

# Disabled boy gets a helping hand

**Balukhali camp: Few would dispute that life has treated eight-year old Mohammed Junaid harshly. Born with deformities in both legs, his mother died of a sudden illness in their native Myanmar. His father was shot and killed when the family joined the mass exodus of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh last year.**

Junaid survived the journey, and now lives in Balukhali camp with his aunt, two sisters, four brothers and three first cousins.

Junaid's disability makes getting around the hilly terrain of the camp difficult. And getting to the nearest Child-Friendly Space (CFS) run by CODEC, a UNICEF partner, would be impossible were it not for the help he gets from his friend, Omer Farooq, who accompanies him on the 10-minute journey to and from his home.

"I try to walk unaided but it's not easy," Junaid says. "Yet I

consider myself to be lucky. If I fall down the other children help me get to my feet."

Omer Farooq is usually the first to provide help.

"He is my best friend," Omer says. "It is my duty to lend my shoulder whenever I can."

The CFS has been a key part of UNICEF's response since the earliest days of the Rohingya refugee crisis. Five days a week, Junaid and other children play games and take part in other activities designed to help them heal from the traumatic experiences most have been through.

"I love playing Ludo and pinball with my friends," he says.

But behind his positive outlook, Junaid fears his disability will cause him problems in future.

"There is no hospital here that can help me," he says. "How will I be able to survive in a camp like this when I find it so hard to walk?"

UNICEF and partners support 426 CFS in Rohingya refugee camps and host communities. The spaces provide a safe environment for children to heal, grow and play.



Omar Farouq (right) helps his friend Mohammed Junaid along the rough paths of Balukhali camp.