [to our abilities]?"

Rohingya people were also not allowed to have a gun, or not even to use a catapult to hunt birds. Some people in the village made arrows and nets to hunt deer, but they kept them hidden.

When the government started saying that we were illegal migrants from Bangladesh, even our neighbors in Rakhine, who knew that our fathers and grandfathers had been born there, started calling us "Bengalis."

In 2010, the government set up checkpoints to restrict movement. They would fine or beat us if we even tried to visit another village. Since there was no hope of my studying engineering at the university in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State, I returned to my village to teach.

There was a police training center in MaungDaw near my village, so in the evening, at 4 p.m., the cadets and some of the authorities used to come out and play football with us. During those games, the Burmese were very good to us. Whenever the authorities played with us,



Association for Asian Studies COMMUNITY FORUM

NEW! MEMBER BENEFIT



community.asianstudies.org

BECOME A MEMBER AND JOIN DISCUSSIONS



Siddique (face blurred to protect identity) with students at their camp. Source: Image courtesy of Ann Bayliss.

they became our friends, but whenever they wanted something, they humiliated us.

For example, everybody respects teachers. Once, I was teaching my students at 8 a.m., and one of the authorities saw me and said, “Hello, teacher, come down from the class!” I was right in the middle of going over some Burmese pronunciation. So, I responded politely, “Yes, sir, I am coming.” Then he asked me about my bike. “Where is your bike? I need your bike. Just give it to me.” So I said, “OK, sir, you can take it.”

Sometimes, someone who was not skilled enough to ride the bike would take it for one or two days. He would fall off and bring it back broken.

Hussein’s shop was beside my teaching center. He sold necessities for the home: cooking wine for curry, candy, and betel nuts. After teaching, I used to go sit with him. Sometimes, we played Scrabble. Sometimes, we talked. In family situations, if the question came up about why the government was persecuting us, we would just say, “That’s the way it is.” But Hussein and I discussed what we really felt. “What will happen if all the Rohingya are kept from higher education?”, we used to ask each other. “What will happen to our younger generation?”

Interviewer’s Note: In a few years, Siddique and Hussein would find out precisely what their new military government had in mind for them.

Part III: Exodus

Not long before my displacement, I was attacked—punched in the face—as I was coming home from school on my motorbike after teaching, and there were many military men going in the same direction. They were headed back to their camp on foot after checking another village. I had come across a student of mine on the way who had some trouble walking because his left leg was a little bent and offered him a ride, so he was riding behind me on my bike.

When we passed, a military officer, a captain, told me to stop. He was not one I knew from football, probably because he had too many responsibilities to play with the rest of the group. He told me to get off the bike.

“Where are you from?” he asked, and I pointed to my village, which was close by. I told him, “I have been teaching for three years and as usual am coming back from my school.” He said, “I need your bike.” Normally, I would have just given him the bike, but this time I said, “Sir, the student who is riding with me is not physically strong; please let him ride with me.”

He said, “Don’t bargain!”

I was quiet. He asked me, “Give me your key.” So I gave him my key and took my student off the back of the bike. The captain could not ride the bike because it was a little bit different than other motorbikes: it is a Hi Bobo type bike. To stop, you pulled a wire system. It also had a leg brake.

He tried to ride, but when he first got onto the bike, he fell off. I pulled him up and helped him up on the motorbike, but I said, “Sir, I think it is not possible for you because it is a different motorbike.”

He said, “How dare you say that!” and he punched me in the face. Then I stayed quiet. He told me, “Tell me how to ride it.” I told him which was the hand brake and which was the leg brake. Then he rode very slowly, because he did not know how, and my student and I walked back to our village. This was on Thursday. On Sunday, I went to his shelter and asked for my bike back because the school week was starting, and he said I could take it.

Rain and Migration

August 27, 2017, was not like a normal day. It was the rainy season. Because we had been hearing rumors, people in the village had been keeping watch until midnight. That meant that many would be sleeping at dawn, and the military knew this. My house was in the northern part of the village. I woke up and heard a woman scream, “They have killed my husband!” We could hear shots. They were coming from Da Gyi Zar [village] about half a kilometer (a quarter of a mile) to the south.

