

# GiHA Working Group Newsletter

Newsletter 2022 — Issue 01

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

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Rohingya youth leader Lucky shares her thoughts on leadership in camps.

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Promising Practice: Gender mainstreaming in SNFI Sector.

## LET'S ADDRESS THE PATRIARCHY TO END GBV.

— ROKEYA KABIR, BNPS

GiHA Meetup 2022 — Page 06

National feminist leader Rokeya Kabir discussed how to bridge between local and national women's network at the GiHA experience sharing meetup 2022 in Cox's Bazar.



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Balukhali Camp, Cox's Bazar  
Photo: UN Women/Allison Joyce

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— **Report**  
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— **Photobook**  
Women in Climate Action



Photo: ISCG/Syed Tahfim

## Greetings from the co-chairs

Dear colleagues and friends,

We are pleased to share this GiHA Working Group newsletter with you! This newsletter reaches you at a time when gender equality still remains a top priority for joint action for all of us, and when we need to UNITE! more than ever to end gender-based violence.

We have left a very busy period behind us during which, as GiHA WG, we have made substantive contributions to ensure that gender is mainstreamed across all Joint Response Plan (JRP) proposals, utilizing the Gender and Age Marker (GAM) as a tool. This process entailed capacity development, review of proposals, and the provision of feedback. This would not have been possible without the dedicated time and effort of GiHA WG members, and we thank you for your contributions. In the upcoming period, we will be finalizing our report based on the GAM review process spearheaded by the GiHA WG, indicating the extent to which there was a focus on gender equality in the 2023 JRP proposals across different sectors.

This newsletter captures the great work we have undertaken by the GiHA WG in the last year. Many challenges lie ahead, and much more needs to be done. Together we are stronger. Together we can make a substantive difference in the lives of women and girls, and gender-diverse populations in the Rohingya refugee camps and the host communities.

In the spirit of feminist activism, we look forward to seeing you at the 16 Days Campaign events!

In solidarity,

—  
**Mehtap Tatar**  
**Tahmina Parvin**



Learning Circle | Photo: GiHAWG/Farzana Farid Lucy

Logistics is not a popular career choice for women. Training in Gender Mainstreaming helped me debunk gender myths.

— SAMIRA EFFAT, DCA BANGLADESH



GAM Training | Photo: GiHAWG/Farzana Farid Lucy

## Snapshot

# GiHAWG in 2022

Throughout the year, the GiHA WG actively engaged, educated, and energized **1024 participants** in the humanitarian community.

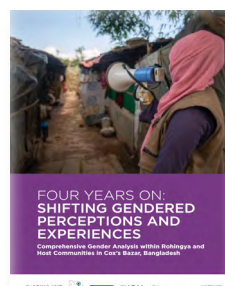
188	GAM Appraisals
14	Communications Products
11	Trainings
08	Knowledge Products
07	Gender and Inclusion Action Plans
03	Gender Dialogue on International Days
02	Learning Circles
01	Organizational Gender Audit
01	Lessons Learned Workshop

## Knowledge Bank

### Key Documents on Gender in Humanitarian Action



Download  
[The Gender Handbook](#)



Download  
[Comprehensive Gender Analysis \(CGA\)](#)



Download  
[Guidance Note on RGA](#)

# Gulbahar promotes women's rights at age 70

**A woman aged 70, Gulbahar is curious to learn more about women's leadership. Her routine now includes attending all awareness sessions by BNPS. She visits the MPWC on her own.**

Gulbahar, a woman aged 70, lives in Jheelonja union in Cox's Bazar.

As part of her routine, she has been attending all the awareness sessions on women's leadership, learning, and livelihoods organized by Bangladesh Nari Pragati Shongho (BNPS).

BNPS works with women and girls in host communities to make them aware of available services, information, and support. With support from UN Women, the program aims to increase women and girls' access to resources and opportunities by fostering transformative leadership practices in a safe and enabling environment.

"These sessions are meant to give me something new. You might wonder, at my age, why I need to learn. For one thing, I am curious to know my rights better and also to pass knowledge on to my grandchildren," Gulbahar explained with a smile.

