

Ex post evaluation: Learning centres for children affected by the Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh

Title	Learning centres for children affected by the Rohingya crisis		
Sector and CRS code	Primary education 1122000		
Project number	Phase I: 41717; Phase II: 41897		
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)		
Recipient/Project-executing agency	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, UNICEF		
Project volume/ Financing instrument	Phase I*: Subsidy (transitional aid), EUR 4 million Phase II**: Subsidy (transitional aid), EUR 8 million		
Project duration	Phase I: 14 December 2017 (financing agreement) until 8 May 2019 (final inspection);; Phase II: December 2018 until June 2021. Note: The financing proposal for Phase I included an anticipated appraisal part for Phase II.		
Year of report	2022	Year of random sample	2021*/23**

Objectives and project outline

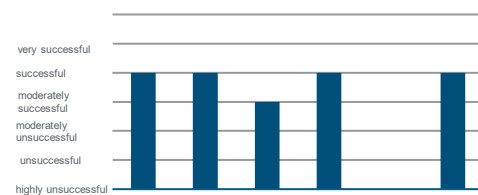
The project's objective at outcome level was: Children affected by the refugee crisis use the (Phase II: equal) access to (Phase II: standardised) informal primary education and school materials in a safe learning environment. At impact level, the intent is to improve the resilience and future prospects of Rohingya children. The FC funds made available to UNICEF were used to build 350 learning centres and latrines, provide school materials, train and pay teachers, and raise awareness of the importance of inclusive education.

Key findings

Despite difficult and challenging general conditions, the project was effective in terms of development policy and is rated as "successful" overall:

- By visiting learning centres, Rohingya children are not only provided with a minimum level of primary education, but also a little bit of normality and stability despite adverse circumstances and this reduces the risk of these children ultimately growing up to become a "lost generation".
- As it is often the case in a refugee context, the project's sustainability impact is limited as the measures implemented are only transitional in nature. The Rohingya community is completely dependent on support from the international donor community to meet basic needs and ensure educational opportunities. The restrictive attitude of the Bangladesh government with regard to the refugee situation also limits potential impacts and long-term developments. This has a limiting effect on the various areas with regard to the implementation of the project. For example, it is only possible to build temporary learning centres, the stipulation of the teaching language and remuneration restrict the pool of qualified teachers, and the certification of individual learning results remains a sensitive topic.
- However, the approach of promoting education in emergency situations is fundamentally to be understood as having lasting impacts, as children can benefit from the knowledge and cognitive skills acquired from their education both during the acute situation and for a lifetime.

Overall rating:
successful



Note: Due to the reduced sustainability requirements as part of the evaluation, the rating is not included in the overall rating.

Conclusions

- Raising awareness among the community and parents about the importance of inclusive education as well as involving them in activities are key factors for the success of the project. Different channels should be addressed within the scope of outreach measures to the greatest extent possible.
- Alternative learning options enable children who would otherwise be denied participation in lessons to still participate in the educational offering.
- To achieve peaceful coexistence and decrease the potential for social tensions, it is important to strike a balance between support for refugees and the local population ("do no harm").

Ex post evaluation – rating according to OECD-DAC criteria

General conditions and classification of the project

In 2017, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya, a Muslim minority of Myanmar, fled to neighbouring Bangladesh due to brutal attacks by the military. The Rohingya people have been suffering violence, discrimination, and persecution in Myanmar for decades. Myanmar is mostly Buddhist and does not recognise the minority living mainly in the northern part of Rakhing State in Myanmar that borders Bangladesh as an official ethnic group and has refused them citizenship since 1982. As a result, they are one of the largest stateless population groups in the world. The Rohingya have repeatedly protested this situation, as was the case on 25 August 2017. With the aim of establishing its own Rohingya State, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) rebel group carried out several attacks in the administrative area of Rakhing. The police and the army of Myanmar responded with a wave of violence that triggered a stream of refugees. According to reports, mass rape has occurred, tens of thousands of Rohingya have been killed and Rohingya villages have been partially or completely destroyed.¹ Due to the scale of the atrocities, the United Nations has accused the military of Myanmar of mass murder with “genocidal intent”² and describes what has happened as a “textbook example of ethnic cleansing”.³

In the past (e.g. 1978, 1991 and 1992), large numbers of refugees have occurred repeatedly. It is estimated that since becoming independent in 1948, Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, has seen around 1.5 million Rohingya go into exile. They mainly live in Bangladesh and other Asian countries. From the end of August 2017, the number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh increased dramatically as almost 750,000 Rohingya fled across the border within a few months (see Figure 1).

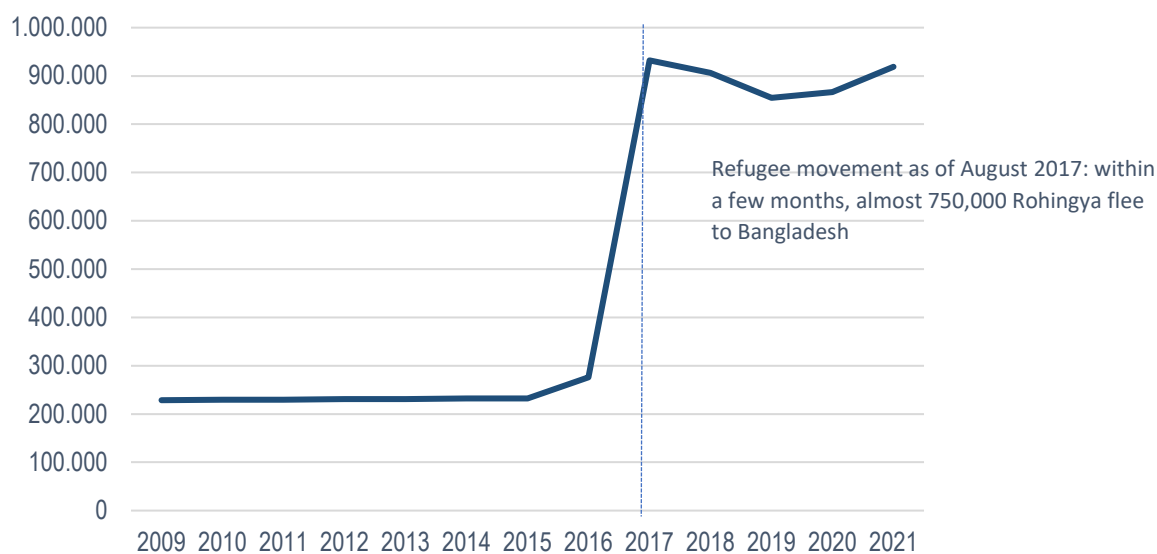


Figure 1: Number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh between 2009 and 2021. Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR). Own representation.

In the south-eastern border area of Cox’s Bazar, one of the poorest areas in Bangladesh, a total of 34 camps span over 3,000 hectares and, together, form the world’s largest refugee camp (“Megacamp”). The 926,486 Rohingya living there (as of May 2022, see Figure 2) are exposed to precarious conditions and repressive measures. Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and has avoided recognising Rohingya people as

¹ UN Human Rights Council (2018): Report of the detailed findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar. 17 September. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/FFM-Myanmar/A_HRC_39_CRP.2.docx

² Reuters (2018): Myanmar generals had “genocidal intent” against Rohingya, must face justice – UN. <https://www.reuters.com/article/myanmar-rohingya-un-idUSL8N1VH04R>

³ UN (2017): UN human rights chief points to ‘textbook example of ethnic cleansing’ in Myanmar. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/09/564622-un-human-rights-chief-points-textbook-example-ethnic-cleansing-myanmar>

'refugees'.⁴ The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) is not aiming to establish long-term Rohingya settlements and called on the government of Myanmar to take back refugees. Despite the agreement signed in November 2017 between Myanmar and Bangladesh on the return of displaced Rohingya and the tripartite letter of intent to support this agreement between Myanmar, UNHCR and UNDP in June 2018, the conditions for a secure, dignified and sustained return of Rohingya refugees are still not met to this day, especially after the military coup in February 2021. It can be assumed that the Rohingya will also remain in Bangladesh in the medium term. There, too, they do not have a secure legal status, do not enjoy the right to move freely, work or access formal education, and rely on humanitarian aid to meet all their basic needs.

