

Lessons Learned Exercise

ROHINGYA REFUGEE RESPONSE
BANGLADESH 2024



Acknowledgement

The Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector (LSDS) extends its sincere appreciation to all partner organizations and stakeholders who have actively contributed to the implementation of LSDS activities across both the Rohingya refugee camps and host communities throughout 2024. This Lesson Learned Exercise has been made possible through the close coordination and collaboration with the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) and the unwavering commitment of our partners on the ground.

We recognize and commend the efforts of implementing agencies who have continued to navigate operational challenges while striving to create pathways for self-reliance, skills development, and income generation for persons of concern and affected host communities. The insights captured in this document reflect not only the achievements and innovations from the field but also critical reflections that will guide future programming.

This exercise is particularly timely as LSDS continues its advocacy on advancing pragmatic and context-specific solutions—what we refer to as the “low-hanging fruits”—while also engaging with policy and coordination platforms in support of the recently developed *Non-Paper on Reinforcing Resilience in Cox’s Bazar*. These efforts remain central to fostering an enabling environment for sustainable livelihoods within humanitarian-development-peace nexus frameworks.

We are especially grateful to Mafia Rahman Tule for her instrumental role in leading the coordination and documentation process of this Lesson Learned Exercise. Her dedication and collaborative approach have been vital to its successful completion.

For further information or to engage with the Sector on its ongoing work, please contact Ashik Kabir, Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector Coordinator.

LSDS 5W Analysis Report

 **551,887**

Population in need

 **71,965**

Population targeted

 **19,933**

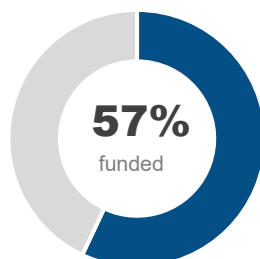
Refugees reached

 **13,313**

Host communities reached

 **\$35.5 MILLION**

Funding required for 2024



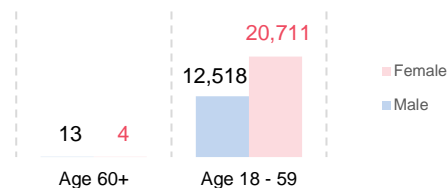
 **23**

Programme partners

 **31**

Implementing partners

 **Beneficiary reached**



 **166**

Male with disability

 **274**

Female with disability

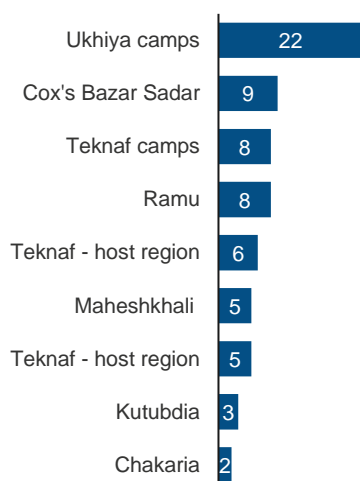
 **12,531**

Total male reached

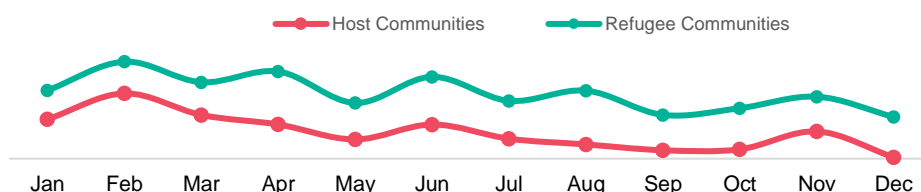
 **20,715**

Total female reached

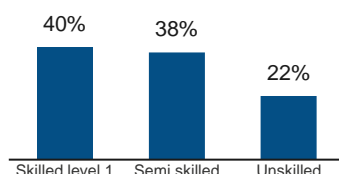
Locations



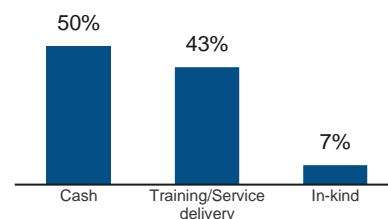
Monthly trend (beneficiaries reached)



Volunteer engagement



Delivery modality



Activity covered

 **2,160**

Number of beneficiaries reached on accelerated adult learning

 **6,347**

Number of beneficiaries reached on creating diversified livelihoods opportunities in the camps

 **9,014**

Number of beneficiaries reached on non-formal technical training

 **9,006**

Number of beneficiaries reached through supporting livelihoods of host community based on gained skills

 **1,361**

Number of beneficiaries reached on vocational skills development for Host/Local communities

 **5,358**

Number of beneficiaries reached through vocational training in line with formally recognized curriculum/ certification

Programme partner: AMAN

Implementing partner: AMAN

Highlights



390

Female reached



13

Persons with disability

Key achievements

- Provided **120 training sessions** in manual sewing, industrial sewing, handicrafts, and jute ware production to 120 Rohingya refugee women and adolescent girls, equipping them with practical, marketable skills to enhance their economic independence and self-reliance.
- Established **2 training centers** (Rohingya Camp 16 and Camp 10) to expand the reach of livelihood opportunities for displaced communities, with a dedicated production center at Camp 16 for creating sustainable income generation.
- Created **30 income-generating volunteer positions** within the production center, offering participants practical experience and the opportunity to sell their handmade products, directly contributing to financial independence and reducing vulnerability to exploitation.



Activity details

Activity Groups and Gender Segregation:

