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Lessons Learned Report

For refugees' interventions

Emergency Food Security Program

August 2020

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Abbreviations

BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs
CCLC	Community Cooking & Learning Centers
CiC	Camp in Charge
CRM	Complaints and Response Mechanism
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
DC	District Commissioner
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EFSP	Emergency Food Security Program
FFP	USAID's Office of Food for Peace
FFV	Fresh Food Voucher
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
HA	Humanitarian Assistance
HDA	Help Desk Assistant
HH	Household
IGA	Income Generating Activities
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MTC	Multipurpose Training Center
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SoPs	Standard Operating Procedures
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees/ The UN Refugee Agency
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WV	World Vision

1. Introduction

This report summarizes the key learnings and recommendations generated from the discussions in the lessons learned sessions held with project stakeholders for camps interventions during August for the Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP) to Refugees and Host communities in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. EFSP is a two-year emergency food assistance project funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that seeks to meet the immediate life-saving food assistance needs of 39,341 most vulnerable households (HHs), for both the refugee and host community in Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh. EFSP started on 1st August 2019 and the interventions for refugees will be completed by 31st August 2020 whereas host communities' interventions will continue for another year with 31st July 2021 as the end date of the project.

The overall goal of the project is to improve the food security and nutrition status of Rohingya refugees and vulnerable host community members and has two main purposes; 1) Improving access to and consumption of diverse and nutritious foods for 34,112 refugee HHs; while also addressing the short-term food security needs and strengthening the medium-term livelihoods recovery of 5,376 of the most vulnerable host community HH's directly impacted by the refugee influx and, 2) enhancing the capacity of Refugees and Host Communities to withstand future shocks. The main interventions for refugees' beneficiaries intended by the project are as following:

- a) **Unconditional, restricted commodity value-based fresh food vouchers transfers (for 10 months).** With the support of Camp in Charge (CIC) and camp stakeholders (site management, UNHCR, CiC and WFP), 34,112 HHs will be selected to benefit from the fresh food voucher (FFV) modality. Specific consideration is given to, in no particular preference, households (HHs) with pregnant or lactating mothers, children under the age of 5, female headed, containing family members with disability or chronic illness, and/or without any HH member currently paid to volunteer for an aid organization or participating in cash for work.
- b) **Community Cooking & Learning Centers (CCLCs).** The project will establish 62 CCLCs in 6 camps to serve as a gathering point for 3100 women to benefit from support such as cooking demonstrations and nutrition awareness training; training and tools to grow nutritious vegetables around their shelter; personal and family hygiene practices including hand washing demonstrations ; Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) awareness and strategies, including monsoon season risks, cyclone preparedness and fire safety; awareness sessions on safe child care practices, preventing sexual gender based violence (SGBV), and promoting gender empowerment. The community kitchens also provide enrolled women with the opportunity to cook one hot meal for their family per day in a safe environment with other women.
- c) The project will run 6 **Multipurpose Training Centers (MTC)** (4 for women and 2 for men) across 3 camps, serving 4,320 beneficiaries (2,880 women and 1,440 men) between the ages of 18-30. In order to build social cohesion between Rohingya and host communities, the project will aim to include host community individuals for up to 10 percent of participants. Given the limited training options allowed by the Government, the project plans culturally appropriate and feasible modules

such as sewing and embroidery for women's centers, and mat and basket weaving and solar equipment repair for men's centers

Lessons learned workshop was one of key activities planned to be held upon completion of camps interventions in order to identify best practices, challenges and draw lessons and recommendations for operation team for future similar interventions. EFSP MEAL team with the support of operation team for camps side conducted lessons learned workshops with key project stakeholders and beneficiaries in late July and beginning of August and one workshop with EFSP WV staff and donor representative in 10 August 2020. Due to COVID-19 pandemic situation limitations on gatherings and movement, it was not possible to have a joint workshop with all project stakeholders but instead separate sessions were held with key targeted audience/ stakeholders. The sessions with project stakeholders and beneficiaries were held face to face whereas the workshop held with EFSP team, donor reps and WVB staff was held virtually using Zoom platform. All necessary COVID-19 protective and preventive measures were taken for the face to face sessions with beneficiaries, government and community stakeholders

Participants in the Lessons learned events and sessions held

- Beneficiaries (men and women) of camps interventions (CCLCs, MTC and FFV) - 5 sessions
- Key project stakeholders such as CiC representatives, site management sectors representatives, as community leaders such as Majhi and imams (religious leaders) - 3 sessions, and FFV outlets vendors – 1 session.
- EFSP senior management team in country and WVUS, operation team staff for each of the interventions and WV Bangladesh staff from human and resources department, supply chain and finance
- USAID Bangladesh Advisor for the Rohingya Refugee Response, Team Lead, Humanitarian Assistance (HA) Cell

A semi-structured interview questionnaire was used to guide the discussions for the sessions and key notes capturing participants comments and feedback was recorded in the lessons learned matrix (refer for more to the appendices section). The information collected from lessons learned sessions with all stakeholders was analyzed by MEAL team and operation team and the report was drafted by EFSP MEAL Lead.

