

report

Assessment of Economic Opportunities for Young Rohingyas in Bangladesh

Md. Noorunnabi Talukder

Md. Irfan Hossain

Abdullah Al Mahmud Shohag

Eashita Farzana Haque

Iqbal Ehsan

Joseph P. Falcone

Ubaidur Rob



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Population Council
House 49, Road 28, Gulshan 1
Dhaka 1212
Bangladesh
Tel: +880 2222292276
email: info.bangladesh@popcouncil.org

popcouncil.org

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Research Report

Md. Noorunnabi Talukder
Md. Irfan Hossain
Abdullah Al Mahmud Shohag
Eashita Farzana Haque
Iqbal Ehsan
Joseph P. Falcone
Ubaidur Rob

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh has been hosting nearly a million Rohingyas for the past five years. Since the 1980s, in order to escape widespread persecution and conflict, Rohingyas have been crossing the border from Myanmar into Bangladesh. The first major influx occurred in 1991-92 when over 250,000 Rohingyas fled to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Another massive influx began in August 2017 and since then around 762,000 Rohingyas have come to Bangladesh (IOM 2022). These forcibly displaced Rohingyas have taken shelter in the camps in the Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB), with support from the UN and other humanitarian agencies, is working to meet their most immediate needs, including accommodations, safe water, food, sanitation, and other basic services. Rohingyas are not entitled to, or integrated in, any long-term development agenda of the Bangladesh government. They do not have freedom of movement and permission to work. Their prolonged stay is putting pressure on the country's economic, societal, environmental, security, and political resources. The Bangladesh government has called for the voluntary repatriation of the forcibly displaced Rohingya people to Myanmar. However, upon several failed attempts, their repatriation remains uncertain. The unfortunate reality is that Rohingya populations in Bangladesh may not be able to return to Myanmar for the foreseeable future (ICG 2019). Attention needs to be given to not only the most immediate needs and basic services of the displaced Rohingyas, but also to identifying and supporting the various coping strategies and livelihoods Rohingyas adopt to survive in the camps in Bangladesh (Mahapatro 2017). Livelihood generation among Rohingya populations is a vital issue as this humanitarian situation may not be resolved quickly.

Against this background, the Population Council conducted a livelihood needs assessment study to generate evidence on the extent to which livelihood and income-earning opportunities are available to young Rohingya populations living in the camps, and to identify the types of skills and occupations they need during the interim period of their stay in Bangladesh and also upon their repatriation.

METHODOLOGY

This needs assessment study aimed to create an evidence base on livelihood and work opportunities, challenges, aspirations, needs, and preferences of young Rohingya populations living in the camps. The overall study consisted of (a) an assessment of work opportunities of young Rohingyas, and (b) a review of global refugee integration programs. For assessing work opportunities, the project carried out a household survey among young Rohingyas living in the camps and conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) among Rohingya youth and key informant interviews (KIIs) with program managers. This report presents the findings from our primary research on economic opportunities for Rohingyas. For the global program review, the project in its earlier phase carried out a narrative review of literature on the economic integration of refugees in five host countries: Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, and Uganda, which is published separately.

The household survey was conducted in four Rohingya camps in Ukhiya upazila in the Cox's Bazar district. This was a cross-sectional survey among a representative sample of both male and female Rohingya populations between the ages of 15 and 29, randomly chosen from four camps. The sample size for the study was 1,200 (male 800, female 400). In four study camps, a total of 1,209 respondents were interviewed (male 805, female 404). The sample size for females is smaller compared to that of males. Since female Rohingyas were barely involved in the livelihood activities we would like to gauge, it was less likely that the large sample size would add much to the results given the extra time and money it would cost.

To complement the evidence generated from the household survey, the study conducted 16 FGDs with young Rohingyas age 18-29 (8 with males and 8 with females) to understand their perceptions, needs, and aspirations related to livelihood and work opportunities. In addition, the study conducted KIIIs with 12 program managers from UN agencies, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working for Rohingyas to understand their needs and possible/potential Rohingya livelihood and vocational training interventions and associated challenges and policy actions.

