

BANGLADESH

15-31 December 2018

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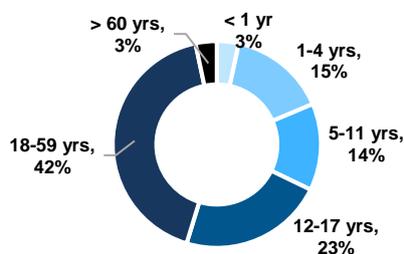
UNHCR and its protection partners plan to **strengthen the field capacity of partners and refugee mobilisers**, and **promote sustainable interventions and community resilience in 2019**. During a review of 2018 achievements and planning for 2019, UNHCR and partners agreed to **improve inter-sector coordination** for strengthened **accountability measures**, and enhance **meaningful participation of refugees, especially girls and women**.

Since January 2018, **16,252 individuals have arrived in Bangladesh** from several townships in Myanmar, including **319 individuals** in December. Many Rohingya arrived by small boats across the Naf River through the southern part of the peninsula in Cox's Bazar, adjacent to Myanmar. The new arrivals were hosted at UNHCR at its reception centre next to Kutupalong refugee settlement, where they received initial assistance before relocation to the main camps.

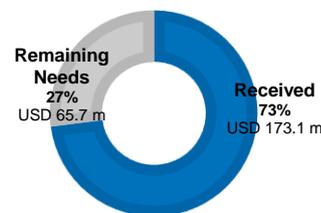
POPULATION FIGURES (as of 31 December 2018)

906,572 Total number of refugees in Cox's Bazar
738,196 Estimated new arrivals since 25 August 2017

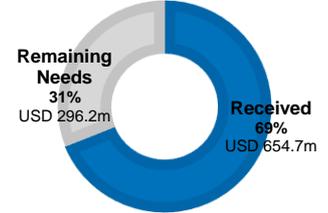
Age breakdown of refugees in Cox's Bazar



UNHCR FUNDING 2018



JOINT RESPONSE PLAN FUNDING 2018



A camp-in-charge hands over prizes to an outstanding student during an annual prize giving ceremony. About 189 learning centres and Early Childhood Development Centres took part in the annual event which was jointly organised by UNHCR and its partners in four refugee sites. ©UNHCR

Community Outreach Members: One Year in Action

One year ago, UNHCR started to put together the first team of Community Outreach Members (COMs), composed mostly of young Rohingya volunteers ready to work to build networks of support within the community. Some **30 newly arrived refugees** in Kutupalong's large settlement were the first to be inducted to the program in December 2017.

The year 2018 saw the program expand to more settlements. Towards the end of the year, **354 COMs, including 243 men and 111 women, had joined the COM teams in 15 refugee sites.** The initiative began with an intensive foundational induction where candidates received trainings on the COMs' roles and responsibilities, code of conduct, Humanitarian Principles and values, Protection Principles, Child Protection and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and social skill trainings such as conducting focus group discussions, effective communication and effective interviewing, among others. Throughout the year, the COMs have evolved with a number of them assisting with SGBV response and awareness raising along with UNHCR's SGBV partners, while others are trained on health and hygiene outreach in collaboration with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) actors. The COMs were instrumental in raising the community's awareness on flood and landslide risks during the monsoon season and cyclone emergency preparation.

In 2018, the refugee volunteers **dedicated themselves to work hand-in-hand with UNHCR and its partners through challenging phases of the operation.** Individually and as a team, they have **won the respect of their community and peers, and strengthened community-based protection mechanisms.** UNHCR has sought to empower the refugee communities through programs such as COM, which **focuses on enhancing the capacity of each individual who is able and willing to dedicate time for community service.**

Community outreach program provides opportunity for personal development

Despite restrictions on employment and education, the community outreach program has enabled refugees to **earn stipends and invest in skills learning, community mobilisation, and the use of technology to gather information.** UNHCR provided trainings on using technology such as Kobo toolbox, a tablet-based data collection tool to facilitate COMs' field activities.

During the reporting period, two out of 25 COMs completed the first modules of English language programs offered through **UNHCR's Coursera for Refugees.** Despite multiple challenges with internet connectivity and difficulties in navigating online courses for beginners, those enrolled persevered with support from partners and UNHCR. **English and computer courses** have been in **high demand** amongst the COMs, many of whom are in their early 20s and 30s.



