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# WFP in Cox's Bazar | Information Booklet

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMMES, INNOVATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS, SECTORS, CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Photos: WFP/Nihab Rahman and ISCG/Saikat Mojumder

April 2021







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## Emergency Response in the Rohingya Refugee Camps

### CONTEXT

By end-March 2021, there were over 878,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. This includes almost 600,000 in the Kutupalong megacamp, the largest refugee camp in the world, and over 18,000 on Bhasan Char island. The COVID-19 pandemic created a double-layered crisis and heightened vulnerabilities among refugees with 96 percent being reported as moderately and highly vulnerable by end-2020. As evidenced by the major January and March fires in Teknaf and Ukhiya megacamps respectively, ensuring refugees' safety and wellbeing remains a serious challenge with population density reaching 60,000 persons per km<sup>2</sup> ([REVA IV, 2021](#)).

### 2021 Q1 IN NUMBERS

**863,000** ROHINGYA REFUGEES  
SUPPORTED MONTHLY



**200,000** women & children  
reached with nutrition services



**200** women & men engaged in  
self-reliance activities

**FFA**

**45,000** volunteers engaged in  
food assistance for assets



**182,000** households reached  
with micronutrient fortified bis-  
cuits

### WFP RESPONSE

Since the start of the crisis in August 2017, WFP has provided food assistance to the camp population, and nutrition services to women and children. This is complemented with life-skills training, disaster risk reduction activities and common engineering services. WFP also facilitates essential shared logistics and emergency telecommunication services and co-leads the Food Security Sector. WFP adapted its programmes to adhere to evolving COVID-19 restrictions, while ensuring lifesaving interventions continue, such as the immediate response to the massive March fire in the Kutupalong megacamp.

Photo: WFP/Sayed Asif Mahmud

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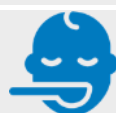
## Interventions in the Host Community

### CONTEXT

Cox's Bazar, situated in Bangladesh's southern "cyclone belt", is one of the country's most underdeveloped regions. The COVID-19 pandemic hit the local economy with 51 percent of the host community population reported as moderately or highly vulnerable in 2020, up from 41 percent in 2019. This increase can be attributed to the economic contractions experienced during COVID-19 lockdowns, which led to a decline in economic activity, especially in the informal sector, which absorbs most of the host community labour force ([REVA IV, 2021](#)).

### 2021 Q1 IN NUMBERS

**296,000** HOST COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS SUPPORTED MONTHLY



**12,000** women & children  
reached with nutrition services



**30,000** women engaged in the  
livelihoods programme



**13** Aggregation Centres  
established



**134,000** students reached with  
micronutrient fortified biscuits

### WFP RESPONSE

WFP supports host community populations through long-term interventions, including nutrition assistance at community clinics, school feeding, livelihoods programmes specifically targeting vulnerable women, and disaster risk reduction activities. In 2021 WFP has expanded its Aggregation Centres in the host community, which link local farmers, including WFP livelihood beneficiaries and FAO farmers' groups, to fresh food corners in the refugee camps and competitive markets. WFP is also continuing to conduct door-to-door micronutrient fortified biscuit distributions while schools remain closed.

SCAN TO READ THE LATEST  
HOST COMMUNITY BRIEFS



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# General Food Assistance

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- Food assistance delivered to all Rohingya refugees across **34** camps every month
- Almost **99%** of GFA provided through e-vouchers with **95%** channelled through Building Blocks
- 21** e-voucher outlets and **1** in-kind distribution point
- WFP immediately responded with rapid food assistance to the January fire in the Nayapara Registered Camp in Teknaf and the March fire in the Kutupalong megacamp

### OVERVIEW

WFP delivers food assistance to the entire refugee population every month. The majority of assistance is provided through e-vouchers where beneficiaries receive an electronic voucher (value adjusted each month) to be redeemed across WFP assistance outlets. The remaining caseload receive in-kind food rations (30 kg rice, 9 kg lentils and 3 litres vegetable oil).

WFP rapid response ensures efficient emergency intervention. At the onset of any crisis, affected populations are assisted with one in-kind food basket or a six-day ration of micronutrient fortified biscuits. Within two weeks, families are then re-integrated into the regular food assistance programme. Depending on access to cooking facilities, refugees can also receive cooked meals or dry food.

### OBJECTIVES

- Ensure all Rohingya refugees receive a minimum of **2,100 calories of nutritious food** to meet their daily dietary needs.
- Enhance transparency and accountability through digital systems (Building Blocks and SCOPE) and complaints and feedback mechanisms.
- Allow choice and dignity by providing assistance through e-vouchers which give people greater freedom to select from a range of food items at a time convenient to them.

### ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- WFP delivered food assistance to the entire refugee population every month with almost all refugees receiving assistance through e-vouchers whereby they can purchase up to 32 (fixed and flexible) food items at 21 outlets.

- Building Blocks, WFP's blockchain-based digital ledger, is operational in 19 out of 21 e-voucher outlets and by end-March was serving 95 percent of the total refugee population.
- Through the 13 operational fresh food corners, WFP provided 16 types of vegetables to up to 128,393 vulnerable refugees every month
- Following the March fires, WFP reached up to 15,000 households with micronutrient fortified biscuits, supported up to 63,000 people with over 1.3 million cooked meals and distributed almost 350,000 litres of water to complement the IOM water distributions.
- Together with cooperating partners, WFP supported eight hot food kitchens near affected camps providing freshly cooked meals until LPG and kitchen sets could be distributed.
- WFP provided a one-off in-kind food ration to over 2,000 households hosted in camps not directly affected and 126 fire-affected host community households.

### THE WAY FORWARD

- WFP will scale-up Building Blocks based e-voucher modality transfers for all refugees.
- Distribute new SCOPE Assistance Cards to all beneficiaries and ensure 100 percent alignment with Government and UNHCR data.
- WFP will expand fresh food corners to all existing outlets.



# Social Cohesion: Fresh Food Corners

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- › 13 operational fresh food corners at e-voucher outlets after the March fire
- › 128,393 vulnerable refugees provided with e-voucher top-up of USD 3 to access fresh produce every month

## OVERVIEW

While WFP continues to support refugees with monthly food assistance, the dietary diversity and access to nutritious food items among the most vulnerable households remains poor. The Refugee Emergency Vulnerability Assessment ([REVA III](#)) conducted in late 2019 found that almost 60 percent of households' external purchases are fresh food items, mainly chicken and fish.

Amid the current COVID-19 situation, low-income households, particularly child, women or older person headed households and households with a family member with a disability, are the most disadvantaged owing to their limited access to income opportunities. This prompts the adoption of negative coping strategies, such as reselling assistance, borrowing money and buying food on credit. The latest WFP Social Cohesion survey found that 26 percent of refugee respondents and 11 percent of host community respondents are keen to interact with each other in the marketplace. In response, WFP introduced fresh food corners to provide the most vulnerable households direct access to fresh food items.

A monthly top-up of USD 3 per individual is transferred to these vulnerable households, and can be redeemed at the fresh food corners inside e-voucher outlets. Fresh food corners provide households with the freedom of choice to purchase from a wide variety of fresh fruit and vegetables.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Improve the dietary diversity of the most vulnerable households** via direct access to fresh food items, particularly protein-rich items.
- **Strengthen market linkages between the camps and host community's** small-scale farmers, petty traders, aggregators and retailers. Most food items will be locally purchased and/or produced

to improve social cohesion between the two communities by increasing economic opportunities, agricultural production for host communities and fostering positive interactions.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- WFP opened/resumed 14 fresh food corners, one of which was destroyed during the March fires.
- In total 2,098 women engaged in the livelihoods programme, selling their products to fresh food corners. This includes 940 women who are using the Farm2Go application.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- To benefit smaller local enterprises WFP will link FAO farmers' groups and WFP livelihood beneficiaries to fresh food corners through FAO and WFP Aggregation Centres.
- WFP will scale-up the use of the Farm2Go application which will collect digital, real-time data from smallholder farmers and their respective cooperatives and connect to WFP retailers and commercial markets.
- WFP will re-introduce live chicken and fish into fresh food corners from April.

# Integrated Nutrition Assistance in the Camps

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- › 200,000 women and children supported every month at 45 Integrated Nutrition Centres
- › An average of 165,000 children were referred to the nutrition treatment programme every month
- › 2,000 children and 200 women from fire affected camps supported with daily nutrition services for two weeks following the March fire

## OVERVIEW

To address malnutrition, WFP provides prevention and treatment services to young children and pregnant and nursing mothers in the camps.