FINDINGS

Access to formal education

Rohingya youth in general had limited access to schooling in Myanmar. Roughly half the young Rohingyas attended school in Myanmar and more than half of those who attended school did not complete the primary level. Overall, school attendance was much higher for males than females (62% vs 43%). In Bangladesh, there is no provision for Rohingyas to receive formal education. The Bangladesh government, in collaboration with development partners, provides opportunities for informal education from learning centers inside the camps. It is not common for young Rohingyas to attend a learning center. Only 12 percent of young Rohingyas ever attended a learning center and the rate of male attendance was almost twice that of females (14% vs 8%).

Access to skills training

The overall scope of skills training was extremely limited for Rohingyas in both Myanmar and Bangladesh. The percentage of Rohingyas who received training in Bangladesh (male 5%, female 9%) is the same as in Myanmar (male 6%, female 9%). In Myanmar, the opportunities for Rohingyas to receive skills training from institutions barely existed, while in Bangladesh UN- and NGO-supported programs were the main source of training. There was less of a variety in trainings for women as opposed to men. Overall, females received training mostly on home-based work such as tailoring and handicrafts, whereas skills training for men ranged from agricultural to technical skills such as mechanical work, masonry, paramedical work, and computer operation. Overall, 93 percent of young Rohingyas did not receive any training in Bangladesh. Lack of training opportunities and unawareness of training institutions/programs were the major reasons given by young Rohingyas for never receiving training in Bangladesh.

Household income sources

In the camps, Rohingyas mainly survive on humanitarian assistance, yet most turn to different income sources to meet the needs of their households. Daily labor was reported as a source of income by 54 percent of the respondents. Selling of relief goods (10%), small business activities (9%), and remittances (5%) are additional important sources of household income. Others compete for limited work opportunities in NGO programs inside the camp (4%) and provide teaching/tutoring services (5%).

Availability of work

Economic opportunities for Rohingya youth are scarce both inside and outside the camp in Bangladesh. Work opportunities are higher inside the camp than outside, and most of these opportunities are particularly available for males. Day labor, small business, tailoring, masonry, private tutoring, handicrafts, and paramedical work are some available work opportunities inside the camp. Opportunities for males to participate in economic activities are much more varied and widespread than for females. Tutoring and tailoring are primarily available to female Rohingyas. In addition, some Rohingyas gain opportunities to work as “volunteers” in NGOs. These opportunities are available more for men than women. Most of the work opportunities available in the camps are not appropriate for female Rohingyas due to cultural norms. Unskilled volunteers can work as day laborers in wash, shelter, and road construction sectors. Semi-skilled and skilled volunteers work in NGOs.

Out-of-camp work options are not as plentiful as inside the camp. These options were mostly limited to day labor, masonry, and construction labor, mainly for males. Opportunities for females to work outside the camp are extremely limited.

Economic participation

Economic opportunities for young Rohingyas were limited in both Myanmar and Bangladesh and it was highly gender-biased in both countries. While 55 percent of male Rohingyas had some work experience in Myanmar, female employment was already extremely low (4%). Small business, cultivation, day labor, and fishing were among the most reported economic activities in Myanmar by male Rohingyas. The state of work experience of young Rohingyas is not much different in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, two-thirds of male Rohingyas are economically active inside the camps, while it is extremely low at 6 percent for females. Outside the camps, a quarter of male Rohingyas have experience working primarily as day laborers; female work outside the camps was not reported. In Bangladesh, the participation of young Rohingyas in economic activities is not as sustainable as in Myanmar. In Myanmar, Rohingyas had land for cultivation, access to water for fishing, and local markets for business. Similar access to these specific livelihood opportunities does not exist in the camps in Bangladesh.

