

Crayon Renderings of My Experience In Bangladesh

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From June through December of 2016, I moved to Dhaka, Bangladesh, and worked as an intern for the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), a small research-based NGO that studies human migrations both out of Bangladesh and within it.

The experience was revelatory, and educated me in ways that I find it hard to express in words. Thus, for my CAPSTONE project, I have drawn some pictures based on my memories and impressions from my time in Bangladesh.

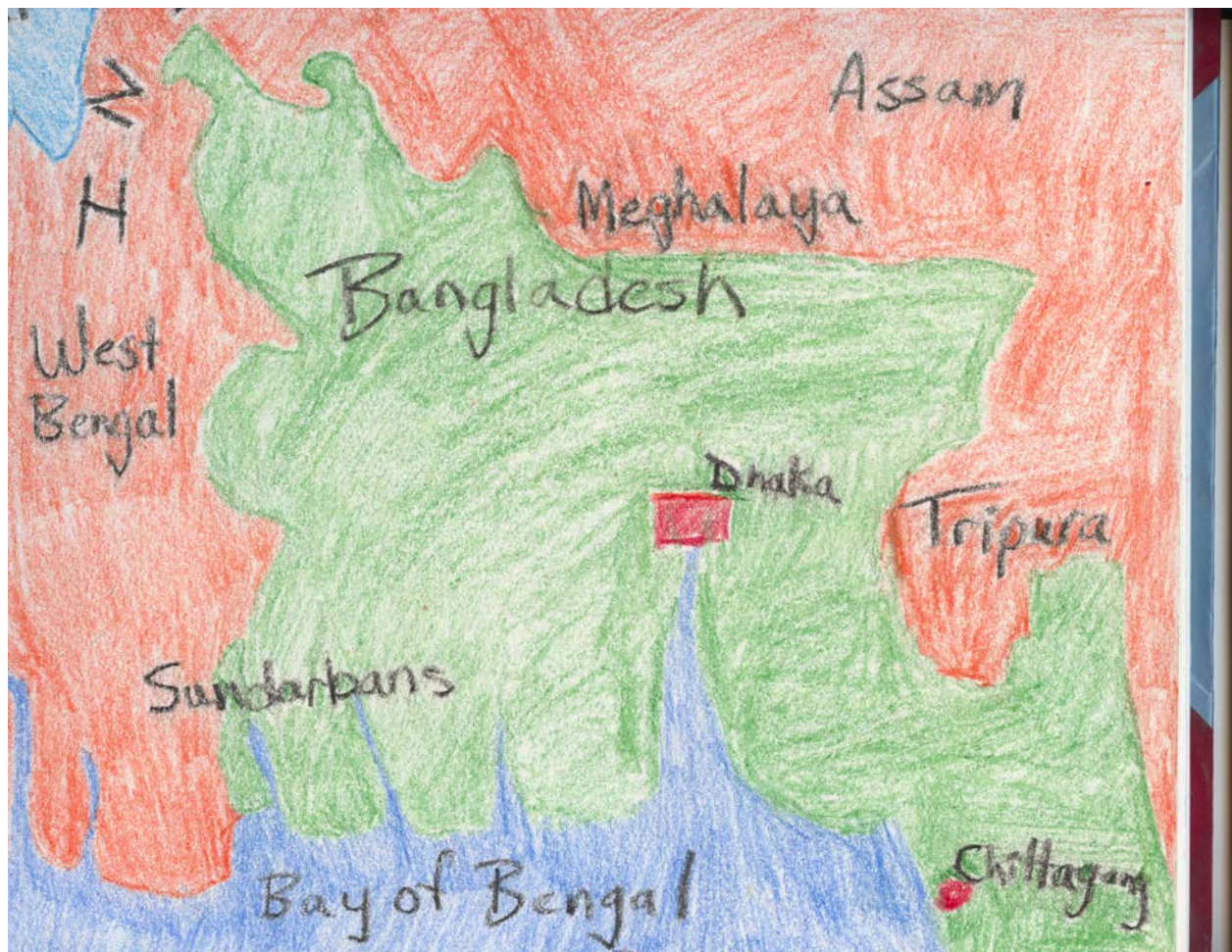


Fig. 1: An Impressionistic Geography of Bengal



Fig 2: Fishermen Out on the River.

Based on several different photographs, none of which were taken by me. However, I saw many Bengali riverboats while I was living in Bangladesh, I just didn't happen to snap one with my camera. So I've included this drawing, which I drew using a few different photographs, but also a little bit of my memory. I really love the unique shapes of the boats, and I also wanted to represent with at least one drawing in this book the strong connection of many Bangladeshis to the waterways. I think the relationship between Bangladeshis and their rivers is quite beautiful.