Women COM and members of the photography club practice using digital camera for the first time and therefore get themselves ready for their first photo shooting project. ©UNHCR

Refugee women, who form just over 30 per cent of the COMs, have also capitalised on this opportunity to enhance literacy and technology skills, thereby building self-esteem and personal development.

Following the successes of the Women's Photography Workshop and Competition in September 2018, which was attended by around 60 female COMs, a 19-member COMs **Women's Photography Club** has been set up with the objectives to **safeguard**

and revive Rohingya culture through photography. Members will share and exchange experiences with those interested in using art as a means of expression and tool for social change, promote and advance women's rights, and build camaraderie amongst women and the community who share the same interest in such endeavours. A small committee was formed by club members to organise a practice session using digital cameras, which the women quickly picked up, having previously used cameras on smartphones.

Appreciation to the COM's services and way forward

Robust Protection training and ongoing coaching has strengthened the COMs capacities to address the needs of persons at heightened risk. The COMs identified a total of **25,681 cases in need of support**, of which **1,826 required urgent intervention**; and referred **4,837 cases** to partners Technical Assistance Inc. (TAI) and BRAC. The COMs also provided **direct support to 5,295 refugees**, by accompanying refugees to service providers, notably to healthcare facilities and organising stretchers for those requiring additional help.

One year on, the COMs commitment to the community is as strong as it was at the beginning of the response. **The experienced members of the teams are leading and coaching new volunteers.**

A review of the program and collaborative discussions on the way forward in 2019 were undertaken with the COMs from 16 to 19 December, where UNHCR **also highlighted the great efforts of its partners, BRAC and TAI**, in supporting the COMs project. The participants pledged to amplify **the voices of girls and women in the public sphere** and enhance their roles in decision-making in order to **build a more inclusive community for refugees of all ages and gender.**

UNHCR also **extended its gratitude to the refugee volunteers** for their contribution to community-based protection. In 2019, **community-based programs that promote resilience and sustainability** will be strengthened and expanded.

Since January 2018, the COMs have conducted: **28,131 home visits**, meeting **93,577 people** (44,106 male and 49,471 female); as well as **23,662 awareness raising sessions** for **427,113 people** (212,896 male and 214,217 female refugees).



Members of the COMs help transfer a paralysed patient to ambulance, using a stretcher provided by UNHCR's partner TAI. The refugee community is counting on the COMs for support in medical emergency such as patient transfer, which remains a service gap in refugee settlements that lack direct access to ambulances. This gap is often covered by the COM team. ©UNHCR

Rohingya students, parents and teachers participate in Education Fair

UNHCR, in collaboration with its partner CODEC, organised an Education Fair in Kutupalong and Nayapara settlements simultaneously on 18 December 2018. The event provided a **forum for education providers to exchange ideas and innovations in addressing education challenges.** It also gave parents, caregivers, as well as other stakeholders the opportunity to **interact with education actors and learn about the materials used for teaching.**

Schoolchildren **performed rhymes and songs they learned in schools, and took part in drawing competitions.** In line with UNHCR's strategy of promoting positive competition amongst education service providers and learners, and in ensuring that learners will continue to enrol and attend classes, outstanding learners, teachers and education personnel were awarded during the event.

The Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), Assistant District Primary Education Officer (ADPEO), and selected Camp in Charge (CiC) officers from Kutupalong settlement attended the opening of the event. Education stalls were set up by Save the Children, Handicap International, Plan International, ACF, TAI, ADRA, NGO Forum, BRAC, Mukti, and CODEC.

In a related development, annual prize giving ceremonies were held in four settlements in Kutupalong. About 189 learning centres and Early Childhood Development Centres took part in the event, which was attended by the ADPEO.

Outstanding individuals within the education sector ranging from learners, teachers, learning facilitators and security guards, were **recognised for their achievements in a challenging learning environment.** In Nayapara settlement, **girls emerged as top scorers** in nine out of the eleven participating schools.



Rohingya children take part in a drawing competition during the Education Fair.©UNHCR

UNHCR to install 1,000 solar street lights

During the reporting period, UNHCR received **1,000 solar street lights for installation in refugee settlements.** The new solar street lights will provide lighting in **1,400 locations in the settlements** which were identified through community consultations in September 2018.

