



The arrival of refugees to Cox’s Bazar from Myanmar put a large strain on the local environment. During the initial phase of the emergency, hundreds of thousands of refugees struggled to build emergency shelters with the materials they could find, and used firewood from forest areas for cooking. This led to forest areas being cleared and trees cut extensively. UNHCR has been working with the authorities and other humanitarian agencies in Cox’s Bazar on sustainable and safe solutions for refugees helping to mitigate the impact on the environment and protect and restore it with the help of refugees.

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT OBJECTIVES

**95,990 refugee & host community households were reached with Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and cooking kits** providing cheaper, safer and a more efficient and cleaner source of energy.

**UNHCR is working to create a better environment by:**

- 1 **Reducing the environmental impact** of hosting refugees through environmental protection efforts, restoration & awareness among refugees
- 2 **Increasing the use of safe and alternative energy sources** in both refugee and host communities
- 3 **Improving protection and wellbeing** in refugee settlements through solar street lights installations and other environment-friendly energy initiatives

## PROGRESS

The LPG programme of UNHCR is on-going and proving to be key for the protection of refugees. 100% of the refugees have been cooking with LPG since April 2019. The on-going monitoring and evaluation has allowed to better tailor the distribution as per refugees’ needs, and to make sure that refugees are using LPG cooking stove in a same manner. A LPG assessment has been carried out with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and it quantified an 80% reduction in terms of deforestation and a positive impact for the preservation of ecosystem services. The distributions of host community families have been initiated based on a vulnerability survey which already have covered more than 31,000 host community families. About 10,000 LPG system have already been distributed out of targeted 40,000 for host community along with 1 year continuous refill. This on-going distribution will contribute to strengthen the resilience of the inhabitants of the Cox’s Bazar . A pilot project on pressure cooker has been rolled out and the data generated highlights 53% fuel efficiency to its users. A scale-up is planned upon the results of the pilot project. As per the High Commissioner’s initiate, the Solar+ programme has started and consist of the implementation of mini grids in the refugee camps. The construction of a mini grid that will power, amongst others, a clinic and street light.

Planting using a composition (27 species) of tree saplings, grass, legumes and shrubs have been completed in 95 hectare of degraded land within the 16 camps. Planting programme of UNHCR and partners aim at controlling soil erosion, riparian protection, improving soil health and promotion of shade and nutrition. Refugees are engaged to protect the saplings following an agro-forestry model. 160 refugee households have been engaged and supported with inputs and relevant training on environment friendly agricultural techniques that ensures minimum disturbance to soil, less water use by the crops and bio-pesticide control mechanisms.

Watershed management options, enhancing water carrying capacity, increased groundwater recharge, bank protection with plant, biological waste water treatment are being piloted in one important stretch of Madurchhara watershed aiming to be replicated and scaled up in whole basin. Better watershed management will ensure livelihoods security of host communities living in the downstream and improve habitat condition for the refugees as well as contribute to improve habitat for the biodiversity that were affected. 606 Elephant Response Team volunteers from host and refugee communities are engaged, who have been monitoring the elephant movement around the camp from 100 watch towers and managing the contact by engaging with community. The 100 watch towers will be up graded and replaced over the next 12 months to a more sustainable robust design. Also, a program has been launched to tackle human snake contacts. Aiming sustainability and improving the capacity of the environment programme, 176,111 individuals have been provided with environmental education.

## CHALLENGE

- Maintenance of solar street lights, including recycling of e-waste. As some type of batteries, such as lithium ion cannot be recycled in Bangladesh;
- Lack of space in the camps. Numerous projects are hampered due to not being able to find space (for saplings, for control rooms, etc.);
- Further conservation measures needed to address the situation of wild Asian elephants as the refugee settlements are on a vital migration corridor they once used.

## WAY FORWARD

UNHCR is looking at ways to make the LPG programme more sustainable. The pressure cooker seems to offer the solution and the detailed monitoring and evaluation has validated this hypothesis. Solar street lights are expensive and less durable; UNHCR is aiming at gradually phasing in mini grids and phasing out solar street lights. Refugees are engaged for the basic maintenance and a scheme of “Energy Ambassador” shall be created.

A comprehensive environment restoration plan requires understanding and knowledge of the basin characteristics, degradation level and causes. Stream restoration plan for two other major stream networks will be implemented soon. Development of an environment sensitive camp management protocol is almost completed aiming to mainstream environment in all sectors and consider impact on environment in all aspects of activities in compliance with Bangladesh’s environmental laws and regulations.

**KEY FIGURES**

**95,985**  
Households receiving LPG support by UNHCR

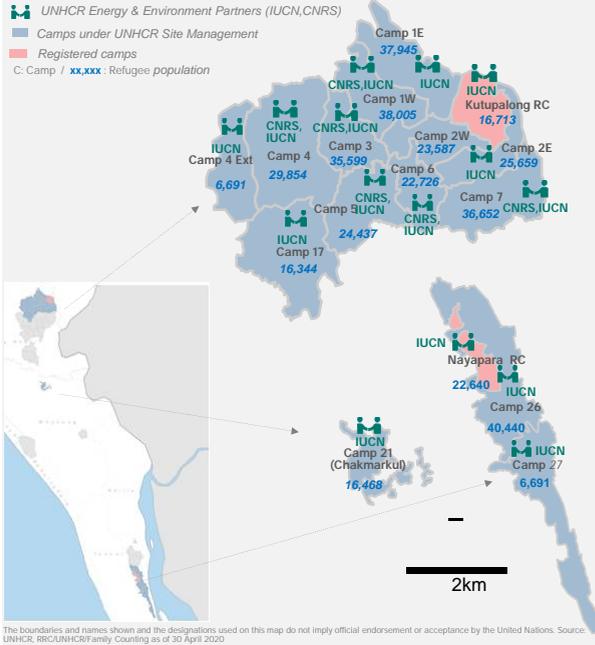
**31,093**  
Host community households surveyed for LPG distribution