- **Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme:** As part of the prevention programme, children between 6 and 59 months receive Super Cereal Plus (WSB++) while pregnant and nursing mothers receive Super Cereal (WSB+).
- **Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme:** As part of the treatment programme, children under five identified as moderately undernourished receive monthly rations of Ready to Use Supplementary Food (RUSF) while pregnant and nursing mothers identified as malnourished receive Super Cereal (WSB+) mixed with vegetable oil.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Malnutrition rehabilitation and treatment:** WFP aims to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with malnutrition among pregnant and nursing mothers and young children.
- **Social and behaviour change communication:** To ensure sustained change for cases of malnutrition, WFP conducts communication activities and utilizes tools that positively influence behaviour, knowledge and attitudes around nutrition, hygiene and social protection.
- **Active case finding:** WFP engages community outreach volunteers to screen and identify malnourished women and children who are then referred to the nearest nutrition centre. Beneficiaries who require regular assistance are closely followed and supported through home visits. During the last trimester, pregnant women receive services at home. WFP is also providing training to caregivers on how to screen their children for malnutrition and self-refer them to nutrition sites.
- **Promoting an inclusive approach:** Services are tailored to ensure everyone—women, men, older people, people who have chronic

conditions and people with disabilities—can participate. For instance, breastfeeding corners at every nutrition site provide safety and privacy for mothers while encouraging them to come to the facilities.

- **Evidence based programming:** WFP supports both quantitative and qualitative assessments to ensure that nutrition programmes are tailored accordingly.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- In March, WFP launched a new cash pilot, whereby households with children between the ages of 3 and 5 can redeem USD 3 per child per month at fresh food corners. This responds directly to beneficiaries' feedback on access to a more diverse selection of nutritious foods.
- WFP continued to provide nutrition services while ensuring the safety of staff and beneficiaries. WFP distributed an average of 900 mt of nutrition supplements every month.
- Immediately following the March fire, WFP set-up two temporary nutrition centres with UNICEF. Centres resumed counselling services for mothers, complementary feeding rations for children between 6 and 23 months, Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) treatment for children under five, drinking water and wet Super Cereal Plus for mothers and children. Children were also screened for acute malnutrition.

## THE WAY FORWARD

WFP will resume the following services that were hampered by COVID-19 since March 2020:

- Strengthening growth monitoring and Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) services, as feasible.
- Conducting qualitative assessments to support available quantitative data for finetuning SBCC programming.
- Piloting a locally produced food commodity for pregnant and nursing mothers.



# School Feeding Programme in the Camps

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- › Up to **182,307** households reached with micronutrient fortified biscuits
- › **670** mt of micronutrient fortified biscuits distributed
- › **408** volunteers engaged for packaging, delivery and distribution of micronutrient fortified biscuits

### OVERVIEW

WFP's school feeding programme for registered refugees was first launched in 2002 with the goal of improving children's learning by addressing the root causes of hunger and micronutrient deficiencies that can have consequences on their cognitive growth.

WFP provides a packet of 50 g of micronutrient fortified biscuits to children enrolled in learning centres in the camps every day. These locally-produced biscuits are fortified with 14 vitamins and minerals, and provide approximately half of the daily micronutrient requirements for a child between 3 and 14 years. From 2019, WFP also started distributing dates to children.

WFP partners with the Bangladesh Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children and BRAC to support emergency school feeding in over 4,200 learning centres across the camps. In line with the national de-worming campaign and in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, WFP also facilitates de-worming campaigns twice a year for Rohingya children who attend learning centres.

### OBJECTIVES

- **Ensure that hunger is not an impediment to a child's overall development.**
- **Improve children's learning capacity** by providing them with micronutrient fortified biscuits for every school attendance day.
- **Build capacity and promote community participation** by engaging refugee teachers and volunteers in the programme.
- **Address root causes of hunger and micronutrient deficiencies** among refugee children. A WFP study shows that micronutrient fortified biscuits consistently reduce anaemia prevalence and improve micronutrient status—in particular iron, vitamin A, iodine and folate.

### ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- The planned expansion of activities to new learning centres in the camps was not possible due to the closure of educational institutions, WFP therefore reached 182,307 Rohingya households through blanket coverage of micronutrient fortified biscuit distribution at GFA sites.

### THE WAY FORWARD

- WFP will continue micronutrient fortified biscuit distribution and deworming campaigns in all camps throughout the year.

# Resilience Building in the Camps: Self-Reliance

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- > Over **200** Rohingya refugees engaged
- > **970** kg of vegetables produced and **1,660** kg of fish harvested from **12** ponds
- > **188,168** WFP food packets collected and recycled into **2,002** products

## OVERVIEW

Under the self-reliance programme, WFP supports refugees to enhance their resilience through skills development activities such as homestead vegetable gardening, aquaculture and tailoring.

In 2021 WFP is scaling-up self-reliance activities targeting at-risk youth (both women and men), extremely vulnerable individuals such as older people and persons with disabilities and women-headed households.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Strengthen food security and access to fresh foods** through urban agriculture interventions, including aquaculture and seed production.
- **Support economic empowerment**, focusing on demand created by the camp itself.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- WFP engaged 207 Rohingya refugees in self-reliance activities across 30 camps.
- WFP maintained 12 fishponds which produced 1,660 kg of fish for 446 households. Almost 1,000 kg of vegetables were also produced around the fishponds and distributed to 666 households.
- In September 2020, WFP launched the Circular Food Assistance project which, through upcycling waste into useful products, provides skills development and income opportunities for Rohingya youth, women and people with disabilities while also creating a cleaner camp environment. The project won the WFP Innovation Accelerator award and was also selected for the SPRINT, an intense six-month acceleration programme that helps innovators

and start-ups reach proof-of-concept and develop prototypes ready for implementation. Since September, over half a million WFP food packets and bottles have been collected from the camps and recycled into 2,171 products (fans, wallets, bags, baskets, mats, pillows, shelves, cards and pen holders, dust bins, photo frames, notice and tiffin boxes, window shutters, notebook covers, caps and jewelry).

## CIRCULAR FOOD ASSISTANCE SINCE SEPT. 2020



## THE WAY FORWARD

- To enhance income generation, WFP plans to focus on demand coming from the camp-based needs, such as services, skills, and items needed for delivering humanitarian assistance, or by the Rohingya themselves.
- WFP will continue to engage 152 Communications with Communities (CwC) volunteers including volunteers who were deployed for the March fire response.

# Resilience Building in the Camps: Disaster Risk Reduction

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- › 45,105 people engaged through food assistance for assets
- › Reforestation activities maintained across 219 hectares of land in 19 camps
- › (Re)constructed/stabilized/cleaned 7,560 m of pathways, 5,574 m<sup>2</sup> of stairs, 1,422 m of roads, 2,759 m of brick guide walls, 1,589 m<sup>2</sup> of slopes, 32,585 m of drainage and 8,217 m of canals

## OVERVIEW

Almost four years into the humanitarian response, WFP continues to undertake disaster risk management activities. Since the major influx in 2017, WFP's response has transitioned from immediate life-saving assistance to targeted programmatic interventions to improve resilience in communities. In this regard, disaster risk reduction activities aim to prevent and reduce risks from natural disasters and strengthen resilience with capacity-building for Rohingya refugees.

Access to key roadways and social infrastructure are critical to ensuring the continuation of essential humanitarian operations and communication across the camps. It is especially important to mitigate the harmful effects and prevent further damages from natural disasters such as cyclones and heavy rains. WFP maintains regular coordination and collaboration with the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), Camp-in-Charges, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, the Forest Department and other relevant UN agencies including FAO, IOM and UNHCR.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Strengthen and build resilience** through building and rehabilitating community assets and improve accessibility to reduce disaster risk in Rohingya refugee camps.
- **Improving accessibility to humanitarian actors and communities:** Building bridges, strengthening drainage systems and roads to improve access to markets, emergency food or nutrition assistance sites.
- **Site improvement and disaster risk mitigation:** Slope protection, perimeter fencing and dam construction to reduce soil erosion.

- **Community engagement and outreach:** Engaging refugees in multi-sectoral community services as outreach volunteers, on topics such as fire safety and emergency monsoon or cyclone preparedness.
- **Social inclusion and protection mainstreaming:** WFP encourages participation of differently abled people and age groups.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- WFP engaged 6,859 women and 38,246 men, among whom 525 are people with disabilities. WFP also deployed up to 1,130 volunteer labourers to support food assistance and debris clearance following the March fire.
- WFP took initiatives to ensure worker safety including disinfecting the sites, strictly maintaining social distancing, wearing masks and installing portable handwashing facilities.
- In collaboration with FAO, WFP maintained 584,507 tree seedlings across 19 camps covering 219 hectares.
- To improve access around the camps, WFP (re)constructed pedestrian pathways, stairs and access road.
- To prepare for the monsoon season, WFP constructed brick guide walls, stabilized slopes, cleaned drains and re-excavated of canals.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- WFP will continue to support the RRRC in strengthening coordination at the camp level.

