

KEY ACTIVITIES

Access to Cleaner Cooking Energy - Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)

UNHCR and IOM distribute LPG as cooking fuel to all refugee households to meet their basic needs and mitigate climate change. LPG is a cleaner and more efficient alternative to firewood and has become the primary cooking fuel used by refugees. The distribution of LPG has had a significant environmental benefit by reducing carbon emissions, deforestation and associated disaster risks, protection risks such as gender-based violence and negative health impacts due to smoke inhalation. It also promotes food security, nutrition, and peaceful coexistence by reducing competition for resources. To enhance fuel efficiency and optimize costs, UNHCR has piloted the introduction of pressure cookers through a pre-pilot and pilot programme and are planning to introduce fuel efficiency at scale in 2023.



Stream rehabilitation project_SuLMER. © UNHCR/Md. Abdul Maleque

Access to Lighting, Electrical Energy and Lightning Protection

UNHCR has installed thousands of solar streetlights across all camps to improve access for refugees to water and sanitation facilities and to mitigate gender-based violence risks. UNHCR is supporting a community-based maintenance strategy for the solar streetlights, promoting continued operation and maintenance of these important assets by refugees, approximately 70% of street lights are functional daily basis. On the other hand, to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from diesel generators, UNHCR has installed multiple solar mini grids to power health facilities, camp offices, communal facilities, and public lights with renewable energy to mitigate climate change. To protect refugees from the risk of lightning strikes, UNHCR has installed lightning protection systems across the camps and in newly constructed facilities where required.

Environment and Ecosystem Rehabilitation

UNHCR and partners engage refugees and local Bangladeshis to rehabilitate the environment, clean up and prevent pollution of waterways, increase resilience to climate shocks by reducing disaster risks from landslides, floods, droughts, and fires through introducing nature-based solutions. These includes plantation for slope stabilization, water quality management and the establishment of water reservoirs for various uses. Revegetation with mixed species is underway with quality planting materials grown in own nursery including trees, bamboos, and grasses to enhance soil erosion control. Toddy palm seedlings are also being planted as a nature-based solution to provide additional protection against lightning strikes aligned with the Government of Bangladesh's strategy. To ensure the sustainability of interventions, rapid environmental impact assessments are undertaken, and communities, especially youth, are engaged with environmental education training and sensitization on the importance of environmental conservation.

Sustainable Land Management and Environmental Rehabilitation Project (SuLMER)

Recognizing that both refugee and host communities live in a shared environment and can be affected by upstream conditions, UNHCR and partners are working to holistically rehabilitate watersheds, which are areas or basins of land where all the streams and rainfall drain to a common outlet. This multi-sectoral approach promotes climate resilience and peaceful coexistence, and includes stream excavation, bank protection, slope stabilization, revegetation, plant-based wastewater treatment, drainage improvement and construction of silt traps, water reservoirs and firebreaks. By the end of 2022, some 600 meters of stream have been re-excavated with plans to expand in 2023, resulting in a safer and more stable environment for community members living in the area.

Wildlife Conservation and Human-Elephant Conflict Management

Since the establishment of the camps after the 2017 influx, the risk of human-elephant conflicts remains a protection concern for both the refugee and the host communities who live in the migration corridor of one of the last remaining herds of wild Asian elephants. To mitigate human-elephant conflicts in the camps and surrounding areas, elephant response team volunteers are trained and equipped with torches and loudspeakers to deter elephants to the nearby forests. Thorny plants and beehives are being established along the camp boundaries to act as natural deterrents to elephants. Volunteers are also involved in wildlife rescue including snakes that are transported to the local wildlife centre operated by the Bangladesh Forest Department.

SAFE Plus 2: UN-Joint Programme

In close coordination with the Government, UNHCR leads the second phase of the Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus (SAFE+2) Joint Programme with FAO, WFP, and IOM. The programme seeks to enable safe access to sufficient and cleaner cooking energy for all refugee households, to rehabilitate and protect degraded environment and ecosystems in the camps and surrounding areas, and to increase resilience among refugee and host community households.

