

# BANGLADESH

## Operational highlights

- Living conditions for the 28,300 refugees from Myanmar residing in two camps in Cox's Bazar have improved as a result of constructive government policies, international support and UNHCR initiatives.
- There were marked improvements in the areas of protection, shelter, water and sanitation, environmental protection, education and health and nutrition.
- The two-year USD 33 million UN Joint Initiative, which targets communities living in the Teknaf and Ukhiya districts (outside the camps), was launched at the end of 2009. The unregistered population and Bangladeshi host communities are expected to benefit from development assistance in health, education, nutrition, food security and livelihoods.
- The urban refugee programme targeting 245 refugees was aligned with the new UNHCR urban refugee policy. The Office increased its legal counseling efforts, and supported refugees' development of livelihood skills and greater self-reliance.
- Approximately 250,000 Urdu-speakers who were allowed to vote in the December 2008 elections received additional support from developmental programmers operated by the United Nations and the Government. The Government of Bangladesh also amended its legislation to ensure that mothers could pass on their nationality to their children, thus reducing potential cases of statelessness.

## Working environment

Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and UNHCR's activities are limited to assisting some 28,000 refugees from Myanmar's northern Rakhine State in the Kutupalong and Nayapara camps in the south-eastern district of Cox's Bazar.



The Government estimates that in addition to the camp-based population, there are 200,000 to 400,000 unregistered refugees living outside the camps. The agreement of the Government of Bangladesh to consider some form of identification for this population is an important step forward and reflects continuing cooperation between UNHCR and the authorities, at both the country and regional level.

Bangladesh was also affected by the global economic crisis, which hit poorer communities especially hard, and contributed to growing resentment against refugee

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Myanmar	28,600	28,300	52	59
	Various	30	-	28	10
People in a refugee-like situation	Myanmar	200,000	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>228,630</b>	<b>28,300</b>		

communities. At the end of the year, a rise in anti-Rohingya sentiment led to an increase in the number of unregistered refugees settling informally outside Kutupalong camp, where high rates of malnutrition and poor sanitary conditions are common.

## | Achievements and impact |

### • Main objectives

To prepare for eventual voluntary repatriation to Myanmar, UNHCR sought to improve the protection and living conditions of camp-based refugees. It worked to ensure equitable living conditions for registered and unregistered people of concern from Myanmar. The Office also promoted principles of international protection and aimed to reinforce the self-reliance of the 245 refugees living in urban areas.

### • Protection and solutions

UNHCR distributed identity cards, which are respected by law enforcement agencies in the country, to all registered refugees over five years of age. The new camp management structure was strengthened by training 42 refugee leaders, with 40 per cent female participation, in leadership and conflict management so that minor disputes could be resolved locally, increasing trust among the refugee leaders.

Two youth groups and six women's groups were formed to address issues such as livelihoods, sexual violence and community self-management. Standard procedures on sexual violence were revised. However, sexual and gender-based violence and child protection continue to be areas that require further attention.

Efforts to create more equitable living conditions for both registered and unregistered people of concern from Myanmar, as well as for the host population, were advanced with the launch of the UN Joint Initiative. In addition, six Bangladeshi educational institutions were assisted with infrastructure improvements to benefit the host communities. However, a gradual deterioration of the situation of the unregistered population, due to a rise in local anti-refugee sentiment, was observed in the latter half of 2009, resulting in an increase in the number of unregistered refugees moving to a makeshift site around Kutupalong.

As part of a comprehensive durable solutions plan, 500 individuals were submitted for resettlement, and 453 refugees departed for six countries in 2009. The strategic use of resettlement has influenced social changes among refugees: many more of them are learning and speaking English; more girls are attending school; and the number of early marriages is declining.

UNHCR conducted RSD for a small number of non-Myanmar refugees. The Office fostered greater



Khaleda holds language classes for adolescent girls in a camp in Cox's Bazar.

self-reliance among the 245 refugees living in urban areas through an assistance programme which includes language training, self-employment opportunities and skills development.

The legal status of the approximately 250,000 Urdu-speakers was resolved when the Government issued them with national identity cards which allowed them to vote in the December 2008 elections. UNHCR issued a guidance note for States addressing asylum claims by this community, and is working to ensure that they benefit from national development programmes. Legislation passed in 2009 to ensure that mothers could pass on their nationality to their children was a significant step towards preventing statelessness.

### ○ *Activities and assistance*

**Community services:** With the establishment of new refugee leadership structures in 2008, the focus in 2009 shifted to capacity building for refugee leaders ensuring their active participation in camp management. It has also inspired refugees to develop solutions for the community, mobilize volunteers to repair block centres, initiate informal English classes and work with the humanitarian community to address SGBV and domestic violence. Youth and women groups have been formed. Twenty-four refugees, including 12 women, were assisted to develop their entrepreneurial skills.

**Domestic needs and household support:** Refugees were provided with basic items to meet their daily needs throughout the year. In order to promote self-reliance, the Office continues efforts to phase out blanket assistance in favour of targeted distributions of essential items based on need. Some 1,345 energy-saving cooking stoves were operational in both camps.