Following Bangladesh's efforts to shoulder the task of supporting refugees with its own resources before the current refugee crisis, in view of the developments that took place, the GoB appealed for support to the international community, which has since contributed over USD 2.95 billion to the aid measures.⁵

The current interventions of humanitarian actors are being coordinated by the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) in Cox's Bazar and the Strategic Executive Group (SEG) in Dhaka in cooperation with the GoB, which has established a Joint Response Plan. The SEG is co-led by the United Nations (UN), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and coordinates with all international donors in Dhaka. The ISCG is – in close coordination with the government, in particular with the offices of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) and the Deputy Commissioner (DC) – the central coordination body for humanitarian organisations on the ground, which supports Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The different organisations are divided into 12 thematic sectors and subsectors (e.g. protection, health, WASH) and in working parties that focus on overarching topics (e.g. protection, gender in humanitarian aid, communication with communities). Together with Save the Children, UNICEF heads up the education sector. In this sector, Germany's FC is supporting learning centres for Rohingya refugee children in the camps, along with other donors, by providing transitional aid funds to UNICEF.

Brief description of the project

In order to strengthen the resilience and future prospects of Rohingya girls and boys affected by the refugee crisis, training opportunities were created in a safe learning environment in various phases (Phase I: 12/2017–12/2018; Phase II: 12/2018–06/2021, Phase III: since 01/2020, Phase IV: since 12/2021). These include the temporary construction of learning centres (LC), the construction of latrines, the provision of school materials and the recruitment and training of teachers, as well as measures to raise awareness of the importance of education. The target group of Phases I and II of the project were Rohingya refugee children from 4–14 years of age. The ex post evaluation covers Phases I & II, which have already been completed. While Phase I was part of the 2021 grab sample, Phase II was bundled as part of the ex post evaluation and is also part of the 2023 grab sample. Since the developmental impacts are often difficult to define, all phases are taken into account in terms of content.

Breakdown of total costs

The amount of TA funds for Phases I & II is as follows. There was no provision for the Bangladeshi government to make a counterpart contribution. The remaining costs were covered by further UNICEF funds.

		Phase I (Planned)	Phase I (Ac- tual)	Phase II (Planned)	Phase II (Ac- tual)*
Investment costs (total)	EUR million	5,769,800	6,004,034	8,000,000	/
Counterpart contribution		0	0	0	/
EUR million					
Debt financing	EUR million	5,769,800	6,004,034	0	/
<i>Of which budget funds (BMZ)</i>		4,000,000	3,999,841	8,000,000	/
EUR million					

* The final inspection for Phase II was not available at the time of the evaluation.

⁴ Instead, they are referred to as 'forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals'.

⁵ Joint Response Plan 2021, funding update, December 2021, ISCG.

Map/satellite image of the project country including project areas

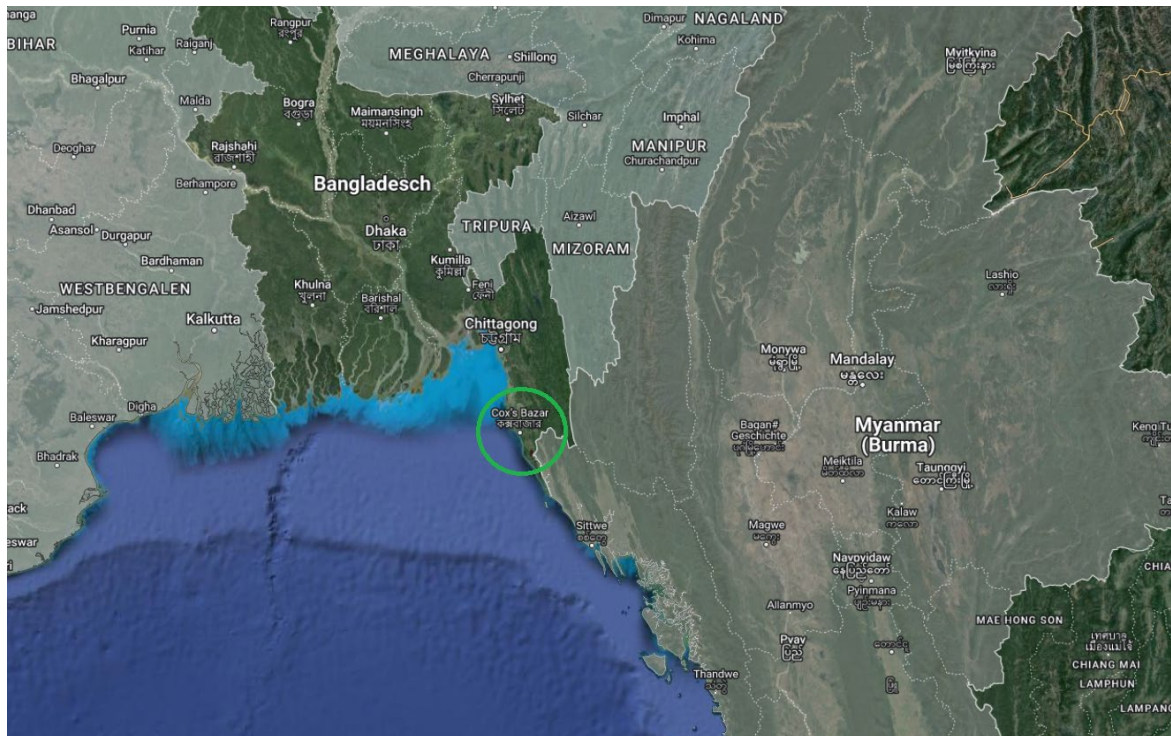


Figure 2a: Satellite image of the project location (marked green). Source: own presentation (KfW Development Bank based on ©Maxar Inc/Google, Global Administrative Database (GADM) V.4.1)



Figure 2b: Locations of refugee camps (in red). Source: own presentation (KfW Development Bank based on <https://data.humdata.org>, Global Administrative Database (GADM) V.4.1)

Rating according to OECD-DAC criteria

Relevance

Policy and priority focus

In the context of Germany's development policy, the project is in line with the strategy published in July 2020 for structural transitional aid from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)⁶ to strengthen the resilience of particularly hard-hit people and local structures. In addition, it follows the German Federal Government's human rights approach of inclusive development and the core objective of poverty reduction and overcoming the causes of poverty. In addition to the funds from other donors, German FC provided transitional aid funds to UNICEF for this purpose. UNICEF ensures coordination with national programmes and sector strategies as part of its continuous and long-term cooperation with the GoB. A critical issue remains the restrictive refugee policy of the GoB, which poses challenges to implementation. At the same time, it is important to find appropriate balance in terms of support for the Rohingya people and the local population ("do no harm").

Focus on needs and capacities of participants and stakeholders

Given that the age group of 4 to 14-year-old children accounts for 57% of the population aged 3 to 24 years, the focus on this group (in Phases I to III) is understandable within the sector strategy in response to the large number of incoming refugee children. In this respect, however, the supply of education is largely limited to primary education and leaves a gap in the area of secondary education. At the time before the COVID-19 pandemic, 83% of youth and young adults aged 15 to 24 years did not have access to education.⁷ This aspect is currently being taken into account both in Phase IV of the project, which also addresses older children and adolescents between the ages of 8⁵–18, and in the FC project "Future-advancing measures for teenagers and young adults inside and outside of Rohingya refugee camps", which focuses on improving training, youth protection and everyday skills for older children and adolescents (see "Coherence" section). However, demand remains high.

While the focus in Phase I of the project was initially on direct access to LCs for the large number of incoming children, explicit focus has been and continues to be placed on inclusive and gender-friendly education in the subsequent phases (II–IV) to this day. This is important because, for example, sociocultural barriers (23%), marriage (36%) and responsibility for supporting tasks at home (20%)⁹ make it difficult to participate in education, especially for girls aged 12 and over.

Appropriateness of design

Over half of the 900,000 Rohingya displaced from Myanmar are children under the age of 18.¹⁰ Due to the experiences of migration and displacement, they reach the camps and provisional settlements with severe trauma. Visiting public schools remains denied to Rohingya children as a consequence of the restrictive refugee policy of the GoB. This includes lessons in Bengali and the use of the national curriculum. Taking into account the political and institutional framework conditions, the FC projects therefore initially aimed to provide children with a minimum level of primary education, not only through visiting informal LCs, but also give them a little bit of normality and stability in a sheltered environment, despite the adverse circumstances in the improvised and chaotic refugee camps.

The design and the underlying impact chain, according to which the use of (equal) access to (standardised) informal primary education and school materials in a secure learning environment (outcome level) improves the resilience (i.e. psychological resilience) and future prospects of the Rohingya children (impact level)¹¹ appear plausible and comprehensible. With regard to target achievement at outcome level, the planned measures to raise awareness among the Rohingya community of the importance of inclusive education are considered essential –

⁶ BMZ081_Strategie_Uebergangshilfe_200720_bf.pdf.

⁷ Education Sector in Cox's Bazar – Multi-year Strategy (2020), p.19.

⁸ Phase IV targets children and young people ages 5–18 years old. The target group's altered age range compared to the previous phase results from the switch to the Myanmar Curriculum, which is intended for young people up to the age of 18.

⁹ "Education Sector in Cox's Bazar – Multi-year Strategy", 2020, p.22.

