COVID-19: Preparedness and response for the Rohingya refugee camps and host communities in Cox’s Bazar District
Weekly Update #10 | 17 May 2020

Highlights

“"I feel that I can support my people to protect them from Coronavirus by listening to their worries and giving them information.””

– Noor Ahmed*, a Rohingya woman outreach volunteer. She is one of many Rohingya women volunteers at the frontline of the COVID-19 response who are sharing prevention messages in their communities and producing protective masks. Rohingya women like Noor have noted their appreciation for the opportunity to support their communities to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly as they are able to leave their homes and relieve the tension and anxiety of the pandemic situation. Read more

4 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Rohingya refugee camps. 199 confirmed cases in the District – see IEDCR

243,775 individuals in the camps and host community participated in community engagement activities on COVID-19

38,801 students in the District received high energy biscuits as part of a school feeding programme

44,972 WASH facilities and public buildings were disinfected in the camps and host communities

100 % nutrition frontline staff and volunteers in the camps and host community were oriented on COVID-19

11 May a consultation paper by UN Women and IOM was published on Rohingya community social dynamics and COVID-19

Sector Preparedness and Response

Health Sector

Health Sector partners continued to support the Government in surveillance, testing, and case management for COVID-19 this week, isolating and treating the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 among refugees, and rapidly tracing their contacts. Partners completed key COVID-19 trainings including on Biosafety and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) for COVID-19 Sample Collection and Transportation with 31 participants who will handle mainly samples from the camps; IPC for COVID-19 in Isolation and Treatment Centres (ITCs) with 21 doctors from Bangladesh Civil Service who will support patient care in ITCs in Ramu and Chakaria Upazila Health Complexes; and Training of Trainers on Clinical Case Management for COVID-19 with 39 participants from health posts, primary health care facilities and field hospitals.
**WASH Sector**

WASH Sector partners reached 208,660 individuals with approved COVID-19 messages through a neighborhood-based approach, and 315,778 individuals through mass media in Cox’s Bazar District, including host and refugee communities. In the camps, WASH Sector partners provided soap to 21,591 households and family hygiene kits to 16,748 households; and installed 9,453 hand-washing stations in public places, at household level and near toilets, as well as at 15 entry points to the camps, where temperature screening is also being carried out. In the host community and camps, WASH Sector partners disinfected 44,972 WASH facilities and public buildings; and supported 6 ITCs with 390 hygiene kits.

**Communication with Communities Working Group (CwC WG)**

Risk Communication Technical Working Group developed key messages on mental health and psychosocial support for the host and Rohingya communities, and with the support of UNICEF, WHO, TWB and BBC Media Action produced COVID 19 FAQs. BBC Media Action published What Matters issue 37 focusing on host community perceptions of COVID-19. CwC WG partners organized 16 cascade training sessions on COVID-19 with 465 staff and volunteers. CwC WG partners reached 243,775 people in the camps and host community with key COVID-19 messages through community engagement activities including 26,844 neighborhood-based sessions, 3,993 community consultations, 667 listening groups, 40 sessions for older persons, 184 video/film viewings, and 3,179 sessions by religious leaders. CwC WG partners organized announcements on COVID-19 awareness via loudspeakers and megaphones on CNG/Tomtom/auto-rickshaws in 34 camps, and in Cox’s Bazar Sadar, Pekua, Maheshkali and Kutubdia. For community feedback and complaints, 56 information service centers and help desks were operational in the camps and 4 information service centers were active in the host community. CwC WG published its 6th COVID-19 Risk Communication and Community Engagement Update, which includes the latest 6 audios and 6 video programs on COVID-19 developed by partners.

**Nutrition Sector**

Nutrition Sector partners trained more than 15,800 mothers and 300 adolescent girls in the camps on measuring Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) to check nutritional status of their children and refer to integrated nutrition facilities. Nutrition Sector COVID-19 Master Trainers oriented frontline staff and volunteers on COVID-19 in the camps and host community, achieving 100% coverage. In the camps and host community, Nutrition Sector partners trained 289 staff and volunteers on mobile nutrition; distributed 384 guidance materials on disinfection during COVID-19 to 32 integrated nutrition facilities; and reached over 23,000 Rohingya mothers and caregivers and 7,000 Bangladeshi mothers and caregivers with COVID-19 hygiene messages through the infant and young child feeding practices in emergencies counseling and other nutrition education sessions.

