



Thematic Evaluation of UN Women Bangladesh Humanitarian Portfolio in Cox's Bazar

2023



Thematic Evaluation of UN Women Bangladesh Humanitarian Portfolio in Cox's Bazar

2023



**UN WOMEN BANGLADESH
AUGUST 2023**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EVALUATION MANAGEMENT GROUP

Sabrina Evangelista Regional Evaluation Specialist, UN Women Asia-Pacific Regional Office
Tania Sharmin Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Analyst, UN Women Bangladesh
Silja Rajander Head of Sub-Office, UN Women in Cox's Bazar

EVALUATION TEAM

Nassrin Farzaneh Evaluation Team Leader
Julaikha Hossain National Evaluation Consultant.

EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP

Shamsud Doza, Additional Refugee and Repatriation Commissioner
Abdul Alim, Head of Humanitarian Programme, Action Aid Bangladesh
Shefali Begum, Women Market Manager, BRAC
Paola Castro-Neiderstam, Second Secretary, Democracy, Human Rights and Gender Equality, Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh
Matilda Svensson, Coordinator Humanitarian & Development Assistance, Embassy of Sweden
Rewa El Oubari, Inter-Sector Coordination Group Policy Officer
Sheepa Hafiza, UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group
Tahmida Nur Mostafa, Project Manager, BRAC
Tahmina Parvin, Co-Chair of GIHA WG, UNHCR
Dalim Shaheda Khatun, Project Manager, Action Aid Bangladesh
Razia Sultana, Chairperson, Rights of Women Welfare Society

Design and layout: Magfuzur Rahman Shana/UN Women
Cover photo: UN Women
Copyright © UN Women 2023, all rights reserved.

Disclaimer: The analysis and recommendations of this report are those of the independent evaluation team and do not necessarily reflect the views of UN Women.
Read the evaluation report at <https://gate.unwomen.org>.

ABBREVIATIONS

APBN	Armed Police Battalion
ASK	Ain o Salish Kendra
AAB	ActionAid Bangladesh
BNPS	Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha
CBO	Community Based Organization
CIC	Camp-in-Charge
CP	Child Protection
CWC	Communications with Communities Working Group
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Government of Australia
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
EQ	Evaluation Question
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDMN	Forcibly Displaced Myanmar National
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAM	Gender Age Marker
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEEWG	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls
GERAAS	Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System – UN Women
GFO	Gender Field Officer
GIHA WG	Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISCG	Inter-Sector Coordination Group
JRP	Joint Response Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
LEAP	Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection (global flagship initiative)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs
MPWC	Multi-Purpose Women’s Centre
NAP	National Action Plan
NAP WPS	National Action Plan Women Peace & Security
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PSEA	Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RP	Responsible Party
RRRC	Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner
RWWS	Rights of Women Welfare Society
SCE	Second chance education
SDC	Swiss Development and Cooperation
SEG	Strategic Executive Group
SiDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToTs	Training of Trainers
UNW	United Nation Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WFS	Women Friendly Spaces

WGSS
WG
WLO
WRO
WPHF
WPS

Women and Girls Safe Spaces
Working Group
Women-Led Organisations
Women's Rights Organisation
Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund
Women, Peace & Security

TABALE OF CONTENTS

1.	<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>	10
1.1	INTRODUCTION	10
1.2	EVALUATION OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, INTENDED AUDIENCE, AND TIMELINE	11
1.3	EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	12
1.4	LIMITATIONS	13
1.5	EVALUATION FINDINGS	13
1.6	CONCLUSIONS	16
1.7	RECOMMENDATIONS	22
2.	<u>BACKGROUND</u>	26
2.1.	CONTEXT	26
2.2	THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE	28
2.3	UN WOMEN'S HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING IN COX'S BAZAR	29
2.4	MEANS TO LEAD PROJECT DESCRIPTION	31
3.	<u>EVALUATION METHODOLOGY</u>	35
3.1	OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, INTENDED AUDIENCE, AND TIMELINE	35
3.2	EVALUATION DESIGN	36
3.4	SAMPLING, DATA SOURCES, DATA COLLECTION TOOLS	39
3.5	DATA ANALYSIS METHODS	39
3.6	TEAM COMPOSITION	40
3.7	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	40
3.8	EVALUATION MANAGEMENT & QUALITY ASSURANCE	40
3.9	LIMITATIONS	41
4.	<u>EVALUATION FINDINGS</u>	43
5.	<u>CONCLUSION</u>	64
6.	<u>LESSONS LEARNED</u>	70
7.	<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	72
	<u>REFERENCES</u>	78
	<u>ANNEX 1: EVALUATION MATRIX</u>	80
	<u>ANNEX 2: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS</u>	84
	<u>ANNEX 3: LIST OF KEY INFORMANT'S ORGANIZATIONS</u>	85
	<u>ANNEX 4: NUMBER OF KIIS, FGDS, IDIS AND GROUP DISCUSSION PARTICIPANTS AND EXIT SURVEYS</u>	86
	<u>ANNEX 5: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE</u>	86
	<u>ANNEX 6: FGD GUIDE</u>	89

ANNEX 7: EXIT-SURVEY QUESTIONS	92
ANNEX 8: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE	93
ANNEX 11: TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)	3
ANNEX 12: MEANS TO LEAD THEORY OF CHANGE	8

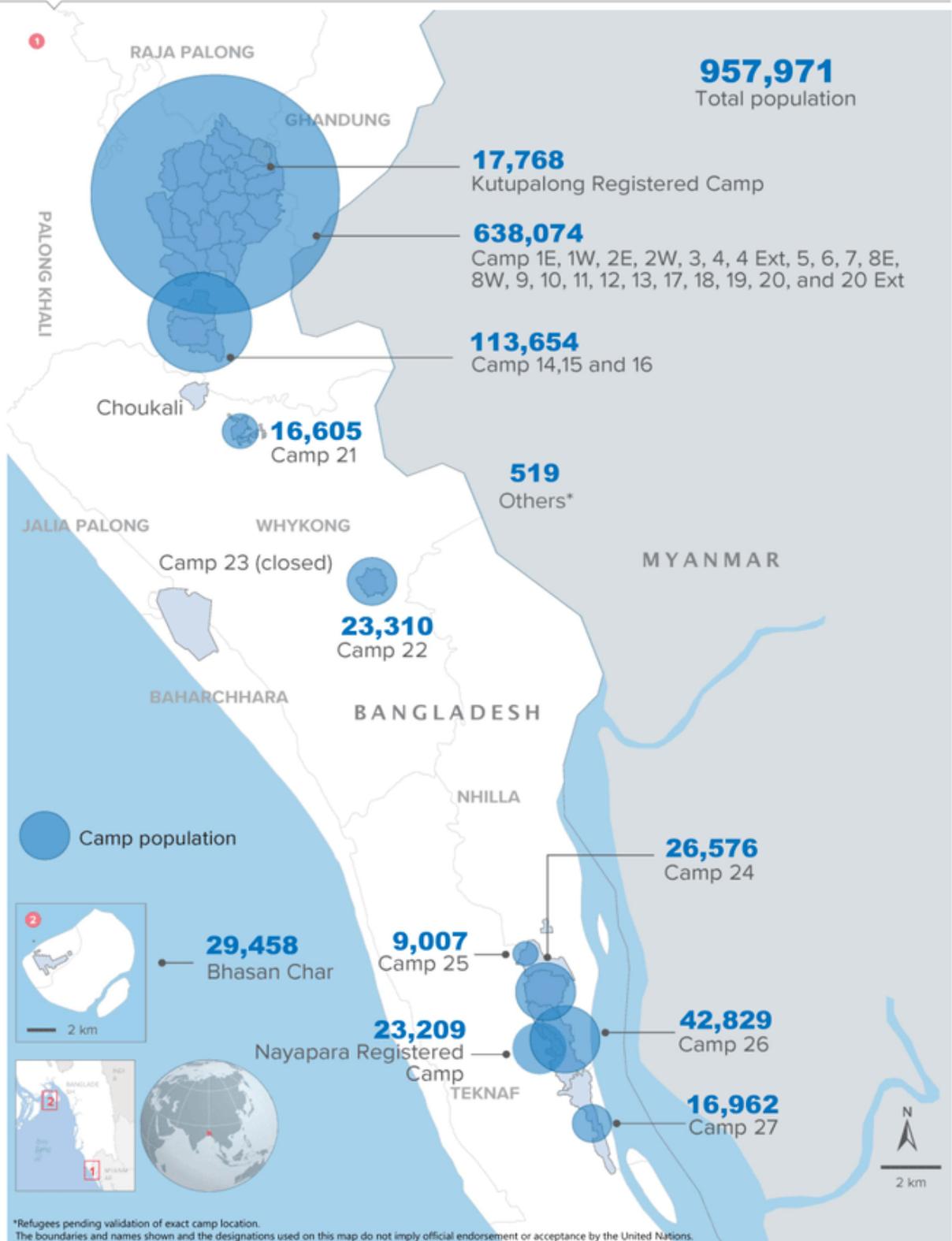




Photo: Rohingya women artisans produce handicrafts in the UN Women's Multi-Purpose Women's Centre in the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, Credit: UN Women/Mahmudul Karim.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1. In 2017, an estimated 745,000 stateless Rohingya refugees fled persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine state and arrived in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. As of May 2023, more than 961,175 Rohingya refugees remain in Cox's Bazar in a protracted crisis situation, 52% of whom are women and girls.¹ The vast majority of the Rohingya refugees reside in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas in 33 extremely congested camps, including the largest single site, the Kutupalong-Balukhali Expansion Site,² which is host to more than 635,000 Rohingya refugees.³ ⁴ While Cox' Bazar district has a total Bangladeshi population of 2,823,000, Rohingya refugees outnumber the locals by nearly three to one in the two sub-districts, Ukhiya and Teknaf.
2. The protracted humanitarian context in Cox's Bazar has led to changing and exacerbated needs and vulnerabilities (including gender-based violence (GBV)), and experiences of gender inequalities among the Rohingya refugees and host communities. The Rohingya refugees continue to be marginalized due to various socio-economic and political conditions, and dependent on external aid.⁵ ⁶ The reduction in donor funding due to competing global crisis (i.e., the war in Ukraine and the earthquake in Turkey, among others), is having a critical impact on the Rohingya refugees. In June 2023, the World Food Programme (WFP) will reduce monthly rations for Rohingya refugees to \$8 dollars and has issued urgent calls for funding to restore food rations. For the 2023 Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, the UN and partners have appealed for 876 million dollars.
3. The socioeconomic and health impacts (including mental health) of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as large-scale hazards such as fires and floods that hit the camps in 2021, and a more recent fire in a camp in March 2023, affecting 15,000 people⁷, have further exacerbated the Rohingya refugees' vulnerabilities. As these needs and vulnerabilities vary among different members of the community (in terms of age, gender, disability and health status, sexual orientations, poverty levels, among others), some Rohingya households are increasingly adapting negative coping mechanisms, which implicate girls and women, especially.⁸
4. UN Women has been present in Cox's Bazar since 2015 and established a sub-office in 2018 in response following the influx of Rohingya refugees in 2017, to implement humanitarian action programming targeting the most vulnerable women and girls in Rohingya camps, as well as the host communities around the camps. The UN Women humanitarian actions cover the areas of coordination, technical assistance, gender assessments and studies through the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG)⁹ (previously through the Gender Hub); integrated, multi-sectoral support through its multi-purpose women's centres (MPWCs), which offer leadership skills development, livelihoods and life skills development (including literacy, numeracy, and business skills), and second chance education for women and girls, as well as integrated sexual and reproductive health, psychosocial counseling and GBV referrals, the first of which was established in January 2018; gender-based violence prevention and response support; and advocacy to advance normative changes in the rights of women and girls. Through its support to the GiHA WG, UN Women

¹ Joint Government of Bangladesh - UNHCR Population Factsheet as of May 2023.

² The International Organization for Migration (IOM) refers to the collective settlement of Balukhali and neighbouring Kutupalong refugee camp as the Kutupalong-Balukhali expansion site.

³ OCHA : <https://www.unocha.org/rohingya-refugee-crisis>.

⁴ Joint Government of Bangladesh – UNHCR Population Factsheet as of May 2023.

⁵ Inter-Agency Research Report, October 2020, An Intersectional Analysis of Gender Amongst Rohingya Refugees and Host communities in COX's Bazar, Bangladesh: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/abridged_version_gender_and_intersectionality_report-2020-19th_october_2020.pdf

⁶ Remarks by Noeleen Hazer, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar at the General Assembly, 16 March 2023.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Inter-Agency Research Report, October 2020, An Intersectional Analysis of Gender Amongst Rohingya Refugees and Host communities in COX's Bazar, Bangladesh.

⁹ GiHA WG was established in 2017 and is co-chaired by UN Women and UNHCR. It is one of the six established Inter-Sector Working Groups to ensure the effective mainstreaming of gender equality in humanitarian action.

also ensures that gender-sensitive measures are integrated into all sectors and programming of other humanitarian actors in Cox's Bazar.¹⁰

5. In 2022, UN Women has been implementing eight projects funded by various donors in Cox's Bazar (ref. pages 34-35).
6. UN Women work in Cox's Bazar aligns with the priority areas stipulated by the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021: Outcome 5: Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action. Furthermore, it aligns with the objective of UN Women Bangladesh Strategic Note (2022-2026) to ensure a strong coherence and synergy among UN agencies and partners. Specifically, it aims toward the following outcome of the Bangladesh Strategic Note (2022-2026), which is dedicated to the response to the Rohingya humanitarian crisis in Cox's Bazar: Outcome 5: By 2026 more Rohingya and host community women and girls are empowered by a gender-responsive enabling environment, to exercise their agency and decision-making with improved access to protection, education, and socio-economic opportunities.

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, INTENDED AUDIENCE, AND TIMELINE

7. The main objective of this thematic evaluation¹¹ is to explore the UN Women's programmatic contribution in responding to the needs of the Rohingya refugees and host communities around the refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar, with a focus on "Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya refugee and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods" project (hereon: Means to Lead project). UN Women's Means to Lead project is a four-year project (Oct 2019-31 Aug 2023), funded by the Government of Sweden, represented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in Bangladesh. The aim of the project is to increase the resilience, leadership, protection and livelihood opportunities for women and adolescent girls in Ukhiya and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar's refugee settlements and host communities, and to enhance social cohesion through participation of women in decision making in community and camp structures. The project is in line with UN Women's global programme, the Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection (LEAP) programme that aims to make gender equality and women's empowerment central for co-ordinated, effective humanitarian action and crisis response, as well as the 2019 Rohingya Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis¹². The Means to Lead project has a total budget of US\$ 8.846 million.
8. Beyond its main objective, the evaluation terms of reference (ToR) include specific objectives to:
 - Assess relevance and coherence of the strategy and approaches of UN Women Cox's Bazar programming and coordination work including its partnership approach with regards to the protracted nature of the Rohingya refugee crisis and its implications for engagement with government stakeholders moving forward.
 - Assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of UN Women interventions with respect to results across programming and coordination activities.
 - Assess how the human rights-based approach, gender equality principles and the participation of socially marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and gender diverse groups, were integrated in the design and the implementation of the project.
 - Draw lessons learnt, best practices, success stories and challenges from the implementation of interventions in the Rohingya refugee camps and host communities.
 - Provide actionable recommendations to guide UN Women future humanitarian response efforts in Cox's Bazar, identifying opportunities to enhance sustainability, including through programmatic developments and support to coordination.

¹⁰ UN Women Regional Evaluation: UN Women ROAP, Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, Annexes-Volume 2, January 2022.

¹¹ This evaluation is commissioned by the UN Women Bangladesh Country Office.

¹² The intervention continued to contribute to the Joint Response Plan during the course of project implementation. Under the 2021 Joint Response Plan, it contributes to the Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen the protection of Rohingya refugee women, men, girls and boys and Strategic Objective 3: Foster the Wellbeing of Host Communities in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas.

- Assess the partnership approach of UN Women’s programming in Cox’s Bazar, including with regards to the protracted nature of the Rohingya refugee crisis and its implications for engagement with government stakeholders moving forward.
9. The purpose of this evaluation is both summative and formative. It is summative since it generates findings pertaining to lessons learned, accountability, and the contribution of UN Women’s programming to the ongoing Rohingya refugee response in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. The evaluation is also formative as it is intended to be used for strategic and programmatic decision-making on how best to improve UN Women’s humanitarian programming and management addressing the needs and priorities of women and girls in the Rohingya refugee camps and the host community. It is also intended to inform on the design and implementation of similar programming moving forward.
 10. The scope of the evaluation consists of UN Women contribution to the Rohingya refugee response in Ukhyia and Teknaf in Cox’s Bazar’s refugee settlements and host communities. The evaluation timeframe covers the project and activities implemented by both UN Women Cox’s Bazar sub-office team and its Responsible Parties from October 2019 to December 2022.
 11. The audiences for the results of the evaluation are UN Women, other UN agencies present in Cox’s Bazar,¹³ donors, civil society organizations¹⁴, national and local authorities, and camp management/sectors,¹⁵ and other relevant stakeholders.
 12. The evaluation had a duration of 40 days over the period of February 15 and May 31, 2023. Primary data collection with the key informants (KIs) started in March 2023 and was completed in April 2023. The key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted both in person and virtually.¹⁶ The fieldwork for the collection of primary data from focus group discussions (FGDs), group discussions, in-depth interviews, direct observations, and exit surveys started on 20 March 2023, and ended on 2 April 2023, covering a total of two-weeks.

1.3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

13. The design of this evaluation follows United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in United Nations System and pursues UNEG gender-related norms and standards¹⁷, ensuring gender equality and human rights considerations were integrated into each stage of the evaluation. It examined the extent to which UN Women projects in Cox’s Bazar have been contributing towards gender equality, human rights and women’s empowerment, and whether they are having different impacts on women and men. The evaluation was inclusive and participatory, and ensured that different groups of women including the most marginalized and vulnerable were included throughout the evaluation. The evaluation paid close attention to the way in which the project(s) has (have) identified gender-specific vulnerabilities, needs, and barriers. It examined the interaction between different projects and mechanisms in addressing gender equality, inclusiveness, ‘do no harm’, and human rights, and the extent to which they have contributed to the greatest change in the lives of the community members. The evaluation also examined gender and age disaggregated data to the extent that they could be extracted and were relevant to the evaluation questions.
14. The evaluation used a mixed-methods and theory-based approach. The Theory of Change (TOC) of the Means to Lead project was tested through the evaluation questions (EQs). The methodology

¹³ Including International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and World Food Programme (WFP).

¹⁴ Including Oxfam, BRAC, Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB), Dan Church Aid, (DCA), and a range of partners, including United Purpose Bangladesh, Helvetas, Prantic, Mukti Cox’s Bazaar, Relief International and NGO Forum.

¹⁵ I.e., Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, the District Welfare Officer at Cox’s Bazar, the office of Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), District Commissioner

¹⁶ A few KIIs were conducted following the completion of the fieldwork due to the unavailability of respondents at the time.

¹⁷ [UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation \(2016\)](#). (Specifically, on norm 8, which focuses on the need to ensure human rights and gender equality considerations are integrated across all stages of an evaluation, in adherence to the principle of ‘leaving no-one behind’; and standard 4.7, which focuses on considering the extend to which human rights and gender equality featured in the design of the subject of evaluation).

designed for this evaluation aimed to draw on both qualitative and quantitative data (using primary data collection methods and secondary sources).

15. The evaluation used a purposive sampling strategy for the collection of primary data in the five camps with Multi-Purpose Women Centers (MPWCs) for refugees (camps 3, 4, 4-extension, 5, and 18), and 1 host community site with an MPWC (Teknaf, camp 22). This sampling strategy was both cost-effective, and an appropriate method for collecting data on a limited number of primary data sources who could contribute to answering the evaluation questions. The methods for primary data collection included KIIs, FGDs, group discussions, in-depth interviews, and direct observations and exit surveys at the MPWCs. The evaluation conducted a total of 36 KIIs (27 females, 9 males), 14 FGDs (37 females, 42 males, 5 transgenders), 7 group interviews (30 female, 4 male), 3 in-depth interviews (all female), 3 direct observations at MPWCs, and 30 exit-surveys (all female). The total number of respondents was 187 (127 females, 55 males, and 5 transgenders). (See Annex 3 for the list of key informant respondents and Annex 4 for the total number of interviews according to method).
16. Participatory validation workshops with the members of the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) were conducted following the submission of the draft inception report and preliminary findings. On the 24 May 2023, a validation workshop bringing together over 50 participants representing 15 organizations/stakeholders, including the RRRC, RPs and sister UN agencies, was organized to validate the key findings and recommendations of the draft evaluation report.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

1. In both qualitative and quantitative data collection, cultural norms and professional affiliation may encourage respondents to give more positive responses due to a social desirability bias, where respondents answer questions in a way that sounds more favorable or provide answers that they feel the interviewer wants to hear.
2. The timing of data collection needed to consider factors affecting participation of the affected population, including the arrival of Ramadan on March 22, which constrained the data collection timeframe. This impacted especially the number of FGDs/group interviews, in-depth interviews and exit surveys that could be viably conducted within the limited timeframe. (See Annex 4).
3. The exit surveys were not conducted in the host communities due to time constraints to assess any differences across beneficiaries attending the MPWCs at the camps and host communities.
4. It was also difficult for the ET to ensure that the 'most marginalized' were included in the FGDs due to time constraints in terms of identifying and selecting them for the interviews (although the ET conducted one FGD with a gender diverse group, and also an in-depth interview with a woman with disability).
5. Both output and outcome level data were missing as the project indicators and related reporting were mainly focused on project activities and implementation.

1.5 EVALUATION FINDINGS

EQ 1. To what extent has UN Women's humanitarian portfolio been relevant to and responding to the needs and priorities of women/girls in Rohingya refugee and host communities with respect to its comparative advantage (1.1), alignment of programmes with the gender and humanitarian response priorities in Cox's Bazar and national priorities (1.2), adapting to the evolving contexts (1.3), inclusive approaches (1.4), addressing underlying social norms and structural barriers for effective programming (1.5), context specificity (1.6), and integrating the principles of gender equality, equity, human rights, and 'do no harm' into its programming to address the needs of the most vulnerable (1.7)?

Key Findings 1:

- 1.1 UN Women's humanitarian portfolio is highly relevant to the humanitarian response

priorities in Cox's Bazar and to addressing the social norm barriers to women's empowerment, leadership, and income-generation.

- 1.2 The design and implementation of UN Women's humanitarian portfolio in Cox's Bazar aligns with the priority areas stipulated in the UN Women Strategic Plan (2018-2021) and UN Women Bangladesh Strategic note (2022-2026), which are commensurate with the objectives of the Joint Response Plan (JRP) and Bangladesh government's National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security (WPS) national priorities.
- 1.3 UN Women's humanitarian portfolio adapted well to the evolving context, including the COVID-19 situation, to remain relevant. The GiHA WG provided important guidelines for programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.4 UN Women's inclusive approach to programming is evidenced by its vulnerability selection criteria of beneficiaries at the MPWCs. However, it needs to intensify its efforts to better identify hidden groups among the most vulnerable (i.e., the poorest of the poor and populations with different disabilities, including mental health), and provide tailored support to ensure access to services by these groups.
- 1.5 UN Women's approach in addressing underlying social norms and structural is informed by the needs and priorities of Rohingya women and girls collected through joint analyses in the context of the GiHA WG and through consultations with programme beneficiaries. Its programmatic approach has aimed to address underlying social norms/structural barriers related to gender equality, including through male engagement activities, and advocacy and awareness-raising activities reaching both women and men.
- 1.6 The Means to Lead project implementation strategy has been tailored to reflect changes in context and needs of the refugees and host communities as evidenced by the construction of additional MPWCS in the refugee camps (5 to-date) and host communities (3 to-date), as well as increase in the number of female and male volunteers for community outreach activities, and Women Leaders. Nonetheless, the project's TOC does not specifically incorporate assumptions and risks with regarding to the changing context.

UN Women projects benefit from gender and human rights analyses provided by the GiHA WG. The Means to Lead project promotes gender equity through dedicated activities for women, adolescent girls and transgenders (including those with disabilities); and through outreach and awareness activities conducted by MPWC volunteers (women and men), promoting gender and human rights sensitivity within the community, ensuring that also men learn about gender equality and equity. This is important as UN Women's focus on vulnerable women and girls could otherwise lead to an increased 'double burden of work' among women and girls, and to conflicts between men and women at the household and community levels, jeopardizing the principle of 'do no harm'. However, UN Women could do more to generate analysis to inform programming tailored for men and boys.

EQ 2. To what extent are UN Women's efforts in Cox's Bazar coherent externally with the interventions of other actors engaged in the Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar particularly within the UN system (2.1) and internally within its humanitarian portfolio (2.2); do the individual projects, including the Means to Lead project build on synergies between each other to achieve a greater impact (2.3); and how is UN Women monitoring its efforts and integrating learning into its approach (2.4)?

Key Findings 2:

- 2.1 UN Women's active participation in the humanitarian response has allowed it to demonstrate the importance of a coherent and collective gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (GEEWG) approach in Cox's Bazar and to have an impact on the different dimensions of gender equality in a coordinated and complementary manner with other UN agencies.

- 2.2 Although UN Women's work in Cox's Bazar is embedded as one outcome under the Bangladesh Strategic Note and sits under the Bangladesh country office, there has been a lack of concrete connection between its programming in Cox's Bazar and that at the national level.
- 2.3 UN Women's cross-cutting work on gender is supportive of coherence across its projects and working with different actors to achieve greatest impact.
- 2.4 UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar lacks a robust M&E system that captures results at the outcome level, identifies gaps, and highlights lessons learned at the outcome level. UN Women needs to strengthen its M&E and reporting functions to better reflect results and trends at the higher, outcome levels.

EQ 3. How effective has UN Women's programming, especially the Means to the Lead project, been in achieving its objectives; what strategies, partnerships and coordination mechanisms have been most effective; were any replicable models established with potential for scale-up (3.1); what barriers and challenges have the projects, especially the Means to the Lead project, been experiencing during the implementation for effectiveness of results (3.2); and what have been the positive and negative unanticipated consequences (3.3)?

Key Findings 3:

- 3.1 The combination of services offered at the MPWCs (including counseling and GBV referral mechanisms), outreach activities, and focus on women's leadership building have been among the most effective strategies, alongside partnerships and coordination mechanisms in both the refugee camps and host communities. UN Women's support through the GiHA WG (previously benefitting from technical support provided by the Gender Hub) has contributed significantly to enhanced mainstreaming of gender considerations across the humanitarian response.
- 3.2 Funding constraints have limited coverage within and across camps and host communities. Government regulations on the Rohingya refugees including restrictions on their freedom of movement, alongside inaccessibility to market linkages and inability for the refugees to access income generation opportunities/jobs, as well as the deteriorating security situation in the camps have been among the key barriers and challenges that the projects, especially the Means to the Lead project, have encountered in ensuring the effectiveness of results.
- 3.3 An important unanticipated negative consequence of the projects has been the targeting of Rohingya women leaders by the armed groups in the camps. The insecure situation has also impacted women's and girl's perceptions of safety in leaving their homes to access services offered by UN Women's projects.

EQ 4: To what extent does the UN Women Cox's Bazar sub-office have sufficient human and financial resources to support the humanitarian portfolio (4.1); how timely and economical are the efforts of the humanitarian portfolio (4.2); to what extent have the indicators in the log frame been used in monitoring the implementation and efficiency of the programme over time (4.3)?

Key Findings 4:

- 4.1 The number of staff at the sub-office, with roughly a third of positions as of April 2023 being in process of recruitment, is not sufficient to manage and monitor the multiple components of the projects. This is especially true regarding skills and expertise that are needed to work in advisory capacity. However, it may be noted that overall the number of personnel at the sub-office has remained mostly consistent since 2021 to 2023, with around 22 – 23 personnel in the sub-

office, and 3 – 4 personnel in the now closed Gender Hub, whilst the overall budget had reduced from USD 5.1 million in 2021 to USD 4.5 million in 2023.

- 4.2 UN Women has established regular Partnership Meetings with its RPs and provides training for all RPs on key aspects of program management, monitoring and coaching RP activities on a regular basis and sharing common guidance and resources through collective emails to RPs to ensure timely and economical implementation of the interventions. However, the RPs highlighted the need for more collaborative approaches, joint monitoring, and information sharing.
- 4.3 The efficiency of projects is currently measured against the distribution of funds to different activities under different project components, whether targets have been reached on time or not. Neither the RPs nor UN Women have conducted cost-benefit/effectiveness analyses to determine the efficiency of projects.

EQ 5. To what extent are the results achieved through UN Women projects in Cox's Bazar likely to continue beyond 2023 and to what extent has the humanitarian portfolio built-in mechanisms – such as capacity development of partners - to ensure the sustainability of efforts (5.1); to what extent have Means to Lead and other relevant projects in Cox's Bazar contributed to reinforcing the capacities and transformative resilience of the refugees for the transition from a humanitarian protracted crisis scenario to provision of long-term development assistance (5.2)?

Key Findings 5:

- 5.1 UN Women's humanitarian portfolio includes built-in mechanisms such as its capacity development at the system level, including to local NGOs in support of rationalization/localization and sustainability in the longer term.
- 5.2 The sustainability of UN Women's efforts is more at the individual than the collective level, given its relatively limited resources and thus coverage. The persistence of regressive social norms continues to limit the capacities of both women and men in both Rohingya and host communities to consciously engage in long-term change processes.

