

MOAS

MAGAZINE

2020



Remote
Learning Project

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Masks making
initiative

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Kaleidoscope
Of Solidarity

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MOAS has been operational since 2014 and is registered in Italy, UK and Malta as well as having legal representation in Germany and the USA. MOAS is an International Humanitarian organization providing emergency relief to migrants risking their lives in search of safety.

MOAS Founder: Christopher Catrambone
MOAS Co-Founder & Director: Regina Egle Liotta Catrambone
Photo credits: Mark Zammit Cordina, Giulio Piscitelli, Jason Florio, International Medical Corps
Somalia, ADRA Yemen, Simon Borg

MOAS

Letter from MOAS' Director

2020 was a complex and unexpected year. The Coronavirus pandemic has upset our lives, changed our habits and questioned our certainties. There were many obstacles and difficulties that we managed to overcome in the family, affective, social, working spheres and which highlighted our vulnerabilities and our weaknesses, but which also made us rediscover the ability to adapt in such a complicated situation. The year we leave behind was full of challenges and new projects for MOAS.

In Bangladesh, in response to the pandemic crisis, aware of the difficulties in implementing prevention measures against the virus in the context of Cox's Bazar and in refugee camps, we have started a project to produce reusable facemasks to be distributed to front-line workers, local communities and Rohingya refugees. For the production of the facemasks we involved local tailors and seamstresses, many of whom had lost their jobs due to COVID19. Thanks to the dedication of our team we have produced almost 900,000 masks. In September, we resumed our Flood and Water Safety Training and trained 700 Rohingya refugees and 800 Bengali from the communities of Ukhia and Teknaf. Furthermore, through our Water Safety and Livelihood Practice, we have provided 800 local fishermen with the necessary skills to work safely and to carry out rescues in the water.

In Malta, over 140 volunteers have produced nearly 9,000 masks, following our appeal for the launch of a project related to the COVID emergency for the most vulnerable people, asylum seekers and refugees on the island. We have also started the Remote Learning Project, aimed at accessing distance learning for children residing in the centers by providing them with tablets, modems and internet connections. Despite the logistical difficulties caused by the pandemic, we managed to continue the delivery to Yemen of therapeutic food for the treatment of child malnutrition and one shipment of pharmaceutical aid.

In 2020 we started delivering humanitarian aid to Somalia with the first 25-ton shipment of Plumpy Sup™, a supplement formulated for children suffering from acute malnutrition.

Our commitment to #SafeAndLegalRoutes has not stopped even this year. The pandemic and the closure of national borders have highlighted the urgent need to implement safe entry channels. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, today even more than yesterday, must be guaranteed the possibility of reaching another country without endangering their lives by relying on traffickers.

2021 welcomes us with new hopes, with the desire to return to the normality of our days and with the awareness of the value of solidarity, of every small gesture, of reaching out to those who are close to us but also to those who live thousands of kilometers away from us, in conditions that are unimaginable for us. It is precisely for this reason that we continue to thank our donors, supporters, partners and all those who believe in us.

Enjoy the reading!

Covid-19 Response



MASK MAKING PROJECT IN COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH



In 2020, MOAS continued to support Rohingya refugees and host communities in the Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh. In response to COVID-19 pandemic, MOAS launched a new humanitarian initiative, our Mask Making Project, to slow the spread of the virus through the overcrowded refugee camps and local community.

The Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh, which is home to over a million Rohingya refugees, is particularly susceptible to the spread of this virus, due to limited sanitation infrastructure and overcrowded living conditions that make social distancing a challenge as a preventative measure. In light of the additional difficulties faced by the region in the face of this pandemic, and after our ongoing flood and water safety training was suspended for several months due to new restrictions in the camps, MOAS decided to utilise our resources to contribute to the COVID-19 emergency response in the region.

With support from IOM, we decided to transform our newly constructed workshop in Shamlapur into a production hub for the manufacturing of reusable, washable cotton face masks to be distributed across the region as a preventative measure and attempt to slow the spread of the virus.

The prototype we developed for the masks was approved by the Cox's Bazar Civil Surgeon, and although the masks are not substituting surgical masks or N95 respirators, they are recommended in contexts like Bangladesh where access to other safe sanitation infrastructure is severely lacking, to help stunt the spread of the virus across the region. This project also served as a livelihood for local host community workers, many of whom lost income due to the shutdown but were then employed in

our workshop. Our fantastic team of local tailors (a total of 362, 115 female and 247 male) also included many working from home, to make this project more accessible and beneficial to the wider local community.

Furthermore, all our materials for the production of the masks were sourced from local businesses to further support the host community during these challenging and uncertain times.

Our original goal was to make 350,000 masks independently and a further 500,000 with other partners, however, thanks to the dedication of our fantastic team, we exceeded this figure and made an incredible total of 883,514 which represent an extraordinary result.

The distribution has been coordinated by IOM, the Livelihoods sector and local administrators who have also provided information leaflets on basic hygiene measures as well as how to use and effectively sanitise the facemask to recipients to ensure widespread access to public health information. Besides the Rohingya refugees in the camps, the target groups of the distributions of masks included those particularly vulnerable to exposure including the police, the Fire Service, the Cyclone Preparedness volunteers and their own community volunteers who have been grateful for the additional preventative measures in light of the pandemic.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

#MOASMASKSMALTA

INITIATIVE



In 2020 MOAS established a mask production initiative, to expand the provision of protective measures for the many asylum seekers and refugees - the majority of whom live in centers in overcrowded conditions that facilitate the spread of the virus - and for the vulnerable communities across the island. Nearly 9000 masks were made by over 100 volunteers.



MOAS called upon local tailors, seamstresses and any volunteers willing to help out, to make homemade face masks for vulnerable groups on the island.

We were blown away by the overwhelming response to this project and are so grateful for the outstanding generosity of all those who have reached out to us offering their time and support during 2020. In the **first round** of the project, we collected a **total of 6610 masks** from our volunteers which have been distributed to vulnerable groups across the island by organisations, such as the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) and Foodbank Lifeline Foundation, Migrant Commission and more.

This project was also supported by local stakeholders including a local textile company, the Maltese taxi provider eCabs, as well as the brilliant fashion designer and couturier Luke Azzopardi who kindly created a YouTube tutorial on how to make MOAS masks for our team of volunteers. The support of the community has been what

has made this project so special in asserting such a powerful message of solidarity during this challenging time when so many people have experienced extreme hardships due to restrictions on movement and employment opportunities. The masks are washable and reusable, to reduce plastic waste and protect the environment.

Then in August, in response to the endurance of the pandemic, we decided to initiate a second round of the project. Once again, the people of Malta demonstrated their community-spirit by getting back to their sewing machines and



"It felt good to be part of a community, a good cause. To see that people care."

Mary

"It has been a pleasure to assist MOAS with their mask making for children. All materials were well supplied and the instructions clear and easy to follow."

Maria

making a further 2,000 masks. The response to both rounds of the project was fantastic, and through the hard work, generosity and solidarity imparted to us by our volunteers, as well as several supporting local businesses, nearly 9,000 masks were made by over 140 volunteers.

Some of our volunteers explained to us what contributing to the project has meant to them:



"To start with, being of assistance, even in this small way, to those who have little or no way of sustaining their own health and that of their fellow people, gives me great encouragement to go on helping as much as possible. I truly believe that helping others who are less fortunate than me, is a good way to make life worthwhile. Secondly, let us also thank you [MOAS] for involving us in this project and also congratulate you and your members, those who deliver and collect the masks, on their friendly and educated manners which are becoming a rarity these days. It is a great pleasure for us to collaborate in your venture."

Helen

COVID-19. MOAS & THE MALTA REMOTE LEARNING PROJECT

21 tablets and internet connections were provided to migrant families to help vulnerable students to keep up with remote education

This past year of the pandemic has been a challenge for many of us as we have had to learn to adapt to new routines and circumstances. However, this was amplified for those inside detention centres who have already had to adapt so much and face adversity on their migration journeys.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, several migrant families in Malta have experienced difficulties in accessing remote education services on behalf of their children, due to a lack of resources. During the initial lockdown, most schools were using online learning platforms, however, for the children living within the three open centres across Malta, this was not an option, as they did not have access to laptops or an adequate internet connection. As a result, many migrant children were going without an education, proving to be another challenge for these, already marginalized, children who faced further inequality in the quality and access to education available to them.

Therefore, as many migrant families struggled to gain access to the educational facilities provided online by various institutions, MOAS felt compelled to address this gap in resources, in order to ensure that all children have access to the right to an education regardless of their asylum status.

For this reason, MOAS provided 21 tablets and internet connections to 21 vulnerable migrant families to help them maintain access to education throughout these difficult times.