2. Key learning and recommendations

The review process in the lessons learned workshop sessions focused on exploring what went well during project implementation, challenges and contributing factors, and drawing the key learning and recommendation for future similar interventions. In order to have an in-depth exploration of key factors for the success and challenges, the discussions were structured around three broad themes; a) project modalities/interventions b) government and stakeholders' coordination and c) internal project management processes and procedures such as project start up, staffing structures, budget management, procurement and reporting.

2.1 Fresh food voucher modality

Successes and good practices

The main success identified from all stakeholders was that FFV component did provide the beneficiaries with access to nutritious food and addressed one of the key challenges for refugees; food insecurity. The most important positive aspects highlighted by beneficiaries is the right to choose over a wide varieties of food commodities as per their specific needs, the establishment of breastfeeding corners as it enabled mothers who did not have anyone to look after their children to take them and look after them properly and the existence of key facilities in the outlets (such as WASH facilities, Help desks etc.). It is worthy to note that beneficiaries highlighted the caring attitude and respectful behavior of WV staff and vendors also as one of the positive aspects of FFV component.

Priority given to elderly people, pregnant and lactating women during the FFV distribution was praised as a good practice from beneficiaries. Also, the proper maintenance of hygiene and physical distance during COVID-19 Pandemic situation and provision of awareness for beneficiaries on the COVID - 19 prevention measures were amongst the good practices cited by beneficiaries and camps in charge representatives.

The rapid and on time startup of the FFV component and achievement of project life target due to strong and regular cooperation and coordination with CiC authorities was one of the key successes highlighted by EFSP team and government stakeholders. Beneficiary selection process was overall smooth, and beneficiaries appreciated the door to door verification done by WV team to ensure that all entitled beneficiaries received food assistance. The rapid adjustment of project standard procedures (SoPs) and distribution modalities (such as prepacked food packages for beneficiaries) to respond to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was highlighted as a very good practice as it allowed for providing critical services to beneficiaries during the pandemic and adequate monitoring of FFV intervention.

Finally, the strong presence and influence of WV in the food security cluster was a contributing factor to timely completion of FFV target and facilitating the coordination with sector and government stakeholders. The table below provides more details on the key successes articulated by all stakeholders during the lessons learned workshop.

Fresh Food Vouchers: What went well?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beneficiaries could buy food from outlets based of their need and choice.• Improvement of household food dietary diversity due to the complimentary of the FFV food basket with the ongoing WFP general food distribution.• Selection and verification of beneficiaries was good and smooth overall.• Door to door selection and verification of beneficiaries to ensure the entitled people receive food.• The behavior of all the staffs and vendors was very polite and supportive towards the beneficiaries.• Pregnant women and old aged people had priority in the distribution point.• For lactating mothers, breast-feeding corners were a very innovative thing as they have to come with the infants and the corner allowed them to feed their child.• WASH facilities were good, having latrine in the outlet allowed women to use the facilities.

- During COVID- 19 Pandemic, outlets were properly cleaned, and crowd control helped to ensure social distance.
- Approval from CIC was overall fast thus the FFV started very fast.
- CIC inaugurated all FFV outlets and visited FFV outlets and also provided feedback to WV. RRR and IRC visited camp programs.
- Good coordination and relations with govt. office both at the camp and out of the camp helped for the successful implementation.
- To respond to the COVID-19 crisis, modified SoPs were quickly put in place (in consultation with donor) adjusting the distribution modalities and implementation approach. This was very important to guide the implementation during COVID-19 and respond rapidly to the changes in context.
- Provision of prepacked food package due to COVID-19 disruption was a good and relevant practice to respond to the situation (preventing crowd and longtime queuing, speeding up the distribution, maintenance of physical distancing etc.).
- Timely support from the MEAL team for the completion of FFV PDMs surveys and monthly price market monitoring and sharing of findings for addressing the issues.
- FFV program helped in the reduction of the selling of in-kind food provided by WFP general food distribution.
- WV influence in the FSL sector allowed for timely completion of the FFV program target.

Challenges

The voucher entitlement value categorized in two main dimensions of family size (1-7 and 8+ HH members) was deemed as inappropriate because they did not capture adequately specific realities of households with differences in the numbers of members. The WFP four categories of family size for determining food entitlement for general distribution is suggested as relevant to address adequately the needs. Insufficiency of the food quantity provided for one month was a challenge raised by beneficiaries, community leaders and CiC representatives during the discussions. Poor quality of some food items provided by vendors, poor quality sometimes of packaging for prepacked food during COVID-19 pandemic as well as difference of prices (higher prices for some food commodities in EFSP outlets compared to local market prices) were also some challenges highlighted by beneficiaries and community stakeholders.