**Education:** Two new schools were built, one in each camp, to avoid overcrowding. Access to educational opportunities within the camps was broadened and the quality of existing programmes was improved. Refugee teachers received additional training and the curriculum was revised. A more protective learning environment for students was established by building fences around schools and involving parents more actively in their children's education. There was a 20 per cent increase in primary school enrolment in both camps from the previous year. Computer centres were established in both camps, enabling 267 refugees (52 of them female) to complete basic computer training.

**Food:** A refugee food management committee was established in Kutupalong camp, creating new opportunities for refugees to participate in food management. At the end of the year, more than 23,670 registered refugees received food rations. In addition, an average of 435 children per month received supplementary feeding, while a total of 222 children benefited from therapeutic feeding in both camps.

**Health and nutrition:** Improvements in service and diagnostic facilities reduced the annual incidence of respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases in 2009 by 15 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively. Increased use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, as well as early detection

and prompt treatment, has contributed to a gradual downward trend in the prevalence of malaria over the past five years. Community participation, the Community Traditional Birth Attendant programme, monitoring and supervision enabled births attended by skilled health workers to increase from 10 per cent to 54 per cent in 2009. Anaemia among children under 6 years old was reduced from 74 to 29 per cent. Some 90 community nutrition volunteers were trained, and the percentage of children attending the growth monitoring programme increased from 34.2 to 73 per cent.

**Income generation:** Access to income-generation and vocational-training opportunities improved significantly for refugee men and women in 2009. More than 300 refugees were trained in various skills such as mushroom farming, carpentry, electrical work, rickshaw maintenance and mobile-phone repair. An additional 700 refugees were engaged in tailoring, soap and tooth powder production. Twenty-four refugees (including 15 women) received entrepreneurial training. Over 31 per cent of the refugees are engaged in some form of informal employment.

**Legal assistance:** UNHCR completed a comprehensive profiling exercise of the registered refugees residing in Nayapara and Kutupalong refugee camps. Some 27,500 refugees (96 per cent of the population) were interviewed in order to identify individuals with specific needs. New data regarding the community was uncovered, including the identification of separated children and women at risk. Over 50 refugees were able to avail themselves of legal representation, some with UNHCR's support.

**Operational support (to agencies):** UNHCR supported implementing and operational partners to ensure effective delivery of services to refugees and the host community, including the UN Joint Initiative and activities outside the camps. These included UNICEF's child-friendly spaces and feeding programmes in villages.

**Sanitation:** 566 latrines and 34 bath houses were repaired. In addition, 19 latrine blocks and 8 bath house blocks are being constructed in Nayapara. All the refugees have access to sanitation facilities. Important strides were made in 2009 in promoting refugee ownership of sanitation facilities. 41 refugee hygiene promoters, including two females, were trained to conduct awareness-raising sessions on improving personal and environmental hygiene in the camps.

**Shelter and other infrastructure:** The construction of 286 new shelters in Nayapara camp benefited more than 5,000 refugee families. With the new shelters, some 83 per cent of the total project had been completed. This will contribute to reducing overcrowding. The installation of 39 solar street lights in public areas and camp perimeters has helped to improve camp security, especially for women and girls.

**Transport and logistics:** Relief material, including medical items, household non-food items, and food are regularly transported to the camps and feeding centers. As a part of emergency preparedness, stocks of plastic sheets, jerry cans, blankets and essential drugs were delivered and stored in both camps.

**Water:** Water facilities were rehabilitated, greatly improving the storage capacity in Nayapara camp, especially during dry season. Regular community meetings were used to promote water conservation and management. Hygiene promotion resulted in a reduction in open defecation and an increase in appropriate garbage disposal, although more work is needed to increase community responsibility. Facilities at Kutupalong have come under additional pressure due to the unregistered population accumulating outside the camp.

## ● Constraints

The protracted situation of Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh remains of concern. Refugees face restrictions on their freedom of movement and do not have the right to work legally. This constrains efforts to promote self-reliance among them and makes them less likely to benefit from durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation, in the future. The lack of legal status for up to 400,000 unregistered refugees poses a significant problem for them.

## | Financial information |

The trend of increasing expenditures since 2006 peaked in 2008, reflecting the new political environment in the country and the qualitative improvement in facilities in the camps, in particular the refugees' accommodation, infrastructure and services. The cumulative impact of this trend in 2009 led to more focused improvements in camp facilities and accommodation, resulting in slightly lower expenditure. Donor support with additional funding for shelter construction and other activities in the education, water and sanitation sectors continued in 2009.

## | Organization and implementation |

In 2009, UNHCR had a total of 39 staff, including eight international, 22 national, eight UNVs, one JPO and three secondees from the International Catholic Migration Commission, Norwegian Refugee Council and the Australian Youth Ambassador Programme. Operations were managed by the Dhaka country office and the field office in Cox's Bazar.