Inside the camps, 60 percent of males are engaged as day laborers, while female participation in that activity is entirely absent. Small business, tutoring, masonry, hawking, and mechanical work are the major economic activities for male Rohingyas. Tailoring and handicrafts are the principal economic activities of women. Additionally, some males are engaged as paid employees, while wage employment is much more limited among females. The Rohingyas who are involved in wage employment are mostly engaged in NGO work, and others work as paramedics, salespersons, or hotel/restaurant services. Many young Rohingyas have low levels of education and skills, which limits their ability to obtain work/employment. Other notable economic challenges are an overall systemic lack of work opportunities, mobility restrictions beyond the camp, and government policy restrictions on labor-force participation.

Access to business

Less than 10 percent of young Rohingyas have been able to conduct small businesses inside the camps, for which they mostly use their own money while a few borrowed from others. The most common business for males was operating a grocery shop, followed by tea stalls and food shops. Females were involved in home-based businesses and earned substantially less than their male counterparts. Average monthly income from business for males was Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) 7,180 (USD 71)¹ and for females it was BDT 1,785 (USD 18). In general, Rohingyas face difficulties in venturing into businesses in Bangladesh. The lack of capital, lack of market linkages, mobility restrictions, and government business regulations were perceived as the main barriers by the Rohingya youth to starting a business. Most important, the GOB's local administration (the camp authority) does not allow Rohingyas to run any businesses. According to the Bangladesh government regulations, no marketplace can be built inside the camp for trade. Moreover, Rohingyas are not allowed to access banking services, and they are also not entitled to receive micro-credit services.

Aspirations

A gender stereotype exists in future aspirations regarding income generation among Rohingya youth. Women are keen to learn skills for the types of work traditionally carried out by females. Men, on the other hand, are mostly inclined to receive technical or mechanical skills needed for work. In general, men prefer to receive

¹ 1 USD≈100BDT

trainings on small business, computer operation, electronics, carpentry, masonry, and paramedical work, while women are interested in developing their skills in tailoring, sewing, embroidery, and handicrafts.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Bangladesh is highly acclaimed by the global community for its generosity in shouldering a great burden by sheltering Rohingya refugees, but the country does not have a national policy permitting refugees to work. The forcibly displaced Rohingyas are living in overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar with no freedom of movement outside the camps and without the right to work. While there are no legal restrictions on informal work inside the camps, the restrictions on movement outside the camps makes it difficult for Rohingyas to access income-earning opportunities and to move where work opportunities are available. With no near-term prospect of returning to Myanmar, Rohingya populations living in the camps in Bangladesh are facing an uncertain future. Young Rohingyas, primarily males are inclined to receive skills training and intend to work or have a small business. Our study findings highlight the importance of creating economic opportunities for young Rohingyas during their interim stay in Bangladesh through the provision of technical and vocational-skills training, entrepreneurship, and employment.

- **Livelihood training:** In Bangladesh, Rohingyas have few options for technical and vocational training. Most livelihood training programs come from UN- and NGO-supported programs. Such training programs are attended by a small number of young Rohingyas, predominantly girls. Inside the camp, there are limited NGO training facilities. Furthermore, mobility restrictions and existing policies prevent Rohingyas from accessing training outside the camp. Skill-based training will help Rohingyas learn mechanisms of earning a livelihood, which is supposed to sustain them if they get income-generation opportunities inside or outside the camp. Livelihood training and targeted technical and vocational-skills training should be prioritized so that Rohingya youth can utilize these skills while in Bangladesh and also upon their repatriation.
- **Work opportunities:** Work opportunities within the camps are limited, occasional, and sporadic. The Rohingyas' level of education and skills are not adequate for getting a job. Very few jobs within the camp are available, and most of these are conducted by men. The intent to build or conduct a business is much stronger for men, but there is no access to capital and there are restrictions on mobility beyond the camp. Rohingya women can be trained and supported for home-based business activities without facing cultural barriers. Work opportunities need to be improved within the camp for young Rohingyas. Creation of work opportunities outside the camp is a legal and complex process that depends on joint GOB-UN responses. It is necessary to reform GOB policies to provide formal access to work for Rohingyas. Such reforms can be built on the evidence from similar contexts where granting rights to work for refugees has been successful.

