

BANGLADESH

1-15 January 2019

IN THIS UPDATE:

- *New reservoirs ready to tackle water challenges in Teknaf area*
- *Refugee health workers raising awareness on chickenpox*
- *Rohingya learners assessed on language and math skills*
- *Religious leaders and refugees discuss community issues*
- *Phase 2 registration/verification exercise*
- *Update on the new arrivals from India*

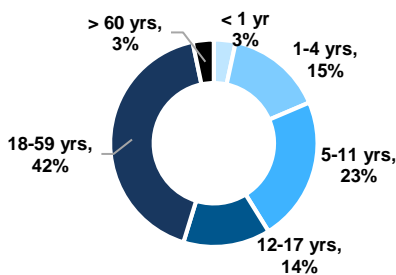
UNHCR and its partner, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society distributed Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and cooking sets to **45,473** refugee families in both Kutupalong and Nayapara settlements during the first two weeks of the year. During the same period, **LPG refills were provided to 30,268 families.** UNHCR plans to complete the roll-out of LPG to 16 refugee settlements by the end of February 2019. The completed roll-out in all 34 settlements is scheduled for mid-2019.

In the first two weeks of 2019, **194 refugees** arrived in Bangladesh as recorded in the Joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR Phase 2 registration/verification exercise. **Throughout 2018, 16,676 Rohingya** arrived in Bangladesh. The majority of new arrivals in 2018 were from Myanmar. Many of them crossed the Naf River by boats to the southern part of the peninsula in Cox's Bazar adjacent to Myanmar. All new arrivals are hosted at UNHCR's Transit Centre in Ukhiya sub-district.

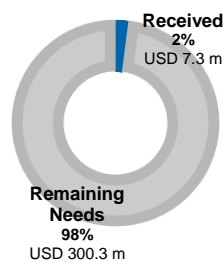
POPULATION FIGURES (as of 15 January 2019)

907,199 Total number of refugees in Cox's Bazar
738,805 Estimated new arrivals since 25 August 2017

Age breakdown of refugees in Cox's Bazar



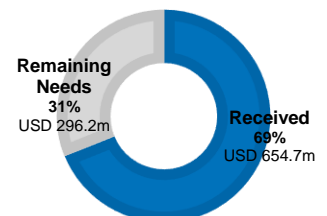
UNHCR FUNDING 2019



JOINT RESPONSE PLAN FUNDING 2018



The 2019 JRP will be launched in February



A Community Outreach Member receives a One Year Service certificate from UNHCR and its partner Technical Assistance Inc. The certificate was awarded to over 200 Rohingya refugees who accomplished a year of service to their community. ©UNHCR

New reservoirs ready to tackle water challenges in Teknaf area

UNHCR and its partners are **improving access to water for refugees in Teknaf sub-district in the south of Cox's Bazar in preparation for the dry season**, which usually starts in March, before the monsoon rains in June.

In collaboration with Bangladesh partner, NGO Forum for Public Health, UNHCR recently completed **dam construction work at four canals** – Omar Khal, Jadir Khal, Hazir Khal and Shilchora BGB Khal – to store water. With Oxfam and Solidarités International, work is underway to further complete the **pipng system to distribute water from the new reservoirs to Shalbagan (Camp 26) and Jadimura (Camp 27) refugee settlements**. The water will be treated before reaching its distribution point.



The water reservoir in Shalbagan (Camp 26) where an excavation was recently completed. ©UNHCR

In addition, UNHCR has **enlarged a water reservoir in Shalbagan**, increasing its storage capacity to 44,000 cubic metre of water. The water will be treated prior to distribution to about **24,000 refugees in the Shalbagan settlement (Camp 26)**.

Altogether, the four canals and the water reservoir will ensure a **water supply to an estimated 61,000 refugees in both settlements for three months**, and ensure water requirements of 20 liters per day per person are met.

The influx of Rohingya refugees since August 2017 has **increased the demand on the already limited water resources in Teknaf**. The construction of water reservoirs to store rainwater for distribution through a piped network is part of **UNHCR's strategy to meet the critical water needs and ensure sustainability of water supply for refugees and host community users in this area**. Water supply remains a challenge in this sub-district as **ground water is not easily available in most parts of the area**. Geographical factors in Teknaf Peninsula also contributes to **salinity in river and ground water**.

Refugee health workers raising awareness on chickenpox

In collaboration with Community Partners International (CPI), UNHCR organised a **Training of Trainers (ToT) on sensitising the refugee community on chickenpox**, which has been reported in some refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar.

The ToT was held from 13 to 14 January 2019 and attended by 164 coordinators and supervisors of the Community Health Workers (CHW) initiative, which enlists refugee volunteers to spread communication on health issues in the refugee settlements.

The trained community health supervisors and coordinators will now utilise their knowledge to train a further 1,300 community health workers who **will systematically reach out to their community, and through community venues and structures, to raise awareness on chickenpox and mobilise community support in the event of a disease outbreak**.

