



IN BRIEF

COX'S BAZAR UPDATE

APRIL–JUNE 2021



PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH UN WOMEN PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

*Apr-Jun 2021

UN Women Volunteers Reached



UN Women Partners Reached



*LGBTIQ-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning

Multi-Purpose Women's Centres (MPWCs)



8 Active MPWCs

Services Provided by MPWCs

Information on COVID-19, Health and Sanitation, nutrition, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Child marriage, Anti-trafficking, Literacy and Skills Training

Services Provided by UN Women Volunteers

Information on COVID-19, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Child Marriage and Care Work

Note: Due to COVID-19, operations scaled down to only critical activities.

Journalists in Cox's Bazar trained to write more sensitive stories about woman

Thirty Bangladeshi journalists have learned how to write about women in more gender-sensitive and empowering ways. The 22–24 June training encouraged “Gender-Responsive Journalism,” in which journalists writing stories about crimes against women, for example, might protect the woman’s privacy and focus on solutions instead of just presenting her as a “victim”.

The training’s main objectives were to increase women’s participation in local media, eliminate misrepresentation of women, increase the use of gender-sensitive words in reports on violence against women and give local journalists a fair idea about reliable sources of information. Trainers exchanged views with journalists on the need for a socially cohesive and gender-responsive journalism practice.

The last day was focused on changing attitudes towards women in society. The extent to which women can play a vital role in various walks of life was discussed. Journalists were urged to focus on women’s empowerment without defining women in the traditional way of thinking.



Photo: UN Women/Abdul Saboor Golap

“When journalists victimize a woman in the breaking news, not only the woman but also the whole nation is insulted,” said Deepak Sharma Dipu, one of the journalists in the training.

Said Ahsan Suman, who works for SA TV, “Our most important lesson to take back with us is how we, as journalists, can help to contribute to peace and equality within our communities.”

In her welcome address, Flora Macula, Head of the UN Women Cox's Bazar Sub-Office, said, "We are working to change the way we think, the way news is presented and the way women are portrayed in the media. The media can play a vital role in establishing gender equality in society." She called upon the media to work to highlight women's contributions to various fields of society.

In his special guest's speech, Abu Taher Chowdhury, President of Cox's Bazar Press Club, thanked UN Women for organizing the training. He hopes that this training programme will help journalists carry out their work in a more gender-sensitive way. He urged journalists to act in accordance with the National Media Act.



Photo: Ain o Salish Kendra

In his keynote address, the chief guest of the closing event, Mohammad Shamsud Douza, Additional Commissioner for Refugee Relief and Repatriation, stated, "Journalism is a sensitive profession; sensitivity should be considered in all reporting, with all aspects of the society. We will work together for the development of Cox's Bazar. We need to improve our communication skills so that we can communicate effectively in the international environment. I urge UN Women and all other UN agencies to conduct such training regularly so that the skills of local journalists are further enhanced."

Training on Women's Leadership in Cox's Bazar

Humanitarian workers increased their capacities through leadership trainings. Women's active participation in decision-making and leadership is critical for achieving an equal world. As a part of the Maitree project for building peace and social cohesion for the host and Rohingya community, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), with the support of UN Women, organized a 4-day training on women's leadership from 21 to 24 June in Cox's Bazar. The training was to strengthen and promote women's leadership, address the barriers to achieving this and promote women's participation in decision-making. Discussions centred around the difference between feminism and gender, identifying elements of self-care, the fair distribution of paid and unpaid care work, and the decision-making process within the family and outside of it.

Rimu's Blog: Child marriage is a curse for girls in Bangladesh

"Child marriage is a curse for young women, as they cannot develop their talents due to early marriage. Their dreams are broken down. They suffer from so many health issues as they are married at an earlier age than they should be. I have so many friends who took care of the whole family while they were still a child. I cannot cook yet, but they are cooking for their husband's families." Follow the link to read [Rimu's Blog](#)

Rimu is a 19-year-old peace activist and member of the Young Women Leadership (YWL) network in Cox's Bazar, a programme of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders. She made the BBC's list of 100 inspiring and influential women worldwide for 2020.