As part of the Malta Remote Learning Project, MOAS provided the following devices:

- **21 x state of the art Samsung Tablets**
- **21 x Go Mobile plug-and-play modems, donated by Go Mobile**
- **21 x 6-month subscriptions for internet**



The project has been made possible thanks to collaboration with the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS), who identified the recipient families and coordinated with MOAS for the development of the project and the delivery of the items. Go Mobile believed in the importance of the project and donated the plug-and-play modems free of a deposit, thus giving its support to these already vulnerable students and families. These personal electronic devices and internet connectivity allowed these families and children not only to engage in their school activities but also to abide by all rules of social distancing and quarantine through access to needed resources from their own homes.

The families were delighted to be able to continue their education within the confines of the social distancing restrictions, and we are looking forward to distributing further tablets and modems to the remaining vulnerable migrant families on the island throughout 2021.

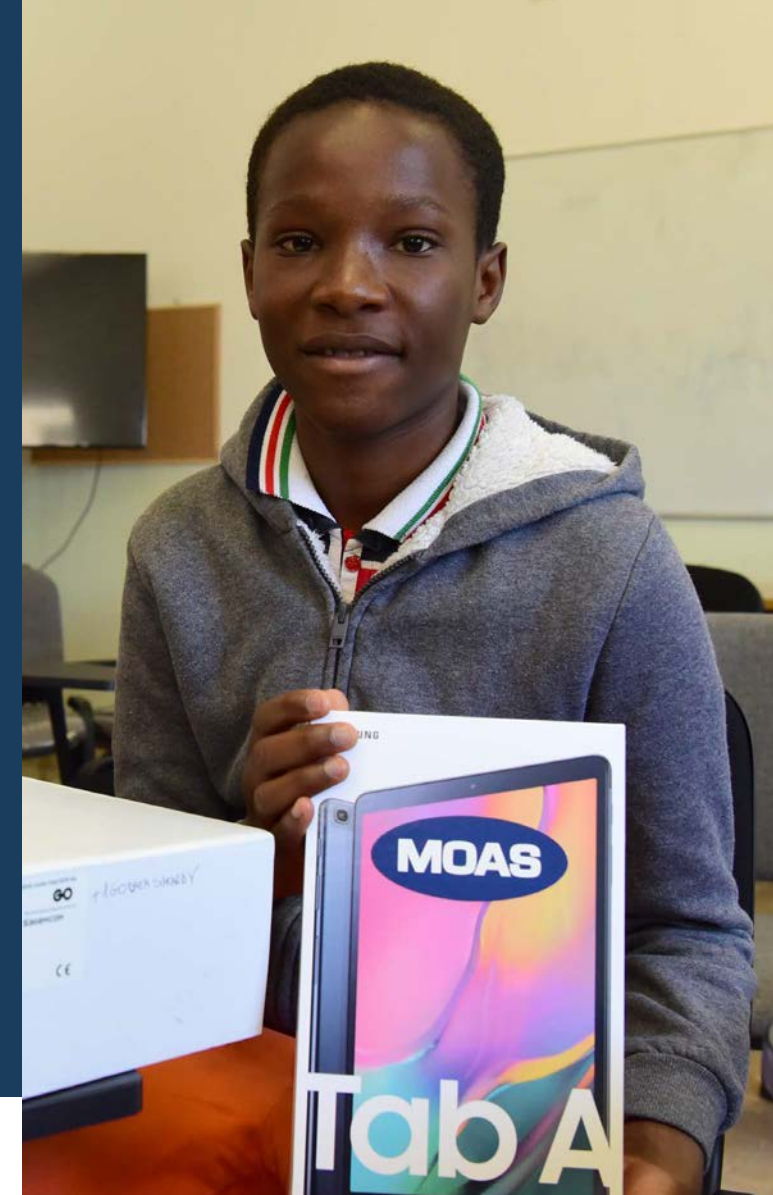
We heard from the mothers of two families that took part in the Remote Learning Project:

"We arrived in Malta in September last year and my seven-year-old son was attending primary school before the outbreak of COVID-19. I would like to thank MOAS so much for the tablet, it is very useful. My son was able to do his homework and keep up with his education by taking lessons remotely when schools were closed. I dream of a better future for him, and by studying, he may have the opportunity to become an educated person, which as a mother would make me proud. I believe that studying is really important to build a future and I am grateful for this opportunity."

Princess, from Nigeria, mother of 3



By supporting vulnerable migrant communities in Malta, MOAS wants to help promote better integration and continue to show solidarity at a time when there has, sadly, been so much hostility against marginalised communities.



"We arrived in Malta one year ago and my son started school here. The tablet is so useful as a way to improve and learn. He uses the tablet a lot to study. Every day he devotes at least three hours to doing his homework, including Math, English, Science and Maltese. If it is difficult, he takes more time to study. I find this project very useful because children with tablets can read, study, play and do many different things. They may also be able to study art or music remotely in the future. I also use the tablet from time to time, it is really useful for improving and learning many things. The opportunities are endless."

Amina, from Eritrea, mother of 3



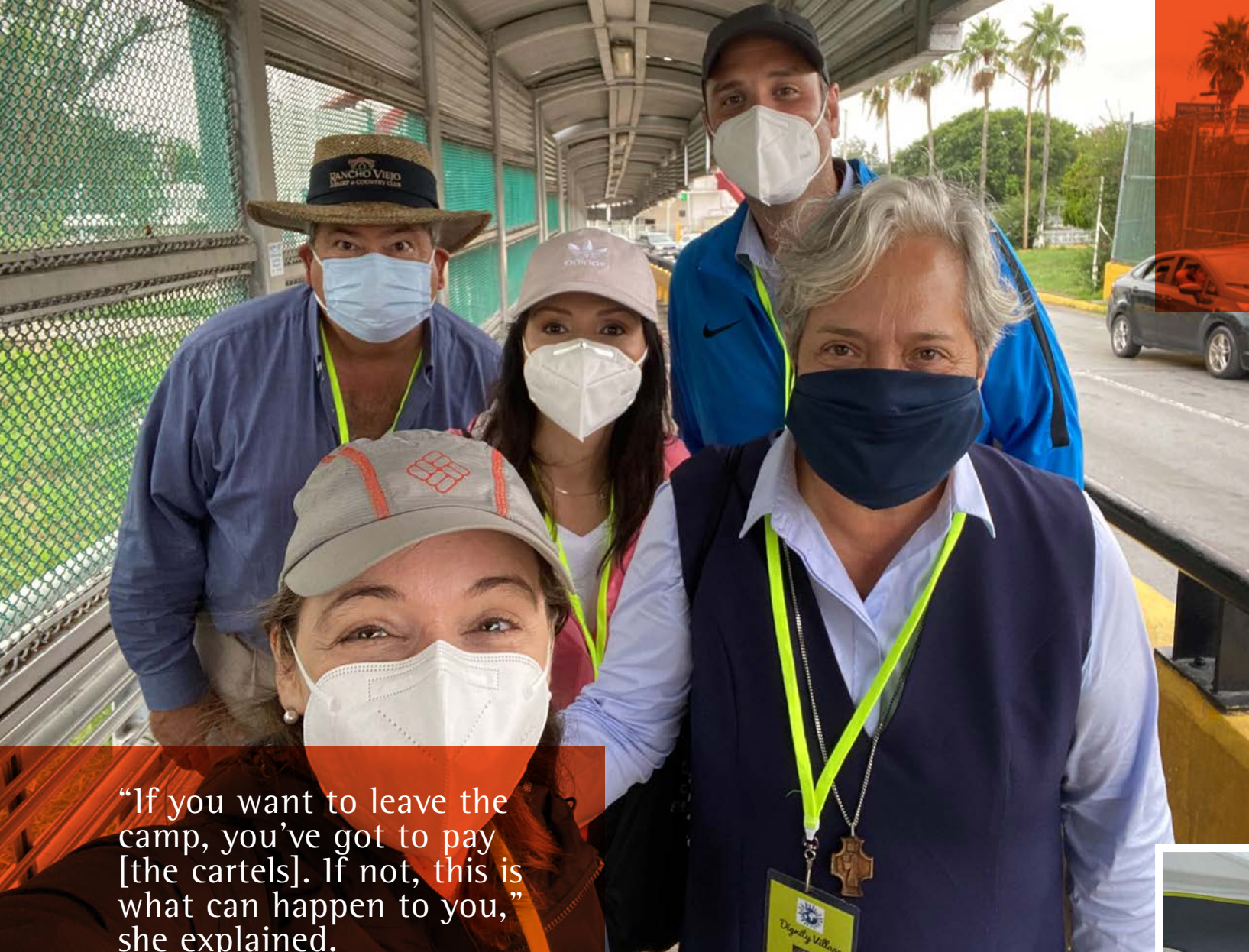
Matamoros: waiting in limbo

Regina Catrambone

Anyone forced to flee their home is
vulnerable and deserving of care

When I walked into the Matamoros refugee camp on the Mexican border with Texas, I had no idea what to expect. What I saw will haunt me forever.