# Resilience Building in the Camps: Community Workfare and Services

HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

## Community Services

- › Conditional food assistance transfers provided to **133,146** displaced Rohingya population through USD 2 e-voucher top-up to be redeemed at fresh food corners

- › **1,266** Rohingya volunteers received trainings for portable skills, life skills and awareness-raising

## Community Workfare

- › **17,932** displaced Rohingya population engaged in community workfare activities

## PROGRAMME

WFP is implementing the “Strengthening Community Resilience” component of the World Bank funded Emergency Multi-Sector Rohingya Crisis Response project in collaboration with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) of the Government of Bangladesh. The project covers the 32 unregistered camps and aims to increase the wellbeing and entitlements of the most vulnerable households, reducing the likelihood of youth idleness and improving living conditions in the camps through providing community services and community workfare.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Improving safety and living conditions** of the displaced Rohingya population.
- **Enhancing self-reliance** and address potential conflict with host community.
- **Revert environmental degradation.**

## PROJECT SET-UP

As WFP was about to embark on project implementation of the 15-month project, Bangladesh was hit by COVID-19. This led to a modification. From June to November 2020, the project implemented training on COVID-19 prevention and awareness campaigns for community members while ensuring COVID-19 safety. Since October 2020, the project has gradually resumed implementation of activities under both the community services and community workfare sub-components as originally planned while regular WFP programmes shifted to the “new normal” environment in the camps.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- The project provided a USD 2 top-up through e-vouchers to 69,236 women and 63,910 men in the 32 unregistered camps on the condition that they attend COVID-19 related awareness sessions.

- Under the community workfare component, WFP engaged 2,745 women and 15,187 men, 247 of whom were people with disabilities in disaster risk reduction activities. During this period, the project has constructed 9,500 m of drainage, 4,800 m of pathways, 99,300 m<sup>2</sup> of stairs and 1,700 m of brick guide wall; protected 1,500 m<sup>2</sup> of slopes; constructed/rehabilitated 1,000 m of access road; cleaned/rehabilitated 32,000 m of drainage; maintained 289,500 tree seedlings across 103 hectares of forested land; and re-excavated 6,000 m of canals.
- WFP conducted 155 environment and social safeguard screenings (tree plantation, road maintenance/construction, slope stabilization and drainage) across non-registered camps to ensure that planned activities do not have an adverse impact on ecosystems and communities.
- Following UNICEF’s life skills curriculum, WFP trained 146 adolescent women and 251 adolescent men on basic life skills (trust and friendship, problem solving, managing stress and emotions, positive thinking).
- WFP trained 459 women and 410 men on vocational skills (masonry and plumbing).
- WFP reformed 18 Rohingya Food Security Committees to include more diverse representation of the Rohingya community.

## THE WAY FORWARD

WFP will continue implementing regular project activities. Community service activities will focus on skills development, food assistance to extremely vulnerable households and volunteer services. Community workfare activities will include site improvement, disaster risk reduction, accessibility improvement and community-based environmental protection activities such as tree planting.

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## Voices from the field: March fire response

After the March fire, thousands of Rohingya volunteers mobilized to support clean-up and rapid food assistance. Like many other volunteers, Mohammed Ali's shelter was destroyed, as were all his possessions. But his family was safe and he said that is more important.

In the fire's aftermath, Ali dedicated every day to getting word out about how and where to access WFP food assistance, while ensuring people had the things they needed.

"The scope and scale of this fire was unprecedented," said Richard Ragan, WFP Country Director for Bangladesh. "WFP, together with our partners and thousands of volunteers, has supported the families since the start of the tragedy in meeting their most urgent needs of food and water. Where nutrition centres once stood, debris was cleared in record time, stocks were replenished and services resumed for children and their mothers. We are determined to do what we can to help [refugees] get their lives back to normal as quickly as possible."

WFP Senior Emergency Coordinator in Cox's Bazar, Sheila Grudem, commended WFP's partnerships for the rapidity and effectiveness of its response: "[We] rapidly deploy[ed] food assistance, in large part thanks to the partnerships we have forged, from national retailers to local hotels and restaurants and of course our humanitarian partners on the ground. It is with thanks to them that Rohingya families [were] able to have warm meals since day one."

SCAN TO READ THE  
FULL STORY



## Voices from the field: Fatema's story



"I have been studying on my own at home [during the pandemic] and my sister helps me with my studies. I like studying on my own because nobody disturbs me, but I will feel very good when the schools reopen."

Before schools closed, Fatema was 'book captain' at her school in Cox's Bazar and led her classmates in daily reading activities and encouraged her friends to improve their reading skills. "I loved being a book captain," she says. "I checked out and gave books to my classmates."

SCAN TO READ  
FATEMA'S FULL STORY



Spurred by COVID-19, inequality between students threatens to grow deeper and wider in Bangladesh. The lack of technology at home and limited connection to the internet, together with economic instability, puts girls, rural students and socio-economically disadvantaged children at risk of being left behind.

Thirteen-year-old Fatema is one of the 42 million children who have been out of school for close to 12 months.

Thanks to at-home deliveries of nutritious snacks and reading materials from a WFP-supported literacy programme, students like her can continue to learn and grow at home while schools remain closed in Cox's Bazar and across the country.

As the pandemic continues, innovative learning resources and biscuits rich in vitamins and minerals are crucial to encouraging the healthy development and motivation of the next generation.

# Social Safety Net in the Host Community: Disaster Risk Reduction

## HIGHLIGHTS

- > In March 2021, WFP hosted a Joint Launching Ceremony for Host Community DRR/Asset Creation Programme Interventions in 2021, WFP plans to engage **38,000** direct beneficiaries through food assistance for assets and **190,000** community members who will be indirectly supported
- > In 2020, WFP rehabilitated **30** cyclone shelters, installed **120** hand-washing stations, maintained **910** hectares of forest land and engaged **7,160** people through food assistance for assets

## OVERVIEW

WFP has operationalized the disaster risk reduction programme for the prevention and reduction of risks from natural disasters, with the overall objective of strengthening resilience and capacity development of the most-vulnerable host community population. WFP maintains effective coordination and collaboration with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) and the Bangladesh Forest Department for fostering dialogue on host community development.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Strengthen the resilience and capacity development** of the most-vulnerable host community population.
- **Community-based environmental protection:** In collaboration with the Bangladesh Forest Department and FAO, promoting reforestation and restoration of the damaged environment through plantation of fast-growing species, bag gardening/vegetation for soil retention and seedling production and nursery propagation.
- **Emergency preparedness:** Rehabilitating cyclone shelters and evacuation centres.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- To ensure continued COVID-19 risk messaging, WFP will install digital bill-boards at major tourist points in Cox's Bazar.
- To improve community access, especially the "last mile" to cyclone shelters, WFP will improve roads, pathways, bridges, culverts and ramps providing access to 70 previously rehabilitated cyclone shelters in Ukhiya and Teknaf.
- As part of the cyclone preparedness programme,

WFP will rehabilitate 30 cyclone shelters in remote areas of Moheshkhali, Pekua and Kutubdiya.

- Under the technical leadership of FAO, WFP will work to improve land stabilization, restoration and erosion control measures through the maintenance and plantation of trees across 2,000 hectares of land in Cox's Bazar Sadar, Chakaria, Ukhiya, Teknaf and Ramu.
- In consultation with FAO and the Department of Agriculture, WFP will improve irrigation networks, water systems, culverts, water reservoirs and solar energies in vulnerable locations of Chakaria, Ramu, Teknaf and Ukhiya.
- WFP will continue capacity strengthening initiatives including the strengthening of early warning systems and forecast-based financing pilot as well as supporting the government strengthening policy and school safety programme.

## 2021 ACTIVITIES

-  **COVID-19 RISK MESSAGING**  
Cox's Bazar Sadar
-  **IMPROVED COMMUNITY ACCESS**  
Teknaf & Ukhiya
-  **CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS**  
Kutubdia, Maheshkhali & Pekua
-  **NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**  
Cox's Bazar Sadar, Chakaria, Ukhiya, Teknaf & Ramu
-  **AGRICULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE**  
Chakaria, Ukhiya, Teknaf & Ramu
-  **CAPACITY STRENGTHENING**

# Social Safety Net in the Host Community: Livelihoods Programme

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

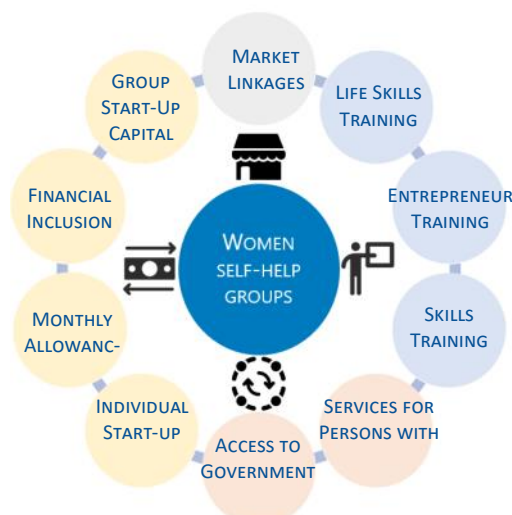
- › 30,000 women engaged in Ukhiya and Teknaf and 15,000 women in Moheshkhali, Pekua and Kutubdia are under selection
- › USD 103,422 raised and saved by 1,156 self-help groups

### OVERVIEW

The “Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition” (EFSN) livelihoods programme targets vulnerable women in Ukhiya, Teknaf, Mooheskhali, Pekua and Kutubdia. In 2021, WFP is supporting 45,600 beneficiaries: 25,600 of whom are enrolled in the EFSN programme and 20,000 who already graduated the initial two-year programme and are now provided with technical support for market linkages and value chain development in their third year.