Photo: UN Women/ Mahmudul Karim



Humanitarian workers in Cox's Bazar are now focused on self-care when it is necessary in this new normal work modality during the pandemic. As a part of the process, GIHA WG (Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group, previously Gender Hub) held a Learning Circle for the feminist collective on self-care on 4 April. The Learning Circle series represents one of the participatory learning modalities identified by the members of the feminist collective and initiated by the GIHA WG to promote networking, capacity-building and peer support for staff working on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The topic was chosen to support staff in addressing the significantly elevated levels of stress from the latest lockdown restrictions, especially female national staff, who often face the double burden of professional work and unpaid care work. The session discussed symptoms of stress, the importance of self-care and walked participants through practical exercises on relaxation and meditation and ways to promote self-care.



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We lost everything to the fire, I had to depend on others to borrow their abaya (hijab) for going outside. After receiving the dignity kits, specifically abaya, me and my daughter can move freely to access toilet facilities, collect water and aid items from other blocks.

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Feroza
Rohingya Refugee

Photo: UN Women/ Mahmudul Karim

Fire Response to Women and Girls in Rohingya Camps

Feroza (35) and her daughter received dignity kits after the fire outbreak on 22 March in the Rohingya camps at Cox’s Bazar. Devastating fire broke out in three camps, leaving more than 10,000 households without shelter. The distribution of dignity kits as a part of disaster response actions is critical for restoring women and girls’ dignity and self-confidence and improving their safety. This is especially valid for a single woman like Feroza, who lost her husband during the violence in Myanmar, and is now living in Camp 9 along with her daughter and son. UN Women is working jointly with partner agencies, NGOs and the Government of Bangladesh to serve fire-affected people. UN Women asked the needs of women, pregnant women, lactating mothers, adolescent girls and boys, and disabled, widowed and older people in Camp 9. As a part of the response, UN Women distributed 1,439 dignity kits (abaya, sandals, sanitary napkin, toothbrush and toothpaste, mosquito net, and comb) through the end of June for the fire-affected Rohingya women and girls.

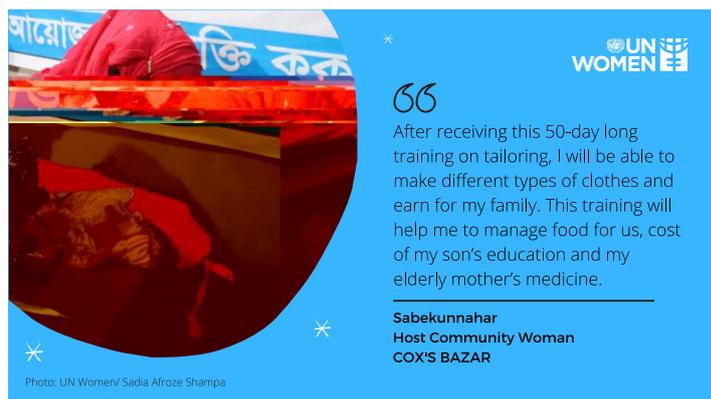
Rohingya Women in COVID-19 Awareness

“I feel like I have contributed to creating awareness on health and hygiene in the COVID-19 context and maintaining peace in the community. If I did not continue this work, there would be more violence and poorer hygiene practices in our community” – Rokeya Begum.



Photo: UN Women/ Khaled Arafat Ahmed

Rokeya Begum (45), a Rohingya woman, participates in the Assistance for Survival and Sustainable Capacity-Building project implemented by UN Women’s responsible partner Rohingya Women Welfare Society (RWWS). The project is generously funded by the Women’s Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF).