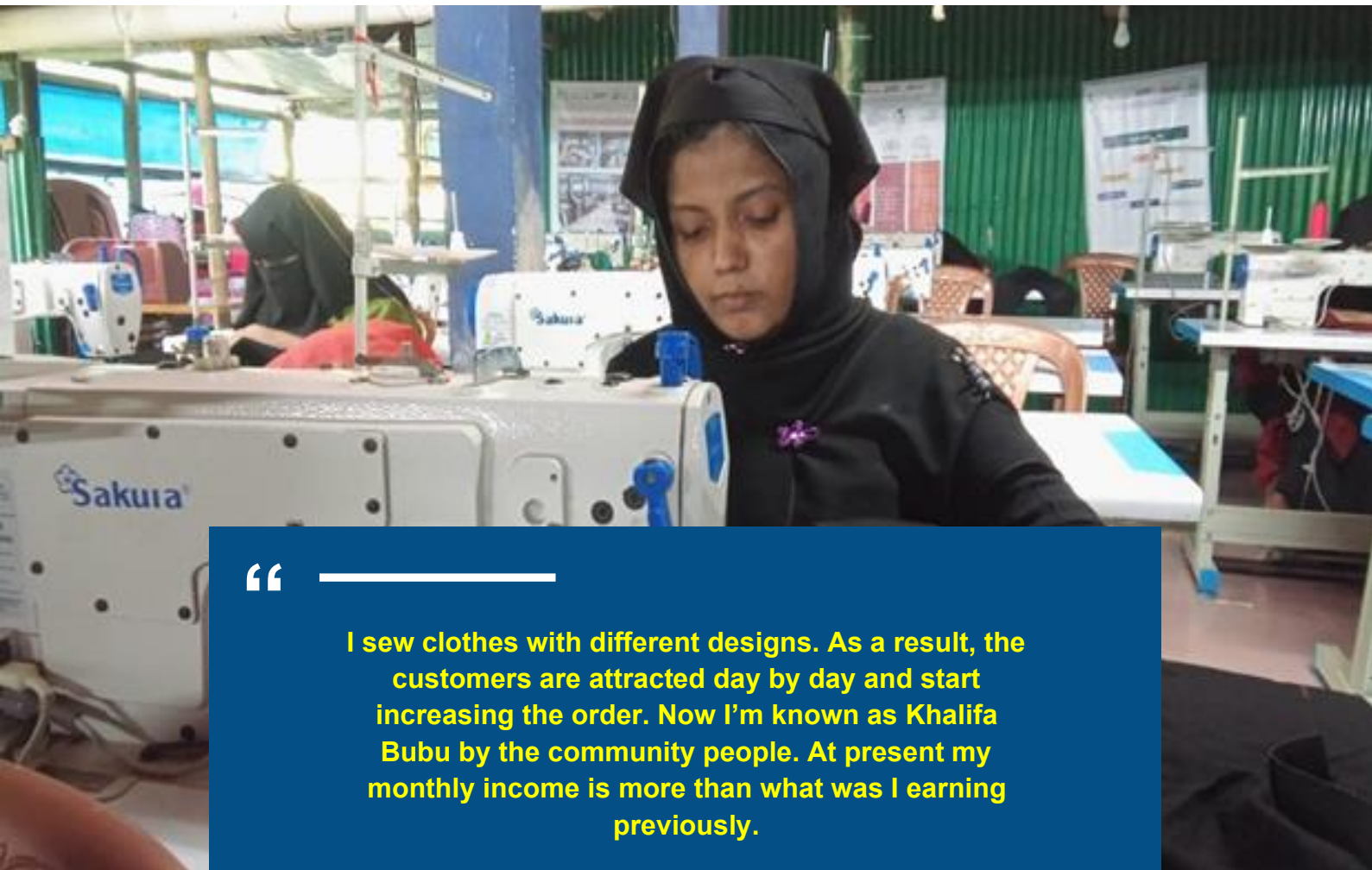
- Skill Training: Manual/Industrial Sewing, Jute Ware, Block & Boutique, Handicraft Operation, Capacity Building. All beneficiaries are women and adolescent girls.
- Income Generation (Production Center): Handicraft production and related tasks. Targeted participants were selected who have graduated from the training provided by AMAN and their items are sold through market linkage.
- Supportive Services: Health check-ups, mental health counseling, awareness campaigns on GBV, Protection, Nutrition etc. Primarily women and adolescent girls, but likely also indirectly benefits other family members.
- Communication Skills Training: Rohingya language, math, basic accounting, speech, negotiation. All beneficiaries are women and adolescent girls.

Conversion Rate from Skills to Income Generation:

- Total Beneficiaries Reached (NFTT and VT): AMAN reached 360 trainees (NFTT - Non-Formal Technical Training) and 30 production volunteers. Therefore, the total number of direct beneficiaries reached is 390 women and adolescent girls.
- Conversion Rate: 30 out of the 360 trainees (8%) transitioned to income generation through the production center. This is a direct conversion rate. It's likely that a larger percentage of the remaining 330 trainees are generating some income through selling their products independently through our seed support.

Covered Areas:

- Camps: The program explicitly operates in Rohingya Refugee Camps 10 & Camp-15 (training center) and Camp 16 (production center) in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar.
- Host & Local Community: The program indirectly support to the host and local communities as market linkages are established "locally and beyond," so the program's impact, particularly through product sales, may extend to the host community. However, the direct training and employment activities are confined to the refugee camps.



“

I sew clothes with different designs. As a result, the customers are attracted day by day and start increasing the order. Now I'm known as Khalifa Bubu by the community people. At present my monthly income is more than what was I earning previously.

”

A Journey of Empowerment
Photo© AMAN

Rokeya Begum – A Journey of Empowerment (Rohingya Community)

Rokeya Begum, a 35-year-old Rohingya woman residing in Camp-15, has faced tremendous challenges in her efforts to support her family of five. Like many others displaced by conflict, Rokeya struggled with limited livelihood opportunities and the constant pressure of meeting her family's basic needs. Despite these hardships, she remained determined to create a better future for herself and her children. Her journey toward self-reliance began when she enrolled in the BRAC Pooled Fund Training Center, implemented by AMAN. There, she received hands-on training in sewing, block printing, and jute bag making—valuable skills aligned with market demands. Throughout the training, Rokeya demonstrated great dedication and creativity, quickly mastering the techniques and exploring innovative designs.

Upon completing the training, Rokeya secured a short-term opportunity with an NGO to produce eco-friendly jute bags. During this three-month engagement, she applied her newly acquired skills and earned enough income to purchase her own sewing machine—an important milestone toward independence. With her machine at home and growing confidence, Rokeya began producing bags and textile items based on her own unique designs. Her work started attracting attention, and small orders began flowing in from within the camp and nearby host communities. As her reputation grew, so did her customer base.

Today, Rokeya is earning a stable income and contributing meaningfully to her household expenses. More importantly, she has found a renewed sense of purpose and hope. Her transformation from an unemployed homemaker to a skilled artisan and income earner exemplifies the impact of targeted skills development and livelihood support. Rokeya's story is a testament to the power of resilience, opportunity, and community-based support. Through the collaborative efforts of AMAN and BRAC under the Pooled Fund initiative, she was equipped not just with vocational skills, but with the confidence and tools to shape her own future.

Programme partner: BRAC

Implementing partner: Shushilan, AMAN

Highlights



2,901

Female reached



2,038

Male reached



77

Persons with disability

Key achievements

- **4099** participants from Rohingya community received on-farm training & input support on homestead gardening, poultry rearing & pigeon rearing.
- **840** participants received off-farm training and input from different trade such as: mason work, bamboo construction work, fishing net, tailoring, carpenter, barber shop, Nakshikatha, Shitolpati, jute/bamboo and cane products.
- **4939** participants received awareness raising training on GBV, PSEA, Safeguarding and Disability Inclusion, Family Planning, Leadership.
- **3583** participants were engaged in community engagement activities such as: cash for work, community consultation meeting, self-help group meeting.



