

An Investigation on sustainable education provision for the migrated Rohingya minority children living in the settlements camps across Cox'sbazar Bangladesh (Vulnerabilities & Inequalities)

Meheroze Al Hassan
Bangladesh University of Engineering &
Technology (BUET)

Sabin Huda
University of Dhaka

Meherub Al Hassan
Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP)

Sureya Huda
Eastern University Bangladesh

Abstract

Bangladesh has sheltered 1.2 million Rohingya refugees mainly on humanitarian grounds in several camps Cox'sbazar where their children having access to non-formal education approved by the government and few international organizations for the education of the Rohingyas who entered Bangladesh recently. But Bangladesh has limited financial, institutional and other resources to provide them all with education. Some further steps could be taken for their education which can make them capable of protecting themselves and improving their situation. Different types of non-formal education, including accelerated education, vocational training and life skills training, are given in emergency situations. Accelerated education is usually given to refugee children and adolescents in many countries. In accelerated education, the number of years of schooling is curtailed and education is concisely given, but it is certified in order that the students can get enrolled in formal educational institutions when they leave emergency situations and are re-settled in the place of origin. Unquestionably we know the only access to education & sound knowledge could bring the any community of this ethnic minority to the summit of self-development and progress eventually. It has widely been understood that investing into education sectors with provision of environment and facilities would help this under privileged ethnic people to combat any unwanted situation near future. This analysis aims to investigate the

Inadequacy to formal educational facilities of Rohingya Crisis. Considering these factors would assist the concern personnel including stakeholders, workers, researchers, scientists to prioritize the provision of sustainable education for them.

Main Research

Section Sub-Header 01

Supporting the local refugee community to deliver their own 'stop gap' model of flexible education is to learning for refugee children who are denied services. Children are provided with basic education, protection, trauma recovery and opportunities for creative expression, until a time when official services become available.

- Community ownership from the outset ensures that needs are being met effectively and develops resilience in a volatile environment. The refugee community are supported to design and build school infrastructure and maintain the project through the establishment of School Management Committees (SMCs). Through these committees, regular discussion and evaluation, local parents, children and the wider community are supported to find solutions to their own problems, creating stability and sustainability for the project.
- Training teachers from within the refugee camps creates a resource that is otherwise unobtainable and maintains the low-profile of education activities in a volatile environment. It preserves culture, whilst encouraging engagement and familiarity for traumatised children. Using refugee teachers is both a result of, and an incentive for, the continuing ownership of the project



Rohingya refugee children attend a class to learn Burmese language at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh [File: Mohammad Ponir Hossain/Reuters]

sensitive, pro poor and child friendly curriculum, designed for children who have never had the chance of education or who have dropped out of school. The project is founded on local partnership and active community participation. Children, parents and the wider community are engaged at all levels, and staff work with parents to increase their understanding of the importance of education and to encourage them in supporting various aspects of their children's learning. These children are equipped with the skills and knowledge required to cope with their current situation and an uncertain path ahead. They will be able to begin to process any trauma they have experienced and look towards a brighter future.

Background

Not recognised as citizens in either Myanmar or Bangladesh, the Rohingya are effectively stateless, deprived from citizenship began after Myanmar's independence in 1948 and persecution has persisted over generations, triggering regular waves of migration. June 2012 and October 2016 saw extensive, coordinated campaigns of violence, forcing thousands of Rohingya into Bangladesh. Both the UN and human rights organisations documented reports of extrajudicial killing, mass rape and arson. The government now estimates that between 300,000 - 500,000 undocumented Rohingya reside in Bangladesh, mostly without legal status. Thousands end up in refugee



Figure 2. Rohingya Kids are studying in Camps. BBC.

support from Children on the Edge from within the refugee community. Local people were resourced to develop a 'Standing in the gap' model to provide education for their children, through a low-profile approach, within one of the makeshift refugee camps. This concept acknowledges the complex dynamics of the area, the pressure on all actors involved and the limits on resources, but rather than allowing these factors to decide the fate of the area, the project, which is community-led and flexible, looks for an alternative solution until the