Street lighting increases **security in refugee settlements,** allowing women to safely go to latrines during night time. Additionally, lighting **enhances the dignity of life in the settlements,** allowing individuals to visit neighbours, and build community life after sundown. Electricity has now expanded into many areas of the settlements. As of September 2018, UNHCR has installed **more than 1,600 street lights** in both refugee settlements and host community areas.

Further to the community consultations and a series of street light mapping exercises, a **coordination tool** has been produced which will be used in joint projects with the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and other agencies. The tool is aimed to **ensure equal community lighting coverage** between settlements, as well as for **monitoring and evaluation purposes.**

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

Over 35,000 individuals have been verified/registered through the joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR Phase 2 registration/verification exercise. An ID card, commonly referred to 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) registration card and a Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (yellow) family counting card.

The authorities have met with refugees to advise them that the **card is a Government of Bangladesh requirement**. The Government has also stated **that there will be no forcible return to Myanmar**, seeking to allay fears over the use of information collected during the process.

The benefit of the card is that it provides a secure identity document for refugees. It will help with more efficient delivery of assistance at distribution points as well as help to improve services through the information collected. The process will also eliminate duplications in the existing database, ensuring equity in distribution.

Quick facts and figures on UNHCR protection services and assistance

Access to Education



45,118

children supported by UNHCR and its partners currently access Early Childhood Development, primary, and lower secondary education in refugee settlements

Education Facilities



381

classrooms constructed, providing learning spaces for over 37,918 children

Education Facilities



480

community-based centres established for over 7,200 children attending Early Childhood Development program

Community-Based Protection



427,113

refugee men, women and children received information on hygiene, the use of *aqua tabs*, and Acute Watery Diarrhea, from community volunteers (COMs) since January 2018

Community-Based Protection



1,229

refugees joined 52 Community Groups for men, women and youth in 15 refugee settlements, completing over 300 community service projects including infrastructure, improvements, tree planting, shelter repair as well as organising sports and cultural activities

Child Protection



80,463

children provided with psychosocial support

Information Points



5,325

refugees received information or referral through Information Points during the reporting period.

Healthcare Services



410,266

primary healthcare consultations provided to refugees in 22 UNHCR-supported health facilities

LPG Distribution



37,583

refugee families received Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) bottle and a cooking stove as part of a roll-out of this fuel support. Some 17,023 families received LPG refills. The distributions are part of UNHCR's SGBV prevention, health, and environmental protection efforts, by reducing unaccompanied trips to collect firewood, reducing harmful fumes in shelters, and addressing deforestation through reduced tree cutting

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, including:

ACF (Action Contre la Faim) | **ACTED** (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development) | **ADRA** (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) | **BDRCS** (Bangladesh Red Crescent Society) | **BNWLA** (Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association) | **BRAC** (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) | **CARITAS BANGLADESH** | **CODEC** (Community Development Centre) | **CSI** (Center for Social Integrity) | **DRC** (Danish Refugee Council) | **FH** (Food For the Hungry) | **GK** (Gonoshasthaya Kendra) | **HELVETAS** Swiss Intercooperation | **HI** (Handicap International) | **IUCN** (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) | **IRC** (International Rescue Committee) | **MTI** (Medical Teams International) | **NGOF** (NGO Forum) | **OXFAM** | **PIN** (People in Need) | **PUI** (Première Urgence Internationale) | **REACH** | **RI** (Relief International) | **RTMI** (Research Training and Management International) | **SCI** (Save the Children) | **SI** (Solidarités International) | **TAI** (Technical Assistance Incorporated) | **TDH** (Terre Des Hommes Foundation)

UNHCR would also like to acknowledge the crucial role played by the refugees in the response; with over 6,500 **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 emergency 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 238.8m (as part of its Supplementary Appeal for 2018) 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 2017 and 2018:



With thanks to the many private donations from individuals, foundations, and companies such as the Arab Gulf Fund, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, International Islamic Relief Organization, Kuwait Finance House, OPEC Fund for International Development, Prosolidar-Onlus Foundation, 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](#)

UNHCR financial needs for 2018	
 	Protection 26.7 m
	Basic relief items 5.6 m
	Water, sanitation & hygiene 40.8 m
	Shelter/infrastructure 25.0 m
	Energy and environment 13.4 m
	Education 10.0 m
	Community mobilization 18.1 m
	Health and nutrition 34.5 m
	Logistics 11.0 m
	Camp management 35.3 m
	Support costs 18.4 m
TOTAL	238.8 m