Bhasan Char

With the Government of Bangladesh, UNHCR and partners are working to mainstream Climate Action initiatives to mitigate, adapt and increase resilience to climate shocks on Bhasan Char in line with the UNHCR Strategic Framework for Climate Action and Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy. Environmental protection is being mainstreamed in close coordination with livelihoods and WASH sectors. Wildlife conservation interventions are informed by a completed biodiversity assessment and regular ecological monitoring in consultation with the Bangladesh Forest Department. Energy access and safety is being enhanced by retrofitting existing electrical and solar systems to offer services to refugees including registration and health facilities. UNHCR's partners are monitoring existing street lighting and lightning protection systems and will establish community-based structures for ongoing care and maintenance. In collaboration with operational partners that are currently distributing LPG, UNHCR is supporting cooking energy efficiency through needs assessment, training, operationalizing biogas installations, distribution of cooking equipment, introduction of pressure cookers and heat-retaining cooking baskets. UNHCR-BDRCS are maintaining the batteries for the solar systems in the Multi-Purpose Cyclone Shelters and refugee houses that power lighting and solar water pumping in the clusters.

KEY FIGURES COX'S BAZAR CAMPS*

200
Metres of beehive fences installed as natural deterrents to elephants

51
Hectares of mixed vegetation maintained by refugees and host community

1,098
Volunteers supported to implement environmental protection activities

884
Rohingya and Bangladeshis engaged as Elephant Response Volunteers

7,116
Solar street lights operational

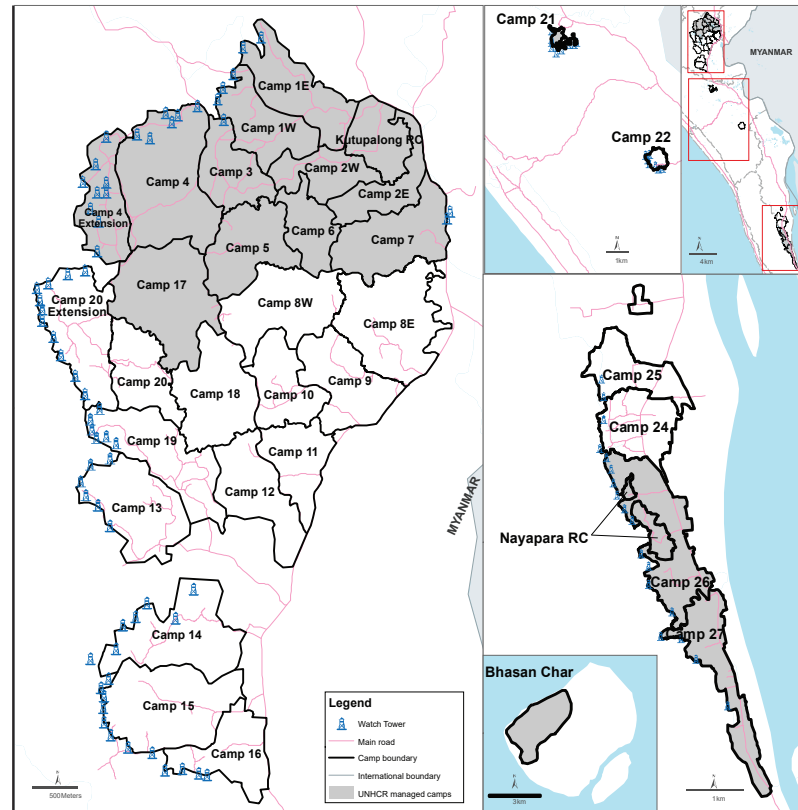
866,736
Cylinder refills (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) distributed to refugee households

33,083
Bamboo plantlets planted

99
Elephant watch towers maintained

105,600
Seedlings (bamboo + tree) raised and maintained in the nursery to plantation age and height

UNHCR MANAGED CAMPS



KEY FIGURES BHASAN CHAR*

1
Registration centre electrification completed

5
Assessments completed including lightning protection system, biodiversity and solar street light (site-wide)

4
Electrification of health facilities (20 bed hospital in progress, 2 primary health centres and medical warehouse completed)

59
Repair of lightning protection systems in progress

290
Government, partners staff and refugee volunteers trained about snake awareness

*This information reflects data collected between January to December 2022