

Highlights

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the already vulnerable host communities in Cox's Bazar, particularly income opportunities and households' purchasing power which impacted food security. In response, WFP provided cash and in-kind assistance to over half of a million people through Special Support for the Host Community (SSHC) in all eight sub-districts of Cox's Bazar. WFP also provided food assistance to people in isolation and quarantine facilities. SSHC was extended through November to ensure that the most vulnerable households will receive appropriate entitlements.

Following the easing of lockdown measures, WFP resumed livelihoods activities in July 2020 and is supporting 28,850 women. Moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment services for children under 5 and pregnant and breastfeeding women are continuing at 123 community clinics. Disaster Risk Reduction works are also ongoing with the focus on improving access to rehabilitated cyclone shelters. As schools in the host communities are yet to re-open, WFP continues to provide High Energy Biscuits (HEB) to children through door-to-door distributions.



In Numbers

(as of 31 October 2020)



700,000 people assisted in the host communities



570,000 people received assistance through SSHC



10,676 women & children received nutrition treatment



70 cyclone shelters rehabilitated



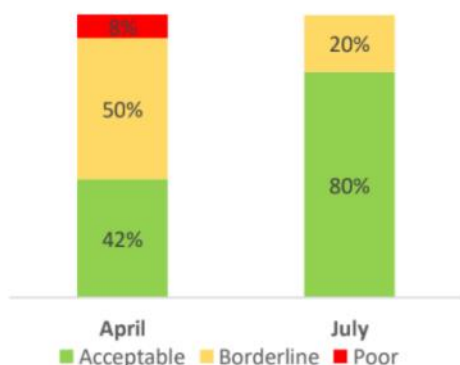
73,555 children received High Energy Biscuits



123 clinics Providing nutrition services

COVID-19 Impacts on Refugees and Host Communities

Host community households Food Consumption Score (FCS)*



- ◆ At the height of the COVID-19 crisis, in July, over 50 percent of host community households were dependent on food assistance and only 3 percent had their own produced yields to consume.
- ◆ Scaled-up of assistance played a critical role in cushioning host community households following livelihood disruptions. In July, the proportion of households with acceptable FCS rose to 80 percent (compared to 42 percent in April).
- ◆ Per capita weekly food expenditure for host community households reduced by BDT 521 (USD 6.5) following lockdown measures.

*Households with an acceptable diet generally consume staples and vegetables every day, frequently accompanied by oil and pulses and occasionally meat, fish and dairy.

Source: WFP, "COVID-19 Impacts on Refugees and Host Communities", September 2020

Voices from different sub-districts in Cox's Bazar

Focus Group Discussion with SSHC beneficiaries in Pekua

WFP emergency assistance during COVID-19 was crucial with 50 percent of host community households in July having reported dependence on external food assistance. People also reported being stuck in a vicious cycle: “lose job—borrow money from neighbour—work more or reduce expenditure on food to repay — get sick and can’t work— borrow money”. During discussions held in late September, people were hopeful for more stable income sources and showed significant interest in possible trainings on skills and individual business.

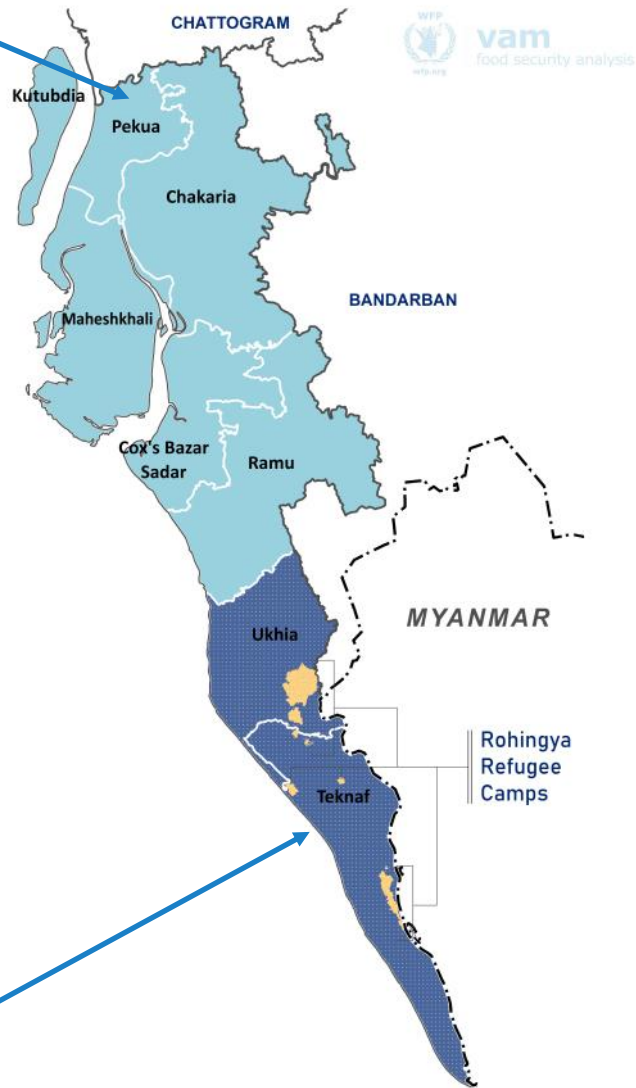


“Before WFP assistance, I only had rice and salt for 1-2 months. I’m old and have no energy. But if there is any opportunity, I want to learn some skills to feed myself”

Rukia (70 years)

“I had to fully rely on WFP special assistance during COVID-19. But I really need stable income source. I know how to make good clothes, but I would like to have my own sewing machine and want to learn business.”