Activity details

Program Reach:

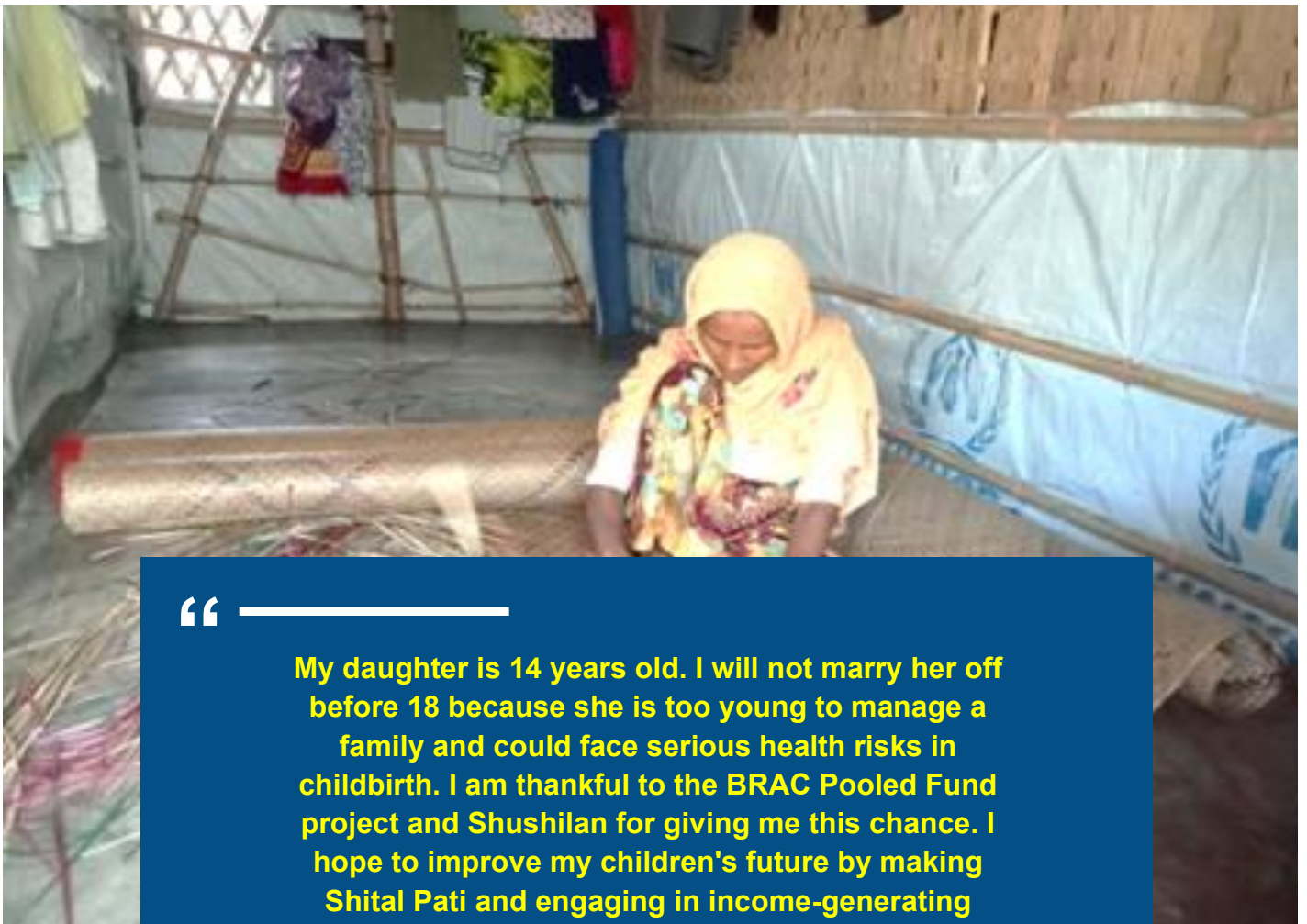
- On-Farm Training & Input Distribution: A total of 3,889 participants were engaged, gaining practical agricultural skills and essential resources to support farming activities.
- Off-Farm Training & Input Distribution: 1,050 participants received vocational training and inputs for non-farm activities, enhancing their ability to pursue diverse income-generating opportunities.

Gender and inclusion:

- Women's Participation: 2,901 women (59%) actively took part in the training programs, highlighting the project's strong focus on women's empowerment and their role in economic development.
- Men's Participation: 2,038 men (41%) were also engaged, contributing to a balanced and inclusive approach to skill development.
- Persons with Disabilities: The project ensured inclusivity by reaching 77 participants with disabilities, including 61 women and 16 men, providing them with equal opportunities to acquire skills and enhance their livelihoods.
- Geographic Coverage: The project was implemented across eight refugee camps, ensuring a wide reach and impact: 1E, 2E, 4, 4EXT, 5, 8E, 15, 17

Impact and outcomes:

- Income Generation: With the provision of inputs and training, participants were better equipped to start their own ventures, contributing to household income and self-reliance.
- Women's Empowerment: The high rate of women's participation demonstrated the project's success in promoting gender inclusion and empowering women economically.



“

My daughter is 14 years old. I will not marry her off before 18 because she is too young to manage a family and could face serious health risks in childbirth. I am thankful to the BRAC Pooled Fund project and Shushilan for giving me this chance. I hope to improve my children's future by making Shital Pati and engaging in income-generating activities

”

Hasina is making Shital Pati at her residence.
Photo© Md Mokter Hossain, Community Mobilizer,

Hasina's Journey Towards Economic Empowerment

Hasina, a 40-year-old refugee from Camp 4 Extension, has faced immense challenges as the sole provider for her two children after her husband, Mohammad Jaker, remarried and left to live with his second wife. With no independent source of income, Hasina struggled to meet essential expenses beyond the basic support provided by WFP, including her son's education, medical needs, and household essentials.

Determined to change her circumstances, Hasina attended a Community Consultation Meeting for beneficiary selection under the Sustainable and Inclusive Gender Equitable Livelihood Support Program. She was selected to participate in a 24-day Shital Pati Handicraft Training, where she mastered the art of traditional mat weaving. As an active member of the Rainbow Self-Help Group (SHG), she collaborated with fellow artisans to address marketing challenges and explore opportunities. She also gained crucial soft skills through training on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and child marriage awareness. With input support materials provided through the program, Hasina quickly turned her skills into income. She sold six Shital Pati mats for 6,200 BDT and completed five wage-based mats, earning an additional 2,300 BDT. Her earnings covered her son's education, medical expenses, and reinvested 500 BDT into materials for further production.

Hasina's resilience and newfound skills have not only secured her family's well-being but also empowered her to build a more stable and hopeful future.

Programme partner: DRC

Implementing partner: Eco Social Development Organization (ESDO)

Highlights



283

Female reached



92

Male reached

Key achievements

- **Jhoot Recycling Training for Women:**
225 women (75 from camps and 150 from host communities) completed a 24-day (120-hour) NFT training on garment jhoot recycling using a customized module. Trainings were held in Camps 8, 8W, 10, and in Rajapalong, Palongkhali, and Jaliapalong.
- **Gas Stove Repair Training for Men:**
50 Rohingya men (25 each from Camps 5 and 8W) completed 24-day (120-hour) training on gas stove repair and maintenance.
- **Diversified Livelihoods and Recycling Centers:**
150 beneficiaries (108 men, 42 women) engaged in recycling-based livelihoods. Established 7 jhoot recycling centers and 1 operational plastic recycling unit with shredding machine.