In the first quarter there were some challenges in setting up the implementation and standardizing the targeting approach due to lack of a standardized/harmonized targeting approach in the food security sector, different organizations applied different voucher values for entitlement. Also, division of camps and setting the geographic scope for FFV distribution was challenging (WFP took over some camps and CIC delayed the permission for few camps). Lastly, COVID-19 Pandemic affected distribution, created insecurity, particularly on the onset of crisis due to temporary suspension of distribution in some camps (camps with confirmed COVID-19 cases) as well as food commodities prices fluctuation (increase) in local market due to lockdown and limitation on the movement of people and commodities. COVID-19 also had a huge impact in the economic situation and increased overall food insecurity for refugees and host communities. Refer to the following table for more details on the challenges experienced for FFV distribution.

WV Bangladesh, EFSP Cox's Bazar, Award #72DFFP19GR00058, Camp Lessons Learned Report

Fresh Food Vouchers: What did not go well/challenges

- Distributions camp 1E and 1W, were stopped during COVID-19 and it took a while for approval to be given to start distribution due to fear to transmission of COVID- 19 in these camps.
- WFP took over some camps (3,15 and 4) which led to delay in starting up the program in those camps.
- Challenges in few camps to get the CiC approval.
- Due to FCN errors, beneficiaries not listed (camps block change of beneficiaries) the registration process took long for some beneficiaries and as result they could not receive food for more than a month.
- COVID 19 caused insecurity, affected the distribution speed on the onset of crisis, it created some delays (some camps with confirmed COVID cases were temporarily suspended by CiC).
- Challenges with the quality of food sometimes; some vendors did not supply fresh and quality food.
- Some beneficiaries were buying more eggs (big quantities of eggs) than the other food items part of food basket.
- Voucher entitlement for beneficiaries based on two categories of family size (1-7 members and 8+) was not adequate to the different needs as per family size.
- The complaints of beneficiaries were not always responded within the designated time frame.
- Food quantity was not sufficient for beneficiaries, the food did not last for one month.
- In the first quarter there were challenges in standardizing the targeting approach and implementation approach. Lack of clarity and standardization of targeting approaches in the sector (different partners had different family categories for providing food entitlements, different voucher values not harmonized among several organizations/standardized in cluster level).
- FFV distribution catchment areas division among organizations was also challenging in the beginning.
- Commodity price fluctuation during the life of the project for some food commodities but particularly during COVID- 19 created difficulties as it affected the value of voucher.
- There were differences among local market prices and FFV outlets prices for some food commodities in the FVV outlets.
- While the crowd control inside the outlets was very functional, outside the outlet, there was not always a proper crowd control (the invitation token was not always distributed one day prior to distribution and timeframe allocated for different subblocks was not adequate).
- Prepacked food provided during the COVID-19 pandemic limited the choice of the beneficiaries over food items they wanted to buy (although the package was prepared based on the expenditures pattern identified during PDM surveys).
- Ongoing/serial FFV phase-out from camps required additional costs for vendors as they had to reconstruct the outlets again in a different location.

Key learning and recommendations

- Keeping strong relationships and timely coordination with government stakeholders, CiC authorities and other actors in the food security sector is instrumental to get approvals and start activities on time and solve the issues encountered during the implementation.

- Strong coordination and active participation of WV in the food security cluster coordination meetings are instrumental to influence decision making in the cluster and support successful implementation.
- Timely and regular engagement with vendors to negotiate and change food commodities prices is crucial to maximize the beneficiaries' food basket as well as ensure fairness to vendors so they do not lose because of price fluctuations. Stipulations and protocols for measures to address price fluctuation should be specifically outlined in the agreement with vendors.
- Quick and appropriate adjustment of SoPs in case of crisis is necessary to respond quickly and appropriately to the changes of the context and not interrupt the provision of essential services to beneficiaries.
- The FFV value entitlements based on family size should be in alignment with general food distribution criteria (4 categories of households as per family size) to meet adequately households needs according to their size.
- Standardized sectoral/cluster approaches, operating procedures are important for a smooth coordination of activities among different organizations in different camps and maximizing the impact for beneficiaries.
- Regular and frequent (at least monthly) follow up meetings with vendors and suppliers should be undertaken to ensure the quality of supplies/food/services provided.
- The invitation token for distribution should be given to beneficiaries one day prior to distribution day and a proper timed schedule of distribution for different sub-blocks should be in place to prevent crowds during distribution.
- All complaints received by beneficiaries should be solved/addressed as per designated timeframe (within 7 days).

2.2 Community Cooking & Learning Centers

Successes and good practices

The key successes highlighted during the discussions are that women beneficiaries improved learning and skills in positive nutrition practices, knowledge on nutritional values of different food groups and cooking hygiene, and cultivation of vegetables in small plots/gardens in their shelter surrounding after receiving seeds and training from EFSP. One benefit highlighted from beneficiaries and community leaders is that women beneficiaries managed to save gas stock at home because of the opportunity to cook one meal every day at the CCLC. Also, it is worthy to highlight that one of the impacts noted by community stakeholders is that CCLCs provided a social support network/platform for women beneficiaries to come together, share issues and offer support to each other which contributed to increased social cohesion. This is highly appreciated given the limitations of women movements outside their shelters and lack of social support networks which are crucial to refugees and particularly women.