¹⁰ Joint Government of Bangladesh – UNHCR Population Factsheet (31 May 2022).

¹¹ The formulation of a target at impact level only took place from Phase III onwards and was adopted accordingly.

particularly given that access to educational opportunities in the home country was severely restricted and the illiteracy rate is correspondingly high, as well as that traditions are critical of girls attending school. The construction of LC-owned latrines should also have a positive effect on participation in lessons, as children do not have to use latrines outside the learning environment, which should reduce safety concerns (especially for girls). With regard to target achievement at impact level, it seems plausible that, on the one hand, the skills learned improve the refugees' future prospects in the event of a possible return to their home country (in the long term) and (in the short and medium term) within the refugee camps by increasing their qualifications for working on income-generating measures (e.g. "refugee volunteer programmes"¹²).

In accordance with the strategy of structural transitional aid, the project holistically addresses the improvement of the resilience of Rohingya children: Education offers children the opportunity to develop their cognitive, emotional and physical potential in a protected space, for example by providing knowledge, support and, last but not least, relationships with peers as well as schedules and a regulated daily routine, and thus to benefit from the education they have obtained beyond the acute situation and improve their future prospects. Without alternative education, they ran the risk of growing into a "lost generation". Education is not only beneficial from the perspective of each individual, but also limits the loss of social capital for society as a whole and significant socio-economic consequences.

Response to changes/adaptability

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions have been a major challenge for the provision of education services in the Rohingya refugee camps since March 2020. For example, the GoB classified education as a "non-essential service". As a result, LCs were closed and access to the camps was restricted for professionals employed in the education and child protection sector. The executing agency reacted with regard to the implementation of the project by enabling education in the form of alternative COVID-19-adapted learning opportunities (see "Effectiveness"). Furthermore, it is not clear that the earmarking of funds had a hindering effect on responsiveness, as the projects were embedded in the coordinated measures of the education sector.

Summary of the rating:

From today's perspective, the programme's relevance is rated high. Since Rohingya children are not allowed to attend public schools, informal educational opportunities are the only way to learn basic knowledge in the camps. Almost half a million refugee children depend on the support of the global donor community. There is still a high unmet need which needs to be addressed – especially in the 15–24 age group. Against the backdrop of the speed with which it was necessary to respond to the needs of the unexpected flood of refugees in the initial phase and the political and institutional framework conditions in which the project can move, the relevance of the project is assessed as successful overall.

Relevance: successful

Coherence

Internal coherence

The projects supplement humanitarian aid, including the German Federal Government's use of funds from the German Federal Foreign Office (AA) in Bangladesh, with structural support. For example, humanitarian funds from the AA were used to support health services for people with disabilities in the short term. Phases II–IV of the

¹² Since Rohingya refugees do not have work permits, the two most important official income-generating opportunities are participation in Cash-for-Work and volunteer programmes. These follow specific rules defined by the ISCG in Cox's Bazar and were approved by the GoB. Cash-for-Work programmes usually employ unskilled workers and limit the duration of the service to up to 16 consecutive days or 32 days spread over three months. Volunteers, on the other hand, may have different qualifications and the duration of the activity is not necessarily limited. Depending on their qualifications, Rohingya volunteers' tasks in the camps may include fire fighting, disaster prevention and management, healthcare, cleaning or even teaching within the framework of the LCs. Rohingya refugees taking part in the Cash-for-Work and volunteer programmes are compensated for the period of activity, but are not considered employees and do not receive a wage (see UNHCR (2022): The Impact of Financial Assistance through Volunteer Programmes in Cox's Bazar Refugee Camps).

project built on this by, among other things, providing support to people with disabilities as part of the educational offering.

The project is complementary to phases I–III of the FC project “Future-advancing measures for teenagers and young adults inside and outside of Rohingya refugee camps” (BMZ nos.: 2018 18 616; 2019 18 523; 2020 18 455), which focuses on improving education, child protection and everyday skills for older children and young people. Two further FC projects (BMZ nos.: 2018 68 843, 2020 68 534) contribute to improving the life and health situation by improving access to climate-resilient infrastructure, strengthening disaster resilience and the social resilience of the population, and improving sanitation and waste management for Rohingya camps and host communities.

As part of a multi-year programme, GIZ is supporting capacity building to resolve conflicts peacefully and to eliminate the causes of conflicts between Rohingya and the host communities, which will also benefit the project under evaluation.

The project is aligned with the Holistic Education in Emergencies (EiE) principle¹³ and supports the human right to education. The project is consistent with the international and national norms and standards acknowledged by German DC, and thus generally meets suitability requirements in terms of internal coherence.

External coherence

Supplying refugees presents the GoB with enormous infrastructural, financial, humanitarian, political and cultural challenges. After making efforts to shoulder the task of supporting refugees with its own resources, it appealed to the international community for support following the dramatic increase in refugees in August 2017.

The proposed measures are part of the Sector Response Plan in the area of education, which is coordinated via ISCG and funded by other donors. Together with Save the Children, UNICEF holds the sector coordination for education in the crisis response mechanism for the Rohingya refugee crisis. UNICEF is cooperating closely in Cox’s Bazar with other UN organisations and various international and national NGOs in almost all areas, including education. Sector coordination is therefore a useful instrument for donor coordination and harmonisation in terms of external coherence.

The scale and speed of the refugee flow came as a surprise. With UNICEF as the executing agency, a long-standing actor (active in Bangladesh since 1952) was deployed and existing structures were thus used.

Summary of the rating:

Due to the overall good internal and external coherence of the project, it is rated as successful.

Coherence: successful

Effectiveness

Achievement of (intended) targets

The objective underlying the evaluation at outcome level is: Girls and boys affected by the refugee crisis have (Phase II: equal) access to (Phase II: standardised) informal primary education and school materials in a safe learning environment and use them. In the UNICEF results matrix, target achievement was predominantly measured using output-oriented indicators, which restricts the impact measurement. As part of the evaluation, these are used as proxy indicators to measure the impacts at outcome level and, as far as possible, supplemented with data for use. UNICEF and its partners have been surveying the presence of Rohingya children enrolled in the LCs since March 2022.

The achievement of the key indicators in relation to target achievement can be summarised as follows (with regard to further measures at output level to support target achievement, reference is made to the statements in the text):

¹³ “Education in Emergencies – EiE” is a core element of global humanitarian aid and includes a range of activities aimed at providing children affected by humanitarian crises with uninterrupted and high-quality learning opportunities.

Indicator	Status during PA	Target value according to PA/EPE	Actual value at final inspection (optional)	Actual value at EPE
(1)				
Output level Phase I: Over 35,000 Rohingya girls and boys receive access to informal primary education, a basic supply of standardised school materials and benefit from a safe and protective learning environment	0	> 35,000	Final inspection (April 2019): 35,700	Value partially achieved: In May 2022, 24,514 children (11,951 girls and 12,563 boys, including 104 children with disabilities (as of April 2022) were enrolled in the 350 LCs. See text for further explanatory notes. see above
Phase II: Over 36,700 Rohingya girls and boys receive high-quality informal basic education and a basic supply of standardised school materials in a safe and protective learning environment.	0	> 36,700	/	
Outcome level Attendance rate of enrolled children	0	/	/	On average 78% of enrolled children attended classes in the LCs (as of May 2022)
(2)				
Output level Phase I: 450 teachers are recruited and receive education and training on the topics of inclusion, vital skills and psychosocial support	0	450	Final inspection (April 2019): 700	Value achieved: The 700 teachers (414 women and 286 men) contracted by UNICEF implementing partners are trained to teach in the 350 LCs, including 350 Burmese teachers (135 women) and 350 national teachers (278 women), as of May 2022.
Phase II: 700 teachers are hired and trained to make lessons gender-sensitive and student-oriented based on the developed curriculum.	0	700		
(3)				
Output level Phase I:	0	350		

350 LCs, including toilets and handwashing facilities are in place			Final inspection (April 2019): 350 LCs, 334 latrines	Value partially achieved: In May 2022, 331 of the 350 LCs were open and operational. 269 LCs have direct access to functioning latrines. See text for further explanatory notes.
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Contribution to achieving targets

Development until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic:

Until the COVID-19 pandemic-related closure of the LCs in March 2020, according to UNICEF¹⁴ 37,723 Rohingya children, including 181 children with disabilities, had access to learning opportunities at output level – initially under Phase I and then Phase II of the project. Of these children, 35,700 (17,493 girls and 18,207 boys) between the ages of 4–14 attended an LC, and 2,023 children between the ages of 10–14 took part in alternative learning methods such as Big Brother, Big Sister.¹⁵

For this purpose, 350 LCs were built during Phase I until April 2019 – with a potential utilisation of approx. 35–40 children per LC per school shift. Due to a lack of space in the camps or lack of building permits, only 334 latrines were built instead of the 350 that were planned. A total of 700 teachers (539 of them women) from the host communities and the Rohingya community were recruited and trained. Pedagogical training and education with regard to academic content and general life skills for teachers was essential – especially in view of the different educational backgrounds among Rohingya and teachers from Bangladesh.

