

INDIA

31-December-2020

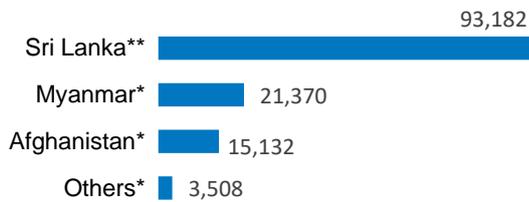
4,069 mosquito nets and 2,793 tarpaulin sheets distributed as monsoon support **and 1,764 households supported with blankets** for the cold winter.

3,495 female refugee and asylum seekers provided with Sanitary kits with support of **UNFPA**.

173 female volunteers supported with mobile phones and training to promote **GBV reporting and awareness**.

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES (AS OF DEC 2020)

Country/Territory of origin



*Refugee and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR India (as of 31 December 2020)

** Refugees registered and assisted by the Government of India. Statistics with regard to Sri Lankan refugees are drawn from the Department of Rehabilitation, Tamil Nadu (as of 1 Oct 2020). 58,872 Sri Lankan refugees are staying in camps.

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

30 National Staff

6 International Staff

28 Affiliate Workforce (26 National 2 International)

Offices:

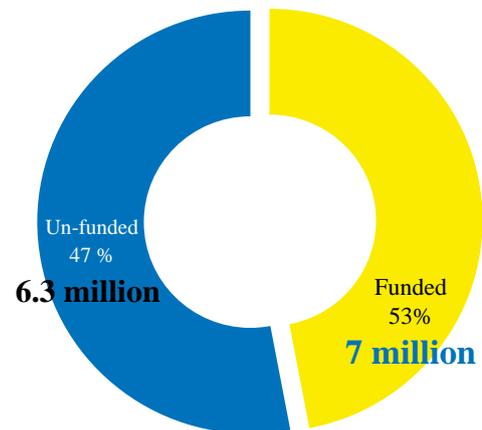
1 Country Office in New Delhi

1 Field Office in Chennai

FUNDING (AS OF 15 DECEMBER 2020)

USD 13.3 million

requested for the India situation



Three-year-old Sadiya practices safe hand washing technique. UNHCR-Unilever soap distribution in Hyderabad in December 2020. ©UNHCR/Kalyan Chakravarty

Working with Partners

UNHCR coordinates protection and assistance for refugees and asylum seekers in collaboration with:

- **Government of India:** Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs.
- **UN:** UNHCR is a member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and contributes towards the Government of India-United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) for 2018-2022.
- **Formal partnership agreements with eight national NGOs:** Bosco Organisation for Social Concern and Operation (BOSCO), Socio-Legal Information Centre (SLIC), Bal Raksha Bharat (Save the Children), Fair Trade Forum India (FTF-I), Development and Justice Initiative (DAJI), Gandhi National Memorial Society (GNMS), ActionAid (AA), and Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI).

Main Activities

Registration and Refugee Status Determination (RSD)

- Registration and RSD continued via remote work procedures.
- As at end-December 2020, **40,010 refugees and asylum-seekers** are registered with UNHCR under its mandate, of which **30,121 individuals (those above the age of 4) are biometrically enrolled. No biometrics enrolment took place since March 2020 as a result of COVID-19.**
- 2311 individuals approached UNHCR for registration and Refugee's Status Determination (RSD) during the course of the year, and **RSD interviews were conducted with over 1500 individuals. 2,087 individual RSD decisions were finalised.**

Protection

- UNHCR has **declared a global emergency across all operations** and is following guidance from WHO as well working with national authorities to support the management of the pandemic for refugees and affected communities.
- UNHCR recorded a total of **94 incidents of Gender Based Violence (GBV)** during 2020. Domestic and intimate partner violence accounted for majority of reported cases. 5 UNHCR partners are working to prevent and response to GBV. During the COVID19, risks to GBV escalated, therefore **UNHCR provided 173 refugee women volunteers with mobile phones** to ensure that they have access to internet during COVID19, support awareness raising and timely reporting on GBV and Child Protection issues and act as psychosocial first aid providers for their communities.
- UNHCR **supported two 'one-stop crisis centre'** managed by 'It's my Choices Foundation' and 'Ankuram' in Telangana and **Crisis Intervention and Counselling Centre (CICC)** managed by NGO Shakthi Shalini in Delhi, providing essential services to refugees and host communities.
- UNHCR conducted **156 session to train and educate partners** about PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse), Prevention and response to GBV and Child protection. During the reporting period, 18 sessions were conducted.
- **24 refugee youth** in Delhi were trained by **Clown Science Dreams** to conduct sessions with children to improve their Psycho-Social well-being. The youth will be now conducting child-friendly psycho-social sessions with children in their community.
- UNHCR advocates with authorities and relevant stakeholders **to seek the release of asylum seekers and refugees detained for irregular entry.** UNHCR NGO partners reaches out to refugees and asylum seekers in detention for legal aid and referrals for assistance.
- To build national capacity on Refugee Protection, UNHCR continues to conduct lectures on Human Rights and Refugee law at the **Indian Society of International Law (ISIL)** for the **Post Graduate Diploma course on Human Rights, International Humanitarian and Refugee Laws.**



