



## Empowering Rohingya women through skills and knowledge – UN Women’s Multi-Purpose Women’s Centre



(Camp 18, Balukhali) 30 April 2018 Update

UN Women is focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalized women and girls, in particular female-headed households, elderly women and adolescent girls. Urgent and special measures are required to ensure their access to information, relief and services that will safeguard their health, safety and security; access to resources and opportunities that will mitigate their risks of being exploited and enhance their self-reliance; and participation in decision making.

UN Women’s programming builds on its previous experience in supporting refugees and host community women in Cox’s Bazar in partnership with UNHCR, and its global response model to humanitarian crisis around the world adapted to the current context. The programme also leverages UN Women’s partnership with the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (MoWCA). Furthermore, UN Women is building partnerships with the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC) and the Camp-in-Charge system to ground and localize further the gender responsive humanitarian efforts.

By end of march, 7893 dignity kits and 6388 rice husks were distributed to women and girls, and 1026 women and girls had received information and referral services for psychosocial support; learned about nutrition, health and sanitation, and other essential life-saving matters; and gained knowledge about intimate partner violence, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), child marriage and trafficking. Women have bathing space and clothes washing facility for proper hygiene maintenance. Above all, the centre is providing women who are otherwise confined and isolated in their homes, a space to relax and socialize with other women.



Refugee woman teaching tailoring to others at UN Women’s Multi-Purpose Women’s Centre  
Photo: Allison Joyce/UN Women

The first Multi-Purpose Women’s Centre (MPWC) was opened in Camp 18 of Balukhali temporary settlement in January 2018. The centre is offering services to an average of 70 women and adolescent girls each day.

90 women are learning tailoring with UN Women support, many of them using a sewing machine for the first time in their lives. Some women are already receiving orders from neighbours.

30 women are working as Community Outreach Members (COM) to reach out to women who are not aware of the services available at the centre. They are disseminating information especially to female headed households, and gathering women’s concerns and needs in order to raise those with the Camp in Charge (CiC); a COM representative

now attends the weekly meetings that the CiC of Camp 18 holds with *Madjis* (community leaders, all of whom are men).

Three women leaders from old UNHCR camps that UN Women had trained previously are volunteering at the MPWC and mentoring the newly arriving women on leadership skills.

During International Women’s Day celebration, a Charter of Demands was developed by women at the MPWC, and presented to the CiC for Camp 18. In the Charter, women and girls demanded their human rights (citizenship in Myanmar, protection, equality, religious freedom, access to justice); skills development and empowerment opportunities; improvement in the quality of shelters, WASH facilities, information on disaster preparedness; and installation of solar lighting in dark corners in the camps and educational opportunities for girls.

*“Today, I feel happy to come to the MPWC, I have forgotten my pain and can smile again. We want to live in peace”. Photo: Dilruba Haider/UN Women*



### Next Steps:

- Set up a 2<sup>nd</sup> Multi-Purpose Women’s Centre in Camp 4. The location has been agreed with the CiC and construction will be completed by Eid.
- Develop a set of awareness raising, life and leadership skills training modules in collaboration with WFP, BRAC and Action Aid, covering nutrition and health, functional literacy and numeracy, gender and rights

### Our stories

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/women-find-hope-amid-rohingya-refugee-camp-dangers>

<http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2018/01/i-want-to-help-other-women>

<http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2018/02/relief-that-counts-in-the-practical-needs-of-rohingya>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFUxYH\\_uw-w&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFUxYH_uw-w&feature=youtu.be)

awareness, disaster preparedness, and gender-based violence prevention. These modules are expected to be used across the women’s centres and women friendly spaces (WFSs) of UN Women, BRAC and Action Aid.

- Sign partnership agreement with two organizations on ‘cash for work’ opportunities for women who graduate the tailoring course
- Introduce skills training in new areas such as solar panel and mobile phone repairs.
- Mobilize resources to establish 5 more MPWCs, and support 9 existing/planned WFSs of Action Aid and BRAC to turn those into MPWCs, integrating services including vocational training.



Photo: Allison Joyce/UN Women

- Train CiCs on mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in camp management.
- Support a dialogue of host community Women Development Forums members and refugee women to address shared concerns across the refugee and host community such as prevention of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

### Inter-Sector Coordination and Gender Mainstreaming

The Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group that UN Women and UNHCR co-chair has produced the following.

- [Gender Profile of the Rohingya Refugee Crisis](#) that was fed into the needs analysis, sector strategy and monitoring indicator development for the Joint Response Plan (JRP)
- [GiHA Brief No. 1](#): Summary of Key Commitments on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action in Joint Response Plan March - December 2018
- [GiHA Brief No. 2](#): Gender Equality Check-list for Monsoon and Cyclone Season
- [GiHA Brief No. 3](#): International Women’s Day