## | Working with others |

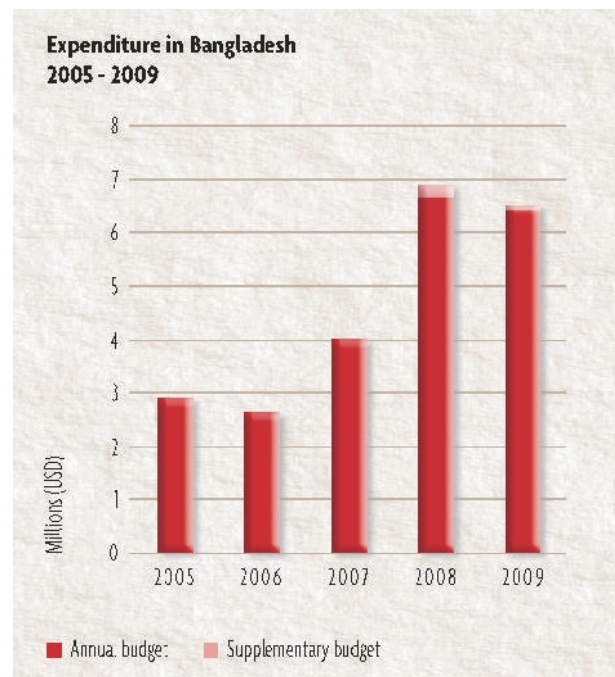
UNHCR has engaged with partners to achieve short-term improvements in the overall living conditions in the camps. Particular emphasis has been placed on working with humanitarian and development partners to reorient the programme to benefit both refugees and the host community. UNHCR participated in the design of the UN Joint Initiative launched at the end of 2009.

## | Overall assessment |

UNHCR has continued to strengthen cooperation with the Government, diplomatic missions, UN agencies and NGOs, resulting in improvements in the lives of the refugees in camps. Despite this progress, the refugees' living conditions remain below international standards as living space in the camps is limited.

The situation of the unregistered refugee population remains of concern, and the Government's willingness to provide identity documents to this population would be an important step towards addressing this complex issue. However, a rise in anti-refugee sentiment at the local level has resulted in a steady deterioration of the situation of these refugees. Measures to improve education, health care and livelihood opportunities for refugee and host communities alike would improve their quality of life and also enhance prospects for durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation. The continued engagement of all stakeholders is required to improve the living conditions of refugees in the country pending durable solutions.

Partners	
<b>Implementing partners</b>	
<b>Government:</b>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management
<b>NGOs:</b>	Research, Technical Assistance Incorporated, Training and Management International, ACF, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
<b>Operational partners</b>	
<b>NGOs:</b>	Austcare, Handicap International, Concern Worldwide
<b>Others:</b>	FAO, ILO, IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP



Budget, income and expenditure in Bangladesh (USD)					
	Final budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available	Total funds available	Total expenditure
Annual budget	6,809,089	5,533,647	1,038,354	6,572,001	6,399,435
Avian and human influenza preparedness SB	117,214	0	117,214	117,214	117,214
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,926,303</b>	<b>5,533,647</b>	<b>1,155,568</b>	<b>6,689,214</b>	<b>6,516,649</b>

Note: Supplementary programmes do not include seven per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR. Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

Financial report for UNHCR's operations in Bangladesh (USD)				
Expenditure breakdown	Current years' project			Previous years' project
	Annual budget	Supplementary budgets	Total	Annual and supplementary budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,373,557	0	1,373,557	0
Community services	225,105	0	225,105	50,190
Domestic needs and household support	359,670	0	359,670	0
Education	38,773	0	38,773	34,007
Food	6,436	0	6,436	2,639
Health and nutrition	761,083	0	761,083	48,166
Income generation	1,548	0	1,548	1,879
Legal assistance	146,332	0	146,332	23,420
Operational support (to agencies)	544,876	0	544,876	71,841
Sanitation	31,884	9,314	41,198	104,855
Shelter and infrastructure	1,495,019	0	1,495,019	10,176
Transport and logistics	164,432	0	164,432	10,779
Water	140,250	107,900	248,150	16,598
Instalments to implementing partners	553,021	0	553,021	(374,550)
<b>Subtotal operational activities</b>	<b>5,841,985</b>	<b>117,214</b>	<b>5,959,199</b>	<b>0</b>
Programme support	557,449	0	557,449	0
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>6,399,435</b>	<b>117,214</b>	<b>6,516,648</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cancellation on previous years' expenditure</b>				<b>(20,035)</b>
<b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>				
Payments made	1,605,225	0	1,605,225	
Reporting received	(1,052,204)	0	(1,052,204)	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>553,021</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>553,021</b>	
<b>Previous year's report</b>				
Instalments with implementing partners:				
Outstanding 1st January				424,000
Reporting received				(374,550)
Refunded to UNHCR				(53,905)
Currency adjustment				0
<b>Outstanding 31st December</b>				<b>(4,455)</b>