Selected women are enrolled in a multi-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 group (SHG) which act as a platform for them to enhance financial accountability by 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-farm and off-farm businesses to mitigate risks. Each member also receives a growth grant of BDT 4,500 (USD 54) to collectively invest in group businesses.

### PROGRAMME MODEL



### OBJECTIVES

- Address the underlying drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition through empowering women economically.
- Enhance resilience through trainings in social networking, financial inclusion, disability inclusion and social and behavioural-change communication.

### ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- WFP has supported 10,000 women to manage their own businesses and income effectively and take collective actions on mitigating gender-based violence and early marriages. So far in 2021, USD 103,422 was raised and saved in collective bank accounts by these groups.
- WFP extended the project to also focus on market linkages and by end-March had 13 operational Aggregation Centres to facilitate these linkages. These centres are run by women supported by WFP and aggregate produce from beneficiaries living within a 1.5 km radius.
- WFP launched the Farm2Go pilot to digitalise market linkages and so far supported 940 women from 39 SHGs.
- WFP continued providing monthly allowances to EFSN beneficiaries through bKash (a national mobile financial service).
- WFP has trained 819 beneficiaries in basic literacy, 417 in skill development, 11,702 post-harvest management, 800 in organic farming and 35 in disability inclusion.

### THE WAY FORWARD

- Within the EFSN umbrella, WFP started a new pilot project on saline resilient agriculture targeting 600 households.
- WFP will open an additional 14 Aggregation Centres during the year.

# Social Safety Net in the Host Community: Integrated Nutrition Assistance

HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- > 12,000 women and children supported every month at 124 clinics

## OVERVIEW

Since 2011, as part of the Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition programme, WFP has been providing tailored nutrition assistance to treat Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) among young children and pregnant and nursing mothers. WFP also engages host communities through Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) sessions on a range of topics such as hygiene, good preparation and storage of food (including WFP supplementary food), nutrition and health.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Treat MAM:** Children identified with MAM in the host community receive monthly rations of Super Cereal Plus (WSB++) for malnutrition treatment. Pregnant and nursing mothers identified as malnourished receive Super Cereal (WSB+) mixed with vegetable oil.
- **Improve livelihoods of local community women:** WFP engages women as community nutrition volunteers to conduct weekly “Courtyard Sessions” for beneficiaries on issues surrounding hygiene, good preparation and storage of food, nutrition and health. The volunteers are paid USD 90 on a monthly basis and the income contributes to their family and local economy.
- **Enhance community-level knowledge:** WFP’s nutrition programme plays a significant role in raising awareness among women, their families and communities.

- **Evidence based programming:** WFP supports both quantitative and qualitative assessments to ensure that nutrition programmes are tailor-made accordingly.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- WFP assisted more than 4,700 pregnant and nursing mothers and 7,200 children under five every month across five sub-districts.
- WFP provided malnutrition prevention and treatment services at 124 host community clinics.
- WFP facilitated trainings on nutrition programming for 151 frontline staff and volunteers.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- WFP will continue to proactively engage government partners and Cooperating Partners for operational implementation.
- WFP will continue nutrition services through integrated nutrition facilities and ensure coordination with UNICEF/ACF in providing such services in host communities.



# Social Protection in the Host Community: School Feeding

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- › Up to **134,000** students reached with micronutrient fortified biscuits through door-to-door distributions in Ukhiya, Teknaf, Kutubdia, Moheshkhali and Pekua and **340** mt of biscuits distributed
- › **44,399** students in Ukhiya and Kutubdia also received hygiene kits
- › **589** host community volunteers engaged to deliver micronutrient fortified biscuits

## OVERVIEW

WFP's school feeding programme is operational in the five sub-districts of Cox's Bazar. In collaboration with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, WFP provides micronutrient fortified biscuits and dates to pre-primary and primary school children in Government and NGO-run schools as well as in approved "madrassas" (Islamic schools). WFP also provides an "essential learning package" to benefit the whole community through community mobilization; de-worming campaigns; and health, hygiene, nutrition and school vegetable gardening.

The programme in Ukhiya and Kutubdia is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Programme and the Government of Bangladesh. This programme provides literacy and nutrition activities; capacity strengthening of Government education officials, teachers and school management committees (SMC); improves WASH facilities and increases awareness around health, hygiene, gender equality, women's empowerment, human trafficking and child marriage.

As schools have been closed across Bangladesh for the past year, since March 2020, WFP has distributed micronutrient fortified biscuits to students' homes.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Ensure hunger is not an impediment to a child's overall development and improve learning** by addressing short-term hunger and promoting development of cognitive capacities.
- **Contribute to the Government's policy of universal primary education by improving access to basic education**, particularly for children living in poverty-prone areas.
- **Build capacity and promote community participation in the management of the schools** by engaging community members in trainings and capacity building activities.
- **Improve literacy of school-aged children and quality of education** through early grade learning interventions.

- **Promote gender equity and women's empowerment** through community mobilisation workshops. Through local partners, WFP develops the leadership skills of women to enable them to play an active role in SMCs.
- **Conduct de-worming activities** in all primary schools twice a year in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- WFP reached 134,000 students with micronutrient fortified biscuits every month. Each child received 25 biscuit packets.
- In preparation for schools reopening (initially expected by end-March but postponed to end-May), WFP partner, Room to Read Bangladesh conducted workshops to develop teaching and learning materials for primary schools.
- WFP partner, Resource Integration Centre (RIC) also provided hygiene kits to children and government primary schools in Ukhiya and Kutubdia to prepare for school reopening
- WFP finalised the "Essential Learning Package" consisting of health hygiene learning session for children and community mobilisation workshops and conducted a three-days Training of Trainers for cooperating partner field staff from Ukhiya, Teknaf and Kutubdia.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- WFP will continue door-to-door biscuit distributions until schools reopen.
- WFP will begin providing home-grown cooked meals in Teknaf for 26,000 children in 68 schools and expand school meals to Cox's Bazar Sadar. WFP will construct infrastructures (kitchens, water supply etc) to start cooked meals in Ukhiya and Kutubdia in 2022.
- WFP will continue the USDA McGovern-Dole-funded literacy improvement activities in Ukhiya and Kutubdia for 45,000 children at 138 schools.
- To ensure sustainability, WFP will handover activities in Pekua and Moheshkhali to the Government in July 2021.

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# Innovations and Digital Solutions

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- › Building Blocks is now serving 95% of the total refugee population.
- › Cox's Bazar is the first WFP operation to build e-voucher outlets. Almost 100% of refugees receive food assistance through e-vouchers
- › Building Blocks, SCOPE and an in-house app were used in an innovative combination to facilitate a rapid cross-program response to the March fire crisis

## LEADING INNOVATIONS IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

WFP's emergency operation in Cox's Bazar leads in innovating food assistance to respond to a humanitarian crisis and feed the world's largest refugee camp. Embracing new technologies to provide life-saving food and nutrition support to Rohingya refugees as well as to assist the host community, WFP is leveraging innovation and digital solutions to achieve Zero Hunger (Sustainable Development Goal 2) in Cox's Bazar.

## MARCH FIRE RESPONSE

- WFP printed over 7,000 SCOPECARDS for all Camp 9 beneficiaries who lost their documents in the fire and had distributed them to over 1,100 households by end-March. The cards were distributed at IOM non-food item distribution points where beneficiaries also received kitchen kits, hygiene kits, facemasks and dignity kits.
- Beneficiaries from affected camps who lost their UNHCR card or other ID were still able to redeem their remaining entitlements and newly topped-up regular April entitlements using fingerprint biometrics. UNHCR registration teams supported people at key WFP distribution points to re-issue family documentation.

## INNOVATING FOOD ASSISTANCE: E-VOUCHERS AND BUILDING BLOCKS

- **E-vouchers** are a more dignified approach to food assistance whereby refugees can choose from a menu of items each month. Almost 100 percent of Rohingya refugees received food assistance through e-vouchers by end-March.
- **Blockchain:** By end-March, all e-voucher outlets in non-registered camps were serviced by Building Blocks, based on blockchain technology.
- **One card for all assistance:** SCOPE assistance cards used by refugees to receive food, LPG, soap and hygiene kits through a multi-wallet platform that facilitates collaboration between UN agencies.

## bKASH FINANCING

In December 2020, WFP started the **partnership with financial service provider, bKash** to provide monthly subsistence allowances to women in the livelihoods programme through mobile money.

## FORECAST-BASED FINANCING

Under the disaster risk reduction programme, WFP is rolling out Forecast-based Financing in Teknaf to better **respond to climate shocks**, such as flooding and cyclones. Forecasts trigger the release of electronic payments ahead of a natural disaster to vulnerable households likely to be affected.