In the makeshift camp, surrounded by children, I met one woman who showed me a blurry photo on her mobile phone.



“If you want to leave the camp, you’ve got to pay [the cartels]. If not, this is what can happen to you,” she explained.

The photo displayed the body of a man, young enough to be her son, face down in the Rio Grande, which acts as a boundary between Mexico and the United States of America.

The 22-year-old victim had been her neighbour for months in the makeshift camp in which she and around 1,000 other refugees and displaced people from Latin America reside.

Venezuelans, Ecuadorians, Hondurans and Mexicans have escaped brutal conditions at home, only to find themselves, trapped by US legislation, in a limbo filled with mosquitoes, snakes, rats and at the mercy of criminal cartels who extort, rape and kill the camp’s vulnerable residents with impunity. Around 50 per cent of people in the camp are children.

People who make arduous and traumatic journeys to seek asylum are often denied the safety they should be entitled to under human rights laws and treaties which countries, including the United States, are party to.

In the US, the use of so-called ‘Migrant Protection Protocols’ introduced last year means asylum seekers entering or attempting to enter the country from Mexico can be pushed back to Mexico to await a decision on their application. With the arrival of COVID-19, the system ground to a halt, forcing vulnerable people to spend months in territories run by extremely violent cartels.

Their daily survival relies on the care and compassion of individuals and small local organisations who strive to ensure that the refugees have access to the bare necessities.



What I saw will haunt me forever

Regina Catrambone

My visit to Matamoros earlier this year was the first I have made to a refugee camp in the Americas. But, as an Italian, living and working in Europe where my husband and I founded the Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS) in 2014, I am, sadly, no stranger to witnessing first-hand the plight of refugees and displaced people.

In Malta, MOAS’ work relies greatly on the good will of local volunteers who give their support to everything, ranging from hospital visits, to providing support to those saved from overcrowded or capsized dinghies, and to making masks for migrants to help them defend themselves against the pandemic.

I also work with MOAS in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, where almost one million Rohingya refugees live after fleeing extreme violence in Myanmar.

Cox’s Bazar is one of the most impoverished regions of Bangladesh, yet, that did not prevent local people from opening their hearts, providing food and following their spiritual faith to support desperate people in need when they first arrived. One of the things that shocked me most when I arrived in Matamoros was the grim similarity



between the desperate conditions imposed on the refugees on the American/Mexican border and those on the Bangladesh/Myanmar border.

How, I wondered, could the US, a country that holds itself to be a great superpower, be unable or unwilling to provide better conditions than those offered by Bangladesh, a still-developing nation? In forcing the refugees back into Mexico, the US’s (MPP) – Migrant Protection Protocols – certainly do not offer migrants any form of ‘protection’. Instead, they violate international laws banning refoulement or ‘pushback’ agreements aimed to ensure the world’s most vulnerable people are not forced back to countries where their lives are endangered.

We must also remember that in the United States, there are more than 11 million people without identification papers, some of them stateless. In the 1980s, Ronald Reagan granted such people an amnesty. A new amnesty would ensure the rights of these people that are living like ghosts.

It is our duty as responsible and compassionate human beings to urge the United States and all other nations that refuse to allow refugees safe entry into their countries to apply for asylum, to uphold international protocols.

It is important not to disempower refugees by failing to recognise their strength. The people I met in Matamoros are survivors of terrible events who have found ways to maintain their independence and dignity: I think of one widow I met who had escaped to the border in fear for her life after her husband’s death. A proud cook, she has set up a tiny business making and selling donuts to her fellow refugees.

But anyone forced to flee their home is vulnerable and deserving of pastoral care. As citizens of the world, we should not hesitate to speak out when governments of any country seek to throw refugees to the wolves with policies that leave them at the mercy of criminals, traffickers and warmongers.



SHIPMENT OF FOOD SUPPLEMENTS TO SOMALIA

MOAS did our first delivery of over 25 tons of life-saving nutritional supplies to the port of Mogadishu with the support of the donors and partners

The humanitarian crisis in Somalia is one of the most prolonged and complex in the world. The combination of the persistent insecurity caused by the conflict, prolonged climate-related disasters, and displacement has significantly restricted the ability of Somalis to support themselves economically.

In 2020, an estimated 5.9 million people needed humanitarian assistance in the country, with millions of Somalis dependent on outside support for their survival and livelihood. Moreover, the COVID-19 outbreak has impacted the country as a result of movement restrictions, which have reduced the humanitarian capacity in support of the most vulnerable communities.

In response to the considerable need for humanitarian aid, MOAS took the decision to expand our operations to contribute to this crisis. We, therefore, initiated our first ever aid delivery to Somalia, which arrived in September to Mogadishu. In partnership with Edesia, which frequently collaborate with MOAS to coordinate nutritional aid deliveries to communities in crisis, we have shipped 25 tons of the ready-to-use supplementary food Plumpy Sup, which is specially formulated to treat moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in children aged six months and above. The treatment usually lasts between twelve to sixteen weeks, with one Plumpy'Sup™ sachet being distributed each day for every child. Considering that one in seven children under the age of five in Somalia are acutely malnourished, shipments such as this are vital to combating infant malnutrition and mortality in the country.

Our local partner International Medical Corps Somalia has started and is continuing the distribution of the life-saving nutritional aid. The distribution started in October, and between then and December 2020, 163 cartons of RUSF were given out to 649 beneficiaries, comprising of 484 children and 165 pregnant and lactating women (PLWs).

Nurses and assistant nurses distributed the supplies to the registered beneficiaries (children 6-59 months with MAM and acutely malnourished PLWs) on a bi-weekly basis. Each beneficiary received 14 RUSF sachets (bi-weekly), or one sachet per day, per beneficiary.

The team is continuously admitting beneficiaries, especially children aged between 6-59 months with MAM (Moderate Acute Malnutrition). However, COVID-19 has affected the admission criteria, as IMC has adopted the Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) as the only criteria into Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) programs due to the no-touch policy associated with COVID-19. The Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) is the circumference of the left upper arm, measured at the mid-point between the tip of the shoulder and the tip of the elbow (olecranon process and the acromium) and is used for the assessment of nutritional status.



“Somalia is facing myriad crises, and the combination of this year’s pandemic, locust infestation, flooding and residual effect of past droughts is threatening to aggravate the already critical situation even further. There is an urgent need to address the immediate nutritional requirements of Somalia’s most vulnerable communities. Therefore, MOAS is very thankful to be able to collaborate with International Medical Corps on this shipment, and to contribute to alleviating the suffering of thousands of children. MOAS’ aim is to save lives and to give a helping hand to the most vulnerable people around the world”.

Regina Catrambone, MOAS Director



YEMEN

DELIVERY OF MEDICAL AND NUTRITIONAL AID

In Yemen, the ongoing conflict has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis, causing over 24 million people to depend on humanitarian assistance. The combination of the pandemic along with a resurgence in fighting, decreased humanitarian funding and access, losses of income, hikes in food prices, and increased displacement, is threatening to further exacerbate the already critical situation and push 3.2 million people towards acute food insecurity.

Since the end of 2018, MOAS has been working hard to provide aid to Yemeni communities living amidst the unrest of a country torn apart by civil war.

In 2020, we managed to deliver 50 tons of Plumpy Sup food supplement and 70,000 € worth of pharmaceutical aid, thanks to our partners Edesia

and Medeor. All our aid deliveries were coordinated and distributed by our in-country partner, ADRA Yemen.

THE STORY

A father in a rural area of Yemen whose baby daughter had received treatment through MOAS and our partners, ADRA Yemen, described to us the impact of our deliveries of Ready-to-use Therapeutic Food (RUTF):

"My daughter is one and a half years old and she suffers from moderate acute malnutrition. She was losing weight and appetite. When the mobile clinic team arrived, they weighed my little girl and discovered that she was suffering from moderate acute malnutrition. She was given some of the PLUMPY food and she liked it. My child's health condition is improving significantly. We thank the team that worked hard to follow up on the case. Honestly, they did not hold back, even they though we are in a rugged rural area. But they were able to control this situation and the results are positive, thank God. I thank the working team of the mobile clinic and I thank also ADRA and MOAS."





We are very thankful to able to collaborate with ADRA Yemen on our shipments of nutritional aid and contribute to enhancing the availability of vital, life-saving services for vulnerable communities. We spoke to ADRA's Director of USG Programs and Partnerships in Yemen, Mohammed Bahashwan, who highlighted the impact our partnership is having on their operations:

"The support from MOAS throughout the past years has been critical to the programming we do, especially for addressing malnutrition needs. We are very fortunate to have this support and partnership with MOAS, providing these nutrition materials and supplements to many of our health facilities on a very regular basis, and continually providing nutrition services including acute malnutrition and moderate acute malnutrition." (Read full interview in the box)



Food insecurity in Yemen

Interview with Mohammed Bahashwan, ADRA's Director of USG Programs and Partnerships in Yemen.