Initially, 1.5 teachers were planned per LC. During the implementation period, in line with the recommendations of the education sector, this ratio was increased to 2 teachers (one Bangladeshi teacher from the host community and one teacher recruited from the Rohingya community (Burmese Language Instructor, BLI)) per LC. The bilingual (Burmese, English) ad hoc learning package during Phase I – consisting of 3 learning levels – addressed the educational needs of children between the ages of 5 and 14. While Phase I initially focused on direct access to education for the large number of arriving children, a new, sector-wide learning architecture (Learning Competency Framework and Approach, LCFA) was introduced in 2019 (during Phase II) with the involvement of Bangladesh’s Ministry of Education. This consisted of a range of learning skills (English, Burmese, Mathematics, “Life Skills” and Science) for four different levels and enables children to participate in developmental learning experiences classified according to their skills, not their age. In line with the LCFA, the switch from three to two shifts per learning centre per day was initiated in the last quarter of 2018, so that instead of just two hours per day, pupils (except Level 1) now receive four hours of lessons per day. Phase II (as well as all other phases) should explicitly take inclusive and gender-friendly education into account. This applies in particular to children with disabilities as well as girls, especially in higher classes, as, due to socio-cultural norms, girls often leave school upon entering puberty if there are obstacles such as security concerns, a lack of female teachers and gender-separated latrines or even gender-separated classrooms.

During Phase II, 700 teachers continued to be paid and trained to teach the LCFA. Since the end of 2019, teachers have also received training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse as well as on disaster prevention, prevention of gender-based violence and inclusive education. In addition, the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) framework, which includes standardised teacher skills and quality standards for teacher training, was finalised in mid-2020. These include modules for specialist teacher training and modules for child-centred pedagogy. A total of 72 Master’s trainers (34 female and 38 male) were trained based on the TPD framework for teacher professional development.

¹⁴ UNICEF Final Report, August 2021.

¹⁵ This is an alternative learning concept that was introduced in 2019 and in which young carers between the ages of 15 to 18 support children between the ages of 6 to 14 years.

All of the 350 LCs were repaired and maintained at the start of Phase II, and maintenance was performed on latrines connected to 243 LCs. Since construction began in 2017, the LC design has been continuously developed based on learning experience. While LCs did not offer sufficient protection against wind and rain in the first phase, over time, greater climate resilience was achieved through renovation measures (e.g. stronger walls, sandbags, connecting roofs, stabilisation with bamboo), particularly in the design of rainwater drainage.

As the Rohingya community's commitment is key to promoting inclusive education for children in LCs, the standard for the education sector requires that a Learning Centre Management Committee (LCMC) be established in each LC. The seven members are made up of parents, community and religious leaders and a teacher (including at least three women). The latter is particularly important for questions and decisions that may affect girls' enrolment and school attendance. In this respect, LCMC support for education is a crucial element of the education sector strategy and is intended to guarantee local ownership of the administration and operation of the LC. During the closure of the LCs, LCMCs provided links between the partners and the Rohingya community and provided support, for example, when planning home visits. At the time of the UNICEF Final Report (August 2021), 2,443 (1,228 female) LCMC members participated in training courses on topics such as school administration (tasks and responsibilities), disaster prevention in general and disaster management at school level as well as child protection. Meanwhile, the LCMC has been renamed the "Parents Support Group".

In order to raise awareness among parents and community members of the importance of inclusive education and other child protection issues (promoting hygiene, reducing traditional practices such as child marriage, child labour, domestic violence, disaster preparedness and communicable diseases), communication campaigns were also carried out both in Phase I and Phase II (number of people reached in Phase I: 15,377, Phase II: 32,916).

In Phase I, 350 early childhood development (ECD) and school-in-a-box kits containing essential educational material were distributed. Consumables (such as pens, notebooks, etc.) are replenished by the IPs with local materials as soon as they run out. In Phase II, additional learning materials were provided from FC funds. In general, all children enrolled in the 350 LCs receive learning materials; these include workbooks and additional worksheets, materials from the ECD and school-in-a-box kits, school bags and school supplies that are either financed from FC funds or funds from other donors. During the evaluation, a random assessment of the stock of the school-in-a-box kits took place – in some cases, the boxes were used to store various materials, and it was unclear whether all the materials that were to be distributed had already been distributed to the children. However, all respondents (both pupils and teachers) expressed their satisfaction with the materials provided and reported that these are replenished by IPs as needed.

Challenges during project implementation:

Phase II initially envisaged the construction of 125 new LCs. This was changed in 2020 (before construction began) in favour of the design of a semi-permanent infrastructure in the construction of 47 double-storey LCs. Following approval from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), preparatory work took place at 32 sites for the construction of the double-storey LCs. This work consisted of the demolition of the single-storey temporary LCs located there. At the beginning of 2021, however, the GoB made the policy decision to withdraw the building permit. The reconstruction of the destroyed 32 single-storey temporary LCs as well as an LC financed from FC funds, which was demolished as the space was required for a police station, is currently being implemented in Phase III with the funds earmarked for the construction of the double-storey LCs. In view of the climatic conditions and the limited space¹⁶ for building new LCs, from today's perspective of the evaluation, it would have been very welcome to see both semi-permanent infrastructure instead of temporary bamboo constructions as well as the double-storey construction. A total of 185 LCs were damaged as a result of a fire in March and severe flooding in July 2021. The repair work took place until mid-2022.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LCs were closed from March 2020 to September 2021 and January 2022 to March 2022. Nevertheless, UNICEF and other stakeholders continued to strive to provide education in the form of alternative COVID-19-adapted learning opportunities. In addition to the distribution of teaching materials for "caregiver-led learning"¹⁷ and home visits by teachers, this also included technology-supported distance learning (e.g. teaching units for radios stored on SD cards). However, inadequate Internet access in refugee camps and

¹⁶ This is exacerbated by the monsoon and the resulting complications such as land erosion. Freely available land is initially used for new accommodation.

¹⁷ In this model, an immediate family member or a person from the learner's immediate vicinity is designated as a "caregiver" to provide the learner with the necessary guidance and support. The Burmese teachers (BLIs) then provide support for the caregivers for the weekly activities the learner needs to complete and the relevant materials (i.e. worksheets, workbook pages, etc.).

the ban on acquiring SIM cards for Rohingya refugees represent a major obstacle to distance learning and contact-free training for teachers. According to the ISCG Joint Multi-Sector Needs Assessment survey in May 2021, 62% of households reported difficulties in supporting their children’s online lessons. The lack of learning materials, the lack of guidance from teachers and insufficient educational background of parents/household members to support children were the biggest obstacles to online lessons.¹⁸ The latter was also confirmed by the focus group discussions with the parents conducted as part of the evaluation mission.

Between October 2021 and January 2022, teaching restrictions were partially removed and lessons continued (with the exception of Level 1 pupils) with reduced class sizes (maximum 15 children per class 2–3 times per week). The LCs have been open again since 2 March 2022. UNICEF and partners are committed to returning all previously enrolled children to the LCs, but the long closure of the LCs has had a strong impact on the children’s attendance.

Current development and status quo:

Phases III & IV of the project (ongoing) largely continue the inclusive approach of Phase II, with the transition from the LCFA to the national curriculum of Myanmar (Myanmar Curriculum, MC) currently taking place. The curriculum offers standardised education to Rohingya refugee children and also closes an important gap in secondary education: It also enables older children, who previously had little access to education, to receive school education. This was very welcomed by the parents. The lessons started on 5 December 2021. In May 2022, 1,912 children (320 girls, 1,592 boys) were enrolled at the supported LCs for lessons according to the MC. The transfer from the LCFA to the MC will now take place successively.

At the time of the evaluation, with regard to the LCs supported by German FC in Phases III & IV, 24,514 children (11,951 girls and 12,563 boys (as of May 2022), of which, 104 had disabilities (as of April 2022)) continued to receive access to school materials and LCs, with 331 of the 350 LCs being open and in operation.¹⁹ In this respect, indicators 1(a) and 3 can be considered only partially achieved. However, it can be assumed that these will achieve their objectives again as soon as normal operation resumes or all repair and reconstruction work has been carried out. With regard to the impact measurement at outcome level (new indicator 1(b)), the data collected in May 2022 shows that an average of 78% of children enrolled participated in lessons in the LCs. If the attendance rate is differentiated according to learning level, it is still around 80% for children at levels 1 and 2 and falls to around 60% for levels 3 and 4 (see Figure 3). This observation is in line with frequently expressed obstacles to school attendance for older children, i.e. as children age, they increasingly participate in income-generating measures or cultural reasons restrict the participation of girls. This is already reflected in the comparatively low enrolment numbers for higher learning levels. It can also be assumed that the lack of opportunity to certify learning progress to date (see Impact section) has a rather demotivating effect on participation in higher classes.