To date, more than **800 cases of chickenpox** have been reported by health partners in various refugee settlements since early December 2018. **Low awareness** on chickenpox affects **refugees knowledge of when to seek treatment**, which further contributes to the rapid spread of infection.



Community Health Worker supervisors share messages on chickenpox during a simulation in the Training of Trainers organised by UNHCR and CPI in Cox's Bazar. ©UNHCR/L. Dassanayake

The ToT is part of a plan by health actors, in close collaboration with the Civil Surgeon Office from the Bangladesh's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, to **contain and further prevent chickenpox from potentially spreading**. The **Community Health Working Group**, jointly led by UNHCR and CPI, is coordinating the preventive actions in the community. **Community Outreach Members** refugee volunteers are also speaking with their community about chickenpox and helping refer family members to health facilities.

Chickenpox is an acute, highly contagious disease caused by primary infection with varicella zoster virus (VZV) during childhood. It may develop as shingles much later in adult life. While mostly a mild disorder in childhood, varicella can be more severe in adults.

Chickenpox is an acute, highly contagious disease caused by primary infection with

Rohingya learners assessed on language and math skills

In December 2018, a learning assessment utilising the the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) was conducted in all refugee settlements. The assessment will **determine the ability of different learners to meet the Learning Competency Framework and Approach (LCFA) requirements for language, math and life skills at various levels of education**, which was developed by the Education Sector in Bangladesh.



A Rohingya boy is being assessed on his English language skill. ©UNHCR

The results, which mapped the different learning capacities amongst learners, will help match the learners to the LCFA levels from I to III – comparable to Early Childhood Development (ECD) and the first grade of primary school through to the fifth grade.

Following a review of the initial assessment results, the initial exercise was complemented by an assessment of writing skills to validate classroom observations by teachers.

Based on the initial assessments and complementary observations, a placement of learners in the LCFA levels was completed. A total of **19,473 students** (9,480 girls and 9,993 boys) out of **19,920 children** from **166 learning centres managed by UNHCR and its education partner CODEC** took part in the additional assessments around English and Myanmar language skills, reading comprehension, and basic math operations.

As a result, **86 per cent of learners** (16,792 children, including 8,312 girls and 8,480 boys) are eligible for LCFA level 2 (equivalent to primary level grades 1 and 2). About **11 per cent of learners** (2,175 children, including 1,008 girls and 1,167 boys) did not meet minimum standards to pass the assessment and therefore remain at LCFA level I for 2019, equivalent to ECD and pre-primary classes. The majority of learners in this group had just enrolled in the learning centres in December 2018.

The remaining **2 per cent of learners** (506 children, including 160 girls and 346 boys) demonstrated the ability to read easy passages, make sentences in both languages and perform four basic math operations of subtraction, addition, multiplication and division, making them eligible for LCFA level III, which is comparable to primary grades 3 to 5. **Education levels for Rohingya refugees are not restricted by the actual age.** In 2018, the age distribution for LCFA level I was between 3-5 years old, while level II was attended by children between 6-14 years old. Level III was not opened last year. This year, the age group for level I will remain the same while level II is for children 6-10 years old and level III for 9-14 years old.

Refugees take part in community activities to welcome the New Year

As a follow-up to community-led discussions on the use of community centres last year, UNHCR and partner BRAC held an **'Open Day' at the community centres** in five Rohingya refugee settlements. Among the participants were religious leaders, who conducted *Mehfil i-Milad* (blessings) and were actively engaged in discussions with refugees to help identify their concerns on topics such as requests for appropriate education for older children as well as for additional community spaces for vocational training and other constructive activities.



Refugee girls and women join the prayer during the Open Day at a BRAC community centre. ©UNHCR

During the 'Open Day', UNHCR and BRAC took the opportunity to **encourage the community to maximise use of all available community spaces** and to allow all members of the family to access and participate in the activities offered at Child- and Women-Friendly Spaces, as well as Temporarily Learning Centres. Through such community events, UNHCR and its partners are **strengthening their engagement with all refugees**, particularly influential pillars of the community such as religious leaders, **to promote meaningful participation of men, women, boys and girls of all ages and abilities, in various activities at the community centres.** Due to particular restrictions on women's involvement in public spheres, it was important to explain the purpose of these initiatives to **gain greater community understanding** of the programs offered, and help address some of the challenges for women wishing to take part in social activities.

Following efforts to create inclusive participation and community solidarity amongst refugees, over **1,000 unpaid refugee volunteers** in Men, Women and Youth Community Groups **completed 365 community service projects in 2018; an average of one service project every day of the year.** Service projects included site improvement activities; tree planting, repairs of footpath and bridges, support to building/rebuilding shelters for persons with specific needs and community led discussions and peer support around issues such as child marriage, education and trafficking.