Gulbahar is unfamiliar with the word "empowerment," but she holds the spirit. She lost three of her children at a young age. Later, she adopted three orphan adolescents and raised them as her own, never losing her maternal instinct.

In 2020, one of Gulbahar's granddaughters took her to the orientation at the Multi-purpose Women's Center (MPWC).



Gulbahar | Photo: BNPS

After attending one session, she became passionate about continuing. She now comes on her own.

"We aim to provide a safe space for women and girls to socialize, receive information and support on women's rights and health, and develop relevant skills," said Shahida Parvin from BNPS.

Shahida added that women can also use referral services to access safe and non-stigmatizing multi-sectorial GBV response services through them.

"This knowledge was not available to women in my community. Now I have this wonderful opportunity. Even though I am not physically strong, I can still share what I have learned with my community's women," said Gulbahar.

## Camp | Positive Masculinity

# The voice of a camp majhi

In our Rohingya culture, women are expected to stay at home. No studying or working outside. This tradition dates back generations.

But being a refugee has changed our lives since 2017. Having participated in humanitarian activities and seeing things from a new perspective, I am now aware of discrimination against women and girls.

I think women and girls need education, even if they do not work outside. Imagine a typical Rohingya family: men work, women raise children. A mother who is educated will enlighten her children.

Also, a family can benefit from exercising equal rights. It's time to think about how all members can contribute to the family's welfare. We must start at home.

I can see female leaders emerging from our own families, speaking out for women's rights and reaching out to sisters and mothers. Despite these positive changes, security threats remain a concern.

*An excerpt from an interview conducted by a women-led organization. For security reasons, Majhi and the organization are not named.*

## Lucky on leadership

**Lucky is a 19-year-old Rohingya refugee and survivor of armed conflict. As a community youth leader, she promotes girls' education in camps. She shared her thoughts on feminist leadership and education.**

For me, a leader is not someone who seeks power, but someone who cares for others and fights for their rights.

Feminist leaders should be more confident and resilient to stand up for women and girls so that they can stand their ground when challenged.

Now, I assist the dropout adolescent girls around my household in continuing their education, their life skills. Whenever I have a chance to speak on a platform, I always speak

out for the rights of women and girls.

I think educating Rohingya girls will pave the way for more feminist leaders to emerge since education is the most powerful tool to solve and resolve problems. That's why I encourage my community's girls to pursue this path.

The fact that Rohingya women face discrimination every day compels me to strive for a position to make a difference.

Lucky | Photo: UN Women/Mahmudul Karim



**Education is the most powerful tool to solve and resolve problems. That's why I encourage girls in my community to pursue this path.**

Host | Change-maker

## Asma said NO to early marriage for her daughters

Asma, 35, lives with her husband and two daughters in Cox's Bazar.

The eldest daughter, Sharifa, is 17 years old; Sultana is two years younger. Because of COVID-19, their education was disrupted, and Asma and

her husband decided to marry off their daughters. They even hired a matchmaker to find suitable grooms.

While this was going on, at the same union, Jago Nari Unnayon Sangsta (JNUS), with the support of UN Women, was conducting awareness-raising events on the harmful aspects of child marriage, the dowry system, and gender-based violence.

Asma was encouraged to participate in such an event as a participant by local community members.

The discussion had a great impact on her, and she began to see child marriage from a new perspective.

Asma returned home and discussed with her spouse. Although some wealthy singles abroad expressed interest in marrying her daughters, she managed to convince her spouse to not marry off their daughters too early.

Asma is more concerned about her daughters' healthy lives than their early marriage. She and her husband declined the marriage proposals and decided to wait until their daughters turned 18. Asma asked, "What do I do with the perfect suitor when my daughter is not well?"

Both daughters can now pursue their studies.

*All names are pseudonym due to persons confidentiality.*



International Women's Day 2022 event in Cox's Bazar | Photo: UN Women

8 March 2022

## International Women's Day

This year, the members of GiHAWG celebrated a five-day campaign in Cox's Bazar consisting of 110 events from 6-10 March. The theme for 2022 was "Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow."

