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EATING OUT OF HER HANDS

Maloti Rudro, 56 years old

Maloti Rudro, née Baala, is a potter from Reyazuddinna Farah, Foirah Bazar, Maungdaw Township, Myanmar. She is married to Subhash Rudro who is also a potter and they have two children, a daughter and a son.

Maloti became involved with pottery three years after her wedding in Myanmar. Her father-in-law was one of the best-known potters in their area, and she wanted to learn the family trade to be able to work together with her husband.

She likes pottery because it is work that can be done anytime of the year. *'I don't mix or carrying the clay, or carry other heavy things. I just make things with my hands'*, she says with a smile, pointing towards the heavier objects around her. *'I can do pottery anytime I want. There is no season for it, and it only takes the skills of my hands and a supply of clay. I can make anything out of clay.'*

She says her husband is more skilled than she is, as this is their family's trade, but she hasn't found it that difficult to keep up with him as she has her own areas of specialisation.

She mainly makes crockery and other kitchen on household items. *'I heard from my grandfather that everything in a kitchen was once made of clay by potters. Even though this is less true nowadays, many things are still earthen. So, I decided to specialise in these as I could earn good money for my family with it'*, says Maloti, as she continues working on the plate, or *baason* as it is called in the Rohingya language, which she shapes with her hands while talking.

Baasons are used to eat from like a plate is, or to store things in. They are generally a bit deeper than standard plates. With her eyes firmly on her work, Maloti explains the process of *baason* making. *'To make a baason I need clay, water, a piece of cloth, a knife to cut the clay, madir goora (dry soil flakes) and some wood. You first design it with your hands and let it dry in the sun. Then you bake it in a furnace, like a brick!'*