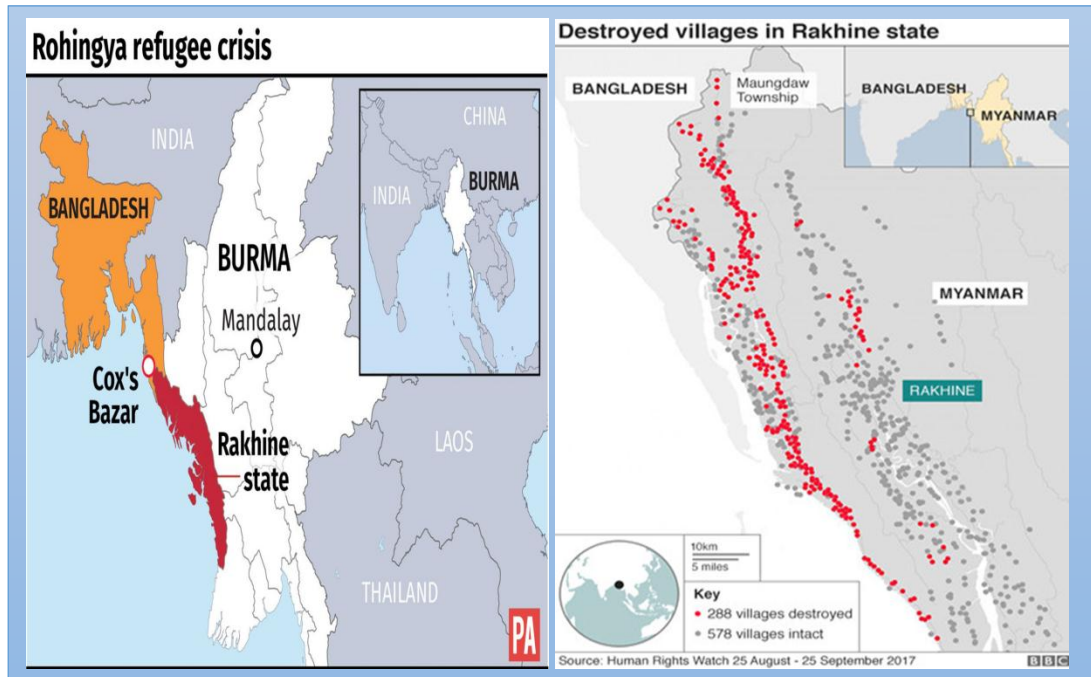


Figure 3. Graphical Image depicts how Rohingya Crisis affecting the Region. AFP,BBC.



Figure 4. Educational Setup & almost all the Structures are indiscriminately burnt down & destroyed .BBC,Reuters.

destructive consequences of refugee children missing out on even short periods of education are well documented¹² and at this point, there was a real likelihood that an entire generation of Rohingya would grow up unable to read and write. A UNHCR senior officer stated that “Without this community receiving education and opportunity, it’s a generation lost.”¹³

There were no organisations providing education at this time, but Children on the Edge worked closely with Doctors without Borders (MSF) and Action Against Hunger (ACF), who were operating within the makeshift camp providing vital health and nutrition services. These organisations were suspended in 2012 leaving Children on the Edge as the only outside agency supporting the Rohingya. Both have been allowed back for various periods on condition of maintaining a low-profile.

Intervention Header 02

Problem 2.1

The intervention was developed in response to the absence of education opportunities for thousands of unregistered Rohingya refugee children, near the Myanmar – Bangladesh border. International organisations were unable to provide services to unregistered refugees, so education in the makeshift Kutupalong camp was non-existent. Most children had never attended school, as they had only known life in the camp, or arrived from Myanmar, where education was restricted for the Rohingya. Consequently, the children had either no education, or significant learning gaps for their age. Thousands of children wandered the camp unoccupied and vulnerable. They were fearful and lacking in confidence due to the traumas they had experienced, the squalid conditions they survived in, and the negative attitudes displayed to their community. Bringing in teachers from outside the camp was a practical impossibility, but there were very few trained teachers from within the refugee community. The climate was too volatile to facilitate large training and refugees leaving the camp were vulnerable to abuse.

Securing education venues was also a significant problem.

The initial school building constructed by the

community was pulled down five days later by the police, and permanent building materials were not permitted.

Overview of approach

The approach was developed with the Rohingya community in the makeshift camp, who identified children’s education as their most pressing need. Together with local partners, Children on the Edge began discussions with the camp authorities.

Authorities were faced with a situation where they could not officially sanction services here, but were concerned about the implications that thousands of unoccupied and vulnerable children roaming the camp, posed to general security. This issue was a factor in their tacit agreement to allow the education project to begin, under the strict condition that the work would have an informal and low-profile nature. Children on the Edge have supported the Rohingya community to achieve outcomes using the following methods:

Low-profile classrooms 45 largely unmarked classrooms, made of mud and sticks, were woven into the structure of the makeshift camp, evenly spread, within or alongside existing dwellings. They contain only the most essential elements needed for teaching (blackboard, books, notebooks etc.). To maximise each venue, classrooms offer morning and afternoon sessions to 30 children.