Activity details

- In 2024, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) supported livelihood and income generation activities for Rohingya refugees and host communities.
- A total of 375 beneficiaries (283 females and 92 males) were engaged through Activity Group 1 and Activity Group 2.
- 225 beneficiaries (175 females and 50 males) participated in Non-Formal Technical Training, gaining essential vocational skills.
- Out of those trained, 150 beneficiaries (108 males and 42 females) successfully engaged in income-generating activities, contributing to their household resilience.
- Activities were implemented in the following areas:
 - Refugee Camps: Camp 5, Camp 8E, Camp 8W, and Camp 10
 - Host Communities: Rajapalong, Palongkhali, and Jaliapalong Unions
- The initiative placed strong emphasis on women's participation, economic inclusion, and gender equity.
- These efforts aligned with the broader goals of the Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector (LSDS) to promote self-reliance and skill-building.
- DRC's approach contributed to sustainable livelihoods, economic empowerment, and increased resilience for both refugee and host community members.



“

I am very much grateful to DRC and ESDO for this training and shows me the path of earning income. I will continue the task in future

”

Doormat production center, Patabari, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar.
Photo©ChandanaTigga,ESDO

Empowering Women through Doormat Production from Garment Jhoot Waste

DRC, in partnership with Eco Social Development Organization (ESDO), is implementing a skills development initiative focused on recycling garment jhoot waste into domestic doormats. This livelihood activity, ongoing in Camps 5, 8E, 10 and host community unions Rajapalong, Palongkhali, and Jaliapalong, offers a viable income-generating opportunity for underprivileged women, especially those previously unemployed.

In Patabari village under Rajapalong Union, 25 women formed a Community-Based Organization (CBO) and received 24-day (120-hour) hands-on training on jhoot processing, doormat production, and basic business skills. Before the intervention, participants had no exposure to jhoot recycling or group-based income activities. Post-training, they now produce doormats using 100% indigenous materials and techniques with support from ESDO, which initially provided 375 kg of raw jhoot and 15 wooden/bamboo doormat-making machines.

Raw materials are sourced from Chattogram through established supply linkages. The CBO members produce and sell doormats, earning between BDT 89–120 per item based on design. Income is shared equally among members, and the CBO independently manages its operations, including a joint-signatory bank account.

Programme partner: IOM

Implementing partner: Prottiyashi, Shed, United Purpose

Highlights



3,193

Female reached



700

Male reached



35

Persons with disability

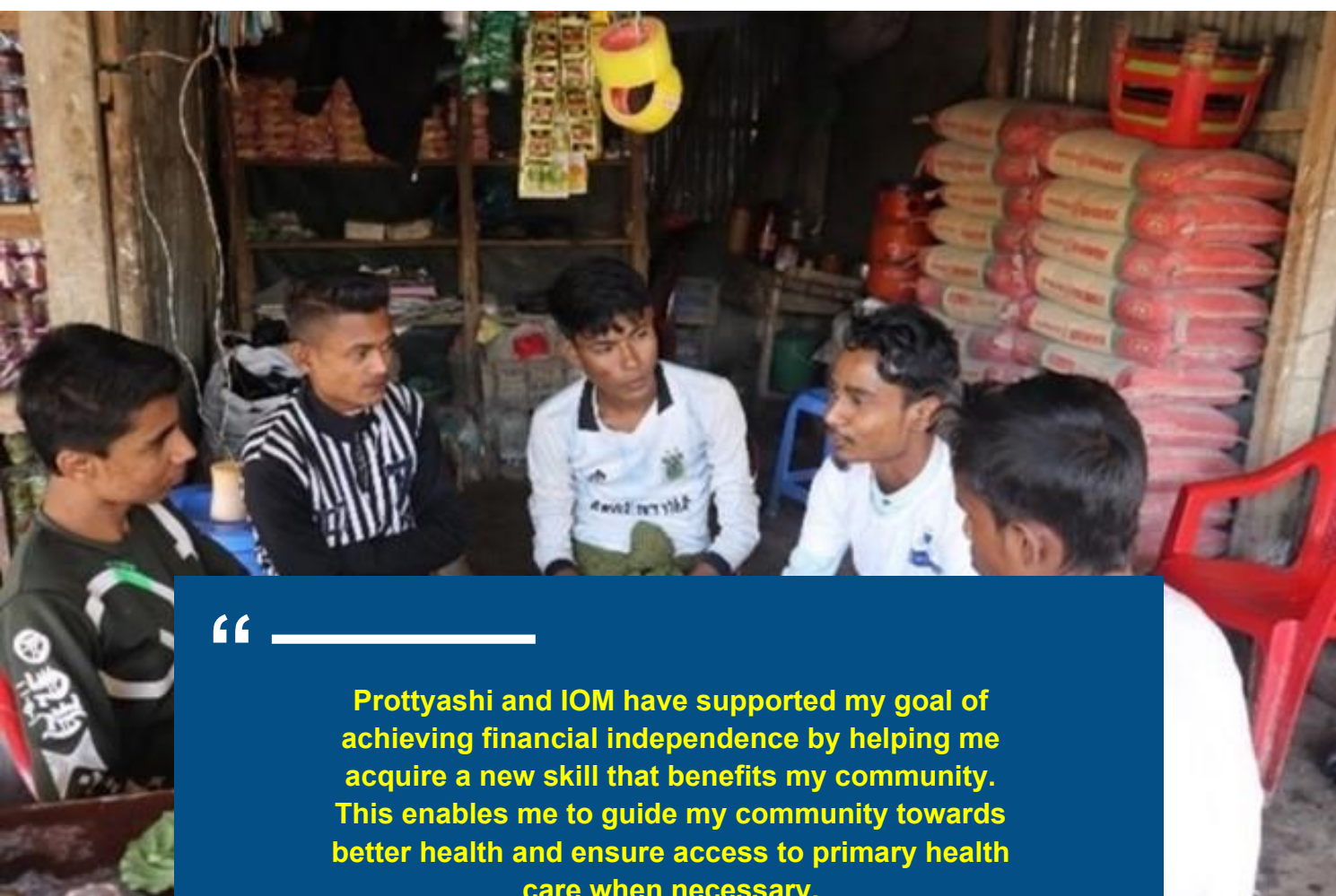
Key achievements

- IOM's livelihoods program made significant strides in supporting both Rohingya refugees and host community members in Cox's Bazar. A total of **741 Rohingya beneficiaries** received technical and vocational training, equipping them with valuable skills for income generation. In addition, **707 Rohingya** engaged in voluntary activities, while **396** others transitioned into self-employment, fostering economic independence and self-reliance.
- For the host community, **1,636 beneficiaries** received livelihoods cash support, enhancing their ability to meet basic needs. Furthermore, **857 host community members** and **454 Rohingya refugees** received livelihoods in-kind support.
- The program also facilitated market linkages by establishing **36 shops** across **18 unions** in Cox's Bazar, benefiting the host community.
- This multi-faceted approach has empowered both communities, fostering resilience and economic growth.



