



hūmānus: On the UN Theme: "Co-Creation" vs. Reality

The UN theme this year is "The power of youth in co-creating education." Through the **Rohingya Students' Network (RSN)**, you have been co-creating an educational infrastructure for youth in Cox's Bazar for years. Based on your experience, what is the biggest barrier international organisations ignore when they talk about "youth empowerment" in refugee settings?

MS: The biggest barrier is legal invisibility. International organizations celebrate youth leadership. But they ignore refugee legal status. Most refugee youth cannot enroll in accredited education. They cannot receive recognized certificates. They cannot sit for public exams. Their skills are treated as informal. Their leadership is praised but not legalized. Co-creation without legal recognition has no power. Youth cannot co-create systems they are excluded from.

hūmānus: On Educational Reparations and Corporate Responsibility

The UN defines education as a 'public responsibility'. In your campaign regarding Meta, you specifically requested that reparations include funding for educational programmes in Cox's Bazar. Why is it vital that 'educational reparations' - the restoration of a community's intellectual future - become a standard part of legal redress for the Rohingya, rather than just financial compensation for the past?

MS: Education is the core of reparations. The Rohingya lost generations of learning. Schools were destroyed. Teachers were killed or displaced. Language, history, and knowledge were interrupted. Financial compensation addresses past harm. Educational reparations repair future loss. They restore intellectual continuity. They allow a community to govern its future. Without education, displacement becomes permanent. Justice must rebuild capacity, not only compensate damage.

hūmānus: On the Structural Violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that higher education should be accessible to all. Yet, for millions of refugee youth, 'statelessness' acts as a legal ceiling rather than a mere hurdle. Having overcome 147 rejections to reach NYU, how are you using your platform to ensure that the 'ladder out of poverty' isn't just a lucky escape for one, but a protected legal right for the many? How can we reform international law, so that 'merit' is no longer defeated by 'status'?

MS: The Convention promises access to higher education. Statelessness cancels that promise in practice. For refugees, status overrides merit. I applied to 147 universities. I met academic requirements. I was rejected because I had no passport. This is not an individual failure. It is a structural violation of international law. I now use my platform to expose this gap. I advocate for legal education pathways for stateless youth. International law must treat education as enforceable. Merit should not collapse under nationality.

hūmānus: On the Evolution of the Advocate

You have transitioned from a student seeking an education to a law student at NYU who is now dissecting the very systems that once excluded you. How has your perspective on 'Justice' evolved since



moving from the camps to a global academic centre? Do you see the law primarily as a shield for protection, or a sword for reclaiming rights like education?

MS: In the camps, justice meant safety and survival. In academia, justice means accountability and design. I now study how exclusion is legalized. I see law as a protective shield. I also see law as a tool for recovery. Education is not a privilege. It is a stolen right that must be reclaimed. Justice is not passive. Justice requires structure, enforcement, and repair.

UN International Day of Education, 2026 theme: The power of youth in co-creating education

Youth make up more than half of the global population and are a powerful engine for innovation, social change and sustainable development. Yet many still face persistent barriers that hold them back from shaping the future they want — from poverty and inequality to limited access to quality education and decent work.

Because their lives and opportunities are directly shaped by education, young people must be active partners in reimagining how learning works. As technology continues to transform the world, involving youth in co-creating modern, relevant and inclusive education systems is essential to ensure teaching and learning truly meet their aspirations.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/education-day>