A ‘train the trainer’ approach To ensure a low-profile, teachers were trained from within the refugee community. To maintain safety,

15 teachers regularly travelled outside the camp to receive training, they then returned to the camp and, in pairs, shared their learning with the other teachers. This provided employment, skills training and increased social standing for teachers. It ensured community ownership and created familiarity for the children.

Child-friendly education To help children begin to recover from the effects of trauma and to develop their self-worth; classroom spaces were safe, child friendly environments and a familiar routine established a ‘new



Figure 5. Rohingya minorities are yet trying to survive in the makeshift houses in temporary camps. AFP,BBC,Reuters.

normal’.

Children had daily opportunities to play, express themselves and simply enjoy being children, despite their circumstances.

Teaching methods encouraged creativity and had an emphasis on problem solving and hands-on

learning rather than rote memorization. They included a focus on health and nutrition, prevention of

common diseases, rights, sexual abuse, and the dangers of trafficking and child marriage. The schools used a government approved BRAC curriculum, designed for refugee children that have been out of school.

Completion provides fundamental education, equipping children for daily life and giving greater opportunities for the future. It prepares children to join the government school system if they gain refugee status, but also teaches Burmese if they have the opportunity to safely return home. They undertake official exam papers, proctored by their teachers, to ensure that their education is at a certified standard, despite their refugee status. Working relationally The model evolved from the initial request of the community who informed the original design of the work. Through the input of Rohingya teachers, School Management Committees, parent meetings and child councils, the project was implemented and adapted, shaped and protected over six years.

The wider community was engaged through informal interviews, and their contribution included the vital provision of voluntary labour to construct and maintain the schools.

Implementation and Monitoring

The project was implemented through local partners who engaged teachers, parents, children and the wider community to creatively respond to challenges. Monitoring processes were participatory from the outset; encouraging a wide spectrum of people to input

into internal and external reviews.

Qualitative methods included the ‘Most Significant Change’ 14

technique, observations, focus group discussions and semistructured interviews with both adults and children.

Quantitative

indicators included exam results, attendance rates and regular assessment of change indicators measuring signs of confidence and positive self-esteem.

Outcome

The concept of ‘Standing in the gap’ Finds alternative solutions to improve the situations of the most vulnerable. Instead of postponing futures, this intervention provide an innovative learning for children in seemingly impossible situation. In response to the Rohingya community’s initial request in 2010, Children on the Edge supported them to create a two-year pilot education project reaching 900 children. Its relevance was soon reflected by increased demand.

A thorough pilot evaluation in 2013 reflected the success of the model thus far and identified the need to expand.¹⁵ With the support of the Big Lottery in 2014, schools increased their reach to 2,700 children. By the end of 2016 a 93% retention rate was recorded.¹⁶ Impact was demonstrated in a final external evaluation identifying how children’s language, literacy and numeracy have improved.¹⁷ One parent told the external evaluator “When people like you come to the camp, they are not afraid to talk.”¹⁸ Teachers were given a source of training, income and improved social standing. They showed zeal and commitment in spite of the personal risks involved, and developed ‘deep bonds of affection’¹⁹ with their students. Teachers demonstrating improved skills and ability to BRAC education specialists increased from 70% to 100%.²⁰

The education to daily lives was continually assessed through interviews. They described the following positive changes:

- Children used their knowledge to teach siblings and parents.
- Their learning enabled them to read health leaflets, and understand announcements about visiting health workers.
- They spoke of learning through newspapers found.
- They could understand army officers entering the camps.
- They started to be able to handle simple financial transactions,

Endnotes

1. Children on the Edge (Jan 2017) 'Refugee and Working Children Education' – End of Project Monitoring Report'
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3. Human Rights Watch - World Report 2017 - 'Abuses against the Rohingya'
4. IOM (Feb 2017) 'Humanitarian Response to undocumented
5. Myanmar nationals in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh' – Situation report
6. IRIN (2010) 'Bangladesh: Rohingya youth hunger for education'
7. Leehey, J (2017) Bangladesh Education Project: Learning Centres for Working Children & Rohingya Refugee Camp Schools – Final
8. UNICEF (May 2017) 'Humanitarian Situation Report 1' -Bangladesh