What are the main causes of food insecurity in Yemen?

"I would say the worst part of the crisis in Yemen is food insecurity. Yemen has been suffering from food insecurity even before the current crisis, now the war is pushing most of the country to the brink of famine. Of course, economic collapse due to the conflict has made access to either food or means to get food, for families much more challenging. And as we know, this war in Yemen has been continuous for the past five years, and as a result, millions of people remain extremely malnourished, extremely hungry, prone to hunger if they're not hungry right now, prone to famine, prone to illnesses and other acute vulnerabilities."

How has the COVID-19 pandemic further hindered food security?

Yemen has gone through a lot of these outbreaks and epidemics. Cholera of course, diphtheria, dengue, malaria. Almost all parts of the country have faced some of these outbreaks. But COVID-19 is looking like a new challenge for everyone involved. The government is not able to cope with the needs for testing or proper access for health facilities. Ventilation resources at the hospitals are very limited. The humanitarian community alone is not able to address this huge responsibility of responding to COVID-19. We are already seeing an increase of prices, increases of cost for food commodities, for important commodities like medications. Transportation of these commodities across the country is also becoming much more challenging and expensive.

What do deliveries of food and therapy foods, such as those provided by MOAS and ADRA, mean for communities in crisis today?

I'll say this with complete honesty and no exaggeration, the support from MOAS throughout the past years has been paramount to the programming we do, especially for addressing malnutrition needs. Most of our programming is lifesaving focused, and in most of the large number of health facilities ADRA covers through our programming, sustained access to malnutrition materials and nutrition supplements is a big challenge.

The food items provided by MOAS have had a much-improved outcome. Food materials are normally provided without addressing the core gaps in the family, as children are usually ignored or overlooked as a result of this larger scale crisis. And again it's because of the support of MOAS, ADRA was able to ensure a sustained source of therapy food. The supply chain in Yemen is very weak and challenged by the security situation so having this access and support from MOAS for our interventions is a great driver of much more impactful programming."





Saving lives and
protecting human rights

Why safe and legal routes are needed for refugees

#NOBODYDESERVESTODIEATSEA

Dr. Jeff Crisp

Refugee Studies Centre
University of Oxford

In recent years, thousands of refugees - including large numbers of children - have drowned at sea while trying to move from one country to another by boat. Others have lost their lives while crossing deserts in overcrowded trucks or trekking on foot through impenetrable forests and mountain ranges. Those who have been fortunate enough to survive their journey have often endured terrible and traumatic experiences, including rape, torture, slavery, detention, extortion and exploitation.

So why do refugees take such risks?

First, because they are desperate to escape from persecution, armed conflict or political violence in their homeland, or because the countries to which they have initially fled are also unable to provide them with safety and security.

Second, because states across the globe have made it increasingly difficult for refugees to cross international borders in a regular manner, obstructing their movement by means of visa restrictions and frontier fences, as well as the deployment of armed forces, the police and vigilante groups. At the same time, many of the world's most prosperous countries have struck deals with poorer countries that are paid to obstruct the departure of refugees or to intercept and return them should they try to move on.

Third, because the refugees who make such difficult and dangerous journeys do not always know the full extent of the horrors that await them as they set out to reach another country. In many instances, moreover, they are the victims of unscrupulous human smugglers and traffickers who have provided them with false information about their journey and offered them unrealistic hopes with respect to their future.

It does not have to be this way. The lives of many refugees could be saved and their human rights better protected if a concerted effort was made by governments, NGOs and civil society to provide them with safe and legal routes to asylum, or 'complementary pathways' to use the term coined by the UN's refugee agency.



Such routes and pathways could assume a number of different forms.

Refugees who are particularly vulnerable or who find themselves in unsafe countries of asylum should be offered the opportunity to move on to other locations by means of resettlement programmes, sponsored either by governments or by local communities and associations.

At the same time, family reunion initiatives should be expanded, allowing refugees - especially children who find themselves without an appropriate adult guardian - to join close relatives who have already made their way to another country.

Those refugees who have skills that are in demand elsewhere should be able to benefit from the

establishment of labour migration channels, while those with the potential to benefit from new educational opportunities should be able to enlist in student and scholarship schemes, both within and beyond their country of asylum.

Humanitarian visas and humanitarian corridors represent another means whereby refugees can travel in a safe and legal manner. With respect to the former, individual refugees and families should be offered an opportunity to explain why they are unable to remain in their first country of asylum, so that they can be given the travel documents needed to lawfully enter another state.

In terms of the latter, faith-based organizations, NGOs and the UN should assume the role of intermediaries, negotiating the relocation of refugee

groups from countries which lack the capacity and resources to support them effectively to those better equipped to assume this responsibility.

Finally, in countries where refugees are at imminent risk of death or serious harm, or in situations where they have undergone particularly traumatic experiences, evacuation operations should be launched, enabling such people to be taken to a place of safety while arrangements are made for their longer-term future.

Such safe and legal pathways, it must be emphasized, do not constitute a panacea.

Great care would be needed to establish fair and effective selection procedures, so as to ensure that refugees are provided with the pathway that is most appropriate for them. At the same time, it is essential for refugees to be fully informed of how those

procedures work, and to explain to them why only some can be offered an early opportunity to move on in this way.

Substantial efforts will be required to inform and educate the public in destination countries about the purpose of such safe and legal routes and the circumstances of the refugees that are selected to make use of them. Adequate arrangements will also be required for the initial reception and longer-term care of the new arrivals.

Finally, at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is still spreading, rigorous efforts will be required to ensure that the lives and health of both refugees and receiving communities are fully safeguarded when such pathways are established. This might entail pre-departure medical screenings, health certification or temporary quarantine upon arrival, as well as the establishment of reception facilities where physical distancing is possible.



More generally, every effort must be made to ensure that refugees, whether they are living in camps, are concentrated in urban settlements or are scattered amongst the host community, are fully integrated in global, national and local efforts to suppress the coronavirus and provide adequate treatment to those infected by it.

It is a tragedy that refugees who are fleeing from deadly conditions in their own countries are obliged to undertake such difficult and dangerous journeys in their efforts to find a safe haven. The establishment of the routes and pathways proposed in this article would avert the need for them to do so.

At the same time, this approach would enable responsibility for refugees to be more equitably shared amongst states, and would provide the international community with a means of prioritizing those who are greatest risk and have the most pressing needs.

BIRHAN'S STORY, ASSISTED IN HOSPITAL *BY* MOAS



#keephopealive

Since 2019, MOAS been undertaking a project assisting medically evacuated migrants at the local hospital in Malta. In 2020, the initiative suffered from a temporary setback, due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Yet, during summer, following a decrease in new cases and an ease of restrictions, MOAS managed to visit Birhan, a boy of only 19 (now 20), who arrived in Malta aboard the Lebanese cattle ship Talia.



Regina Catrambone, MOAS Director, went to the Mater Dei hospital to provide Birhan not only with a kit of basic necessities, including shower gel, personal hygiene products, a sweatshirt, underwear, but most importantly to give comfort and show solidarity to the young boy, alone and traumatized.

Birhan had been photographed in the arms of a Syrian sailor as he was transferred aboard the patrol boats of the Maltese Armed Forces, and the media immediately renamed him as the "Pietà of the Mediterranean". Being in poor health, severely undernourished and dehydrated, he was then taken to Mater Dei. While staying in the Maltese hospital, he slowly began to recover, and he shared his sad story with MOAS.

Originally from Eritrea, Birhan is an orphan of both parents and he left his home with his three closest friends in search of a better life, to escape the persecution, hunger and misery that afflict his country. Arriving in Sudan, he was captured by human traffickers and transported against his will to Libya, where he was sold as a slave.

Birhan told us: "I was sold twice because I was penniless, and they treated me worse than an

animal. In the two prisons where I stayed, they tortured me, held us upside down with tied ankles and beat us with a cane and the tail of a gun on the legs. I didn't eat for 11 days. And today when I see food, I'm afraid, because when they gave us pasta-macaroni to eat, they used to hit us immediately afterwards".

He says that his friends did not make it, they never came out of the Libyan concentration camps. Birhan cries at the memory of the traumas he experienced, with the signs of torture clearly recognizable and shows the scars scattered on his legs and feet. After 20 days in the hospital, the young boy was transferred to the Hal Far Detention Center, where he remained for about 6 months, before returning to freedom.

MOAS intends to continue the hospital assistance program for migrants in 2021, to support them in the first days after their arrival in Malta, when they are in particularly fragile conditions, not only to bring basic necessities, but above all to show empathy, affection and carry a message of solidarity.