List of Abbreviations

BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
CIC	Camp-in-Charge
FDMN	Forcibly Displaced Myanmar National
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
ISCG	Inter Sector Coordination Group
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
RRRC	Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
WFP	World Food Program

I. Introduction

Bangladesh has been hosting nearly a million Rohingyas for the past five years. Since the 1980s, in order to escape widespread persecution and conflict, Rohingyas have been crossing the border from Myanmar into Bangladesh. The first major influx occurred in 1991-92 when over 250,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh in the wake of serious state repression in Myanmar. Another massive influx began in August 2017 after the Myanmar Army crackdown in northern Rakhine state. Since then, around 762,000 Rohingyas have come to Bangladesh, and the vast majority are women and children (IOM 2022). Bangladesh is their preferred destination considering religious and ethnic proximity as well as the historical affiliation of the two countries. These forcibly displaced Rohingyas have taken shelter in the camps in Cox's Bazar, and even after five years of mass expulsion no sustainable solution for these individuals is in sight. The unfortunate reality is that Rohingya populations in Bangladesh may not be able to return home to Myanmar for the foreseeable future (ICG 2019).

The Government of Bangladesh (GOB), not being a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, recognizes the Rohingyas who have taken shelter in the camps in Cox's Bazar as forced migrants and foreign nationals. The government does not grant formal refugee status to Rohingya populations. Instead they define them as Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs). The Bangladesh army has registered these Rohingyas and provided them with individual camp ID cards. There is no law in Bangladesh regarding the regulation of refugees. The Bangladesh government does not view the Rohingya settlement in Cox's Bazar as a tenable solution. The government has called for voluntary repatriation of the forcibly displaced Rohingya people to Myanmar. However, upon several failed attempts, the repatriation of Rohingyas remains uncertain for the unforeseeable time.

An impressive aid operation has stabilized the humanitarian situation in the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar. There are several GOB and development-partner interventions to provide a minimum level of basic humanitarian needs for these distressed people, which include accommodations, safe water, food, sanitation, and reproductive as well as maternal and child healthcare. The cumulative efforts of the GOB and development partners to ensure basic humanitarian assistance for Rohingyas is praiseworthy against resource constraints. However, livelihood generation among Rohingya populations is a vital issue as this situation is not likely to be resolved quickly.

Rohingyas are not entitled to, or integrated into, any long-term development agendas of the Bangladesh government. They do not have freedom of movement and permission to work, but they are engaged in some informal income-generating activities in Cox's Bazar. Registered Rohingyas in the camps can participate in government-sanctioned informal education programs. UN agencies and NGOs offer Rohingya children and adolescents informal education opportunities (Tay et al. 2018). Few life skills and income-generation activities were available in the camps where Rohingyas took shelter in the early 1990s (UNHCR and ILO 2009). However, little is known about the need for income-generation activities of the Rohingyas who arrived in August 2017 and onward. It is important to learn about the coverage or progress of interventions on livelihood opportunities inside the camp intended for these newly arrived refugees.

Globally, in recent years there has been a remarkable positive shift in refugee response observed in many host countries. In refugee situations in the countries where displacement is protracted, there is substantial host-government support for refugee livelihoods and self-reliance. In several refugee-hosting countries there are policies on integrating refugee programming into national development. For example, in Uganda the government policy approach to refugees recognizes their right to accessing land, freedom to work, unhindered mobility, and the right to essential social services (Mathys 2016). In Jordan, male refugees get the right to work legally and find employment in sectors open to immigrants such as agriculture, construction services, wholesale trade, and manufacturing, and female refugees have the right to run home-based businesses (UNHCR 2017). In comparison, Rohingyas in Bangladesh have extremely limited livelihood opportunities. It is

important for program managers in Bangladesh to understand the specific livelihood and entrepreneurship interventions that have been introduced in other refugee-hosting countries.