Mohammad (25 years)



WFP EFSN participants in Teknaf

With the BDT 15,000 grant from WFP, Meraising bought and reared a pig and goats. Her pig delivered 12 piglets which she sold for BDT 48,000. She also bought a cow and land to cultivate rice and vegetables. She is saving part of the profits and plans to rebuild her house so that it is more resilient to floods.

Meraising is enjoying expanding her business and is interested in participating in more business trainings.



“Every argument with [my] husband used to start from money issue. Now even when he is sick, I have my business. During the lockdowns I also relied on my savings.”

Meraising (26 years)

Senoara has single-handedly supported her family of seven since her husband left 15 years ago. With the BDT 15,000 grant she received from WFP, she bought clothes and fabric at the big market and started selling them to neighbours. Her collection is popular in the village and she has several regular customers.



“Before joining WFP programme, I used to be day labourer. There was no way to save money. Now my business is growing, not only I can feed my family, I’m more respected in the village as woman too.”

Senoara (40 years)



WFP Host Community Programmes

Special Support for Host Community (SSHC)

SSHC supported the most vulnerable populations across Cox's Bazar. WFP provided in-kind rice, HEBs, pulses, oil and cash distributions of USD 53 (BDT 4,500). WFP also provided life-saving food assistance to people at government supported isolation/treatment centres and hospitals.

By the end of October, WFP had reached 113,072 households (570,000 people); disbursed over USD 4.4 million; distributed more than 5,000 mt of rice and pulses, 130 litres of oil and 350 mt of HEBs; and provided 1,390 hot meals to 4,500 people in government supported isolation and quarantine centres.

Livelihoods in the Host Community

WFP Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) livelihoods programme, targeting the most vulnerable women in Cox's Bazar, started in 2012. Selected women are enrolled into a two year programme through which they have access to entrepreneurial skill development and life-skills trainings. Participants are supported with a monthly subsistence allowance of BDT 1,050 (USD 12) and are organized into Self-Help Groups (SHG) which act as a platform to enhance financial accountability through monthly savings. Following the completion of trainings and the submission of a business plan, each group member receives a substantive cash grant of BDT 15,000 (USD 180) to start diversified income generating activities with a combination of on- and off-farm businesses. Each member also receives a growth grant of BDT 4,500 (USD 54) to invest in group businesses.

Following suspension during COVID-19, WFP resumed EFSN activities in July 2020. Income-generating activities and SHG formation continued for 28,850 women in Ukhiya and Teknaf. Many participants responded they are happy to own their business and showed huge interest to receive more trainings. WFP has also formed two SHGs exclusively for women with disabilities, targeting women in Raja Palong, Ukhiya and Palongkhali, Teknaf.

School Feeding



WFP continues to distribute HEB, dates and studying materials to students through door-to-door distributions in Kutubdia, Ukhiya, Pekua, Moheshkhali and Teknaf.

In October, 38,416 girls and 35,139 boys received 275 mt of HEB and 78 mt of dates.

Students in Teknaf and Ukhiya also received child-sized masks made by Rohingya refugees.

Disaster Risk Reduction



WFP installed 100 foot-operated handwashing stations in the 70 rehabilitated cyclone shelters at host community schools. DRR and COVID-19 awareness campaigns continue through digital sign boards, visibility banners and door-to-door messaging.

In September, WFP launched "Forecast-based Financing for host communities" in Teknaf. This will provide assistance before disaster strikes to extremely vulnerable Bangladeshi households living in areas prone to flooding.


Nutrition




WFP is expanding nutrition assistance to the host community. In September, 11 new government health facilities started to treat malnutrition in Kutubdia, bringing the number of community nutrition clinics assisted by WFP to 123.

Cooperating Partner staff working in the host communities are also being trained on malnutrition prevention and treatment.

Looking ahead

 **EFSN is scaling-up to reach 15,000 vulnerable women** in the most disaster prone areas of Moheshkhali, Pekua and Kutubdia. This support is essential as these sub-districts are the most underserved in the host community.

 **Farmers' Markets, linking host community farmers with Rohingya refugees, will resume in early 2021.** WFP aims to open eight Farmers' Markets throughout the first half of 2021.

WFP thanks the support of its donors: Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, France, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America