# Digital Solutions: Building Blocks

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- > Operational in **19** e-voucher outlets, **41** shops, **14** fresh food corners and **340** mPOS (mobile point-of-sale)
- > **95%** of refugees served through Building Blocks
- > **USD 70 million** of assistance processed through **1.6 million** transactions

SCAN TO SEE [BUILDING  
BLOCKS IN ACTION](#)



## OVERVIEW

Building Blocks (BB) is an online digital transfer management and inter-organizational assistance coordination system based on blockchain technology. For food assistance, WFP deposits value into a beneficiary's BB digital accounts. Beneficiaries can spend this value at WFP assistance outlets through WFP-partnered retailers. At the end of each month, transaction data stored on BB is used for reconciliation with retailers, who are reimbursed based on actual expenditures. Working with retail partners based in Bangladesh, rather than importing commodities for direct distribution, helps spur sustainable development and boost the local economy. A record of the transaction is updated in real-time on the blockchain, enabling organizations across the humanitarian sector to ensure individuals are receiving the right assistance, at the right time.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Provide coordinated, well-targeted and transparent assistance to common beneficiaries.** Many agencies have their own closed systems for beneficiary information management and assistance delivery. Since these systems are generally not integrated, the outcome is siloed assistance, with high probabilities of exclusion and inclusion errors. BB allows agencies to maintain their own proprietary systems for information management while delivering assistance through a collectively owned, jointly governed platform.
- **Increased convenience and choice.** By having all assistance available in one place, beneficiaries enjoy an improved user experience. For example, in some outlets, beneficiaries can redeem their WFP food and UNICEF soap entitlements in a single transaction.
- **Ensure greater security and privacy for refugees.** Sensitive information is not stored on BB which works off anonymous identifiers that are mathematically scrambled to increase security. BB is a private blockchain network and is only accessible to approved members.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (2021 Q1)

- When BB was first introduced in the Rohingya refugee camps in March 2020 it served 46,000 refugees at one assistance outlet. By end-March

2021, it served up to 825,000 refugees at 19 assistance outlets.

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, BB was quickly adapted from biometric authentication to QR code scans of the UNHCR Smart Cards for beneficiary authentication and transactions. The switch to QR codes reduced the likelihood of virus transmission by facilitating contactless interaction between beneficiaries and retailers.
- In response to the devastating fire which broke out in March, Building Blocks, SCOPE and an in-house app were used in an innovative combination to facilitate a rapid cross-program response to the crisis. Beneficiaries from affected camps who lost their UNHCR card or other ID were still able to redeem their remaining and future entitlements through Building Blocks using fingerprint biometrics.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- **Demonstrate inter-agency collaboration.** WFP is in discussion with agencies who have expressed interest in becoming a member or co-owner of the platform.
- **Provide “cash-like” assistance that increases choice and convenience.** By connecting small Bangladeshi retail shops in the camps to BB, WFP hopes to enable refugees to spend part of their entitlements in public markets. Not only will this allow refugees to purchase food and non-items flexibly at better prices, but it will also benefit the host community.
- **Ensure all WFP assistance is delivered and tracked digitally.** As connectivity across the camps expands, WFP will ensure all types of assistance are delivered through BB (e.g. nutrition, cash-for-work incentives).
- **Explore information management use cases.** In the camps there are many health providers offering vaccination services and while a common vaccination card exists, refugees often lose it or do not carry it resulting in people getting vaccinated for the same thing multiple times. On BB, the administration of a vaccine can be recorded by a health provider, and all other providers can access the information through the decentralized network.

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## UN Partnerships

### OVERVIEW

WFP works closely with all United Nations agencies present in Cox's Bazar through the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) and has direct partnerships with FAO, IOM, UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR and UNFPA. In addition to joint projects implemented with FAO, IOM and UNHCR, WFP also provides SCOPE digital services for non-food items to partners such as IOM, UNICEF and the Bangladesh Red Cross.

### SAFE ACCESS TO FUEL & ENERGY (SAFE) PLUS

SAFE Plus is a joint project between WFP, FAO and IOM aiming to address cooking fuel needs, environmental degradation and food security for 125,000 Rohingya and affected host community households in Cox's Bazar. For WFP, SAFE Plus is not a stand alone project, but embedded across existing interventions.

### WFP-FAO AGREEMENT

A landmark UN-UN agreement was signed with FAO in April 2021. The agreement is made up of the following five components aiming to enhance self-reliance, livelihoods, and natural resource management in the refugee camps and surrounding host community:

1. Resilience building through self-reliance and livelihoods activities
2. Technical assistance to agro-food systems through connecting local supply with demand
3. Technical assessment of Natural Resources Management in the Rohingya camps
4. Technical assistance for Monitoring and Evaluation activities
5. Technical support in coordinating the Food Security Sector, specifically on agricultural activities

### SITE MAINTENANCE & ENGINEERING PROJECT (SMEP)

WFP, IOM and UNHCR jointly established the SMEP to support the Government of Bangladesh in emergency preparedness, response and rehabilitation. See page 25 for more updates on achievements.

### MARCH FIRE RESPONSE

WFP worked closely with IOM throughout the March fire response to ensure smooth coordination of activities. For instance, WFP distributed water to complement IOM distributions and deployed SMEP machinery and volunteers to assist with waste removal. WFP also set-up two temporary nutrition centres with UNICEF and worked with IOM and UNHCR to ensure beneficiaries' documents lost in the fire were replaced.



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## NGO Partnerships

### OVERVIEW

WFP would not be able to achieve what we do without all our Cooperating Partners. From January to March 2021, WFP implemented activities through 22 partners, including nine national and local NGOs. WFP regards localization as critical to mobilize resources efficiently and sustainably and to build upon the existing human resources, civil society and market structures from the local to the national level. To this end the nine national and local NGO partners handle over 51 percent of all contract value.

### PROPORTION OF FUNDS GOING TO NATIONAL VERSUS INTERNATIONAL NGO PARTNERS

#### INTERNATIONAL NGOs:

Action Aid | CARE | Christian Aid | Concern Worldwide | HelpAge International | Helvetas | ICCO Cooperation | Relief International | Save the Children | Solidarities International | World Concern Medair | World Vision



■ National NGO (51.86%)  
■ International NGO (48.14%)

#### NATIONAL NGOs:

BRAC | Caritas Bangladesh | Centre for Natural Resource Studies | Community Development Centre | Eco Social Development | Nabolok | Resource Integration Centre | Shushilian | Social Assistance and Rehabilitation for the Physically Vulnerable | The Society for Environment and Human Development

### MARCH FIRE RESPONSE

WFP could not have responded so effectively following the March fire without the support of its Cooperating Partners. WFP worked with Save the Children International (SCI), World Vision International (WVI), Resource Integration Centre (RIC) and BRAC to provide rapid response through micronutrient fortified biscuits and cooked meals, and opened hot food kitchens with Action Aid, Concern Worldwide, ICCO Cooperation, RIC, Shushilian and World Vision. WFP also used the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency's (TIKA) kitchen to provide cooked meals.



# Food Security Sector

HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)



- › 50 reporting partners reached over 860,000 Rohingya refugees and 72,000 Bangladeshis in the host community with life-saving food assistance and resilience building activities
- › After the March fire, FSS partners responded immediately to the needs of affected populations by providing emergency food assistance. FSS played a key role in coordinating partners and ensuring the response was as effective and efficient as possible with no overlap

## OVERVIEW

The Food Security Sector (FSS) is committed to saving lives through the coordination of appropriate, efficient and well-resourced food security responses in major emergencies. The FSS in Cox's Bazar was established in 2017 and is led by WFP and FAO and co-chaired by BRAC. Within the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), the FSS is a platform to strengthen food security and livelihood response through operational coordination, information sharing and identifying food security related priorities and solutions. FSS Livelihoods Working Group strengthens coordination of livelihoods and self-reliance interventions to build resilience of Rohingya and host communities.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Support service delivery:** Provide a platform to ensure service delivery is driven by the agreed strategic priorities and develop mechanisms to avoid duplication.
- **Inform and support strategic decision making for the humanitarian response:** Lead joint situation and response analyses, including the identification of gaps, duplications, obstacles in the FSS response and inter-sectoral linkages in prioritizing food security needs and responses.
- **Monitoring implementation** and outcomes of activities conducted under the FSS strategic plan.
- **Contingency planning:** Lead joint contingency planning for potential new events or set-backs.
- **Training and capacity building:** Identify and prioritize stakeholders' training needs.
- **Planning and strategy development:** Develop and adapt plans in line with humanitarian strategic priorities, and ensure adherence to existing standards and guidelines. In liaison with other sectors, closely coordinate planning and implementation of the Joint Response Plan (JRP).
- **Advocacy:** Undertake advocacy activities on behalf of partners and the affected population.