1.6 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance):

23. The findings highlight both the achievements and limitations of UN Women's approach in Cox's Bazar. UN Women's humanitarian portfolio in Cox's Bazar is highly relevant and aligned with international conventions, strategic plans, and the objectives of the JRP and NAP WPS. The organization's efforts in producing information, conducting training, and building capacity effectively address gender-related needs and contribute to the overall goals of gender equality and empowerment in Cox's Bazar. UN Women has a clear added value in the refugee humanitarian crisis context and is a relevant actor in promoting the capacity of other humanitarian actors to respond to gender equality and GBV prevention from an empowerment and resilience building angle. While the GiHA WG has been bringing to the forefront the critical role of gender responsive programming, its coordination function has been questioned at times by other stakeholders mainly due to lack of concrete indicators that can measure the relevance and effectiveness of its coordination efforts and activities.
24. Although UN Women's projects have been instrumental in addressing social norms and structural barriers related to gender, there are areas where its programmatic approach falls short of being gender transformative. Limited resources as well as government regulations on the Rohingya

refugees have constrained the coverage of UN Women's initiatives, preventing them from fully achieving gender transformative outcomes. Additionally, the persistence of long-held beliefs and expectations regarding gender roles and responsibilities has posed a challenge to bringing about substantial change. However, UN Women's projects, such as the Means to Lead, have been successful in transforming gender attitudes at individual levels by raising awareness, building capacity, and empowering women through skills development and income-generating activities. The engagement of female and male community outreach volunteers and women leaders from the same communities has been crucial in effectively increasing awareness and challenging regressive norms.

25. The evaluation acknowledges UN Women's human-rights-based approach, which emphasizes strengthening the voice of women and girls and removing structural barriers to gender equality and empowerment. However, it should address resource constraints, ensure tailored approaches to engaging men and boys in gender equality initiatives, continue to promote gender-transformative livelihoods and income generation opportunities, and strengthen the comprehensiveness of its approach to address the needs and perspectives of all community members, including the poorest of the poor and those with different types of disabilities, including mental health.
26. In alignment with its mandate and expertise, UN Women focuses its skills building and empowerment activities on vulnerable women and girls, while the community outreach activities in the camps conducted by the male volunteers, the male engagement activities of its RPs, and gender sensitization and training provided by GFOs aim to address harmful and regressive gender norms and behaviors among men and boys. UN Women should further strengthen its approach to men and boys, generating gender analysis to inform the pursuit of evidence-informed approaches to programming tailored for men and boys, leveraging its coordination function to support humanitarian actors to implement such programming in the camps and host community, minimizing any potential 'do no harm' risks that may emerge from women becoming more skilled and empowered members of their communities.
27. The absence of a comprehensive and realistic assessment of assumptions, risks, and potential contextual changes undermines ability of the sub-office to adapt its programming and respond effectively to the challenges on the ground. It is crucial for UN Women to address these limitations and ensure that the TOC is revised to reflect the complex and evolving context of Cox's Bazar, including government regulations, security concerns, and potential social dynamics that may affect women's leadership and self-reliance. A more robust and context-specific TOC will enable UN Women to better anticipate and address the barriers and risks that may arise during project implementation, ultimately enhancing the project's impact and promoting meaningful gender equality and empowerment in the Rohingya camps and host communities.

Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence):

28. The evaluation findings highlight significant challenges in ensuring coherence and integrated programming among multiple stakeholders involved in the humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar. The presence of various UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs, along with the absence of a multi-year plan, has led to overlapping services in some camps and critical service gaps in others. Limited coordination and communication among organizations on their operations and interventions has further exacerbated this issue. However, it is important to acknowledge that the impact of various interventions in gender-responsive programming may not be uniform across different individuals. Despite the eagerness to promote gender equality, there are challenges in the perception that gender issues are not seen as 'life-saving' by some in the humanitarian community. It is crucial to ensure equity in the coordination system and make gender a cross-cutting responsibility for all agencies. Collaboration with the Inter-Sector Gender Coordination Group (ISGC) is important to follow up on the implementation of recommendations provided by the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG).
29. On the other hand, the presence of different types of women centers, such as MPWCs and Women Friendly Spaces (WFSs) with their different focuses, should be viewed as complementary rather than duplicating each other. Given the multifaceted nature of gender equality challenges in Cox's Bazar, there is a need for multidimensional programming approaches and multi-year funding.
30. Coordination of efforts remains challenging, and different individuals and agencies may have varying perspectives on the value of coordination. It is essential to overcome these challenges and

enhance coordination to ensure the effectiveness of the humanitarian response by employing a holistic and integrated approach to gender programming, one that recognizes the interconnections between different dimensions of women's lives and seeks to address them in a coordinated and complementary manner. In this respect, it is vital for the UN agencies and other organizations in Cox's Bazar to engage together in a comprehensive mapping of their services on gender equality to avoid duplication and overlap and address service gaps across and within the camps.

31. Likewise, it is essential for UN Women's projects (at the national and sub-office levels) to maintain an internal coherence and build on each other's synergies. This will enable UN Women to ensure that its projects/programs are linked together in addressing different aspects of women's empowerment and agency and gender equality based on context.
32. UN Women projects in Cox's Bazar are interconnected, building synergies at both the system level and community level. They focus on capacity-building of various stakeholders and individual trainings and awareness-raising activities. However, the lack of engagement around a holistic development plan for Cox's Bazar poses challenges to ensuring an aligned approach. Opportunities for market linkages and private sector engagement have not been fully utilized, and there is a risk of fragmentation of efforts with increased development opportunities and financing in the pipeline. UN Women should consider coherent support and explore joint programs to address gender issues effectively.
33. Moving forward, UN Women should plan for longer-term development and humanitarian programming in the host/local communities that is adaptable to future risks and addresses root causes of gender inequalities and promotes community cohesion based on lessons learned and good practices. The projects would benefit from a more robust M&E system across UN Women's projects that incorporates standardized indicators at output and outcomes levels as well as comprehensive analysis of disaggregated data to identify trends and inform programming decisions.
34. Currently, there is a lack of consolidated outcome-level indicators, making it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the GiHA WG's coordination activities. Consolidation of outcome-level measurements and indicators is necessary to assess the coherence of gender-responsive programming. A more coordinated policy approach is needed to identify indicators that measure progress at outcome levels in alignment with the IASC Policy on gender.

Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness):

35. UN Women's humanitarian strategy and the Means to Lead project in Cox's Bazar have been effective in promoting women's agency and transformative resilience, challenging traditional gender roles, and changing narratives about Rohingya and host community women. The evaluation identifies several key strategies that have contributed to the success of UN Women's approach, including direct engagement with women and girls at the individual level through the MPWCs, working with women leaders and networks, community engagement initiatives, outreach and awareness raising activities, system-level capacity building and engagement with various stakeholders, and close coordination with the GiHA WG and GBV sub-sector. These strategies have helped identify programming gaps, advocate for gender issues, and integrate gender-responsive programming across all sectors.
36. The project's impact extends beyond the trained women leaders, positively influencing the wider community by challenging patriarchal attitudes and promoting gender equality. Women leaders bring unique perspectives to decision-making processes, leading to more inclusive and effective decisions. The women leaders' networks have played a crucial role in reaching refugee communities, raising awareness on gender issues, addressing gender-related needs, and facilitating crisis response activities. Scaling up the leadership component of UN Women's interventions through female volunteers, Rohingya women leaders, and GFOs across camps and host communities can further enhance women's participation and decision-making in community representation and engagement.
37. The evaluation findings indicate that the outreach and awareness raising sessions have contributed to a reduction in harmful gender-related practices, such as child marriage, and have empowered women and girls to leave their homes rather than be confined to these. While there may be mixed

opinions on women's empowerment at the household and personal levels, with some men involving female family members in decision-making while others maintain patriarchal norms, the awareness raising efforts have led to positive changes in day-to-day gender roles and practices within families and communities. However, there are ongoing challenges in renegotiating gender norms within Rohingya culture, as some women and men still hold strong beliefs in cultural gender norms despite their knowledge of gender equality.

38. These findings emphasize the importance of continued efforts to challenge patriarchal norms, promote gender equality, and create lasting changes in attitudes and practices. It is also essential to understand the contextual difficulties with which men/boys are faced to address the challenges involved in renegotiating gender norms within the Rohingya culture and provide ongoing support and interventions to sustain positive changes even after individuals return to Myanmar.
39. There are a number of challenges that are impacting the effectiveness of the UN Women in Cox's Bazar. Coverage – including the number of the MPWCs - remains low due to funding limitations. Furthermore, despite UN Women's efforts to identify the most vulnerable and those with different kinds of disabilities including mental health, the projects are not necessarily reaching these hidden groups. Additionally, the low earnings of those who have received livelihood training is a concern, as is the relatively small number of individuals who have received leadership training. It is also concerning that UN Women is no longer able to provide beneficiaries who have been trained in tailoring and other skills with the necessary tools (i.e., sewing machines) so that they can use their skills to generate income.
40. The project has had anticipated positive consequences, such as strengthening women's agency, but some unexpected negative consequences have emerged due to contextual factors. The deteriorating security situation and regressive cultural norms, particularly the concept of 'izzot' or honor, pose significant barriers to project effectiveness. Rohingya women leaders have faced targeting and intimidation by armed groups, leading to security concerns and forced departures from the camps.
41. Investment in gender-sensitive risk and conflict analyses and joint, risk-informed gender-responsive approaches is needed to address the security challenges faced by women leaders. Balancing the leadership roles of women with safety and security considerations is crucial, and support should be provided to women leaders, Women-Led Organizations (WLOs), Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), and male gender equality advocates. The UN's collective influence can be leveraged to address these issues effectively.
42. The issue of social cohesion and perception of access to services between refugees and host communities is also a significant challenge that should continue to be addressed. Inclusive approaches that bring together women from different communities can also help promote diversity and create a more inclusive environment to foster social cohesion.

Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency):

43. The main cost drivers of UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar are the operation and maintenance of the Multi-Purpose Women's Centers (MPWCs) and staffing costs. Discontinuing or reducing the number of MPWCs would create a significant gap in empowering women and girls and achieving gender transformative results. Similarly, inadequate staffing would greatly reduce the effectiveness of UN Women's projects.
44. Balancing cost-effectiveness and quality is crucial for delivering programming that meets the needs of vulnerable communities. While cost reductions are necessary, it is important to improve the availability of technical and advisory support, especially during the program redesign phase. Local Women's Leadership Organizations (WLOs) and Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) can play an enhanced role in achieving improved quality, effectiveness, and greater coverage in the medium term.
45. UN Women has made efforts to clarify and streamline staff roles, responsibilities, and workflows in its sub-office in Cox's Bazar and in coordination with its country office in Dhaka. However, the current staffing levels in the sub-office are insufficient to effectively manage and monitor the projects,

particularly in advisory capacities. Furthermore, concrete linkages between Dhaka and Cox's Bazar programming are needed to improve coordination and leverage local community activities.

46. Although UN Women has established regular partnership meetings with its Responsible Parties (RPs) and provides training to ensure timely and economical implementation of interventions, there is a need for a more collaborative approach, including joint meetings, monitoring, and information sharing across partners. Greater investments are required to develop local capacities, but it is also important to invest in a standard accountability system to ensure transparency in operations and implementation, also in alignment with the principle of accountability to affected populations.
47. Multiple layers of partnerships, particularly channeling funding through INGOs to local WLOs and WROs, should be phased out in favor of a phased approach to localization. Localization should consider the specific capacities of I/NGOs and the localized knowledge and skills of local organizations. Additionally, a standard accountability system is needed to ensure transparency across stakeholder groups.
48. Greater integration in gender-responsive programming is needed to expand coverage, effectiveness, and efficiency in Cox's Bazar. UN Women should seek to link its interventions with other actors, leveraging existing spaces, capacities, and resources across the camps. Detailed mapping of gender-responsive services and gaps is crucial, as well as clarifying the roles, responsibilities, and comparative advantage of different organizations to consolidate efforts and deliver on gender equality commitments.
49. UN Women currently uses separate log-frames for different projects, making it challenging to measure the efficiency of project activities. Efforts should be made to conduct cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses to determine project efficiency. Improved communication of results and continued monitoring of resource mobilization and operational implementation are necessary to meet the expectations of humanitarian stakeholders and donors.

Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability):

50. UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar was designed in response to the humanitarian crisis due to the deadly crackdown on the Rohingya in Rakhine State and the resultant massive influx of Rohingya refugees to Cox's Bazar in 2017. With the crisis now into its sixth year, UN Women should ensure its support to the Rohingya crisis considers the protracted nature of the crisis, including adherence with rationalization and localization principles. UN Women should consider complementing these efforts by risk-informed, medium- to longer term initiatives in the host community. The sustainability of UN Women's support to the host community would benefit from a tailored approach with a stronger development lens, inclusive of market and private sector linkages, and institutional capacity development of relevant actors.
51. UN Women is presently looking at different options to ensure the sustainability of its efforts in Cox's Bazar within the humanitarian-development-nexus. There is especially need for greater knowledge sharing and skills development of local and national partners in project implementation, as well as better coordination of programmatic efforts between the country office and Cox's Bazar sub-office.
52. Having channeled its support mainly through national WLOs, in alignment with the localization agenda and building on the Entity's specific value added, UN Women should ensure investment local in WLO/WRO capacity to stay and deliver, prioritizing funding to local organizations with specialized knowledge and skills, which were for the most part present already before the 2017 crisis. UN Women should ensure interventions maintain a strong focus on conflict sensitivity and women's leadership, on par designing longer term development initiatives adaptable to future risks (especially in the host communities, given the restrictions placed on the Rohingya refugees).
53. The multifaceted problematic of gender inequality entails the necessity for multidimensional, multi-year programming approaches that address the interrelated factors of gender inequality. Multi-year funding focused on the protracted crisis is a key step forward as it will allow for more stability and sustainability. This will require a focus on economic empowerment and expanding access to education and training, as well as ensuring that the infrastructure and services that are provided are available and accessible to both the Rohingya and host community members, tailoring approaches for the camps and host communities. Furthermore, it is essential for UN Women to deepen its

engagement with national and local authorities in contributing to the sustainability of results already achieved in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities and inequities within the Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar.

54. The sustainability of UN Women's results in Cox's Bazar depends on the availability of resources and capacities for complementary programming, as well as stable conditions and the buy-in of the government. Linking programmatic efforts between the UN Women country office and the Cox's Bazar sub-office can also contribute to greater sustainability.
55. The capacity building efforts targeting women leaders and women's networks have faced significant challenges in achieving sustainability. Unforeseen contextual impediments, such as threats and violence towards these leaders, jeopardize the long-term success of these initiatives. Additionally, the persistence of regressive social norms, particularly among the Rohingya refugees, hinders the capacity of both women and men to actively participate in transformative processes that challenge power dynamics and promote gender equality. To address these challenges, UN Women must prioritize conflict sensitivity and the empowerment of women's leadership within the host and local communities, giving equal weight to conflict sensitivity and women's leadership. It is crucial to acknowledge and address the contextual obstacles that impede the sustainability of capacity building efforts. This includes providing support and protection to women leaders and networks, addressing the root causes of violence and threats they face, and fostering an enabling environment for their engagement by working with national and local authorities and strengthening the local authorities' capacities in responding to both the Rohingya refugees' and host communities' needs in Cox's Bazar.
56. Furthermore, UN Women should design long-term development initiatives that are flexible and adaptable to future risks and changing circumstances. By considering the evolving needs and challenges, they can ensure that their interventions remain relevant and effective in promoting gender equality.

1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Priority Immediate	Recommendations	Links to paragraphs (§) in the main text	Responsibility
1.	In coordination with the country office and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, building on UN Women's triple mandate, redesign UN Women's work in Cox's Bazar to ensure a clear focus on a nexus approach, ensuring investment in national and local capacity development to stay and deliver as well as opportunities for joint/joined up programmes. On par, ensure the sub-office is staffing is equipped to support the localization agenda and related needs and demands, also leveraging UN Women expertise and resources at country level to strengthen 'nexus' programming, building more systemic linkages with UN Women's work at the country level in relevant thematic areas.	Findings EQ. 2.3 (Coherence): §85 Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §136 Findings EQ. 4.1 (Efficiency): §116, §117 Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §148, §150 Findings EQ. 5.1 (Sustainability): §122, §123 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §156, §159	UN Women
2.	Ensure continuation of multi-year planning based on a nexus approach to allow for greater coherence, effectiveness, and a higher likelihood of sustainability, especially given the long-term process of normative and behavioral changes.	Findings EQ. 2.2 (Coherence): §76, §82 Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §133, §134 Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness): §110 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §143 Findings EQ. 5.1: (Sustainability): §122 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §158	UN Women
3.	Leveraging the UN Women's technical expertise and its coordination mandate through GiHA WG, and in collaboration with the GBV sub-sector, map out GEWE interventions in sectors and thematic areas of common interest in the camps and host communities, to promote common standards, adaptive approaches, and joint risk-informed gender-sensitive analyses in support of joined-up humanitarian and development planning and programming. Work with the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) to ensure that all sectors address IASC commitments to gender equality - including engaging with women leaders and local WLOs and WROs - and that gender specific programming is mutually reinforcing and adheres to international standards.	Findings EQ. 1.2 (Relevance): §63, Findings EQ. 1.3 (Relevance): §64 Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance) : §132 Findings EQ. 2.1 (Coherence): §76, §77, §78, §81 Findings EQ. 2.3 (Coherence): §85 Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §133, §135, §137, §139 Findings EQ. 3.3 (Effectiveness): §114 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §146 Findings EQ. 4.2 (Efficiency): §120	UN Women

		<p>Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §153</p> <p>Findings EQ. 5.1 (Sustainability): §123</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §161</p>	
4.	In coordination with the GiHA WG conduct a comprehensive analysis across camps to understand the contextual difficulties with which boys and men are faced and their implications on gender equality and gender relation interventions. Support design of activities according to their most pressing needs in social, educational, and economic spheres, and increase opportunities for them to interact with male champions and agents of change in collaboration with other UN agencies and organizations that work in those spaces with boys and men.	<p>Findings EQ. 1.7 (Relevance): §75</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §131</p> <p>Findings EQ. 3.3 (Effectiveness): §115</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §143</p> <p>Findings EQ. 4.2 (Efficiency): §120</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §153</p> <p>Findings EQ. 5.2 (Sustainability): §125</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §158, §160</p>	UN Women
5.	Consider developing a harmonized monitoring framework with outcome level statements and indicators for the Means to Lead-project (and parallel donor projects), to be able to measure the contributions of the projects to results and to provide information on project's strategic approach, in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and intervention gaps to inform decision making. Furthermore, develop a joint monitoring system with UNFPA to monitor RP coordination and identify gaps, constraints, and challenges in gender-responsive programming and to improve RP communication and collaboration and increase accountability and transparency.	<p>Findings EQ. 2.4 (Coherence): §86, §87</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §138, §139</p> <p>Findings EQ. 4.3 (Efficiency): §121</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §154</p>	UN Women
6.	Actively create opportunities and continue with the empowerment interventions with the Rohingya and host community adolescent girls, to allow them to become champions of change within their communities.	<p>Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §101, §102</p> <p>Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness): §106</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §135</p>	UN Women
7.	Develop a standardized model of technical support provision to local NGOs/RPs/WLOs and WROs, including capacity building strategies for scale out and institutionalization of trainings, including refresher trainings.	<p>Findings EQ. 4.2 (Efficiency): §119</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §151, §152</p> <p>Findings EQ. 5.1 (Sustainability): §123</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §155</p>	UN Women
8.	Scale-up the MPWC model and link these with the existing women/girls centers run by other UN agencies, especially UNFPA, across and within the camps to increase coverage and effectiveness, and tailor outreach activities to ensure better targeting of support to the most vulnerable individuals, including those with different kinds of disabilities, and	<p>Findings EQ. 1.4 (Relevance): §65, §66, §67</p> <p>Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §126</p> <p>Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §91, §92, §101, §102, §103</p> <p>Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness):</p>	UN Women

	consider scaling up and diversifying the type of income-generation activities to include more 'non-traditional' activities for women (such mechanics, equipment repair, and other activities traditionally reserved for men within the cultures of the Rohingya and host communities).	§104, §105, §106, §112 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness) §138, §139, §140, §144	
9.	Follow-up on support to women/girls and transgenders who have completed the skills and livelihoods training sessions so that they can continue to generate income for themselves and their households and strengthen their agency.	Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §95 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness) §144	UN Women
10.	Prioritize future programmatic funding to local WLO/WROs with specialised knowledge and skills, ensuring support to their institutional capacity development, investing in learning of what works, and in promoting collective accountability across the response to women's leadership, and catalyze the role of GFOs at the camp level, as conduits for women to bring their issues to the attention of CiCs, and to track and support camp-level progress on core gender equality commitments.	Findings EQ. 1.5 (Relevance): §68, §70 Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §129 Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §89, §95, §96, §97 Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness): §109, §110, §111 Findings EQ. 3.3 (Effectiveness): §114 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §141, §143, §146 Findings EQ. 4.1 (Efficiency): §116 Findings EQ. 4.2 (Efficiency): §119 Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §149, §152 Findings EQ. 5.2 (Sustainability): §127 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §157, §160	UN Women
11.	To increase social cohesion between the Rohingya and host communities, consider engaging a local WLO/WRO to manage support to women leaders in the camps, to foster empowerment of local women and their engagement on an equal foot in dialogues.	Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness): §109 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §147	UN Women
Priority Long-term	Recommendations	Links to paragraphs (§) in the main text	Responsibility
12.	Deepen engagement with the government at both the national and local levels, to ensure knowledge and lessons learned from UN Women's support to the Rohingya refugee crisis is shared at the national level on the one hand, and on the other, to strengthen available support to local authorities beyond the camps to enhance the resilience and empowerment of women and girls in local communities.	Findings EQ. 1.2 (Relevance): §63 Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §126 Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §89 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §140 Findings EQ. 5.2 (Sustainability): §126	UN Women

		Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §159, §160	
13.	Invest in harmonized M&E systems with regards to joint monitoring of GiHA commitments across the response through UN Women's technical advice to the GiHA WG, building on IASC gender equality commitments and standards.	Findings EQ. 1.1 (Relevance): §59 Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §128 Findings EQ. 2.1 (Coherence): §81 Conclusion EQ. 2 (Coherence): §139	UN Women
14.	Ensure that lessons and good practices learned during the humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar feed into the organization-wide crisis response strategy, policy, tools, and procedures.	Findings EQ. 2.4 (Coherence): §84, §88 Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §138	UN Women



Photo: Young girls in the Balukhali Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Credit: UN Women/Allison Joyce

BACKGROUND

in Bangladesh.¹⁸ The Myanmar government has committed numerous human rights abuses against the Rohingyas and has denied them the rights to citizenship on the grounds that because they did not acquire a nationality at birth, their state of origin no longer exists.¹⁹

2. Since August 2017, the Rohingya humanitarian crisis has taken a protracted nature. An estimated 745,000 stateless Rohingya refugees arrived in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh in 2017. As of May 2023, more than 961,175 Rohingya refugees remain in Cox's Bazar in a protracted crisis, over 52% of whom are women and girls²⁰, and 16% are women headed households. The vast majority of the Rohingya refugees reside in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas in 33 extremely congested camps, including the largest single site, the Kutupalong-Balukhali Expansion Site, which is host to more than 635,000 Rohingya refugees.²¹ The Government of Bangladesh relocated about 30,000 Rohingya refugees on a voluntary basis from the camps in Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char by December 2022, and plans to continue voluntary relocations up to a total of 100,000 refugees by the end of 2023.²² Cox' Bazar district has a total Bangladeshi population of 2,823,000. The sizable influx of Rohingya refugees has outnumbered the locals by nearly three to one in the two sub-districts, Ukhiya and Teknaf.
3. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and international humanitarian community have been providing humanitarian assistance including rehabilitation and livelihoods support to Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar in response to the crisis in 2017 (and earlier crises). The humanitarian needs of the Rohingya refugees, however, continue to be immense. The protracted humanitarian context in Cox's Bazar has led to changing and exacerbated needs and vulnerabilities (including gender-based violence (GBV)) and experiences of gender inequalities and rights violations of the Rohingya refugees and host communities. There are limited or no decision-making opportunities and leadership roles for Rohingya women and girls due to patriarchal household and community decision-making structures and social norms - men in both refugee and host communities remain the ultimate decision-makers at the household and community levels.²³ Restrictions on women's and adolescent girls' freedom of movement due to social norms, as well as increasing incidences of armed violence in the Rohingya camps have tightened controls over women's movement, limiting their access to services and resources. Lack of income-generating opportunities for both women and men has been affecting the resilience of refugee and host community population. Furthermore, increased stress and anxiety, insecurity and violence, and lack of work for men are also causing greater likelihood of a rise in domestic violence.
4. The Rohingya refugees continue to be marginalized due to various socio-economic and political conditions such as limited access to livelihood, income generation, skills development, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), lack of formal and accredited educational opportunities especially for adolescents and youth,²⁴ and lack of freedom of movement. Additionally, the reduction in donor funding due to competing global crisis (i.e., the war in Ukraine and the earthquake in Turkey, among others), are having a critical impact on the Rohingya refugees. The World Food Programme (WFP) announced it needs to reduce rations for Rohingya refugees in June from an original \$12 earlier to \$8 dollars and issued an urgent call for 125 million dollars to avoid the cut. For the 2023 Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, the UN and partners have appealed for 876 million dollars.²⁵

¹⁸ In 1977, the Myanmar government implemented a nationwide initiative scrutinizing illegal immigrants which resulted in killings, mass arrests, and other abuses against the Rohingya, forcing more than 200,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh. Similarly, in 1992, more than a quarter million fled to Bangladesh following the military's attack on Rohingya villages, killing hundreds. See <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/17966/Abdelkader.pdf;sequence=1>

¹⁹ Engy Abdelkader, *The Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar: Past, Present, and Future*, OREGON REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, Volume 15, 2013. <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/17966/Abdelkader.pdf;sequence=1>

²⁰ [Joint Government of Bangladesh - UNHCR Population Factsheet as of May 2023](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2023/05/2023-Joint-Government-of-Bangladesh-UNHCR-Population-Factsheet-as-of-May-2023.pdf).

²¹ Ibid.

²² 2023 Joint Response Plan Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, January-December 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/2023-joint-response-plan-rohingya-humanitarian-crisis-january-december-2023>

²³ Inter-Agency Research Report, October 2020, An Intersectional Analysis of Gender Amongst Rohingya Refugees and Host communities in COX's Bazar, Bangladesh: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/abridged_vesrion_gender_and_intersectionality_report-2020-19th_october_2020.pdf

²⁴ Inter-Agency Research Report, October 2020, An Intersectional Analysis of Gender Amongst Rohingya Refugees and Host communities in COX's Bazar, Bangladesh: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/abridged_vesrion_gender_and_intersectionality_report-2020-19th_october_2020.pdf

²⁵ Remarks by Noeleen Hazer, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar at the General Assembly, 16 March 2023.

5. The socioeconomic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the refugees and the host communities were also enormous. There was reportedly a significant increase in all forms of GBV including kidnapping, abductions, polygamy, child marriage, trafficking, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, intimidation, and sexual harassment. Additionally, the government lockdowns and restrictions for UN Agencies and other international organizations to access the camps, increased security risks for the Rohingya women and reduced their access to basic services. Rohingya Women leaders and volunteers were also subjected to harassment during this period. Moreover, the large-scale hazards such as fires²⁶ and floods that hit the camps in 2021, and a more recent fire in March 2023, affecting 15,000 people,²⁷ have further exasperated the Rohingya refugees' vulnerabilities as well as pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination against women and girls. As these needs and vulnerabilities vary among different members of the community (in terms of age, gender including transgenders, disability and health status, and poverty levels, among others), it has also resulted in adaptation of negative coping mechanisms and have exposed Rohingya women and girls to various types of risks including early or forced marriage, polygamy, survival sex, and trafficking (with risks of physical violence and sexual abuse).²⁸

2.2 THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

6. The Protection Framework for the humanitarian response guides the overall humanitarian response under the 2023 Joint Response Plan (JRP) and is implemented in full partnership with the Government of Bangladesh and in cooperation with Rohingya refugees and host communities. The framework consists of three Protection pillars: 1: Working towards and preparing for the sustainable return of the Rohingya refugees/Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs) by promoting capacity building of the Rohingya that is commensurate with opportunities in Myanmar for their eventual return and reintegration; 2: Securing the identity of Rohingya refugees through continuous registration, as part of the Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR joint registration exercise, and relevant documentation in close consultation with the Government; and 3: Promoting a safe and protective environment for Rohingya refugees in close cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh and through ensuring equitable access to basic assistance and protection needs of all Rohingya refugee women, men, girls, boys, and persons with specific needs. This includes assisting in developing their skills and capacities in line with the Skills Development Framework; addressing and responding to various protection issues such as child marriage, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse; prioritizing disaster risk management and combatting against climate change and mitigating potential tensions and conflicts between the Rohingya refugees and host communities.²⁹
7. The 2022 JRP monitoring framework is designed according to sector³⁰ strategic objectives and mainly activity level indicators. The framework includes 12 common activity level indicators,³¹ but does not have any outcome level indicators to measure the consolidated efforts of the UN agencies.³²
8. The Rohingya humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char is led and coordinated by the Government of Bangladesh. The Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, is responsible for the management and oversight of the Rohingya refugee response. The Deputy Commissioner who leads the civil administration, plays an important role in coordinating the response to the needs of the host communities, including security and public order as well as during natural disasters. The Strategic Executive

²⁶ On March 22nd, 2021, a massive fire broke out in the Rohingya refugee camps in Ukhiya and quickly spread across three camps consuming shelters and personal belongings of more than 48,000 refugees.

²⁷ Remarks by Noeleen Hazer, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar at the General Assembly, 16 March 2023.

²⁸ Inter-Agency Research Report, October 2020, An Intersectional Analysis of Gender Amongst Rohingya Refugees and Host communities in COX's Bazar, Bangladesh: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/abridged_vesion_gender_and_intersectionality_report-2020-19th_october_2020.pdf

²⁹ 2023 Joint Response Plan Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, January-December 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/2023-joint-response-plan-rohingya-humanitarian-crisis-january-december-2023>

³⁰ The sectors are: food security; health; shelter and non-food items; water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH); site management and site development; protection (including child protection and GBV); education; nutrition; communication with communities; emergency telecommunications; logistics; coordination; healthcare for humanitarian actors and other personnel.

