



WFP in Cox's Bazar: An Integrated Protection Approach

Why WFP needs to integrate a protection approach?

The World Food Programme as part of the emergency operation in Cox's Bazar has operationalized an integrated response whereby the most vulnerable population, approximately 900,000 people, are assisted with life-saving food and nutrition assistance that is critical to the population. Alongside, WFP continues to support the population in-need in the host community with tailored livelihoods assistance and nutrition and complementary supplementary food assistance.

Under these circumstances, WFP has adopted protective practices in every facet of its work stream across stages from needs assessment to programme design to delivery mechanisms and training for front-line staff. Through this approach, WFP aims to enhance access to food and nutrition, enhancing safety, rights of the beneficiaries without contributing to or perpetuating discrimination, abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation.

Key tenets: Protection beyond boundaries

WFP provides blanket food assistance to the entire refugee population which considerably reduces their vulnerability and susceptibility to adopting negative coping mechanisms. As revealed in the Rohingya Emergency Vulnerability Assessment II, a majority of the Rohingya population is susceptible to adopting one coping strategy affecting their livelihoods in the medium to long term. Some of the commonly adopted strategies include borrowing money, selling jewellery, child labour, beginning. This is commonly driven by the need to meet their immediate food or health care needs. Hence food assistance has direct impacts on the protection and safety of the refugees. In this regard, food assistance is critical to protection of the most vulnerable population.

“Protection approach entails implementing food assistance in a manner which enhances security, safety and dignity of the individuals receiving it.”

“There are some porters who help me carrying the food from the shop to my home. I am the only person in my family of two other minor children and they can't help me with carrying the food home. As much important it is to get the food, that much crucial it is to get it home safely. It is great for me to receive the porter service now.” Saira falls under the elderly beneficiary category and therefore eligible for the porter service.



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Enhancing community level participation to ensure integration of their perspectives in programming is a critical aspect of mitigating protection issues to ensure maximization of the positive impact of WFP's assistance.

In lieu with this, WFP engages with the community and opinion leaders to better engage and incorporate their perspectives in programming. Through the period of a year, WFP has held more than 30 meetings from which feedbacks have been incorporated into enhancing the operational programming.

Dialogue and engagement with communities and other stakeholders are necessary for better assessment of needs and concerns, and for enhancing local ownership and sustainability of assistance.

WFP engages with the targeted audience through the modalities of either focus group discussions or semi-structured interviews, with the aim to understand a) access to WFP assistance b) Complaints and communication pathway and raise their awareness of WFP's programme.

Protection approach to integrated food assistance

WFP in Cox's Bazar continues to provide food assistance to almost 95 percent of the refugee population. The way in which assistance is delivered can either support or undermine people's protection. In order to understand this, it is important to recognize that food assistance shapes the perceptions and attitude of a wide range of stakeholders, and therefore is critical to the protection measures undertaken within the humanitarian ambit.

To ensure susceptibility of these risks is minimized to the optimum possible, WFP has taken the following steps:

- Beneficiary complaint and feedback mechanisms which comprises of helpdesks and toll-free hotline number;
- Adopting an intersectional approach ensuring there is interaction between gender, protection and disability inclusion approaches;
- Referrals of cases with protection concerns are supported expeditiously as outlined in our standard operating procedure.

Porter system: A big relief



"When you have a physical ailment it shows, people are aware of it. But when you must deal with mental illness, it requires even more patience and strength. I tell my son to be brave, he has some neurological problem doctor said but I don't have a solution for him yet", Reheena Begum says.

As part of addressing protection issues of people of different age groups, WFP interviewed people aged above 60 – to ensure and facilitate the range of services they are additionally entitled to. Reheena is the third person being interviewed out of the list that was pulled out from the SCOPE database. A thatched-roof shelter housing three: she, her sons aged 10 and 18 respectively.

Speaking further with the protection team, she relayed what kind of problems she was facing earlier with transporting food items, but it has become easier as they were shifted to a shop closer to their house. Additionally, the protection team conveyed she would be assisted with a porter soon, which she said would help her profusely.

"I know I am contributing in some way, back in Myanmar I had a land where I did some farming so I constantly had the urge to do something here so I started working as a porter and I find that really helpful" says Sadar.

He has been working at the e-voucher outlet for more than six months and has a stable source of income. *"Earlier, it was difficult to meet our expenses on health care, medicines but now I find it easy to meet my children's necessary requirement. I aspire someday when they grow up they will also do something that helps other and makes their life better."*

Safe access to fuel : A basic necessity

A key aspect of ensuring food security encompasses access to nutritious and safe food that meets beneficiaries' dietary needs and food preferences. One of the major roadblocks to this has been the sourcing of fuel through secure channels and to address the issues arising from this. In this regard, WFP in partnership with FAO and IOM implemented safe access to fuel and energy programme as part of which liquified petroleum gas is distributed amongst the refugees. This prevents risks arising from the need for the population to travel to unsafe location to access fuel, mostly women and children were found vulnerable in this aspect.

Major Outcomes: An integrated humanitarian-development response

- ⇒ Prevent and minimize as much as possible any unintended negative effects of our intervention which can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks.
- ⇒ We have been able to arrange for our beneficiaries' access to assistance and services by identifying the barriers and taking corrective action in a timely manner.
- ⇒ We have been able to listen to the concerns, complains and compliments from our beneficiaries. This has enabled us to make strategic changes in our programming which addresses the needs of our beneficiaries.

Nutrition assistance key to good health of mothers and children

In the Rohingya camps, the '**Hindu Para**', harbouring close to **113 families** (belonging to the Rohingya community who are predominantly Hindu), has had a different trajectory when it comes to having access to nutrition services. As a part of the routine exercise, WFP was conducting a focus group discussion with a group of women where amongst several things, they highlighted the need for nutrition assistance which they haven't been receiving.

On further inquiry, it was revealed that there are many children under five who fall under the moderate acute malnutrition category and therefore in need of additional supply of nutritious food which would ensure they are able to grow into healthy adults. WFP protection team advocated with the nutrition team and impressed upon them the importance of targeting the community and providing essential nutritional support. After a month of coordinating with the cooperating partners, the integrated nutrition assistance successfully began assisting close to 250 women and 70 children under five.



During a focus group discussion with women in the camps, some of them informed the protection team of the specific challenges they have been facing and how some of them could be resolved.

Senoara, mother of three children reckons 'when I first came here there was no one, it was all forest, we had to build our homes here from scratch' She was one of the 250 mothers who wasn't aware of the nutrition assistance mothers and children who are found to be malnourished are provided with. On engaging with few community volunteers and attending group discussions organized by WFP she realised how essential it was to take care of smaller things here.

"My older child is 10-year-old and she takes care of a lot of things. I get enormous strength from her, she is my backbone. I don't think in anyway I lack anything just by virtue of being mother to three daughters. Now that my youngest daughter is receiving assistance, I know that she will grow better and become even stronger."

"We see few people in blue t-shirt coming to us and making sure the nutrition and food items we receive reaches us on a regular basis and ask us about if any specific problems we face in accessing them. I believe this has improved my life a lot and made my children healthier."