In Bangladesh, as a protracted crisis and with a massive influx of Rohingyas, attention needs to be given to not only their most immediate needs, including accommodations, safe water, food, sanitation, and other basic services, but also the various coping strategies and livelihoods they adopt to survive in the camps. As such, practical solutions that involve some degree of self-reliance and livelihood autonomy are needed for the most vulnerable groups prior to their return to Myanmar or elsewhere (Mahapatro 2017). There is a clear and pressing need to develop a thorough understanding of the livelihood risks that Rohingyas face as being part of a protracted refugee crisis as well as their livelihood needs and aspirations.

Against this background, we attempted to explore the livelihood and work opportunities, challenges, needs, and aspirations of young Rohingya populations living in the camps. Toward this end, we conducted a livelihood needs assessment study to generate evidence on the extent to which livelihood and income-earning opportunities are available to young Rohingya populations living in the camps in Bangladesh, and their aspirations and needs for income-earning opportunities during the interim period of their stay in Bangladesh or to flourish wherever they ultimately live.

II. Methodology

STUDY DESIGN

The study was intended to assess the livelihood and work opportunities, challenges, aspirations, needs, and preferences of young Rohingya populations living in the camps in the Cox's Bazar² district of Bangladesh. This was a needs assessment study, and hence there was no intervention. The study consisted of (a) an assessment of economic opportunities of young Rohingyas living in the camps, and (b) a review of global refugee integration programs, followed by policy advocacy. This report presents the findings from our primary research on economic opportunities for Rohingyas.

To assess **economic opportunities** of Rohingya youth, this study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The quantitative assessment included a household survey among young Rohingya populations aged 15-29 years living inside the camps. Qualitative data were collected through FGDs and KIIs.

For the **program review**, the project carried out a review of literature on the global experience of creating livelihood and employment opportunities for refugees. The study team conducted a narrative review of literature on the economic integration of refugees in five refugee-hosting countries: Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, and Uganda. The literature review report is available at: https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2585&context=departments_sbsr-pgy

The project was 12 months in duration and started in January 2020. Household data collection for economic opportunity assessment started in late February 2020; however, data collection activity stopped in late March 2020 due to coronavirus-related government restrictions. The study team followed both the government directives and Population Council guidelines for resuming data-collection activities in the field. Household data collection restarted in March 2021 and the survey was completed in May 2021. In the interim, the study team obtained an extension of the project to December 2021. Qualitative data collection was carried out in October 2021.

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

A cross-sectional household survey was conducted among a representative sample of both male and female Rohingya populations between the ages of 15 and 29 randomly chosen from four selected camps (Camp 1W, Camp 4, Camp 13, and Camp 15). The survey aimed at collecting information on education background, skill sets, previous work experience, sources of income, current employment or income-generating activities, access to market, capital, and credit, and opportunities, challenges, aspirations, needs, and preferences in terms of work or employment.

Sampling

The survey was conducted in four randomly chosen camps among 24 Rohingya camps in Ukhiya upazila in the Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh. We considered three criteria for camp eligibility: (i) camps with population between 20,000 and 50,000 included, (ii) non-adjacent camps, and (iii) presence of a marketplace near households. After selecting the camps, we determined the physical boundary of the survey catchment in consultation with respective Rohingya community leaders (locally known as *Majhis*).

² A southeastern district of Bangladesh bordering the Rakhine state of Myanmar.

We conducted this needs assessment study through a basic survey to gather a rough estimate of livelihood opportunities between two groups (male and female). The size of the female sample was 400 and the male sample was 800. The results of other surveys in Rohingya camps reveal that livelihood opportunities are extremely limited for female Rohingyas and much greater for males. As females were barely involved in the economic activities we would like to gauge, it was less likely that the large sample size would add much to the results given the extra time and money it would cost. Therefore, the sample size for females was smaller compared to that of males.

