



Tote (Jute) bag production centre in camp 5 is engaging refugee women to secure their wage employment. Around 250 refugee women are involved with the jute bag production. ©UNHCR / Nahid Hasan Raju

Objectives

- 1 Peaceful co-existence with local communities promoted
- 2 Self-reliance and livelihoods of the refugee and host community improved

Progress (January - June 2021)

Agricultural Support for Refugees: During the first half of the year over 6,600 refugee households received continued agricultural support to grow vegetables in their gardens. This is part of a multi-year initiative supporting refugee self-reliance in the camps. In addition, adoption of the innovative approach of vertical gardening allowed refugees to use the narrow space available to produce vegetables in order to meet their nutritional needs, as well as support their families by earning an income through selling surplus produce. More than 80% of households are headed by female refugees who previously did not participate in agricultural activities due to cultural and contextual norms.

Livelihood Support for Refugee Women: Some 625 young women aged 18-24 have earned an income through producing tote (jute) bags to sell to organisations working in the camps or supply to UNHCR. The women also produce menstrual hygiene materials such as sanitary pads, underwear, soap, as well as embroidery cloth.

Agricultural support for host community: Over 3,500 host community households across five unions of Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts received seasonal agricultural support, while more than 1,100 households received assets such as cows and goats to improve their livelihoods. The poorest households in the host community have been receiving support through UNHCR's multi-year livelihood projects since 2019 as a commitment to ensure peaceful coexistence.

Ultra-Poor Graduation Programme: The Graduation Programme has been supporting 2,000 poor host community households across five Unions of Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts since early 2020 by providing assets such as cows, goats, and agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizer and saplings, as well as matching the savings of host community households to encourage them to save. 2,028 households were previously supported under the programme during April 2018-March 2020. In addition, during January-June 2021 more than 280 women from the host community produced crafted cloth through hand embroidery, block printing, screen printing, and sewing, each receiving on average some BDT 1,500 in monthly income, lower compared to previous months as the production centres were closed for several months due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Host Community Solidarity Project: Since the influx of 2017, under its Host Community Solidarity Project (HCSP), UNHCR has been supporting the host community to increase its self-reliance by focusing on development of infrastructure such as school buildings, roads, markets and drains, after several pieces of community infrastructure hosting refugees during the early days of the influx were damaged. In addition, locations which previously did have basic infrastructure in place benefitted from construction or renovation support. During April to May 2021, three schemes were completed under the HCSP to improve community services. Since 2018, a total of 130 similar projects have been implemented.

Social Cohesion: Since 2019, UNHCR has continued to engage with the refugee and host communities to increase awareness on social cohesion and enhance peaceful coexistence, with over 5,000 individuals attending events during 2021.

Challenges

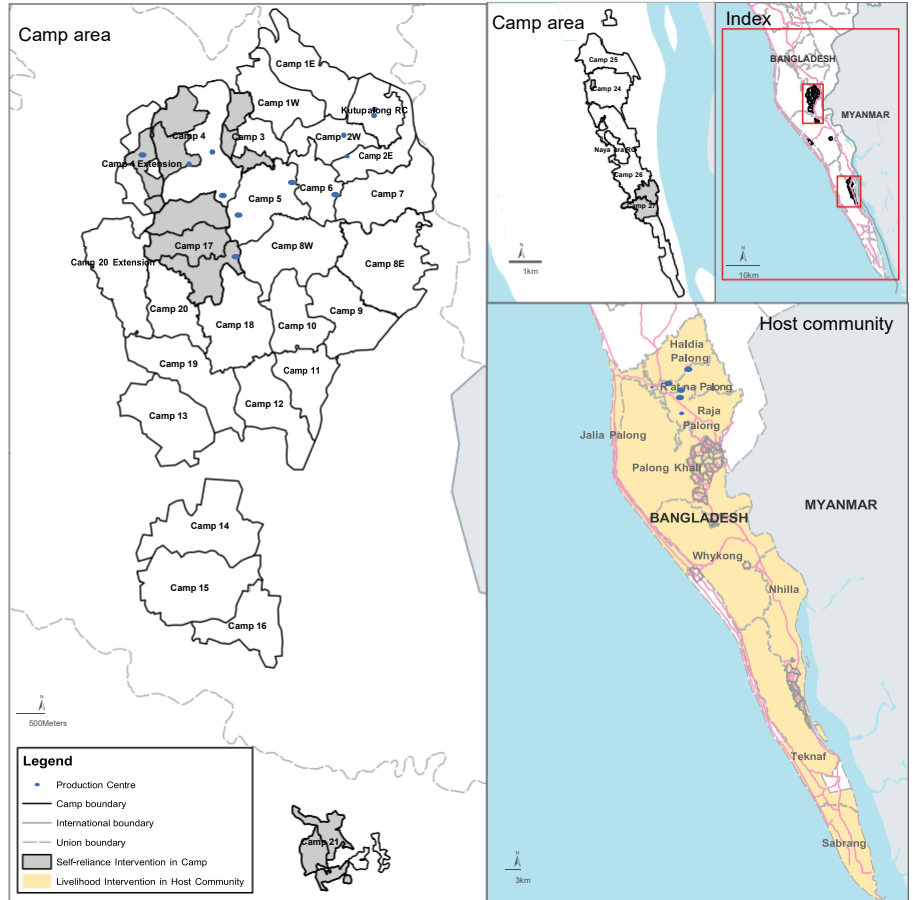
In line with Government directives to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, humanitarian partners were required to reduce the scale of activities conducted in the camps and host communities. This reduced footprint seriously impacted the implementation of planned activities. Home gardening activities in the camp, which are season-dependent, were hampered and delayed due to such restrictions, also resulting in the suspension of operation of production centres. This left refugee volunteers without an income, while the level of self-reliance attained by livelihood programme participants has deteriorated.

Way Forward

UNHCR continues to advocate with the Government to ensure continued humanitarian access to all areas and vital protection and assistance services, including refugee self-reliance activities. Meanwhile, UNHCR is in the process of developing a project to support adolescents and youths to develop skills required within the camps which is anticipated to start at the end of this year. For the remainder of 2021, depending on the COVID-19 situation, several events related to ongoing interventions are planned, including the organization of trainings in the camps.

Key Figures (as of June 2021)

- 3**
Peaceful coexistence projects implemented
- 3**
Leadership, Conflict Management, Social Cohesion and Human Rights trainings conducted with youths from the camps and host community
- 5,917**
People attending social cohesion awareness-raising events
- 281**
Female host community members earning an income through employment
- 625**
Female volunteers earning an income in the camps
- 400,000**
Tote bags produced by female refugees delivered to UNHCR



Achievements (January - June 2021)

- 5,53** Local community members benefiting from projects
- 6,74** Persons receiving production kits or inputs for agriculture/livestock/fisheries activities
- 5,91** Persons reached through community sensitisation campaigns
- 90** Persons earning incentives/wages from partners and from community contracting projects

Trends