Activity details

- In 2024, IOM implemented a comprehensive livelihoods program focusing on vocational and non-formal technical skills training, self-employment, volunteer engagement, and market linkages. The program reached **1,103** Rohingya beneficiaries from Camp 11, 15, 20 ext, and 24, along with **3,500** host community members from seven sub-districts of Cox's Bazar.
- Through targeted skills development, these beneficiaries acquired market-relevant skills, enabling them to engage in income-generating activities. The training covered a range of sectors, from vocational skills to technical expertise, empowering individuals with the tools they need for self-employment and economic independence.
- In addition to the skills training, IOM facilitated market linkages, ensuring beneficiaries could connect with potential employers and buyers, thereby strengthening their business prospects. The program not only improved livelihoods but also fostered resilience within both Rohingya refugee and host communities, promoting long-term self-sufficiency and economic growth in the region.



“

Prottiyashi and IOM have supported my goal of achieving financial independence by helping me acquire a new skill that benefits my community. This enables me to guide my community towards better health and ensure access to primary health care when necessary.

”

Icha is disseminating health related information to the communities. Photo© Prottiyashi

From Despair to Hope: Icha's Journey as a Community Health Worker

Icha, a young Rohingya refugee, transformed his life from a Class 9 dropout to a skilled community health worker through resilience and opportunity. After joining a 72-day vocational training by Prottiyashi, he mastered skills in first aid, vital signs monitoring, and health education. Excelling in the final assessment, Icha now conducts health awareness sessions, supports vaccination drives, and assists in managing communicable diseases in his camp. His journey not only showcases the impact of skill development but also inspires other young men to follow a similar path toward hope and self-reliance.

Ruma's Rise Through enterprising skills (Host Community)

Ruma Akter from Kutubdia boosted her family's income by starting a goat and poultry business. With support from the “Hilsa Self-Help Group,” she invested 19,000 BDT and received training in business and animal rearing. Now owning four goats and selling eggs through DMS shops, she has earned 7,500 BDT, improved her family's food security and covered medical expenses. Ruma plans to expand her business, inspiring other women in her community

“

Thanks to IOM and United purpose to help the poor people of this remote island by supporting us through livelihoods activities.

”



Programme partner: NRC

Implementing partner: NRC and Uttaran

Highlights



245

Female reached



213

Male reached



7

Persons with disability

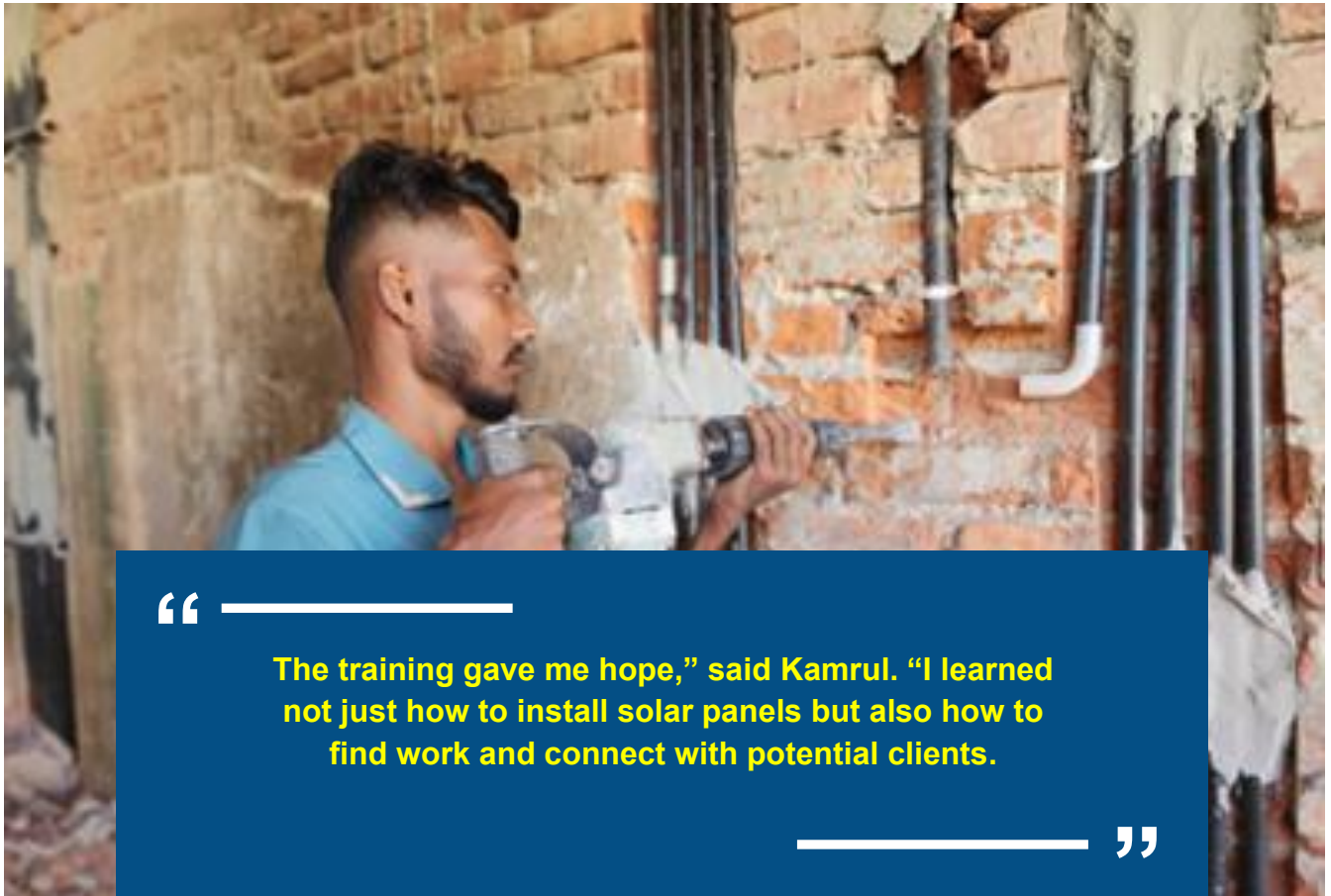
Key achievements

- A significant progress was made in advancing youth livelihoods through non-formal technical skills training for both Rohingya and host communities. A total of **458 youths (368 Rohingya, 90 host)** received hands-on training in Solar System Installation and Maintenance, Tailoring and Dressmaking, Plumbing and WASH Facilities Maintenance, Handicrafts, and Screen Printing. Upon successful completion of the courses, all trainees were provided with business start-up kits to support their transition into income-generating activities.
- To strengthen access to skills development, four dedicated vocational education centers and six community-based learning centers were established inside the refugee camps, alongside four rented centers in the host communities.
- Additionally, three exhibition fairs were organized to showcase the products made by youth graduates, facilitating market linkages and boosting visibility of their work. The initiative successfully engaged **205 refugee youths (132 female, 73 male)** in home-based small business opportunities, supporting self-reliance and household income generation.