**71,076**  
Households received LPG refill (in April)

**6,486**  
Refugees receiving environmental education

**2,500**  
Street lighting maintained by UNHCR

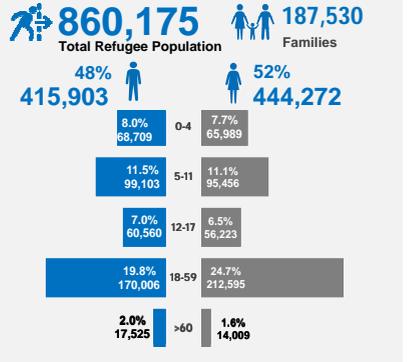
**GEOGRAPHIC SITUATION & PARTNER**



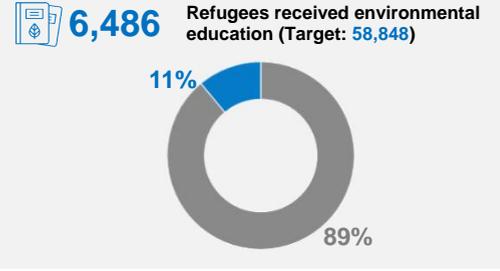
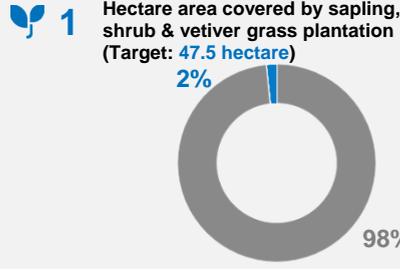
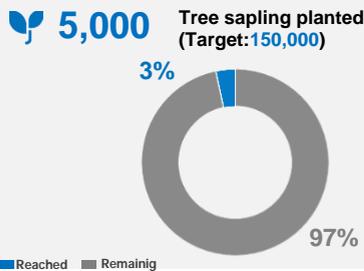
**UNHCR FUNDING STATUS**



**POPULATION BREAKDOWN**



**ACTIVITY STATUS**



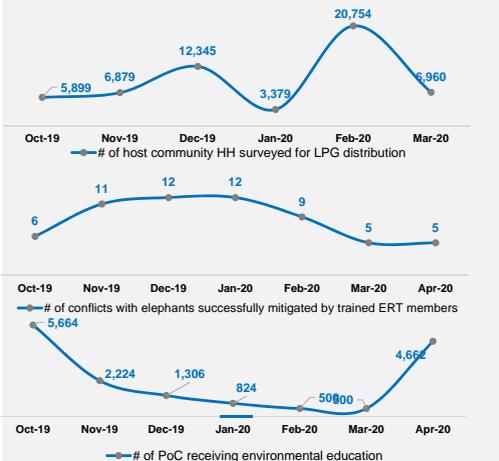
**PROGRESS AGAINST 2019 TARGETS**



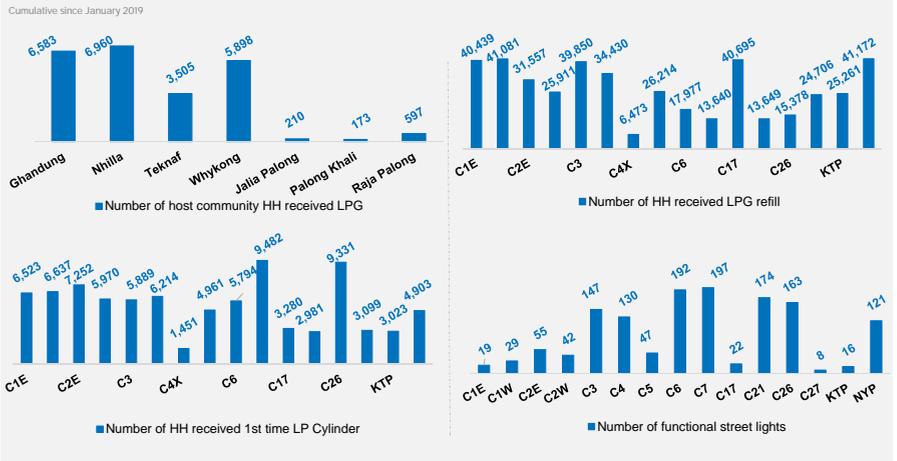
**ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE (MAR & APR)**

- 451 refugee households received 1st time LPG cylinder while 152,850 cylinders were distributed to refugee households.
- 10,716 host community households have received LPG refill.
- 10 conflicts with elephants successfully mitigated by trained Elephant Response Team.

**ACHIEVEMENT TRENDS**



**TREND ANALYSIS**



**THANK YOU**

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