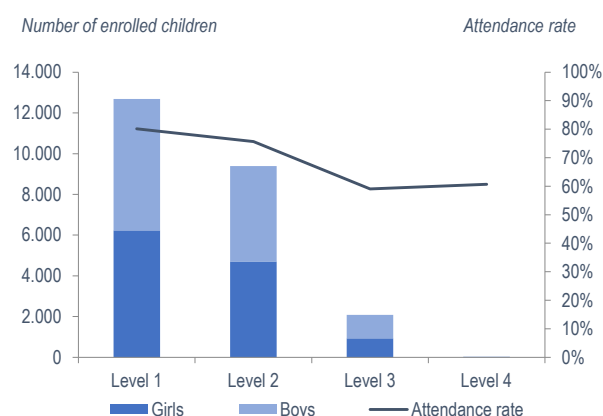


Figure 3: Differentiated by learning level (according to the LCFA), the left axis measures the number of enrolled children, while the right axis shows the attendance rate (as of May 2022). At that time, the number of children enrolled in level 4 was only 26. Source: UNICEF attendance records.

The LCs visited as part of the evaluation mission were all operational and were used. The condition varied, but in all cases it was good to acceptable. These included both a pre-selected, representative selection of LCs by UNICEF and spontaneous visits. With regard to the latter, it is worth highlighting the positive reaction of the

¹⁸ ISCG (2021, May): Joint Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (J-MSNA), Rohingya Refugees, p.33.

¹⁹ Children who were enrolled in LCs that were still closed were able to attend classes at nearby LCs.

teachers, although the visit came unexpectedly for them. They were very open and proud to show the LCs (“Welcome to my school”). Although this only reflects anecdotal evidence, this observation is a very positive sign and highlights the fact that the participating teachers identified with the projects.

269 of the LCs have direct access to functioning latrines, while the children in the remaining 81 LCs can use nearby latrines in the community. During the mission, the condition of the latrines was also randomly checked. This led to the following observations: In view of the safety concerns for children, especially for older girls, the use of latrines outside the LCs must be viewed critically, even if this is sometimes unavoidable due to the limited space available. Since there is an explicit focus on inclusive education from Phase II onwards, it was examined whether the latrines were designed in a way that is suitable for disabled people, which is not the case. If this type of design had been taken into account from the outset, the additional costs would have amounted to approx. 5–10%, whereas the costs for subsequent adjustments are significantly higher. During the inspection, it was also observed that the latrines doors can be locked from both inside and outside, with the latter causing safety concerns. With regard to the condition of the latrines, it should be noted that the latrines belonging to the LCs are cleaned by cleaning personnel and were in an acceptable condition. However, this does not apply to all latrines visited outside the LCs maintained by the community. The latter is particularly relevant for teenage girls.

With regard to indicator 2, at the time of the evaluation, 700 teachers (414 women and 286 men) were contracted by UNICEF IPs and trained for teaching in the 350 LCs – including 350 BLIs (135 women) and 350 national teachers (278 women). It should be noted that the transition from the LCFA to the MC will change the composition and profiles of teachers in the future. Finding qualified teachers remains a challenge. The situation has recently been exacerbated by the government’s decision to cut teachers’ salaries and the higher requirements for teachers’ training in connection with the introduction of the MC. As the MC is based on the Burmese language, it will be necessary to hire a higher proportion of Rohingya teachers with a level of education that is, on average, lower than that of the local teachers, further exacerbating the problem. A recent ASER Plus assessment (2nd Round, 2021, Draft version, see “Impact” section) proves that support from BLIs during the closure of LCs had a significant impact on learners’ performance in the Burmese test, but no significant impact on English and mathematics, indicating that teachers’ qualifications have potential for improvement. Apart from this, the BLIs are not recognised by the authorities as teachers, but as volunteers who receive a premium per month instead of a salary, which has a demotivating effect.

In formulating the objectives of Phase II, equal access to educational opportunities was set aside. Important aspects for the promotion of inclusive and gender-friendly education were partially addressed in measures during Phase II – but not yet sufficiently addressed and only initiated and/or continued in later phases. For example, in terms of equal access to education for girls – such as single-gender teaching, provision of female mentors and accompanying persons for the journey to school or an increase in the proportion of female teaching staff – it would have been desirable if the measures carried out in Phase IV had already been initiated at the beginning of Phase II. In addition, the original plan was to provide 3,500 children with disabilities with adequate aids based on a screening carried out beforehand in order to enable them to be better integrated into educational offerings. Screening included 1,297 children, 657 of whom were disabled, 77 of whom were provided with assistance. This is significantly below the target of 3,500 children, but covers 100% of the children examined who had a corresponding need. The target value was corrected to 1,102 due to a lower than expected demand and the intention is to achieve this during Phase III. Given that 3% of the population is affected by disabilities, this percentage is to be achieved in the future when addressing pupils. In this context, alternative learning methods already introduced before the pandemic should be continued to help children facing particular obstacles (e.g. children with disabilities, teenage girls) to provide access to education.

Quality of implementation

UNICEF’s comparative advantage in terms of target achievement lies in its leadership role in the education sector and in the area of child protection, among other areas. UNICEF works in close cooperation with the Bangladesh government, the relevant ministries, other UN organisations and other international and local partners.

In the context of the Rohingya refugee crisis, a branch office was set up in Cox’s Bazar, which is supported by the Regional Office in Chittagong. While the branch office had only 11 employees before August 2017, there are currently more than 100 employees there who organise and coordinate implementation by partner organisations (NGOs).

UNICEF's on-site activity in cooperation with partner organisations (NGOs) and the network of government or organisations that existed before August 2017 proved to be very favourable in terms of responsiveness, even if the scale of the refugee flow came unexpectedly.²⁰

Unintended consequences (positive or negative)

The Rohingya camps are located in and around a formerly protected forest area where important flora and fauna have been lost. In order to rebuild parts of the destroyed environment and reduce the impact of the camps on the environment, the government and ISCG developed a concept for greening the camps. During the monsoon season in 2019, plantings were carried out in 196 out of 250 planned LCs. Due to the density of buildings in the camps, it is not possible to equip all LCs with gardens. Further planting plans were hindered by COVID-19-related restrictions but have continued since the LCs opened. During the evaluation mission, evidence emerged that the cleaning staff working in the LCs have taken over the task of maintaining the gardens. In the sense of strengthening ownership, it would be beneficial if responsibility for the gardens was given to the pupils, for example.

Summary of the rating:

Although not all indicators were fully achieved at the time of the evaluation, it can be assumed that the target values can be achieved again in the near future based on the current status. Since 2017, the measures have followed a continuous process of further development – both in terms of the structural development of the LCs and the content and structural development of the teaching content. The recent introduction of the MC can be seen as a milestone in the education of Rohingya children. In connection with this, the challenge of ensuring sufficient quality of teaching continues to rise at the same time. It is also important and positive to note that particular significance is placed on aspects of inclusive access to education. Against the backdrop of the enormous challenges that the project has had to face (and still faces), it is rated as successful.

Effectiveness: successful

Efficiency

Production efficiency

In principle, it can be assumed that the inputs of the programme were used sparingly and in a needs-based manner in relation to the outputs provided. For example, the implementation plan for Phase I originally included the construction of the water supply in addition to separate toilet units for boys and girls. At the time of project implementation, however, it was decided at camp management level that the WASH sector would take over the water supply in the camps, while the education sector would guarantee the availability of toilet facilities, including hand washing stations, in the LCs. Some of the funds saved were used to improve the LCs in accordance with the recommendations of an independent construction company commissioned by UNICEF. These maintenance measures were not included in the original construction budget but are crucial for the sustainability of the LCs toilets (additional bamboo columns, beams and metal rods reinforce the LCs against strong winds). Another part of the funds saved was used to hire and train teachers.

As already explained in the "Effectiveness" section, the building permit for the construction of two-storey LCs (in Phase II) with greater capacity was withdrawn by the GoB, so the intent is to implement the reconstruction of the LCs already demolished for this purpose with the financial resources in Phase III. This development (i.e. the reduced costs) naturally has a negative impact on the efficiency of the project. However, according to the original plan, the demolition was necessary as there were no alternate sites for building the two-storey LCs and the selection of the sites was also needs-based. Reuse of the materials was also not possible due to the nature or limited useful life of the building materials (mainly bamboo), so the demolished components were distributed to community members as firewood.