³¹ 2022 Joint Response Plan Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, January-December 2022, Monitoring Framework.

³² As of May 2023, a Monitoring Framework for the 2023 JRP is yet to be developed.

Group (SEG) provides overall guidance for the Rohingya humanitarian response of the humanitarian community and engages with the Government of Bangladesh at the national level. The United Nations Resident Coordinator (RC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative, and International Office of Migration (IOM) Chief of Mission serve as the SEG Co-Chairs.

9. Humanitarian action in Cox's Bazar is coordinated by the ISCG. As part of the response effort four thematic units (Gender Hub³³, Protections from Sexual Abuse (PSEA), Transfers, and Emergency Preparedness) and six Working Groups have been set up. The GiHA WG, established in 2017³⁴ ³⁵- co-chaired by UN Women and UNHCR until 2023 - is one of the six established Working Groups and has as its focus that of ensuring the effective mainstreaming of gender equality in humanitarian action across the response. The GiHA WG is comprised of sector gender focal points and gender advisers engaged in the response from across NGOs, INGOs, and the UN agencies. It provides cross-sectoral and inter-organisational support to ensure the integration of gender aspects in humanitarian action. Since at the time, the GiHA WG did not have any dedicated funding or dedicated staff, the Gender Hub was established in 2019 as a dedicated unit (with UN Women staff) to focus on technical assistance, capacity development, and knowledge management, and promoting and mainstreamed gender in the humanitarian activities in Cox's Bazar. As of June 2023, the GiHA WG will sit under the ISCG structure, with two staff in process of recruitment as of May 2022, with technical guidance and strategic direction to be provided by UN Women, while the GiHA WG Co-ordinator will be operational and report to the ISCG. The coordination system established in ISCG has the role of assisting in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues across the work of all sectors and humanitarian partners.

2.3 UN WOMEN'S HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING IN COX'S BAZAR

10. UN Women has been assisting Rohingya refugee women since 2015, with focus on disaster risk reduction and management (for natural disasters such as floods, cyclones and mudslides). However, it started to engage more intensely in the Rohingya response, following the new influx of Rohingya refugees in 2017. In 2018, UN Women established the sub-office in Cox's Bazar to implement humanitarian action programme targeting the most vulnerable women and girls in Rohingya camps, as well as the host communities around the camps. In partnership with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), UN Women developed a response programme to promote Rohingya and host community women's' and girls' participation and leadership to ensure their equitable and safe access to humanitarian and development assistance.
11. In 2020, UN Women Sub Office in Cox's Bazar set up a Crisis Response and Business Continuity Plan to prepare for emergencies and ensure the continuity of its operations in the event of business disruptions. This is a crucial aspect of organizational management, especially in a humanitarian setting where there are often multiple challenges and risks. The plan identifies the responsibilities, processes, and resources for responding to emergencies and business disruptions and restoring business operations. The recruitment of national Gender Field Officers (GFOs) and engagement of women and men volunteers boosted the efficiency of UN Women activities in camps particularly in terms of timely needs assessment, information sharing and referral of various issues to the responsible stakeholders.³⁶ UN Women Cox's Bazar office has currently 28 staff (6 international and 22 national staff, 8 of whom are in the process of being recruited as of April-May 2023).

³³ UN Women launched the Gender Hub in March 2019 (in line with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Humanitarian Action and its Accountability Framework, with funds from Global Affairs Canada) to further strengthen accountability of humanitarian actors for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In 2022, in response to findings of an evaluation (The Inter Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on GEEWG case study on Bangladesh published in 2020), which suggested ambiguities with respect to the management and roles of the Gender Hub and GiHA WG, the Gender Hub was dismantled.

³⁴ In 2021, the GiHA WG had a membership list comprising about 200 members. This included gender focal points from INGOs, government, UN and local NGO's. (See UN Women Regional Evaluation: UN Women ROAP, Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, Annexes-Volume 2, January 2022).

³⁵ As agreed in 2022, the GiHA WG will transition to function under the ISCG with one coordinator ('chair') funded by UN Women and reporting to the ISCG while seeking technical guidance and strategic direction on gender mainstreaming issues from the UN Women Head of Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar.

³⁶ Source: UN Women Strategic Note 2022-2026. UN Women Bangladesh Country Office. December 2021.

12. The UN Women humanitarian actions cover the areas of coordination, operational support, and advocacy to advance normative changes in the rights of women and girls. Thematically and as outlined in UN Women's Country Strategic Note, its humanitarian action programme is focused on:³⁷ i) Enhancing the capacities of Rohingya and host community women and girls to participate in decision-making and increase their access to multi-sectoral services, especially protection, education, and socio-economic opportunities; ii) Increasing the advocacy and leadership capacities of Rohingya and host community women-led organizations (WLOs) to promote GEWE, GBV prevention and response and social cohesion respectively; and iii) Increasing the capacities of humanitarian actors, including WLOs, to operate enhanced coordination mechanisms and play a leadership role in facilitating gender-responsive humanitarian response and programming. In 2022, UN Women was admitted as a member of the IASC. This has created expectations and opportunities for UN Women to contribute its expertise in coordinating gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action.
13. The UN Women country and sub-office budget (non-core resources) for humanitarian and disaster risk reduction activities in Bangladesh constituted a significant portion of the overall UN Women country - and sub-office and budget: in 2019, 48% was dedicated to humanitarian action budget (USD 4,529,891), in 2020 this increased to 60% of the overall country office budget and in 2021 it constituted 68% (USD 8,443,217) of the budget amounting USD 12,241,458 including budget toward the Development Results Framework and the Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness Framework. UN Women humanitarian actions cover the areas of coordination, programming to deliver services and support, such as through UN Women multi-purpose women's centres, and advocacy to advance normative changes in the rights of women and girls. The Gender Hub budget was approximately USD 1.6 million for a duration between March 2019 - 31 March 2022.³⁸
14. In 2022, UN Women has been implementing eight humanitarian projects funded by various donors in Cox's Bazar.
15. The Table below shows the breakdown of UN Women's humanitarian programme funding active in 2022. The description of these projects is presented in Annex 14.

UN Women's Donor Funding Breakdown

Donors	Project name	Fund	Project Period
1. Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	Women and girls who have experienced/are experiencing GBV or are at risk of GBV benefit from provision of and access to quality services and empowered to increasingly engage in decision making and leadership in GBV response, mitigation, and prevention.	USD 1.28 million	17 February 2021 – 16 February 2023.
2. Australia (DFAT)	Empowerment of Rohingya Refugee and Host Communities Women and Girls in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh	AUD 950,000	01 May 2022 – 31 Dec 2022
3. Global Affairs Canada through UNDP	Community Cohesion in Cox's Bazar	USD 1.37 million	30 Sep 2021 – 30 June 2022
4. Department of Foreign Affairs, Aid and Development, Canada	Gender Hub to Strengthen Gender-Responsiveness of the Rohingya Crisis Response	CAD 2 million	01 Mar 2019 – 31 June 2022
5. Sweden (SIDA)	Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya refugees and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods	USD 8.846m; Cost extension – USD 600,000	11 Oct 2019 – 31 Aug 2023

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

6. Switzerland (SDC)	Women Peacebuilders Lead Social Cohesion: Enhancing Capacities and Collaboration of Women Civil Society Groups from Rohingya Community and Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh	USD 1.4 million (Increased through cost extension - 1.738 million USD)	10 Oct 2021 – 30 Sep 2023
7. Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)	Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (ME function of the WPHF for Bangladesh, outcome 6) support under WPHF Impact Area 5: Improved socioeconomic recovery, participation and leadership of women and young women in forced displacement contexts.	USD 1.25 million	12 Dec 2022 – 31 Aug 2025
8. Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)	Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (ME function of the WPHF COVID-19 Emergency Response Window, Bangladesh)	USD 770,000	01 Jul 2020 – 31 May 2022

2.4 MEANS TO LEAD PROJECT DESCRIPTION

15. Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya refugees and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods project – referenced as Means to Lead, henceforth – is a four-year project that started in October 2019, and which has an end date in August 2023. The Government of Sweden, represented by SIDA, is providing USD 8,846,391 funding for the project³⁹, which represents about 76% of the total funding for the interventions alongside Japan, Switzerland, Canada, and Australia in 2022. The project draws on elements of the UN Women global flagship LEAP programme and the Second-Chance Education (SCE) programme to broaden their opportunities for employment and economic empowerment by gaining literacy, numeracy, financial skills, and information communication technology skills (in the host community only).
16. The project aims to increase the resilience, leadership, protection and livelihoods and income generation opportunities for women and adolescent girls in Ukhyia and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar's refugee settlements and host communities around the camps, and to strengthen social cohesion between the refugees and host communities. The project strategy is to: i) capacitate women potential leaders with the leadership and governance skills with which they will be able to effectively carry out leadership responsibilities in their communities and, more specifically, be prepared for future elections; ii) offer opportunities to learn, develop skills and access services through a context specific learning programme of life, women's empowerment, and livelihood skills combined with income generation activities, tailored to women's and girls' needs as learners, but also to their future as earners, and to empower the most disadvantaged women and young women in particular from both Host and Refugee community; and iii) provide technical assistance to Camps-in-Charge (CiCs) and strengthen their capacity to address women's concerns and protection needs and to be able to curb impunity for GBV and deal with complaints and suggestions from Rohingya women, and to improve humanitarian service delivery by all humanitarian actors.
17. The project relies on MPWC – 8 established to-date with 5 in the refugee camps 3,4,4-Extension, 5, 18, and 3 in the host communities around these camps - to provide safe spaces⁴⁰ for access to training and information to women and girls in the refugee settlements and the host communities with support from the GFOs. Access to income generation is supported, among other, through a Women's Market established in Camp 5. The project informs and sensitizes the wider community, including men and boys, through awareness raising and learning initiatives about gender, securing

³⁹ UN Women proposal document for Means to Lead project, 1 June, 2022; with currency deflation, decreased from original USD 9,330,491.

⁴⁰ The MPWCs offer protection, learning, as well as livelihoods and empowerment services, activities, and opportunities such as second chance learning which offers basis reading and numeracy skills to women. While these services were previously also offered to adolescent girls, they are currently stopped due to funding constraints. However, all women and adolescent girls attending the MPWCs receive sensitization sessions on topics such as child marriage, child labour, rape, domestic violence, trafficking, dowry, polygamy, menstrual hygiene, etc.

buy-in for the Centre activities and engaging with them on women's needs. It also aims to increase the capacities of CiCs and their support staff to respond effectively and in a gender-responsive manner to the concerns and protection needs of women. The Project also contributes to Grand Bargain localization commitments by ensuring women's participation and leadership across the humanitarian-development-peace and development nexus.⁴¹

18. UN Women has deployed six GFOs who are seconded to six CiCs⁴² in Cox's Bazar. The GFOs work closely with the CiCs to strengthen their capacity to respond to the needs of women and girls, ensure the provision of gender-responsive services, and handle the GBV cases. UN Women Gender Field Officers also work with 64 outreach Rohingya men and women volunteers (50% female, 50% male) in the camps.⁴³ These volunteers facilitate community-based awareness sessions on issues related to gender equality and GBV prevention. This is important work that helps to raise awareness and educate the community on these critical issues. They are also responsible for seeking out the most vulnerable and marginalized groups that could be included in the leadership, skills and livelihoods trainings in the MPWCs, and support referrals to relevant sectors for support at camp level. The UN Women Rohingya volunteers also play an essential role in referring issues related to gender inequality to the CiCs to enable official responses.
19. The women leadership component of Means to Lead, supported by SDC as of 2023, focuses on building the leadership capacity for women from both the Rohingya and host communities. By the end of 2021, around 10,000 women had received leadership and advocacy training. Together with SDC, the project trained 36 Rohingya women leaders ("Maitre" in local language) by year end 2022. The approach is to develop women leaders who can mediate and lead various programs related to family law, gender-based violence, early marriage, contribute to social cohesion, and participate in elections. Various activities (including street drama) contribute to sensitizing the communities on women's leadership, participation in decision-making processes, and promotion of women's leadership. By providing leadership and capacity building training to these women, activities are not only empowering them, but also aim at creating a positive impact on the community.
20. Female women leaders in the Rohingya refugee camps work together through an umbrella network, which comprises over 50 elected Rohingya female leaders and groups representing women and girls in 25 camps⁴⁴. The network includes representatives of groups set up by the Rohingya refugees such as the Shanti Mohila and Rohingya Women's Welfare Society. The main objective of the network is to increase women's participation and voice in community representation committees in the camps.⁴⁵ UN Women provides training, mentoring and coaching to women who are selected for the women's leadership component and links them with community representatives including the CiCs, the police, and other groups, facilitating dialogues and discussions where at the women leaders can bring their issues to the attention of decision-makers.
21. The Means to Lead Theory of Change (ToC) project level Goal/Impact is: Women and girls, both Rohingya and host community, are empowered and resilient leaders, and are able to address and build social cohesion. The project has 1 outcome: Outcome 1: Women and adolescent girls' engagement in and benefit from leadership, local government services, livelihoods, learning and social cohesion opportunities in Rohingya refugee camps and host communities are enhanced.
22. The project ToC consists of three outputs:
 1. Output 1.1: Gender equality is integrated in the Rohingya camps' government structures and processes.

⁴¹ UN Women already developed the Regarding Rohingya women's empowerment, leadership and participation (WELP), training manuals and conducted training of trainers (ToTs) for all Humanitarian actors. It has also established a Women's Empowerment and Leadership Task Force under the GIHA Working Group.

⁴² Prior to 2021, the six GFOs supported 13 camps. Following an assessment that analysed the work of the GFOs along with CiC requirements, each GFO began focusing on one camp. As a result, GFO support was reduced to six camps. Each GFO has a team of at least 10 UN Women Rohingya volunteers. Each of these UN Women volunteers is responsible for coordinating two women and girl community groups and two men and boy community groups. As a result, each UN Women volunteer has a community network of more than 40 community members.

⁴³ The number of volunteers was previously 60 but has been increased to 64.

⁴⁴ See: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/bangladesh/contribute-and-benefit-equally/leap/promoting-women-leadership>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

2. Output 1.2: Women have increased capacity and skills to participate in community management and decision-making, in an enabling environment with links to women's networks, CBOs and women development fora.
 3. Output 1.3: Opportunities, skills and access to livelihood for women and adolescent girls in host and Rohingya communities developed to enhance their leadership role and self-reliance. (The latest Results Framework of the project (2021) is in Annex 12, with adjustments proposed by the ET; see para 25 below).
25. The ET reconstructed the project ToC by adding the following outcomes to also measure the intermediate outcomes of the project (See Annex 12 for the ToC diagram).

Intermediate Outcome 1.1: Rohingya women have increased gender equitable household and community decision-making opportunities.

Intermediate Outcome 1.2: Rohingya and host community women & girls have strengthened social ties with one another through participation in informal safety nets based on trust, reciprocity, and cooperation to empower one another.

Intermediate Outcome 1.3: Rohingya women and girls and those in the host communities have increased opportunities to make pro-active and informed choices about their lives and their diversified livelihood strategies based on changing needs and conditions.

26. UN Women works with other UN agencies, local women's organizations and authorities to ensure the sustainability of the project. Means to Lead is implemented in cooperation and coordination with RRRRC, CiCs, the Bangladesh police, the MoWCA, Women Local Organizations (WLOs), working groups (i.e., the GBV sub-sector, Protection Sector, the PSEA Network, and the Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector, Education Sector, the Communications with Communities (CWC) Working Group, GiHA WG, and others. The proposed activities are harmonized with ongoing interventions of ISCG such as trainings for CiCs, education sector learning programmes, and ongoing livelihood activities of World Food Programme (WFP). The UN Women project activities are implemented in partnership and coordination with BRAC (Bangladesh), OXFAM (through local partners: BNPS in Cox's Bazar, Mukti in Whykong/Ukhiya, and RWWS in Holdiya/Teknaf) and Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB), Dan Church Aid (DCA), and Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK).^{46 47}
27. UN Women, through the GFOs, volunteers and MPWCs has been providing the Rohingya refugees and host community members with: basic psychosocial support, health and sexual and reproductive health services; leadership and livelihoods training, and establishing sustainable local and national market linkages (through the contributions of the RPs); learning initiatives through a second-chance education intervention; awareness raising on the importance of women's leadership and participation in decision-making among Rohingya and host community women, girls, men, and boys; sensitization activities on addressing gender-based violence (GBV), ending child marriage, as well as prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), in addition to COVID-19 preventive measures.

⁴⁶ ASK is a one of the leading human rights and legal aid organization in Bangladesh. ASK works on MAITREE: Promoting women's participation in peace building and social cohesion project as well the Means to Lead project with UN Women.

⁴⁷ ActionAid Bangladesh and BRAC operate the 5 MPWCs in refugee camps that are supported under Output 1.2 of Means to Lead Project. Both the partners have been working with UN Women in managing these centres since 2019. DanChurchAid implements the education component under Output 1.2., and Oxfam is implementing women's leadership activities under Output 1.1 through its 3 local partners in host communities: BNPS, Mukti Cox's Bazar, and RAWW.



Photo: 16 Days Activism event. Credit: UN Women/Arafat Ahmed

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, INTENDED AUDIENCE, AND TIMELINE

28. The main objective of this thematic evaluation⁴⁸ is to explore the UN Women’s programmatic contribution in responding to the needs of the Rohingya refugees and host communities around the refugee settlements in Cox’s Bazar, with a focus on “Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya refugee and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods” project (hereon: Means to Lead project). Beyond its main objective, the evaluation terms of reference (ToR) includes specific objectives to:
- Assess relevance and coherence of the strategy and approaches of UN Women Cox’s Bazar programming and coordination work including its partnership approach with regards to the protracted nature of the Rohingya refugee crisis and its implications for engagement with government stakeholders moving forward.
 - Assess the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UN Women interventions with respect to results across programming and coordination activities.

⁴⁸ This evaluation is commissioned by the UN Women Bangladesh Country Office.

- Assess how the human rights-based approach, gender equality principles and the participation of socially marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and gender diverse groups, were integrated in the design and the implementation of the project.
 - Draw lessons learnt, best practices, success stories and challenges from the implementation of interventions in the Rohingya refugee camps and host communities.
 - Provide actionable recommendations to guide UN Women future humanitarian response efforts in Cox's Bazar, identifying opportunities to enhance sustainability, including through programmatic developments and support to coordination.
 - Assess the partnership approach of UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar, including with regards to the protracted nature of the Rohingya refugee crisis and its implications for engagement with government stakeholders moving forward.
29. The purpose of this evaluation is both summative and formative. It is summative since it generates findings pertaining to lessons learned, accountability, and the contribution of UN Women's programming to the ongoing Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The evaluation is also formative as it is intended to be used for strategic and programmatic decision-making on how best to improve UN Women's humanitarian programming and management addressing the needs and priorities of women and girls in the Rohingya refugee camps and the host community. It is also intended to inform on the design and implementation of similar programming moving forward.
30. The scope of the evaluation consists of UN Women contribution to the Rohingya refugee response in Ukhyia and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar's refugee settlements and host communities with a focus on the "Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya refugee and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods". This is a four-year project (11 Oct 2019- 31 Aug 2023), funded by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The evaluation timeframe covers the project and activities implemented by both UN Women Cox's Bazar sub-office team and its Responsible Parties from October 2019 to December 2022.
31. The audiences for the results of the evaluation are UN Women, other UN agencies present in Cox's Bazar⁴⁹, donors, civil society organizations⁵⁰ including, the national and local authorities, and Camp Management/Sectors⁵¹, and other relevant stakeholders.
32. The evaluation had a duration of 40 days over the period of February 15 and May 31, 2023. Primary data collection with the KIs started in March 2023 and was completed in April 2023. The KIIs were conducted both in person and virtually. The fieldwork for the collection of primary data from FGDs, group discussions, in-depth interviews, direct observations, and exit surveys started on 20 March 2023 and ended on 2 April 2023, covering a total of two-weeks.

3.2 EVALUATION DESIGN

33. The design of this evaluation employs a non-experimental, theory-based approach, and follows United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in United Nations System, pursuing UNEG human rights and gender equality related norms and standards⁵² to ensure gender equality and human rights considerations were integrated into each stage of the evaluation. It examined the extent to which projects in Cox's Bazar are contributing towards gender equality, human rights and women's empowerment, and whether they are having different impacts on women and men. The evaluation was also inclusive and participatory, and ensured that different groups of women including the most marginalized and vulnerable were included throughout the evaluation. The evaluation paid close attention to the way in which the project(s) has (have) identified gender-specific vulnerabilities, needs, and barriers. It examined the interaction between different projects and mechanisms in addressing gender equality, inclusiveness, 'do no harm', and

⁴⁹ Including FAO, IOM, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and other relevant UN agencies.

⁵⁰ Including Oxfam, BRAC, Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB), Dan Church Aid, (DCA), and a range of partners, including United Purpose Bangladesh, Helvetas, Prantic, Mukti Cox's Bazaar, Relief International and NGO Forum.

⁵¹ I.e., Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, the District Welfare Officer at Cox's Bazar, the office of Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), District Commissioner

⁵² [UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation \(2016\)](#). (Specifically, on norm 8, which focuses on the need to ensure human rights and gender equality considerations are integrated across all stages of an evaluation, in adherence to the principle of 'leaving no-one behind'; and standard 4.7, which focuses on considering the extent to which human rights and gender equality featured in the design of the subject of evaluation).

human rights, and the extent to which they have contributed to the greatest change in the lives of the community members. The evaluation assessed gender, equity, and 'do no harm' by including explicit questions on these issues in the questionnaires and triangulating findings with information from secondary source documents and reports. Furthermore, the design of the evaluation methodology was guided by the Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) to programming and evaluation (achievement of planned results through morally acceptable processes to realise human rights, in particular children's rights). The evaluation was guided by five core principles: normativity, participation, non-discrimination, accountability, and transparency, and by the Common Understanding on HRBA to Development Cooperation and Programming.⁵³ The evaluation examined gender and age disaggregated data to the extent that they could be extracted from the methodology and were relevant to the evaluation questions.

34. The evaluation used a mixed-methods design using both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to allow for the triangulation of data across various sources. The program's theory of change has been tested mainly through evaluation questions. All data collection methods provided input to the evaluation questions.
35. Quantitative data was mainly drawn from secondary sources. These included UN Women strategic documents; Responsible Parties (RPs) project and programme documents, including, among others, results frameworks, and indicators; donor reports; situation and assessment reports; monitoring reports; and evaluations and case studies, among others. The evaluation also includes quantitative data based on short exit-surveys at the MPWCs in selected camps to explore the perceptions and experiences of the beneficiaries.
36. The ET collected qualitative data through secondary sources, key informant interviews (KIIs), and group/ focus group discussions (FGDs) from a wide range and variety of stakeholders and Rohingya refugees and host community members to obtain in-depth understanding of mechanisms and processes that contribute to the intended and unintended programme outcomes. FGDs provided stakeholder perspectives related to the successes and any shortcomings of the interventions, while highlighting perceptions around the sustainability of activities. Similarly, the KIIs provided information on the interventions from the perspective of individuals who have particularly informed knowledge of the project to explain the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and sustainability of the interventions. The inclusion of multiple stakeholders will enhance the validation of findings. Additionally, the ET conducted in-depth interviews to record stories from individuals within the refugee camps and examine the way(s) in which their daily lives and life experiences have evolved and/or changed through the interventions.
37. Partnerships and coordination are another crucial and analytical crosscutting factor in the analysis of the humanitarian programming. Partnerships take different forms, coordination, and technical influence and will inevitably feature in the analysis. The ET focused on the way in which partnerships and coordination enabled or hindered the achievement of outcomes.
38. The evaluation has been tailored to the needs of UN Women through a participatory approach from the inception through to the development of recommendations, which will facilitate production of a useful evaluation. It was carried out in accordance with UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct, UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines, the UNEG Guidance: Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation, and the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) evaluation report quality checklist.

3.3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

39. The evaluation questions are coherent with the objectives of the evaluation and cover the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability as well as gender and

⁵³ The principles state: All programmes of development cooperation, policies and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments; human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process; and development cooperation contributes to the development of the capacities of 'duty bearers' to meet their obligations and/or of 'rights-holders' to claim their rights. United Nations Development Group (2003). The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards A Common Understanding Among UN Agencies.

inclusiveness. The criteria of coherence of a humanitarian crisis response programme will also be used.⁵⁴ The evaluation assessed gender, inclusivity, and 'do no harm' in the humanitarian response by triangulating findings from primary and secondary sources. The following Table depicts the evaluation questions and supplemental lines of inquiry related to each question.

Evaluation Questions & Lines of inquiry
<p>Relevance</p> <p>1. To what extent has UN Women's humanitarian portfolio been relevant to and responding to the needs and priorities of women and girls in Rohingya refugee and host communities?</p> <p>1.1 To what extent has UN Women drawn on its comparative advantage in the context of its work in Cox's Bazar?</p> <p>1.2 To what extent are the design and focus of the humanitarian portfolio aligned with the humanitarian response priorities in Cox's Bazar and with national priorities relevant to gender and humanitarian action?</p> <p>1.3 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio adapted to the evolving context, including the COVID-19 situation, in order to remain relevant?</p> <p>1.4 Is there a strategy to put in place for inclusive approaches to humanitarian response (such as a vulnerability analysis), ensuring the most marginalized groups are benefitting from efforts (women with disabilities, ethnic minorities, poorest of the poor, gender diverse groups, etc.)?</p> <p>1.5 To what extent is UN women addressing underlying social norms and structural barriers related to gender?</p> <p>1.6 Has the project implementation strategy been context specific and tailored to reflect changes in context and has incorporated assumptions and risks in its ToC?</p> <p>1.7 To what extent has UN Women's approach integrated the principles of gender equality, equity, human rights, and 'do no harm' into its programming to address the needs of the most vulnerable?</p>
<p>Coherence</p> <p>2. To what extent are UN Women's efforts in Cox's Bazar coherent</p> <p>2.1 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio coherent externally with the interventions of other actors engaged in the Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar (particularly within the UN system)?</p> <p>2.2 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio been coherent internally?</p> <p>2.3 Do the individual projects, including the Means to Lead project build on synergies between each other to achieve a greater impact?</p> <p>2.4 How is UN Women monitoring its efforts and integrating learning into its approach?</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>3. How well has UN Women's programming, especially the Means to the Lead project, achieved its objectives?</p> <p>3.1 What strategies, partnerships and coordination mechanisms have been most effective? Were any replicable models established with potential for scale-up?</p> <p>3.2 What barriers and challenges have the projects, especially the Means to the Lead project, been experiencing during the implementation for effectiveness of results?</p> <p>3.3 To what extent have there been unintended negative (including 'do no harm') or positive effects? Which ones?</p>
<p>Efficiency</p> <p>4. To what extent does the UN Women Cox's Bazar sub-office have been efficient?</p> <p>4.1 To what extent does the Cox's Bazar sub-office have sufficient human and financial resources to support the humanitarian portfolio?</p> <p>4.2 How timely and economical are the efforts of the humanitarian portfolio?</p> <p>4.3 To what extent have the indicators in the logframe been used in monitoring the implementation and efficiency of the programme over time?</p>
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>5. To what extent are the results achieved through UN Women projects in Cox's Bazar likely to continue beyond 2023?</p> <p>5.1 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio built-in mechanisms – such as capacity development of partners – to ensure the sustainability of efforts?</p> <p>5.2 To what extent has Means to Lead and other relevant projects in Cox's Bazar have contributed to reinforcing the capacities and transformative resilience of the refugees for the transition from a humanitarian protracted crisis scenario to provision of long-term development assistance?</p>

⁵⁴ See column 'data analysis methods' in the evaluation matrix for more detail.

3.4 SAMPLING. DATA SOURCES, DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

40. The ET considered accessibility as a key consideration in the sampling strategy and relied on further information provided by and in consultation with UN Women to refine its site selection. The evaluation used purposive sampling for the collection of primary data the five refugee camps with MPWCs (camps 3, 4, 4-Extension, 5, and 18) for refugee women and girls, and 1 host community site with an MPWC (Teknaf). This sampling strategy was both cost-effective, and an appropriate method for collecting data from a limited number of primary data sources to answer the evaluation questions.
41. The primary data collection methods included group/FGDs, KIIs and in-depth interviews, direct observations, and exit-surveys. The ET used semi-structured questionnaires for the KIIs, FGDs, and group discussions, and in-depth interviews to gain first-hand knowledge. All evaluation instruments were finalized in consultation with UN Women and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG).
42. The evaluation conducted a total of 36 KIIs (27 females, 9 males), 14 FGDs (37 females, 42 males, 5transgenders, 7 group interviews (30 female, 4 male), 3 in-depth interviews (all female), 3 direct observations at MPWCs, and 30 exit-surveys (all female). The total number respondents were 187 (127 females, 55 males, and 5 transgenders). (See Annex 3 for the list of key informant respondents and Annex 4 for the total number of interviews according to method).
43. The KIIs included respondents from UN Women and relevant UN agencies; donors; RPs; the field team; monitoring and evaluation (M&E) staff; Cox's Bazar ISCG; MoWCA; RRRC; the GFOs, and CiCs and their supporting staff, among others. The evaluation conducted FGDs with project beneficiaries from both the refugee and host communities. FGD participants consisted of men, women, and youth. The evaluation conducted FGDs with 4 different groups of participants. These included: 1) the most marginalized women/young females in selected camps; 2) women/young females in the host communities around the camps; 3) men/young men in the refugee camps; and 4) men/young men in the host communities.
44. The evaluation also conducted 3 in-depth interviews. The respondents for the in-depth interviews were selected from among the Rohingya refugee women and girls according to the following criteria: a) women/female youth who has been the most successful with respect to income generation and livelihoods from among the Rohingya refugees; b) young adolescent; and c) a woman with disability The evaluation had group discussions with the staff at 3 MPWCs as well as the Woman's Market, followed by direct observations of the centers.
45. Additionally, the evaluation administered exit-surveys at 3 MPWCs in camp 3, camp 4, and camp 4-Extension, undertaking 10 at each camp, making a total of 30 surveys. The main purpose of the exit-surveys was to assess beneficiary perceptions, characteristics, and recommendations regarding the services that are being offered at the MPWCs.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

46. Qualitative data analysis (KIIs, FGDs, and in-depth interviews, desk-review documents) involved reading all relevant documents and examining the data using thematic content analysis to code data against a conceptual framework that seeks to confirm or reject the theory of change through contribution analysis. Additionally, coding was done from the ground up to allow for exploration and understanding of what themes emerged from the content as an inductive approach. In this way, the analysis determined what themes were found in the data and what evidence was there that the intervention has affected project outcomes through its activities. Quantitative data analysis consisted of examining descriptive statistics and frequencies based on secondary sources as well as the exit-survey data.
47. Triangulation was one of the main methods used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the analysis. The following approach was put into practice:
 - Source triangulation: comparing information from different sources, for example, perspectives

from different stakeholder groups, documentation, and observation.