The estimated sample size per camp was 300 (male 200, female 100). The sampling frame for the survey was constructed based on the household listing conducted before the survey. For each camp, about 1,000 households were enumerated to collect basic information on household members, which included name, relationship with the head of the household, age, and marital, educational, and work status. From this frame, a systematic random sampling method was used to select the households for interview. In each camp, 200 households were selected randomly to interview one young male Rohingya respondent per household, and another 100 households were separately selected at random to interview one young female Rohingya respondent per household. In total, 1,209 respondents from four camps were successfully interviewed (male 805, female 404).

The household survey utilized interviewer-administered survey questionnaires preinstalled in android-based smartphones. The interviewers received a one-week-long extensive training that included research ethics, survey objectives, android-based data collection, etc. Data were sent using an encrypted cloud-based platform named “SurveyCTO.”

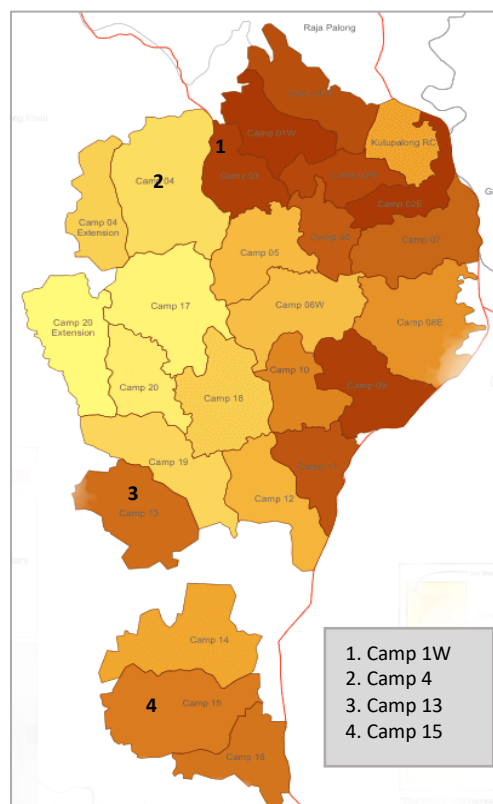
QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

To complement the evidence generated from the household survey and to understand the perceptions, needs, and rationales on the livelihood and employment interventions for young Rohingyas, the study collected qualitative data through FGDs and KIs.

A total of 16 FGDs with young Rohingyas age 18-29 (8 with male groups, 8 with female groups) were conducted to understand their perceptions, needs, and aspirations regarding their involvement in economic activities and what types of skills training they need to improve their capacity to engage in economic activities during their interim stay in Bangladesh as well as on their return to their country of origin or a third country. Besides, FGDs attempted to explore the barriers that young Rohingyas face in skills acquisition and gainful employment and what skills, livelihoods, and employment suited them.

In addition, the study conducted KIs with 12 program managers from UN agencies, international NGOs, and local NGOs working for Rohingyas to understand their needs, possible/potential livelihood and vocational training interventions, and associated challenges and policy actions. Potential and possible employment opportunities or occupations for Rohingya youth were also explored.

Image 1. Data collection sites in Rohingya camps, Ukhiya. Map source: ISCG



All the FGDs and KIs were recorded via smartphone. In cases of FGDs, notetakers took notes on paper. Recordings were destroyed after transcriptions (directly in Bangla) had been prepared, reviewed, and checked for accuracy and completeness. Bangla transcripts were then translated into English for data processing. Finalized data were made available only to the researchers through password encoding.

