588
Community Outreach Members (COMs)

1,240
PoC received Individual & group based Psychosocial support

294,902
Beneficiaries of community-led projects

4,143
Community-led projects supported

30,365
Person of concern with specific needs receiving support (non-cash)

1,059
Number of volunteers supported (Skilled, Semiskilled, Unskilled)

FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT
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Children enjoying a lively puppet show during World Refugee Day 2025 celebrations. ©UNHCR

Community-based protection (CBP) puts the capacities, rights and dignity of forcibly displaced and stateless persons at the center of programming. It generates more effective and sustainable protection outcomes by strengthening local resources and capacity and identifying protection gaps through regular consultations. UNHCR takes a community-based approach in all its work with the people with and for whom we work. Through consultation and community action-planning, communities engage meaningfully and substantively in all programs that affect them and play a leading role in change.

UNHCR recognizes that, without the engagement of refugees, stateless and other forcibly displaced persons, external intervention alone cannot achieve sustained improvement in their lives. CBP community-based approach' implies that communities engage meaningfully and substantially in all aspects of programmes that affect them, strengthening the community's leading role as a driving force for change.

Community-based, programmes in Bangladesh involves the Rohingya Refugee Community at every stage: in assessment, diagnosis, prioritization, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation seeking to diminish refugees' reliance on external humanitarian actors and agencies to determine and implement protection services and ensure a sustainable response with refugees at the center. In the current context, a sustainable approach is more than ever key to ensure and safeguard protection outcomes for the Rohingya refugees. As such strengthen refugee capacity, participation, ownership, leadership and decision-making is central to the response

For each area under CBP, activities focus on achieving outcomes and impacts to support and enhance the refugee-led role in the Rohingya refugee response.

Key achievements

The network of Community Outreach Members (COMs) consists of 588 trained and incentivized male and female refugees, present in all 33 camps, who take a leading role in supporting the refugee community.

Community Outreach Members (COMs) conducted **102,098** home visits, reaching **268,195** individuals, and identified **30,365** persons with specific needs (PSNs) including **16,923** females and facilitated referrals for tailored support. They organized **55,699** awareness sessions covering protection and well-being topics, reaching **379,714** individuals, strengthening community resilience and improving access to protection services.

At the block level, COMs conducted **16,307** child marriage prevention sessions, reaching **115,914** individuals, including **10,692** PSNs. Additionally, **16,897** self-care sessions were conducted, reaching 96,191 refugees, including **3,922** PSNs, promoting stress management, emotional awareness, and positive coping mechanisms. COMs also supported new arrivals, referred vulnerable individuals affected by fire incidents and monsoon emergencies, and disseminated life-saving messages during emergencies.

Furthermore, **576** Saturday Solidarity Projects (SSPs) were implemented and handed over to refugee communities, reaching 8,459 individuals, while **100** Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) were verified.

Community groups consist of 4,300 male and female unpaid group members, both refugee and host community volunteers, who organize community-led discussion and implement community-led initiatives in all 34 camps including Bhasan Char.

Community groups remained actively engaged across 34 camps, including Bhasan Char, with approximately **5,000** members (50.03% male and 49.97% female) contributing to community empowerment and social cohesion. Supported by UNHCR and partners, these non-incentivized volunteer groups implemented 3,534 community initiatives, including fire and monsoon risk awareness, peer-to-peer protection monitoring, support for persons with specific needs, preservation of Rohingya cultural practices, and small-scale community improvements. In addition, they facilitated 9,077 community-led discussions covering a wide range of topics such as disaster risk reduction, health and hygiene, child protection, GBV prevention, peaceful coexistence, women's empowerment, prevention of harmful practices and risk behaviors, and environmental resilience. These initiatives strengthened community ownership, improved awareness of key protection issues, and enhanced resilience and cooperation among refugee and host communities.

Through its community center volunteers, UNHCR operates 48 community centers across 34 camps open to refugees and host community members.

Community Centers expanded inclusive learning and engagement opportunities by establishing art groups, sports groups, storytelling sessions, Hajoni (beautification) corners, and breastfeeding corners, reaching **626,257** individuals. The installation of Akash TV also supported information sharing and learning. Participation increased, particularly among women, and community members demonstrated improved knowledge and attitudes through regular engagement. Community Centers also promoted dialogue on harmful social norms. Community dialogue sessions were organized with community leaders to address issues, such as child marriage, polygamy, and dowry practices. Cultural programs, including village fairs, Boli Khela, Ha Du Du Khela, and traditional marriage ceremonies were introduced to preserve cultural heritage and strengthen community participation.

