Food Security Sector Cox's Bazar

Joint Field Visit Refugee camps

19 May 2025

Photos: Cox's Bazar FSS field visit Rohingya refugee camps 19th May 2025

1. Introduction

The Food Security Sector (FSS) is a platform to strengthen food security and Resilience responses through operational coordination, information sharing, provision of technical support and guidance, and identifying food security related priorities and solutions.

Theme: Life Saving Food Assistance / Resilience/Livelihood Activity in the camps.

Joint field visit objectives:

- ✓ Provide insights into implementation of Food Security and Resilience programs.
- ✓ Discuss the impacts and results of the programs with FSS partners.
- ✓ Share good practices & lessons learned for documentation and dissemination.
- ✓ Documenting cross cutting issues for the follow up with respective sectors.

Led by FSS / WFP & FAO: 21 participants / 19 partners: AAB, BRAC, Care Bangladesh, CWW, DRC, ESDO, EPR – ISCG, FIVDB, HI, HAPS, IRC, Mukti, PIB, RDRS, RF, Shushilan, UTTRAN, WVI, FAO and WFP. In total 4 sites visited in the Rohingya refugee camps.

On 19th May in the morning a field visit briefing session organized and facilitated by the FSS coordinator (Mr. Naser Mohmand including introduction of participants, objectives and the plan for the visit explained to all the participants.

Sites visited:

- ✓ Camp 12 hosted by Shushilan/FAO - Branding and Marketing Promotion of Processed Foods in Camp Markets.
- ✓ Camp 11 hosted by AAB/WFP &WVB. Upcycling activity and E Voucher & FFC.
- ✓ Camp 5 hosted by DRC. Vertical gardening programme.
- ✓ Camp 4E hosted by BRAC. Community gardening programme.

The visit facilitated peer learning, encouraged replication of successful interventions, and underscored the importance of coordinated, community-driven food security initiatives.

Organization | Implementing partners

BRAC | MUKTI Cox's bazar

Program/Project title: Humanitarian Assistance for Rohingya and Host Communities in Bangladesh

Visited Activity & location: Community Gardening, Camp 4 extension Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar.

Overview: To empower Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and enhance food security and income generation, a comprehensive sustainable agriculture initiative has been implemented in Camp 4 Extension, Camp 7, and Camp 15, targeting 5,000 households. The project provided essential agricultural inputs for both summer and winter seasons, including seeds, sack/jute bags, geo bags, nets, rope, bamboo, organic manure, and sex-pheromone traps etc. These inputs supported the establishment of Homestead Gardens as well as Community and Commercial Agriculture, aiming to meet family nutritional needs and generate income through sustainable farming practice using different climate smart agricultural technologies. These are cultivation through sac bags/geo bags, trellis, pit, vertical gardening, multi-layer cropping, composting, yellow trap as sex pheromone trap etc. To optimize the limited land available in the camps, 289

community and commercial gardens have been established, covering over 50 acres acres land in the three camps. Additionally, 32 wastewater recycling systems were installed at tap stands to facilitate irrigation, promoting sustainable water management by reusing wastewater. These systems are currently benefiting more than 1,000 households. Capacity-building activities were also a key component of the initiative. A total of 25 volunteers were trained in homestead production technologies and data collection to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of agricultural practices. This initiative aims to promote self-sufficiency in food production, equipping refugees with the knowledge and skills necessary for sustainable agriculture and long-term resilience.

Project duration: July 2023 to December'2025

Number of Beneficiaries and selection criteria:

Direct: 5000 HHs (26338 individuals), **Indirect:** 26338 Individuals

Selection Criteria: Vulnerable, women headed, person with disabilities, willing to practice agriculture.

Good Practices:

Re-use of wastewater through recycling for irrigation purposes, Proper use of space for year-round crop production through Community and Commercial gardening, multi-storied gardening; Seed bank for future use and engagement of women in agricultural production towards enhancing women empowerment.