Both my uncles and their wives and children were in the house with me. The only way we could escape was away from the main road. I grabbed my bag which had some clothes, cologne, and my cellphone, and asked my uncle to let me take one of the littlest children with me. He told me to just go, “Don’t come back—just go wherever you can go. We will take care of everything.”

I could not take my bike over the trails across the countryside. There were crowds of people running together, but there was no time to look for friends or talk. Some people had taken their fathers on their backs and were running along with us. One young man carried his mother and father in baskets attached to a yoke. I was running in Panda sandals. We ran until we had passed three villages, and then we stopped.

This village was more peaceful. People were offering water, fruit, snacks, dry clothes. I made conversation with one boy from Buthidaung

town. He told me what had happened to their village. It was all part of the military's plan. It had taken him twelve or thirteen days to get there. I asked what they had had to eat, and he said, "Leaves and salty water."

A few hours later, people started screaming that the military was entering the town. This time, they came from every direction except the west. We had nowhere to go except towards Bangladesh. Our target was to get to Balukhali because the military was catching up, running after us and threatening us. They had big guns and launchers of the type that can burn up a helicopter.

It rained most of that night, and no one could really sleep. I slept in the hills with the men under a banyan tree, and the women slept nearby. People also slept under the mango and jackfruit trees, but neither of these bears fruit during the rainy season. People were crying because they were so hungry.

A little boy about five or six years old went to gather some *footigullah* (the fruit of the melastoma tree). Footigullah is a tiny fruit with a red outside and black inside, that tastes sweet, like grapes. He took everything he found to his mother who was sick. I was surprised, because he was such a small kid, and I don't know how hungry he was, but he did not eat even a single one—he just gave them all to her.

In the morning, we started running again because the military had come. I saw many elderly people and young children. One of the women had to stop because she went into labor, but her husband kept running. The midwife stayed with her.

In two days, we reached Balukhali and came back out onto the main route again by the Naf River, which separates Myanmar from Bangladesh. There were about sixty members of the military there, and I could see their faces. They were not doing anything—just watching us. I looked east, and wow—I have never seen so many people. The queue was as long as the eye could see.

That night was really horrible. The winds were strong, and it was dangerous to cross the river. You had to pay the boatmen 100,000 kyats [more than one month's salary, or about US \$45] to cross. People who could pay, paid. Women gave their gold earrings. I gave them all I had, which was a gold ring with a small diamond-like stone.

Many of the boats, called *coracles*, were so crammed with people that they capsized. Elderly people and children who could not swim, drowned, and the women also, weighed down with their clothes and hijabs. After we crossed and the border police let us in, Bangladeshi people came to welcome us with food, clothes, and even money. Then a yellow and white bus came. I had no money, but a man paid for many of us to ride with him and his family to the nearest camp.

When I saw the camp, I felt really, really sad. Other Rohingya refugees from Myanmar had been living there since 1991. It was very hot. It was just a hut as if for animals. But at the same time that I was sad, I was thankful to Bangladesh and to Almighty Allah.

I heard the *Maghrib Salah* [call to evening prayer] on a loud-speaker coming from the camp just after arriving. It's a little bit different-sounding than in Myanmar. There, we were not allowed to use a microphone for prayers. After performing the evening prayer, I could finally call my uncle, and he told me that he and his family had crossed safely. When they arrived, some registered refugees welcomed us and took us to the mosque where we could stay the night. They took the women and children to another place.

That night was really horrible. The roof was tin and the walls were made of bamboo, and we slept in our clothes on the concrete floor. It never stopped raining. I could not sleep well. I was worried about the people who were still crossing the border, and I kept

The History Teacher

by THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORY EDUCATION



The History Teacher began in 1967 and is in Volume 55 for 2021-2022. Published quarterly, the journal features inspirational scholarship in history education, including articles and reviews addressing primary, secondary, and higher education.

The Society for History Education is a non-profit organization and an affiliate of the American Historical Association.