- **Methods triangulation:** comparing information collected by different methods, for example, interviews, document review and focus groups.
- **Geographic triangulation:** comparing information gathered from different sites to ensure results can be generalized and not limited to a particular context.

48. Findings from the field phase were triangulated, counter-argued and validated through internal team procedures to harmonize results and eliminate bias and discord within the team. The preliminary findings were shared during a workshop with the ERG.

3.6 TEAM COMPOSITION

49. The evaluation consisted of an international team leader and a national evaluation expert. One UN Women staff at the Cox's Bazar sub-office who spoke the Rohingya dialect and was not involved in the programming (and who was also aware of the ethical conduct and confidentiality of the data) assisted the ET with interpretation and translation of interviews as well as the evaluation logistics, given the challenges of recruiting a translator with the required gender terminology and sensitivity and within the tight timeframe. The team leader was responsible for the overall management and quality of the evaluation and conducted KIIs and group interviews in the field along with the national evaluator. The national evaluation expert was responsible for facilitating the FGDs, the in-depth interviews as well as conducting the exit-surveys and a selected number of KIIs. UN Women provided the logistic support to the ET during the fieldwork.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

50. The evaluation abided by the ethical code of conduct research and evaluation in the UN System as adopted by UNEG.⁵⁵ This includes the independence of the consultants, the anonymity and confidentiality of individual participants in the evaluation, sensitivity to social and cultural contexts and monitoring integrity and honesty in relations with all stakeholders, as well as human rights and gender equality related norms and standards. The privacy of all respondents was respected, as it will not be possible to attribute their contributions back to them. All FGDs, group discussions, in-depth interviews and surveys were conducted in private spaces at the MPWCs, where psychosocial counseling was also available. This also ensured that if the respondents needed any services related to GBV and other confidential matters, they could be addressed immediately by the MPWC psychosocial support staff trained in counseling and case management. The ET also ensured fair representation and sensitivity to the operational and protection context. Verbal consent for participation in the study was obtained from all participants prior to the start of the interviews to inform them on their rights in participation, the objectives of the evaluation, as well as the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Furthermore, to prevent any traceability back to the key informants, all names have been deleted from this report.

3.8 EVALUATION MANAGEMENT & QUALITY ASSURANCE

51. Under the overall supervision of the Cox's Bazar Head of Sub-Office, the ET coordinated all the evaluation activities with the UN Women Cox's Bazar-based Monitoring and Reporting Analyst and Dhaka based Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Analyst and who supported coordination of the evaluation process. UN Women Regional evaluation specialist provided quality assurance throughout the evaluation process. The Evaluation Management Team (EMT) was responsible for administrative and logistical support and accountability. It consisted of the Regional Evaluation Specialist, Cox's Bazar Head of Sub-office, and the Dhaka-based Monitoring and Reporting Analyst. The Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) representing UN Women's key partners, providing substantive inputs at different stages of the evaluation process, ensuring transparency and accuracy, providing key insights, and ensuring that any gaps or misinterpretations would be avoided. It was composed

⁵⁵ UNEG. April 2005. Standards for Evaluation in the UN System; UNEG. April 2005. Norms for Evaluation in the UN System; UNEG. March 2008. UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

of members of the national government, civil society, humanitarian partners, and UN partners, WLO, donors, and the EMG.

3.9 LIMITATIONS

52. In both qualitative and quantitative data collection, cultural norms and professional affiliation may encourage respondents to give more positive responses due to a social desirability bias, where respondents answer questions in a way that sounds more favorable or provide answers that the respondent feels the interviewer wants to hear.
53. The timing of data collection needed to consider factors affecting participation of the affected population, including the arrival of Ramadan on March 22, which constrained the data collection timeframe. This impacted, especially, the number of FGDs/group interviews, in-depth interviews and exit surveys that could be viably conducted within the limited timeframe. (See Annex 4).
54. The exit surveys were not conducted in the host communities to assess any differences across beneficiaries attending the MPWCs at the camps and host communities due to time constraints.
55. It was also difficult for the ET to ensure that the 'most marginalized' were included in the FGDs due to time constraints in terms of identifying and selecting them for the interviews (although the ET conducted one FGD with a gender diverse group, and an in-depth interview with a woman with disability).
56. Both output and outcome level data were missing as the project indicators and related reporting were mainly focused on project activities and implementation.



Photo: Awareness raising session for girls. Credit: UN Women/Khaled Arafat Ahmed

EVALUATION FINDINGS

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

EQ 1. To what extent has UN Women’s humanitarian portfolio been relevant to and responding to the needs and priorities of women/girls in Rohingya refugee and host communities with respect to its comparative advantage (1.1); alignment of programmes with the gender and humanitarian response priorities in Cox’s Bazar and national priorities (1.2); adapting to the evolving contexts (1.3); inclusive approaches (1.4); addressing underlying social norms and structural barriers for effective programming (1.5); context specificity (1.6); and integrating the principles of gender equality, equity, human rights, and ‘do no harm’ into its programming to address the needs of the most vulnerable (1.7)?

Key Findings 1:

1.1 UN Women’s humanitarian portfolio is highly relevant to the humanitarian response priorities in Cox’s Bazar and addressing the social norm barriers to women’s empowerment, leadership, and income-generation.

1.2 The design and implementation of UN Women’s humanitarian portfolio in Cox’s Bazar align with the priority areas stipulated in the UN Women Strategic Plan (2018-2021) and UN Women Bangladesh Strategic note (2022-2026), which commensurate with the objectives of the Joint Response Plan (JRP) and Bangladesh government’s National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security (WPS) national priorities.

1.3 UN Women’s humanitarian portfolio adapted well to the evolving context, including the COVID-19 situation, remaining relevant. The GiHA WG provided important guidelines for programming during the COVID-19 pandemic, including setting up isolation centers.

1.4 UN Women’s inclusive approach to programming is evidenced by its vulnerability selection criteria of beneficiaries at the MPWCS. However, it needs to intensify its efforts in better identifying the hidden groups (i.e., the poorest of the poor and populations with different disabilities including mental health) among the most vulnerable, and provide tailored support to ensure access to services by these groups.

1.5 UN Women’s approach in addressing underlying social norms and structural is informed by the needs and priorities of Rohingya women and girls collected through joint analyses in the context of the GiHA WG and through consultations with programme beneficiaries. Its programmatic approach has aimed to address underlying social norms/structural barriers related to gender equality by building the capacities of male volunteers and reaching both women and men through its awareness-raising activities.

1.6 The Means to Lead project implementation strategy has been tailored to reflect changes in context and needs of the refugees and host communities as evidenced by the construction of additional MPWCS in the refugee camps (5 to-date) and host communities (3 to-date), as well as increase in the number of female and male volunteers for out-reach activities and Women Leaders. Nonetheless, the project’s TOC does not specifically incorporate assumptions and risks with regarding to changing context.

Key Findings 1 (cont.):

1.7 UN Women projects benefits from gender and human rights analyses provided by the GiHA WG. The Means to Lead project promotes gender equity through dedicated activities for women, adolescent girls, and transgenders (including those with disabilities); and through outreach and awareness activities conducted by MPWC volunteers (women and men), ensuring that also men learn about gender equality and equity. This is important as UN Women's focus on vulnerable women and girls could otherwise lead to an increased 'double burden of work' among women and girls, and to conflicts between men and women, jeopardizing the principle of 'do no harm'. UN Women could do more to generate analysis and inform programming tailored for men and boys.

EQ 1.1: To what extent has UN Women drawn on its comparative advantage in the context of its work in Cox's Bazar?

57. Since establishing its the sub-office in Cox's Bazar, UN Women has positioned itself as the agency with technical knowledge on the needs of women and girls in Cox's Bazar and how to directly reach them to build their leadership skills and bring about their empowerment. UN Women's comparative advantage stems from its technical expertise and strategic approach to gender equality and equity and having led the policy of interagency standing committee.⁵⁶ Although not all key informants were familiar with UN Women's individual projects in Cox's Bazar, they perceived its active participation in the humanitarian response having allowed gender equality and empowerment to be central to humanitarian-peace-development nexus approach - rather than being optional or sidelined - and important for increasing the coherence of humanitarian programming. Just as empowering women contributes to improving household livelihood and food security, food scarcity and interruption of services also intersects with increased GBV and gender inequality demonstrated by studies.⁵⁷ As one key informant commented, it is important to pay attention to the structure of leadership and mechanisms by which gender equality is mainstreamed since many agencies may not necessarily have the capacities to mainstream gender programming due to limited fundings.
58. UN Women's presence in the humanitarian space in Cox's Bazar since 2017, has been significant in enabling stakeholders to advocate gender issues in a coordinated way and address gender specific needs, which were not comprehensively reflected in the 2017 Joint Response Plan. At the beginning of the influx, sectors did not fully integrate gender and inclusiveness issues into their programming. As a result, their approach was not necessarily tailored to the gender specific needs of the affected population.⁵⁸ To address these issues, in April 2018, the GiHA WG prepared "Gender Equality Commitments: Key Actions on GEEWG in Humanitarian Action" that have since been mainstreamed into the JRP, thereby allowing the ISCG to benefit from the UN Women's knowledge and expertise on gender. Since 2018, the yearly JRPs recognize that protection and gender equality should be mainstreamed as a priority for all sectors. However, a gender capacity learning assessment carried out by Gender Hub in 2019, concluded that despite having gender policies and strategies in place to guide activities, UN agencies and most INGOs, have limited effectiveness due to absence of relevant knowledge of individual staff and RPs on gender issues. Furthermore, one report stipulates that while "there has been observed substantive progress on the integration of GEEWG principles into the response activities since the initial 2017 response... Even with these positive elements and the progress observed, gender equality programming is highly variable across specific agencies and sectors."⁵⁹ Another evaluation concluded: "GiHA WG should be considered part of standard operating procedures for humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar but without

⁵⁶ IASC Gender Accountability Framework Report 2021. Since 2018, the annual reports reviewing the IASC's adherence to its Gender Policy have been developed by UN Women in its role as Gender Desk of the IASC Gender Reference Group.

⁵⁷ See for example Concern report, <https://www.concern.net/news/causes-of-gender-based-violence>, CARE: https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/GBV-food-security-brief_EN.pdf.

⁵⁸ The Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG) Case Study Bangladesh, 2020

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 1.

dedicated funds, and Gender Hub is the first of its kind - piloted in Cox's Bazar to further strengthen and operationally support gender capacities of humanitarian actors."⁶⁰

59. Some respondents contended that despite its comparative advantage, UN Women's presence in the operational rather than the policy context of humanitarian assistance in Cox's Bazar has been questioned at times, especially since it was not an IASC member until October 2022. Similarly, some key informants questioned the value added of the GiHA WG with respect to its coordination efforts in a humanitarian setting. While one key informant remarked that since gender is not a sector as such, but rather cross-cutting across all sectors, it often runs the risk of being side-lined when it comes to negotiating for spaces vis-à-vis other sectors. Furthermore, in the absence of indicators for measuring GiHA WGs contributions, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of its coordination activities. On the other hand, indicators for tracking progress need to stem from the IASC Policy on gender. Therefore, there is need for a more coordinated policy approach in identifying indicators that measure progress at outcome levels. One key informant noted that one of the challenges has been ensuring that the recommendations provided by GiHA WG (or previously the Gender Hub) are in fact implemented.
60. The design and implementation of UN Women's humanitarian portfolio in Cox's Bazar reflect its strong commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda.⁶¹ Its humanitarian portfolio is also well aligned with the priorities and recommendations in other key international conventions and declarations such as CEDAW, Sendai Framework, the World Humanitarian Summit, New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Global Compact on Refugees, Grand Bargain, Global Compact on WPS and Humanitarian Action. Similarly, the UN Women interventions implemented in Cox's Bazar are aligned with the IASC Policy on Gender Equality and GEEWG in Humanitarian Action.⁶²

EQ 1.2 To what extent are the design and focus of the humanitarian portfolio aligned with the humanitarian response priorities in Cox's Bazar and with national priorities relevant to gender and humanitarian action?

61. UN Women interventions align with the priority areas stipulated by the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021: Outcome 5: Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action; as well as the UN Women Bangladesh Strategic Note 2022-2026: Outcome 5: By 2026 more Rohingya and host community women and girls are empowered by a gender-responsive enabling environment, to exercise their agency and decision-making with improved access to protection, education, and socio-economic opportunities. Both outcomes commensurate with the objectives of the JRP and Bangladesh government's National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security (WPS) (2019-2022): i) Prevention: strengthening social cohesion and raising awareness to prevent all forms of conflict, violent extremism, and gender discrimination that disproportionately impacts women; ii) Participation: increasing women's meaningful participation in decision making on peace and security, including peace building, peacekeeping missions, and preventing violent extremism; and iii) Protection, relief and recovery: protecting women's safety and well-being as well as their rights, and engage women in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief policies and programmes with an aim to address their specific needs and utilize their unique expertise.⁶³ Within its economic empowerment approach, UN Women utilizes a two-pronged approach of influencing the major stakeholders and implementing targeted interventions aimed at influencing policies, programmes and funds relevant for women's economic empowerment.⁶⁴
62. The Means to Lead project interventions contribute to the 2022 JRP strategic objectives in the following areas: i) Food Security sector Objective 2: Support skills and capacity building of Rohingya refugees/FDMNs that can support their sustainable reintegration in Myanmar; ii) Protection Sector (including CP and GBV) Objective 1: Ensure safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable repatriation

⁶⁰ UN Women ROAP, Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, Annexes-Volume 2, p. 11.

⁶¹ Despite a stand-alone SDG goal on gender equality, progress on any and all of the SDGs will only be achieved if women's empowerment and gender equality are prioritized.

⁶² Information in relation to the implementation of the IASC Gender Policy at the field level is gathered from UN Women country offices operating in IASC-managed contexts.

⁶³ National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, Bangladesh (2019-2022): [https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Bangladesh%20NAP%20\(2019-2022\).pdf](https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Bangladesh%20NAP%20(2019-2022).pdf)

⁶⁴ See: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/bosnia-and-herzegovina/women%27s-economic-empowerment>

of Rohingya refugees/FDMNs to Myanmar and respect for Rohingya refugees'/FDMNs' basic needs, while continuing protection, through inter alia, joint registration (as part of the Government-UNHCR registration exercise) and documentation for all Rohingya refugees/FDMNs; iii) Protection Sector Objective 2: Promote a community-based approach to the response, support community protection mechanisms, and facilitate meaningful access to specialized services for persons, such as older persons, persons with disabilities, vulnerable women and children; and iv) Protection sector Objective 5: Enhance access to survivor-centred services by responding to individual needs, preventing and mitigating GBV risks, and supporting survivors of GBV in the Rohingya refugee/FDMN camps and targeted areas in host communities.

63. The evaluation found UN Women's humanitarian portfolio in Cox's Bazar highly relevant within the humanitarian-development-peace-nexus with respect to its upstream programmatic strategy in producing and sharing information on gender issues and needs in Cox's Bazar through the GiHA WG and previously the Gender Hub (i.e., assessments, studies, gender analyses and data work, etc.), and developing training modules. Its system and downstream programmatic approach in capacity building and awareness raising on gender issues of a variety of stakeholders and beneficiaries are also highly relevant in addressing the needs and gaps in gender equality and practice (i.e., gender responsive police training⁶⁵ of female and male Bangladeshi police and armed battalion, CiCs, outreach activities, GFOs, volunteers, women leaders/networks, Rohingya and host community members, and local RPs).

EQ 1.3: To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio adapted to the evolving context, including the COVID-19 situation, in order to remain relevant?

64. The Gender Hub and GiHA WG reports, analyses, and assessment have been especially relevant in informing gender-responsive programming - not only for UN Women, but other actors as well – on changing needs and risks with which the affected populations are faced. The GiHA WG provided important guidelines for programming during the COVID-19 pandemic, including setting up isolation centers.⁶⁶

EQ 1.4 Is there a strategy to put in place for inclusive approaches to humanitarian response (such as a vulnerability analysis), ensuring the most marginalized groups are benefitting from efforts (women with disabilities, ethnic minorities, poorest of the poor, gender diverse groups, etc.)?

65. The camps and the host communities with the MPWCs have been selected by an overall gap analysis by the GBV sub-working group in terms of existing services, and coordination of the camp management for space and the mapping of the camps. UN Women's inclusive approach to programming is evidenced by its vulnerability selection criteria of beneficiaries at the MPWCs (i.e., persons with disabilities, transgenders, survivors of GBV, women/girls from female headed households, divorced or widowed women or those who do not receive any support from their husbands, number of household members, etc.), and the engagement of refugee women and men directly in its activities. Both female and male respondents in the Rohingya camps and host communities highlighted the relevant role played by the female and male volunteers (64 to date) in reaching out to them to increase their knowledge and change their attitude towards gender equality and harmful gender practices (especially child marriage, polygamy, dowry, and child trafficking). Although some women and girls who were interviewed at the MPWCs had learned about the centers through the word of mouth, others said that without the guidance and efforts of the volunteers they would have never known about the centers or even to have been allowed to attend the centers due to restrictive social norms. As per respondent comments, the UN Women volunteers have been key in identifying the most vulnerable women/girls from amongst the camp population and to inform them of the

⁶⁵ Since 2019, UN Women, funded by the Government of Australia, has provided gender-responsive policing training. By December 2021, 292 officers from the Armed Battalion Police and Cox's Bazar District Police and 18 master trainers had received training from UN Women. The trainings are tailored to the context of the humanitarian crisis in Cox's Bazar and the needs of women and girls by allowing the police to become aware of the GBV cases and their responsibilities, and how to work with women and children in the camps, especially given the language barriers. UN Women has arranged for women police to hold bi-monthly community meetings with Rohingya women and girls to address their needs and established help desks in 9 camps. Women & children who have experienced violence can access medical services, psychosocial counselling, sexual and reproductive healthcare, and referrals to other essential services through the help desks.

services offered at the MPWCs. Notably, UN Women female volunteers play a leadership role in their community, supporting awareness-raising of rights and access to available services among vulnerable women and girls in their communities.

66. Some volunteers, however, indicated that at times, it was challenging for them to bring persons with disabilities to the centers in the absence of dedicated assistance or transport. Similarly, other volunteers noted that it is not always possible to ensure that the most vulnerable (including the 'poorest of the poor') will participate in the activities provided at the MPWCs, since they also need to show interest and consent to participate. While reached through community outreach by volunteers, the most vulnerable groups are thus less likely to utilize MPWC services even when they are informed about them. Tailored support, such as home-based livelihoods and empowerment activities, alongside dedicated support to ensure access, should be explored moving forward.
67. Mental health issues can be a significant concern in the context of GBV and other gender related issues. It is important to provide appropriate support for those affected. UN Women has made efforts to include marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities and transgender communities in its response, including through a pilot livelihoods project for 30 gender diverse persons in the camps. Further, female and male volunteers (64) overseen by UN Women GFOs as well as AAB and BRAC community volunteers (28) have raised awareness of rights and facilitated access of the most marginalized women and girls to services and support provided at MPWCs and by relevant sectors. MPWC activities currently do not reach out to women and girls with mental disabilities, nor do they cover those with hearing or sight disabilities, however. Lack of access to multi-sectoral services for these vulnerable groups can have severe consequences, especially, during sudden crises such as fire or other hazards, and they need to be addressed.

EQ 1.5 To what extent is UN women addressing the underlying social norms and structural barriers related to gender?

68. UN Women's approach has been evolving and maturing since the start of the current Rohingya refugee crisis in 2017 and its approach is informed, to a large extent, by the needs and priorities of Rohingya women and girls collected through joint analyses in the context of the GiHA WG and through consultations with programme beneficiaries. Its projects have been addressing the underlying social norms and structural barriers related to gender by through its programmatic interventions including skills building and income generating activities for women and girls, capacity building of women leaders, and outreach awareness raising activities on gender equality and human rights. Although its programmatic approach has been key in promoting the adaptive resilience of women/girls as evidenced by their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has not been gender transformative. This has been partly due to its relatively limited resources, which has considerably constricted its coverage, and partly due to the long-term nature of collective beliefs regarding gender roles and responsibilities and about what people expect from each other.
69. On the other hand, UN Women's projects - including the Means to Lead - awareness raising activities, capacity building of women leaders, and the empowerment of women through skills development and income-generating activities have been critical measures towards transforming individual gender attitudes. These interventions are aimed at facilitating a process through which participants share their knowledge with others that can help achieve change in existing social norms, ultimately contributing to change in their practices. The engagement of female and male volunteers and the women leaders as a core group of motivated 'messengers' who are members of the same communities is especially important to effectively increasing individual and collective awareness of a widespread regressive normative practices.

EQ 1.6 Has the project implementation strategy been context specific and tailored to reflect changes in context and has incorporated assumptions and risks in its ToC?

70. Overall, the evaluation finds the Means to Lead project implementation strategy has been context specific based on its expected outputs:

Output 1.1: Gender equality is integrated in the Rohingya camps' government structures and processes.

Output 1.2: Women have increased capacity and skills to participate in community management and decision-making, in an enabling environment with links to women's networks, CBOs and women development.

Output 1.3: Opportunities, skills and access to livelihood for women and adolescent girls in host and Rohingya communities developed to enhance their leadership role and self-reliance.

71. Nonetheless, the project's TOC does not incorporate assumptions and risks to reflect contextual barriers and unexpected events. For example, Output 1.3. assumes that access to livelihood for women and girls in the Rohingya and host communities will contribute to their leadership role and self-reliance. However, it fails to take into consideration the government regulations which prohibit freedom of movement of the Rohingya population beyond the camp areas, and access to market linkages and employment. Similarly, the TOC does not account for potential unintended results or unexpected changes in context such as insecurity in camps as a result of the armed groups and targeting of women leaders due to social status in communities.

EQ 1.7 To what extent has UN Women's approach integrated the principles of gender equality, equity, human rights, and 'do no harm' into its programming to address the needs of the most vulnerable?

72. UN Women's mandate is to advance gender equality and to include marginalized groups. UN Women's skills building, and income generation activities are in alignment with its mandate and Strategic Plan - focused on vulnerable women and girls - with a pilot initiative for gender diverse persons. UN Women's programmatic approach focuses on women's and girls' empowerment, resilience, and leadership⁶⁷, with a pilot initiative for livelihoods development of gender diverse persons. Rohingya and host community men are engaged through awareness raising activities, to promote gender equal norms and practices, including with regards to caregiving and women's voice; and through the training of men volunteers.
73. The evaluation finds that UN Women's projects in the humanitarian context of Cox's Bazar are informed by a human-rights- based approach. This is evidenced by their focus on strengthening the voice of women and girls and removing the structural barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment.
74. On the other hand, since UN Women's skills building and income generation activities concentrate on vulnerable women and girls challenging patriarchal gender norms, the importance of outreach and awareness activities conducted by MPWC volunteers (women and men), promoting gender and human rights sensitivity within the community, ensuring that also men learn about gender equality and equity, cannot be underestimated. Otherwise, increased skills of women may increase the burden of work for women and lead to conflict between women and men at the household and community levels⁶⁸. The FGD male respondents in both the Rohingya camps and host communities expressed their interest – as well as objection to having been excluded- in participating in the livelihood and income generations skills development activities. The host community men were also eager to receive leadership skills trainings.
75. In this respect, UN Women could leverage its coordination mandate to promote gender-transformative livelihoods and skills development opportunities for men, generating evidence to inform such programming in the refugee camps and host community. Further, UN Women should strengthen engagement with adolescent boys and men either directly (such as with the male volunteers) or indirectly through the projects of other UN agencies, promoting standardized approaches such as

⁶⁷ Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (2022) Four Years On: Shifting gendered perceptions and experiences: Comprehensive gender analysis within Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. March 2022.

⁶⁸ Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (2022) Four Years On: Shifting gendered perceptions and experiences: Comprehensive gender analysis within Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, in collaboration with ACAPS Analysis Hub, IOM Needs and Population Monitoring Unit, UNHCR, and UN Women. March 2022.

As the above study observes, the engagement of men and boys in social and educational opportunities is necessary and so is also the creation of spaces where they can interact with male champions, change agents, and role models to support gender-responsive programming.

SASA! to promote gender equality and end violence against women and girls.

EQ 2. To what extent are UN Women's efforts in Cox's Bazar coherent externally with the interventions of other actors engaged in the Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar particularly within the UN system (2.1) and internally within its humanitarian portfolio (2.2); do the individual projects, including the Means to Lead project build on synergies between each other

EQ 2.1 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio coherent externally with the interventions of other actors engaged in the Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar (particularly within the UN system)?

Key Findings 2:

2.1 UN Women's active participation in the humanitarian response has allowed it to demonstrate the importance of a coherent and collective gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (GEEWG) approach in Cox's Bazar in order to have an impact on the different dimensions of gender equality in a coordinated and complementary manner with other UN agencies.

2.2 Although UN Women's work in Cox's Bazar is embedded as one outcome under the Bangladesh Strategic Note and sits under the Bangladesh country office, there has been a lack of concrete connection between its programming in Cox's Bazar and that at the national level.

2.3 UN Women's cross-cutting work on gender is supportive of coherence across its projects and working with different actors to achieve greatest impact.

2.4 UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar lacks a robust M&E system that captures results, identifies gaps, and highlights lessons learned at the outcome level and needs to strengthen its M&E and reporting functions to better reflect results and trends at outcome levels.

to achieve a greater impact (2.3); and how is UN Women monitoring its efforts and integrating learning into its approach (2.4)?

57. The complex nature of the protracted humanitarian crisis in Cox's Bazar with the presence of multiple stakeholders (UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs) and multi-donor programming, and with the absence of a multi-year plan is, nonetheless, challenging to ensure coherence and integrated programming across all organizations. As one report concludes: "The number and geographic distribution of partners is a primary cause for significant overlap of services in some camps, and critical gaps in services in other camps."⁶⁹ There are a number of logistical and resource constraints that make it difficult to provide comprehensive support and services to everyone who needs it in the refugee camps. Overall, findings from interviews indicate that engagement amongst donors and the UN agencies on the coherence of programming should be increased.
58. UN Women sub-office has actively contributed to discussions on the need for rationalization, promoting engagement with local WLOs and WROs across the response, while engaging in discussions on the need to reduce duplication and overlap among UN agencies and other development partners. This is mainly due to inadequate collaboration, communication, and information sharing among the UN and other organizations on their operations and interventions across the camps. Some key informants questioned the added value of having both UN Women Women's MPWCs and UNFPA Women Friendly Spaces (WFS) or Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS).⁷⁰ This was especially a concern for funding purposes in view of the diminishing donor funds. While both agencies work on changing norms and behavior on gender equality, rights, and inclusiveness, their

⁶⁹ Principles of Rationalization in the Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh. May 2022. P. 1.

⁷⁰ UN Women and UNFPA have collaborated in the context of a joined up programme under CERF funding, where UNFPA has been responsible for ensuring that cash and voucher assistance enables survivors to access GBV services, while UN Women has been responsible for ensuring that GBV survivors were enabled to rebuild their livelihoods and recover from crisis. UN Women and UNFPA are currently exploring areas of collaboration with respect to joint field visits, multi-hazard response, knowledge production and sharing, and areas for joint capacity building initiatives.

strategic and operational approaches are, however, different.^{71 72}

59. Despite eagerness to promote gender equality, there are still challenges related to the perception that gender issues are not seen as 'life-saving' by some in the humanitarian community. On the other hand, by coordinating efforts and resources, UN agencies can make the most of what is available and ensure that there is equitable access to services for everyone in need. UN women needs to ensure that all agencies have equity in the coordination system and that cross-cutting issues such as gender are the responsibility of everyone, not just one sector or agency. In collaboration with ISGC, it should also follow-up on the implementation of recommendations provided by the GiHA WG.
60. Key informants commented that the models of the women centers - operated by various UN agencies - are different across camps. Some perceived the MPWCs as providing a more comprehensive, multi-sectoral range of services in addressing gender equality and empowerment compared to the WFSs.⁷³ UNFPA data indicate that there are currently 23 WFS and 4 WGSS in the camps and 7 WFS in the host communities. This compares to 5 MPWCs in refugee camps and 3 in the host communities. The UN Women MPWCs and UNFPA WFSs are both present in only one refugee camp (camp 4-Extension) and one host community in Teknaf.⁷⁴ Key informants also observed that to the extent that there are service gaps in promoting gender equality and the protection against GBV within and across camps, the presence of different types of women centers need be considered more complementing rather than duplicating each other. This is especially important in view of the great challenges in addressing the multifaceted problematic of gender equality in Cox's Bazar. UN Women recognizes the necessity for multidimensional programming approaches that address the interrelated factors of gender inequality. It also acknowledges the need for multi-year programming and funding.
61. The JRP breaks down the priorities and contribution of each sector within the humanitarian response according to its objectives and requires reporting on activity or output level indicators.⁷⁵ However, coordination of efforts remain challenging. One key informant remarked that people will only coordinate when they see the value of doing so and different individuals and agencies may have different perspective on what constitutes value.
62. Although one of the tasks of the GiHA WG is to conduct assessments and studies to identify gaps and best practices on gender-responsive programming within and across sectors, in the absence of consolidated outcome level measurements, it is difficult to assess the coherence of the humanitarian assistance vis-à-vis gender within the 'one camp approach'. According to key informants, the JRP indicators could be better consolidated to reflect the results at outcome levels. Similarly, given the absence of indicators for measuring GiHA WGs contributions, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of its coordination activities. On the other hand, indicators for tracking progress need to stem from the IASC Policy on gender. Therefore, there is need for a more coordinated policy approach in identifying indicators that measure progress at outcome levels.

