WHO ARE WE?

Food Security Sector (FSS) is led by WFP and co-led by FAO. Within the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) in Cox’s Bazar, the FSS is a platform to strengthen the food security response through operational coordination, information sharing, and identifying food security related priorities and solutions.

Livelihoods Working Group (LHWG): Under FSS, the LHWG aims at strengthening coordination of livelihoods activities in the host community and Rohingya refugee camps.

MASK MAKING INITIATIVE

Introduction of lockdown measure to combat COVID-19 impacted livelihoods activities such as skills development and input distribution. LHWG partners transitioned health and safety concerns, decreased supply chain access, and the objective to offer livelihoods opportunities into a local mask making initiative in support of Covid-19 response. The Cox’s Bazar Civil Surgeon (CS) approved a cloth mask design harmonized with Bangladesh Directorate General of Health Services (BDGHS), which LHWG has since reviewed with WHO/Health Sector to ensure alignment with WHO globally guidance on cloth masks.

The approved mask design is three layers of poplin weave fabric (how-to video [here](#)) and it is advised to distribute 2 masks per person. Further, highlights found below:

- **March 24th:** The District Commissioner (DC) approved mask making, in line with CS design, as a critical activity in Cox’s Bazar District.
- **Late March:** Production of masks began in the host community in late March and in the camps by mid-April.
- **May 3rd:** LHWG hosted a virtual workshop on locally tailor made mask initiative focused on operational harmonization.
- **Mid-May:** An online mask production and distribution tracker was developed by LHWG as a follow-up to ISCG request for response-wide coordination on mask distributions. Partners are encouraged to coordinate with LHWG for distribution to avoid possible overlap considering incoming masks donation.
- **Late May:** Messaging on how to wear and wash masks developed in collaboration with LHWG, Communications with Communities Working Group (CwC WG), and WHO / Health Sector colleagues and partners.
- **June:** In a multi-sectoral ISCG Covid-19 response initiative, LHWG in coordination with Site Management and Site Development (SMSD) and Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) Sectors/Partners launched a plan to provide coverage of two LHWG locally tailor made masks per older persons (approximately 31,500 individuals) in the camp.
- **An increasing amount of evidence** supporting cloth masks as Covid-19 prevention measure. As such, partners are encouraged to look at potential long-term planning (i.e. producing masks for top-up distributions in 6 months).

OVERVIEW

- **Coordination Sectors & Working Groups:** 6
- **Partners:** 29
- **Target Population:** 1.5 million individuals in the camps and host community with two masks per person
- **Coverage (June 30th):**
  - Planned (locally made): 2 M masks
  - Planned (factory made): 3 M masks
  - Distributed: 515,000 masks

WITH THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR COORDINATION SUPPORT:

**Sectors and Working Groups:** Inter Sectoral Coordination Group (ISCG), Food Security Sector (FSS), Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI), Site Management and Site Development (SMSD), Communications with Communities Working Group (CwC WG), Health Sector

**Partners:**
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Oxfam, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), ActionAid Bangladesh, Care Bangladesh, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), Muki, Protyasha, Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS), Nongor, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Christian Aid, Dustho Sastho Kendra (DSK), World Vision International (WVI), Swedish Red Cross (SRC), Turkish Red Crescent (TRC), Resource Integration Centre (RIC), Technical Assistance Incorporated (TAI), Humanitarian Assistance Program (HAP), Ayesha Abed Foundation (AAF), ICCO Cooperation, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Media Action, Translators Without Borders (TWB), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) International, Relief Singapore (RSG), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
MASK MAKING INITIATIVE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION: We are planning to start reusable cloth mask production, is there any specific design to follow?
ANSWER: Yes - the approved mask design is made out of three layers of poplin weave fabric (see how-to video [here]). This design is aligned with District Civil Surgeon and Bangladesh Directorate General of Health Services (BDGHS) as well as approved of by Cox’s Bazar WHO/Health Sector (see global WHO guidance on cloth masks [here]).