Faith leaders, as part of the religious engagement network, play an important role in shaping and moderating issues in Rohingya communities including influencing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Imams and Female Religious Teachers (FRTs) facilitated awareness sessions on life-saving emergency response through religious gatherings, group discussions, and demonstrations, using mosques, madrasahs, talim houses, and other community structures to disseminate key messages. Through these platforms, they reached **1,624,894**[i] community members across 34 camps, including 346,930 women and **34,685** persons with disabilities.

Religious leaders also supported the identification and referral of vulnerable individuals, referring approximately 17,885 cases to relevant sectors. In addition, capacity-building initiatives strengthened their role in promoting peaceful coexistence, social cohesion, child protection, and positive parenting, with **1,613** Imams, **1,180** FRTs, **34** Christian leaders, and **22** Hindu leaders trained. To further promote inclusion and interfaith dialogue, minority religious leader groups (Christian and Hindu) were established in Camps 1E, 13, and 27, fostering collaboration, conflict prevention, and mutual respect among diverse faith groups.

UNHCR supports refugee-elected community leaders present in 4 camps (Nayapara registered camp, Kutupalong registered camp, 4 ext. and 26). They are part of UNHCRs commitment to increase sustainable refugee self-governance within the camps.

Community representatives played a key role in strengthening social cohesion, resolving disputes, and facilitating access to services across the camps. They facilitated 2,501 local dispute resolution sessions, engaging 3,373 refugees and addressing family, shelter, and community-related conflicts. Women's radio listening groups conducted 382 awareness sessions, reaching 3,508 individuals on topics including health, safety, and social issues. In addition, refugee-led blood donation groups collected 1,417 bags of blood to support medical emergencies, while community leaders conducted 274 awareness sessions reaching 5,180 people on disaster preparedness, fire prevention, safe LPG use, and first aid. Regular coordination with the CiC, UNHCR partners, APBN, and service providers further strengthened protection responses and improved access to services within the camps.

Sport for Protection (S4P) offers the opportunity for young refugees to engage in sports and develop their knowledge on protection issues as well as their social competencies and skills through a contextualized training curriculum.

The Sports for Protection (S4P) program strengthened social inclusion and youth empowerment among children and adolescents aged 10–24 years across six camps. Over **1,200** sports sessions were conducted by 36 trained coaches, engaging approximately **3,200** adolescents, 46% of whom were female.

The program enhanced life skills, leadership, teamwork, gender awareness, and protection knowledge. UNHCR rehabilitated 12 sports fields, built girl-friendly and disability-accessible facilities, and provided sports equipment.

Mixed tournaments and youth-led activities promoted social cohesion between refugees and host communities, while collaboration with local sports clubs strengthened sustainability and community ownership.

This programme contributes to mitigating the protection risks such as recruitment, irregular migration, gambling, engagement with criminal groups and other criminal activities, child marriage, child labor etc.

Disability & Inclusion aims to ensure tailored support and meaningful participation of refugees with a disability and their caretakers in community life.

House-to-house identification and assessment for persons with disabilities were conducted, and 100,006 individuals with disabilities were identified. A total of **9,129** persons with specific needs, including **4,066** persons with disabilities, received individualized support tailored to their protection and well-being. Rehabilitation services were provided to **4,020** individuals, while **2,282** individuals accessed mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). In Cox's Bazar, **3,736** children, including 609 children with disabilities, actively participated in 737 inclusive recreational and sports events, fostering inclusion and emotional well-being. A total of **1,098** protection risk assessments resulted in **1,373** referrals including health, GBV, CP, with 1,252 individuals (98%) successfully accessing the necessary services. These efforts reflect ongoing commitment to addressing diverse protection needs through timely support, inclusive activities, and improved referral pathways.

'' Accountability to Affected People'' (AAP) entails commitments and mechanisms put in place by UNHCR to ensure that communities are meaningfully and continuously involved in decisions that directly impact their lives as well as self-referral for services.

CBP restructured 50 Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) desks across all camps in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char to strengthen coordination and efficiency in service access for refugees, including new CFM desks in camps 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, and 20 extension which were fully operational starting in May 2025. **365,794** queries from refugees (73% through CFM desks and 25% through Helpline) were received averaging **32,161** per month on various topics such as shelter, food and protection, with a 97% closure rate and average processing time of 17 days per ticket. UNHCR continues to strengthen its two-way communication with refugees to ensure timely and efficient response to their concerns raised. Participatory Assessment (PA) was conducted to obtain understanding of the current situation of girls, boys, women and men of concern of diverse backgrounds, including the problems and protection risks faced, underlying causes, capacities and coping mechanisms to address those problems, and their priorities for programming. 495 Participants were engaged through 42 Focus Group Discussions and 39 key informant interviews.