EQ 2.2 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio been coherent internally?

63. UN Women's work in Cox's Bazar is embedded in Bangladesh Strategic Note and sits under the Bangladesh country office. Its cross-cutting work on gender is supportive of coherence across its

⁷¹ Both agencies are under the Protection Sector in the JRP. UN Women's approach to protecting the gender and human rights of women and girls and fostering gender equality focuses on promoting their economic empowerment, leadership, and income generation activities/livelihoods in terms of addressing their protection needs and vulnerabilities. UNFPA strategic and operational approach focuses on promoting gender equality and human rights through its sexual and reproductive health and GBV prevention interventions.

⁷² The ET was not able to visit any of the UNFPA centers. Furthermore, other women/youth centers are also operated by different organizations in the camps and host communities. The MPWCs have UNFPA seconded staff to provide family planning counseling as well as contraceptives and referrals of GBV cases to appropriate service providers, but unlike UNFPA, they do not focus on GBV or reproductive health. Similarly, although some of the UNFPA WFSs offer skills training such as hand stitching and sewing, the centers mainly provide free access to recreational activities to women and girls, in addition to awareness raising sessions of GBV.

⁷³ During the Covid-19 pandemic the MPWCs were the only centers that remained open.

⁷⁴ Based on data provided to the ET by UNFPA.

⁷⁵ See ISCG Bangladesh, Joint Response Monitoring Framework, January-December 2022. The JRP M&E framework includes activity and output rather than outcome level indicators that are to be disaggregated by age, sex, and disability to the extent possible. Furthermore, according to respondents, individual Sectors have their own M&E frameworks and report on outcome level indicators (such as % of girls that go to school disaggregated by age) and share those results with ISGC.

projects and working with different actors. The projects in Cox's Bazar feed into the theory of change of UN Women's flagship global project Women's LEAP. The empowerment, leadership skills provided to women networks⁷⁶, the livelihood components of UN Women's programmatic approach through the MPWCs, and its outreach awareness raising efforts are a vehicle to address gender equality and GBV in a coherent manner. Notably, UN Women has benefitted from multi-year funding, allowing the sub-office to pursue a coherent approach particularly with regards to its Multi-Purpose Women's Centers and the promotion of women's voice and leadership across different arenas.

64. UN Women's GiHA coordination work in Cox's Bazar does not have direct linkages with national GiHA coordination. Cox's Bazar is one of the most disaster-prone districts in Bangladesh. UN Women's GiHA coordination work in Cox's Bazar would benefit from concrete programmatic linkages and cross-fertilization moving forward, including to strengthen institutional capacities for gender-responsive disaster risk reduction in Cox's Bazar and to ensure engagement at national level on the gendered dimensions of the Rohingya crisis.
65. The evaluation finds that UN Women projects are interlinked as they build on synergies between one another at the system level (i.e., capacitating the CiCs, the RRRC, the Bangladeshi police-women and -men, and local NGOs, among others) and community level individual trainings and awareness raising (i.e., skills and leadership trainings to women and girls, volunteers, and women leaders/networks).

EQ 2.3 Do the individual projects, including the Means to Lead project build on synergies between each other to achieve a greater impact?

66. UN Women's programming has been developed with the humanitarian crisis in mind, with similar interventions in the host community as in the camps, focused on Multi-Purpose Women's Centers and women's leadership. UN Women's current programming in the host/local communities is risk informed and promotes social cohesion. The lack of a holistic development plan for Cox's Bazar has presented a challenge to ensuring an aligned approach; nonetheless, opportunities for market linkages and private sector engagement have not been fully leveraged. Further, with increased development opportunities and financing in the pipeline for Cox's Bazar, there is a risk of fragmentation of efforts to address gender issues. Moving forward, leveraging its triple mandate, UN Women should consider support to ensuring support is coherent, coordinating for joined up, effective approaches while exploring opportunities for joint programmes.
67. UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar lacks a robust M&E system that captures results, identifies gaps, and highlights lessons learned at the outcome level. M&E is an essential component of all projects as it helps organizations to assess the effectiveness of their programs and policies, to make data-driven decisions, and to continuously improve their operations. To the extent that the Means to Lead-project indicators are not able to measure the results of the project at outcome levels, it is not possible to assess project effectiveness and efficiency and to identify areas where interventions are not working as intended. A weak M&E system can also lead to missed opportunities for learning and improvement. A proper M&E system also requires adequate capacities and resources. UN Women sub-office needs to strengthen its capacities in this regard, in order to also better support its RPs to collect data and measure the results of interventions beyond activity level indicators.

EQ 2.4 How is UN Women monitoring its efforts and integrating learning into its approach?

68. Currently, the RPs report on activity level indicators. The RPs are required to report on disaggregated data, although according to one evaluation not all partners use the disaggregated data for programming purposes.⁷⁷ While the timeframe of the project also limits measurement at higher outcome levels (such as transformative changes), the project M&E framework could benefit from including standardized indicators at lower levels of results, such as the number or percentage of women who have completed the trainings and are engaged in stable income-generating activities.

⁷⁶ The Means to Lead project has reached 36 Maitre Apa women network members for leadership skills; this support is being further scaled out with SDC support in 2023.

⁷⁷ UN Women Regional Evaluation: UN Women ROAP, Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, Annexes-Volume 2, January 2022.

The ET did not find any trend analysis of the disaggregated data at the activity level other than reporting on targets and explaining some of the challenges in having met or not met the targets.

69. UN Women also monitors developments in the field through a feedback system by consulting with umbrella networks of Rohingya women from different camps, as well as consultations with its volunteers and the MPWC staff and through the help desks for women and children. It also relies on the GiHA WG documents and bilateral and individual assessments to incorporate lessons learned into its interventions. However, based on primary and secondary source data⁷⁸, UN Women has not sufficiently invested in capacity building in results-based reporting. As one study concludes of the Rohingya refugee response: “Collective goals and indicators for measuring gender impact have not been put in place because gender is ‘cross-cutting’ and because gender interventions are scattered and imbalanced.”⁷⁹ Other key informants highlighted the urgency on implementation and delivery aspect of programming at the cost of reporting and capacity building around monitoring activities.

EQ 3. How effective has UN Women’s programming, especially the Means to the Lead project, been in achieving its objectives, what strategies, partnerships and coordination mechanisms have been most effective, were any replicable models established with potential for scale-up (3.1); what barriers and challenges have the projects, especially the Means to the Lead project, been experiencing during the implementation for effectiveness of results (3.2); and what have been the positive and negative unanticipated consequences (3.3)?

EQ 3.1 What strategies, partnerships and coordination mechanisms have been most effective? Were any replicable models established with potential for scale-up?

Key Findings 3:

3.1 The combination of services offered at the MPWCs (including counseling and GBV referral mechanisms), outreach activities, and focus on women’s leadership building have been among the most effective strategies and partnerships and coordination mechanisms in both refugee camps and host communities. Furthermore, UN Women’s support through the GiHA WG (previously benefitting from technical support provided by the Gender Hub) has contributed significantly to enhanced mainstreaming of gender considerations across the humanitarian response.

3.2 Funding constraints have limited coverage within and across camps and host communities. Furthermore, government regulations on the Rohingya refugees including restrictions on their freedom of movement, inaccessibility to market linkages and inability to be hired, as well as the deteriorating security situation in the camps have been among key barriers and challenges the projects, especially the Means to the Lead project, have encountered for the effectiveness of results.

3.3 An important unanticipated negative consequence of the projects has been the targeting of Rohingya women leaders by the armed groups in the camps. The insecure situation has also impacted women’s and girls’ perceptions of safety in leaving their homes to access services offered by UN Women’s pro-

70. UN Women is currently finalizing a humanitarian strategy for its programmatic approach on its engagement in protracted humanitarian crisis globally. It recognizes the main enablers of its projects in the humanitarian context in Cox’s Bazar as strengthening women’s agency and transformative resilience, as well as changing the initial narratives on women, especially the Rohingya women. The evaluation finds the effective strategies of UN Women’s humanitarian approach to include: a) direct engagement with the women and girls at the refugee camps and host communities at the individual level at the MPWCs and through volunteers and the GFOs⁸⁰; b) working with women

⁷⁸ Such as UN Women Evaluability Assessment. 2022.

⁷⁹ GiHA WG (2022) Four Years On: Shifting gendered perceptions and experiences: Comprehensive gender analysis within Rohingya and host communities in Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh. P. 25.

⁸⁰ The GFOs are not all in the camps with MPWCs. They are currently present in camps 1E, 1W, 4, 5, 9, and 18. They work with different sectors and their main role is to identify needs and assess gender gaps and report to CiCs on issues such as GBV and child marriage. They also provide legal advice and referrals to women to access the appropriate services.

leaders/networks and building their leadership skills combined with community engagement initiatives to build an enabling environment; c) outreach and awareness raising activities; d) system level capacity building and engagement with the RRRC, CiCs, and Bangladeshi battalion and women and men police, district commissioners, and national level ministries such as the MoWCA, and local NGOs; and e) working in close coordination with the GiHA WG and GBV sub-sector in identifying programming gaps and advocacy issues and integrating conscious gender-responsive programming into all sectors.

71. In 2021, 150,000 women and girls had been reached by UN Women projects.⁸¹ Livelihood training had been provided to around 4,000 women⁸², although the 2021 Means to Lead monitoring report only reported on income generation by 627 women (199 host community women and 428 Rohingya community women). Furthermore, 1,157 Beneficiaries (302 Rohingya and 855 host community women) had access to second chance education.⁸³ As these figures indicate, the project coverage of women and girls is low, especially, in the Rohingya camps.
72. FGD respondents provided positive feedback on the effectiveness and quality of project interventions. They agreed that the combination of services offered at the MPWCs (including counseling and GBV referral mechanisms) has had a positive impact on them and that interventions have strengthened their practical skills, confidence, motivation, and understanding of the importance of income-generating activities for women - especially those who are the sole source of their family income.⁸⁴ They acknowledged the vital role played by the MPWCs in providing safe and indispensable spaces for women and girls to socialize, feel comfortable, and enable them to engage in skills training and learning activities. Some felt that the second chance education was especially important in giving them a sense of pride and empowerment.
73. The skills training has allowed some Rohingya women to become trainers themselves at the MPWCs and earn income as volunteers. Key informants noted that the productions made by Rohingya women at the centers have gained recognition both within and outside of the camps. The fairs organized in Cox's Bazar are important platforms for these women to showcase their products and reach a wider audience. Collaborating with the Ayesha Abed Foundation's technical assistance is also a great step towards empowering these women and providing them with the necessary skills to improve their products.⁸⁵ Group discussions with the MPWC staff also indicate that there have been important positive changes in both female and male attitudes towards gender rights through the Means to Lead project. Some staff members indicated that the project has helped women to become more aware of their legal rights as well.
74. According to the SIDA annual report of 2022, 42,876 Rohingya women and girls (including 30,504 women and 12,372 adolescent girls, 77 persons with disabilities and 4,146 female-headed) benefited from services from the services at the 5 MPWCs in the camps. Likewise, 13,277 women and girls within the host community (including 8,436 women and 4,841 girls, 165 women and girls with disabilities and 1,071 female-headed households) benefited from the services at the 3 MPWCs in the host community and 3 Women Friendly Sheds. While in the absence of data, it is difficult to assess the scale of the project's success regarding the number of women who are engaged in income-generating activities, findings from interviews and desk reviews confirm that the skills trainings that women received at the centers have had great impact on enabling them to engage in income-generating activities and for some, setting up businesses at the Women's Market. One woman working at the Women's Market⁸⁶ expressed that the project had not only enabled her to generate income, but she had also learned how to handle her family issues and because of her

⁸¹ Key informant.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ 211 Rohingya women and 91 Rohingya adolescent girls, and 644 host community women and 191 host community adolescent girls, as per Means to Lead reporting.

⁸⁴ The women spend the money they receive from the income generating activities mostly on food, and health (although health services are free at the camps, if there is an emergency they cannot afford to wait in the long queues and are forced to go elsewhere which means they need to pay for transport costs) and education of their children as well as shoes, burka, and clothing with what remains.

⁸⁵ ARONG (BRAC's largest production house) provides these beneficiaries with access to this training, and that these Rohingya women are able to create items that will be marketed by ARONG.

⁸⁶ The Women's Market has currently 24 shops with roughly 30% from the host community and 70% Rohingya women. The shops are, however, not necessarily run by UN Women beneficiaries.

income her family respected her decisions.

75. The focus group discussion findings with transgender persons (30) who participated in pilot activities in 2022 also indicate that project has made a positive impact on their lives by enabling them to generate income for their families and also building their self-confidence and sense of self-worth.⁸⁷ They expressed their interest in having a space at the Women's Market as well. Furthermore, the changes in their attitudes and the fact that they were learning skills has had a ripple effect among other transgender persons in their community who also aspire to join the centers.
76. In 2021, around 10,000 women had received leadership and advocacy training.⁸⁸ To-date, the Means to Lead project has trained 36 Rohingya women leaders ("Maitre" in local language). Overall, the project's focus on women's leadership building was considered a positive step towards empowering women and promoting gender equality in the Rohingya and host communities. The leadership skills gained by these women has not only helped them lead various programs and activities but has also allowed them to take on leadership roles in other areas of their lives. At the same time, there was concern by one key informant working with the host communities about lack of sufficient direct and follow-up training support to women leaders to enable them to lead and mediate various programs and activities in the community. The lack of support in training more members by the leaders was also considered a significant limitation to the growth of women's leadership.
77. In addition to the immediate benefits to the women who have been trained and developed as leaders, the project has also had a positive impact on the wider community in terms of helping to break down traditional gender roles and promote gender equality. This has contributed to challenging traditional patriarchal attitudes and behaviors, which are important barriers to women's participation in decision-making and leadership roles. As one respondent remarked, women leaders bring unique perspectives and experience to the decision-making process, which can lead to more inclusive and effective decisions. The participation of a one host community women leader in local elections, highlights the potential impact of building women's leadership skills and potential for creating positive normative changes in communities.
78. Findings from another evaluation also indicate that the women leader's network has been key in creating direct channels to reach refugee communities, promoting awareness on gender issues and making crisis response activities, and addressing their gender related needs.⁸⁹ In this respect, the leadership component of UN Women's interventions through its outreach female volunteers, Rohingya women leaders, and the GFOs can be scaled up across camps and host communities to allow for women's active participation and decision-making in community representation and engagement.
79. FGD women and men respondents credited the outreach awareness raising sessions for a reduction in harmful gender related practices (i.e., child marriage) in their blocks and the fact that women and girls were allowed to leave their homes. This finding is corroborated by another study which states: "While there was no apparent relationship between gender activities and individuals' beliefs on traditional gender norms, women and men from both Rohingya and host communities who participated in gender activities did experience and observe positive changes in day-to-day gender roles and practices during interactions with their families and communities."⁹⁰
80. Opinions regarding women's empowerment in terms of decision making at the household and personal levels were, however, mixed. While some male FGD respondents said they involved female family members in household decision-makings, their female counterparts stated that women still did not have the 'right' to make decisions - given their patriarchal cultural norms -and that men continued to have the ultimate say in decisions made in their households. Some female respondents were also despondent about the effectiveness of the awareness raising efforts in producing lasting changes in the attitudes and practices of both women and men on gender equality, especially once they returned to Myanmar. Despite of their gained knowledge on gender equality, some

⁸⁷ Two of the transgender respondents noted that they were the household head and the only source of income for their families.

⁸⁸ Key informant.

⁸⁹ UN Women Regional Evaluation: UN Women ROAP, Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, Annexes-Volume 1, December 2021.

⁹⁰ GiHA WG (2022) Four Years On: Shifting gendered perceptions and experiences: Comprehensive gender analysis within Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. P. 26

of the women who were interviewed still held a strong belief in traditional cultural gender norms. These findings highlight the continued challenges involved in renegotiating gender norms within the Rohingya culture for both women and men.

81. Examples of respondent comments regarding their experiences from the project are as follow:

'Before, I was unaware of how important women were to us and their contribution for the family. I became more conscious of how much my wife is contributing for the family after receiving awareness raising training. I regret the way I used to treat her. I have begged her for forgiveness for that.' (Translation-Host community FGD Male).

'Before coming here [the MPWC] I did not even know how to hold a pen and was afraid to do so, but now, I can write my name and also count.' (Translation-In-depth interview Rohingya woman).

'[Our families] did not permit us at first [to go to the MPWC]. But we came here anyway... Then we informed our family what we are being taught in the sessions. I told my mother-in-law, and sister-in-law, what was said in the sessions.... My mother-in-law and sister-in-law also attended the learning sessions. They then asked whether there are any sessions for men... and my husband also started attending outreach awareness raising sessions. Gradually they got to know that it is not right to control women.' (Translation-Host community FGD women)

'The attitude of people is mixed. Some people don't take it [women working at the Women's Market] positively others do. For example, they say, women are selling clothes, so it is the end of the world.' (Translation-respondent at Women's Market)

'Before, I did not know that women are capable to use their own brain and earn money and be capable to learn something.' (Translation-FGD Rohingya women)

'In the past, even their parents did not treat them [women] well because they did not make money. Society did not treat them well.... They had to endure hearing from their parents earlier that they were worthless and incapable of accomplishing anything. But now they receive good care. Additionally, the other residents of the neighborhood are inspired by their improvements, which has inspired them to participate in the livelihood skill training provided by MPWC.' (Translation- FGD Rohingya women)

82. Data from the exit surveys in the refugee camps also corroborate the findings from other data sources. All respondents were highly satisfied with the services offered at the MPWCs.⁹¹ They perceived the MPWCs' staff as friendly and considered the centres as pleasant and comfortable spaces. Most respondents (60%) indicated that they went to the centres daily, followed by 30% who went more than once a week, and 10% at least once a week. The majority (73%) attended the centers primarily to socialize and meet other women, and 10% indicated that they went to the centres to have privacy and get out of home. Additionally, 20% of the women went to the centres to also receive counseling services. About 80% of the respondents were "satisfied" with the full range of services that was offered at the MPWCs, and 20% noted that the range of services was "okay". All respondents felt that their community's attitude towards the MPWCs was "good". The majority (93%) believed that the men/boys had a positive attitude towards the MPWCs, while two respondents indicated that their attitudes were either "okay" or "not so good".

83. The MPWCs have not only been an important venue for Rohingya and host community women and girls to boost their self-confidence and feel empowered, but also for the staff and the volunteers at these centres. During one group discussion, the MPWC national staff noted that working at the centres had allowed them to develop their skills and feel confident about themselves. One staff member said that even if she loses her job, she has confidence that she can do something on her own and provide herself a better life. She also noted that working at the MPWC had also helped her to develop soft skills such as listening to people and being able to understand their viewpoints.

⁹¹ Respondents were between 18 and 50 years. The evaluation did not conduct exit surveys at the Teknaf host community MPWC.

84. The MPWCs have a strong potential for replicability and scaling-up across the camps as well as the host communities as standardized models for providing integrated services. During group discussions respondents pointed out that some CiCs from other camps who visited the centers had shown a great interest in having a MPWC in their own camp as well. The project can also benefit from scaling up the type of income-generation activities it offers at the centers to include “non-traditional” activities for women such as mechanics, repair and maintenance of equipment and solar

EQ 3.2 What barriers and challenges have the projects, especially the Means to the Lead project, been experiencing during the implementation for effectiveness of results?

lamps, technology, and innovation, among others.⁹² According to one study: “A deeper question is the extent to which livelihoods activities implemented in the project contribute towards challenging gender norms. Many of the activities implemented such as tailoring, cooking, and hairdressing remain within traditional gender roles for women. Yet, for many women, this is the first opportunity they had to earn an income. Therefore, further discussion is needed in future project design to ensure that livelihood activities and GBV prevention and response are truly complementary.”⁹³

85. The evaluation finds the principal barriers to project implementation and effectiveness as: i. inadequate funding to ensure coverage and enhanced quality of the multi-sectoral services at the MPWCs; ii. the high turn over rate of local RP staff (I/NGOs); iii. the high turn over rate of the CiCs; iv. bureaucratic procedures; v. security issues; vi. time constraints of the beneficiaries, and vii. regressive cultural barriers.⁹⁴
86. In view of limited funding, UN Women’s operations on the ground - including the number of the MPWCs and the space available at the centers - cannot fully respond to the enormous demand for its services in the camps and the host communities. Staff at the MPWCs observed that they can only provide services to a limited number of beneficiaries who fulfill their selection criteria. Similarly, some indicated that more women could benefit from the women’s leadership skills training. Also, beneficiaries who have completed their skills training in tailoring can no longer receive sewing machines, which was previously provided by the project. It is very difficult for the majority of these women to buy sewing machines with the low incomes they make from tailoring, especially when their income is often spent on household needs. To address this, the MPWCs allow women to go to the centers to use the sewing machines. Some beneficiaries including those at the Women’s Market also complained about the quality of the materials they receive to enable them to increase their income. A volunteer expressed her frustration by stating that although there were many trained women – including those with disabilities and transgenders –, they were unable to apply their skills to earn a living as they did not have access to sewing machines. Another volunteer commented that at times the women who have been trained become discouraged since they cannot earn a living without the necessary tools, and instead, revert to having children.
87. Although the MPWCs previously offered skills building to adolescent girls as well, due to funding shortages, these services are currently provided only to women 18 and above. (Second chance education is offered to primarily adolescent girls who have dropped out of school, and to women between 18 and 24 years who are interested to join). Direct observations show that the centers do not have similar capacities in terms of space and number of staff⁹⁵ and consequently, the number of participants. For example, in camp 18, second chance learning was not offered to the women due to limited space. Women respondents in the FGDs and in group discussions mentioned the importance of the continued provision of skills building services to adolescent girls to promote their empowerment and increase their income-generation prospects so that they could be self-sufficient in the future. In-depth interviews also highlight the women’s, especially adolescent girls’ eagerness in being at the MPWCs, which allows them to socialize and also do recreational and cultural

⁹² Betts Alexander, Bloom Louise, Kaplan Josiah, Omata Naohiko. Refugee Economies, Rethinking Popular Assumptions. 2014.

⁹³ Mid-term Review of UN Women CERF Grant, Oct. 2022. P. 18-19.

⁹⁴ A number of which barriers are corroborated by findings in the 2022 UN Women Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific.

⁹⁵ The number of Bangladeshi staff in the MWPCs visited by the ET ranged from 5 to 8 including 3 males in the refugee MWPCs and 1 in Teknaf.

activities such as singing.

88. The exclusion of adolescent girls from livelihood programs due to funding shortages and the lack of available funding to continue second chance education activities represent a significant challenge to empowering this important population group. Adolescent girls have the potential to become champions of change, and investing in their education and economic opportunities can have a positive impact on their lives and communities. Excluding them from these activities may lead to missed opportunities for them to develop new skills, gain knowledge, and access resources that could help them build a better future for themselves and their families. Additionally, it may reinforce existing gender inequalities and limit their potential for personal and economic growth.
89. At the same time, lack of access to market linkages and restrictions on movement beyond the camps extensively limits the Rohingya women's income generation possibilities. Alongside inaccessibility to market linkages and inability to be hired, these have a significant impact on the effectiveness and sustainability of gender-responsive programming. Restrictions on refugees' freedom of movement and restrictions on their access to services, markets, and employment, limit their resilience and self-reliance. This is particularly important for women-headed households which are often disproportionately affected by these regulations. In contrast, host community women have greater opportunities for generating income following the completion of their livelihoods skills trainings since they can be hired and/or link with the government to receive support in areas such as agriculture. However, in the host community, livelihoods activities in the 3 MPWCs have not established clear market linkages, and there is scope to improve private sector engagement.
90. Some key informants noted that the host communities are experiencing compassion fatigue and resent the perceived advantages that refugees receive. However, it is important for governments and international organizations to provide support and resource to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and rights of refugees are protected. While social cohesion between the refugee and host communities may be taking place in some instances, such as at the Women's Market, it is not on a large scale, given the restrictions with which the Rohingya refugees are faced. One key informant highlighted the need to provide the host community women leaders with the opportunity to work in the camps with Rohingya women leaders to build social cohesion. This approach would bring together women from different communities and would contribute to diversity and a more inclusive environment for women to develop their skills and take on leadership roles effectively.
91. Due to the multi-year nature of the Means to Lead-project, UN Women has been able to establish agreements with RPs, which have been cost extended from their original timeframes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the I/NGO partners experienced challenges in maintaining project staff in Cox's Bazar. On par, local WLOs and WROs engaged as RPs by UN Women reported challenges in securing multi-year funding for staff positions and in maintaining trained staff, due to the lower level of staff salaries. Timely implementation of projects has at times been further hampered by UN Women's lengthy bureaucratic processes in processing funds to the RPs. The RPs also noted that the starting implementation date of their projects was often delayed due approval processes.
92. The high turn over rates of the CiCs often translate into the renegotiation of the spaces that had been previously secured for the implementation of different project components. The high turn-over of the CiCs, as many as 5 times in the past 3 years, has also meant that the GFOs have to start over their efforts. They also noted that there is need for better specification of their roles and tasks so that the CiCs are also aware of the scope of their responsibilities.
93. UN Women projects have made a long stride in enabling women to speak out and have a voice. Nonetheless, the participation of women and girls in project activities at the MPWCs, and the movement of Rohingya women leaders and volunteers as well as the local RP staff are also hindered by security issues and threats from the Rohingya armed groups. Additionally, beneficiaries have different daily needs to which they must attend - such as collecting food from the WFP centers or getting household items from other venues in the camps. There are no 'one-stop-shops' that offer food and non-food items in the camps. At times the beneficiaries are unable to collect everything they need (due inventory shortages) on the same day and must return the following day. One volunteer noted that this situation has an impact on the scheduling and attendance of the beneficiaries to different sessions of training and awareness raising and is challenging for effective and efficient project implementation. Finally, regressive cultural norms are also important barriers to project

implementation. The MPWC staff affirmed that it had been a long process for them to secure the trust of women and encourage them to come to counseling and participate in the services offered at the centers. While there have been some changes in cultural norms on gender equality among the Rohingya and the host communities, progress has been slow.

94. The positive consequences of the project were as anticipated. Although, the COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected crisis, the Rohingya women's leadership during the crisis demonstrates the effectiveness of the project in strengthening the women's agency rather than an unanticipated consequence. On the other hand, the unexpected negative consequences of the project have been more contextual rather than due to the project design or interventions. For example, the Bangladesh government does not approve of mass gatherings of Rohingya women and men. During a peaceful commemoration of the second year of the influx, the government became quite strict with such gatherings.

EQ 3.3 To what extent have there been unintended negative (including 'do no harm') or positive effects? Which ones?

95. The deteriorating security situation and the persistence of patriarchal and regressive cultural norms have presented critical barriers to project implementation and effectiveness. As one study notes, "The Rohingya's understanding of izzot, or "honour" has specific implications for women and operates as a normative system of control that shape their status and roles within their families and communities."⁹⁶ Many women and girls are reported as not feeling safe leaving their homes, including to access MPWCs, as there is a risk of violence and targeting of those women (and men) who speak out. In fact, an unanticipated negative consequence of the projects has been the targeting of Rohingya women leaders by the armed groups in the camps. A few of the woman leaders have been forced to go into hiding in fear of their life. With increased insecurities in the camps, there is a need to invest in gender-sensitive risk and conflict analyses and joint, risk-informed gender-responsive approaches that make positive contributions to women's voice, access, and rights at scale. Support to women leaders and WLOs/WROs and to male gender equality advocates need to carefully consider the balance between the leadership roles of women, and safety and security considerations, leveraging the collective support of the UN to do so.
96. The ET was not able to investigate the 'do no harm' aspects of the project in detail. The volunteers have played a significant role in conveying the objectives of the projects to both women and men to prevent any misunderstandings and conflicts within households and the community. Some female respondents in the host communities, however, complained about the selection process of beneficiaries for the income-generation grants. They were ambivalent about the selection criteria and the reasons for which some women were selected and others not. It is, therefore, important for the project to ensure that its selection criteria are well-understood by all community members to avoid any conflict, and to be able to fully abide by the principles of 'do no harm'. UN Women should further strengthen its approach to men and boys, generating gender analysis to inform the pursuit of evidence-informed approaches to programming tailored for men and boys, leveraging its coordination function to support humanitarian actors to implement such programming in the camps and host community, minimizing any potential 'do no harm' risks that may emerge from women

⁹⁶ Honor in Transition; April 2020. P. 7. <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/honour-transition-changing-gender-norms-among-rohingya-april-2020-0>.

becoming more skilled and empowered members of their communities.

EQ 4: To what extent does the UN Women Cox's Bazar sub-office have sufficient human and financial resources to support the humanitarian portfolio (4.1); how timely and economical are the efforts of the humanitarian portfolio (4.2); to what extent have the indicators in the logframe been used in monitoring the implementation and efficiency of the programme over time (4.3)

Key Findings 4:

4.1 The number of staff at the sub-office, with roughly a third of positions as of April 2023 being in process of recruitment, is not sufficient to manage and monitor the multiple components of the projects. This is especially true regarding skills and expertise that are needed to work in advisory capacity.