- **Provider of last resort:** Inform lead agencies of priority gaps that cannot be covered by any partner and inform action by lead agencies.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (Q1 2021)

- FSS coordinated 27 organisations to ensure timely and effective life-saving food assistance and livelihood support for Rohingya refugees and host community individuals in Cox's Bazar District in line with the 2021 JRP.
- In response to the March fire, FSS supported operational coordination for the distribution of 1.4 million cooked meals and developed a [response tracker](#) and [guidance note](#) to streamline partners' emergency food response.
- FSS initiated and coordinated response-wide local reusable mask production and distribution to support the District health response and promote local income generating opportunities, including a [second round of mask distributions](#) in the camps completed in February 2021.
- FSS extended a de-duplication exercise among partners providing cash assistance to beneficiaries in host community to avoid overlaps and support targeting.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- Proactively steer the coordination of the food security and livelihoods response through promoting minimum standards, developing guidance on technical issues, and advocacy with relevant local and international actors and government officials.
- Improve food security information for decision making by supporting evidence generation and analyses to identify needs and gaps in coordination with relevant local and international actors and government officials.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Web: [fscluster.org/rohingya\\_crisis](http://fscluster.org/rohingya_crisis)

# Emergency Telecommunications Sector

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- › Data connectivity provided to over **608** humanitarian from **12** local and international NGOs and **seven** UN agencies
- › Security telecommunications services provided to **860** humanitarian from **12** UN agencies



## OVERVIEW

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) is a global network of organizations that work together to provide shared communications services in humanitarian emergencies. ETC is one of the 11 clusters designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and is led by WFP.

In Bangladesh, the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) was activated in 2017 to support the Rohingya crisis response. As voice and data services are extremely limited in the refugee camps, ETS' mandate is to provide: (i) augmented radio (VHF) network for UN staff safety/security and general operational support and (ii) data connectivity for digital assistance services and communication between humanitarian workers.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Maintain existing telecommunications and data connectivity services** to facilitate the entire humanitarian response and ensure the safety and security of UN staff.
- **Conduct capacity building exercises** to strengthen emergency preparedness and response skills of inter-agency responders on the ground and to ensure the sustainability of services when ETS phases out.
- **Coordinate the ETS response and develop and share operational information** to support decision-making, strengthen advocacy efforts, ensure the swift delivery of services and avoid duplication of efforts.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (Q1 2021)

- ETS provided data connectivity services to 37 sites, including e-voucher outlets, logistics and residential hubs, Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI)/ Infection Treatment Centres (ITC), relay sites from where ETS internet signals

are retransmitted, and other UN agency locations. Regular assessments, installations and maintenance activities ensure the full operability of these services.

- In response to the March fire, ETS monitored the radio repeater at the TV tower to ensure it was functional and bought adjacent e-voucher outlets back online four days following the fire. ETS also connected an IOM LPG distribution site to support the digitalization of IOM's shelter and non-food item distributions and began installation of a backup power source.
- ETS continued to provide technical staff and equipment to ensure the whole operational area in Cox's Bazar was covered by security telecommunications services. ETS is establishing an umbrella network, Chātā (meaning umbrella in Bangla), which provides (i) augmented radio (VHF) network and (ii) data connectivity for digital assistance services and communication.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- In 2021 the Sector plans to provide data connectivity to an additional 170 sites and upgrade the VHF radio network.
- Owing to the challenging topography in the camps and to ensure continued communications in case of a natural disaster, ETS has ordered cyclone-resilient towers (30 m and 70 m) which will serve as backbone to data connectivity and radio services. ETS is awaiting government approval to import and erect these towers.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Logistics Sector

### HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- > 39 partners | 5 warehouses | 3,820 m<sup>3</sup> storage
- > 6,666 m<sup>3</sup> of relief items stored for 20 organisations
- > 4,852 m<sup>3</sup> of relief items transported for 25 organisations, including items for the March fire response
- > Four training sessions for 102 staff from 46 organisations
- > 4 coordination meetings held with 27 organisations



### OVERVIEW

As part of the government-led humanitarian response, the Logistics Sector supports the humanitarian community in Cox's Bazar with coordination, information management/ geographic information systems (GIS) and facilitation of common logistics support. The sector works in collaboration with the government, humanitarian partners, Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) and other key stakeholders.

### OBJECTIVES

- **Coordination** to ensure the humanitarian community has access to resources required for operational support and emergency preparedness while minimising duplication of efforts.
- **Information management** to support operational decision making, respond to logistical challenges and improve the efficiency of the logistics response, especially during cyclone and monsoon seasons.
- **Provision of common logistics services**, such as storage and prepositioned storage assets, to allow rapid scale up and mitigate disruptions due to natural disasters.
- **Capacity strengthening** to develop operational expertise and reduce the need for temporary logistics services, while ensuring participation of local logistic actors and expanding capacity strengthening and preparedness activities delivered in Bangla.

### ACHIEVEMENTS (Q1 2021)

- The Logistic Sector conducted three rounds of Warehouse and Inventory Management trainings and, in partnership with IOM, a Pharmacy Management, Quantification and Waste Disposal Training with a total of 102 participants from 46 organisations.

- Partner organisations received the 2021 [Warehouse Capacity Assessment](#) and [Cyclone/ Monsoon Self-Assessment](#) to facilitate internal preparedness activities prior to the monsoon season.
- In response to the March fire, the Logistics Sector supported with skilled labour and loaned out assets, including light towers; generators; and an ablution unit, mobile storage unit and prefab. In partnership with Humanity & Inclusion - Atlas Logistique (HI-Atlas), the Sector transported 170 mt of relief items for eight organisations. A [fire response map](#) was developed to indicate items loaned per location and cargo transported.
- The Sector designed and conducted a rapid assessment to identify access constraints on the roads used by humanitarian partners to reach the camps. Traffic and access to the camps are being updated in the Logics Information Exchange Platform (LOG.IE) [Physical Access Constraint \(PAC\) map](#).

### THE WAY FORWARD

- The Sector will carry out cyclone preparedness activities and training on relevant topics (dependent on COVID-19 restrictions), a review of its 72 hour and contingency plans, and the Gaps and Needs Assessment (GNA).
- Coordination and information sharing will continue focusing on emergency preparedness and response, capacity strengthening, and stronger engagement with national partners and RRRC counterparts in Cox's Bazar.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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# Engineering

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- > 9,651 women and 1,585 men engaged (including 63 people with disabilities)
- > 715 m of new road constructed in the camps
- > 25,619 km of canals dredged
- > Two Nutrition Centres constructed in the camps (construction of an additional centre postponed due to the March fire)

### OVERVIEW

Access to the refugee camps is critical to the humanitarian response, particularly given Cox's Bazar's geographic vulnerability. Through providing essential engineering services, WFP ensures humanitarian and development partners can easily access intervention areas and have safe facilities to store food supplies. WFP Engineering encompasses the WFP, IOM and UNHCR joint Site Maintenance and Engineering Project (SMEP), Facility Management team and Cash-based-Transfers (CBT) engineering team. It also provides technical support to programme units including disaster risk reduction and community workfare activities.

### OBJECTIVES

- **Ensure unhindered access** to the camp area through maintaining vehicular access.
- **Provide critical, safe infrastructures and facilities** through site preparation work, rehabilitation and construction.
- **Maintain well-functioning drainage systems** through clearing and strengthening primary drainage channels.
- **Facilitate rapid response** through the pre-positioning of materials and other supplies.

### ACHIEVEMENTS (Q1 2021)

- SMEP constructed 715 m of new road providing vehicular access to camps and key facilities.
- SMEP completed land development for the construction of shelters and speed bumps in Kutupalong megacamp to reduce road accidents.
- In response to the March fire, SMEP deployed light and heavy machinery to remove debris, support the Shelter Sector, and undertake excavation work. SMEP also transported water and cooked meals to affected populations and partnered with IOM for waste removal.

- To assess the extent of damage after the March fire, WFP conducted a Bamboo Bridge Damage Rapid Assessment and developed an [operational map](#) which included all bridges in the affected area. Fifty-eight bridges were identified, of which 30 were destroyed, four heavily damaged, 18 minorly damaged and six still intact.

### THE WAY FORWARD

- SMEP will continue to engage in a multitude of emergency repair and rehabilitation works, including slope stabilization; construction of roads, bridges, culverts and temporary water reservoirs; reinforcement of bridges and hills with terracing; and infrastructure repairs.
- WFP Engineering will continue to build resilience against the effects of inclement weather, such as landslides and flooding, and increase the number of safe spaces for the relocation of impacted refugees.
- WFP Engineering will facilitate the construction of a new office building, and renovation and reconstruction works at Madhuchara Hub.
- To expand contingency planning to retailers and support them in reaching a minimum standard of preparedness to withstand external shocks, WFP will design and implement a set of tailored minimum and advanced preparedness actions (MPA/APA) using the Emergency Preparedness and Response Package approach. WFP is currently working to develop a set of MPAs for retailers (e.g. proper storage of food, and fire safety and hygiene standards).

# Gender

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- > 52% of Rohingya refugees supported through general food assistance are women and girls
- > 30,000 women supported in host community livelihoods programmes
- > 50% of self-reliance beneficiaries are women

### OVERVIEW

WFP Gender Unit works with each programme throughout the project cycle to ensure gender objectives are mainstreamed across all activities. Trainings and capacity building exercises are conducted with WFP staff and Cooperating Partners on basic concepts, frameworks and programmatic applications of gender-transformative approaches. WFP also conducts advocacy and awareness activities, such as the 16-Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence (GBV) and International Women's Day, in collaboration with other agencies.

### OBJECTIVES

**GOAL:** Enable WFP to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment across all activities and ensure the different food security and nutrition needs of women, men, girls and boys are addressed.