Selection of beneficiary's door to door due to close cooperation with community leaders (majhi) was successful, particularly the fact that beneficiaries were selected in the proximity of the CCLC location which allowed for easy access and attendance of sessions. The coordination with CiCs, camps site

management representatives and community leaders were highlighted as successful practice from WV staff whereas the camps site management representatives and community leaders highlighted this as a challenge during project implementation. The following table provides a summary of successes identified by all stakeholders.

CCLC: What went well/good practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women had an opportunity to learn cooking nutritious food and improving nutrition practices contributing to their household nutritional status. (They know the different food groups and their nutritional values). • The CCLC helped beneficiaries to reduce pressure on house stock of gas/wood as they were able to cook one meal per day at CCLCs. • Women beneficiaries are practicing homestead gardening in their shelters surroundings as result of support with seeds and homestead gardening training provided by EFSP. This is contributing to increased access to nutritious food in their households. • The beneficiaries were selected near the area of CCLC and the selection was done by the operation team and Majhee's. • Maintaining a very good relationship and peaceful relationships in the CCLC center contributed to peacebuilding in camps. • There was good coordination with CiC, site management and community leaders for CCLC activities (WV staff feedback). • Culturally appropriate cooking demonstration sessions supported the learning process for cooking nutritious foods and food preservation in home. • Beneficiaries were oriented and skilled on gender base violence issues, protection, WASH and Human Rights which contributed in family wellbeing and establish peaceful situation in family. • CCLC provided a social support network/platform for women to get together outside the confinement of the shelter and socialize by sharing issues and supporting each other.

Challenges

There have been quite some challenges for the CCLCs implementation as per stakeholders' feedback. One set of challenges are related to the insufficiency of supplies and nonfunctional facilities in some CCLCs premises, such as irregular supply of gas for the cooking stoves, unfunctional WASH facilities, fans, lack of a washing station for cooking ingredients and utensils. Another important theme that came out during the discussions is around challenges that delayed or interrupted the normal operations of CCLCs such as delay for getting approval for the location of the new CCLCs, delay on approval of gas use for the CCLCs, delays in procuring suppliers and vendors for the CCLC services, delay on the approval from donor for the type of construction materials for the new CCLCs. COVID-19 pandemic also caused the suspension of CCLCs activities and the government decision on disallowing refugees to get employed as volunteers for facilitation of activities in the camps delayed the activities.

There were some challenges related to the coverage and appropriateness of interventions highlighted by the beneficiaries, government and community stakeholders. Thus, the caseload of 50 beneficiaries for a

session in the current CCLCs premises was deemed inappropriate as the space is not sufficient and congested. The gap in coverage of beneficiaries also is highlighted as a challenge as there are many more beneficiaries who live in the CCLC surroundings and interested to attend the cooking sessions. Lastly, the camp site management stakeholders highlighted as a challenge the gaps in coordination between them and CCLCs team. Refer to the following table for more details on the challenges identified by all stakeholders.

CCLCs: What did not go well/challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having only one time slot for cooking session and the timing of cooking session is not appropriate for women. Women need to cook early in the morning. • Coverage gaps for CCLCs activities mentioned by beneficiaries and government authorities. They suggested to establish more centers to cover more beneficiaries given the high need. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Gaps on CCLC facilities and supplies – not sufficient and not always functional.</i> - <i>The supply with gas cylinders for cooking stoves was not always on time.</i> - <i>There was not a designated place for women to wash the cooking utensils and ingredients at the CCLC (they brought with them all the utensils and washed the cooking ingredients at home).</i> - <i>Fans were not functional making the environment hot due to cooking.</i> - <i>WASH facilities in some CCLCs not functional.</i> - <i>Materials and cooking ingredients were not budgeted for conducting cooking demonstration sessions.</i> • The time remained for the implementation of full program in CCLC was short particularly for the new established CCLCs. Main reasons for this were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Delays in the procurement process to find vendors/suppliers for the construction of new CCLC</i> - <i>Delays on revision of the budget for CCLC construction (donor did not approve the type of materials to be used for the construction so this delayed the starting up the construction)</i> - <i>Difficulties in getting the land/location for establishment of new CCLC</i> - <i>District Commissioner (DC) office did not give permission for LPG use in CCLCs which caused a delay of 1.5 to 2 months for starting the cooking sessions</i> - <i>Recruitment problems – Instead of recruiting female facilitators in the beginning male facilitators were recruited and changing that caused delays in starting up the CCLCs activities</i> - <i>Government decision for not allowing refugees to be employed as volunteers for the activities in camps (Oct-Nov’19) hampered the regular flow of activities in CCLCs until Dec’20. There was lack of clarity about this issue for quite some time thus affecting the mobilization of women facilitators for CCCLs activities.</i> - <i>Due to COVID 19 crisis the CCLC operation was suspended for some months.</i> • The CCLCs facilitators facilitated all the types of training topics/areas (nutrition, hygiene, cooking process etc.). Learning process would be more effective if specialized facilitators for each topic/area of training are assigned rather than having a generalist approach- one facilitator providing training/awareness in all areas/topics.