4.2 UN Women has established regular Partnership Meetings with its RPs and provides training for all RPs on key aspects of program management, monitoring and coaching RP activities on a regular basis and sharing common guidance and resources through collective emails to RPs to ensure timely and economical implementation of the interventions. However, the RPs highlighted the need for more collaborative approaches in the form of joint meetings, joint monitoring, and information sharing.

4.3 The efficiency of projects is currently measured against the distribution of funds to different activities under different project components and whether targets have been reached on time or not. Neither the RPs nor UN Women have conducted specific cost-benefit/effectiveness analyses to determine the efficiency of projects.

EQ 4.1 To what extent does the Cox's Bazar sub-office have sufficient human and financial resources to support the humanitarian portfolio?

97. The cost drivers of UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar are the operation and maintenance of the MPWCs, currently implemented by I/NGOs, and costs associated with staffing. The absence of the MPWCs or a reduction in their number would create a big gap in strengthening the agency of women and girls and ensuring gender transformative results. Similarly, the effectiveness of the UN Women's projects would be extensively reduced without adequate staff to manage and monitor the projects, including adequate staff in senior advisory roles. Gains in efficiency, therefore, require balancing the need for reductions in costs with improved availability of technical and advisory support especially at the program redesign phase, to reach improved quality, effectiveness, and greater coverage in the medium term, achieved through the enhanced role of local WLOs and WROs. Overall, it is important to strike a balance between cost-effectiveness and quality in delivering programming that meets the needs of vulnerable communities. It is a challenging task, but one that is crucial for creating sustainable impact.
98. In response to recommendations put forward through various assessments and evaluations, UN Women has worked on clarifying and streamlining the roles, responsibilities of its staff in Cox's Bazar, and workflows in its sub-office in Cox's Bazar and vis-à-vis its country office in Dhaka. The process has entailed the clarification of program staff roles, among other, with regards to their thematic focus; ensuring induction of new staff; staff coaching and training, where possible. Interviews with the UN Women staff indicate that the number of staff at the sub-office is significantly less than planned for in the Country Strategic Note and is not sufficient to well manage and monitor the multiple components of the projects, especially with regard to skills and expertise that are needed to work in advisory capacities.⁹⁷ It may also be noted that overall the number of personnel at the sub-office has remained mostly consistent since 2021 to 2023, with around 22 – 23 personnel in

4.2 How timely and economical are the efforts of the humanitarian portfolio?

⁹⁷ UN Women recently finalized the recruitment of one international GBV specialist and an international GiHA coordination specialist. It is also working towards securing funds for 2 other senior specialist positions, ideally one of whom could be a senior national specialist.

the sub-office, and 3 – 4 personnel in the now closed Gender Hub, whilst the overall budget had reduced from USD 5.1 million in 2021 to USD 4.5 million in 2023. While ensuring the right-sizing of staff capacity in the sub-office is a priority, UN Women would also benefit from concrete linkages between Dhaka and Cox’s Bazar programming over the medium term, including the context of host/local community activities.

99. UN Women has established regular Partnership Meetings with its RPs and provides training for all RPs on key aspects of program management, monitoring and coaching RP activities on a regular basis and sharing common guidance and resources through collective emails to RPs to ensure timely and economical implementation of the interventions. However, the RPs highlighted the need for more collaborative approach in the form of joint meetings, joint monitoring, and information sharing with partners, as well as guidance on partnership models, and capacity building in different areas. Although key informants acknowledged the importance of rationalization and complementarity of interventions across the humanitarian space and the gradual phasing out of the INGOs to reduce operational costs, they also expressed concern regarding the low-capacity levels among the local humanitarian staff in Cox’s Bazar. While greater investments are required to develop local capacities, it is also necessary to invest in a standard accountability system that can effectively check for transparency in operations and implementation of activities across stakeholders, also in alignment with the principle of accountability to affected populations.
100. Costs are often higher when there are multiple layers of partnerships, and similarly, key informants acknowledged the importance of rationalization and the gradual phasing out of the INGOs to reduce operational costs. Nonetheless, they also expressed concern regarding the need to assess the institutional and staff capacity levels of local organizations in Cox’s Bazar. It is thus important to pursue a phased approach to localization, recognizing the specific capacities of I/NGOs vis-à-vis the localized knowledge and skills of local WLOs and WROs. In the immediate term, multiple layers of partnerships, channeling funding to INGOs who channel to local WLOs and WROs, should be phased out. On par with greater investments in local WLOs and WROs, it is also necessary to invest in a standard accountability system that can effectively check for transparency in operations and implementation of activities across stakeholder groups.
101. Based on evidence from data, there is need for greater integration in gender responsive programming to expand coverage, effectiveness, and efficiency in Cox’s Bazar. By recognizing UN Women’s added value in gender responsive and transformative approaches, some key informants were eager for UN Women to link its interventions with those of other actors - especially actors that operated at scale – by plugging into the existing spaces, capacities, and resources across the camps. In this way, UN Women and the other organizations would be able to increase efficiencies, engaging in more complementary interventions on gender equality and GBV across and within camps. Such efforts are contingent on detailed mapping of gender-responsive services and gaps within and across camps, and also clarification of the roles, responsibilities and comparative advantage of different organizations when it comes to gender specific programming, to consolidate efforts in order to deliver on gender equality commitments. On par, a better understanding of available support and services within local communities beyond the host communities adjacent to the camps, and the immediate and longer-term needs and concerns of host/local community women and girls would benefit from more analysis, considering the protracted nature of the crisis and the

different opportunities available outside the camps.

102. UN Women has different siloed log-frames for its different projects for measuring the efficiency of project activities implemented by its RPs against results at outcomes levels. The efficiency of projects is currently measured against the distribution of funds to different activities under different project components and whether targets have been reached on time. The ET also did not find any cost benefit/effective analyses conducted by RPs or UN Women to determine the efficiency of pro-

4.3 To what extent have the indicators in the logframe been used in monitoring the implementation and efficiency of the programme over time?

jects. The last results framework for the Means to Lead project reflects achievements only up to the end of 2021. Four of the output indicators had reached their target, three had underachieved targets, four had overachieved targets; and two had not been assessed. These findings are confirmed by an evaluation report which states: “There are high expectations from UN Women (by humanitarian stakeholders and the donors) to stay engaged in monitoring resource mobilization and also operational implementation and results of the successes achieved in programming. Also, further efforts are needed in communicating the results.”⁹⁸

EQ 5. To what extent are the results achieved through UN Women projects in Cox’s Bazar likely to continue beyond 2023 and to what extent has the humanitarian portfolio built-in mechanisms – such as capacity development of partners - to ensure the sustainability of efforts (5.1); to what extent have Means to Lead and other relevant projects in Cox’s Bazar contributed to reinforcing the capacities and transformative resilience of the refugees for the transition from a humanitarian protracted crisis scenario to provision of long-term development assistance (5.2)?

EQ 5.1 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio built-in mechanisms – such as capacity development of partners – to ensure the sustainability of efforts?

Key Findings 5:

5.1 UN Women’s humanitarian portfolio includes built-in mechanisms such as its capacity development at the system level including the local NGOs in support of rationalization/localization and sustainability.

5.2 The sustainability of UN Women’s efforts is, more at the individual than the collective level, given its relatively limited resources and thus coverage. The persistence of regressive social norms continue to limit the capacities of both women and men in both Rohingya and host communities to consciously engage in long-term change processes. UN Women should give equal weight to conflict sensitivity and women’s leadership. It should also focus on designing long-term development initiatives that can adapt to future risks.

103. UN Women does not currently have an exit strategy to ensure the results of its efforts in Cox’s Bazar are sustainable, although it is exploring different options to ensuring the sustainability of its results within the humanitarian-development-nexus. UN Women’s programming has been developed with the humanitarian crisis in mind, with similar interventions in the host community as in the camps, focused on Multi-Purpose Women’s Centers and women’s leadership. The lack of engagement around a holistic development plan for Cox’s Bazar poses challenges to ensuring an aligned and coherent approach. Moving forward, UN Women should plan for longer-term ‘nexus’ development and humanitarian programming in the host/local communities that is adaptable to future risks

⁹⁸ UN Women ROAP, Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, Annexes-Volume 2, January 2022. P. 23

and addresses root causes of gender inequalities and promotes community cohesion.

104. Within UN Women’s humanitarian-development-nexus programming approach, the sustainability of its results requires the availability of resources and capacities for complementary programming, stable conditions, and the buy-in of the government. At the same time, UN Women’s humanitarian portfolio includes built-in mechanisms such as its capacity development at the system level including the local NGOs in support of rationalization/localization and sustainability as well as local authorities such as the CiCs. As discussed by an evaluability assessment, the sustainability of UN Women’s efforts in Cox’s Bazar could be promoted through greater knowledge sharing and skills development of local and national partner in the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. Furthermore, the UN Women’s country office and Cox’s Bazar sub-office could link their programmatic efforts through new or existing projects to ensure greater sustainability of results within the nexus.⁹⁹
105. The COVID-19 pandemic exhibited the impact of disruptions in resources and services offered to the refugees, which led to setbacks in progress towards gender equality and prevention of GBV. The Rohingya women’s capability to manage the MPWCs during the COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the critical role played by skills building and empowerment activities to strengthen adaptive capacities. In this respect, UN Women’s achievements in providing women with agency and building their resilience through skills building, and empowerment activities (including second chance education) are likely to be sustainable. At the same time, the dramatic increase in GBV and domestic violence incidences during the COVID-19 pandemic in Cox’s Bazar also attest to the multifaceted problematic of gender equality, and the necessity for multidimensional programming approaches that address the interrelated factors of gender inequality.

EQ 5.2 To what extent has Means to Lead and other relevant projects in Cox’s Bazar have contributed to reinforcing the capacities and transformative resilience of the refugees for the transition from a humanitarian protracted crisis scenario to provision of long-term development assistance?

106. Although awareness raising sessions contribute to increasing women/girls’ and men/boys’ knowledge on gender equality and harmful gender practices, they do not necessarily bring about lasting behavioral changes. While UN Women’s approach focuses on strengthening the resilience of women by increasing their agency and addressing the root causes of their vulnerabilities, the sustainability of its efforts is also contingent on the degree to which men/boys are involved in activities (other than awareness raising) that contribute to norm changes for their behavior. Some boys and men may join the armed groups in the camps due to idleness, political beliefs, and other perceived benefits. For example, the targeting of women leaders (despite male community leaders having been also targeted) with threats and violence by Rohingya armed groups in the camps may point to some potential repercussions of not engaging the young men in productive activities. It is, hence, important to examine more closely the common assumptions and narratives on gender norms to avert potential backlash. As one study concludes, “Understanding and engaging with norms for male behaviour is therefore an important element of a transformative, prevention-oriented approach to gender equality, peace and development in fragile and conflict-affected settings.”¹⁰⁰
107. The evaluation finds that UN Women’s interventions have not had impact on a large scale due to limitations in funding and resources. To the degree that the host community women do not face the same restrictions with which the Rohingya women are confronted, they have had a better chance of progressing towards sustainability. For example, women in the host communities have established different types of businesses in their areas and benefit from stable sources of income. Some host community women have also been able to connect with different institutions to get financial support for their livelihood activities. As such, it is essential for UN Women to share lessons learned from its efforts in Cox’s Bazar with national and local authorities to promote their active engagement in contributing to strengthening the resilience of both the Rohingya refugees and the host communities.
108. Although the capacity building modality of women leaders and women networks is intended to have

⁹⁹ UN Women Evaluability Assessment Report. 2022.

¹⁰⁰ OECD. Gender Equality Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, July 2021

a rippling effect, the unanticipated contextual impediments such as threats and violence towards these leaders jeopardize the sustainability of such efforts. Additionally, the persistence of regressive social norms - especially, among the Rohingya refugees – continue to limit the capacities of both women and men to consciously engage in long-term change processes that shift power relations and change the ways of thinking and behaving to support greater levels of gender equality. Furthermore, in alignment with OECD DAC recommendations concerning the Humanitarian Development Nexus¹⁰¹, UN Women needs to underscore the significance of conflict sensitivity and the empowerment of women's leadership in its interventions within host/local communities. Moreover, it should design long-term development initiatives that can be adjusted to address future risks.

¹⁰¹ OECD-DAC (2023). [DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus](#).



Photo: Fish culture skills development activities for women are implemented in the camps. Credit: UN Women/Mahmudul Karim

CONCLUSION

109. The findings highlight both the achievements and limitations of UN Women's approach in Cox's Bazar. UN Women's humanitarian portfolio in Cox's Bazar is highly relevant and aligned with international conventions, strategic plans, and the objectives of the JRP and NAP WPS. The organization's efforts in producing information, conducting training, and building capacity effectively address gender-related needs and contribute to the overall goals of gender equality and empowerment in the region. UN Women has a clear added value in the Cox's Bazar humanitarian crisis context and is a relevant actor in promoting the capacity of other humanitarian actors to respond to gender equality and GBV prevention from an empowerment and resilience building angle. While the GiHA WG has been bringing to the forefront the critical role of gender responsive programming, its coordination function has been questioned at times by other stakeholders mainly due to lack of concrete indicators that can measure the relevance and effectiveness of its coordination efforts and activities.
110. Although UN Women's projects have been instrumental in addressing social norms and structural barriers related to gender, there are areas where its programmatic approach falls short of being gender transformative. Limited resources as well as regulations limiting the scope of interventions for the Rohingya refugees have constrained the coverage and impact of UN Women's initiatives, preventing them from fully achieving gender transformative outcomes. Additionally, the persistence of long-held beliefs and expectations regarding gender roles and responsibilities has posed a challenge to bringing about substantial change. However, UN Women's projects, such as the Means to Lead, have been successful in transforming gender attitudes at individual levels by raising awareness, building capacity, and empowering women through skills development and income-generating activities. The engagement of female and male volunteers and women leaders from the same communities has been crucial in effectively increasing awareness and challenging regressive norms.
111. The evaluation acknowledges UN Women's human-rights-based approach, which emphasizes strengthening the voice of women and girls and removing structural barriers to gender equality and empowerment. However, it should address resource constraints, ensure tailored approaches to engaging men and boys in gender equality initiatives, continue to promote gender-transformative livelihoods and income generation opportunities, and strengthen the comprehensiveness of its approach to address the needs and perspectives of all community members, including the poorest of the poor and those with different types of disabilities, including mental health.
112. The concentration of skills building and income generation activities on vulnerable women and girls raises concerns about potential harm and conflicts within households. In alignment with its mandate and expertise, UN Women focuses its skills building and empowerment activities on vulnerable women and girls, while the community outreach activities in the camps conducted by the male volunteers, the male engagement activities of its RPs, and gender sensitization and training provided by GFOs aim to address harmful and regressive gender norms and behaviors among men and boys. UN Women should further strengthen its approach to men and boys, generating gender analysis to inform the pursuit of evidence-informed approaches to programming tailored for men and boys, leveraging its coordination function to support humanitarian actors to implement such programming in the camps and host community, minimizing any potential 'do no harm' risks that may emerge from women becoming more skilled and empowered members of their communities.
113. The absence of a comprehensive and realistic assessment of assumptions, risks, and potential contextual changes undermines the project's ability to adapt and respond effectively to the challenges on the ground. It is crucial for UN Women to address these limitations and ensure that the TOC is revised to reflect the complex and evolving context of Cox's Bazar, including government regulations, security concerns, and potential social dynamics that may affect women's leadership and self-reliance. A more robust and context-specific TOC will enable UN Women to better anticipate and address the barriers and risks that may arise during project implementation, ultimately enhancing the project's impact and promoting meaningful gender equality and empowerment in the Rohingya camps and host communities.

Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence):

114. The evaluation findings highlight challenges in ensuring coherence and integrated programming among multiple stakeholders involved in the humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar. The presence of various UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs, along with the absence of a multi-year plan, has led to overlapping services in some camps and critical service gaps in others. Limited coordination and

communication among organizations on their operations and interventions has further exacerbated this issue. It is important to acknowledge that the impact of various interventions in gender-responsive programming may not be uniform across different individuals. Despite the eagerness to promote gender equality, there are challenges in the perception that gender issues are not seen as 'life-saving' by some in the humanitarian community. It is crucial to ensure equity in the coordination system and make gender a cross-cutting responsibility for all agencies. Collaboration with the Inter-Sector Gender Coordination Group (ISGC) is important to follow up on the implementation of recommendations provided by the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG).

115. On the other hand, the presence of different types of women centers, such as MPWCs and WFSs, should be viewed as complementary rather than duplicating each other. Given the multifaceted nature of gender equality challenges in Cox's Bazar, there is a need for multidimensional programming approaches and multi-year funding.
116. Coordination of efforts remains challenging, and different individuals and agencies may have varying perspectives on the value of coordination. It is essential to overcome these challenges and enhance coordination to ensure the effectiveness of the humanitarian response by employing a holistic and integrated approach to gender programming, one that recognizes the interconnections between different dimensions of women's lives and seeks to address them in a coordinated and complementary manner. In this respect, it is vital for the UN agencies and other organizations in Cox's Bazar to engage together in a comprehensive mapping of their services on gender equality to avoid duplication and overlap and also address service gaps across and within the camps.
117. Likewise, it is essential for UN Women's projects (at the national and sub-office levels) to maintain an internal coherence and build on each other's synergies. This will UN Women to ensure that its projects/programs are linked together in addressing different aspects of women's empowerment and agency and gender equality based on context.
118. UN Women projects in Cox's Bazar are interconnected, building synergies at both the system level and community level. They focus on capacity-building of various stakeholders and individual trainings and awareness-raising activities. However, there is a lack of a holistic development plan for Cox's Bazar, which poses challenges to ensuring an aligned approach. Opportunities for market linkages and private sector engagement have not been fully utilized, and there is a risk of fragmentation of efforts with increased development opportunities and financing in the pipeline. UN Women should consider coherent support and explore joint programs to address gender issues effectively.
119. Moving forward, UN Women should plan for longer-term development and humanitarian programming in the host/local communities that is adaptable to future risks and addresses root causes of gender inequalities and promotes community cohesion based on lessons learned and good practices. The projects would benefit from a more robust M&E system across UN Women's projects that incorporates standardized indicators at output and outcomes levels as well as comprehensive analysis of disaggregated data to identify trends and inform programming decisions.
120. Consolidation of outcome-level measurements and indicators is necessary to assess the coherence of gender-responsive programming. The lack of consolidated outcome-level indicators makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the GiHA WG's coordination activities. A more coordinated policy approach is needed to identify indicators that measure progress at outcome levels in alignment with the IASC Policy on gender.

Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness):

121. UN Women's humanitarian strategy and the Means to Lead project in Cox's Bazar have been effective in promoting women's agency and transformative resilience, challenging traditional gender roles, and changing narratives about Rohingya women. The evaluation identifies several key strategies that have contributed to the success of UN Women's approach, including direct engagement with women and girls at the individual level through the MPWCs, working with women leaders and networks, community engagement initiatives, outreach and awareness raising activities, system-level capacity building and engagement with various stakeholders, and close coordination with the GiHA WG and GBV sub-sector. These strategies have helped identify programming gaps, advocate for gender issues, and integrate gender-responsive programming across all sectors.

122. The project's impact extends beyond the trained women leaders, positively influencing the wider community by challenging patriarchal attitudes and promoting gender equality. Women leaders bring unique perspectives to decision-making processes, leading to more inclusive and effective decisions. The women leader's network has played a crucial role in reaching refugee communities, raising awareness on gender issues, addressing gender-related needs, and facilitating crisis response activities. Scaling up the leadership component of UN Women's interventions through female volunteers, Rohingya women leaders, and GFOs across camps and host communities can further enhance women's participation and decision-making in community representation and engagement.
123. The evaluation findings indicate that the outreach and awareness raising sessions have contributed to a reduction in harmful gender-related practices, such as child marriage, and have empowered women and girls to leave their homes. While there may be mixed opinions on women's empowerment at the household and personal levels, with some men involving female family members in decision-making while others maintain patriarchal norms, the awareness raising efforts have led to positive changes in day-to-day gender roles and practices within families and communities. However, there are ongoing challenges in renegotiating gender norms within Rohingya culture, as some women and men still hold strong beliefs in cultural gender norms despite their knowledge of gender equality.
124. These findings emphasize the importance of continued efforts to challenge patriarchal norms, promote gender equality, and create lasting changes in gendered attitudes and practices. It is also essential to understand the contextual difficulties with which men/boys are faced to address the challenges involved in renegotiating gender norms within the Rohingya culture to provide ongoing support and interventions to sustain positive changes even after individuals return to Myanmar.
125. There are several challenges that are impacting the effectiveness of the UN Women in Cox's Bazar. Coverage – including the number of the MPWCs - remains low due to funding limitations. Furthermore, despite UN Women's efforts to identify the most vulnerable and those with different kinds of disabilities including mental health, the projects are not necessarily reaching these hidden groups. Additionally, the low earnings of those who have received livelihood training is a concern, as is the small number of individuals who have received leadership training. It is also concerning that UN Women is no longer able to provide beneficiaries who have been trained in tailoring and other skills with the necessary tools (i.e., sewing machines) so that they can use their skills to generate income.
126. The project has had anticipated positive consequences, such as strengthening women's agency, but some unexpected negative consequences have emerged due to contextual factors. The deteriorating security situation and regressive cultural norms, particularly the concept of 'izzot' or honor, pose significant barriers to project effectiveness. Rohingya women leaders have faced targeting and intimidation by armed groups, leading to security concerns and forced departures from the camps.
127. Investment in gender-sensitive risk and conflict analyses and joint, risk-informed gender-responsive approaches is needed to address the security challenges faced by women leaders. Balancing the leadership roles of women with safety and security considerations is crucial, and support should be provided to women leaders, WLOs, WROs, and male gender equality advocates. The UN's collective support can be leveraged to address these issues effectively.
128. The issue of social cohesion and perception of access to services between refugees and host communities is also a significant challenge that should be addressed. Inclusive approaches that bring together women from different communities can also help promote diversity and create a more inclusive environment to foster social cohesion.

Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency):

129. The main cost drivers of UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar are the operation and maintenance of the Multi-Purpose Women's Centers (MPWCs) and staffing costs. Discontinuing or reducing the number of MPWCs would create a significant gap in empowering women and girls and achieving gender transformative results. Similarly, inadequate staffing would greatly reduce the effectiveness of UN Women's projects.

130. Balancing cost-effectiveness and quality is crucial for delivering programming that meets the needs of vulnerable communities. While cost reductions are necessary, it is important to improve the availability of technical and advisory support, especially during the program redesign phase. Local Women's Leadership Organizations (WLOs) and Women's Resource Organizations (WROs) can play an enhanced role in achieving improved quality, effectiveness, and greater coverage in the medium term.
131. UN Women has made efforts to clarify and streamline staff roles, responsibilities, and workflows in its sub-office in Cox's Bazar and in coordination with its country office in Dhaka. However, the current staffing levels in the sub-office are insufficient to effectively manage and monitor the projects, particularly in advisory capacities. Concrete linkages between Dhaka and Cox's Bazar programming are needed to improve coordination and leverage local community activities.
132. Although UN Women has established regular partnership meetings with its Responsible Parties (RPs) and provides training to ensure timely and economical implementation of interventions, there is a need for a more collaborative approach, including joint meetings, monitoring, and information sharing across partners. Greater investments are required to develop local capacities, but it is also important to invest in a standard accountability system to ensure transparency in operations and implementation.
133. Multiple layers of partnerships, particularly channeling funding through INGOs to local WLOs and WROs, should be phased out in favor of a phased approach to localization. Localization should consider the specific capacities of I/NGOs and the localized knowledge and skills of local organizations. Additionally, a standard accountability system is needed to ensure transparency across stakeholder groups.
134. Greater integration of gender-responsive programming is needed to expand coverage, effectiveness, and efficiency in Cox's Bazar. UN Women should seek to facilitate this process and link its interventions with other actors, leveraging existing spaces, capacities, and resources across the camps. Detailed mapping of gender-responsive services and gaps is crucial, as well as clarifying the roles, responsibilities, and comparative advantage of different organizations to consolidate efforts and deliver on gender equality commitments.
135. UN Women currently uses separate log-frames for different projects, making it challenging to measure the efficiency of project activities. Efforts should be made to conduct cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses to determine project efficiency. Improved communication of results and continued monitoring of resource mobilization and operational implementation continue to be necessary to meet the expectations of humanitarian stakeholders and donors.

Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability):

136. UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar was designed in response to the humanitarian crisis due to the deadly crackdown on the Rohingya in Rakhine State and the resultant massive influx of Rohingya refugees to Cox's Bazar. With the crisis now into its sixth year, UN Women should ensure its support to the Rohingya crisis considers the protracted nature of the crisis, including adherence with rationalization and localization principles. UN Women should consider complementing these efforts by risk-informed, medium- to longer term initiatives in the host community.
137. UN Women is presently looking at different options to ensure the sustainability of its efforts in Cox's Bazar within the humanitarian-development-nexus. There is especially need for greater knowledge sharing and skills development of local and national partners in project implementation, as well as better linkages between programmatic efforts of the country office and Cox's Bazar sub-office. The sustainability of UN Women's support to the host community would benefit from a tailored approach with a stronger development lens, inclusive of market and private sector linkages, and institutional capacity development of relevant actors.
138. Having channeled its support mainly through national WLOs, in alignment with the localization agenda and building on the Entity's specific value added, UN Women should ensure investment local in WLO/WRO capacity to stay and deliver, prioritizing funding to local organizations with specialized knowledge and skills, which were for the most part present already before the 2017 crisis. UN Women should ensure interventions (especially in the host communities, given the restrictions

placed on the Rohingya refugees) maintain a strong focus on conflict sensitivity and women's leadership, on par designing longer term development initiatives adaptable to future risks.

139. The multifaceted problematic of gender inequality entails the necessity for multidimensional, multi-year programming approaches that address the interrelated factors of gender inequality. Multi-year funding focused on the protracted crisis is a key step forward as it will allow for more stability and sustainability. This will require a focus on economic empowerment and expanding access to education and training, as well as ensuring that the infrastructure and services that are provided are available and accessible to both the Rohingya and host community members.
140. The sustainability of UN Women's results in Cox's Bazar depends on the availability of resources and capacities for complementary programming, as well as stable conditions. Linking programmatic efforts between the UN Women country Office and the Cox's Bazar sub-office can also contribute to greater sustainability. Furthermore, it is essential for UN Women to deepen its engagement with national and local authorities in contributing to the sustainability of results already achieved in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities and inequities within the Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar.
141. The capacity building efforts targeting women leaders and women's networks have faced significant challenges in achieving sustainability. Unforeseen contextual impediments, such as threats and violence towards these leaders, have jeopardized the long-term success of these initiatives. Additionally, the persistence of regressive social norms, particularly among the Rohingya refugees, hinders the capacity of both women and men to actively participate in transformative processes that challenge power dynamics and promote gender equality. To address these challenges, UN Women must prioritize conflict sensitivity and the empowerment of women's leadership within the host and local communities. It is crucial to acknowledge and address the contextual obstacles that impede the sustainability of capacity building efforts. This includes providing support and protection to women leaders and networks, addressing the root causes of violence and threats they face, and fostering an enabling environment for their engagement by working with national and local authorities and strengthening the local authorities' capacities in responding to both the Rohingya refugees' and host communities' needs in Cox's Bazar.
142. Furthermore, UN Women should design long-term development initiatives in the host community that are flexible and adaptable to future risks and changing circumstances. By considering the evolving needs and challenges, they can ensure that their interventions remain relevant and effective in promoting gender equality.



Rohingya women engaged in the production of masks in UN Women-BRAC Multi-Purpose Women Centre ,Photo credit: Nadira Islam/ UN Women

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Integrated interventions are key in addressing gender equality and transformative resilience by engaging and empowering women through awareness raising activities for women/girls and men/boys, and livelihoods/income-generating and leadership skills, in addition to providing GBV and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services.
2. Literacy and numeracy trainings (even at basic levels) are critical in enabling women to become resilient and self-sufficient in livelihoods and income generating activities, in addition to providing them with a sense of pride and dignity.
3. Communication/information sharing, collaboration, and cooperation among the UN agencies (through various platforms including the ISCG) are key to increase success in terms coverage, effectiveness, and efficiencies of assistance within the humanitarian-development-nexus in Cox's Bazar. The opportunity to scale impact through collaboration with other humanitarian actors should not be overlooked, given extensive shrinkages in funding.
4. Engagement and building relations with government entities such as the RRRC, DC, APBn and battalion, and the CiCs are essential and have allowed UN Women to secure their trust in providing an enabling environment for the implementation of projects.
5. A comprehensive mapping and assessment of activities and services on promoting gender equality provided by all stakeholders in the Cox's Bazar is a precondition for averting duplication and overlap and address the coverage of gaps by plugging-in existing spaces.
6. It is important for UN Women to closely examine the common assumptions on women's empowerment within the Rohingya culture in constructing its narratives on gender norms, as well as the impact of displacement in reinforcing or disrupting various practices to avoid conflict and jeopardize the 'do no harm' principles.
7. Transformative change processes of gender and social norms are slow. It is essential to recognize that various interventions and programs aimed at women's empowerment (i.e., GBV, access to services, leadership, education, and economic empowerment) are interlinked and need to be addressed holistically to ensure meaningful impact on cultural/social norms of gender equality.
8. Investing in capacity building of the local NGOs in project design, implementation, management, monitoring, reporting, accountability and transparency is important in promoting efficiencies and the sustainability of activities and results.



