



Bangladesh Surfer Girls' Project

2012 - 2015

The Bangladesh Surfer Girls' Project was a joint collaboration between Brown Girl Surf and Coconut Club, Bangladesh, actively involved in the implementation and protection of the rights of women and children in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

The project, founded and run by [Hazera Khanam](#) with support from brown girl surf, provided scholarships to distressed, orphaned and disabled girls living on the beach or in slums close to the beach in Cox's Bazar. It included child friendly education, sports and cultural training opportunities. It also provided medical care, clothing, protection, legal advice, nutritional support, housing and other kinds of assistance to prepare girls for a better life as independent women.

All beneficiaries were "first learner" girls growing up in a hostile environment where almost all their family members and neighbors were illiterate. Therefore, most of these students had to fight injustice, traditional beliefs, discrimination and prejudice to secure their right to study.

Location:

The project was operated in the Cox's Bazar region of Southern Bangladesh, near the border with Myanmar and the Bay of Bengal. Cox's Bazar is home to the longest sandy sea beach in the world. The region is particularly vulnerable to climate, historically bearing the brunt of regional monsoon rains and flooding. The region is also one of the poorest and most neglected areas of Bangladesh, with the highest rate of illiteracy in the country.

Founder:

Hazera Khanam started the Bangladesh Surfer Girls' Project in 2013 after meeting Co-Producers [Cara Jones](#) of Storytellers for Good and [Farhana Huq](#), Founder of brown girl surf, who hired Khanam as a translator for their [Surfing Possibility documentaries](#). Hazera became inspired to start the project after hearing the stories and struggles of the surfer girls being interviewed for the project.

Hazera was born and raised in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. She attended Lalmati Women's College in Dhaka and received a scholarship to attend London Metropolitan University in the UK where she received a BA and MA in International Relations. She is a strong and passionate advocate of women and girls' rights, an avid writer and currently serves as a Senior Protection Associate at the UN High Commission on Refugees ([UNHCR](#)).

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