Progress on Joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR Phase 2 registration/verification exercise

The Government of Bangladesh and UNHCR are advancing with plans to move to Kutupalong with its registration activities. The registration/verification site in Teknaf sub-district where Phase 2 of the registration/verification exercise is underway, will **end on 31 January 2019**. The exercise will **continue in the refugee settlements in Kutupalong** with the opening of several new registration/verification sites by **1 February 2019**.

To date, over 43,000 individuals have been verified/registered through the joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR Phase 2 registration/verification exercise. An identity card, commonly referred to by refugees as the 'smart card', is issued to all refugee women, men, girls and boys above the age of 12 and replaces two existing cards that they already possess – a Ministry of Home Affairs (white) card and a Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (yellow) family counting card.

The card will provide a secure identity document for refugees, and contribute to ensuring a refugee's right to return. It will improve the delivery of services, as well as help tailor services, through systematic identification of refugees with specific needs. The process will also eliminate duplications in the existing database, promoting equity in distribution and assistance.

The Government of Bangladesh has stated that there will be no forcible return to Myanmar, seeking to allay fears over the use of information collected during the process.

Update on the newly arrived Rohingya refugees from India

UNHCR's Transit Centre in Kutupalong, Ukhiya sub-district, **has been approached by Rohingya refugees from India seeking assistance.** From 1 to 14 January 2019, a total of **620 Rohingya from India (141 refugee households)** have arrived at the Transit Centre. Many new arrivals possess refugee identification cards provided by UNHCR from time spent in India.

UNHCR continues to work closely with the Government of Bangladesh, notably through the **Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, to ensure that all new arrivals are recorded and receive the necessary support.** UNHCR in Bangladesh continues to monitor the situation, in order that **Rohingya refugees entering the country from India receive appropriate protection assistance.**

Working in partnership

UNHCR co-chairs a Strategic Executive Group (SEG) in Bangladesh with the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM. The Refugee Agency leads on the protection response for all refugees, and heads a Protection Working Group in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR welcomes its valuable partnership with a number of UN agencies and coordinates the delivery of its assistance with humanitarian partners through a number of working groups under the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). UNHCR's main government counterpart is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and its Cox's Bazar-based Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC). UNHCR staff work closely with the Camp-in-Charge officials in different refugee settlements, as well as a range of international and national actors. It has a strong network of **28 partners**:

Action Aid Bangladesh | **ACF** (Action Contre la Faim) | **ADRA** (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) | **BNWLA** (Bangladesh National Woman Lawyer's Association) | **Bangladesh Red Crescent Society** | **BRAC** (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) | **Caritas Bangladesh** | **Center for Natural Resource Studies** | **CODEC** (Community Development Centre) | **COAST** (Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust) | **Danish Refugee Council** | **FH Association** (Food for the Hungry) | **GK** (Gonoshasthaya Kendra) | **International Rescue Committee** | **IUCN** (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) | **Handicap International** | **Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation** | **Light House** | **Oxfam GB** | **Relief International** | **Mukti Cox's Bazar** | **NGO Forum for Public Health** | **RTMI** (Research, Training and Management International) | **Save the Children International** | **Sesame Workshop** | **Solidarites International** | **Terre des hommes Foundation** | **TAI** (Technical Assistance Incorporated)

UNHCR would also like to acknowledge the crucial role played by the refugees in the response; with **over 3,000 volunteers from the refugee community** who are often **the first responders on the ground**. UNHCR and partners have trained and work with **safety unit volunteers (SUVs)** who support the emergency response, **community outreach members** who support raising awareness on important issues and in addressing protection risks, **community health workers** who assist with outreach for health and nutrition, and others who provide further critical support to the refugee response.

Donor Support

The Government and the people of Bangladesh have shown extraordinary generosity in responding to the crisis. However, more support and solidarity is required from the international community to assist the ongoing humanitarian response. Continued political efforts to work towards a solution to the situation remains vital. UNHCR is appealing for USD 307.6 million (as part of its Supplementary Appeal for 2019) in order to respond to the needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

UNHCR Bangladesh is grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have provided unrestricted and broadly earmarked funds, as well as to donors who have contributed directly to the Operation in 2018 and 2019:



With thanks to the many private donations from individuals, foundations, and companies such as the Arab Gulf Fund, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Education Cannot Wait, International Islamic Relief Organization, Kuwait Finance House, Qatar Charity, Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation, The Big Heart Foundation, The Church of Latter-Day Saints, and UPS Corporate. Special thanks also to CERF.

CONTACTS: **Ivy Susanti**, Reporting Officer, UNHCR Bangladesh, susanti@unhcr.org
Mai Hosoi, External Relations Officer, UNHCR Bangladesh, hosoi@unhcr.org

LINKS: [UNHCR data portal](#) - [UNHCR operation page](#) – [Facebook](#) – [Twitter](#) – [Latest stories](#) – [Instagram](#)