



Bangladesh communities in Cox's Bazar were the first to respond to the large arrival of Rohingya refugees in 2017, providing lifesaving support together with the Government of Bangladesh. This, however, put a strain on the local community's infrastructure, and public services, and the emergency's impact was felt in the local economy, particularly in Ukhiya and Teknaf which hosts the majority of the refugee settlements. All combined, it contributed to a challenging situation for host communities. UNHCR recognises that local communities assisting refugees also need support.

In collaboration with the local authorities and partner organizations, UNHCR initiated quick impact projects (QIPs). These are small-scale community-based projects with short implementation periods that offer direct positive impacts for the targeted communities. In 2018/19 UNHCR provided livelihood support for the poorest in the host community and distributed family kits (tarpaulin, wire, rope, bucket and sleeping mats) to local families affected by and at risk from the monsoon and cyclones. Additionally, schools and health facilities, as well as infrastructure like roads, were upgraded or provided added capacity in selected locations. Repairing public buildings and infrastructure (e.g. 24 cyclone shelters renovated by UNHCR) can strengthen the host community's capacity and serve local needs. Other supported services, such as health services in the host community continue to offer critical support for refugees. UNHCR is continuing to work with host communities and local authorities in 2019 to add its support and contribute to these communities in meaningful ways.

Progress

With the Bangladeshi authorities and communities, and partners, QIP projects continue to be identified. UNHCR works with partners BRAC, Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK), NGO Forum for Public Health, Technical Assistance Inc. (TAI), Artolution, CODEC, Mukti Cox's Bazar, CNRS, COAST Trust and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). The following progress was made to date:

42 QIPs completed
in education, water,
sanitation, health, shelter
and energy

59 schools renovated
(additional
classrooms, computer
labs and latrines)
16 are in progress

30,000 family kits
delivered to local
communities, including
4,300 to the poorest




2,028 women received
livelihoods support and
trained (assisting graduation
from poverty)

72 infrastructure/schools
improved/renovated in Cox's Bazar
120,836 benefitting from quick
impact projects in host community areas
affected by the large refugee influx
30,000 family kits distributed to assist
host community families affected by or
prone to natural disasters

**UNHCR is working with host
communities to support their needs
through:**

- 1** **Ongoing consultations** with local communities affected by the refugee influx to identify needs and support
- 2** **Livelihood support** to affected communities particularly the poorest, including women
- 3** **Income-generating activities** with short implementation periods and a direct benefit to local economy and the communities

Challenges

-  A need for more in-depth evidence-based assessments to understand host community needs, as well as greater requirement for inputs and resources from relevant development actors.
-  The monsoon and cyclone seasons pose risks to disrupt or affect works in progress, or to cause damage to local services and infrastructure.
-  The strong interest in QIPs results in many requests for interventions, which increases time spent vetting potential projects.

Way forward in 2019

In addition to the on-going livelihood support for 2,028 identified poor households which started in 2018 in partnership with BRAC, UNHCR launched new livelihoods and self-reliance projects in 2019 with partners BRAC, Mukti and CNRS for 4,500 poor and extremely poor households within the host community. UNHCR is also working closely with development actors to look at ways to use their expertise and resources to complement UNHCR's support and contribute to fostering good relations between the host community and Rohingya in Cox's Bazar. With the authorities, UNHCR continues to explore ways to support host communities through QIP projects.

Working in Partnership

UNHCR co-chairs the **Strategic Executive Group** together 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 with a range of international and national actors. It has a strong network of 28 partners, including:

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) | **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** | **World Vision** | **Solidarites International** | **Terre des Hommes** | **TAI** (Technical Assistance Incorporated) | **NRC** (Norwegian Refugee Council). UNHCR would also like to acknowledge the crucial role played by the refugees in the response. **Over 3,000 volunteers from the refugee community** are working side by side with humanitarian agencies.

Donor country contributions to UNHCR Bangladesh (2018/2019)

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