Key Challenges:

Scorching sunlight, drought in dry season, heavy rainfall in monsoon, instability due to armed conflicts and beneficiary's migration, protection issue like stealing of vegetables/fruits/harvest, etc.

Participants Feedback:

The FSS partner visit team was highly pleased with the community garden at Camp 4 Extension, implemented by BRAC. They greatly appreciated the demonstration of six cultivation methods, guided by the Food Security Sector (FSS) and FAO. The partners praised the site as an exemplary model, highlighting the visible demonstration of all components as an ideal showcase. The FSS Coordinator expressed his satisfaction, commenting, "This is an Agricultural Institute," noting that every component was well-organized and had a significant impact on the beneficiaries. He also emphasized its value as a reference of good practice for other partners.

Participants Recommendations

- High value crop under ev-poly shed-lettuce, mushroom, etc
- Raise pit, (Practiced)
- Ring pit,
- Mulching
- Local variety (OP) (practiced)
- Hydro-phonics-Cock sheet
- Bio-char
- Baby plant/ Nursery (started)
- Composting (practiced)
- Propose sector to organize training from Sector for the partners
- Sector can develop a SoP how can market system work properly in the camps

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Organization | Implementing partners

Danish Refugee Council (DRC) | ESDO

Program/Project title: Enhanced food security of the vulnerable youth, men and women of Rohingya Refugees and Host Community in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar through Climate smart agricultural practices

Visited Activity & location: Vertical Gardening by Applying Biochar, Camp 5

Overview: DRC has been working in camps (5, 8E, 8W, 10, 11) and host (Rajapalong, Palongkhali, Jaliapaong, Ratnapalong), implement mostly with implementing partner, ESDO through integrating both its global strategy and country strategy into this joint response plan, aiming to enhance coordination with the food security sector which leads to increase socio-economic access of both Rohingya and host community men and women, elderly people and people with disability (PWD). A total of 8000 households and individuals who are at risk towards the effects of climatic change, will be reached out where 3500 and 4500 Rohingya and host community, respectively, in the field of environmental knowledge development on green agriculture for increasing vegetable & crop production, waste management, climate sensitive innovative interventions, eco based adaptations, nature-based solutions, natural resource management, land stabilization through plantation and some cash-based intervention. Under green agriculture a good number of Rohingya women and host community women will increase their skill and knowledge on vertical gardening, compost preparation, biochar production from bamboo waste and use this compost and biochar in their garden. The food security team will continue to support the most vulnerable and marginalized individuals such as disaster-shocked and survivors of GBV, referred by the protection teams, through cash and or in-kind inputs such as cattle, poultry, sewing machine, vegetable seeds, nursery plants, etc. Finally, establishing strong linkage and coordination with government and other actors including ISCG relevant sectors will also be prioritized.

Project duration: January – December 2025

Number of Beneficiaries and selection criteria:

Direct: Direct: HH/individuals-820, **Indirect:** 4100 (For vertical gardening)

Selection Criteria:

- Through DRC's selection criteria using matrix, beneficiaries are selected-vulnerable HH (Female headed HH/widow/separated/divorced, HH with PWD, pregnant/lactating child under 2 years, disaster/natural-shocked individuals, HH head with no income source, HH head with negative coping strategy- debt/selling assets)
- Committed to attend training and interest in vertical gardening
- None/underserved by NGO/GO
- The long list of beneficiaries are ranked/scored through using beneficiary selection matrix (comprising of vulnerability + technical score) and then selected those who ranked/scored more

Good practices:

- The beneficiaries received high value vegetables seeds, bamboo & compost (Bitter gourd, pumpkin, bottle gourd, cucumber, biochar, bamboo)
- The biochar (soil improver) provided by DRC/ESDO are being used by beneficiaries as while receiving training they come to know about beneficial impact of biochar on soil as below:
  - ✓ Improve soil quality (soil texture & structure)
  - ✓ Carbon sequestration
  - ✓ Improve pH in soil
  - ✓ CEC (Cation-Exchange-Capacity) Etc.
- After applying biochar in vegetables garden, there is drastic change of soil texture having good vegetables' production impact e.g rapid growth, vigor etc.
- The beneficiaries are hopeful to get good production of vegetables.