#Humanityinaction

MOAS DONATES

COVID 19 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

TO LARGE METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL BIANCHI MELACRINO MORELLI IN REGGIO CALABRIA



MOAS Italia has provided medical staff at one of Reggio Calabria's major hospitals with 400 FFP2 masks and 30 protective visors to help in the fight against Covid 19.

In April, during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in Italy, MOAS launched a crowdfunding campaign to purchase medical products to help doctors, nurses and patients at the region's Great Metropolitan Hospital Bianchi Melacrino Morelli.

MOAS has purchased and delivered the equipment for staff who have been heroically working in the fight against Covid19. The donation was funded through an appeal addressed to all Italians,

and in particular to Calabrians, who, like MOAS Director Regina Catrambone, live abroad.

Calabria is an economically and structurally complex area, which is currently facing the latest wave of the pandemic. The donation was greeted with gratitude by the medical staff of the Reggio Calabria hospital.

With this donation, MOAS is able to take another small step towards helping tackle the pandemic in Calabria and provide support, as it is doing in Malta and Bangladesh, to the most vulnerable communities in this difficult period of pandemic.




MOAS

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS & MOAS VOLUNTEERS

MOAS is always grateful for the dedication of those who volunteer their time to support our mission, whether it be in the office or in the field and, with a busy year ahead, we look forward to welcoming more volunteers in the coming year. In particular, we want to highlight our ESC programme.

This year MOAS hosted another group of European Solidarity Corps (ESC) volunteers for a twelve-month placement at our central office in Valletta, Malta. The EVS experience is a unique and valuable opportunity for young adults between 18 and 30 years-old looking to gain international experience working for a cause they are passionate about.

For the volunteers MOAS welcomed in 2020, the year was an opportunity to gain professional experience working for an International NGO whilst experiencing a new country and culture here in Malta. Working in MOAS' small team based in Malta's capital city, the volunteers have been able to gain a real insight into the day-to-day operations of a humanitarian organisation, to develop new skillsets and to learn directly from our team of professionals working hard to deliver aid and assistance to vulnerable communities worldwide.



Sending troops to the channel **won't stop dangerous crossings** - and could be **DEADLY**

UK headlines in recent months have highlighted a rise in people crossing the dangerous waters of the English Channel in desperately unsuitable and overcrowded, inflatable dinghies. The British government has called on defence forces to help stop such crossings.

By
Regina Catrambone

This is certainly not the first-time movement from France to England by migrants and asylum seekers have hit the news. But we are living in strange and frightening times in a world where most of us face unprecedented restrictions on movement under rules relating to the Covid 19 pandemic. Fears of “outsiders” bringing danger are exacerbated making it a fertile climate to propagate anti-migrant messaging.

Particularly in a country where a Conservative government rode to power and secured Brexit with vows to tighten border controls, it is hardly surprising to see stories about “record numbers” of people crossing the Channel without the requisite paperwork stirring up heated emotions.



But the bellicose language of the British government is worrying and dangerous. The creation by the home secretary of a new post bearing the name “Clandestine Channel Threat Commander” to deal with those making the crossing is utterly dehumanising and instigates racism.

A significant number of those arriving in the UK are children, including unaccompanied minors. One wonders what kind of political leaders are so threatened by lone children who have fled famine and conflict that it considers them “Clandestine Threats” and feels the need to call in the Navy to push back the boats they are travelling on rather than rescue them?

Those attempting to reach the UK have already crossed deserts, the Alps, and made dangerous sea crossing before reaching the Channel. Their determination is driven by dreams and aspirations we can all relate to: To be allowed to study; To be able to live in a place where their human rights are recognised; and to exist without the constant dangers of war and conflict.

It has been alleged that the UK government is deliberately stirring up concern over the 4,000 migrants reported to have reached its shores in illicit Channel crossings over the past year to distract from widespread criticism over its handling of the Covid 19 pandemic which has claimed over 46,000 lives in Britain so far.

From my base in Malta I will not comment on such claims. But speaking as a founding director of MOAS, an organisation that has helped rescue more than 40,000 people making perilous attempts

to escape across the Mediterranean and Aegean, the number of migrants reaching the UK by such dangerous crossings is a fraction of those seeking shelter in many small and large European countries.

Through my work with MOAS in Bangladesh, I also witnessed first-hand how a developing country - many of whose own citizens live in desperate poverty - has taken in close to 1 million Rohingya refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar, most of whom arrived in a period of just a few weeks in late 2017.

The situations are very different, but it does put Britain’s “crisis” over a few thousand arrivals in some perspective.

That is not to say that the people of the UK do not have the right to maintain secure borders – only that they must not forget their humanity in finding a solution to those making perilous journeys here in search of safety.

Treating migrants with compassion and dignity and talking to them about what has driven them to undertake such dangerous routes does not make a country weak nor its borders more vulnerable. Dialogue is the first step to understanding what causes people to take these dangerous sea crossings – and through that understanding, long term solutions can be reached.

That requires dialogue between governments of course, but, crucially, also dialogue with those most affected.

People smuggling is a vastly lucrative, transnational crime that exploits the world’s most vulnerable

people. You do not climb onto an inflatable dingy to cross one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes unless life where you are has become intolerable. You certainly do not send your children off to make such a journey unless you are truly desperate.

Experience from across the world tells us that when one smuggling route is closed, criminal networks will find another one, often even more dangerous, and desperate people will still be willing to risk travel.

So, the British and French governments are to be lauded when they say they want to work together to tackle the smuggling syndicates who treat humans as disposable cargo and care so little for the lives of those they transport.

Likewise, when people demand to know why migrants and asylum seekers are leaving the apparently safe country of France to reach the UK, they are posing a vitally important question.

Unfortunately, it is too often asked from the position that the people making these terrifying journeys are the problem, rather than to identify the policies and systemic failings that keeps driving people to take such risks.

There are global protocols on the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. If people in Europe are falling through the gaps to such an extent that they feel they need to escape to the UK via Calais in dinghies – then that needs to be addressed urgently.

Treating migrants as a “mass” rather than individuals not only stirs up racism and fear, but leads to repeated failures in finding effective solutions such as the implementation of safe and legal routes.

Where people have legitimate reasons to travel – such as for family reunification, education or specialist health services – then the barriers they are currently forced to negotiate should be lifted so they are not reduced to putting themselves at the mercy of smugglers out of desperation. Proposals to reduce opportunities for family reunification in the UK are more likely to drive up irregular migration than reduce it.

Rather than spending money to send defence troops to patrol waters and send back boats of people who will likely try to make the journey some other way, investment should be made in ensuring migrants in Europe and the UK are able to live safely and with dignity.

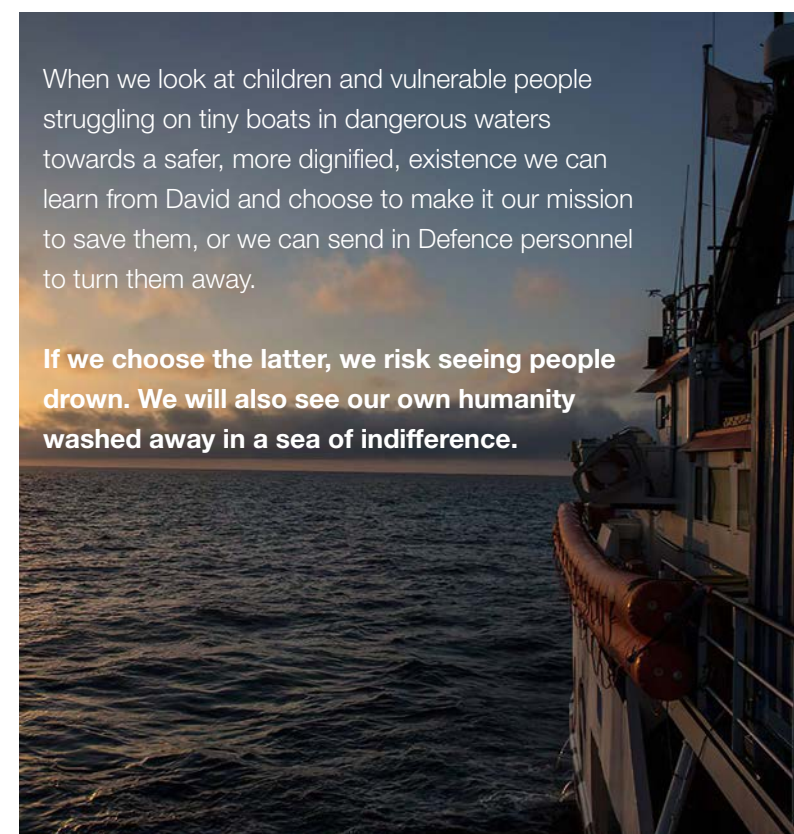
In Europe and Asia, I have personally tended to hundreds of people who have taken to sea in their flight from horrific conditions in their own countries. Through my work with MOAS I have met many memorable people who have taught me much about humanity and the drivers of migration.