24 refugee youth participated in online workshop "Communication and creative tools for children"

Food and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

- Since March 2020, **8,812 families have benefited from dry food ration packets** consisting of rice, pulse and dry spices.
- UNHCR provided **1,764 households with blankets in Delhi** as part of winterisation support. Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) also supported this winterisation drive.
- Despite supporting over 8,812 households with food packages, the need for food is increasing day by day. Refugee children stopped benefiting from day-meals which used to be provided at schools prior to the pandemic. More refugees are resorting to negative coping strategies to buy food, such as selling assets, taking loans/credits from local grocery shops, taking up hazardous occupation, child labour and child marriage.
- Insufficient and irregular food assistance may contribute to further malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies among refugee populations, especially children, elderly, persons with disability and medically vulnerable.
- **Food and NFI assistance are urgently required** to protect refugees from protection risk and deteriorating nutritional status and to maintain good immunity during the pandemic.

Education

- Based on UNHCR data, **approximately 18% of refugee school-going age students have been reached** with educational kits and tabs/mobile devices during COVID-19. There is **urgent need to immediately support remaining students**, in order to ensure that they continuously study and can go back to school when it is re-opened.
- Thus far, 1600 refugees' youths supported with **remote accelerated learning programmes** such as remedial, language classes, bridge classes.
- **2,200 refugee children supported with educational kits** (stationary material, books and indoor game) **to enable their learning at home.**
- **About 9,000 children in the age group of 5 to 17 years need regular education support** as there is an increased risk of possible drop-out after school resumes.

Community Engagement

- **118 group meetings with community representatives and different refugee groups have been held** since the March 2020. Groups continue to raise issues of increasing financial difficulties, situational

stress during the pandemic, inability to meet basic needs and deteriorating coping skills and challenges to maintain their emotional well-being.

- **Remote outreach services counselled 567 asylum seekers and refugees** on varied matters such as services available, mental health and rights and responsibilities.
- **UNHCR trained 336 individuals on psychological first aid in 10 locations** to promote community based psychological interventions.
- **Over 983** emails received from refugees and asylum seekers requesting support for basic needs assistance and documentations. The **requests for support are increasing** and UNHCR continues to be challenged by limited financial resources to comprehensively meet growing needs for food, rent, sanitary items, clothing, medicines.
- **UNHCR India toll free number 1800 1035 635** and helpline remain operational and have boosted capacity for communicating with individuals, providing information to asylum seekers and refugees. In December 2020, 773 calls were attended on these lines.

Water, Health and Sanitation

- **382 (119 Male and 263 Female)** refugees and asylum seekers were provided with assistance in accessing government health care facilities. **24 (9 Male and 15 Female)** were supported in accessing COVID-19 related care.
- **3,495 women and girls asylum seekers, refugees and host community were provided with Sanitary kits with the generous support of UNFPA.** Women were also provided with awareness material on reproductive health during this distribution.



Distribution of sanitary kits supported by UNFPA in Delhi

- With the generous support by **private donor Unilever**, **12,869 refugees and asylum seeker families and host community families** have been provided with soap packets. **41 host community institutions** such as *Anganwadis*, hospitals and police stations have also been supported with soaps under this donation.
- Nevertheless, current initiatives are still inadequate to cope with **growing water and sanitation needs, especially of those refugees living in slum-like conditions.** Due to immediate loss of income, refugee families are **less able to afford soaps and hygiene materials and tend to prioritize other survival needs such as food.** Women and girls are particularly vulnerable as they have de-prioritised their own sanitation needs in order to meet growing food and rental needs for the household. Older refugees and those living with disabilities are also unable to meet their medication and health needs as households are burdened with day to day survival for food and rent.

Cash Based Interventions and Non-Food

- **Cash-based assistance provided to 1,214 refugees**, including 28 unaccompanied or separated children, 201 persons living with disability, 256 elderly without support, 375 persons living with serious medical conditions and 66 women at risk. 241 persons supported with basic needs to ensure the girl child remains enrolled in education, and 47 supported to promote institutional delivery.
- **517 asylum seekers and refugees' families provided one-time emergency** to meet their urgent needs such as rent payment, food, medical treatment and mitigating some of the negative socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on communities.