Key Challenges:

- Less space for vegetables gardening

- Infertile land
- No irrigation facility
- No facility for biochar production at camp level (as biochar is produced from pyrolysis of dry bamboo)

Participants Feedback:

Biochar is a good soil improver especially appropriate for camp soil to make good soil texture

Participants Recommendations

- Training of pumpkin plants for better production
- Tinning of pumpkin plants for better production
- Mulching of pumpkin pits/plants

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Organization | Implementing partners

FAO / ILO | Shushilan

Program/Project title: Strengthening Skills and Entrepreneurship in Agro-Food Systems for the Host Communities and Rohingya People in Cox's Bazar

Visited Activity & location: Branding and Marketing Promotion of Processed Foods in Camp Markets, Camp 12 Darbar Hall

Contact person: Atanu Bhattacharjee, National Climate-Smart Agriculture Specialist, **Cell #:**01713052679, **Email:** Atanu.Bhattacharjee@fao.org

Overview: One-third of the population in Cox's Bazar lives below the poverty line, a situation worsened by the large influx of Rohingya refugees. In response, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), launched the "Strengthening Skills and Entrepreneurship in Agro-Food Systems for Host Communities and Rohingya People in Cox's Bazar" project in January 2022. The initiative aims to enhance livelihoods, food security, and economic resilience through skills development, sustainable farming practices, and market integration.

Under this project, FAO supported 2,500 smallholder and marginal farmers with agricultural inputs and training on climate-smart techniques and high-value crop production. Additionally, 50 Local Service Providers (LSPs) and 20 Digital Service Providers (DSPs) were developed to provide advisory and digital extension support. To strengthen market access, 10 Aggregation Centers (ACs) were established, reducing transportation costs and enabling fair pricing. Agriculture fairs and market linkage workshops further facilitated connections with output market actors, including those in Fresh Food Corners (FFC) inside the camps. As a result, vegetable yields increased from 94 kg to 108 kg per decimal, and market sales rose from 1.4 MT to 2 MT, boosting incomes for 30% of farmers.

For the Rohingya community, 2,500 beneficiaries received vegetable seeds and training in homestead gardening, producing 170 kg per household, consuming 117 kg, and selling 53 kg, earning an average profit of USD 20. Additionally, 2,500 individuals are now receiving training in homestead gardening, food processing, and farm machinery maintenance, aligning with their future aspirations and immediate food security needs.

Project duration: January 2022 – December 2024

Number of Beneficiaries and selection criteria:

Direct: Direct: 5000 HHs (2500 Host & 2500 Rohingya), **Indirect:** 25,000 participants

Selection Criteria: Bangladeshi host and local community farmers (beneficiary) selection criteria.

Rohingya community beneficiary selection criteria

- The household must have adequate space for homestead gardening.
- At least one member must be willing and physically able to actively engage in gardening activities.
- Only one beneficiary will be selected per Rohingya household to ensure broad and equitable coverage.
- Households currently not receiving similar homestead gardening assistance (e.g., seeds, tools, training) from other UN agencies or NGOs will be prioritized.
- Priority will be given to households with one or more of the following characteristics:
  - Women-headed households
  - Female household's members
  - Pregnant or lactating women

- Children under five years of age
- Persons with disabilities
- Households with youth members willing to participate in gardening activities will be given preference.
- Selected beneficiaries must commit to attending basic gardening training and follow-up sessions.

Good practices:

- Developed Master Trainers from the Rohingya community on Competency-Based Training (CBT).
- Provided competency-based training on homestead gardening, food processing and preservation and farm machinery repair to the Rohingya participants (2500 HHs)
- Conducted training on packaging and labeling for participants involved in food processing and preservation training.
- Established market linkages between FFC and Aggregation Centers.
- Facilitated MoU signing between Aggregation Centers and private sector partners.
- Registered Aggregation Centers with the Department of Social Welfare.
- Increased homestead vegetable production among host communities and camp participants.