One of the most memorable was David. An eight-year-old boy, who along with his mother, was fleeing Eritrea – a country rife with violence. As I comforted him after his rescue from sea, I asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up and he told me he wanted to be “a superhero”. This particular job, he reasoned, would allow him to “save his mother from bad people”. In those days before PPE shortages, we were able to share some surgical gloves and convert an apron into a cape in order to allow him to dress up as the superhero he hoped to become.

I feel safe in saying neither David and his mother were any kind of “Clandestine Threat”.

When we look at children and vulnerable people struggling on tiny boats in dangerous waters towards a safer, more dignified, existence we can learn from David and choose to make it our mission to save them, or we can send in Defence personnel to turn them away.

If we choose the latter, we risk seeing people drown. We will also see our own humanity washed away in a sea of indifference.



HEAVY RAINS DURING MONSOON SEASON RESULT IN TRAGIC FATALITIES IN BANGLADESH'S REFUGEE CAMPS

Imagine fleeing violence, persecution and genocide. Taking only what you can carry in your hands, walking for days and crossing an international border, looking for safety and security. Imagine beginning a new life in the world's biggest refugee camp just inside Bangladesh. Having experienced all of this trauma, then imagine losing your child, not to disease or violence but to a more benign killer - drowning.

The World Health Organisation have called it 'The Silent Epidemic', MOAS is working hard to help find solutions.

When monsoon season begins in Bangladesh, scaling up critical disaster risk reduction becomes a priority. According to the ISCG, the arrival of the monsoon season and heavy rainfall exacerbate the already precarious situation in Cox's Bazar District, particularly in the Rohingya refugee camps, where almost 860,000 Rohingya refugees are living in overcrowded conditions and temporary shelters, many situated in hazardous terrain. During the monsoon season, heavy rainfall causes the water levels to rise dramatically in the streams, pools and reservoirs located in the camps, and children are particularly at risk, given the almost total absence of safe places to play and the irresistible

attraction of the pools in the hot, humid weather. In 2019, in response to the problem and in partnership with UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency), MOAS shifted its operations to deliver professional flood and water safety training to the Rohingya population, as well as the local host community, to improve their response to emergencies like these and to prevent further loss of lives. The Flood and Water Safety Training course builds community capacity, training Rohingya or host community volunteers to be able to act as first responders in the event of a water related emergency and to manage the aftereffects of flooding. By December 2019, MOAS had trained over 1230 safety volunteers, with the aim of reducing water related dangers in the camps and providing assistance in emergency flooding events. This year, we faced additional challenges in implementing our activities, due to the

COVID-19 outbreak in the camps. Reduced humanitarian presence in the camps and delivery of only critical, life-saving services as essential COVID-19 mitigation measures, limited the ability to fully carry out key activities.

Unfortunately, despite the efforts made, child drownings continue to happen, meaning that the Flood and Safety Training must continue in order to provide lifesaving skills to Rohingya refugees and the host community.

Our field team in Bangladesh sadly witnessed some tragic stories that have led to recent fatalities in the refugee camps, as a result of rising of water levels in ponds.



Masud's story

The day started just like any other for Masud, an 11-year-old boy who lives in Camp 4. After going to the Madrasa and eating the rice and vegetables his mother had prepared for him at home, he decided to meet his best friend Salim to play football next to the pond.

However, with the recent heavy rains, the pond was very full and when Masud fell in, he was unable to get to safety. Salim quickly ran home to tell Masud's family what had happened, and as his father immediately rushed to the scene in floods of tears, a further 30 people also gathered by the pond to help.

Masud was pulled from the water unconscious and rushed to hospital. However, after 20 minutes Masud's death was declared, leaving his family and friends devastated by the tragic end to a day which had seemed, initially, just like any other.



Kabir's story

Kabir was a 17-year-old orphan with epilepsy living with his aunt and uncle in Camp 20 in Cox's Bazar who decided to go to a pond to bathe. With it being monsoon season, this particular pond had flooded and was now 15ft deep. When Kabir got out of his depth, he drowned as there was tragically nobody else at the pond at the time to help him.

Later that day, some young boys went to play football and bathe in the same pond where Kabir had gone that morning and were alarmed to find Kabir's body. The boys helped pull Kabir out of the water and then informed his uncle of the devastating news.



Tasheen's story

Tasheen was a 7-year-old who lived with his parents in Camp 13 and loved to play with his friends. One day, Tasheen was called to eat his lunch by his parents but instead decided to first go and play in a nearby pond with his friend, Fahim. Tasheen's parents were preoccupied with housework and therefore didn't immediately notice that he had disappeared.

Tasheen, just like Masud and Kabir, then got out his depth in the water and his friend Fahim was unable to help and sat by the pond in floods of tears, unsure what to do. A man passing by noticed Fahim's crying and helped pull Tasheen's unconscious body from the water. Tasheen's death was later declared in MSF's nearby hospital.



Sifat's Story

Sifat was a 7-year-old boy who lived in Nayapara camp in Cox's Bazar with his parents. One day Sifat woke up, went to the Madrasa, ate breakfast & then headed outside to play with his friends.

Whilst Sifat was out playing, his father was sleeping and his mother was busy with her house work and when Sifat's father woke up from his rest, his mother asked him where Sifat was and suggested he go out and get him.

As his father was looking around the camp, he met some children and asked them if they had seen Sifat. They told him

that he had been playing by the reservoir but had got into deep water. Upon hearing this, Sifat's father ran desperately, as fast as he could to the reservoir. When he arrived, some other boys had already pulled his body from the water. However, when he arrived at the hospital with his son, the doctors confirmed that Sifat had died as a result of this traumatic incident.



These heartbreaking stories show how crucial it is to keep providing skills training in flood and water safety to ensure that the local host community, as well as the Rohingya refugee population, is well-prepared to act in such kind of incidents, as all these deaths could have easily been prevented.

Through the Flood and Water Safety Training, MOAS is working hard to help and equip more of the community with essential skills in how to deal with these emergencies. Given that children are constantly playing in the water and that the majority



Expanding Flood and Water Safety Training to the fishermen of Cox's Bazar District

of them are not able to swim, the skills provided by the water safety training can truly be the difference between life and death.

In 2020, MOAS managed to provide the Flood and Water Safety Training to 2,360 volunteers from the host and Rohingya communities, as well as local fishermen.

Monsoon preparedness and response is a priority for MOAS in the Cox's Bazar District, to mitigate risks and save lives.



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Monsoon preparedness and response is a priority for MOAS in the Cox's Bazar District, to mitigate risks and save lives.

At the end of 2019, MOAS made the decision to expand the Flood and Water Safety Training to the fishing community of Cox's Bazar District in 2020. The combined elements of the protracted Rohingya refugee crisis and high fatality rates for local fishermen due to drowning and water related accidents, has resulted in the area being the site of MOAS' intervention. Fishing is key to the local economy, both in terms of providing a food source and an income. However, safety records for fisherman in this region are poor, with fatalities occurring on a regular basis. In addition, whilst out working, fisherman have frequently come across Rohingya boats in distress or refugees in the water. MOAS is, therefore, seeking to improve the safety of those individuals operating on these fishing boats, by equipping them with a greater knowledge of water safety and providing them with the skills necessary to be able to perform simple water rescues.

Through directly engaging with fishermen from the host community, MOAS is now providing expertise and technical advice for the delivery of a basic maritime safety and boat-based rescue course, based on recognized best practice, to them. Specifically tailored towards the marine environment,



the course is providing the necessary skills to perform rescues for anyone in distress at sea, as well as supporting the fishing community itself to be better prepared for emergency situations and work in increased safety. The training is being delivered to groups of 25 people at a time, with one member of each group being nominated further training on how to deliver the course to future participants, to facilitate knowledge retention within the community. In 2020, despite some disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the training course known as Water Safety and Livelihood Practice went ahead, and 800 fishermen from the host communities of the Shamlapur and Teknaf areas received the training.



INVESTIGATING FATAL CHILDHOOD DROWNING INCIDENTS IN THE **COX'S BAZAR REFUGEE CAMPS**

Drowning is a serious and neglected public health threat that results in the deaths of 320,000 people a year worldwide. Drowning is the second leading cause of childhood injury-related deaths worldwide and is the most common cause of injury-related deaths among under-fives. This issue is especially critical in Bangladesh, where drowning has previously been identified as the leading cause of death among children aged 1–17 years, with approximately 17,000 children drowning each

year. Whilst there is not yet a national childhood drowning prevention scheme in Bangladesh, various studies and interventions have been undertaken throughout the country, particularly focusing on rural areas and children under 5 years old. However, such research and actions have so far largely neglected the refugee camps hosting Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, a region where drowning is the fourth highest cause of accidental death, according to a UNDP district level report.