UNHCR supports inclusive engagement, sensitization, and empowerment initiatives to foster social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between host communities and Rohingya refugees.

The program strengthened peaceful coexistence between Rohingya refugees and host communities in Ukhiya and Teknaf. The social cohesion activities included engagement with educational institutions through youth-led discussions; religious engagement sessions; joint youth initiatives; mobilization of community youth journalist groups to promote protection messaging; collaboration with existing sports clubs; joint physical education and sports activities; and dissemination of key protection messages within both communities. Peaceful Coexistence Committees (with at least 30% women and persons with disabilities) were trained on advocacy. Awareness sessions reached 600 host community members, 144 youth club members, and 157 students, while over 100 youth participated in sports and engagement activities that promoted leadership, teamwork, and positive behavior. Campaigns and media engagement reinforced conflict prevention and inclusion messages.

Challenges

- Security risks, including abduction threats, restricted volunteers' movement across blocks, limiting protection efforts and community initiatives.
- Imams and FRTs are facing security concerns that make them hesitant to attend or conduct meetings in certain places, particularly due to the presence of organized groups. FRTs also struggle to hold Talim sessions in shelters due to limited space.
- Security risks and monsoon-related challenges continue to limit safe access to community centers, especially for women, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Damaged infrastructure, low attendance, and volunteer access restrictions highlight the need for localized, weather-resilient services and stronger protection measures.
- Austerity measures due to funding constraints halted many planned activities, limiting support for refugees in the camps.
- Limited community participation in the establishment of community representatives and refugees' concerns about Maji system and the ongoing camp committee structures being established by camp authorities across many camps
- Limited female participation in sports due to cultural barriers restricts inclusive engagement and sustained participation in female-focused sports activities.
- Monsoon rains, limited availability of indoor spaces, and poor road conditions disrupt activities and restrict access, particularly for persons with disabilities, undermining consistent and inclusive participation.

Way Forward

- Timely repairs of infrastructure and safeguard accessibility in the camps.
- Continue to engage with camp authorities and law enforcement to address safety and security concerns of refugees in the camps.
- Stronger coordination through a joint committee of United Nations Organizations, Camp in Charge and Armed Police Battalion is recommended for effective social cohesion. The project will expand to more camps, improve follow-up in institutions, and prioritize Rohingya youth engagement to promote lasting peace and understanding.

- A duty of care approach central in its volunteer engagement to ensure volunteers can conduct their critical activities in the

camps without exposing them to undue risk or harm.

- Strengthen community capacity to continue to identify and refer the most vulnerable refugees, including new arrivals.
- UNHCR will advocate with camp authorities for a transparent process of establishing community representatives with meaningful refugee participation, inclusion, and community empowerment as core principles of humanitarian engagement.

[i] In total, 987,964 refugees participated in awareness-raising sessions: 379,714 were reached through COMs, 599,562 through Imams, 5,180 through male community representatives, and 3,508 through female community representatives. The number of beneficiaries includes individuals who received multiple forms of assistance and does not represent the unique number of individuals assisted.

Total beneficiaries reached by awarness session activities

2,013,296 *

As of 31 December 2025, over **2,013,296** individuals were reached through awareness sessions conducted at community centres, delivering key protection messages and related mitigation measures.

365,794
Number of feedback and complaints received via community-based mechanism

1,059
Number of volunteers supported (Skilled, Semi-skilled, Unskilled)

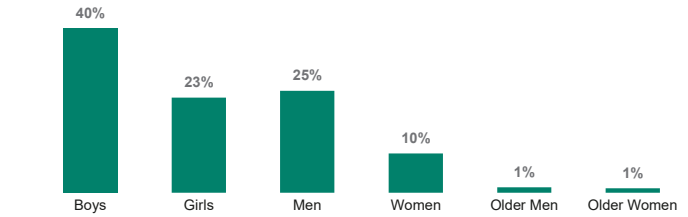
4,143
Number of Community-led projects supported

Key achievements

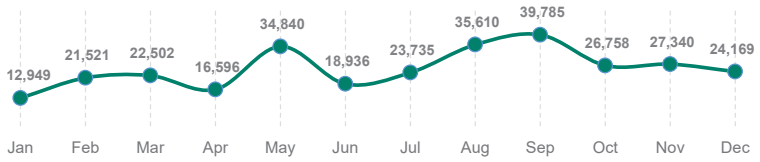
Progress against **target**

	REACHED	TARGET
# beneficiaries of peaceful coexistence and social cohesion initiatives (100%)	40,648	29,865
# individuals have participated in the Community Centre activities (100%)	626,257	619,863
# of beneficiaries of community-led projects (100%)	294,902	248,253
# of persons trained on different types of disability inclusion and other programmes (100%)	4,020	3,770
# of people with and for whom UNHCR works with specific needs receiving support (non-cash) (100%)	30,365	25,915
# of individuals reached through awareness raising and key protection messaging and related mitigation measures (100%)	2,013,296	1,614,574
# of peaceful coexistence and social cohesion intiatives (100%)	752	560
# of children including children with disabilities participating sports and recreational sessions for children & IRC (99%)	3,736	3,762