- A very large number (50) of beneficiaries cooking in one CCLC setting created difficulties in maintaining a proper process due to the congestion in the small spaces of the CCLCs.
- Coordination gaps with site management and community leaders (majhi).
- In FFV there were help desk assistants (HDAs) but in CCLC there were no budgeted positions for HDA's and this affected the implementation of a proper accountability system.

Key learning and recommendations

- The cooking sessions schedule/time should be set to fit women's daily schedule.
- Timely procurement of the essential supplies/processes for establishment and operation of CCLCs sessions and improvement of the quality of facilities is key for normal operation of CCLCs.
- Consider establishing a designated station/place for washing cooking utensils and ingredients for the cooking sessions.
- Pursue funding opportunities to expand and continue the CCLCs activities given the need and the interest.
- Establishing of CRM committee (community members/lead mothers/mahji and accountability and implementation staff) would improve the accountability process.
- It is recommended to budget more staff (HDAs) and resources (more IEC materials for CRM) for CCLCs interventions for accountability purpose given the large geographic scope.
- Consider engaging CCCL beneficiaries in markets for income generation activities given their interest as this would help them to earn an income for their livelihood.
- Consider organizing food fairs as it would help for the promotion of the nutritious food and learning in community level.
- It is recommended to have specialized facilitators providing sessions for specific technical topics/sectoral areas – the learning outcomes would be better if such approach is applied.
- WV government liaison department role in strengthening the relationships and advocacy with government offices is crucial for effective implementation and getting approvals on time for CCLC activities. Also, coordination with camp site management authorities and majhi has to be strengthened to ensure smooth implementation in the future.
- Budget need to be allocated for procuring sufficient materials for the cooking demonstration sessions and IGA development for CCLCs beneficiaries.
- In order to ensure a meaningful engagement/participation (in a conservative context of social gender norms) prioritize hiring female facilitators to engage in activities focused on women.

2.3 Multipurpose Training Centers

Successes and good practices

Selection of beneficiaries from both host communities and refugees in coordination with local government authorities and community leaders is considered as a positive practice by all stakeholders because it helped reduce tensions between both groups and contribute to peaceful relationships between host communities and refugees. Also, the selection process and verification door to door is appreciated from beneficiaries as accurate and relevant.

An increased sense of hope and self-confidence is noted among beneficiaries; they are hopeful to start their own activity to generate income for meeting household needs. The initiative of mask making from beneficiaries in MTCs due to COVID-19 situation and mask distribution in camps is highly appreciated as highly relevant as it provided MTC beneficiaries with very much needed income in a time of crisis but also helped for prevention of the COVID-19 in the camps. Refer to the following table for the summary of successes and impact brought by MTC interventions as per project stakeholders' feedback.

MTC: What went well/good practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 270 trainees (180 women for sewing/tailoring and 90 men for solar repairing) learned skills in the MTCs. • Reprogramming of the MTC curriculum, switching to production of masks by the MTC beneficiaries, was creative and relevant practice to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic related needs and also support beneficiaries to earn an income. The project is on good track to achieve the target for mask distribution (More than 16,000 masks have been already distributed). • MTC provided good opportunities for Rohingya beneficiaries for skills development (solar light repair, tailoring). Particularly women appreciate the opportunity given to them to learn and practice vocations (such as tailoring) that can be done within home which is more preferred by men given that cultural social gender norms prejudice women that work outside their homes. • Door to door mask distribution was a good practice because there were less exclusion errors and also it was blanket distribution, everyone received masks). • Capacity building of both refugee and host community beneficiaries contributed to peacebuilding between the host community and the refugees. • Due to the skills provided in the MTCs, majority of new beneficiaries hope to start their own IGAs in the future which will lead to sustainability of livelihood. • MTCs beneficiaries produced good quality masks (reusable, washable) meeting WHO standards for COVID-19 locally made masks to ensure health safety of beneficiaries. • Tailoring and vocational skills that can be practiced at home are appreciated as a great opportunity for women to work with dignity given the hardship associated with jobs particularly the prejudices in a cultural context that secludes women within their home environment and working outside home is considered not culturally accepted. • Beneficiaries are becoming self-confident in their abilities to start their own activity to generate income. • Beneficiaries are earning money through mask making initiative which is very much needed in this time of crisis caused by COVID-19 Pandemic.