Photo credit: UN Women/Marie Sandberg-Pettersson

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Priority Immediate	Recommendations	Links to paragraphs (§) in the main text	Responsibility
1.	<p>In coordination with the country office and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, building on UN Women's triple mandate, redesign UN Women's work in Cox's Bazar to ensure a clear focus on a nexus approach, ensuring investment in national and local capacity development to stay and deliver as well as opportunities for joint/joined up programmes.</p> <p>On par, ensure the sub-office is staffing is equipped to support the localization agenda and related needs and demands, also leveraging UN Women expertise and resources at country level to strengthen 'nexus' programming, building more systemic linkages with UN Women's work at the country level in relevant thematic areas.</p>	<p>Findings Evaluation Question (EQ). 2.3 (Coherence): §85 Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §136</p> <p>Findings EQ. 4.1 (Efficiency): §116, §117 Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §148, §150</p> <p>Findings EQ. 5.1 (Sustainability): §122, §123 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §156, §159</p>	UN Women
2.	<p>Ensure continuation of multi-year planning based on a nexus approach to allow for greater coherence, effectiveness, and a higher likelihood of sustainability, especially given the long-term process of normative and behavioral changes.</p>	<p>Findings EQ. 2.2 (Coherence): §76, §82 Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §133, §134</p> <p>Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness): §110 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §143</p> <p>Findings EQ. 5.1: (Sustainability): §122 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §158</p>	UN Women
3.	<p>Leveraging the UN Women's technical expertise and its coordination mandate through GiHA WG, and in collaboration with the GBV sub-sector, map out GEWE interventions in sectors and thematic areas of common interest in the camps and host communities, to promote common standards and adaptive approaches, and joint risk-informed gender-sensitive analyses in support of joined-up humanitarian and development planning and programming for systemic contributions to joint multi-stakeholder analyses of risks, needs and vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Work with the ISCG to ensure that all sectors address IASC commitments to gender equality - including engaging with women leaders and local WLOs and WROs - and that gender specific programming is mutually reinforcing and adheres to international standards.</p>	<p>Findings EQ. 1.2 (Relevance): §63, Findings EQ. 1.3 (Relevance): §64 Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance) : §132</p> <p>Findings EQ. 2.1 (Coherence): §76, §77, §78, §81 Findings EQ. 2.3 (Coherence): §85 Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §133, §135, §137, §139</p> <p>Findings EQ. 3.3 (Effectiveness): §114 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §146</p> <p>Findings EQ. 4.2 (Efficiency): §120 Conclusions EQ. 4</p>	UN Women

		(Efficiency): §153 Findings EQ. 5.1 (Sustainability): §123 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §161	
4.	In coordination with the GiHA WG conduct a comprehensive analysis across camps to understand the contextual difficulties with which boys and men are faced and their implications on gender equality and gender relation interventions. Support design of activities according to their most pressing needs in social, educational, and economic spheres, and increase opportunities for them to interact with male champions and agents of change in collaboration with other UN agencies and organizations that work in those spaces with boys and men.	Findings EQ. 1.7 (Relevance): §75 Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §131 Findings EQ. 3.3 (Effectiveness): §115 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §143 Findings EQ. 4.2 (Efficiency): §120 Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §153 Findings EQ. 5.2 (Sustainability): §125 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §158, §160	UN Women
5.	Consider developing a harmonized monitoring frameworks with outcome level statements and indicators for the Means to Lead-project (and parallel donor projects), to be able to measure the contributions of the projects to results and to provide information on project's strategic approach, in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and intervention gaps to inform decision making. Furthermore, develop a joint monitoring system with UNFPA to monitor RP coordination and identify gaps, constraints, and challenges in gender-responsive programming and to improve RP communication and collaboration and increase accountability and transparency.	Findings EQ. 2.4 (Coherence): §86, §87 Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §138, §139 Findings EQ. 4.3 (Efficiency): §121 Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §154	UN Women
6.	Actively create opportunities and continue with the empowerment interventions with the Rohingya and host community adolescent girls, to allow them to become champions of change within their communities.	Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §101, §102 Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness): §106 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §135	UN Women
7.	Develop a standardized model of technical support provision to local NGOs/Ps/WLOs and WROs, including capacity building strategies for scale out and institutionalization of trainings, including refresher trainings.	Findings EQ. 4.2 (Efficiency): §119 Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §151, §152 Findings EQ. 5.1 (Sustainability): §123 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §155	UN Women
Priority Intermediate	Recommendations	Links to paragraphs (§) in the main text	Responsibility
8.	Scale-up the MPWC model and link these with the existing women/girls centers run by other	Findings EQ. 1.4 (Relevance): §65, §66. §67	UN Women

	UN agencies, especially UNFPA, across and within the camps to increase coverage and effectiveness, and tailor outreach activities to ensure better targeting of support to the most vulnerable individuals, including those with different kinds of disabilities, and consider scaling up and diversifying the type of income-generation activities to include more 'non-traditional' activities for women (such mechanics, equipment repair, and other activities traditionally reserved for men within the cultures of the Rohingya and host communities).	Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §126 Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §91, §92, §101, §102, §103 Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness): §104, §105, §106, §112 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness) §138, §139, §140, §144	
9.	Follow-up on support to women/girls and transgenders who have completed the skills and livelihoods training sessions so that they can continue to generate income for themselves and their households and strengthen their agency.	Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §95 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness) §144	UN Women
10.	Prioritize future programmatic funding to local WLO/WROs with specialised knowledge and skills, ensuring support to their institutional capacity development, investing in learning of what works, and in promoting collective accountability across the response to women's leadership, and catalyze the role of GFOs at the camp level, as conduits for women to bring their issues to the attention of CiCs, and to track and support camp-level progress on core gender equality commitments.	Findings EQ. 1.5 (Relevance): §68, §70 Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §129 Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §89, §95, §96, §97 Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness): §109, §110, §111 Findings EQ. 3.3 (Effectiveness): §114 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §141, §143, §146 Findings EQ. 4.1 (Efficiency): §116 Findings EQ. 4.2 (Efficiency): §119 Conclusions EQ. 4 (Efficiency): §149, §152 Findings EQ. 5.2 (Sustainability): §127 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §157, §160	UN Women
11.	To increase social cohesion between the Rohingya and host communities, consider engaging a local WLO/WRO to manage support to women leaders in the camps, to foster empowerment of local women and their engagement on an equal foot in dialogues.	Findings EQ. 3.2 (Effectiveness): §109 Conclusions EQ. 3 (Effectiveness): §147	UN Women
Priority Long-term	Recommendations	Links to paragraphs (§) in the main text	Responsibility
12.	Deepen engagement with the government at both the national and local levels, to ensure knowledge and lessons learned from UN Women's support to the Rohingya refugee crisis is shared at the national level on the one hand, and on the other, to strengthen available support to local authorities beyond the camps to	Findings EQ. 1.2 (Relevance): §63 Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §126 Findings EQ. 3.1 (Effectiveness): §89 Conclusions EQ. 3	UN Women

	enhance the resilience and empowerment of women and girls in local communities.	(Effectiveness): §140 Findings EQ. 5.2 (Sustainability): §126 Conclusions EQ. 5 (Sustainability): §159, §160	
13.	Invest in harmonized M&E systems with regards to joint monitoring of GiHA commitments across the response through UN Women's technical advice to the GiHA WG, building on IASC gender equality commitments and standards.	Findings EQ. 1.1 (Relevance): §59 Conclusions EQ. 1 (Relevance): §128 Findings EQ. 2.1 (Coherence): §81 Conclusion EQ. 2 (Coherence): §139	UN Women
14.	Ensure that lessons and good practices learned during the humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar feed into the organization-wide crisis response strategy, policy, tools, and procedures.	Findings EQ. 2.4 (Coherence): §84, §88 Conclusions EQ. 2 (Coherence): §138	UN Women



Photo: Resilience in Adversity: A Rohingya mother's watchful gaze as her daughter manages their makeshift shop amidst the refugee crisis. Credit: UN Women/Allison Joyce

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

1. Action Aid Bangladesh (2022). Quarterly Progress Report. October - December 2022.
2. Action Aid Bangladesh (2021). Annual Outcome Report: Promoting women and girls 'empowerment through enhancing protection and economic resilience of Rohingya women and adolescent girls in their camps. March 2021.
3. Ain o Salish Kendra (2022). Quarterly Progress Report. October - December 2022.
4. 2023 Bangladesh Joint Response Plan Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis. January – December 2023.
5. 2022 Bangladesh Joint Response Plan Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis.
6. 2021 Bangladesh Joint Response Plan Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis.
7. Betts Alexander, Bloom Louise, Kaplan Josiah, Omata Naohiko. Refugee Economies, Rethinking Popular Assumptions. Published by the Humanitarian Innovation Project, University of Oxford, June 2014.
8. BRAC (2022). Quarterly Progress Report. October - December 2022.
9. CARE. Gender in Emergencies Guidance Note Preparing a Rapid Gender Analysis.
10. CARE. Gender-Based Violence & Food Insecurity: https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/GBV-food-security-brief_EN.pdf.
11. CERF OUTCOME 1 AND 2 MONITORING (INTERNAL ASSESSMENT REPORT).
12. CERF Interim Update, Global, RR: Human Rights, 20-RR-GLB-46341.
13. CONCERN: Three Causes of Gender Based Violence, Story, 21 July 2022. <https://www.concern.net/news/causes-of-gender-based-violence>.
14. Daniel Coyle et al. Honor in Transition. April 2020. <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/honor-transition-changing-gender-norms-among-rohingya-april-2020-0>
15. DCA Quarterly Progress Report. October - December 2022.
16. Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh. BRAC. Social Cohesion Fund for the Cox's Bazar District. BRAC, reporting period 15.12.2019 – 14.12.2023.
17. Engy Abdelkader, The Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar: Past, Present, and Future, OREGON REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, Volume 15, 2013.
18. Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (2022) Four Years On: Shifting gendered perceptions and experiences: Comprehensive gender analysis within Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, in collaboration with ACAPS Analysis Hub, IOM Needs and Population Monitoring Unit, UNHCR, and UN Women. March 2022.
19. Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (2021). Gender Analysis on Project Proposals and GAM (Gender with Age Marker) Reports of the JRP 2022 Partner Organizations: A Brief Report. November 2021.
20. Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (2020). In the shadows of the pandemic: The gendered impact of COVID-19 on Rohingya and host communities.
21. Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group, Newsletter, 2022, Issue 1.
22. Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (2020). Urgent Call for Gender Actions in the COVID-19 Response in Cox's Bazar.
23. IAHE. Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, Companion Piece; Review of Progress: Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls into the Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus Agenda. Final, April 2021.
24. IAHE. Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, case study: Bangladesh, October 2020.
25. IASC Gender Accountability Framework Report, 2021.
26. IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action, December 2006.
27. ILO Brief. Employment in Myanmar in 2021: A Rapid Assessment, January 2022.
28. ILO. Rakhine State Labour Market, Assessing Assets, Projecting Demands, and Identifying Areas for Intervention, 2019.
22. Inter-Agency Research Report, October 2020, An Intersectional Analysis of Gender Amongst Rohingya Refugees and Host communities in COX's Bazar, Bangladesh:

https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/abridged_version_gender_and_intersectionality_report-2020-19th_october_2020.pdf

23. ISCG Bangladesh. Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis: Joint Response Plan, January-December 2023.
24. ISCG Bangladesh (2022). Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis: Joint Response Plan 2022.
25. ISCG Bangladesh. Joint Response Monitoring Framework, January-December 2022.
26. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, Bangladesh (2019-2022): [https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Bangladesh%20NAP%20\(2019-2022\).pdf](https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Bangladesh%20NAP%20(2019-2022).pdf)
27. OECD. Gender Equality Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. Gender Equality Perspective Series, July 2021.
28. OXFAM (2022). Quarterly Progress Report. October - December 2022.
29. Palit Somen et al. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of Rohingya refugees with pre-existing health problems in Bangladesh. *Conflict and Health* (2022) 16:10.
30. Principles of Rationalization in the Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh. May 2022.
31. TOULEMONDE, M. 2020. COVID-19 Outbreak: Cox's Bazar Rapid Gender Analysis, May 2020, developed by the ISCG Gender Hub in collaboration with UN Women, CARE and OXFAM.
29. UNEG. April 2005. Standards for Evaluation in the UN System; UNEG. April 2005. Norms for Evaluation in the UN System; UNEG. March 2008. UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System.
30. [Joint Government of Bangladesh - UNHCR Population factsheet \(as of May 2023\)](#).
31. UNHCR. GLOBAL REPORT DECEMBER 2018. Evaluation of UNHCR's Livelihoods Strategies and Approaches.
32. UNHCR Bangladesh: Rohingya Refugee Response - UNHCR & Partners Presence (3Ws) in Cox's Bazar District (As of February 2023).
33. UNHCR Bangladesh: Rohingya Refugee Response - Operational Partners Presence in UNHCR Managed Camps (as of February 2023).
34. UNHCR, CARE and ActionAid (2020). An Intersectional Analysis of Gender amongst Rohingya Refugees and Host Communities in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. An Inter-Agency Research Report, September 2020.
35. UNHCR Population Factsheet Block Level Data - Oct 2022.
36. UN Women: Annex A: Results Matrix with Progress on the Means to Lead Project, 2021.
37. UN Women: Annual Report on the use of CERF Funds, 2019.
38. UN Women Bangladesh Country Office Evaluability Assessment Report, 2022.
39. UN Women. CERF project completion report: 2021-2023.
40. UN Women Bangladesh Country Portfolio Evaluation. Final report. August 2019.
41. UN Women Cox's Bazar Sub-Office Annual Report, 2022.
42. UN Women (2021). Cox's Bazar Update: In Brief, July - September 2021.
43. UN Women Project Document: Means to Lead, 1 June 2022.
44. UN Women Donor Report, Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya refugee and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods, Reporting period 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021.
45. UN Women Regional Evaluation: UN Women ROAP, Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, Annexes-Volume 1, December 2021.
46. UN Women Regional Evaluation: UN Women ROAP, Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, Annexes-Volume 2, January 2022.
47. UN Women Strategic Note (2022-2026). Un Women Bangladesh Country Office, Dec 2021.
48. UN Women Strategic Plan (2022-2025). Second regular session of 2021, 14–15 September 2021.
49. UN Women Strategic Plan (2022-2025). Brochure, Building a Gender Equal World.
50. UN Women, Annual session of 2021, 21-23 June 2021. Integrated Budget estimates for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the biennium 2022–2023.
51. 39th National Taskforce: Framework for Skill Development and Engagement of Volunteers for FDMNs. September 2022.



Photo: Women are seen in Nayapara Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Credit: UN Women/Allison Joyce.

ANNEX

Evaluation Questions & Sub questions	Data Source	Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods
<p>Relevance</p> <p>1. Relevance: To what extent has UN Women’s humanitarian portfolio been relevant to and responding to the needs and priorities of women and girls in Rohingya refugee and host communities?</p> <p>1.1 To what extent has UN Women drawn on its comparative advantage in the context of its work in Cox’s Bazar?</p> <p>1.2 To what extent are the design and focus of the humanitarian portfolio aligned with the humanitarian response priorities in Cox’s Bazar and with national priorities relevant to gender and humanitarian action?</p> <p>1.3 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio adapted to the evolving context, including the COVID-19 situation, in order to remain relevant?</p> <p>1.4 Is there a strategy to put in place for inclusive approaches to humanitarian response (such as a vulnerability analysis), ensuring the most marginalized groups are benefitting from efforts (women with disabilities, ethnic minorities, poorest of the poor, gender diverse groups, etc.)?</p> <p>1.5 To what extent is UN women addressing underlying social norms and structural barriers related to gender?</p> <p>1.6 Has the project implementation strategy been context specific and tailored to reflect changes in context and has incorporated assumptions and risks in its ToC?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing documents including Means to Lead and UN Women strategic documents; RP project and programme documents; results frameworks and indicators, monitoring reports; Annual Country Reports; programmatic guidelines; case studies (where available); Project staff Responsible Parties Ministry of Women and Children Affairs staff RRC Donors Working groups including Protection Working Group, the PSEA Network, the Food Security Sector and its Livelihoods/Self-reliance Working Group, the CWC Working Group, WLOs, the GFOs, and CiCs and their supporting staff, MPWCs Relevant UN agencies The Police in Cox’s Bazar Beneficiaries- Rohingya Refugee and host community women, girls, men, and boys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of Alignment to the national priorities and SDGs on gender and inclusion including alignment of the plan with the IASC; UN Women and UN-HCR policy priorities on gender and inclusion Evidence of alignment with the needs and priorities of refugees and host community members including gender equality and inclusiveness Evidence of adjustments made to the design and implementation of projects due to COVID-19 and other contextual factors Evidence of relevant civil society organizations participating in the implementation of projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIs Group/FGDs In-depth interviews Desk review Exit surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative data from exit surveys and secondary source data Qualitative analysis including case studies Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data to validate findings and to examine relevance as well as strategic aspects of do no harm and conflict sensitivity, complementarity/coherence and coverage

Coherence				
<p>2. To what extent are UN Women's efforts in Cox's Bazar coherent externally with the interventions of other actors engaged in the Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar (particularly within the UN system)?</p> <p>2.1 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio been coherent internally?</p> <p>2.2 Do the individual projects, including the Means to Lead project build on synergies between each other to achieve a greater impact?</p> <p>2.3 How is UN Women monitoring its efforts and integrating learning into its approach?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review documents • All existing M&E documents and data including those from the RPs • Relevant UN agencies • Ministry of Women and Children Affairs staff • RRRC • Responsible Parties • Donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of joint planning with other UN agencies in Cox's Bazar, monitoring and implementation. • Evidence of building on synergies to ensure internal coherence • Evidence on the use of data on indicators to improve effectiveness and efficiency and coherence in implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs • Group/FGDs • Desk review • Exit-surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative analysis • Quantitative analysis • Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data to validate findings and to examine coherence and coverage
Effectiveness				
<p>3. How well has UN Women's programming, especially the Means to the Lead project, achieved its objectives?</p> <p>3.1 What strategies, partnerships and coordination mechanisms were most effective? Were any replicable models established with potential for scale-up?</p> <p>3.2 What barriers and challenges did the projects, especially the Means to the Lead project, experience during the implementation and how were they addressed?</p> <p>3.3 To what extent have there been unintended negative (including 'do no harm') or positive effects? Which ones?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing documents including Means to Lead and UN Women strategic documents; Responsible Parties project and programme documents; results frameworks and indicators, monitoring reports; Annual Country Reports; programmatic guidelines; case studies (where available); • Project staff • Responsible Parties • Ministry of Women and Children Affairs staff • RRRC • Working groups (including Protection Sector, the PSEA Network, and the Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector, Education Sector, the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of improved capacity and coordination in planning and implementation to address needs • Evidence of improved skills and capacities and adaptive resilience among the beneficiaries • Evidence of the access of women organizations to funding and income-generation opportunities • Evidence of empowerment, decision-making, and leadership roles among Rohingya women and girls • Evidence of building on lessons learned, and best practices to ensure effectiveness and avoid negative unintended consequences • Evidence of appropriate and timely follow-ups and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • KIIs • FGDs • In-depth interviews • Exit-surveys • Direct observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistics • Qualitative analysis including case studies • Triangulation of all qualitative & quantitative findings

	<p>Communications with Communities (CWC)) GBV sub-sector, WLOs, the GFOs, and CiCs and their supporting staff, MPWCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant UN agencies • The Police in Cox's Bazar • Beneficiaries- Rohingya Refugee and host community women, girls, men, and boys • Donors 	<p>monitoring of complaints and bottlenecks</p>		
Efficiency				
<p>4. To what extent does the UN Women Cox's Bazar sub-office have sufficient human and financial resources to support the humanitarian portfolio?</p> <p>4.1 How timely and economical are the efforts of the humanitarian portfolio?</p> <p>4.2 To what extent have the indicators in the logframe been used in monitoring the implementation and efficiency of the programme over time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents including financial documents and M&E reports • Project staff • Responsible Parties • Donors • Relevant UN agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of existence of sufficient resources (human and financial) for project implementation and monitoring • Evidence of timely and adequate response to changes in context • Evidence of improved accountability and contextual adjustments in project indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs • Group/FGDs • Desk review documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistics • Qualitative analysis • Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data to validate findings and to examine efficiency in strategic programming
Sustainability				
<p>5. To what extent are the results achieved through UN Women projects in Cox's Bazar likely to continue beyond 2023?</p> <p>5.1 To what extent has the humanitarian portfolio built-in mechanisms – such as capacity development of partners - to ensure the sustainability of efforts?</p> <p>5.2 To what extent has Means to Lead and other relevant projects in Cox's Bazar have contributed to reinforcing the capacities and transformative resilience of the refugees for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review documents including UN Women strategic documents; monitoring reports; annual country reports; programmatic guidelines; information specific on gender and inclusiveness; previous evaluations and case studies; national statistics • Project staff • Responsible Parties • Local, and national public stakeholders • Donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of transformative resilience among Rohingya women and host community members • Evidence of donor support for continuation of UN Women's projects in Cox's Bazar • Evidence of an exit plan for sustainability by UN Women upon the termination of projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs • Group/FGDs • In-depth interviews • Desk review • Direct observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistics • Qualitative analysis including case studies • Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data to validate findings and to examine relevance in relation to gender, equity/social inclusion, protection, accountability and participation approaches, as well as link between humanitarian to development programming

the transition from a humanitarian protracted crisis scenario to provision of long-term development assistance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries 			
---	---	--	--	--

Annex 2: Stakeholder analysis

In accordance with the UNEG guidance on ‘Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation’¹⁰², the stakeholders were identified drawing on initial information provided by UN Women team and set out in the ToR, as a result of key documentation review. After a validation procedure with the Evaluation Reference Group during the ETG meeting, this will be finalized. The initial mapping has revealed that UN Women has worked with a wide variety of stakeholders under the Means to Lead project, including:

- Rights-holder beneficiary groups (both Rohingya and host community);
- Primary duty bearers who make decisions and implement the project;
- Donors and wider development partners;
- Project based non-governmental stakeholders;
- UN stakeholders through formal coordination roles and formal Joint Programmes, as well as through collaborative project-based partnerships.

Stakeholder Mapping

Stakeholder role	Specific groups	How (ways and capacities in which stakeholders participate)
Target Groups of rights holders	Beneficiaries- Rohingya Refugee and host community women, girls, men, and boys	Humanitarian Response Programme (Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya refugees and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods)
Principle and primary duty bearers who UN Women has engaged with to implement the project	UN Women sub-office (CXB)	
	MoWCA (Department of Women’s Affairs DWA)	Coordination
	Local govt. agencies (RRRC/Additional RRRC)	Coordination
	Armed Police Battalion (APBn)	Protection/Security
Donor duty bearers	Sweden Embassy	Rohingya response
	DFAT	Rohingya response
	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation	Rohingya response
UN Coordination related stakeholders	UN Resident Coordinator	Normative
	Inter-Cluster Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG)	Coordination
UN Joint Programme Stakeholders	UNFPA	Advocacy partner on GBV issues; GiHA Working Group member
UN Partners - Collaborative (Collaborations not under ‘Joint Programme’ mechanism)	UNHCR	Improving camp authority’s response to GBV Establishing shelter network/safe spaces Co-chairing GiHA for Rohingya Response
	WFP	Rohingya response -livelihood support project; GiHA Working Group member

¹⁰² file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/HRGE%20Handbook%20(1).pdf

Project based non-government stakeholders	UNICEF	Coordination
	ILO	Important for WEE moving forward
	BRAC	Rohingya response Responsible Parties; GIHA Working Group member
	OXFAM	Rohingya response Responsible Parties
	DCA	Rohingya response Responsible Parties
	Rights of Women Welfare Society (RWWS)	Rohingya response Responsible Parties
	BNPS	Rohingya response Responsible Parties
	Action Aid Bangladesh	Rohingya response Responsible Parties; GIHA Working Group member
ASK	Rohingya response Responsible Parties	

Annex 3: List of Key Informant's Organizations

No.	Position/Affiliation/Organization
1.	RRRC – spell out acronym (RRRC and Additional RRRC)
2.	Ministry of Women & Children Affairs (Officer)
3.	UN Women: Head Sub-Office and 3 programme staff
4.	UN Women: Country Representative, Bangladesh
5.	UN Women Regional Office, Asia-Pacific
6.	UN Women: Deputy Director, Policy and Programme, and Intergovernmental Division, Headquarters
7.	Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka (2 persons)
8.	DFAT, Australian High Commission Bangladesh
9.	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
10.	UNFPA Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar (GBV staff)
11.	ISCG, CXB Spell out – including Principal Coordinator, GBV-Sub Sector Coordinator
12.	ISCG, CXB
13.	UNHCR Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar (programme staff)
14.	UNFPA Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar (programme staff)
15.	ILO in Cox's Bazar
16.	OXFAM, (programme staff)
17.	ASK (1 project staff in Cox's Bazar)
18.	AAB (2 project staff in Cox's Bazar)
19.	DCA, (programme staff) CXB
20.	BRAC, (programme staff) CXB
21.	RWWS, (programme staff) CXB
22.	BNPS, (programme staff) CXB
23.	MUKTI, (programme staff) CXB

Annex 4: Number of KIIs, FGDs, IDIs and Group Discussion Participants and Exit surveys.

Tools	No. of Participants	Breakdown of number of participants
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	36 (Female: 27; Male: 9)	Virtual & in-person
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	14 (Female: 37; Male: 42; transgenders: 5)	Camp 3 Rohingya Female beneficiaries – 6, Camp 3 Rohingya Male beneficiaries – 8 Camp 4 Rohingya transgenders beneficiaries – 5 Camp 3 Female volunteers– 4 + 1 Male volunteer
		Camp 4 Rohingya Female beneficiaries – 5 Camp 4 Rohingya Male beneficiaries – 8 Camp 4 Rohingya Male volunteers – 4. Camp 4 Rohingya Female volunteers– 5.
		Camp 4 Ext. Rohingya Female beneficiaries – 6 Camp 4 Ext. Rohingya Male beneficiaries – 9
		Camp 5 Women’s Market Female beneficiaries– 5
		Teknaf Host community beneficiaries Female – 6 Teknaf Host community beneficiaries Male – 8 Teknaf Host community Male volunteers – 8
Group Discussions	6 (Female: 30; Male: 4)	MPWC/Camp 3: Female – 4, Male – 1. -
		MPWC/Camp 4: Female – 7, Male – 1.
		MPWC/Camp 4 Ext.: Female – 5, Male – 1.
		MPWC/Camp 18: Female – 5.
		MPWC/Teknaf: Female – 4, Male – 1.
		Women’s Market staff: Female-5
In-depth Interviews	3 (All female)	Camps 4 and 4 Extension Beneficiaries: Female
Exit Surveys	30 (All female)	Camp 3, 4, 4 Extension Beneficiaries: Female

Annex 5: Key Informant Interview Guide

Key Informant and Group Interview TOOL (Donors, RPs, UN, CiCs, GFO, Government officials)

ORGANISATION / AGENCY / DEPARTMENT:	
INTERVIEWEE NAME AND DESIGNATION/TITLE:	Female: _____ Male: _____
LOCATION: Virtual – Dhaka/Ankara	
INTERVIEWER:	
DATE:	

PART 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions, explanation of how data will be used, consent protocols.

My name is X and I am an independent consultant. We are conducting an evaluation of the UN Women’s projects for the Rohingya refugee and host communities in Cox’s Bazar. This interview will help provide information about how appropriate, effective and sustainable the projects are for ensuring that both the Rohingya refugees and host community members are benefiting from the interventions/activities offered by the projects. This interview will examine your opinion, knowledge of the

projects, and seek your recommendations to improve the interventions that are being implemented in Cox's Bazar based on your needs.

The findings from this and other interviews and focus group discussions will be used together to provide recommendations to a range of UN agencies and NGOs as well as donors and the local and national government authorities.

The interview will take about 1 hour of your time. All responses will be anonymous and confidential. No names will be used in the report.

We won't share our notes with anyone apart from the evaluation team. We will use this information to write a report which will include what you and others have told us. However, all information provided in the final report will be kept anonymous. This means that we will not include your name in the report.

Your participation is voluntary. You have a choice about whether you take part in this discussion or you can choose to leave at any time.

Please tell me whether or not you voluntarily agree to participate in this interview.

PART 2: INTERVIEW

1. Please tell me a bit about your role in projects for the Rohingya refugee and host communities in Cox's Bazar, including how long you have been involved.	
Relevance	
<p>2. In your opinion, to what extent do the Means to Lead interventions as well as other UN Women projects in Cox's bazar for the refugees respond to the unique needs of different populations including the most vulnerable?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the gaps in programme design and planning? • In what way programme design and planning are adapted or reflect context in terms of reaching the most vulnerable and ensuring social inclusion? • In what way(s) have the principles of gender equality and equity been incorporated into the project design. 	
3. In your opinion, what are the limitations and opportunities of the current approach to foster complementarity with other relevant actors working to address the needs of the Rohingya refugees as well as the host communities around the camps?	
<p>4. In your opinion do you think the M&E system sufficiently captures the realities on the ground (i.e., context) to inform decision making?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think there are results that are not well-measured by the current monitoring system? 	
<p>5. In what way do the affected populations participate in decision making processes regarding their needs and conditions? Can you give concrete examples?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you ensure accountability? • to what degree the beneficiaries understand and accept the selection criteria for certain interventions, i.e., obtaining grants, credit, cash, etc.? • What have been the challenges in effective communication with and involvement of the communities in decision making process? • What are the mechanisms for promoting participation of community members and local leaders? 	
Coherence	
6. To what extent do you the humanitarian portfolio been coherent internally?	