Key Challenges:

- Dropout of training participants during the Competency-Based Training (CBT).
- Lack of suitable venues in the Rohingya camps for conducting CBT sessions.
- Difficulty in ensuring job placements for participants trained in farm machinery repair.
- Need for proper pricing mechanisms from the Fresh Food Corner (FFC) to Aggregators of Aggregation Centers.

Participants Feedback:

- This was a unique event in the camps, where Rohingya participants received Competency-Based Training (CBT) in the agriculture sector. After completing the training, they showcased their homemade food items for branding and market promotion.
- Participants highlighted the importance of adopting a Training-of-Trainers (ToT) approach to ensure scalability and sustainability.
- They also emphasized the need to address hygiene issues observed during the visit.
- Moreover, participants acknowledged the value of inter-agency collaboration and stressed the importance of developing ToT programs and livelihood-focused skills training.

Participants Recommendations

Participants recommended that Rohingya participants should be developed as Trainers of Trainers (ToT) to build local capacity and ensure sustainability.

Organization | Implementing partners

WFP/AAB

Program/Project title: Green Skills Development – Resilience.

Visited Activity & location: Upcycling activity, at camp -11

Contact person: Nazia Afroz, Programme Policy Officer, Cell #: +8801716829219, Email: nazia.afroz@wfp.org

Overview: Upcycling and solid waste management remain significant challenges in the Rohingya response but also offer unique opportunities for value creation. WFP aims to reduce waste and promote environmental sustainability by transforming materials—such as aluminum wrappers from biscuits and Super Cereal Plus packages—into reusable products through upcycling initiatives.

Project duration: February 2025 – January 2026

Number of Beneficiaries and selection criteria:

Direct: Direct: HH/individuals-1200, **Indirect:** 6000 Individuals

Selection Criteria:

Vulnerable Rohingya male and female.

Good practices:

The project will provide 2-day capacity development training to 1,200 participants on waste management, occupational safety, and use of protective equipment, with special support and assistive devices for Persons with Disabilities. Life skills and foundation training (numeracy, literacy, financial literacy, and nutrition) will be conducted regularly, along with weekly block-based awareness sessions on clean environment, protection, and health.

Key Challenges:

Key challenges during upcycling project implementation include limited market access, low participant skill levels, and irregular supply of recyclable materials. Infrastructure and equipment constraints, inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, and health and safety risks also pose difficulties. Additionally, cultural barriers, weak coordination with stakeholders, lack of community awareness on waste segregation, and sustainability issues affect smooth implementation.

Participants Feedback:

The upcycling activity has created meaningful livelihood opportunities, especially for women and Persons with Disabilities, by turning waste into marketable products. Participants have gained valuable skills in production, waste management, and occupational safety. However, to enhance impact, there is a need to strengthen market linkages, improve quality control, ensure steady raw material supply, and provide ongoing technical support. Community engagement and awareness on waste segregation have also shown positive progress but require further reinforcement.

Participants Recommendations

Ensure regular supply of raw materials, including biodegradable options, and improve

market access for products. Provide advanced skills training and upgrade production centers for better safety and comfort. Increase inclusive roles for Persons with Disabilities, raise community awareness on waste segregation, and offer incentives to motivate participants.

REMARKS

- Use of biodegradable materials can enhance product sustainability and environmental impact.
- Continued mentorship and technical support are essential for long-term success and quality improvement.

Organization | Implementing partners

WFP/ WVI

Program/Project title: General Food Assistance (GFA)

Visited Activity & location: Outlet Operation, Mainnerghona Outlet, Camp-11, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar

Contact person: Khandoker Imtiaz Hossain, Program Manager, GFA, WVB, Cell #: 01712564300, Email: Khandoker_imtiaz_hossain@wvi.org

Overview: The title of the project is Provide Food nutrition and Self-assistance to Crisis affected population. It has four objectives, which are as follows:

Objective -1: All Rohingya refugees will receive a value voucher to meet their minimum food requirement.