During the first six months after the influx, the IPs did not follow a consistent approach to constructing the LCs. In 2018, however, a harmonised design was introduced, which has since been continuously improved (the current

²⁰ UNICEF (2018): Evaluation of UNICEF's Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Bangladesh, p.30.

building design follows the design from 2019) and leads to increased efficiency in the construction. There is also a monthly exchange of best practices between implementation partner (IP) engineers and UNICEF engineers.

Staff turnover among teachers appears low, which is cost-effective in terms of the funds allocated to teacher training. Although teacher retention is not continuously documented, an informal survey of teachers, during recent monitoring visits by partners, shows that most of them have been working on the project for three to five years. However, as mentioned above, the current teacher structure will change as a result of the introduction of the MC.

Overall, there was a slight deviation in the planned investment costs during project implementation (in Phase I). For example, the total costs (with the same transitional aid contribution) have risen by around 4%. This is due, among other things, to an increase in the costs for implementation in the project area (increase in prices for transport and logistics (office rents, warehouses) and scarce construction resources such as bamboo) as well as the higher number of trained teachers that became necessary, whose payment increased due to high demand.

Delays in implementation resulted, among other things, from delayed building permits, the limited free construction space in the camps and the delivery of building materials. The draft for the introduction of the LCFA was already available to the GoB in February 2018, but the new learning architecture was only introduced at the beginning of 2019. While the MC was already approved by the National Task Force in January 2021, the COVID-19 crisis, the associated closure of LCs and delays on the part of the authorities requesting additional information about the programme delayed the planned launch of the MC from April to December 2021.

UNICEF's administrative costs amount to 8% (standard administrative costs) and are rated as appropriate, also in comparison with other projects. There is no reason to believe that production efficiency could have been increased by using a different executing agency.

Allocation efficiency

The temporary bamboo constructions of the LCs require constant maintenance, especially in the face of harsh weather conditions with heavy rainfall and flooding. Approximately 70% need minor or major repairs, while 30% need to be rebuilt every year. This means that a substantial maintenance budget must be made available each year to keep the LCs operational. Against this background, it would have been desirable from the point of view of allocation efficiency (as intended) to set up multi-storey LCs instead of temporary, permanent LCs due to space constraints. On the one hand, the intended impacts could have been achieved more cost-effectively in the longer term through a permanent building structure and, on the other hand, a larger number of children could have been reached, thus achieving positive impacts at outcome and impact level.

It is likely that a higher participation of girls could have been achieved through single-gender classes. This approach has been piloted, but no official figures are available. A systematic introduction of single-gender classes should take place under the MC. In order to strengthen parents' trust and to counteract safety concerns, it would generally be worth considering the extent to which parents could be more involved in school activities.

Raising awareness among the community and parents of the importance of education is a key factor in the success of the project. In the first months of 2020 (Phase II), UNICEF involved 150 religious leaders in spreading messages to parents about inclusive education and other issues of child protection. Support from e.g., religious leaders, or even LCMCs, is indeed an important element of the whole process. To address further channels within the framework of outreach activities, social workers, for example, could also be integrated into the process in order to contact community members directly.

The World Food Programme (WFP) school meals programme distributes High Energy Biscuits (HEB) to children visiting LCs. An additional offer of hot meals could also incentivise parents to support school attendance. If cooking is not possible due to the limited space in the camps, alternative meals that the children find appealing could be offered. The approval of the GoB, which already believes that the Rohingya people are already receiving a great deal of rations, could be critical.

With regard to allocation efficiency, it is generally regarded as positive that the detailed measures are defined at sector level during programme implementation on the basis of need assessments, i.e. in order to make sure that children can visit an LC near their accommodation, the need for education is determined beforehand with the help of a survey.

Summary of the rating:

The efficiency of the project depends to a large extent on the available possibilities and framework conditions (e.g. limited sustainability, limitations with regard to implementation). Against this background, this is rated as moderately successful.

Efficiency: moderately successful

Impact

The impact-level objective underlying the EPE was to enhance the resilience and future prospects of Rohingya children by using (Phase II: equal) access to (Phase II: standardised) informal education in a safe learning environment and to improve protective measures. Data on school performance improvement are used to measure impact to the greatest extent possible (see explanations below).

Overarching developmental changes (intended)

A total of 5,430 learning facilities were created as of May 2022. These are made up of 3,424 (63%) LCs, 1,968 (36%) community-based learning institutions and 38 (1%) cross-sector shared learning institutions.²¹ A total of 308,259 Rohingya children are enrolled in these, 93% (288,315) of whom belong to the 3–14-year-old age group and 7% (19,944) to the 15–24-year-old age group.

One challenge with regard to impact measurement at impact level is that the certification of individual learning results and continuous progress monitoring is a sensitive topic for the GoB. As a result, it has not yet been possible to measure success at this level. The ASER+ study,²² which was carried out in the camps in 2018 and 2021, provides a framework for measuring performance improvement. The evaluation includes performance improvement data based on the last ASER+ study (draft version, 2021, 2nd round) as proxy indicators. The representative grab sample from the second round includes 2,413 children (971 girls, 1,442 boys) from the four different learning levels and takes into account the three subjects Burmese, English and mathematics. The data serves as the basis for deriving an aggregated measurement of learning progress.

The most important results can be summarised as follows:

- (1) Despite the long closure of the LCs, almost all children (97.7% of boys, 98.4% of girls) indicated that they continued to learn.
- (2) Learning progress was shown in all subjects of learning levels I–IV, i.e. 49.1% of learners achieved higher levels compared to their previous classification (see Figure 4). This applies in particular to Level I learners. At the same time, a large proportion of pupils were unable to improve their performance, i.e. they were within their previous classification (38.5%) or reached a lower level (12.4%), indicating a loss of learning due to the closure of the LCs during the pandemic.
- (3) Boys did slightly better than girls: while 37.5% and 51.2% of boys reached the same (higher) level, 40.1% (45.9%) of girls reached the same (higher) level (see Figure 4).

²¹ Cox's Bazar Education Response Update (May 2022). The sector operates three types of learning facilities: (1) LCs are fully-fledged structures of the education sector; (2) community-based learning facilities "belong" to communities: they are mainly at home (in the household), but can also be Madrasas; (3) cross-sectoral shared facilities are structures used and operated by other sectors, such as such as girl-friendly spaces, child-friendly spaces, multi-purpose centres, etc., where education is provided by the sector's partners.

²² ASER stands for Annual Status of Education Report and means "Impact" in Hindi. It is a tool for measuring pupils' reading, writing and numeracy skills. The ASER+ is a version of the ASER assessment used in neighbouring countries such as India.

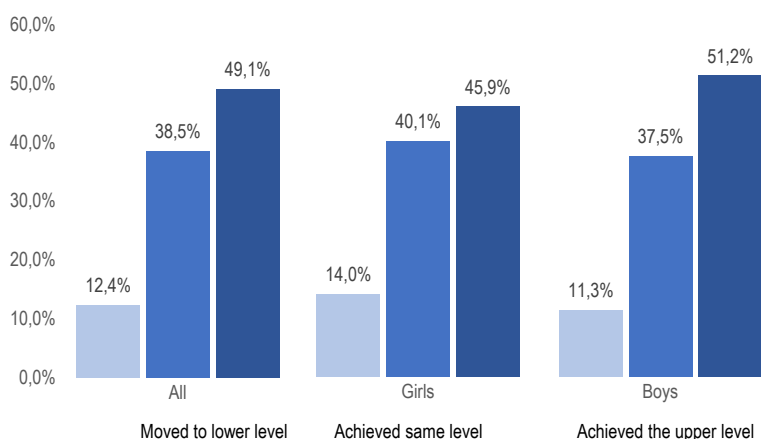


Figure 4: Aggregated learning progress by gender of learners. Source: ASER+ study (draft version, 2021, second round)

(4) Not all parents were able to support their children because they themselves did not have sufficient educational background (rate of illiteracy among parents: fathers: 52%, mothers: 56%). Therefore, parents depended on the help of teachers and caregivers (e.g. neighbours and other family members) to support their children. However, the cross-sectional analysis showed that this support of the latter had no significant influence on the performance of the learners. Teacher support, on the other hand, had a significant positive impact on learning progress in Burmese, but did not have a significant impact on performance in English or mathematics tests.

(5) The cross-sectional analysis shows that the distribution of learning materials in the camp does not appear to improve the competence level of learners.

Even though there is certainly room for improvement against this background, a major output of the education sector is to have kept children studying during the pandemic and, in particular, to prevent major learning losses.