As an international NGO specialising in emergency disaster response and working with Rohingya refugees and host communities in the region, we have gained an understanding of the drowning risks children living in the camps face and the devastating consequences that can follow. From our drowning data collection since 2019, we are aware of several incidents involving children under 5 years old drowning in unfenced water sources, such as ponds that are close to their shelters. In response, fences and barriers have been installed to restrict access and exposure to water bodies. However, there is also a need to consider interventions focusing on school age children who intentionally choose to enter the water to wash or play. We are also aware of fatal drowning incidents involving children between the ages of 5 and 17 that occur in larger water bodies such as reservoirs and canals, often after the victims have finished or not attended school or madrasa.

In response to this, we have investigated fatal drowning cases that occurred in the refugee camps in 2019 and 2020, to further explore the influencing factors and age groups associated with the drowning incidents and possible interventions. We sent our field team into the camps to speak to the families of children that have drowned in 2019 and 2020 and to examine the water bodies in which the incidents occurred.

Findings from the field

In total, eighteen fatal drowning incidents were recorded in 2019 and 2020, which resulted in the deaths of twenty children. The ages of the victims ranged from 2 to 17 years old. Fourteen (70%) of the victims were male and six (30%) were female. Six (30%) fatalities recorded were children under 5 and fourteen (70%) fatalities recorded were school age children (between 5 and 17 years old). Twelve (60%) of these fatalities occurred in ponds, three (15%) in canals, two (10%) in a deep man-made hole that had accumulated rain, and one (5%) each in a lake, reservoir and water bucket.

Nine fatalities were recorded in 2019. Four (44%) of the fatalities recorded in 2019 were children under the age of five. Each of these fatalities

occurred as the victim's parents were undertaking essential household activities, such as work, prayer and preparing food, which meant the child was unsupervised and wandered into ponds near their shelters. Five (56%) of the fatalities during 2019 were school age children. The majority of fatalities (67%) recorded in 2019 were boys (figure 2).

Eleven fatalities were recorded in 2020. Nine (82%) of the fatalities in 2020 were school age children. These occurred primarily in the afternoon, as the children went to play and bathe in canals, reservoirs and ponds without adult supervision, on days when there was no school or madrasa, or after finishing school or madrasa. Other common themes were; the fatalities occurring in water bodies described as far away from the victim's home camp; victims engaging in behaviour such as bathing in ponds alone; and fatalities being witnessed by peers and bystanders who did not know how to help. In addition, three (27%) of the fatalities took place in a canal, after the children involved got into difficulty in the water. Two (18%) of the fatalities in 2020 were children under 5. Whilst one of these fatalities occurred in similar circumstances to those recorded



in 2019, the other occurred as an unsupervised 2 year old child suffering from diarrhoea fell into a water bucket in her own shelter, as her mother briefly left her unsupervised. An important finding is that three (27%) of the fatalities that occurred in 2020 involved children that had epilepsy. Research from high-income countries shows that children with epilepsy are at a much higher risk of drowning. The majority of fatalities (73%) in 2020 were boys. Many fatalities recorded in 2019 involved unsupervised children under 5 drowning in ponds close to their homes, and this finding supports previous research conducted in Bangladesh which highlighted the high drowning risks for children under 5 and emphasised the need for increased child supervision and fences to surround ponds. The fatalities recorded in 2020 revealed a shift in the age groups of the victims (figure 3). Whilst 2019 fatalities were almost evenly split between age categories, the 2020 findings data demonstrated an increase in school age child fatalities, and a decrease in fatalities to children under 5.

The decrease in fatalities to children under 5 could be influenced by efforts undertaken in the last

18 months to build fences around ponds in the camps, which may have reduced the frequency of unsupervised children accidentally falling into the pools. The incidents involving school age child drownings may be influenced by several factors. Previous research has found that older children tend to be less closely supervised and more likely to engage in risky behaviour around water, whilst also drowning further from home, often 500 metres or more, where they swim alone or with peers who do not have swimming, rescue or resuscitation skills. The increase in drowning incidents involving this age group in 2020 may have also been partly influenced by the COVID-19 situation and related measures. 2020 saw a significant reduction in children attending schools and learning centres as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Consequently, with limited or no school, children will have had more unstructured free time and would have been searching for activities and entertainment, and potentially increased the frequency of children playing and bathing in ponds, lakes, reservoirs and canals.

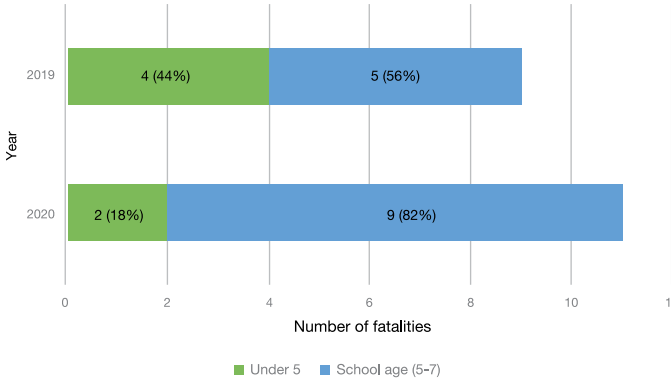


Figure 2. Age groups of fatalities recorded in 2019 and 2020.

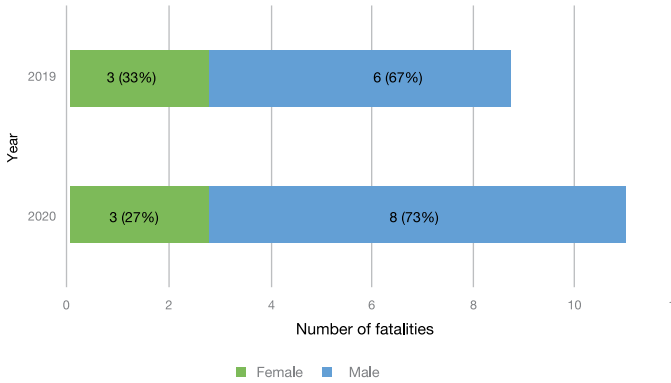


Figure 3. Sexes of fatalities recorded in 2019 and 2020.



Conclusion and recommendations

This investigation has shown that childhood drowning is a grave issue in the refugee camps that requires urgent intervention. Drowning is preventable and there are proven strategies that can be implemented. However, different interventions are required for different age groups. For children under 5, the installation of fences and barriers and increased supervision are key measures that have been proven effective in Bangladesh. For

older children, interventions may include teaching school age children basic water safety and safe rescue skills. This can also be complemented by training bystanders in safe rescue and resuscitation, strengthening public awareness of drowning and highlighting the vulnerability of children. These forms of intervention have already seen some success in other areas in Bangladesh through programmes such as SwimSafe, which teaches basic water safety and safe rescue skills to children age 7–17 years. Therefore, MOAS are advocating the need for similar lifesaving training targeted at the children living in the refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar.





#GIVINGTUESDAY

“KALEIDOSCOPE OF SOLIDARITY”

A COLLECTION TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF MOAS

American artist Kelly White crafted 12 exclusive artworks inspired by the Safe and Legal Routes campaign to support MOAS activities throughout the world

Seattle-based artist and MOAS ambassador Kelly Be created 12 pieces of art, each designed to raise awareness about reducing the need for people to take dangerous journeys in search of safety. 7 of these pieces have been inspired by the specific examples of Safe and Legal Routes advocated in MOAS' campaign and will represent a different legal pathway of migration including:

Family Reunification Visas, Student Visas, Work Visas, Medical Visas, Humanitarian Visas, Humanitarian Corridors, Private Sponsorship.

The artist named the collection Kaleidoscope of Solidarity, with the intent of advocating, educating and raising money to support MOAS. Each piece is carefully hand crafted using recycled materials, mixed and combined with acrylic paint. Sharper details are obtained using various household items such as knives, rules and straws.

The prominent metaphor of Kaleidoscope of Solidarity is butterflies, who are used to represent the people affected by the migration phenomenon and their strengths: Hope, Courage, Transformation, Endurance and Resilience. Created from tinted, poured resin and cut by hand, butterflies are placed in different scenarios of distress and freedom. They are intended to soften the interpretation the viewer may experience and cultivate empathetic association.

Materials such as shattered tempered glass, shards, and barbed wire represent the barriers and the challenges that the migrants face, and which force them to undertake dangerous journeys in search of safety. Kaleidoscope of Solidarity shows the life-shattering reality of millions of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the world, many of which have fled their countries due to persecution, war, or violence, risking their lives in perilous crossings by land and sea.