Objective -2: Refugees will have freedom of choice to select their preferred food commodities.

Objective-3: Refugees will have access to food during all emergency situations.

Objective-4: The Rohingya population will have access to fresh, vegetables, poultry, and fish

Based on the objectives the main activities are as follows:

- Prepare monthly distribution plan and lead sensitization and mobilization
- Coordinate with CIC, SMS, protection, gender stakeholders and WFP
- Monthly Meeting with RFSC volunteer, retailers
- Camp coordination, DMC and others emergency meeting and facilitate food sector meeting
- Ensure SCOPE cards
- Prepare and implement integrated Rapid Response (RR)
- Establish efficient and dynamic complaint-feedback mechanism (CFM)
- Strong relation with local retailers and Rohingya volunteers

During the Rapid Response GFA follows RR guidelines:

- Fortified Biscuits - HEB (High Energy Biscuit) distribution: Immediate food response depending on beneficiaries who have no access to cooking facilities and food storage. Emergency response within - 02 to 24 hours. Quantity of HEB per family – 5 KGs (one carton of 100 Sachets).
- Hot Meal: Emergency response within - 02 to 24 hours. Steamed plain rice-(400 gm) Red Lentil (200 gm), Potato/Mixed Curry – (200 gm).
- One Off GFD: Per HH will receive a 15-day dry food ration – within 2 to 6 days. (Ration size per HH: Rice 30 KGs, Pulse 09 KGs, and Vegetable Oil 03 Liters.
- Lead food distribution as per WFP requirement
- Coordinate with key stakeholders including Protection, Site Management, CiC, WFP
- Formation of dedicated RR team within agreed locations (also based on outlet) and ensuring effective supply and response.
- Rapid Response (RR) requests and share with WFP as per SoP.
- Ensure necessary RR support as per requirements following the standard timeframe.

- Ensure food quality and quantity as per WFP RR guidelines.

Project duration: January 2025 to December 2025

Number of Beneficiaries and selection criteria:

Direct: Direct: HH-43102, Individuals: 212851, **Indirect:** 0

Selection Criteria:

Vulnerable Rohingya male and female as per UNHCR Database

Good practices:

- Daily food commodities provided through Mobilization plan
- Porter supports EVI at the doorstep of the EVI family.
- Control the crowd at the outlet premises

Key Challenges:

- Provide food to Bhashanchar returnee
- Most of the new arrivals are not living in the camp/block; there is no proper way to verify as they have only one smart card for the whole HH.
- A huge number of EVI increased in recent UNHCR/HI assessments. Most of them are not eligible for EVI but in the database shows as EVI
- Pending for printing of lost SCOPE card

REMARKS

- Use of biodegradable materials can enhance product sustainability and environmental impact.
- Continued mentorship and technical support are essential for long-term success and quality improvement.

Photo Gallery: FSS joint field visit 19 May - 2025

Photos: Cox's Bazar FSS field visit Rohingya refugee camps 19th May 2025

Acronyms:

Acs - Aggregation Centers

BRAC - BRAC

CWW – Concern Worldwide

CBT - Competency-Based Training

CEC - Cation-Exchange-Capacity

CiCs – Camp In charge

CFW – Cash for Work

CFM – Complaint Feedback Mechanism

DRC – Danish Refugee Council

DMC – Disaster Management Committee

DRM – Disaster Response and Management

DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction

DSPs – Digital Service Providers

EVI – Extreme Vulnerable Individual

EV – Electronic Voucher

ESDO – Environment and Social Development Organization

FFC – Fresh Food Corner

FB – Fortified Biscuits

FSS – Food Security Sector

ISCG – Inter Sector Coordination Group

LSPs - Local Service Providers

RR – Rapid Response

RFSC – Refugee Food Security Community

SOP – Standard Operating Procedure

WVI – World Vision International

HHs – Households

UN WFP – United Nation World Food Program

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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