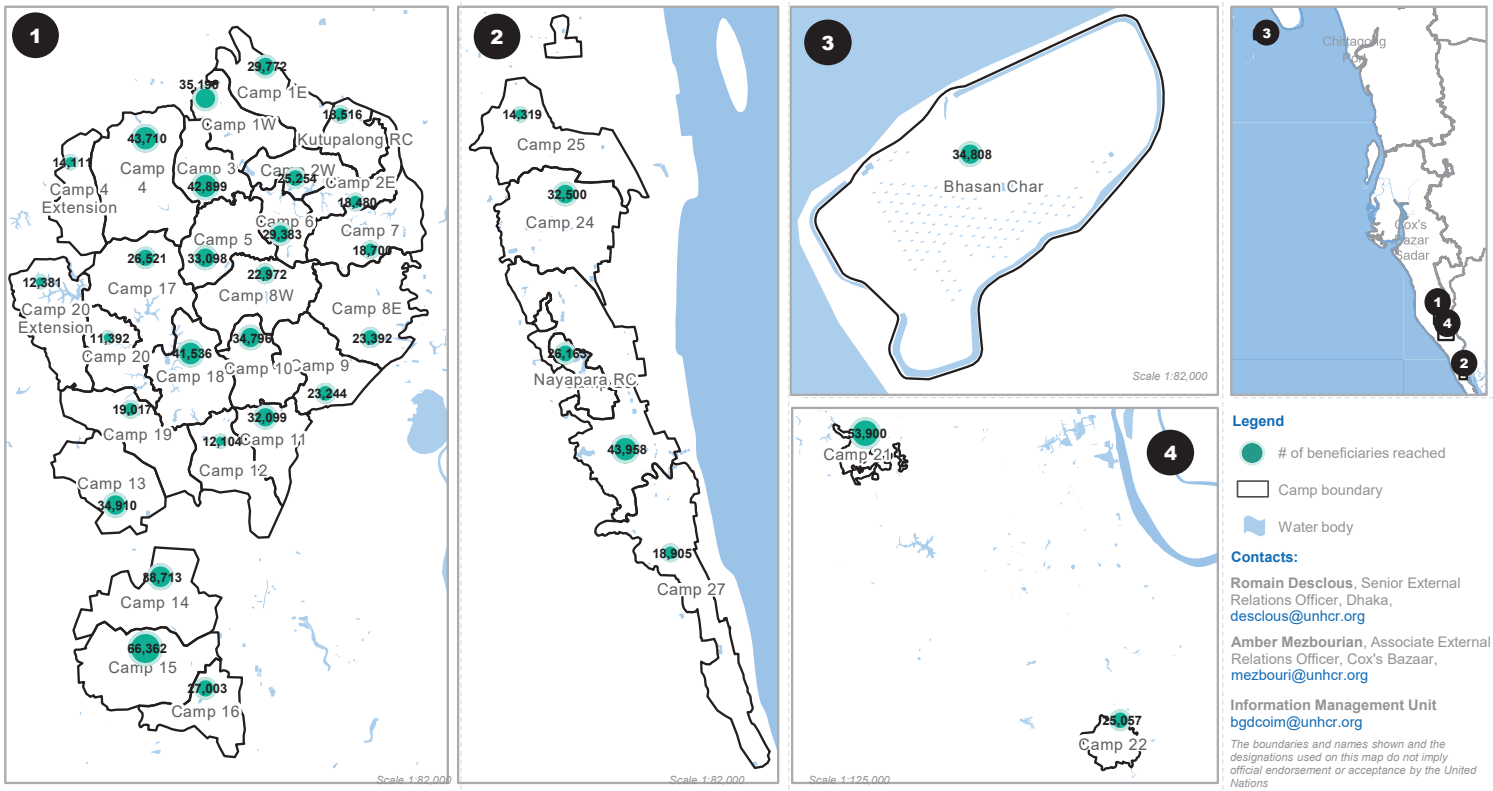
Age and Gender (beneficiaries reached)



Monthly trend (number of beneficiaries reached through community-led projects by month)



Geographic overview (number of individuals reached through awareness and protection messaging with mitigation by camp)



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The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

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Sources: UNHCR Partners (Activity Info)
Partners: AAB, ACTED, BRAC, COAST, HI, NGOF

*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.

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