- Strengthen adapted food assistance addressing the different needs of women, men, girls, boys and people with disabilities.
- Increase women's participation in food security and nutrition programmes.
- Enhance decision-making by women and girls in households, communities and societies.
- Promote safe and dignified food assistance for women, men, girls, boys and people with disabilities.

### ACHIEVEMENTS (Q1 2021)

- The transition of almost 100 percent of general food assistance beneficiaries to e-vouchers is especially important for women as it gives them a voice and choice in what food they receive. As much as possible, assistance cards are issued in the name of the senior woman of the household, which contributes to enhanced decision-making capabilities and control over resources. Every distribution site also has segregated waiting areas, toilet facilities, breastfeeding corners and help desks managed by at least one-woman staff/volunteer.
- WFP trained 2,369 (379 women and 1,990 men) partner staff and general food assistance

retailers on gender and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

- WFP livelihoods programme in the host communities aims to address the underlying drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition through empowering women economically. Through this intervention, women are being organized into self-help groups that provide a forum for entrepreneurship development, life-skills training and a safe communal space to share any challenges and lessons learned. These groups also provide a support structure to tackle issues such as domestic violence.
- WFP self-reliance programme in the camps aims to mostly target women, especially those heading a household who show higher levels of vulnerability, to strengthen capacities and build resilience through portable skills trainings (e.g. tailoring, mobile phone repairing and mask making). Women also receive life skills and behaviour change communication training, including functional literacy to strengthen their decision-making power at household level.
- WFP, UN Women and FAO organized a dialogue at the Women's Market in the camps to celebrate International Women's Day. WFP also organized a panel discussion with WFP's Country Director and Senior Emergency Coordinator to discuss WFP's role in promoting gender equality.

### THE WAY FORWARD

- WFP aims to engage in wider public advocacy for gender mainstreaming.
- WFP plans to document best practices around gender equality and women's empowerment in Cox's Bazar.
- WFP is developing a pocket guide with gender and PSEA related key messages for retailers and volunteers.
- WFP is developing an analytical piece on gendered and disability inclusion related aspects of food and nutrition security using REVA data.

# Disability Inclusion

## HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- › **899** women with disabilities engaged in livelihoods activities and **three** self-help groups dedicated to women with disabilities. **Four** women and men with disabilities engaged in self-reliance activities.
- › WFP oriented Disability Inclusion Champions from different programmes on the [Disability Inclusion Roadmap 2020-2021](#)
- › **25,700** women and men with disabilities assisted through general food assistance every month. WFP also supports households headed with persons with disabilities with porter services to receive general food assistance from e-voucher outlets.
- › **63** people with disabilities enrolled in SMEP workforce

## OVERVIEW

WFP implements an integrated approach to support the participation and engagement of persons with disabilities across all its programmatic interventions.

## OBJECTIVES

- Ensure all WFP programmes disaggregate data by disability (and sex and age).
- Consult directly with people with disabilities in camps and host communities on barriers and enablers to accessing WFP services.
- Increase opportunities for valued roles for people with disabilities (e.g. in livelihoods and committees, and as volunteers and labourers).
- Develop relationships with disability specific organizations in Cox's Bazar.
- Utilise WFP's reach through Cooperating Partners to communicate basic messaging on disability inclusion.
- WFP offers a porter service to alleviate the burden of carrying heavy food rations.

## ACHIEVEMENTS (Q1 2021)

- The recycling project engaged three people with disabilities in livelihood opportunities using WFP's food assistance by-products.
- WFP provided assistive and flexible nutrition services to parents with disabilities and children with disabilities.
- Through the livelihoods programme, WFP is currently supporting 899 women with disabilities in Ukhiya and Teknaf host communities, providing adapted livelihood opportunities.

- WFP increased leadership roles of women with disabilities in livelihoods self-help groups (SHG), executive committees and union standing committees by forming three SHGs dedicated to women with disabilities.
- SMEP engaged people with disabilities in income generating activities.
- WFP organised a lessons learned workshop for Disability Inclusion Champions from different units exploring the achievements and opportunities to further strengthen disability inclusion in Cox's Bazar.
- Eight disability inclusion champions were trained on accessibility audits and disability data collection by CBM and the Centre for Disability in Development (CDD).

## THE WAY FORWARD

- Once schools reopen in host communities, WFP will collect sex, age and disability disaggregated data of school feeding programmes.
- Through the self-reliance programme, WFP will target around 700 persons with disabilities through partnerships with disability focused organisations in the camps.
- WFP is planning to conduct a series of consultations with beneficiaries with disabilities engaged in different programmes to understand the barriers and opportunities.
- WFP is developing a dashboard to visualise the targets and achievements of WFP Cox's Bazar Disability Inclusion Action Plan to further strengthen inclusion efforts.

## Protection

### HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY—MARCH 2021)

- > 56 protection referral cases supported
- > 52 calls received through the Hotline
- > 2,369 partner staffs and retail staffs trained (379 women and 1,990 men)

### OVERVIEW

WFP's protection work is streamlined across the programme ensuring the rights and safety of beneficiaries during the implementation of activities.

### OBJECTIVES

- **Ensure protection during food assistance delivery:** To reduce any existing risks while providing food assistance, WFP (i) ensures that the geographical selection of distribution sites considers beneficiaries' vulnerabilities; (ii) provides access to clean and safe drinking water, a breastfeeding corner and crowd control measures and (iii) offers a porter service to alleviate the burden of carrying heavy food rations. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP also ensures good hygiene practices and physical distancing are maintained with temperature checks and hand washing points at all sites.
- **Protect beneficiary data:** WFP uses SCOPE to ensure beneficiary data is protected. Building Blocks further protects beneficiaries' data as individuals are issued with an encrypted ID or code number to distinguish them from others without revealing their true identities.
- **Enhance accountability:** Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (hotline and helpdesks) are in place across all programmes and regular community consultations are organized with community leaders, religious leaders, persons with disabilities and beneficiaries to understand challenges faced and potential protection risks.
- **Ensure protection is mainstreamed across all activities and assessments:** WFP conducts protection mainstreaming trainings and situational awareness raising sessions for WFP and partner staff and volunteers. Disability inclusive questions are included in all community consultation questionnaires.

- **Contribute to women empowerment and gender equality:** Through the Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE Plus) project, WFP ensures women and girls do not have to collect firewood, therefore reducing potential protection risks.

### ACHIEVEMENTS (Q1 2021)

- WFP trained 26 partner staff on child protection and 2,369 retail and partner staff on protection mainstreaming, gender and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).
- WFP supported 56 protection referral cases including women and child headed households, gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, persons with disabilities, older people and pregnant and nursing mothers.
- Monthly protection monitoring continued since the COVID-19 outbreak and findings were shared to inform necessary programme amendments.
- WFP conducted a protection assessment for the livelihoods' mobile wallet transfer initiative.

