

Education and Protection for Refugee Children (EPRC) Project

Background:

Myanmar refugees, typically Muslims who were displaced from Northern Rakhine State of Myanmar about 25 years ago after being stripped of their nationality, are temporarily living in the two official refugee camps in Cox's Bazaar district of Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB), with assistance from UNHCR, is managing these camps. Since 1991, UNHCR has provided protection and essential services including shelter, water and sanitation facilities, food and non-food items, education and primary health care to the refugees in collaboration with other UN agencies e.g. UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA including national and international agencies. Children and adolescents affected by displacement face serious threats to their safety, education, development, physical and mental well-being, which can have long-lasting effects. The children in the refugee camps are not an exception. The majorities (nearly 68%) of the camp population was born in Bangladesh and have only known life in displacement. Around 51% of the total population are children below 18 years old. One third of this population is not accessing education. The main education and protection related gaps faced by refugee children are no access to government schools, lack of attendance in the camp based schools due to the family preference of livelihood activities, unavailability of qualified teachers in the schools, early marriage, abuses of children, lack of willingness and capacity of adults in listening to children's voices, limited capacity of children in participating in decisions affecting their lives, child exploitation through labor, lack of child-friendly procedures, lack of a community based approach to provide care and protection to children, and lack of community ownership of available services. In this context, the proposed project will focus on strengthening the quality of education by making teachers more accountable as well as prevention and protection of vulnerable children through identifying and resolving risks and incidents of child rights violation in the project locations.

Project Objectives:

To create a safe and protected child-friendly environment and provide education to the Myanmar refugee children through education and child protection.

Geographical Coverage: At two Registered Refugee Camps (Kutupalong and Nayapara) located in Ukhia and Teknaf Upazila of Cox's Bazar District)

Implementing Partners: Village Education Resource Center (VERC, since 2012 to 2016) and CODEC (2017)

Project duration: 01-01-2016 to 31-12-2016, yearly renewable, will continue in 2017

Funded by: UNHCR

Target Groups



Children



Parents



Teachers



Community Members

Major Achievements:

- A. 1,846 children aged 3-4yrs enrolled in early childhood education;
- B. 6,379 primary school-aged children enrolled in primary education;
- C. 55% of teachers are female and 95% of total teachers are trained as planned;
- D. 641 (85%) of secondary school-aged young people enrolled in secondary education;
- E. Children's committees, Community groups, Adolescent clubs, Popular Theater Groups and other structures are organized and awareness development for protection of children is going on;
- F. Training on Positive Discipline in every day parenting is provided to 266 parents.
- G. Community based Child Protection committee (CBCPC) and Child Protection Volunteers (CPV) are formed and capacity building process is going on.

Major Challenges:

- a) NGOs have little control over community and also on the program activities like recruitment, curriculum;
- b) Teacher and student attendance rate is significantly low. In addition, they loss 20-30 munites in fmorning as they have to attend in madrasha;
- c) Scarcity of quality teacher;
- d) Less emphasize on teacher development.

Future Direction:

- i) Continue advocacy to allow EPRC students to appear in Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE)
- ii) Possible extension for Grade-IX and Grade-X,
- iii) Advocacy with UNHCR and government to get a healthy physical setting for Crèche and PG Centre;
- iv) Increase quality of Basic Education through increase the attendance and effective class room delivery.