QUESTION: Why cloth masks, are they even beneficial?
ANSWER: Globally, there is a growing body of evidence in support of cloth masks as minimal protective measure against the spread of Covid-19. Please find relevant documents and research studies [here].

QUESTION: Masks are only beneficial if used properly, is there any messaging available on how to wear and wash masks?
ANSWER: LHWG coordinated with Communications with Communities Working Group (CwC WG) and Health Sector colleagues to develop audio and visual messaging in Rohingya, Burmese, and Bangla (links to messaging found [here]).

QUESTION: Who is making these masks and how are they ensuring they are safe?
ANSWER: This is a livelihoods and self reliance initiative that provides beneficiaries involved with an income generating activity that engages skilled tailors in both the refugee camps and in the host community. Further, implementing partners have ensured the use of risk and mitigation measures including reprogramming so beneficiaries can work from home, using ventilated work spaces and social distancing, temperature monitoring, and more.

To see some of the faces behind to work, see video by implementing partner ActionAid Bangladesh [here].

QUESTION: Okay, so on top of being a livelihoods and self reliance opportunity, this initiative supports in providing coverage of two masks per person to refugees and host community populations, who else is receiving masks?
ANSWER: Partners are also supporting in coverage to volunteers, first line responders, agency staff, government personal, and more. For full list, see online tracker [tabs 3, 4, and 5].

QUESTION: My organization is not involved with mask production but we have staff, volunteers, front line responders, vulnerable beneficiaries, etc. In need of masks, can LHWG help?
ANSWER: LHWG is working on a mask request tracker to connect agencies, NGOs, GoB departments with available masks in stock. If any partner is in need of masks, please reach out to LHWG Chair: Leah.beaulac@wfp.org and IM focal: Nitol.dewan@wfp.org

Please check out [tab 6 of the tracker] to see the lists of coordination requests so far.

QUESTION: I heard there are numerous actors engaged in this activity, how are the distributions being coordinated in order to avoid overlap and ensure gaps are filled?
ANSWER: FSS/LHWG is supporting in operational coordination of production and distribution of masks in the camps and host community through this online tracker. Partners involved with mask production and distribution are requested to provide their updates weekly (LHWG sends out a reminder email every Wednesday). Further, for any new partner entering into this activity, please reach out to LHWG Chair: Leah.beaulac@wfp.org and IM focal: Nitol.dewan@wfp.org

QUESTION: I am not sure how and where to provide input in the tracker. What shall I do?
ANSWER: Any query related to the tracker in terms of providing inputs in production section, or in distribution section, partners are requested to check out the summary tab of the tracker first and reach out to LHWG Chair (leah.beaulac@wfp.org) and IM Focal (nitol.dewan@wfp.org) for further guidance.

OPERATIONAL COORDINATION

To ensure match between supply (production) and demand (distribution) of masks and as more partners enter into the locally tailor made livelihoods activity in response to Covid-19, it is important to ensure continued coordination - kindly reach out to Livelihoods Working Group Chair, leah.beaulac@wfp.org and information management focal, nitol.dewan@wfp.org. Further, to support in this effort, the FSS IM team has developed the following outputs and information management tools:

- Mask Initiative Factsheet - April 2020, first iteration
- Online mask production and distribution tracker - updated weekly
- Resources from recent Non-Agricultural Livelihoods Workshop which includes a progress overview on the mask initiative thus far including projections on when of two masks per person will be realized in camps. Further, an aggregated dashboard on non-agricultural livelihoods activities.
- Interactive Dashboards for Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities updated via 5W Response Tracker to support in coordinating all livelihood activities. If any issues faced, kindly reach out to IM team (akira.kaneko@wfp.org and ajmerry.hossain@wfp.org for support).
- Further information products on FSS and LHWG activities outside of this initiative can be found on the FSS Cox’s Bazar Website.