

# Situation Report

### Overview

- Quality education is difficult to access in any emergency context, however, for Rohingya girls living in the Cox's Bazar camps, barriers are magnified.
- The majority of girls stop attending school once they start menstruating. (1)
- It is culturally taboo for girls (post-menarch) to interact with boys or men, meaning attending school alongside boys is not possible. (2,3)
- When there are limited learning opportunities, the risk of child labour, kidnapping, exploitation, and child marriage increases for adolescent girls living in displacement contexts. (4)
- In the Rohingya camps, women- and girls-only classes are rare, making participation in education in a culturally appropriate way for adolescents nearly impossible. (5)

### Methodology

This report is based on interviews within the Kutupalong Extension Camp and a literature review of publicly available sources on the Rohingya humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar. Interviews were conducted in November 2021 in camp 4. Interviews investigated attitudes, barriers, and enablers to girls' education. Interviewees included 5 girls aged 5 to 9 years, 5 girls and 5 boys aged 10 to 19 years, 5 mothers, 5 fathers, 1 imam, and 1 mahjee.

### Limitations

The study conducted was limited in scope and further studies including populations outside of camp 4 and with a larger number of interviewees would be beneficial.

The secondary sources analysed were produced not by the population being studied, but external observers. To mitigate against potential bias/perspectives that lean heavily on western norms, data originating from first-hand field accounts were prioritised.

### Education within the camps

- Currently 3,415 learning centres operate throughout the refugee camps, reaching 325,063 people. This leaves a 21% gap of the 2022 targeted population of 469,882. (6, 7)
- The majority of children (over 90%) are learning at Learning Competency Framework Approach (LCFA)\* Level 1 and Level 2. This is the equivalent of kindergarten up to grade 2 in a formal school system. (8)
- School attendance ranges between 2 to 3.5 hours a day. Students take classes in Burmese, English, mathematics, and life skills. Those in grades 4 and above also study science. (8)
- The focus of the 2022 Cox's Bazar education response is to transition all learners from the existing curriculum to the Myanmar Curriculum, in line with the strategy to facilitate repatriation of the refugees to Myanmar. (7)
- \*LCFA: a largely informal curriculum created as an emergency measure for Rohingya refugee children. (9)

- Each learning facility has two teachers: one from the Bangladeshi host community and one from the Rohingya refugee community. (8)
- The quality of facilitators, the absence of educational materials and the structure of the education response remains a big challenge in providing quality education, five years after the 2017 influx of refugees. (8)

## Barriers to the education of adolescent girls

- There are mixed sentiments in the Rohingya camps surrounding the education of adolescent girls. (10)
- Traditionally, the education of girls after the onset of puberty was seen in the Rohingya community as inappropriate and unnecessary. (1)
- There is evidence these attitudes are changing, with increasing support for education. (12)
- Parents who support adolescent girls' education stress the importance of culturally-sensitive classes, allowing maintenance of purdah\*. (12)
- Such classes must be female-led and be exclusively for female students. Classes conducted in this way are extremely limited in camp. (12)

**'Purdah' is “the Islamic practice requiring women to be veiled from 'public' gazes or remain within 'private' spaces controlled by the family”. (3)**

This practice is highly important to Rohingya society and cultural identity, and is strongly linked to personal and familial honour. (3, 11)

## Importance of educating adolescent girls

When young and adolescent girls are educated, they are more likely to:

- Lead healthy lives and pass on important health knowledge.
- Participate and be respected in decision-making about matters that affect them and their family.
- Access livelihood opportunities and earn a higher income.
- Have increased access to important information.

Education also correlates with:

- A decrease in child marriage rates.
- A decrease in child mortality and maternal mortality rates.

(12)

## Socio-culturally appropriate education requirements

Interviews conducted suggest that a significant portion of the Rohingya community supports the education of adolescent girls in ways that are socio-culturally acceptable. (10)

**Maiya School found that such education must: (10)**

- have only female students
- be close to one's home
- have only female teachers and support staff
- be safely and securely surrounded by a fence
- have a safe and secure bathroom on learning centre grounds
- have a hand-washing station
- have menstrual hygiene management kits for all students.

## Situation report produced by the Maiya Research Hub in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, September 2022.

Any questions or comments can be directed to [research@maiya-school.org](mailto:research@maiya-school.org)

### Sources

1) Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), Gender Profile No.2 For Rohingya Refugee Response Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh (as of March 2019), 2019, <[https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/iscg\\_gender\\_profile\\_no.\\_2\\_rohingya\\_refugee\\_response\\_30march2019.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/iscg_gender_profile_no._2_rohingya_refugee_response_30march2019.pdf)>

2) ACAPS-NPM (ACAPS), Vulnerabilities in the Rohingya Refugee Camps, 2019, <[https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/20191220\\_acaps\\_analysis\\_hub\\_in\\_coxs\\_vulnerabilities\\_in\\_the\\_rohingya\\_refugee\\_camps\\_0.pdf](https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/20191220_acaps_analysis_hub_in_coxs_vulnerabilities_in_the_rohingya_refugee_camps_0.pdf)>

3) Coyle, D, MS Sandberg-Petterson, & MA Jainul, Honour in Transition: Changing Gender Norms Among the Rohingya, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UN Women (Bangladesh), 2020, p.17.

4) Inter-Sector Coordination Group Gender Hub (ISCG Gender Hub), In the Shadows of the Pandemic Impact of COVID-19 on Rohingya and Host Communities, in collaboration with ACAPS & NPM Analysis Hub, CARE Bangladesh, Oxfam and UN Women, 2020, <<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/10/in-the-shadows-of-the-pandemic>>

5) UN Women & DCA, Education Needs Assessment Report: Adolescent and Youth Women and Girls in the Rohingya Refugee Camps, 2020, <[https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/DCA\\_UN%20Women\\_Needs%20Assessment%20Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/DCA_UN%20Women_Needs%20Assessment%20Report_FINAL.pdf)>

6) Cox's Bazar Education Sector, Overview of Education Sector Dashboard, 31 July, 2022, <<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/bangladesh/infographic/dashboard>>

7) Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), 2022 Joint Response Plan Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, 2022, <<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/bangladesh/document/bangladesh-2022-joint-response-plan-rohingya-humanitarian-crisis>>

8) UNICEF & Cambridge International, Assessment Framework for Rohingya Children's Education (Cox's Bazar), 2022, [internal document].

9) UNICEF, Education milestone for Rohingya refugee children in Cox's Bazar, UNICEF, 2022, <<https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/education-milestone-rohingya-refugee-children-coxs-bazar>>

10) Maiya School, Community Survey: Rohingya community attitudes toward adolescent girls' education, Maiya School, 2021.

11) International Organization of Migration (IOM), Clan, Community, Nation: Belonging among Rohingya living in makeshift camps, 2020a, <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338645066\\_CLAN\\_COMMUNITY\\_NATION\\_Belonging\\_among\\_Rohingya\\_living\\_in\\_makeshift\\_camps](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338645066_CLAN_COMMUNITY_NATION_Belonging_among_Rohingya_living_in_makeshift_camps)>.

12) UNICEF, 'Girls' education', UNICEF, 2022, <<https://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education>>



September 2022