“Through artistic expression, I aim to raise awareness, inspire hopefulness, and empower action until every person has the ability and resources to access safe and legal routes in order to live safely and soundly”,

Kelly White



Regina Catrambone, MOAS Director, said:

“Art, like butterflies, overcomes all barriers and lifts the soul. When we look at the migration phenomenon, we are not faced with a migration crisis, as many say, but rather a crisis of humanity in which these events are viewed from an unempathetic perspective. Border control cannot be the only solution, we need to implement safe and legal pathways of migration so that people will not be forced to undertake dangerous journeys and put their lives at risk. Like love, art has no borders”.

Proceeds of sale supported the MOAS missions around the world and their efforts to help vulnerable communities.



CHRISTMAS

MOAS

DONATED BOOKS, TOILETRY KITS, PUZZLES AND VIDEOGAMES TO THE UNACCOMPANIED MINORS IN MALTA



For Christmas 2020, MOAS made a donation to the unaccompanied minors residing in the DIL and HTV centres in Malta that host young refugees and asylum seekers under the age of 18, the majority of which are teenagers that arrived in Malta alone, without their parents, relatives or siblings.

Thanks to coordination with AWAS, MOAS delivered 150 books, 3 game consoles with controllers and videogames, 2 TVs, 10+ puzzles and several board games that will be used in the common areas of the centres, to help socialize, learn and have some fun, especially during challenging times like these. The donation also includes 150 toiletry kits (shower gel, shampoo, towel, antibacterial hand-wash, toothbrush and toothpaste) as a gift for each individual hosted in the centres.

This has been made possible thanks to the support of Betclic Group, and of our donors that continue to show their support towards our initiatives.

MOAS' hope is that the donation of the books can become the first step for the creation of a library in the centres: a space of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, where friendship and peace can flourish.



“With this donation, we would like to spread a message of hope, brotherhood and love. We wish to make Christmas a moment of happiness and joy. In these difficult times, MOAS is grateful to Betclic Group, and all our donors for their support in this initiative, as it is paramount to show solidarity toward the most vulnerable people. We hope that this initiative of creative cooperation will help to improve the integration of these kids and adolescents in our society, so that they will have the chance to create a future and become meaningful part of the society. We believe that diversity should be converted from a barrier into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding”.

Regina Catrambone, MOAS Director



A summary OF THIS YEAR

2020 was a year like no other for MOAS. Our range of activities has expanded significantly over the past few years, but the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges pushed and motivated us even further to adapt, innovate and engage in completely new forms of projects. It is with some pride we are now in a position to look back at what MOAS did throughout such a difficult year.

BANGLADESH



In Bangladesh, MOAS continued to support Rohingya refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar, adapting to projects to meet the needs created by the Covid 19 pandemic. We established a mask-making initiative to help combat the spread of the virus in the densely populated region and refugee camps. Thanks to the dedication of our fantastic team and partners, we were able to distribute 883,514 masks among front-line workers, local communities and Rohingya refugees. The project also served as a crucial livelihood for host community and refugee workers alike including local tailors and seamstresses, many of whom lost income sources due to the pandemic.

In September, we were very excited to resume the Flood and Water Safety Training to enable new volunteers to act as first responders in the event of water-related emergencies. The project had been suspended in March due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, MOAS technical advisers provided 700 Rohingya refugees and 860 host community members in Ukhia and Teknaf with this vital training in 2020.

We also fulfilled our plans to provide training for the local fishing community in the Teknaf Peninsula. MOAS provided its expertise for a basic maritime safety and rescue course, known as Water Safety and Livelihood Practice and equipped 800 fishermen with the necessary skills to rescue people at sea, be better prepared for emergency situations, and work in a safer manner.

MALTA



In Malta, we continued providing social and physical support to migrants receiving care at the local hospital and donating supplies to the government's migrant support office for new arrivals. We also established a mask-production initiative to provide protection for asylum seekers and refugees across the island - the majority of whom live in centres in overcrowded conditions in which the virus can spread easily. We rallied local tailors, seamstresses and other volunteers to make homemade, reusable face masks. In the first round our brilliant volunteers made 6,610 masks, which were then distributed to vulnerable groups all over the island. In August, as the pandemic continued, we initiated a second round of the project. The response to both rounds of the project was fantastic, and through hard work, generosity and solidarity of volunteers and several supporting local businesses, nearly 9,000 masks were made in total.

Access to education was a further pandemic-related concern in Malta. Covid-related lockdown meant a number of families living within the open centres run by the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) experienced difficulties in accessing remote learning resources because they lacked electronic devices or adequate internet connection. We established our Malta Remote Learning Project to help affected children access remote education services through the purchase of technology. We provided 21 tablets and modems with internet connections to families with school age children living in the centres.

Aid deliveries - Yemen and Somalia



Building on our 2019 shipments of pharmaceutical and famine relief supplies to Yemen, in 2020 we coordinated two more shipments of Ready-to-use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) to our local partners ADRA Yemen, as well as a shipment of 70,000 euros-worth of pharmaceutical aid.

We also coordinated our first ever shipment of humanitarian aid to Somalia, a country also mired in conflict and food insecurity. Again partnering with

Edesia Nutrition, we shipped 25 tonnes of Plumpy Sup™, a nutritional supplement specially formulated for children suffering or at risk of suffering from acute malnutrition, to our newest local partner International Medical Corps Somalia.

Artist-in-Residence - Kelly White



In the second half of 2020 MOAS worked with our first ever artist-in-residence, Kelly White. Kelly created 12 unique pieces of artwork, collectively known as Kaleidoscope of Solidarity inspired by our Safe and Legal Routes campaign and designed to advocate, educate and raise awareness of the need for safe and legal alternative pathways for those forced to take dangerous journeys in search of safety. The pieces went on sale on 1st December, Giving Tuesday 2020, with all proceeds going towards our missions to help vulnerable communities around the world.

ITALY



In April, during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in Italy, MOAS launched a crowdfunding campaign to purchase medical products to help doctors, nurses and patients at Calabria's Great Metropolitan Hospital Bianchi Melacrino Morelli. By November, the success of the appeal and the support of Calabrians who, like MOAS Director Regina Catrambone, live abroad, allowed MOAS Italia to provide the hospital with 400 FFP2 masks and 30 protective visors to help in the fight against Covid 19.





BANGLADESH

700 Rohingya refugees and **860 host community members** in Ukhia and Teknaf trained in Water Safety & Flood/ Cyclone preparedness training

800 fishermen trained in Water Safety and Livelihood Practice training

883,514 reusable facemasks produced and distributed to Rohingya refugees and host community



ITALY

400 FFP2 facemasks and **30 face visors** donated by MOAS ITALIA to GOM – Grande Ospedale Metropolitano Bianchi Melacrino Morelli Di Reggio Calabria



SOMALIA

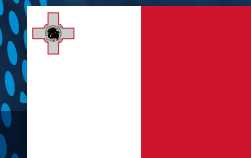
25 tonnes of nutritional aid delivered



YEMEN

50 tonnes of nutritional aid delivered

€70,000 worth of medical supplies delivered




MALTA

Remote Learning Project for migrant students: **21 tablets and modems with internet connections** purchased and distributed to families with school age children living in Malta reception centres

Over 8000 reusable facemasks made for vulnerable groups

Hospital visits: visiting & bringing essentials to migrants who have been medically evacuated to Malta's hospital from SAR vessels

MOAS AROUND THE WORLD

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling and holding a newborn baby wrapped in a patterned blanket. They are inside a tent, with other tents and laundry visible in the background.

Your Donation Saves Lives

If you would like support our humanitarian efforts, you can donate online at moas.eu/donate or affect a bank transfer.

MOAS

EU

Beneficiary Name: **Migrant Offshore Aid Station**
Bank Name: **Lombard Bank Malta plc**
IBAN: MT15LBMA05000000000001180113787
SWIFT Code: LBMAMTMT

GERMANY

Kontoinhaber: **M.O.A.S.**
Bank: **Hamburger Sparkasse**
IBAN: DE48 2005 0550 1002 2118 01
Kontonr. 1002 2118 01 BIC: HASPDEHHXXX

ITALIA

Beneficiario: **MIGRANT OFFSHORE AID STATION ITALIA** Onlus
Banca: **BNL S.p.A.**
IBAN: IT02P0100503337000000003138
SWIFT Code: BNLIITRRXXX

UK

Beneficiary Name: **Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS) UK**
Bank Name: **Lloyds Bank**
Account Number: 39002760
Sort Code: 30-90-89
IBAN: GB33LOYD30908939002760

USA

Beneficiary Name: **Global Impact – MOAS Fund**
Bank Name: **Bank of America**
Account Number: 166009049
SWIFT Code: CINAUS6L