Self-reliance and livelihood

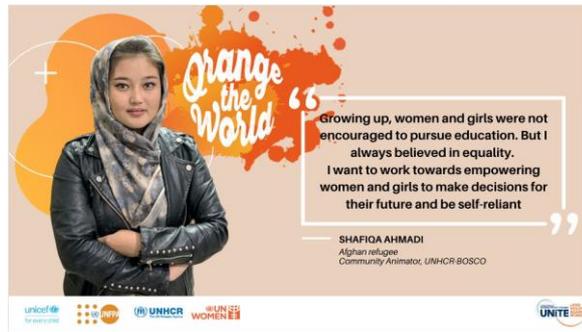
- UNHCR and partners promote women self-help groups for sustainable livelihoods. **58 refugees received micro-grants to set up or enhance individual businesses** by UNHCR Partners (FTFI and SCI) as an initiative to promote self-reliance.
- To promote livelihood of refugee women and support COVID-19 prevention measures for vulnerable persons, **20,000 face masks made by refugee women in India were donated to the Maldives Red Crescent (MRC) to be distributed to migrants and vulnerable host community in the Maldives.**

Durable Solutions

- UNHCR promotes resettlement as a protection tool for most vulnerable cases. During 2020, **58 cases with 167 individuals were submitted for resettlement** by UNHCR, and **42 cases with 114 individuals have departed** for resettlement.
- UNHCR facilitates voluntary repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin. In 2020, UNHCR supported **22 cases with 60 individuals to voluntarily repatriate to country of origin.**
- In 2020, **54 individuals spontaneously returned to their country.**
- In 2020, **119 individuals benefited from complementary pathways admission to third country** (primarily to Canada and Australia).
- 171 individuals (primarily Hindu and Sikh Afghan refugees) filled the online application form for Indian citizenship by naturalisation, assisted by UNHCR's legal partner.

External Relations

- UNHCR continues advocacy for the urgent and unreserved inclusion of refugees in the full range of responses to COVID-19, from public health responses to national social safety nets.
- **Op-ed 'Averting hunger pandemic by the way of expanding food safety nets- learnings from COVID-19'**, jointly written by Oscar Mundia, UNHCR Chief of Mission and Bishow Parajuli, Representative and Country Director to India for World Food Programme was [published by media outlet NDTV.](#)
- UN Volunteers India along with Government of India - Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR Agencies, celebrated International [Volunteer Day 2020 \(IVD\)](#). The IVD 2020 ceremony started with the launch of the [IVD anthem](#) jointly produced by UNV India and UNHCR.
- Three refugee youth conducted an online language and cultural exchange workshop in Dari, Arabic and Mizo with host communities as a part of the **UNV India's International Volunteers Day celebrations**
- **UNHCR joined UNICEF, UNFPA, UN women, UNDP to observe 16 Days Activism to End Violence Against Women.** UNHCR together with NGO partners organised poster making competitions, awareness raising sessions and dialogues around the theme "*Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!*".



- UNHCR is **mentoring and handholding three refugee youth storytellers** from Chennai and Delhi by providing them the platform, authorship, and empowering them to tell stories from their communities.
- UNHCR mentored an Afghan refugee youth to produced **photographs and interview artisans at Archisha center**, Delhi for MADE51 Holiday Collection.
- Shine Your Light **#TalentUnbound** finale in collaboration with **UN Volunteers, UNESCO India and four NGO partners** culminated on 16 November to mark the International Day of Tolerance. Over the three-month journey since its launch, #TalentUnbound engaged the talents and voices of youths, especially from the marginalised communities across India.
- Vintage Car rally organised to create awareness and to build a better future for refugees and communities hosting them. The event was organised by the Ascott Limited in association with UNHCR India and Historical Cars Association of India.



Refugee women produced mask for host communities in Maldives

FUNDING*

UNHCR remains grateful for the robust support from including the Governments of Austria, Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America, as well as Australia for UNHCR, Badr Jafar, CERF, Country-Based Pooled Funds, Education Cannot Wait, España con ACNUR, Japan Association for UNHCR, Private donors from United Kingdom, Latter-day Saints Charities, Qatar Charity, Sawiris Foundation for Social Development (SFSD), Sony Corporation, United Nations Foundation, Unilever, UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe, and USA for UNHCR.

We are also grateful to donors who provide unearmarked contributions to UNHCR, which help support operations in Asia and enable us to respond in a timely and flexible manner. These donors include Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and private donors in Germany, Republic of Korea, Japan, Italy, Lebanon, Spain and Sweden.

*As of 15 December, 2020

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