



UN Volunteer Midwife Specialist, Joyce Matua Bakoko, holding baby "Bakoko" born in Rohingya family in Cox's Bazar.

## UN Volunteer brings life-saving skills to refugee camp in Bangladesh

It was a normal sunny day when I was going through my center unit visits. The birth center, popularly known as Kutupalong Registered Camp (RC), was unusually filled with a rowdy gathering of male outside the center and filled with women inside the labor room.

On seeing me, the midwives on duty rushed me inside the center's labour room only to find a young first-time mother in extreme labour. They confirmed that the mother's situation was dire, complicated and life threatening.

A quick examination revealed that prolapse of the reproductive organs was present, and if not carefully handled, it would lead to serious complications.

At that time, saving the mother and the baby's lives became the only thing I knew I had to do. I therefore made up my mind. Even though, as an

international staff, I technically don't have a license to touch patients in Bangladesh, I decided to take matters in my own hands.

The birth ended up being very successful and a baby girl was born into a Rohingya family. She was later called "Bakoko", in honour of this journey.

“Offering your skills and experience in service to others, adds to and broadens your knowledge as a solution to other peoples' problems." Joyce Matua Bakoko, International UN Volunteer Specialist currently serving with UNFPA in Cox's Bazar.

This is the story of Joyce Matua Bakoko, an International UNV Specialist currently serving with UNFPA's humanitarian crisis response for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar. Her main area of work has been in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for women and girls. She also mentors national staff on clinical responses to victims of Gender-Based Violence. Their team has served around 900,000 refugees-52% of whom are women and girls who arrived in Cox's Bazar in August 2017.

“UNV midwives have been the backbone of supporting the junior midwives in the humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar. Through the volunteers, we have been successful in implementing the minimum initial service package for reproductive health and have moved quickly to comprehensive reproductive health care.”- Rondi Anderson, International Midwifery Specialist, UNFPA Bangladesh.

As part of a response to a large refugee influx in the district of Cox's Bazar in

Bangladesh, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has partnered with UNFPA to mobilize volunteers. Currently, there are 13 UN Volunteers working with UNFPA in addressing the Refugee Emergency Responses in Cox's Bazar. These volunteers are mainly supporting in areas related to maternal health care, Obstetrics and Gynecology, youth and adolescents, reproductive health, midwifery training, communications and information management services.

To date, the strong partnership between UNV and UNFPA has helped mobilize 34 UN Volunteers across Bangladesh. Through their commitment and expertise, these volunteers, like Bakoko, have helped reduce pain and suffering for some of the most vulnerable people currently living in Bangladesh.

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