Challenges

There have been some challenges in regards to the MTC implementation which affected the achievement of the end line target. These issues consisted mostly on delays for procuring the materials and supplies needed for MTC sessions, interruption of MTC sessions due to COVID-19 pandemic, challenges on coordination with CiC in some of the camps. Also, beneficiaries noted as a challenge the high number of people in one session given the available space in the classroom. The location of MTCs was far for some of them and women beneficiaries had concerns about their privacy at times because

no restrictions were put to men for entering in their classrooms which made them feel uncomfortable. Refer to the following table for the summary of challenges as per project stakeholders' feedback.

MTCs: What did not go well/challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID-19 disrupted regular operation of MTCs (training for sewing and solar panel repairing) and as result the end line target was not achieved.• More frequent MEAL support was needed for MTC activities (sometimes just monthly).• Supply chain challenges and delays impacting programming; often needed to procure rapidly (another factor for delays and not reaching the target alongside COVID 19).• Location of MTCs for some beneficiaries as they could not "leave" their camp to attend MTC activities on the camp border.• Other WV Sectors (WASH, CP, GFD) programming caused challenges in EFSP programming in Camp 11 and 12 in terms of government relations.• 30 participants attending the learning session was not appropriate given the space of MTCs as per beneficiaries' feedback. They suggested to have more sufficient space for sessions or a smaller size batch of participants in one session.• Women beneficiaries had concerns about their privacy at times; there were no restrictions for men to enter in their classrooms.• Challenges in coordination, gaps in coordination between CiC and project team (this came from CiC representatives).• The location of MTCs was far for some beneficiaries.

Key learning and recommendations

- Location of MTCs was strategic to support layered activities (overlapping with other EFSP activities).
- Consider having Help Desk assistants or more accountability staff for MTC activities to collect verbal feedback instead of relying mostly in complaint boxes.
- Increased number of masks produced by other WV project teams will allow for stronger collaborated mask distribution.
- Keep trainings open to everyone (gender balance) and increase training in cooking and handicrafts.
- Stronger accountability system needs to be in place for MTC activities (similar to the designated system for FFV distribution).
- More frequent monitoring visits should be conducted for MTC activities.
- Coordination with other WV teams (WASH, CP etc.) is essential for maximizing the benefits for refugees' beneficiaries.
- Address the privacy concerns of women beneficiaries to ensure they feel comfortable during classes.

- Upon completion of vocation training, it would be very useful to provide women with sewing machine to start up their activity.
- Stronger coordination with community leaders would benefit the mobilization of beneficiaries and addressing of issues encountered.
- Consider establishment of MTC in remote areas for beneficiaries living in remote locations.
- Given the high interest and high needs consider designing of interventions targeting a higher number of beneficiaries.

2.4 Coordination with government and camp site management stakeholders

Good practices and challenges

There is an overall recognition from all stakeholders that the relations and coordination with CiC and camp site management authorities was overall good and that government stakeholders were supportive and interested for the implementation of EFSP activities in the camps. However, there is also recognition from all stakeholders that there were also issues and gaps in coordination which affected the implementation.

Key positive examples highlighted by project stakeholders are the startup meetings, monthly coordination meetings and monitoring visits from CiC authorities helped to increase the accountability, visibility and transparency of EFSP interventions. Key challenges relate to suspension of CCLCs and MTCs due to COVID-19 pandemic, gaps in coordination between CiC and project teams in regards to MTCs and CCLCs activities implementation, lack of timely and accurate information about the relocation of beneficiaries to other camps during the beneficiary registration process. Also, the turnover of CiC assigned to camps affected the coordination for the approvals, starting and continuing smoothly the implementation in the camps. The project team had to re-engage with a new CiC assigned to get approvals and coordinate the activities. See for more information the following table.

What went well/good practices	What did not go well/issues?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFSP project was overall well received and welcomed from CiC authorities and other government stakeholders. • CiC was helpful in providing continuous support for the camps related interventions. • Having coordination meetings during start-up phase was a good practice, essential for setting a strong foundation for collaboration and smooth operation of camps interventions. • Monthly coordination meetings with CiC were very helpful for coordination and addressing issues in timely manner. • One to one meeting with specific CiC representatives and government stakeholders in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CCLC and MTC activities were suspended by CiC during the first months of COVID-19 pandemic which delayed implementation of these activities and affected the achievement of end targets. • Beneficiary registration process was challenging sometimes because of lack of information from CiC (Some beneficiaries were not in the camps assigned for FFV; they were relocated in other camps etc.). • Tension and lack of trust of beneficiaries towards site management authorities. Beneficiaries complained to WV staff about the fact that site management authorities would come to visit project activities/sites.

