



The congested and hilly camps of Cox's Bazar present many challenges for refugees and especially women and girls, people with disabilities, older persons and other refugees with specific needs. Community-based protection puts the capacities, agency, rights and dignity of refugees at the center of programming by engaging and empowering community groups and volunteers to identify protection risks and implement community projects, dialogues and awareness-raising programmes.

KEY ACTIVITIES



Community Outreach Members (COMs)



COMs are refugee volunteers who provide invaluable support to their communities, raising awareness on a variety of subjects through group sessions and door-to-door visits. COMs provide information relevant to refugees' daily lives including on access to services, cyclone and monsoon preparedness, and key protection risks such as child marriage. They are also trained to identify people with specific needs, provide community-based support and make referrals to the relevant services. COMs also facilitate projects across camps which engage communities to respond to shared concerns and include constructive activities, such as organizing literacy classes for adults, adolescent chess clubs, and handicraft skills workshops for women. COMs are conducting activities in 27 camps.

Training on PSN identification exercise in camp 3 ©UNHCR Hannah Cochrane



Community Groups

Female and male, adult and youth community groups work together to support their community through monthly projects. They lead the identification of needs and gaps through participatory planning meetings, then develop service projects and community-led discussions to address the needs of the communities. UNHCR and partners support the groups to carry out different projects identified and prioritized by the community. The service projects range from small scale infrastructure repairs to handwashing campaigns and distribution of handicrafts. The Community Groups programme currently functions in 31 camps.



Religious Engagement

UNHCR and partners work closely with imams and female religious teachers to engage them on issues and concerns of the community. Imams and female religious teachers receive support and conduct awareness sessions on prevention of child marriage, health, monsoon and cyclone preparedness, peaceful coexistence, and other protection issues across 31 camps.



Disability Inclusion

Persons with disabilities and older persons face challenges accessing services in the camps. UNHCR and partners support refugees with functional and physical rehabilitation assistance, assistive devices such as wheelchairs and walking sticks, and psychosocial support to enable them to independently access health and protection services. Caregivers are supported to reduce the impact and stigma associated with disability and caregiving roles. To ensure that the rights of older people and persons with disabilities are protected and upheld, UNHCR actively participates in the Age and Disability Working Group.



Gender Equality

UNHCR continues to use an age, gender, diversity lens in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs to facilitate gender equality and mainstreaming which ensures that our assistance is more sensitive to the differentiated needs and capacities of women, girls, boys and men. UNHCR will continue to support the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG) which provides technical support and advocacy to advance gender equality across the joint response, including cross-sectoral support.



Communication with Communities

UNHCR Helpline (16670)

As one of the Common Feedback Mechanisms, the Helpline has created a platform for refugees to directly communicate with UNHCR. The helpline receives over calls from refugees regarding different topics including registration, shelters, protection and others. Apart from receiving refugee calls, Helpline also uses the Interactive Voice Response system to send pre-recorded audio messages, as phone calls, in Rohingya language on topics such as monsoon, cyclone and flood preparedness.

UNHCR operates 36 **community centres** (CC) serve as community structures to counter inactivity in the camps and facilitate a variety of activities for creative and constructive individual expression and social dialogues and help. CCs create a safe space for refugees to gather, convene, converse, celebrate cultural traditions, play recreational games, learn new skills and read books, make arts and crafts, etc.

The Information Service Centres (ISCs) is a mechanism that can assist in people to receive relevant services offer refugees, receive accurate information, provide feedback and concerns on services. ISCs also contribute to a more efficient, relevant, and localised response. There are 25 ISCs across nineteen camps.

Bhasan Char

Community-Based Protection activities are ongoing on Bhasan Char with two locations established as community centres with integrated Information Service Centres. COMs are providing lifesaving information to refugees across all clusters. Engagement with imams and female religious teachers on the island has started. Imams have received training on mental health and psychosocial support, and other protection topics. Community groups are formed and undertaking activities which respond to the needs jointly identified on the island, including making stretchers and chairs to carry refugees to health facilities. Additionally, community-led discussions are ongoing on various issues, including cluster cleanliness and prevention of drowning.