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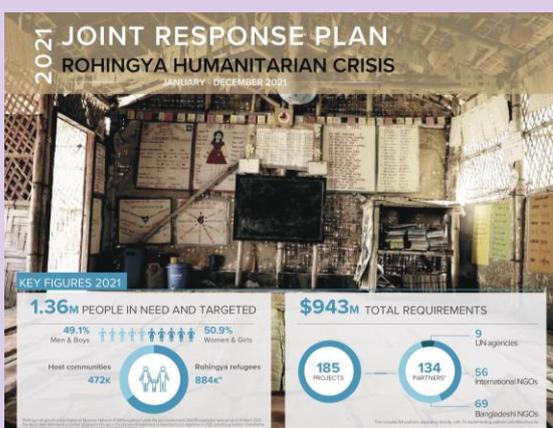
After receiving this 50-day long training on tailoring, I will be able to make different types of clothes and earn for my family. This training will help me to manage food for us, cost of my son’s education and my elderly mother’s medicine.

Sabekunnahar
Host Community Woman
COX’S BAZAR

Photo: UN Women/ Sadia Afroze Shampa

Empowering Women and Girls in Cox’s Bazar

Sabekunnahar (27) is earning well after receiving training on tailoring at the Multi-Purpose Women’s Centre at Teknaf. This initiative is taking place under the Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya Refugee and Host Community Women Through Leadership, Learning and Livelihoods project implemented jointly by Oxfam and Mukti Cox’s Bazar, as part of UN Women’s programme in Cox’s Bazar, funded by the Government of Sweden.



Joint Response Plan – JRP 2021 Launched

The Joint Response Plan (JRP) 2021 for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis was launched virtually in Geneva, Switzerland, on 18 May. The Joint Response Plan is the response framework for all the humanitarian actors present in Cox’s Bazar and is implemented in close cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh. The appeal focuses on strengthening the protection of Rohingya refugees, delivering quality lifesaving assistance to those in need, fostering the well-being of the affected Bangladesh communities and supporting Rohingya refugees in building their skills and capacities towards a sustainable return and reintegration in Myanmar, on a voluntary basis, in safety and with dignity. Please follow the link for [JRP 2021](#)

In the words of Afruza: "I feel proud to share my knowledge with refugee communities"

"During the pandemic, we've been visiting refugee communities and providing vital information about how to keep safe from COVID-19. We also provide information about the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence. In the Rohingya camps, gender-based violence is happening every day. We inform community members about the referral process for gender-based violence cases and we personally refer some cases to UN Women gender field officers." *Follow the link to read [Afruza's story](#)*

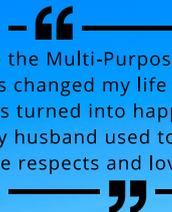


Photo: UN Women/Mahmudul Karim

Afruza Begum (32) is a Rohingya Community Outreach Volunteer; she is part of a UN Women programme that mobilizes and empowers refugee women to lead and participate in decision-making processes in refugee camps. Volunteers like Afruza provide critical information to refugees about preventing gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and where to seek help when women and girls experience violence.



Photo: BRAC



Coming to the Multi-Purpose Women's Centre has changed my life and all of my worries turned into happiness. Before, my husband used to beat me but now he respects and loves me.

Shajeda Begum
Rohingya Woman
Rohingya Camp, Cox's Bazar

Women Empowerment in Rohingya Camp

Shajeda Begum (41) is now a regular mask producer for the COVID-19 emergency response while maintaining a tailoring service for her neighbours. She earns on average BDT150 daily. With her earnings from the mask production, she could return 60,000 taka borrowed for her daughter's marriage. This was possible following the three-month training on tailoring at the Multi-Purpose Women's Centre at the Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar in 2019 and the sewing machine she received as grant. This initiative took place under the UN Women project Promoting Women and Girls' Empowerment through Enhancing Protection and Economic Resilience of Rohingya Women and Adolescent Girls, implemented by BRAC with the generous support of Global Affairs Canada.



