

ISPP Virtual Seminar Series – Asia-Pacific Region November 2022

Organizers: Ying-yi Hong, Diwa Malaya Quinones, Peter Beattie, Idhamsyah Eka Putra

25 November 2022 (Friday), at 12noon of Dhaka (Bangladesh) time (2pm Manila time/Hong Kong Time)

Speaker: **Dr. Yeshim Iqbal**, Global TIES for Children, New York University (based in Bangladesh)

Title: Experiences of Forced Migration: Rohingya Caregivers in Cox's Bazar

Host/Moderator: Peter Beattie, Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Abstract

Rohingyas are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world, having escaped from Myanmar in response to persecution for multiple decades, with the largest influx entering Bangladesh in 2017 in response to a military crackdown with genocidal intent. Now, more than 900,000 Rohingya people reside in Cox's Bazar; this is one of the largest groups of stateless people in the world. From the hazardous escape with children to settling down inside the refugee camps, Rohingya caregivers endured a lot; these experiences shaped their processes of caregiving, coping mechanisms in new surroundings, and future aspirations for their children. The purpose of the present study was to answer the questions: What were the experiences of caregivers, in relation to their children, during the migration process? What were/are the challenges faced in setting up life in the camps in Cox's Bazar? To answer these questions, we took an iterative thematic inquiry approach to analyze Rohingya caregivers' responses to a semi-structured interview protocol. This data, part of a larger pilot study to understand the Rohingya population and refugee camp context, was collected in 2020 and 2021 and consists of 28 interviews with mothers and fathers of 3 and 4 old children (i.e., children who were in utero/small infants during migration). These father-mother dyads came from 10 Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar and ranged in age from 23 to 48 years old. From each of the transcripts, we capture a flow of narratives about how parents survived the attack with their children, escaped from Myanmar, and built another life in Bangladesh. Findings are organized into key themes, including: 1) The importance of family ties 2) The role and presence of trauma 3) Living in uncertainty in the camps 3) Living through conflicted feelings and aspirations. The implications of these results, both for programming being offered to this population and for their wellbeing and aspirations for their family's futures, are discussed.

Speaker Bio

Dr. Yeshim Iqbal is a Senior Research Scientist with ECDEC, Global TIES for Children. She has a PhD from the Psychology and Social Intervention Program in the Department of Applied Psychology at New York University and a B.A. in Psychology from Cornell University. Her research has focused on how people respond to violence, and how belonging to particular social groups influences those responses. Before graduate school, she worked for three years as a Research Coordinator at the Harvard Laboratory for Developmental Studies. She then went on to found *Kaan Pete Roi*, the first emotional support and suicide prevention helpline in Bangladesh, and still serves as its Director.