SEASONAL MIGRATION

*An estimated 400,000 people migrate to Dhaka every year from rural Bangladesh.

Recent studies on the phenomenon of seasonal migration in Bangladesh have suggested that it can be seen as a 'speculative' coping strategy that rural workers use to mitigate the effects of the agricultural 'lean season'.

Fig 3: A Large Part of My Work With RMMRU had to do with the seasonal migration of people to and from the capital, Dhaka.

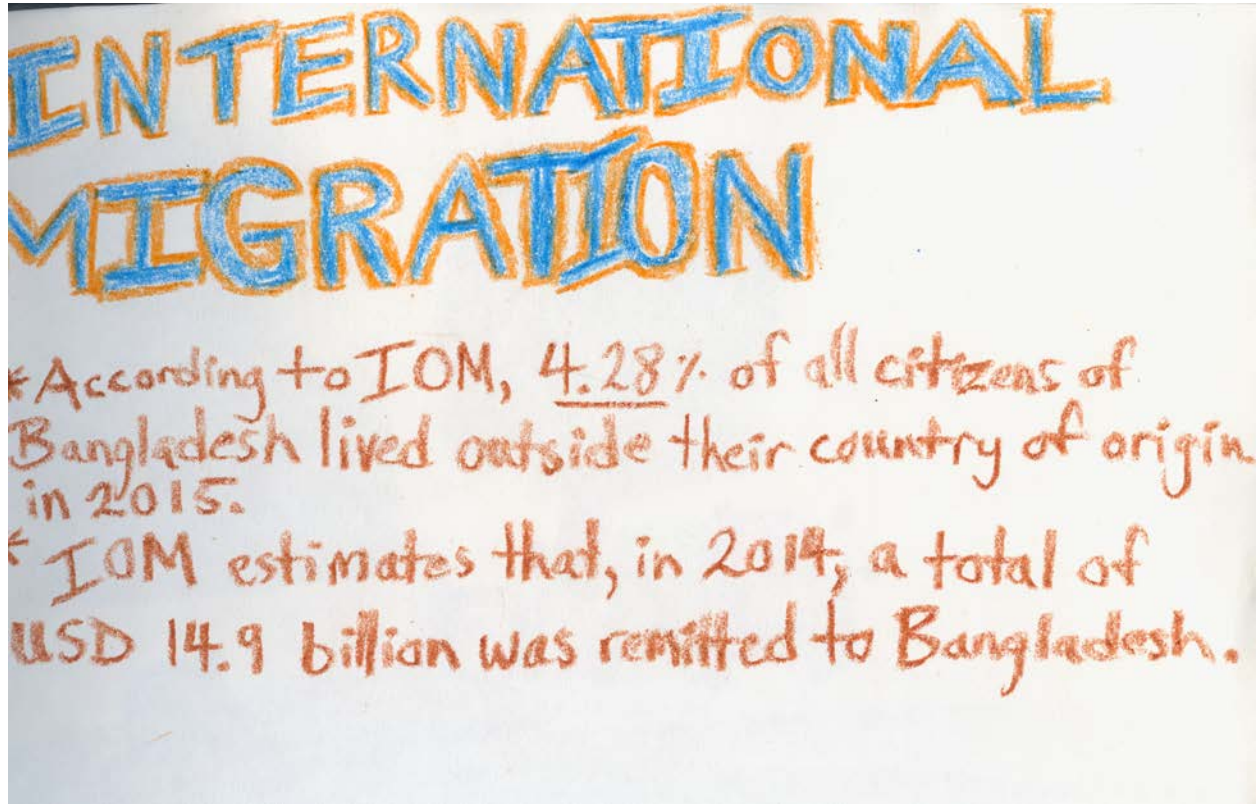


Fig 4: RMMRU also writes research reports on the astounding amount of international migration that millions of Bangladeshis undertake (RMMRU, using data from Bangladesh's Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, has estimated that nearly ten million Bangladesh nationals have gone abroad for work since 1990).



Fig 5: A depiction of an intersection near Dhaka University, just down the road from the intersection with the big Banyan tree.



Fig 6: My home while I lived in Dhaka, a little neighbourhood called Shantibag Bazar (pronounced 'Ba-jar'). A rickshaw ride home from work back to Shantibag cost my colleagues and I around forty takka, depending on how much rain had fallen (and thus how mucky the streets would be). Most rickshaw wallahs are veteran negotiators, though, so if you're new to the city, count on paying something like sixty takka.



Fig. 7: The flag of 1971. I knew absolutely nothing about the Bangladesh genocide of 1971. My visit with my colleagues to the Liberation War Museum in Dhaka educated me, and was an intensely emotional experience, and an increased respect for a people that have displayed immense resilience in the face of utmost devastation.