Activity details

- In 2024, a comprehensive Non-Formal Technical Skills Training program was implemented to empower youth aged 18 to 24 from both Rohingya refugee and host communities in Cox's Bazar. The initiative aimed to enhance employability and promote self-reliance by providing practical, market-driven skills in key trades such as Solar System Installation and Maintenance, Tailoring and Dressmaking, Plumbing and WASH Facilities Maintenance, Handicrafts, and Screen Printing.
- A total of **458 youth—245 females and 213 males**—benefited from the training, gaining hands-on experience and knowledge necessary to pursue income-generating activities or start their own small businesses. The training was conducted across 11 refugee camps (Camp 1E, 2E, 2W, 3, 8E, 8W, 11, 12, 13, 24, and 25) and the Hnila union of Teknaf in the host community.
- By addressing youth unemployment and limited economic opportunities, the program contributed to fostering greater economic inclusion and social cohesion between refugee and host populations. Participants now possess skills that are relevant to local labor markets, boosting their confidence and enabling them to support their families. This initiative stands as a model for inclusive, skill-based development that empowers young people and strengthens community resilience in displacement-affected settings.



“

The training gave me hope,” said Kamrul. “I learned not just how to install solar panels but also how to find work and connect with potential clients.

”

Kamrul at work
@NRC/Faisal Naeem

Kamrul’s Journey: Building a Brighter Future through Skills Development (Host Community)

Kamrul Islam, 22, from Hnila near Cox’s Bazar, left high school in 2019 to support his nine siblings after his father became unable to work. Struggling with poverty, he had to abandon his education to focus on survival. His life changed when he joined a solar panel installation course under NRC’s FCDO-funded skills training programme, implemented by Uttaran.

The three-month training equipped Kamrul with technical skills, client communication, and job sourcing. He also received a 32-item toolbox to kick-start his career. Today, Kamrul is employed in a school construction project and drives an auto-rickshaw part-time to support his family. His earnings now fund his siblings’ education, and he dreams of owning an electronics shop.

NRC continues to support graduates like Kamrul through active social media job networks, keeping them connected and motivated. Kamrul now hopes to pursue advanced training, including computer skills, to further expand his opportunities.

Programme partner: UN Women

Implementing partner: AAB, BRAC, Oxfam, JNUS, SKUS, and RWWS

Highlights



1,213

Female reached



5

Persons with disability

Key achievements

- **1,213** women and gender diverse persons (836 Rohingya women and **32** gender diverse persons, and **345** host community women) including one woman with disability enhanced their income generation skills through completing livelihoods skills development trainings (sewing, embroidery, jute/handicraft, nakshi kantha (local embroidery), homestead gardening, beauty parlor, dry fish processing and motor driving through seven MPWCs in camp 3, 4, 4ext, 5, 18 and host community in Haldiapalong of Ukhiya and Whykong in Teknaf).
- **1,483 trained women (1,173 Rohingya and 310 host community; 270 of the underwent training in 2023)**, initiated income-generating activities that yielded an average monthly income of BDT 2,500. To support them with their business ventures, the women received start-up materials from UN Women and its partners (AAB, BRAC, JNUS, Oxfam and RWWS).
- A total of **100 Rohingya women and 76 host community women** including four women with disabilities, completed foundational literacy and numeracy courses, enhancing their resilience and earning capacity.
- **22 shopkeepers (20 Rohingya women, including one transgender woman, and two host community women)** demonstrated enhanced income generation skills through their business ventures at the Women's Market, earning an average annual income of BDT 104,388 (USD 877) in 2024.



Activity details

- In 2024, UN Women and its partners worked extensively to strengthen the economic resilience of women and gender-diverse individuals from both Rohingya and host communities. Through a network of Multi-Purpose Women's Centres (MPWCs) across refugee camps and host areas, a wide range of skills development trainings were offered. These included sewing, embroidery, jute and handicraft making, nakshi kantha (a traditional form of embroidery), homestead gardening, beauty parlor services, dry fish processing, and even motor driving—broadening the scope of opportunities for women to engage in income-generating activities.
- Participants were supported with essential start-up materials upon completing their training, enabling them to launch small businesses from their homes or in community markets. Many of these women are now actively contributing to their households through regular earnings, improving their families' well-being and food security.
- In addition to technical skills, foundational literacy and numeracy sessions were provided, helping women improve their confidence and navigate their business activities more effectively. Some of these trained women also began operating small shops within designated women-friendly markets, showcasing their products and services.
- These combined efforts are fostering a stronger sense of self-reliance and inspiring more women to pursue economic independence despite the challenging circumstances.



“

I want to continue growing my business and maintain the highest standards of quality and hygiene.

”

Ms. Julaikha, a canteen owner at Women's Market-5, selling her food to customers. Photo© ActionAid

A Story of Rohingya Women's Resilience and Empowerment (Rohingya Community)

Julaikha Banu (pseudonym) arrived in Cox's Bazar in 2017, fleeing the horrors of armed violence in Rakhine State, Myanmar. Alone with her children and no source of stable income, she struggled to meet even the most basic needs. “My husband is no longer with us. I am the sole provider for my family,” she shared.

Despite the hardships, Julaikha never gave up. She began volunteering with UN Women's partner, BRAC, which introduced her to entrepreneurship training and set her on a path to self-reliance. With support from UN Women, BRAC, and ActionAid, she received training in business management and food service. Starting with a modest kitchen in one corner of the Women's Market in Camp 5, she established a canteen that quickly gained popularity.

Her business now covers daily expenses, funds her children's education, and supports her elderly mother's medical needs. She continuously improves her services, listens to customer feedback, and ensures quality and hygiene. “I learned how to manage the kitchen, improve my menu, and understand customer demands,” she says. Julaikha's transformation from a struggling mother to a successful entrepreneur has inspired other women in the camp. She actively encourages them to pursue their goals. “Believe in yourself and take that first step—even if it feels scary,” she advises. The Women's Market, supported by Sida and the Embassy of Japan through UN Women, continues to offer a safe, inclusive space for women to thrive—empowering individuals like Julaikha to build a better future with dignity and determination.

Programme partner: Oxfam in Bangladesh

Implementing partner: Mukti Cox's Bazar

Highlights



578

Female reached



39

Male reached



8

Persons with disability

Key achievements

- Organized skills development training on handicrafts, block-boutique, tailoring, and other vocational skills for **260 Rohingya female** and male participants, enabling them to generate income and improve their livelihoods.
- Conducted skills development training on various trades including handicrafts, block-boutique, tailoring, beautification, motor driving, electronics, carpentry, barbering, and solar light mechanics for **205 host community male and female participants**, fostering economic resilience.
- Implemented vocational training programs following LSDS guidelines on handicrafts, block-boutique, tailoring, motor driving, and beautification for **152 women from the host community**, enhancing their skills and employability.
- Empowered trained participants to efficiently manage and grow their businesses, applying their acquired skills, which has led to improved income levels and reduced financial hardships.



