



GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM

Scoping Mission, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Key points

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Introduction



In autumn 2020 Beyond Conflict and Global Development Consortium (GDC) collaborated to deliver mental health support in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp in Bangladesh. The camp accommodates 1.1 million Rohingya refugees who fled the genocide by the Myanmar military in August 2017. Phase 1 of our project delivered free online mental health training and support to frontline workers from seven local NGOs in the camp. It had a demonstrable impact on the trainees and the refugees they serve. Details of these results are in our first Impact Report, available on our website and published in 2021.

Following the success of Phase 1, Beyond Conflict and GDC – our partner in Bangladesh – undertook a scoping mission to assess the ongoing needs on the ground, once pandemic restrictions were lifted. In March 2022, GDC's Director Golam Abbas, along with Dr Saleh Mohammed, conducted the scoping research in situ to refresh training for existing frontline workers from Phase 1 and sign up new NGOs who wish to take part in Phase 2.

GDC also used this visit to meet organisations in the camp who wish to form a consortium to deliver a new community-based programme for refugees, aimed at mothers and babies born in the camp as well as other vulnerable groups there.

This report highlights key points from the scoping mission.

Background

In May 2022, Bangladesh was hosting...

A total of 926,486 refugees are in 35 official camps located in Cox's Bazar

Comprising 195,583 families

More than half the population are children (52%)



Source: UNHCR

Also...

4.06% are **persons in special need**, including:

- People with a disability & /or medical issues
- Elders
- Children at risk
- Single parents

4% are elderly

1% have a disability

2.9% moved to Bhasan Char; plan is to relocate up to 100,000 refugees.

Source: UNHCR, May 2022



The mission



Context

Beyond Conflict UK and Global Development Consortium (GDC) agreed to undertake a scoping and assessment mission to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Currently, according to the Government estimate, over 1.1 million Rohingya refugees live in Bangladesh.

Aim of the scoping mission

To focus on the state of mental health and psycho-social situation of Rohingya refugees.

To explore ways to develop appropriate interventions to ease lives among the refugees.

To be aware of the challenges & explore mitigation measures.

Methods

Undertaken by Dr. Abu Saleh & Golam Abbas (both of GDC), 3-5 March, 2022.

Training sessions for frontline NGOs providing mental health & psycho-social support.

Referral pathway for future interventions.

Discussions with NGOs on issues including:

A needs **gap analysis** for mental health and psycho-social support for refugees.

Additional **activities** beneficial for refugees' mental health and psycho-social well being.

Potential for **parallel working** with local partners.

The needs of 'war babies', mothers, girls & families headed by children



Up to 60,000 “war babies” were born during the first year of arrival in the camps. The young mothers and their babies continue to face enormous difficulties due to stigmatization of their unfortunate situation... The needs for their mental wellbeing are not sufficiently covered.

Mental health needs are unmet

Competing demands on limited resources mean NGOs are primarily engaged in general relief such as healthcare, water and sanitation.

The mental health and psycho-social support remains unmet.

The NGO heads placed emphasis on investing in mental health and psycho-social preventive care; the current practice of mitigating the mental health concerns are often too late.

Further dangers for women & children

Sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence, early marriage and trafficking are some of the major concerns, especially, for girls and women, single mothers, mothers with war babies, female/child-headed families. It creates hardship and impacts their mental health and wellbeing.



NGOs highlight the main challenges

- Lack of resources to cover the mental health and psycho-social (MHPS) needs of refugees.
- The need to invest in mental health and psycho-social support “preventive care”; current practice of mitigating the mental health concerns are often too late.

NGOs advise on volunteers and a consortium

- Using existing & /or recruiting volunteers for camp-based awareness activities is cost effective because...
- They are identified from the community, aware of and understand the camp dynamics, speak refugee language/dialect & have better access to the refugees.
- NGOs requested to form a consortium to deal with MHPS issues in the camps.

Recommendations



MORE TRAINING

Organise 6 face-to-face mental health & psycho-social (MHPS) training sessions for newly identified NGO staff in Cox's Bazar.

Conduct once-a-month face-to-face MHPS training sessions for newly identified staff & a final refreshers session for the old group of trainees in Cox's Bazar.

REFERRAL PATHWAY

Re-establish the referral pathway for July 2022-June 2023.

A SCALED-UP HOTLINE

Dr. Saleh to manage a designated referral pathway hotline for trainees as well other professionals to remain connected & exchange experiences & get guidance as deemed necessary.

THE BUDGET

The funding to undertake activities for Rohingya refugees in the Cox's Bazar camps for 12 months.

How you can help



Together we can help more refugees and frontline workers

As an individual, school, company or foundation, you can help us to expand our work by fundraising, becoming a Friend of Beyond Conflict, by taking a regular giving pledge, becoming a corporate sponsor or donor.

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Thank you