7. How would you assess the coordination mechanisms among the relevant UN agencies and Responsible Parties?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who does your organization coordinate with and how? Have you faced any challenges in terms of coordination? How have these been overcome? Is there anything else that could be done to improve coordination? 	
8. To what extent are there synergies and interlinkages between the Means to Lead and other projects for the refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar by different donors?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the individual projects, including the Means to Lead project build on synergies between each other to achieve a greater impact? 	
9. To what extent do you consider Means to Lead M&E system including its indicators and reporting requirements appropriate for measuring effectiveness and efficiency of the project over time?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why? 	
Effectiveness	
10. Since its inception in 2019, in your opinion what strategies, partnerships and coordination mechanisms have been most effective in:	
a. addressing the needs of the Rohingya refugees in camps?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why? In what way has the project increased capacities with regard to women's leadership and decision-making, livelihood/income generation, among others? 	
b. How about addressing the needs of the host communities around camps?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why? 	
11. How effective has Means to Lead project been in terms of coverage of vulnerable groups and individuals including the poorest of the poor and the disabled.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why? What have been the major challenges in including the most vulnerable and the poorest of the poor? How are these challenges being addressed? 	
12. To what extent do you believe the interventions, specifically, Means to Lead have contributed to establishing social cohesion between the refugees and host communities in terms of acceptance and local decision-makings?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the barriers? In your opinion how should they be addressed? 	
13. Have there been any unintended positive or negative consequences of the Means to Lead project (Probe about 'do no harm' or leading to something positive but unexpected)	
14. What avenues do the Rohingya refugees including women, girls, boys, and men, have to provide feedback on the project, or otherwise influence how and what the project is delivering?	
Efficiency	
15. In your opinion, what are the primary cost drivers of the project?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why? 	
16. What kind of strategy and mechanisms would contribute to reducing the costs?	
17. In your opinion, how would these compare to those (strategy/mechanisms) used by other similar programs? (This is for donors)	
Sustainability	
18. In what way, if any, do you think Means to lead and other projects in Cox's Bazar for the refugees are contributing to a transition from humanitarian and development programming to ensure sustainability and resilience among the affected populations?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why? What is missing to ensure this transition? 	
19. What do you consider as the sustainable elements for the project? Why?	
20. What are the follow up mechanisms, if any, for affected populations after interventions?	
21. To what degree the results of Means to Lead type of interventions have been translated into advocacy strategies to ensure continued funding for the same or similar humanitarian programs?	
22. To what degree do you think lessons learned and best practices in programming in the context of the Rohingya refugees will contribute to future or ongoing global humanitarian situations elsewhere?	

23.	In your opinion what should be the next steps in expanding and scaling the Means to Lead project?	
Other comments		
24.	Do you have any other comments you wish to make?	

Annex 6: FGD Guide

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE							
Region							
Refugee Camp & Section							
Focus Group Composition				Women/girls _____ Men/boys _____ The most vulnerable women/girls _____			
Date							
Name of Facilitator							
Start Time:				End Time:			
Introduction				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator self-introduction Read consent script and record verbal consent from each participant in box below. Complete additional information below for each participant. 			
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION							
#	Age	Gender	Consent received verbally?	What is your status: i.e., R (Rohingya refugees) or H (host community) member	What is your highest level of Education	How long have you been living in this community (for both Rohingya refugees and host community members)	
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							

PART 1: FGD INTRODUCTION

My name is X and I am an independent consultant. We are conducting an evaluation of the UN Women's projects for the Rohingya refugee and host communities in Cox's Bazar. This interview will help provide information about how appropriate, effective and sustainable the projects are for ensuring that both the Rohingya refugees and host community members are benefiting from the interventions/activities offered by the projects. This interview will examine your opinion, knowledge of the projects, and seek your recommendations to improve the interventions that are being implemented in Cox's Bazar based on your needs.

The findings from this and other interviews and focus group discussions will be used together to provide recommendations to a range of UN agencies and NGOs as well as donors and the local and national government authorities.

The interview will take about 1 hour of your time. All responses will be anonymous and confidential. No names will be used in the report.

We won't share our notes with anyone apart from the evaluation team. We will use this information to write a report which will include what you and others have told us. However, all information provided in the final report will be kept anonymous. This means that we will not include your name in the report.

Your participation is voluntary. You have a choice about whether you take part in this discussion or you can choose to leave at any time.

PART 2: FGD Interviews

Relevance	
1. What type (s) of assistance are you or your family currently receiving from the projects? Please explain (e.g., Health, Cash, Education, Protection, Livelihood, GBV services, counseling, etc.)	
2. Which organizations/projects are providing you with this assistance (for the different types ask which organization)	
3. Are you aware of how the beneficiaries are selected to be included in livelihood activities, receiving grants for businesses, etc.? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes, how were you involved in the selection process? Please explain in what way 	
4. Which of these services offered at this MPWC have been the most meaningful to you and your family? <u>Probe on</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livelihood, income, food security, second change education, leadership roles, Empowerment (e.g., self-confidence, decision-making, voice, self-esteem, trust, respect from others, participation, gender equality). 	
Coherence	
5. Please explain how different types of assistance you have been receiving at the MPWCs have changed your life in terms of making it better	
6. Do you know the name of the projects and/or agencies that are helping you with the activities at the MPWCs?	
7. If yes, which have been the most helpful in your opinion in improving your situation (i.e., in terms of livelihood opportunities, education, health, social protection, etc.)	
Effectiveness	
8. A. If Rohingya Refugee: What have been some of the good things that have happened to you since you moved to this refugee camp? Please, give examples B. If Host Community: How has your life changed since Rohingya refugees arrived in Cox's Bazar? What have been the good things and the bad things? Please, give examples	
9. How would your life have been different if you had not received assistance from the MPWCs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the ONE thing that you think has been the most beneficial to you and/or your family from the Means to Lead Project? 	
10. What do you think of the quality of services of Means to Lead project that you have been receiving? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do you think so? How do you think they can be improved? What more can they do in your opinion? 	
11. Have your relationships and interactions with other camp members (or host community members: Note if the respondent is host community, then ask if with Rohingya refugees in camps) changed since Means to Lead project started in your community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes, in what ways and how were they changed? What has remained the same? <u>Probe about gender roles, who is better or worse off</u>	
12. If Rohingya refugee: What kind of contributions or assistance (cultural, social, economic, etc.), if any, or in what way have the host community members made in your and your community's life? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why? Please give examples 	
13. If Host Community member: What kind of contributions or assistance (cultural, social, economic, etc.), if any, or in what way have the Rohingya refugees made in yours and your community's life?	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? Please give examples 	
<p>14. In what way you believe Means to Lead project has contributed to improving the lives of women and girls in your community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think so, please provide examples. 	
<p>15. Who do you consider as the most vulnerable groups in your community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? 	
<p>16. In what way you believe Means to Lead project has contributed to improving the quality of the lives of the MOST vulnerable women and girls including the disabled in your community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think so, please provide examples. 	
<p>17. Have there been any negative consequences, such as problems or issues, among people in your community or in your household because of the Means to Lead or other projects in your community? Probe on e.g., any issues at the household or community levels, competition, arguments, discrimination, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, what and why? Can you provide examples? 	
<p>18. Were these issues/problems resolved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, how were they resolved? • If no, why do you think they were not resolved? 	
<p>19. Are you aware of any follow up procedures addressing any complaints you or your community may have?</p> <p>20. If yes, To what extent have these follow-up procedures addressed your concerns? What was missing if anything? Please, give examples</p>	
Sustainability	
<p>21. How do you think because of the projects in your community your household and/or other community members have acquired enough skills in different areas to continue without any further assistance from projects?</p> <p>22. If yes, which skills have been the most important for you to continue your life and livelihoods? Please give examples</p>	
<p>23. Have women been able to assume leadership roles in your community since the project started?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what way? (Probe: the type of activities and organizations/groups they are involved in, or type of decision making, etc.) 	
<p>23. What other changes would you like to see to improve the quality of your life and the lives of others in your community through the projects/assistance you are receiving?</p>	
Other Comments	
<p>24. Do you have any other thoughts or suggestions you would like to share with us?</p>	

Annex 7: Exit-Survey Questions

Location : _____
 Date: _____
 Interviewer Name: _____

Exit Surveys at MPWCs

1. Age of Respondent	Years	_____
2. How often do you come to this MPWC?	Every day Once a week More than once a week Once a month Every 2 or 3 months Every 4, 5, or 6 months Once a Year Don't know	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 99
3. What is the main reason you come here?	For counseling/services To socialize/meet people To have privacy (to get out of home) Other (explain)	1 2 3 _____
4. What are some of other reasons for which you come here?	For counseling/services To socialize/meet people To have privacy To get out of home Other (explain)	1 2 3 4 _____
5. How satisfied are you with the assistance/services you receive here?	Very satisfied Satisfied The services/assistance are okay Not satisfied Can't tell	1 2 3 4 99
6. How friendly are the staff/people helping you here?	Very friendly They are okay Not very friendly Not friendly at all Can't tell	1 2 3 4 99
7. In your opinion, how complete (i.e., full range of services) are the services /assistance that this MPWC offers you in terms of your needs?	Very Okay Not very Not at all Can't tell	1 2 3 4 99
8. What type of services/assistance would you like to have that you don't see (or are not receiving) at this MPWC?	_____ _____ _____	
9. What barriers/difficulties can you identify that might make it challenging for you to come here often?	My husband/father does not allow me It takes time for me to get here I am not interested in coming more often than I usually do I have other things to do Other	1 2 3 4 _____
10. Do you consider this MPWC to have a friendly atmosphere, i.e., people freely talking and working together?	Yes No Can't tell	1 2 99
11. In your opinion, how can this MPWC be improved?		

12. How do you describe the community's attitude towards MPWCs?	Good Okay Not so good Bad Don't know	1 2 3 4 99
13. What do men and boys think of this MPWC and its services?	Good Okay Not so good Bad Don't know	1 2 3 4 99

[Annex 8: In-depth Interview Guide](#)

Consent Form

My name is X and I am an independent consultant. We are conducting an evaluation of the UN Women's projects for the Rohingya refugee and host communities in Cox's Bazar. This interview will help provide information about how appropriate, effective and sustainable the projects are for ensuring that both the Rohingya refugees and host community members are benefiting from the interventions/activities offered by the projects. This interview will examine your opinion, knowledge of the projects, and seek your recommendations to improve the interventions that are being implemented in Cox's Bazar based on your needs.

The findings from this and other interviews and focus group discussions will be used together to provide recommendations to a range of UN agencies and NGOs as well as donors and the local and national government authorities.

The interview will take about 1 hour of your time. All responses will be anonymous and confidential. No names will be used in the report.

We won't share our notes with anyone apart from the evaluation team. We will use this information to write a report which will include what you and others have told us. However, all information provided in the final report will be kept anonymous. This means that we will not include your name in the report.

Your participation is voluntary. You have a choice about whether you take part in this discussion or you can choose to leave at any time.

Please tell me whether or not you voluntarily agree to participate in this interview.

INTERVIEWEE Age:
LOCATION:
INTERVIEWER:
DATE:

1. Please tell me how long you have been living here? _____

The following should be used as prompts rather than questions as such

2. I am interested in learning about your life and your experiences since you moved here.
 - Could you give me a brief description on who lives with you at the present in your household
 - How do you normally spend your days? (Let the respondent talk about her day, what she does, where she goes, who she sees, etc.)
 - Can you talk to me a little about the type of activities in which you participate here either for learning and improving your skills or just for pleasure?
 - What is the best thing about your life now?
 - What are some of the challenges of your life now? How are you coping with them?

Annex 9: Group Discussion Guide

Group discussion with MPWC Staff

INTERVIEWEE DESIGNATION/TITLE:	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.
LOCATION:	
INTERVIEWER:	
DATE:	

PART 1: INTRODUCTIONS

My name is X and I am an independent consultant. We are conducting an evaluation of the UN Women's projects for the Rohingya refugee and host communities in Cox's Bazar. This interview will help provide information about how appropriate, effective and sustainable the projects are for ensuring that both the Rohingya refugees and host community members are benefiting from the interventions/activities offered by the projects. This interview will examine your opinion, knowledge of the projects, and seek your recommendations to improve the interventions that are being implemented in Cox's Bazar based on your needs.

The findings from this and other interviews and focus group discussions will be used together to provide recommendations to a range of UN agencies and NGOs as well as donors and the local and national government authorities.

The interview will take about 1 hour of your time. All responses will be anonymous and confidential. No names will be used in the report.

We won't share our notes with anyone apart from the evaluation team. We will use this information to write a report which will include what you and others have told us. However, all information provided in the final report will be kept anonymous. This means that we will not include your name in the report.

Your participation is voluntary. You have a choice about whether you take part in this discussion or you can choose to leave at any time.

Please tell me whether or not you voluntarily agree to participate in this interview.

PART 2: INTERVIEW

1. How long have you been a staff at this MPWC	
2. Please tell me a bit about your roles at this MPWC and what you do	
3. In your opinion, to what extent do the Means to Lead interventions as well as other UN Women projects in Cox's bazar for the refugees respond to the unique needs of different populations including the most vulnerable?	
4. What are some of the gaps in terms of assistance that is provided at this MPWC?	
5. What do you personally find as challenging in working with the beneficiaries here? (Please ask from each participant)	
6. In what way do the affected populations participate in decision making processes regarding their needs and conditions? Can you give concrete examples?	
7. Please explain how the beneficiaries at this MPWC are selected to participate in different services, e.g. second chance education, livelihood, counseling, leadership, etc.	
8. To what degree the beneficiaries understand and accept the selection criteria for certain interventions, i.e., obtaining grants, credit, cash, leadership roles, etc.?	
9. What have been the challenges in effective communication with and involvement of the services? (Probe on household conflict, restriction of movement, etc.)	
10. What are some of the differences between beneficiaries here in terms of frequency of visits, involvement in services, volunteering, etc. with regard to their age, vulnerability including disabilities, and other demographics such as head of household, orphaned, etc.	
11. Since you have been working here, what changes (positive or negative) have you noticed among the women and girls that come to this center? b. Why do you think these changes have happened? addressing the needs of the Rohingya refugees in camps?	
12. In what way has the projects at MPWCs increased capacities with regard to women's leadership and decision-making, livelihood/income generation. Please give examples	
13. How effective have the services at this MPWC been in terms of coverage of vulnerable groups and individuals including the poorest of the poor and the disabled. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? • What have been the major challenges in including the most vulnerable and the poorest of the poor? • How are these challenges being addressed? 	
14. To what extent do you believe the interventions at this center have contributed to establishing gender equality and equity among men and women in this refugee camp? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the most important barriers? • In your opinion how should they be addressed? 	

<p>15. What avenues do the Rohingya refugees including women, girls, boys, and men, have to provide feedback on the project, or otherwise influence how and what the project is delivering? Please give examples</p>	
<p>16. In your opinion, what are some of the major problems at this MPWC e.g., sanitation, privacy, access to services, recreational activities, etc.?</p>	
<p>17. What other services would you personally like to see at this MPWC to be offered to Rohingya women and girls?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think so? What would they change? 	
<p>Direct Observations</p>	
<p>18. Can we go around and look at your facilities/equipment/counseling rooms/ etc.?</p>	<p>Note your observation for each location: e.g. toilettes, counseling rooms, equipment, materials for recreation, etc.</p>

Annex 10: Evaluation Workplan

Weeks		W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	W15
Dates		Feb 16	Feb 26	March 5	March 12	March 19	March 26	April 2	April 9	April 16	April 23	April 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28
		Feb 17	March 2	March 9	March 16	March 23	March 30	April 6	April 13	April 20	April 27	May 3	May 11	May 18	May 26	June 1
Tasks																
Evaluation Design	Kick-Off Meeting with UN Women															
	Desk Review															
	Draft Inception Report & Instruments			March 7												
	UN Women/ Evaluation reference group reviews the inception report															
	Power point presentation of the Inception report to ERG				March 16											
	Qualitative & Quantitative Data Collection & Translation of notes															
Data Collection	In Brief meeting with local consultant - Local consultant arrives on March 18 to Cox's Bazar					March 19										
	In-Brief Meeting with Team lead and local consultant- Team lead arrives on March 25 to Cox's Bazar.						March 26									
	Briefing on preliminary findings							April 3								
	Team Lead leaves Cox's Bazar							April 4								
Data Analysis & Reporting	Qualitative Data Analysis & translation of notes & report writing															
	Draft Evaluation Report submitted to UN Women										April 28					
	ERG Reviews Draft Report & provides feedback															
	Validation workshop													May 15		
	Revised Draft Evaluation Report submitted to UN Women														May 21	
	UN Women & Stakeholders/ERG Review Revised Report/ feedback															
	Final Evaluation Report submitted to UN Women															

Annex 11: Terms of Reference (TOR)

I. Background

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (UN), works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. Placing women's rights at the centre of all its efforts, UN

Women will lead and coordinate UN system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world. It will provide strong and coherent leadership in support of Member States' priorities and efforts, building effective partnerships with civil society and other relevant actors.

August 2022 marks the fifth year since extreme armed violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state prompted a massive influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh. Close to half a million Rohingya women and girls currently live in refugee camps in Bangladesh. The speed and scale of this mass displacement invoked a critical humanitarian emergency in Bangladesh and prompted urgency in delivering a gender-responsive response to this cross-border crisis. During the last five years, Rohingya refugees have shown resilience and the government and people of Bangladesh have generously hosted them. However, pre-existing gender inequalities, GBV, and discrimination continue to be perpetuated and exacerbated.

UN Women Bangladesh Country Office is currently undertaking a thematic evaluation of the humanitarian area of work as a means for providing the organization with an understanding of how it has responded and is continuously adapting programming, primarily to the ongoing Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide information for decision-making, learning, and accountability, which will ultimately strengthen UN Women's strategy moving forward to respond effectively and in a harmonized manner to the needs and priorities of women and girls in the Rohingya refugee camps and the host community.

An evaluation team is being established to conduct this independent evaluation. The international evaluation consultant with experience in the humanitarian field will lead the evaluation process, including working closely with an evaluation team to design the evaluation methodology, conduct data collection, analysis and draft the overall synthesis report. To facilitate data collection in the local languages a national consultant and interpreter will be hired to support the team.

II. Evaluation purpose and use

The humanitarian action programme is implemented by UN Women Bangladesh Cox's Bazar Sub-Office. It targets the most vulnerable women and girls in Rohingya camps, as well as the host community. The programme is in line with the Government's NAP WPS and is contributing to the Joint Response Plan. The overarching Theory of Change (derived from the TOC of UNSDCF) of the UN Women Bangladesh Strategic Note (2022-2026) seeks to ensure a strong coherence and synergy among UN agencies and partners. One outcome has been added to specifically integrate the response to the Rohingya humanitarian crisis in Cox's Bazar:

Outcome 5: By 2026 more Rohingya and host community women and girls are empowered by a gender-responsive enabling environment, to exercise their agency and decision-making with improved access to protection, education, and socio-economic opportunities.

The major focus of the programmatic interventions include:

- i. Enhancing the capacities of Rohingya and host community women and girls to participate in decision making and increase their access to multi-sectoral services.
- ii. Increasing the advocacy and leadership capacities of Rohingya and host community women-led organizations (WLOs).
- iii. Increasing the capacities of humanitarian actors, including WLOs, to operate enhanced coordination mechanisms and play a leadership role. (This encompassed UN Women coordination support on gender in humanitarian action).

Across its programming, UN Women seeks to ensure localization, ownership, and sustainability. Currently 6 projects are being implemented in Cox's Bazar with the focus of empowering Rohingya refugee and host community. These are:

1. Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya refugees and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods.

2. Empowerment of Rohingya Refugee and Host Communities Women and Girls in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh
3. Women and girls who have experienced/are experiencing GBV or are at risk of GBV benefit from provision of and access to quality services and empowered to increasingly engage in decision making and leadership in GBV response, mitigation, and prevention.
4. Women Peacebuilders Lead Social Cohesion: Enhancing Capacities and Collaboration of Women Civil Society Groups from Rohingya Community and Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.
5. Bangladesh CFPs – under WPHF Impact Area 5: Improved socioeconomic recovery, participation and leadership of women and young women in forced displacement contexts.
6. WPHF: ME function of the WPHF COVID 19 ERW, Bangladesh.

In addition, UN Women actively participates in coordination mechanisms related to the Rohingya refugee response, co-chairing the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group together with UNHCR, to ensure accountability to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls across the response.

III. Purpose, intended users and scope of the evaluation

UN Women undertakes evaluations to enhance accountability, inform decision making, and contribute to learning. This thematic exercise will focus on the evaluation of the humanitarian portfolio being implemented by the Cox's Bazar sub-office and will aim to provide strategic recommendations for the sub-office moving forward.

An independent evaluation team leader and national evaluation consultant will be engaged to conduct the evaluation. In conducting the evaluation, this evaluation team should continuously make reference to the guiding documents for evaluation at UN Women, which includes: the [Evaluation Policy](#), the [Evaluation Handbook](#), United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards¹⁰³ and Ethical Guidelines¹⁰⁴ and the [Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System \(GERAAS\)](#) evaluation report quality checklist. The report will be assessed against the GERAAS standards.

The primary intended users of the evaluation (outlined in the box below) are the UN Women Bangladesh Country Office, including the Cox's Bazar sub-office, Sida and other bilateral donors supporting interconnected programming (SDC and DFAT) and responsible parties.

Primary & Secondary Intended Users	Primary Intended Use			
	Learning & Knowledge Generation	Strategic Decision-Making	Accountability	Capacity Development & Mobilisation
UN Women Bangladesh Country Office	X	X	X	X
UN Women IEAS	X			
UN Coordination Partners	X			X
Primary Target groups (individuals, communities, programme /responsible parties)	X		X	X
National and local governments	X		X	X
Civil Society Representatives	X		X	X
Donors & Multilateral Partners	X	X	X	

¹⁰³ UNEG, "Norms and Standards for evaluation", 2016, available online at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

¹⁰⁴ UNEG, "Ethical guidelines for Evaluation", 2020, available online at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

Scope

Thematic scope: This evaluation is expected to assess UN Women's contribution to the Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar and related lessons learned, with a focus on the "Means to Lead: Empowering Rohingya refugee and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods" project (hereon: Means to Lead project) supported by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). In addition, the evaluation will seek to generate findings and recommendations on UN Women's coordination efforts in Cox's Bazar.

Timeframe: The evaluation is expected to assess the project and activities implemented by both UN Women Cox's Bazar sub-office team and its Responsible Parties from October 2019 to December 2022, with a focus especially on the Means to Lead project.

Geographical coverage: Overall, the humanitarian portfolio of UN Women Bangladesh spans across the country with diverse crisis response efforts in different districts. The evaluation will focus on UN Women's contributions in Cox's Bazar which have focused on empowering Rohingya refugee and host community women and girls through protection and livelihood support and advancing women's leadership, and on strengthening gender mainstreaming across the response. Linkages between Dhaka and Cox's Bazar programming will also be explored.

IV. Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation is intended to serve as the basis for programming and management, generating findings, lessons learned and recommendations that will be of use in designing similar programming interventions moving forward. Specifically, the evaluation will:

1. Assess the relevance and coherence of the strategy, approaches and results of UN Women's Cox's Bazar programming and coordination work.
2. Assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the contributions of UN Women with respect to results across programming and coordination activities.
3. Assess how the human rights-based approach, gender equality principles and the participation of socially marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and gender diverse groups were integrated in the design and the implementation of the humanitarian portfolio.
4. Draw lessons learnt of the programmatic interventions in the Rohingya refugee camps and host communities, best practices, success stories and challenges from the implementation of programming interventions.
5. Provide actionable recommendations to guide UN Women's future humanitarian response efforts in Cox's Bazar, identifying opportunities to enhance sustainability, including through programmatic developments and support to coordination.
6. Assess the partnership approach of UN Women's programming in Cox's Bazar, including with regards to the protracted nature of the Rohingya refugee crisis and its implications for engagement with government stakeholders moving forward.

V. Management and quality assurance

Under the overall supervision of the Cox's Bazar Head of Sub-Office, and in close coordination with the Evaluation Co-Managers, Dhaka based Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Analyst and Cox's Bazar based Monitoring and Reporting Analyst, an international consultant and a national consultant will be hired to undertake this evaluation. The evaluation co-managers will be dedicated to coordinate the evaluation process. The Cox's Bazar sub-office will provide the support needed, including but not limited to project documents and relevant materials, assist with liaising, and coordinate the meeting schedules as needed. UN Women Regional evaluation specialist will provide quality assurance throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation will have the following groups:

- **Evaluation Management group** for administrative support and accountability: the evaluation co-managers, Regional Evaluation Specialist, Cox's Bazar Head of Sub-office, and Cox's Bazar Gender in Humanitarian Action Specialist. It will oversee the day-to-day management of the evaluation,

- also provide logistics and other type of support.
- Evaluation Reference Group for substantive technical support (max 10 persons): Donor, National government, Civil Society, Humanitarian partners, UN partners (including ISCG).
- Evaluation team: One international and one national consultant

VI. Composition and function of the Reference Group

The UN Women Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) is an integral part of the evaluation management structure and is constituted to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the design and scope of the evaluation, raising awareness of the different information needs, quality assurance throughout the process and in disseminating the evaluation results.

The UN Women ERG will be composed of representation of the donors and key stakeholders from the government, development partners, UN agencies, UN Women personnel and select programme partners and will provide input at key stages of the evaluation including the preparation, conduct and reporting phases.

The ERG members will help ensure that the evaluation approach is robust and relevant to staff and stakeholders and make certain that factual errors or errors of omission or interpretation are identified in evaluation products. The ERG members will be expected to:

- Act as source of knowledge for the evaluation
- Act as an informant of the evaluation process
- Assist in the collection of pertinent information and documentation
- Assist in identifying external stakeholders to be consulted during the process;
- Play a key role in disseminating the findings of the evaluation and implementation of the management response
- Participate in any meetings of the reference group
- Provide input and quality assurance on the key evaluation products: inception report and draft evaluation report
- Participate in the validation meeting of the final evaluation report
- Participate in learning activities related to the evaluation report

LONG TERM OUTCOME: WOMEN AND GIRLS, BOTH ROHINGYA AND HOST COMMUNITY ARE EMPOWERED AND RESILIENT LEADERS, AND ARE ABLE TO ADDRESS AND BUILD SOCIAL

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Intermediate Outcome 1.1: Rohingya women have increased gender equitable household and community decision-making opportunities

Intermediate Outcome 1.2: Rohingya and host community women & girls have strengthened social ties with one another through participation in informal safety nets based on trust, reciprocity, and cooperation to empower one another

Intermediate Outcome 1.3: Rohingya women & girls and those in the host communities have increased opportunities to make pro-active and informed choices about their lives and their diversified livelihood strategies based on changing needs

OUTPUTS

Output 1.1: Gender equality is integrated in the Rohingya camps' government structures and processes.

Output 1.2: Women have increased capacity and skills to participate in community management and decision-making, in an enabling environment with links to women's networks, CBOs and women de-

Output 1.3: Opportunities, skills and livelihood opportunities of women and adolescent girls in host and Rohingya communities developed to enhance their leadership role and self-reliance

ACTIVITIES

- Gender Field Officers daily support to CICs to effectively address women's needs and concerns through technical advice, monitoring, coordination, capacity development and advocacy
- Community outreach volunteers supporting Gender Field Officers for community engagement (including with community women, men, adolescent boys and girls' groups), monitoring, advocacy and consultation on gender issues
- Community members and leaders, especially men and boys, are sensitized on women's leadership and participation in community decision-making processes in camps and villages
- Roll-out of Gender training module for CiCs and their staff and trainings with Site Management staff

- Leadership training modules developed and translated to roll out leadership training in host communities and camps, including through GiHA WG Women's Leadership TWG members
- Women leaders trained across blocks in targeted camps and villages in host communities including through Women Development Fora and women's CBOs/networks
- Community members and leaders, especially men and boys, are sensitized on women's leadership and participation in community decision-making processes in camps and villages
- Women leaders are mentored and coached
- Women from Rohingya and host communities trained in mediation and leadership skills
- Host Community and Rohingya women leaders are linked, strengthening positive relations; together they initiate and/or participate in activities to promote dialogue, mediation of conflicts and social cohesion
- Support capacity and system strengthening for Rohingya women's networks/CBOs in the camps.

- Operating the 3 multi-purpose women's centers in Ukhiya, Sadar and Teknaf to provide life-saving and comprehensive services, information and skills training
- Operating 5 multi-purpose women's centers in Rohingya camps to provide life-saving and comprehensive services, information and skills training for women and girls.
- Roll-out curriculum for education/learning for host community and Rohingya adolescent girls and young women in close collaboration with ISCG Education Sector and relevant Government authorities, and implement learning programme for young women and adolescent girls
- Provide livelihood skills training to HC women and adolescent girls
- Tools/Grants/seed funds programme for HC women to start income generations activities and Cash for Work options
- Link the selling of products to local markets in the host community, in the existing women's market in the refugee camp 5, and through linking to distributions by humanitarian agencies, and other suitable value chains identified.

Assumptions: An enabling policy and institutional environment for people including the most vulnerable and marginalized to gain access to assets they need for their social and economic well-being including health; Adequate financial and human resources including technical skills to address needs and challenges

Challenges: A protracted humanitarian crisis in Cox's Bazar intertwined with unexpected sudden crises (e.g., fire and the COVID-19 pandemic) in the camps exacerbate the pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination against Rohingya women & girls; Gender and cultural norms limiting decision-making opportunities and leadership roles including access to services and resources, and exposing Rohingya women & girls to various types of risks such as forced marriage ; Lack of income-generating opportunities and transferable skills affecting the resilience of both refugee and host community women and men and leading to negative coping mechanisms ; Limited resources and capacities for the Rohingya refugee response to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in the camps and host communities.

¹⁰⁵ This is based on the 2021 TOC of the Means To Lead Project, with adjustments comprising intermediate outcomes proposed by the Evaluation Team.

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

In 2000, 189 Member States adopted the Millennium Declaration, outlining a global vision for eradicating poverty eradication, fostering peace and security, protecting the environment, and achieving human rights and democracy.

Women's rights are recognized as a foundation for progress in all spheres. The Declaration pledges explicitly 'to combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)'. And it further recognizes the importance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as an effective pathway for combating poverty, hunger and disease and for stimulating sustainable development.

The Millennium Declaration also reconfirms the commitments made at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) and other major world conferences such as the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the Vienna Conference on Human Rights (1993), the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development (1995) and the Istanbul Conference on Human Settlements (1996).



Cox's Bazar Sub-office
UN Women Bangladesh

<https://www.facebook.com/unwomenbangladesh>

www.unwomen.org

www.twitter.com/un_women

www.youtube.com/unwomen

<https://www.flickr.com/unwomen>