Activity details

- In 2024, UN Women and its partners worked extensively to strengthen the economic resilience of women and gender-diverse individuals from both Rohingya and host communities. Through a network of Multi-Purpose Women's Centres (MPWCs) across refugee camps and host areas, a wide range of skills development trainings were offered. These included sewing, embroidery, jute and handicraft making, nakshi kantha (a traditional form of embroidery), homestead gardening, beauty parlor services, dry fish processing, and even motor driving—broadening the scope of opportunities for women to engage in income-generating activities.
- Participants were supported with essential start-up materials upon completing their training, enabling them to launch small businesses from their homes or in community markets. Many of these women are now actively contributing to their households through regular earnings, improving their families' well-being and food security.
- In addition to technical skills, foundational literacy and numeracy sessions were provided, helping women improve their confidence and navigate their business activities more effectively. Some of these trained women also began operating small shops within designated women-friendly markets, showcasing their products and services.
- These combined efforts are fostering a stronger sense of self-reliance and inspiring more women to pursue economic independence despite the challenging circumstances.



“

I want to continue growing my business and maintain the highest standards of quality and hygiene

”

Ms. Julaikha, a canteen owner at Women's Market-5, selling her food to customers. Photo© ActionAid

Empowering Rohingya Women and Promoting Education through Tailoring Skills

Oxfam's project, Addressing Sustainable Livelihoods, Social Cohesion, and Gender Inequality through Integrated Community-led Action successfully empowered the Rohingya refugee community in Camp 4 and the adjacent area of Whykong union by enhancing livelihoods and fostering social cohesion.

As part of this initiative, 50 participants were selected to undergo 15 days of Tailoring and Handicraft Production Training, designed to equip them with practical skills. The training was facilitated in collaboration with the Camp-in-Charge (CiC) office, site management, and block leaders, ensuring community involvement and relevance.

One of the standout achievements of this project was the collaboration between Oxfam and the community to produce school dresses for local students. Following discussions with the CiC, Oxfam embraced the proposal to have skilled Rohingya women, trained in tailoring, produce school uniforms. Led by Toyaba, a trained participant, the group took measurements for 32 students, and Oxfam's logistics team procured the necessary materials to complete the dresses.

The students, who previously attended school in traditional attire, were delighted to receive their new uniforms. This initiative not only improved school attendance and student engagement but also fostered a sense of pride and dignity. It provided the students with the confidence to attend school regularly, ensuring a more conducive learning environment.

This project exemplifies the transformative impact of skill-building on community resilience and the positive ripple effects on education and social cohesion within refugee populations.

Programme partner: Save the Children in Bangladesh

Implementing partner: YPSA & UCEP Bangladesh

Highlights



862

Female reached



772

Male reached

Key achievements

- Delivered Non-Formal Technical Training on Handicrafts and Bamboo Craft to **710 Rohingya refugees**, enhancing their skills for sustainable income generation.
- Provided Vocational Training on Tailoring & Dressmaking (TDM) and Electrical Installation & Maintenance (EIM) to **924 adolescents and youth from host communities**, equipping them with market-relevant technical skills.
- Established **10** skills development centers in refugee camps and **4** training facilities in host communities to expand access to quality technical and vocational education.



Activity details

- To promote self-reliance and strengthen economic resilience among both Rohingya refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar, a comprehensive skills development initiative was implemented through Non-Formal Technical Training (NFTT) and Vocational Training (VT). A total of **710 Rohingya refugees** benefitted from NFTT, including **310 women** trained in handicraft production and 400 men in bamboo craft. These traditional and culturally relevant skills have enabled participants to begin generating income through home-based production and community-based enterprise models.
- Simultaneously, **924 adolescents and youth** from the host communities of Ukhiya and Teknaf were equipped with market-relevant vocational skills. Among them, **552 females** received training in Tailoring and Dress Making (TDM), while **372 males** were trained in Electrical Installation and Maintenance (EIM). These trainings focused on practical, hands-on learning and were aligned with local market demand to increase employability and entrepreneurship potential.
- The program extended beyond training, incorporating entrepreneurship development sessions, private sector engagement, and job placement support. Participants also received input support, including start-up kits and toolboxes, to facilitate their transition into income-generating activities.
- Additionally, nutrition-sensitive livelihoods interventions were introduced, including micronutrient-rich homestead vegetable gardening and the establishment of Village Model Farms (VMFs), contributing to household food security and diversified income sources.



“

**Skill development is not just about learning a trade;
it is about transforming lives. This training has
given me the ability to support my family and build
a better future.**

”

Apu Shil is now working as an electrician, supporting his family's
basic needs & generated self-esteem in his society
Photo© Razu Ahmed /UCEP Bangladesh

Story 2: From Uncertainty to Stability Through Electrical Skills (Host Community)

Apu Shil, a 20-year-old from a modest background in Cox's Bazar, has emerged as a symbol of resilience and determination. With his father, a barber by trade, unable to earn due to health issues, the responsibility of supporting a family of five fell on Apu's young shoulders. Rather than succumbing to the weight of hardship, Apu chose a path of empowerment through skills development.

He enrolled in a Vocational Training programme focused on Electrical Installation and Maintenance (EIM), a market-relevant trade offering strong livelihood prospects. Upon successful completion of the training, Apu quickly transitioned into the workforce as a professional electrician. His dedication, technical expertise, and work ethic led him to secure a stable job with a monthly income of BDT 15,000—marking a significant shift in his family's financial well-being. “Before the training, I was uncertain about my future and how I would support my family. But learning electrical skills changed everything. Now, I have a job, I can provide for my loved ones, and I feel proud to take care of them,” Apu shared with a smile.

Beyond technical skills, the training boosted Apu's self-confidence and sense of purpose. His earnings have improved household stability, allowed for better access to essentials, and restored dignity to his family's daily life. Apu's journey illustrates the transformative impact of vocational education and the importance of equipping youth with practical skills. His story stands as a testament to how the right opportunity, combined with determination, can truly change lives.

Programme partner: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNFPA)

Implementing partner: Mukti Cox's Bazar

Highlights



26

Female reached



24

Male reached



2

Persons with disability

Key achievements

- In 2024 UNFPA started piloting functional literacy in Rohingya camps through its implementing partner Mukti Cox's Bazar.
- Provided **81** training sessions to **50** Rohingya refugees.
- Established **8** center to enhance the capacity of host communities.



Activity details

- **Enrolled Accelerated Adult Learning package:** In 2024, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in collaboration with its implementing partner Mukti Cox's Bazar, initiated a pilot Functional Literacy Programme targeting both Rohingya refugees and the surrounding host community. This initiative aims to equip marginalized populations, particularly women and youth, with essential reading, writing, and numeracy skills to enhance their self-reliance and overall wellbeing.
- As part of this pilot phase, a total of **81** structured training sessions were conducted, directly benefiting **50** Rohingya refugee participants. These sessions were designed using context-sensitive learning materials, aligned with the needs and linguistic capacities of the participants.
- **Establishment of Training Centers:** To ensure broader outreach and sustained engagement, eight Skills Development training centres were established in strategically selected locations within the host community. These centers serve as dedicated learning spaces aimed at enhancing the foundational skills of vulnerable individuals, thereby strengthening social cohesion and contributing to long-term resilience.



“

The support from Mukti's Adolescent and Youth Center and Apa has helped me climb the ladder of success.