### THE WAY FORWARD

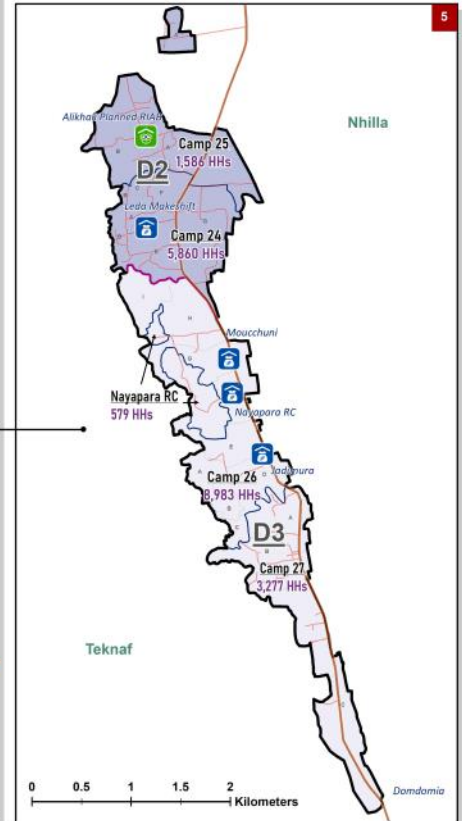
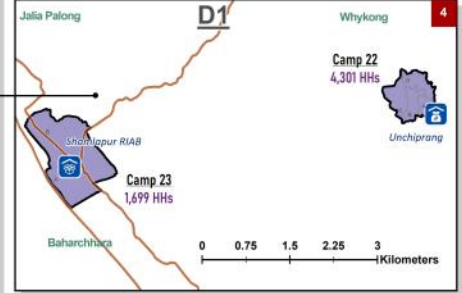
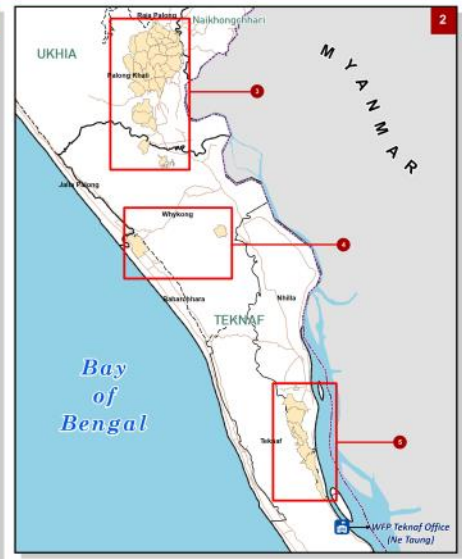
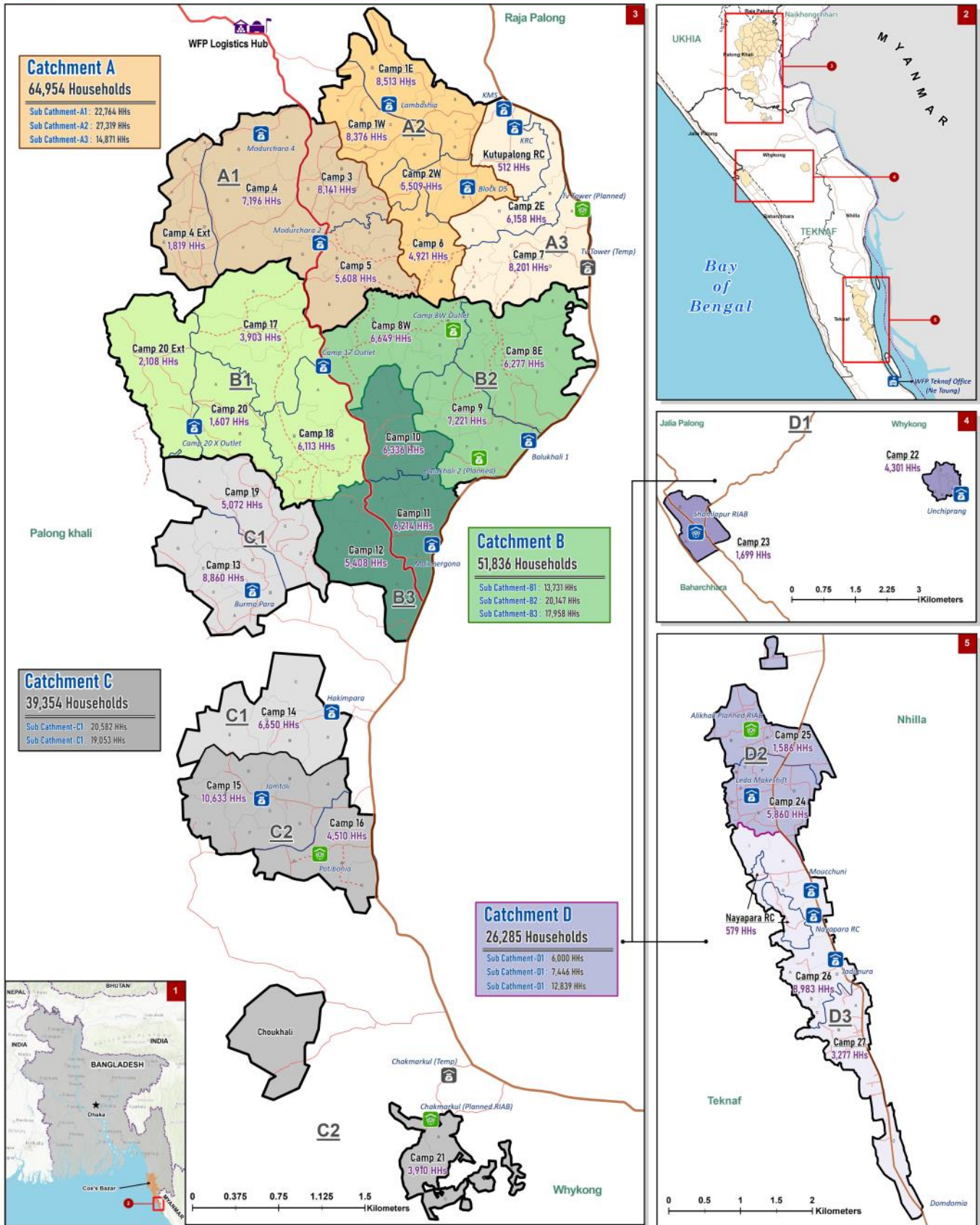
- Introduce GBV and child protection referral pathways for WFP in collaboration with the Protection Working Group.
- Through protection analysis and monitoring, identify challenges and gaps faced by people with disabilities and older people receiving WFP services.
- Introduce service mapping at WFP e-voucher shops to make effective referral pathways for beneficiaries.
- Review and improve WFP complaints and feedback mechanism.
- In collaboration with FSS, conduct a workshop on accountability to affected populations and referral pathways.

# Map of Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar



**vam**  
food security analysis

**WFP Operational Catchments 2021**  
**COX'S BAZAR - BANGLADESH**

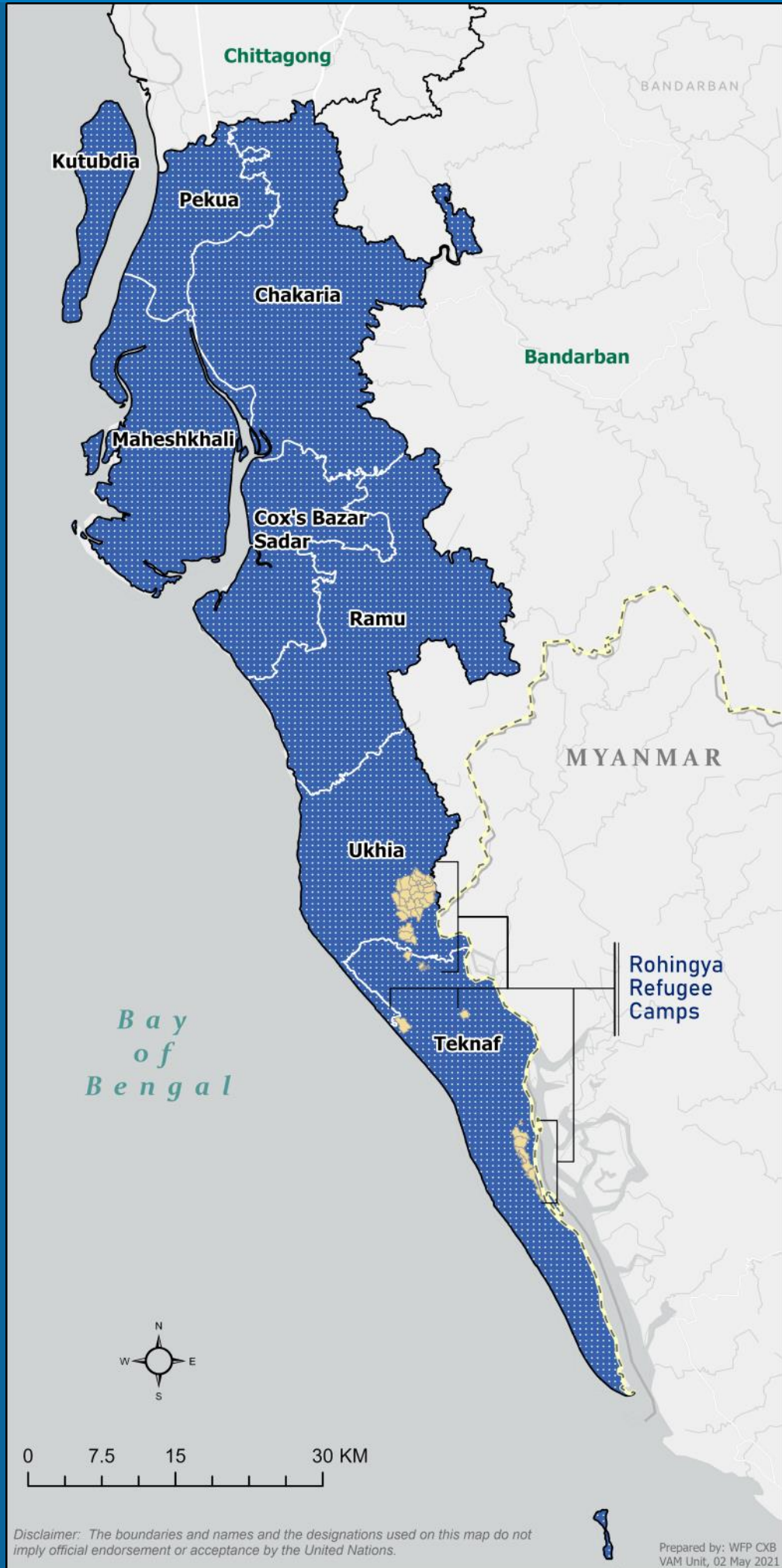


Operational Retail Outlet	Planned Retail Outlet	Planned Retail In A Box (RIAB) Outlet	Highway	 N W    E S
Temporary Retail Outlet	Operational Retail In A Box (RIAB) Outlet	Camp Boundary	Army Road	
			Secondary Road Proposed Road	

Data Source: WFP, ISCG, UNHCR  
Prepared by: WFP-CBS-IMM Unit  
Date: 02 March 2021  
Spatial Reference: GCS WGS 1984

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

# Map of Cox's Bazar



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Prepared by: WFP CXB  
VAM Unit, 02 May 2021

**WFP**



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