Featuring **full-color** historical documents on front and back covers, perfect for classroom analysis.



celebrating

55 years

The History Teacher • 55 volumes • 1967-2022

thehistoryteacher.org

remembering what I had seen and waking up again. I found out later that one of those who defended the village, Mohammed Salaam, had been shot dead from far away. Eleven people from my village, including a child, had been burned alive.

Part IV: "Today's Learner Is Tomorrow's Leader"

We now had the answer to our questions about our future. We became Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs). We cannot apply for refugee status because Myanmar revoked our citizenship. We cannot go home, and only a very few of us have been allowed to emigrate from Bangladesh.

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) was building a hospital in the camp, and I asked them to give me a job. They hired me to visit the camp blocks to talk to residents and find the best locations for washrooms and well taps for water.

I was also a volunteer with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), building shelters. The DRC provided tarpaulins, string, ropes, hooks, and bamboo, called "tie-down kits" and "shelter kits."

That first year in the camp, I made some friends who came from France, Italy, Germany, and America who were there with NGOs. We often had tea and birthday cake together, but when the projects ended, I didn't have anything to do.

I had seen that a lot of the children were playing in the street and screaming during what would be their study time. I realized that if they were in Myanmar, they would be in school. If I could build a school, then we could teach them. It was a really, really amazing idea for me and I could feel proud of myself.

So I spoke with two qualified teachers and one block leader about it. They discouraged me and told me to forget it—that I would not get many teachers.

I told my wife what I was thinking. She said, "How will you pay the

teachers?" and I told her, "If we sell your gold jewelry, we could get two to three lakhs to run the school for at least one year." "Will that be good for us?" she asked. I said, "No, it will not be good for us, but it will be wonderful for the whole community." Then she agreed.

When I met again with the teachers and the block leader, I told them I could pay. We went to a tea shop to discuss everything and formed a committee, including one female teacher. The block leader said, "I'm with you, but not financially." Nonetheless, he motivated me.

I got everybody's consent to teach the Burmese curriculum, because we need to return to our country one day. We even suggested to the families that it would be better if they sent their children to school in a uniform. So some sold their rations to buy green and white uniforms from small shops in the camp.

Our school opened its doors on January 11, 2019. We have over twenty-six teachers, including six lady teachers, and 935 students in grades 1–10. We even have some who are orphans. If today we can teach them something, then tomorrow, our young people will be leaders, because, you know, today's learner is tomorrow's leader. If we try, we will succeed, but we have to try hard.

Methodology: Class Captain from Myanmar

Methodology: Our interviews have taken place completely in English recorded with an Olympus digital voice recorder. Siddique gave his verbal permission to me to record him.

Siddique is highly fluent in English. This is partly thanks to his secondary education in Myanmar, but also because his parents and sisters, who work menial jobs in Saudia Arabia, paid for him to take a course in English in Bangladesh. As one may read in his account, he also took advantage of opportunities to practice his English with the workers from non-governmental organizations who speak it as well. The Rohingya language incorporates some English words into everyday expressions. Siddique and his colleagues record their students delivering speeches in English when they have something to say to a Western audience.

Editing

I recorded what Siddique said for the first months after we began speaking and also took notes longhand. Not knowing where the story might go, I only knew that he had survived a genocide that he could remember and speak about clearly in English.

A Long Way Gone, Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Ba (Sarah Chrichton Books, 2007) served as a source of storytelling inspiration. From that book came the idea to find out more about the fun and "relatable" parts of Siddique's life. I continued to record his verbal answers to questions, taking notes longhand and clarifying later by email or WhatsApp message.

The structure of the story is the only part of the narrative that I altered. I kept Siddique's exact wording wherever possible. Sometimes we would talk for a long period on a Friday evening, and I would write it up, and then more points would arise a month later, and I would insert the new information into the story where it best seemed to fit.

For more information about the Rohingya, please visit *Human Rights Watch* at www.hrw.org/tag/rohingya/. ♦

ANN BAYLISS is a freelance writer who has worked as a French teacher in Virginia public high schools.

"SIDDIQUE," whose social media moniker is Ro BZ Qaveer, is the pseudonym for the valedictorian of his high school in Arakan State, an aspiring engineer who founded Life Destination School while living in a camp for Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals in Bangladesh.