”

Josmin in youth center
Photo© UNFPA Bangladesh

Josmin Ara - A Journey of Resilience and Empowerment* (Rohingya Community)

Josmin Ara's story is one of empowerment, resilience, and success against the odds. With the unwavering support of her family and the dedicated staff at Mukti's Adolescent and Youth Center, she has embraced her identity and defied expectations by joining the Basic Literacy programme facilitated by Mukti Cox's Bazar. Josmin's journey not only inspires her immediate community but also serves as a beacon of hope for others facing similar challenges. Her words resonate with truth: "The support from Mukti's Adolescent and Youth Center and Apa has helped me climb the ladder of success." Through her courage, Josmin teaches us that limitations are often only in our minds, and with determination, anyone can write their own success story. "A lot can be expressed without saying anything." This phrase encapsulates the inspiring journey of Josmin Ara, a remarkable young girl living in a camp with her family. Though hearing impaired, Josmin's spirit resonates through her actions, embodying the essence of resilience and determination.

Early Life: A Princess in a Challenging World

Josmin is the youngest among seven siblings and holds a special place in her father's heart. When she was two years old, her parents discovered that she was deaf. This revelation deeply affected her mother, who struggled emotionally. However, her father remained steadfast, embracing Josmin with boundless love and support, often referring to her as his "princess." He communicated with her using sign language, demonstrating his commitment to ensure she felt valued and understood.

A Desire to Learn: Overcoming Barriers

From a young age, Josmin displayed an unwavering desire to learn and engage with the world around her. Her curiosity led her to explore various handicrafts, showcasing her creative spirit. In 2022, she took a significant step by joining the Girl Shine Session at Mukti's Adolescent and Youth Center. This program not only welcomed her with open arms but also celebrated her unique abilities.

During the sessions, Josmin flourished. She returned home filled with excitement and confidence, excitedly sharing with her parents how the program prioritized her wishes, uplifting her sense of self-worth. One of her proudest achievements was learning to operate a sewing machine and create sanitary pads, marking a vital step toward realizing her dreams.

Empowerment Through Education: A New Chapter Begins

With her newfound confidence, Josmin enrolled in the Basic Literacy Program, where her dedication shone brightly. She approached each lesson with great focus, making significant progress. One of her most notable accomplishments was her ability to write lessons on the board and teach the remaining twelve participants in the class. This experience not only reinforced her own learning but also empowered those around her. Josmin's journey is a testimony to the transformative power of education and support. She no longer sees her hearing impairment as a limitation; instead, her radiant smile reflects her self-assurance and determination.

The Impact of Support: A Mother's Pride

Josmin's mother celebrated her daughter's transformation, saying, "My daughter is now participating in various competitions, showcasing her talent, and winning awards. The neighbors are just as thrilled to see her success; I am overwhelmed by it." Josmin's achievements have reinforced a sense of pride and joy in her family, illustrating how strong support can foster remarkable growth.

"Even though she is hearing-impaired, her journey does not stop," her mother concluded, highlighting Josmin's tenacity and unwavering spirit.

Programme partner: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Implementing partner: BRAC, Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS),
and NGO Forum for Public Health

Highlights



4,266

Female reached



4,236

Male reached



132

Persons with disability

Key achievements

- A total of **1,649 AAL participants** successfully completed trade skills development training across Camps 3, 4Ext, 7, 8E, 14, and 26.
- **4,616 participants (45% female)** successfully completed the training in ten different trades, marking a key step towards certification and future income-generating opportunities.
- Following completion of the training, an impressive **70% (3,244)** of participants successfully transitioned into job placements or self-employment, highlighting the program's effectiveness in linking skills training with income-generating opportunities.
- In an effort to improve employability and communication, **237 skilled graduates (ages 18–24)** received English Language Training, tailored to complement their vocational training. Of them, **118 skilled graduates attended** the IELTS test in the camp.
- In 2024, hygiene kit production centres manufactured **3,366,095 reusable sanitary pads** and **886,111 pieces of female underwear** to meet the hygiene needs of the refugee camps. The Jute Bag Production Centre in Camp 5 recorded a total production of **539,276 units** of different bags, showcasing significant output across various product categories. These initiatives accommodate around **1,000 refugee women** as volunteer workers.



Activity details

- UNHCR continued to strengthen the resilience of Rohingya communities by expanding its self-reliance and skills development initiatives across all camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf. Over **8,500 participants** benefited from vocational skills training, Accelerated Adult Learning (AAL), English Language Training (ELT), Female Hygiene Materials, and craft productions. Among them, **4,266 were women (50%)** and **4,236 were men (50%)**, reflecting a strong gender balance and inclusive outreach.
- Recognising the importance of inclusive development, UNHCR ensured the accessibility and participation of **132 Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)** in its self-reliance programmes. Tailored support mechanisms and barrier-free training environments were introduced to accommodate their unique needs, promoting dignity, self-reliance, and social inclusion.
- The vocational and language training interventions were designed to align with market demands, equipping participants with skills in trades that are compatible as they remain in the camps or during repatriation. English Language Training (ELT) was provided to skilled refugee graduates from vocational programmes, equipping them with the necessary skills to sit for the IELTS exam and explore further education or employment opportunities.
- UNHCR has been actively contributing to the economic empowerment of refugees through various productive initiatives. These initiatives include the production of female hygiene kits, jute and cloth items, and operating a café inside the camp to utilise the skills of refugees. Over **1,000 refugees** are engaged in these productive interventions.



“

Skill development training like small engine mechanics has brought many changes in my life. For the first time, I feel that I have a skill that allows me to support myself, my family, and my community

”

Abul Osman attending practical session at SEM trade at Camp 4 Extension
Photo© CNRS/Manab Mitra Chakma

Resilience in the Face of Adversity: Abul Osman's Journey

Abul Osman, a 22-year-old Rohingya refugee, arrived in Bangladesh in 2017 after fleeing violence and persecution in Rakhine State, Myanmar. During his journey across the Naf River, Osman witnessed traumatic scenes, including the loss of lives, which left deep emotional scars. Despite the immense adversity he faced, Osman's resilience and determination to rebuild his life remain unwavering. Living in a refugee camp, Osman confronted significant barriers to formal education, which is largely unavailable in these settings. Undeterred, he took it upon himself to self-learn English and basic technical skills using limited resources within the camp. His drive for self-improvement led him to enroll in the Small Engine Mechanics (SEM) Level 1 training at the UNHCR-CNRS Skills Development Training Center.

Through this program, Osman developed practical skills in identifying, repairing, and troubleshooting small engines. His successful completion of the training and assessment not only enhanced his technical competence but also enabled him to begin contributing to his family's income. With job placement support from CNRS, he secured employment, marking a significant milestone on his path to self-reliance.

Currently, Osman is preparing for the IELTS exam, aiming to further improve his communication skills and explore broader opportunities. His journey exemplifies how access to education and vocational training, combined with personal determination, can transform lives. Osman's progress stands as an inspiration to his peers in the camp, reflecting the power of resilience, skill development, and community support in fostering hope and rebuilding lives amid displacement.

Lessons Learned Exercise

2024

ROHINGYA REFUGEE RESPONSE

BANGLADESH