<p>addition to the monthly coordination meetings was a good practice because it helped for building relationships, strengthening the collaboration and addressing the issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIC reps and government authorities visited frequently EFSP camps interventions. The monitoring visits and program level visit are good practices contributing to the transparency of interventions and increased trust among government and WV. • Good relations with other sectors staff and other actors in the camps were also established. • Community leaders (Majhi) helped for beneficiary identification and communicating with beneficiaries about project interventions. • CIC deployed volunteers for mobilization of beneficiaries. • CIC provided fire extinguishers for the project • Majhi and imams were present in CIC coordination meetings which helped to strengthen the coordination with these community leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes, CIC staff tried to intervene to influence WV staff to favor or give food vouchers to certain beneficiaries. • In the beginning there were challenges with the CIC as they would not accept the vendors selected for FFV outlets. • Sometime CIC overstepped their authority by causing delays for the project start up and implementation • Turnover/rotation of CIC assigned to camps affected the approvals and starting of activities in the camps (there were changes of CIC assigned to specific camps thus the project team had to re-engage with a new CIC to get approval and coordinate the activities). • Challenges in coordination, gaps in coordination between CiC and project team for MTC and CCLCs activities. • Majhis were not regularly invited/involved in coordination meetings for MTC and CCLCs.
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Key learning and recommendations

- Good relationships with CIC and other actors help for successful implementation particularly for FFV.
- Monthly coordination meetings and one to one meeting with CiC reps are very helpful for smooth implementation of the project and addressing issues in timely manner.
- CIC reps’ visits in the camps interventions are good for the visibility of the project and accountability.
- Higher level management update meetings with CIC help for a smooth implementation of activities.
- Majhis are instrumental to a successful implementation of activities in the camps and they have to be invited and attend regularly the coordination meetings.
- Informing the CIC authorities prior to final selection of vendors or service providers in camps is important to get their buy in and support.

2.5 Internal project management processes and procedures

Project start up, training and staffing structure

What went well	Challenges
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid start up, on time for the FFV intervention. • Staff on-boarding was timely which contributed to the timely start-up of activities. • Project orientations completed within the first week and staff were equipped to start implementation. • Gateway to Grants (G2G) training helped to orient leaders/managers on USAID policies, rules and regulations, procedures enabling them to implement in alignment with donor standards/regulations. • Weekly meetings of all the EFSP SLT were a good practice for real time sharing of issues and follow up actions. • Regular field team and WVUS core team meetings created a space for addressing timely issues and clarification of compliance issues. • Sharing attitude among staff was good for capacity building. • Peer capacity building of staff to staff was a good practice. • High quality baseline study provided a benchmark to measure outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline delayed by 3-4 weeks (difficulties in finding a qualified consultant) and that delayed the activities on both sides (incl. camp). • Procurement and construction related delays for the startup of activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>MTCs started late (in quarter 2)</i> - <i>62 planned CCLCs but only 55 were completed, with the additional 13 completed 6 months into the project.</i> - <i>Procurement of equipment (laptops) delayed programming.</i> - <i>Rainy season delayed activities.</i> • Staff structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>FFV: more field assistants were needed to facilitate field level activities; challenge to meet demands of changing distribution patterns.</i> • Lacking in-depth orientations at the beginning of the program (3-4 days long training) – CCLC, FFV. • Visas delays during start up and then during COVID for the leadership team; they could not visit field to provide guidance. • Senior Leadership team split roles/cost sharing (challenging to have 100% commitment to the project). • Beneficiary registration and beneficiaries Management Information System (BMIS) delays. BMIS had challenges and delays (Camps 3 and 16). Need to recruit additional BMIS staff/data entry assistants for updating beneficiary information (the number of HHs who received FFV was quite high compared to the actual BMIS staff recruited). • Delays for recruitment of the MEAL officer for camps and host communities created gaps in frequent monitoring of CCLC and MTC activities (joined in February).
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Key learning and recommendations

- Adjust monitor staffing needs. Fewer monitoring officers and more field monitoring assistants are needed to be able to cover monitoring of all activities in all camps (particularly CCLCs and MTC suffered in this regard).
- Gateway to Grants (G2G) and other orientation trainings to be conducted before/during design process.
- Advertise early for baseline before start of program to give sufficient time for procuring the consultant (procuring a high-quality consultant requires time and sometimes re-advertising of consultancy is needed).
- Consider hiring a consultant firm since the design phase to provide technical expertise on the design and establishing the theory of change (baseline and endline). This would ensure high quality for end line survey to evaluate the impact of the project as well as avoiding delays caused by the long processes required for procuring separate consultants for baseline and end line.
- Open communication and information sharing among staff at all levels is key for successful implementation.
- Strong senior leadership engagement at all levels is key for successful implementation.
- Government liaison department in National Office needs to strengthen the relationships with respective government authorities to get visa approvals on time for expatriate staff.
- Improve beneficiary registration and information management process. Need to recruit sufficient BMIS staff to support the beneficiary registration and beneficiary information management processes. High number of HH beneficiaries require higher number of staff/data entry assistants.