Recent developments related to the introduction of the MC (within the scope of in Phase IV) represent a significant improvement compared to the previous situation. Two aspects are particularly important here: 1) The LCFA is being replaced by a national curriculum. Although the new curriculum can only be regarded as formal education to a limited extent without certification by the Myanmar Ministry of Education, the introduction should have a beneficial effect in terms of strengthening resilience. In focus group discussions, parents were proud that LCs teach according to a national curriculum (“it’s our national curriculum”). 2) While certification of individual learning outcomes remains a sensitive topic, continuous learning assessments are permitted, facilitating measurement of the learning progress throughout the year to a certain extent.

Despite the limitations and existing challenges listed above, the impacts achieved at impact level are to be assessed positively from the perspective of the evaluation. Especially in view of the fact that access to educational opportunities in the home country was severely restricted. For example, the illiteracy rate among Rohingya adults was around 50% higher than the national average, and the enrolment and graduation rates in primary school in Rakhine are among the lowest in the country.²³ Many of the children, including girls who did not attend school before, are now receiving educational opportunities.

Contribution to overarching developmental changes (intended)

As part of the coordinated measures in the education sector, the TA funds provided to UNICEF through Phases I and II made a contribution at a higher developmental level with regard to the resilience and future prospects of Rohingya children. School education helps children and young people, for example, by providing knowledge, support and, last but not least, relationships with peers and routines to strengthen their mental resilience and develop their cognitive, emotional and physical potential. During the mission, the children very much welcomed the reopening of the LCs, as this enables them to not only learn but also to develop social contacts. Awareness-raising measures in the Rohingya community helped to counteract discriminatory role stereotypes and to promote awareness of the essential importance of education and issues of child and youth protection. In addition, education (in a secure learning environment) can be understood as a basic protection instrument by helping to mitigate

²³ The problems in the education sector in Rakhine are due to chronic poverty and underdevelopment, a lack of teachers and materials, poor quality teaching and poor infrastructure due to years of underfunding. (Education in Emergency Sector Strategy Myanmar, 2018, p. 5).

the worst forms of labour exploitation, early and forced marriages, sexual gender-based violence, the risk of human trafficking and adverse coping mechanisms such as drug abuse, radicalisation and crime – issues of great importance in refugee camps. In this respect, it is also important (as already noted under Relevance) – beyond the projects – to close the gap in the educational provision for older children and young people in order to counteract the increasing frustration in the context of uncertain future prospects.

In conversations with pupils, increased desire for school uniforms has been expressed as they want to be recognised as pupils, and there is no discrimination in terms of appearance, which could certainly be beneficial in terms of strengthening resilience. However, the partners pointed to limited funds.

In principle, it should be noted from a methodological point of view that the FC funds are part of UNICEF's (and Save the Children's) coordinated measures in the education sector, meaning that it is not possible to precisely attribute the impacts to the FC projects. However, as all interventions in the sector are coordinated according to a standardised response plan, it seems plausible that the FC project also contributed proportionally to the impacts achieved. In addition, it is conceivable that other measures or external circumstances may also have had an influence on the impact objectives, which are not directly related to the financed measures.

Contribution to overarching developmental changes (unintended)

Do-no-harm: Only 1.9% of Bangladesh's GDP goes to public education (the third lowest in the world). It is important to raise awareness that, in addition to the Rohingya people, the rest of the population of Bangladesh can also participate in the promotion. The massive increase in households²⁴ and the associated strain on available resources has led to tensions between the two population groups. In response, the education sector supports the needs of host communities in the area of education in close cooperation with the District Primary Education Office (DPEO) and the District Education Office (DEO) by rehabilitating school infrastructure, building or renovating classrooms and WASH facilities, and providing school furniture and materials. For example, as part of the FC project "Future-advancing measures for teenagers and young adults inside and outside of Rohingya refugee camps", the construction of 50 multi-purpose buildings and six youth clubs inside and outside of camps was implemented, as were training measures and psychosocial support services. However, the project to be evaluated itself focuses on educational services within the camps, so that the host communities are only directly promoted by employing and training teachers or administrative staff. At programme level, at least 25% of UNICEF funds are allocated to host communities.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) has been addressed by the PSEA network since October 2017, consisting of UN, I/NGO and UNICEF partners, coordinated by the ISCG and jointly led by UNICEF and IOM. UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse and all forms of misconduct. All UNICEF partners must comply with the PSEA minimum standards.²⁵ A SEA risk assessment is carried out for each IP to identify the strengths of the organisation in the area of PSEA as well as areas for improvement. Implementation of risk mitigation action plans is monitored by UNICEF and the partners. There are various channels available for reporting SEA incidents: a 24/7 hotline and email contact addresses for both UNICEF and the IPs, feedback boxes in the LCs and partner offices, and the use of information/feedback centres in the communities. Despite UNICEF's prevention efforts, SEA incidents in the LC environment could unfortunately not be ruled out and it cannot be assumed that – given the circumstances in the Rohingya camps – such incidents can be completely prevented in the future. In principle, and despite the undeniably negative nature of SEA incidents, it is a positive sign that the complaint mechanisms put in place by UNICEF are working and that incidents are being reported in a cultural environment such as the Rohingya camps. Based on the number of messages received, the 24/7 hotline appears to be the most effective.

Summary of the rating:

Despite all existing challenges, the impacts achieved by the FC project at impact level can be assessed positively from the evaluation's perspective. There are still education offerings for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar today. The measures co-financed by FC in the education sector strengthened stabilising structures and created a protective environment. It is therefore plausible that the FC projects contributed to the impact of strengthening children's mental resilience and improving future prospects. In order to reduce social tension, it is still essential to

²⁴ As a result of the influx of refugees, living conditions in the district of Cox's Bazar, which are below the national average, have been exacerbated, with the refugee population in the upazilas of Ukhiya and Teknaf almost twice as high as the population of the host community.

²⁵ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/bangladesh/document/minimum-operating-standards-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>

raise awareness that, in addition to the refugees, the host communities and other populations can also participate in the promotion.

Impact: successful

Sustainability

Note: As part of the evaluation – in line with the limited sustainability formulated in the financing proposal of the current Phase IV with regard to linking the continuation of the education offerings to the donor commitment – reduced requirements for sustainability are set for the project. This means we consider the criterion of sustainability, but it is not included in the overall rating.

Capacities of participants and stakeholders

As noted at the outset, Rohingya people in Bangladesh do not enjoy a secure legal status, nor do they have the right to move freely, work in the formal sector or attend school. In this respect, they rely on the aid of the international donor community to cover all their basic needs and education opportunities. As is often the case in a refugee context, one challenge for the sustainability of the project is that it cannot be assumed that the education opportunities created will be continued by the GoB if donor involvement in this area is discontinued.

Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities

Since the project's sustainability is linked to sufficient donor involvement at the time of the evaluation, UNICEF is promoting structural and capacity building at local level, i.e. service provision in the camps takes place via local NGOs. This localisation strategy can potentially have a positive impact on the expansion of sustainable capacities or could be used to draw on local know-how in view of the project's ability to integrate. In this respect, it seems plausible that a contribution was made to the creation of local social capital by ensuring that both local NGOs profited from the transfer of knowledge and "learning on the job" as well as BLIs and Bangladeshi teachers from the training measures.

Since it is not likely that the restrictive refugee policy in Bangladesh will soon be lifted from the Rohingya people, the exit strategy of the project is also based on the teaching of skills that will open up future prospects for Rohingya in the event of a possible return to their home country. The recently initiated gradual transfer of education activities in the LCs to lessons according to the MC is an essential step with regard to the structural formation and sustainability of the commitment. However, a return of Rohingya to Myanmar is still unlikely after the military coup in February 2021.

Measures to raise awareness of the essential importance of education within the Rohingya community, including for girls and children with disabilities, reinforce the resilience of the target group as well as particularly disadvantaged groups. This "grassroots support" can be seen as an important sustainability factor.

Durability of impacts over time

The restrictive stance of the GoB with regard to the refugee situation fundamentally limits sustainable developments and is also associated with a constant level of uncertainty in the context (such as the planned relocation of 100,000 Rohingya to the island of Bhasan Char).

There is a lack of structural sustainability with regard to the construction of the LCs, as only a temporary construction method is permitted that cannot permanently withstand the climatic conditions. For example, the useful life of buildings without maintenance is only around six months. This means that there is a continuous need for rehabilitation. As part of the project, funds will be made available to repair all "normal" damage, e.g., during the monsoon season. By contrast, UNICEF must fund any potential reconstruction of LCs following destruction or severe damage caused by cyclones/floods/fires, etc. by acquiring additional funds. UNICEF and partners, however, are constantly striving to improve the design of the LCs to make them more resilient to climatic conditions. The latest design features, for example, a ridged roof that provides better protection against wind and rainwater running off the roof; the floor is cemented and, due to the strong winds during the monsoon season, the roofs are additionally secured with ropes, and the bamboo stilts have been stabilised with metal brackets. Before and after the monsoon period (based on contingency plans) and throughout the year (based on maintenance plans), the LCs are checked based on need, i.e. teachers report to the IPs when a repair is required. Regular maintenance schedules would be desirable to avoid more significant damage.