**Food Security Sector (FSS)**

FSS partners stepped up their response to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in the host community. World Vision, UNDP and Caritas provided multi-purpose cash grants to 4,616 households in Ukhiya and Teknaf. WFP started distribution of cash grants to 5,032 households in Teknaf and 2,679 in Ukhiya, as well as distribution of high energy biscuits to 38,801 students at their households in Cox’s Bazar District, as part of a school feeding programme aiming to reach 134,519 students. UN Women provided livelihood support through mask production to 45 Rohingya women volunteers. FSS held an information management webinar for partners to strengthen information sharing and partner reporting for operational coordination.
**Protection Sector**

In the camps, Community Outreach Members conducted 1,819 sessions on COVID-19 and monsoon/cyclone preparedness, reaching 9,324 people including 1,701 older persons and 170 persons living with disabilities; and reached 7,411 people including 3,620 women through 1,688 household visits and 133 monitoring visits. Protection Emergency Response Units and protection partners in the camps also conducted COVID-19 awareness sessions and reached 43,000 individuals. Protection Sector including GBV and Child Protection Sub-Sectors released a brief on the sector's COVID-19 strategy and engagement including emerging protection trends, response, recommendations and advocacy points. Anti-Trafficking Working Group partners shared messages on risks of dangerous onward movements and trafficking to 515 refugees. GBV Sub-Sector partners provided Psychological First Aid and psychosocial support services to 711 individuals in women/girls safe spaces and multipurpose women centres in 11 camps; trained 416 volunteers including 314 women on GBV prevention/response, gender and PSEA; and conducted GBV and COVID-19 awareness sessions for 998 individuals. Community engagement facilitators and mobilizers conducted COVID-19 and IPC training for 36 Majhis and 11 Imams in 6 camps. Child Protection Sub-Sector continued remote case management and formed ad hoc working groups focusing on emergency preparedness, health, alternative care and child protection mainstreaming to support other sectors’ initiatives to protect children.

**Education Sector**

Education Sector partners distributed 13,914 caregiver-led learning guidelines in the camps; oriented 42 learning facilitators in the host community on COVID-19 awareness to distribute hygiene kits for 1,335 learners; and provided 11,820 Burmese Language Instructors (BLI) with COVID-19 awareness audio messages and home-based learning instructions. BLIs shared COVID-19 education guidelines with learners and caregivers in 34,300 households in 28 camps.

**Site Management Site Development (SMSD) Sector**

SMSD volunteers and staff reached 299,968 individuals including 13,595 women with COVID-19 messages in the 17 camps. SMSD Sector partners supported the return of the boat survivors to their respective camps to rejoin their families following completion of quarantine. SMSD Sector in coordination with the American Red Cross, oriented 288 volunteers including 61 women from 16 camps on cyclone preparedness, ensuring physical distancing, and provided each volunteer with 2 soaps and 10 face masks. SMSD Sector partners supported WASH actors to distribute 498 hygiene kits to Site Management Volunteers, Disaster Management Units, Imams, and committees; and supported infrastructure upgrade of one MSF ITC including establishing a drainage system.

**Logistics Sector**

From 11-12 May, Logistics Sector published its COVID-19 Concept of Operations (CONOPs), CONOPs Map and Standard Operating Procedures for COVID-19 Temporary Storage and Transport on the Logistics Sector Bangladesh website to address specific logistics needs of the humanitarian community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking into account the Government of Bangladesh and WHO guidance to minimise the risk of coronavirus transmission, Logistics Sector prepared and shared with partners a guidance document illustrating how physical distancing can be achieved in vehicles.

**Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG) and Gender Hub**

On 11 May, UN Women and IOM published a consultation paper, addressing social norms dynamics of the COVID-19 impact on the refugee community. GiHA WG and Gender Hub prepared Bangla versions of the Call for Urgent Gender Actions and the Gendered Protection Checklist prepared for ITCs in the camps, in addition to gender modules for training for all health workers and new site management staff that will be rolled-out over the next few weeks. Across 20 camps and in the host community in Ukhiya and Teknaf, 6 CiC Gender Officers, Rohingya women volunteers share their COVID-19 awareness and referral activities on domestic violence. Photo: UN Women
40 volunteers, and 42 women leaders including transgender networks and civil society organisations continued to conduct COVID-19, PSEA, and GBV referral awareness sessions, and engage in community consultations to identify community-based solutions to gender issues related to COVID-19, primarily targeting women and girls.

The humanitarian community and Government of Bangladesh are working closely in COVID-19 preparedness and response in 34 camps and for vulnerable Bangladeshis across the District, including through:

- delivery of critical assistance and services;
- dissemination of COVID-19 messages by over 2,000 Rohingya and Bangladeshi volunteers;
- establishment of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Isolation and Treatment Centres (SARI ITCs) and support to District facilities in Ramu, Chakaria, the Sadar Hospital and the Upazila health complexes.

**Key challenges** continue to be limited testing, intensive care capacity, skilled medical staff, and supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), restricted telecommunications in the camps and nearby host communities, and maintaining social distancing in the densely populated camps.

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