Budget management, procurement and P&C process/procedures

What went well	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely financial reports and information on the burn rate shared weekly and monthly by finance officer with implementation staff for proper budget management. • Project staff list is provided with details account code to ensure accuracy of cost booking. • Outstanding Activity (eg. PR, Pending Buyer action, Approval Pending, Bill Submission) was monitored to keep the burning rate stable. • Timely recruitment of staff. The recruitment process was very impressive as majority of the staffs were recruited within 1st September, 2019. HR planned the recruitment long time before the actual implementation started (about 90% completed before the project started). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of vendors from local community was a challenge as they demanded to be selected even though they did not have the capacity to provide quality services. • Sections of proper locations to construct vendors' outlets. • Late payment/processing of vendors bills led to low burn rate. Poor documentation led to delay in processing of vendors payments. • Staff were not willing to stay in project areas/location which led to loss of time travelling back and forth. • Price fluctuations of commodities (food commodities particularly during COVID-19 Pandemic). • Budget did not cover some of the activities (e.g. packaging bags) for beneficiary to carry their food.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely procurement of vendors for FFV. • Facilitators recruitments was helpful to support activities in the camp. • Project was implemented within approved budget. • Training and orientation were provided by P&C to all staff on WV policy and procedures. • PC and management had a good coordination and on time support was provided. • The budget was overall sufficient to cover planned activities. • Supply chain team provided orientation for all vendors which helps for proper implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with under budgeting for some activities and staff - WV PNS cover some of the under budgeted costs. The budget was not aligned to the level of the staff needed to implement (as well as some activities). • Late recruitment of MEAL officer for camps affected the coverage of all camps activities for monitoring (particularly MTCs and CCLCs considering the large coverage – 55 CCLCs). • Few budget lines were combined for host and camps which created some confusion for charging. • CCLC and MTC were underspent because of start delay – late procurement (see for more the respective sections) and the suspension of activities due to COVID- 19. • There was not a proper breakdown of the MTC budget costs which made it challenging for management and monitoring. • Most of field staff came from other organizations and were not familiar with WV financial/budget monitoring procedures, procurement etc.
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Key learning and recommendations

- Conduct a thorough assessment of local vendors (in local communities not just Cox Bazar) to identify local vendors within the community that have the capacity to provide services as it is more efficient to have local service providers.
- Regular market survey enabled SCM to negotiate market prices with vendors.
- Change commodity items to beneficiaries’ choice by changing the modality of the voucher from commodity base to value base.
- More training should be provided for selected vendors on WV SCM processes and policy (child protection, anti-fraud etc).
- Ensure staff are recruited and based in the specific project location (that should be highlighted in the vacancy announcement).
- Timely coordination with HR, Finance and Procurement is key to successful implementation.
- Ongoing orientation/training sessions on financial and procurement procedures with vendors (especially when new ones are coming on board) are necessary to prevent delays on the procurement and financial processes.
- Procurement plan has to be shared beforehand on time with procurement team because it takes long time to provide materials/find/select vendors for the required project services.
- Provision of in-depth and continuous training on WV procurement and financial procedures to the new WV staff is essential to enable the staff to use properly the system.

- Ensure proper approved documentation during the time of Purchase Request funding.
- It is important that G2G (Gateway to Grants) policies orientation/ training is trickled down to the implementation staff.

Reporting, information management and sharing

What went well	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate and regular information sharing and feedback supported the program to solve the issues on spot. • Weekly updates meetings were useful in sharing information and discussing the progress. • Beneficiaries can provide feedback to us which helps us to improve the project. • Various identified issues are now a base for the team to design and implement other programs with less error. • Reports submitted regularly in a timely manner to the different stakeholders. • Use of social platform like skype was also helpful to share the progress to the broader team. • Visibility materials commodity price list of the project interventions etc. were in place and ensured a good visibility of the project and information sharing. • Monitoring reports and PDM reports were shared in due time to inform the management on the project efficiency and effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues regarding beneficiaries' numbers and HH size - SADD info was not collected properly in the beginning which needs to be solved for the future projects. • CRM mechanism should have been placed properly (and sufficiently sourced with staff) for CCLC and MTC just like for the FFV which will allow the team to share information and feedback from and back to beneficiaries on their concerns. • The BMIS system created delays in the setting up the beneficiary database and created a parallel manual system which led to long delay in establishing the beneficiary database.

Key learning and recommendations

- Setting up quarterly targets in the beginning of the project in the IPTT made it easy for operation team to implement and become accountable to the targets.
- Periodic (quarterly) lessons learned sharing events among staff are important for learning and improvement.
- Provision of the summary updates of the daily monitoring and project site visits reports to operation team in weekly basis so that they can comply with it. (The monitoring reports are monthly, though the daily monitoring visits/reports are shared with ops team after the completion of the monitoring activity).
- Sensitize the beneficiaries with the program interventions so that they can understand their entitlements and rights.
- Share the information more frequently towards the beneficiaries.

- Training and capacity building for BMIS and project staff is very critical for beneficiary's registration and set up of the database.

Appendices



EFSP
LL_Beneficiaries fees



EFSP LL_Vendors
feedback.docx



EFSP_CIC and
community leaders f



EFSP LL workshop
with WV staff_key n