The government closed private schools (so-called Rohingya Community Education Networks (RCENs)) in December 2021 because refugee-led schools that offered alternative access to education (including secondary education) do not have legal status. However, initiatives like these are an important aspect in terms of sustainable awareness of the importance of education. It also has a negative impact on the long-term impact of follow-up projects, e.g. RCENs were explicitly taken into account in the project planning of Phase IV in order to guarantee standardisation and reproducibility of the teaching content taught in LCs and RCENs.

As already mentioned, the accreditation or certification of individual learning outcomes is still a sensitive topic that is being discussed. Aspects of two kinds must be taken into account: The first are political because, on the one hand, Myanmar would have to issue formal approval for certification under the MC. On the other hand, the GoB is strongly committed to the return of Rohingya to Myanmar. Although all residents of Myanmar are generally allowed to take part in school lessons, in view of the repression of the Rohingya it is unclear how many Rohingya children have actually attended school or how many achievements have been certified. If Rohingya children are allowed to formally certify their learning outcomes in the camps, they may be better off than in their home country, which may reduce the incentive to return to Myanmar. A second aspect relates to the more technical level, as criteria would have to be defined under which certification can take place (e.g. ensuring suitable and equal test conditions).

The approach of promoting education in emergency situations should fundamentally be understood as having lasting impacts and facilitating structural development, as children can benefit from the education and the cognitive skills they acquire, both in the acute situation and for a lifetime.

Summary of the rating:

The lack of structural sustainability and the consequent continuous need for rehabilitation can be clearly assessed as moderately unsuccessful. The linking of the continuation to sufficient donor commitment and the restrictive stance of the GoB with regard to the refugee situation also have a negative impact on sustainable developments. In principle, the approach of promoting education in emergency situations, as described above, is to be understood as having lasting impacts and facilitating structural development, and thus receives a greater weighting with regard to the rating.

Sustainability: moderately successful – note: due to the reduced demand for sustainability as part of the evaluation, the rating is not included in the overall rating.

Overall rating: successful

With an average of 20,000 refugees per day, more than 700,000 Rohingya fled to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh in September 2017, creating the largest and most densely populated refugee camp in the world.²⁶ By providing German FC funds to UNICEF as part of the coordinated measures, Rohingya children were able to receive basic, informal education promptly by visiting LCs. In view of the lack of alternative education opportunities, the projects are rated as highly relevant in order to provide children with a certain level of normality and stability despite adverse circumstances. The projects are coherent with other German DC measures and are integrated into the commitment of other donors through sector coordination. While the focus in Phase I was initially on direct access to education for the large number of arriving children, the measures were continuously further developed taking into account the political framework conditions. Challenges also continue to exist against the backdrop of the fragile context and framework conditions (uncertainty regarding, for example, the GoB's attitude towards Rohingya, the chances of returning to Myanmar). Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated closure of LCs once again exacerbated the situation in the project areas and presented further challenges for the implementation of the co-financed measures. The child protection subsector reported increasing violence against children (VAC), child protection problems such as an increase in reported cases of missing children, child labour and marriage of minors (girls) and increased psychosocial emergencies. For the Rohingya children in Bangladesh who were already living in an incredibly difficult environment, the pandemic was another setback. UNICEF and other partners nonetheless continued their efforts to provide education in the form of alternative COVID-19-adapted learning opportunities. Ensuring sufficient teaching quality remains a challenge. Particular significance is given to aspects of inclusive access to education in the current development. This is very positive. The efficiency of the project suffers or is largely dependent on the available options and framework conditions.

²⁶ UNICEF (2018): Evaluation of UNICEF's Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Bangladesh.

While there are and will continue to be opportunities for improvement, the big picture shows the importance of providing stability to children in a secure, protective learning environment by providing knowledge, support, relationships with peers and daily routines, thereby enhancing mental resilience and preserving future prospects. Experiencing education is not only important in order to avoid a “lost generation”, but also to create a structural basis to pass on awareness of the importance of education to future generations. These aspects are of particular importance from the perspective of the evaluation.

Overall, and against the background of the existing challenges, the project is rated as “successful”.

Contributions to the Agenda 2030

The project contributes to improving the lives of refugees, especially refugee children. The LCs are intended to enable children to experience a child-friendly and protected learning environment despite the difficult circumstances in the improvised refugee camps and settlements. Teachers provide children with a minimum level of childhood normality in protected areas. More than half of the refugees are women and children. A large part of the financing thus serves to provide girls with access to education. By supporting girls and female teachers, the project also contributes to SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Particularly in the context of the Rohingya tradition that girls should not go to school, this can be assessed as a success. In addition, the activities of Phases II–IV place a clearer emphasis on inclusive and gender-friendly education. The follow-up Phase III focuses even more strongly on increasing the quality of the educational offerings. The target of pursuing access to quality education is in line with SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) 4 “Quality Education”. The introduction of the Myanmar Curriculum (MC) supports the socio-economic reintegration of children and young people in the event of a possible return to Myanmar.

Project-specific strengths and weaknesses as well as cross-project conclusions and lessons learned

The project had the following strengths and weaknesses in particular:

- Impact measurement was weakened by the formulation of indicators at output level. Please refer to the explanations in the method section.
- Uncertain and varying framework conditions pose significant challenges for the implementation of the project.

Conclusions and lessons learned:

- Investment in education is essential to provide social and human capital in society and to ensure inclusive social participation. The approach of promoting education in emergency situations should fundamentally be understood as having lasting impacts and facilitating structural development, as children can benefit from the education and the cognitive skills they acquire, both in the acute situation and for a lifetime.
- Raising awareness among the community and parents about the importance of education is a key factor in the success of the project. The approach of involving communities in the promotion of inclusive education of children as part of school committees is essential. The participation of female members is particularly important in matters and decisions that may affect girls’ school attendance. This is particularly true in the context of traditions that have a critical view towards girls’ school attendance. Community support for education is also important to foster awareness of the essential importance of education and enhance a sense of responsibility. In exceptional times (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), committees like these can be an important organisational link between the partners and the community. In principle, it seems sensible to address additional or multiple channels within the framework of outreach activities. Social workers, for example, could also be integrated into the process for direct exchange with community members.
- “Educational opportunities as a protective instrument”: The provision of education and a secure and protective learning environment can help to mitigate the worst forms of labour exploitation, early and forced marriages, sexual gender-based violence, the risk of human trafficking and adverse coping mechanisms such as drug abuse, radicalisation and crime.

- Alternative learning opportunities (such as home-based learning) enable children who would otherwise not be able to take part in lessons to still participate in the educational offerings.
- A large number of refugees can overburden host communities and place a significant burden on existing infrastructure, markets (food and building materials, as well as transport) and ecosystems (land requirements, deforestation for construction and firewood). In this respect, it is important to raise awareness (also on the donor side) that, in addition to the refugees, the host communities and the rest of the population can also participate in the promotion, which is essential for reducing the potential of social tension and thus for peaceful coexistence.
- Measures to prevent SEA incidents are indispensable in view of the circumstances in the refugee camps. In particular, it is important to provide various channels for reporting such cases (on the technical side: face-to-face or anonymously (by telephone, email, feedback box) and on the other hand with regard to initial contact).
- (Warm) school meals may incentivise both parents and pupils to attend classes regularly.
- The introduction of school uniforms could make a further contribution to strengthening resilience. Children are proud to be pupils and can present this to the outside world, the feeling of belonging to a group is strengthened (a feeling of togetherness is created) and social disparities are concealed.
- Regular maintenance schedules for learning facilities are necessary to prevent major damage.

Rating methodology

Projects are rated on a six-point scale for each of the OECD DAC criteria. The scale is as follows:

- Level 1** very successful: result is clearly above expectations
- Level 2** successful: result meets expectations fully, no significant shortcomings
- Level 3** moderately successful: result falls short of expectations, but the positive results dominate
- Level 4** moderately unsuccessful: significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results
- Level 5** unsuccessful: despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
- Level 6** highly unsuccessful: situation has deteriorated

The overall rating on the six-point-scale is compiled by weighting all six individual criteria as appropriate to the project in question. Rating levels 1-3 of the overall rating denote a "successful" project while rating levels 4-6 denote an "unsuccessful" project. It should be noted that a project can generally be considered developmentally "successful" only if the achievement of the project objective ("Effectiveness"), the impact on the overall objective ("overarching developmental Impact") and the Sustainability are rated at least "moderately successful" (level 3).

About this publication

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