Photo: DanChurchAid

Second Chance Education is transforming women's life in Cox's Bazar

"After coming to exile, I was heartbroken and barely thinking of resuming any economic activity for earning. I did not know how to read and write, which made me feel less confident. Enrolling in the Second Chance Education programme has changed my life. Now I am confident, earning from my grocery shop and providing for my family." – Rehana Aktar

Rehana Aktar (28) was physically abused by her in-laws for dowry and was forcefully sent back to her parent's house with two children. Then she attended the Second Chance Education programme and learned Basic Literacy and Numeracy skills. With the support of Shushilan and DanChurchAid (DCA), she established a grocery shop beside her home, and now she is earning well.

UN Women is implementing the Second Chance Education and Learning programme for women and girls with limited access to formal education. They learn foundational literacy and numeracy skills. This intervention reduces women and girls' vulnerability, improving their agency and increasing their chances of securing a positive future through economic opportunities towards self-reliance. This project was implemented by DCA with the generous support of the Government of Sweden.



27,027

Reusable cloth masks and Sanitary Napkins have been produced by UN Women with the support of ActionAid and BRAC during April-June 2021.



3,713

Dialogue and Orientation Session on Gender Responsive Journalism at Teknaf

On 15 June 2021, UN Women organized a dialogue and orientation session on gender-responsive journalism in Teknaf, attended by 25 local journalists from online media, newspapers, television and radio.

Participants discussed the importance of maintaining gender balance in the media sector and using gender-responsive language, especially when reporting on violence against women. In the orientation session, UN Women staff Nadira Islam discussed gender equality, and Mahmudul Karim discussed various aspects of gender-sensitive journalism and reporting.



Photo: UN Women/ Al Mahmud Votto

Teknaf Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Parvez Chowdhury was present as the chief guest. Parvez Chowdhury said, “Journalists work very closely with the government. They highlight the inconsistencies of the society, which plays a collaborative role in establishing good governance. Please extend your cooperation in favour of gender-responsive journalism.”

This project was generously funded by the Government of Japan.



Photo: UN Women/ Mahmudul Karim

Training on legal framework with basic concept of counter trafficking

Trainers have described the legal framework and basic concept of counter-trafficking. A total of 30 participants of UN Women staff and partners attended the training. Ain O Shalish Kendro organized a two-day training, on 7 and 9 June, on the legal framework and basic concept of trafficking with the technical support of the International Organization of Migration (IOM), in partnership with UN Women with the generous support of the Government of Japan.

UN Women has received invaluable support from the Governments of Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Sweden and the National Committees for UN Women in Australia, Iceland, Japan, Singapore, Sweden, USA, as well as the Tingari Silvertown Foundation towards delivering a humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, for Rohingya refugee and host community women and girls.



Photo: UN Women

UN Women Country Representative Shoko Ishikawa's send-off visit from Cox's Bazar

UN Women Country Representative Shoko Ishikawa visited Cox's Bazar on 15–17 June as part of her send-off visit before departing Bangladesh. During her visit, she met the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) at his office in Cox's Bazar. In the meeting, the outgoing UN Women Representative re-iterated the pervasiveness of sexual and gender-based violence and child marriage that has significantly increased during the pandemic. She attended the coordination meeting with representatives from RRRC office, Armed Police Battalion and other stakeholders. On the second day of the visit, she visited the activities of UN Women in the Rohingya refugee camps. She visited a Women and Children's Help Desk run by the Armed Police Battalion and spoke to the women police deployed in the camps. She also visited the Women's Market and a Multi-Purpose Women's Centre and spoke with the implementing partners and community outreach Rohingya volunteers. On the same day, she also visited UN Women's activities in the host communities. On the last day of her visit, she attended a meeting with implementing partners and woman leaders. In that meeting, the participants shared updates on their interventions and the challenges faced and proposed new areas of cooperation with UN Women. The Country Representative also attended a learning and sharing session with UN Women Cox's Bazar staff.