### 6 March

The joint workshop and photo exhibition on "Women and Girls Contribution to Climate Action" co-led by the Energy and Environment Working Group and GiHAWG was a great success. Farida Akhter from UBINIG gave the opening remarks, and Razia Sultana from RWWS gave the closing remarks.

### 8 March

UN Women in collaboration with RRRC, GiHAWG, UNHCR and MOWCA, hosted a high-level dialogue session on 8 March.

### 10 March

The GiHAWG, in collaboration with FAO, FSS and WFP, organized a workshop on women and girls' contributions to sustainable livelihoods, which was followed by a fair of food and non-food items.

26 June 2022

## GiHA Meetup 2022

To celebrate the fifth year of unity, GiHAWG member organizations shared their hopes at the "Learning Cafe: Gender and Leadership through GiHA in Five Years" on 26 June 2022.

Over seventy representatives attended the annual meetup. Rokeya Kabir, a national gender advocate, moderated the learning session.

The mid-year review of the group's annual work plan emphasized collective achievement. Support for the JRP 2023 was also discussed by sector coordinators and gender staff.



GiHA Meetup 2022 in Cox's Bazar. Photo: GiHAWG

9 December 2021

# 16 Days of Activism

Joint Closing Event

Seventy guests, leaders, and humanitarian workers shared their pledges against GBV on 9 December 2021, at the closing event of the 16 Days of Activism campaign in Cox's Bazar.

To mark the closing, GiHAWG through UN Women Gender Hub leadership organized a high-level dialogue.

The dialogue speakers at the event "Advancing human rights for women and girls: hopes for the next 365 days" stressed the importance of engaging men and boys.

**Watch**

[Teaser Video](#)

Closing event of the 16 Days of Activism 2021 in Cox's Bazar  
Photo: GiHAWG/Farzana Farid Lucy

16 June 2022

# World Environment Day

Women often are disproportionately impacted by climate change, despite being agents of climate action. Local women leaders raised this concern with government stakeholders during a dialogue to celebrate World Environment Day on 16 June 2022.

Gender and environment advocate Farah Kabir moderated the GiHAWG dialogue "Resilience and Leadership of Women in Climate Change Adaptation."

Participants also renewed their commitment to gender equality with a documentary and climate action stories.



World Environment Day 2022 event | Photo: GiHAWG

# SCI's women-led construction team making shelters

**Save the Children International (SCI) engaged a women-only construction team to build shelters in Cox's Bazar. Eleven Rohingya women from Camp 17 are being trained to make bamboo mats as well.**

Women are rarely assigned heavy construction work because it is assumed that they cannot handle such a "tough" job.

To address this gender inequality, Save the Children (SCI) in Cox's Bazar formed a women-led shelter construction group and engaged 11 Rohingya women to build shelters, with support from SCI-Humanitarian Fund and Japan Platform (JPF). The male leads initially discouraged their female

family members from joining. Later, many women expressed interest in taking part in the initiative to improve their living conditions.

Besides providing training on how to build a complete shelter with bamboo mats, SCI also ensured their separate space in the warehouse.

Now, these women see a future in which they can be self-sufficient and run their households without relying solely on humanitarian aid.



Roshida Begum in Camp 6, Cox's Bazar | Photo: NGO Forum

## Roshida debunks menstrual myths in her community

NGO Forum for Public Health, with the support of UNICEF Bangladesh, engaged women as mobilizers to promote safe menstrual hygiene practices in camps in Cox's Bazar.

The initiative also identified Rohingya girls and women as potential leaders.

Roshida Begum, from camp 6, was noticed at one of the 86 refresher trainings. This Rohingya mother of four believes she can make a difference now that she has been trained.

"With my new knowledge of the menstrual myths, I am more confident about spreading messages about MHM safe practices. The Story of Nur Ana (a communication handbook) is another tool I use to engage," Roshida smiled.



Women-only construction team in Camp 17, Cox's Bazar | Photo: Save The Children

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