

MYANMAR-BANGLADESH REFUGEE CRISIS

3 / End-of-Year Report

Caring For Children in Difficult Conditions

Mahmuda gave birth to her son, Mohamed, just this year, in the refugee camp. With no access to health facilities, she delivered on a dirt floor, in a bamboo and tarp shelter. Mahmuda has two other children, Habiba and Kulsum, both little girls aged 4 and 3 respectively. She knows the difficulties of caring for an infant with the bare basics they had and the conditions they were living in – risks of infection, illness and malnutrition were all higher than normal.



Mahmuda and her children

Mahmuda heard of World Vision’s Women, Adolescent and Young Children Space (WAYCS) in her area. She started going to the WAYCS during her last trimester. There, she learnt about the importance of having a trained health worker to support her during her delivery, reproductive health, child nutrition, exclusive breastfeeding and good hygiene practices. She also received psychosocial counselling to help cope with the stress of her experiences.

Mahmuda and her family escaped their village last August, when their homes were torched. She was one-month pregnant at the time. “I was vomiting as we hid in bushes,” she recalled, “We walked for three days and nights to reach Bangladesh.”

Today, armed with information from the WAYCS, Mahmuda is better able to care for her children. “Mohamed is 45 days old now and I want to breastfeed him until he is six months old,” she says. “After that, I will feed him rice, potatoes and vegetables. I am also more cautious now about hygiene practices. I make sure to wash my hands each time I feed my children, something I didn’t do before. Now I will because I want to protect their health.”

Overview of disaster/crisis

When violence broke out in Rakhine State, Myanmar, in August 2017, hundreds of thousands fled their burning villages and the strife which arose, in desperate search for safety. Many of those who fled identify as Rohingya, and close to 80% were women and children. As of Oct 2018, 700,000 people had fled across the border into Bangladesh. **At present, there are close to 900,000 refugees from Myanmar in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.**

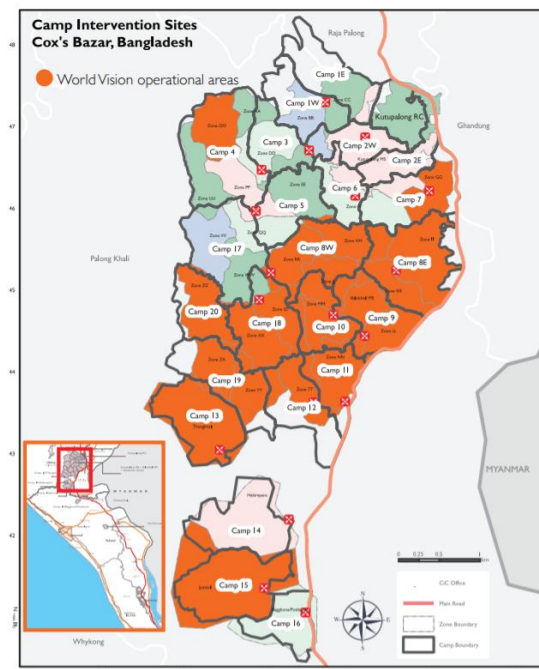


One of the refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar – Jamtoli.

Key Challenges

Humanitarian response has been ongoing since September 2017, and extensive aid has been provided. However, due to the scale of the crisis and its complex, long-drawn challenges, refugees struggle with obstacles such as:

- Child marriage remains a great child protection concern, with young girls at greater risk of being married when families struggle with vulnerability and uncertainty
- Some 1.2 million refugees and host communities need continued food assistance in order to avoid malnutrition and hunger
- As many as 208,418 under-5 year olds and 107,445 pregnant and lactating women are at risk of becoming undernourished. The prevalence of acute malnutrition among refugee children has exceeded emergency threshold levels stipulated by the World Health Organisation.
- Refugees and host communities lack access to health services and there is a strain on medical facilities. Conditions are exacerbated by poor water and sanitation.



Map of refugee camps, with World Vision's work marked in orange

Highlights of WV humanitarian response

In the last year, World Vision reached **264,881 people** with life-saving humanitarian assistance.

Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Some **158,000 beneficiaries** received clean water, sanitation and hygiene support, through:
 - Hygiene kits and hygiene promotion sessions which educate and help to safeguard them from preventable hygiene-related diseases
 - Newly-installed deep-tube wells
 - Repaired tube wells
 - Chlorination tablets to purify water
 - Better ventilated latrines



Two children receiving hygiene education and washing their hands at a deep tube well

Shelter and Non-Food Items

- Some **44,280 people** were reached with upgraded shelter kits, including:
 - Bamboo, tarpaulins, rope, nails and sandbags.
 - blankets and sleeping mats
- **22,500 people** benefitted from cash-for-work activities
 - These sessions averaged 10-12 work days
 - Activities improved general camp conditions through: drainage excavation and cleaning, bamboo bridge repair, pathway and hill staircase levelling



Refugee men engaging in a cash-for-work activity involving the building of sand bunds and staircases

Nutrition and Healthcare

- **30,535 children and mothers** received nutrition support
 - Children under 2 years old were screened for malnutrition
 - More than 450 cases of child malnutrition were detected and referred
 - Facilitators were trained in nutrition and psychosocial care to support the specific needs of child refugees
 - Lactating mothers received feeding counselling and fresh food vouchers which allowed them to purchase nutritious food to ensure that they can continue to breastfeed their infants



Refugee mothers with children under-2 receiving specific counselling and support at a World Vision-run Women, Adolescent and Young Child Space. Children are also screened from malnutrition.

Child Protection

- **12 Child-Friendly Spaces established in 5 camps**, providing:
 - 1,720 children each week, with child protection and learning activities
 - 276 community leaders trained in child protection, and how to identify and report child protection concerns within the community
 - New child protection management committees and advocacy campaigns



Children happier and enjoying the time they spend at World Vision-run Child-Friendly Spaces



Moving forward

In the year ahead, we look to **support the nutrition needs of lactating and expectant mothers in order to avoid maternal and infant malnutrition.** This will be done through the provision of fresh food vouchers entitling vulnerable mothers to food items like eggs and fish, otherwise difficult to obtain.

This will represent a targeted effort at nutrition and healthcare of mothers and children, while the holistic response continues in areas of education (providing learning centres for refugee children), income generation activities, Child-Friendly Spaces for child protection and psychosocial support, as well as providing access to clean water and sanitation.

To make a difference to more children struck by or are vulnerable to disasters and crises, please support The Survival Fund by World Vision Singapore, a way to allow us to stand in the gap while both bracing at-risk communities and providing relief to those recovering from disasters. To learn more, visit www.worldvision.org.sg/disaster.