Total beneficiaries*

579,984

As of 31 Mar 2023, 579,984 individuals benefitted through multiple CBP activities focusing on the engagement and empowerment of the community as agents of their own protection. CBP programmes provide information on protection issues and humanitarian services, support people with specific needs, including people with disabilities, and mobilise the community to identify and address protection issues in the camps.

342,646

No. of individuals reached through awareness raising and key protection messaging and related mitigation measures (including non-violence)

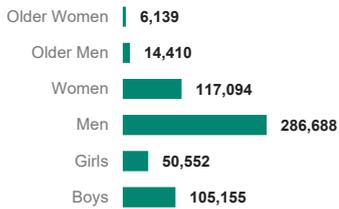
1,739

No. of Semi-skilled /Skilled/ Unskilled volunteers supported

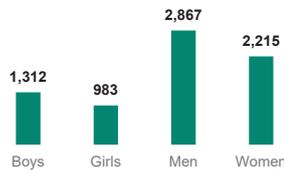
152

No. of Community-led Groups by women, girls, and boys

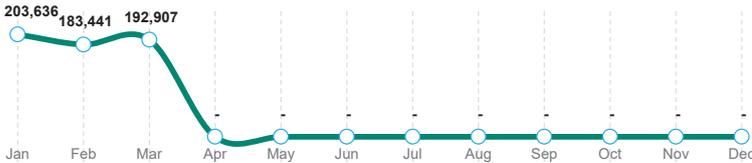
Age and gender



Persons with disabilities



Monthly trend (beneficiaries reached by month)

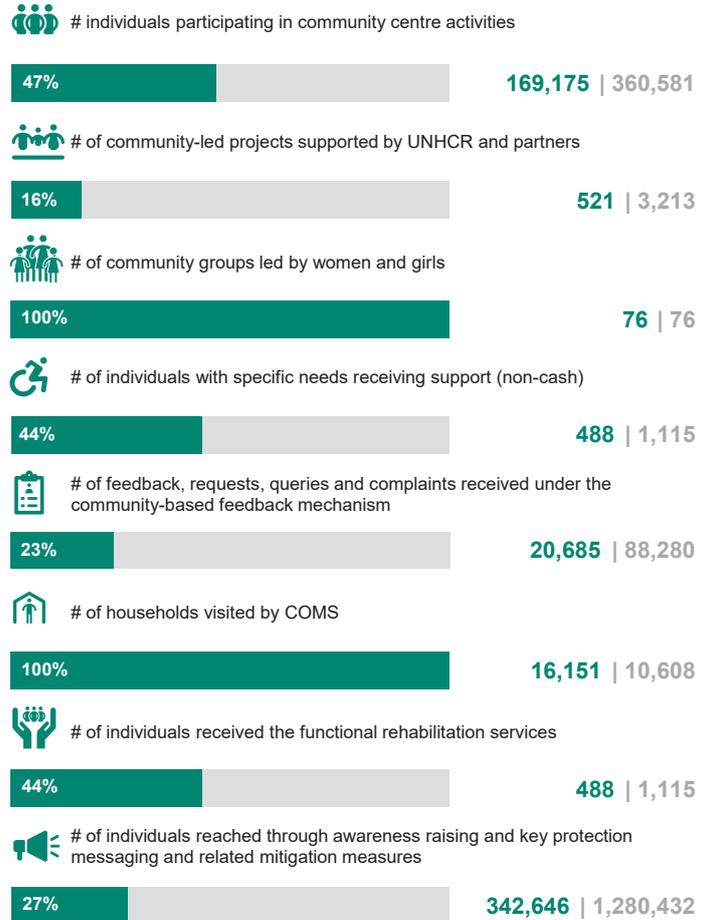


Geographic overview (beneficiaries by camp)



Key achievements

Progress against target



*The number of beneficiaries shown across the factsheets includes individuals who received multiple forms of assistance and does not represent the unique number of individuals assisted.