DATA-COLLECTION CHALLENGES

The collection of data in humanitarian settings has always been a challenging task for researchers and this study was not an exception. First, permission from the Bangladesh authority to conduct the study in the camps had to be obtained. During data collection, our data-collection field team faced a few obstacles. A few interviewers found some differences between Rohingya dialect and Chittagonian dialect, hence they took more than the average duration of time for the interviews. In congested accommodations in the camps, maintaining privacy in conducting household surveys was a challenge for the data-collection team as other members from the household often came inside the house during the interview. In such cases, interviewers had to request that they wait outside until the interview ended or otherwise withheld the interview until privacy was ensured. Moreover, data collection was discontinued at an early stage due to coronavirus-related government restrictions, and was restarted after a long pause.

DATA ANALYSIS

Univariate analysis of survey data was carried out. Quantitative data analysis was done using Stata 15 SE. For qualitative data, thematic analysis was carried out. The transcriptions of FGDs and KIs were reviewed on a regular basis to identify the emerging issues and any gaps in the process to correct and consider for the next one. The recorded interviews were transcribed immediately after the interview, and emerging common and new themes and subthemes were identified to determine data saturation or redundancy. Analysis of the qualitative data was done through theme-based extraction, compilation, and synthesis.

III. Findings from the Survey

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age and marital status of young male and female Rohingyas age 15-29 are presented in Table 1. Interviewed Rohingyas are almost evenly distributed across three age groups. One-third of young Rohingyas are under age 19, with a 6-percentage point difference between male and female groups. The 15-19-year-olds constitute the largest proportion among male respondents (36%). On the other hand, the largest share of female respondents belonged to the 20-24 age group (37%). Overall, 32 percent of young Rohingyas were aged 25-29 years, with a small difference between male and female share.

The mean age of interviewed Rohingyas is 22 years. Females are slightly older than males. More than half the young Rohingyas are currently married. As expected, the proportion of young female Rohingyas who are currently married is higher than their male counterparts (62% vs 53%).

Table 1. Percentage of young Rohingyas according to age group and marital status

Demographic characteristics	Male	Female	All
Age			
15-19	36.0	29.5	33.8
20-24	32.6	36.6	33.9
25-29	31.4	33.9	32.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean age (years)	21.87	22.41	22.05
N	805	404	1,209
Marital status			
Never married	46.6	32.4	41.9
Currently married	53.3	62.1	56.2
Widowed/divorced/separated/deserted	0.1	5.5	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	805	404	1,209

EDUCATION AND MIGRATION

Access to education in Myanmar

Table 2 presents differentials in the educational attainment of young male and female Rohingyas by schooling status, level of education, and types of schools attended in Myanmar. Fifty-five percent of young Rohingyas reported ever attending school and the rate of attending school is substantially higher among males (62%) than females (43%). On the other hand, 45 percent of young Rohingyas have never been to school and reasons for not receiving education in Myanmar varied by gender. Among young Rohingyas not attending school, more than half mentioned financial inability as a reason, and males were more than twice as likely as females to report the financial reason. One-fifth of young Rohingyas did not perceive the need to attend school and this perception was stronger among females than males (24% vs 16%). Limited access to school was cited as the other major reason. Fifteen percent of young Rohingyas reported limited access to school, and this perception was relatively stronger among females than males.

Of the young Rohingyas ever attending school in Myanmar, the majority could not study beyond primary education (59%). Rates of completion of primary and secondary education were 33 percent and 8 percent, respectively, among the respondents who ever attended school. Male Rohingyas were more likely than female

Rohingyas to have completed primary-level education or above. Forty-six percent of male respondents had completed primary, continued on to secondary, or completed secondary education compared with 28 percent of females. The distribution of educational institutions reveals that 85 percent attended government school and 9 percent attended private school. However, male-female differences are prominent in terms of types of schools attended. While 90 percent of male Rohingyas reported attending government school, 70 percent of female Rohingyas reported the same. Conversely, the proportion of females attending private school is much higher than males, 23 and 5 percent respectively. Overall, 5 percent of young Rohingyas attended *madrrasah*, with no notable difference between male and female rates.

Table 2. Percentage of Rohingyas age 15-29 according to schooling in Myanmar

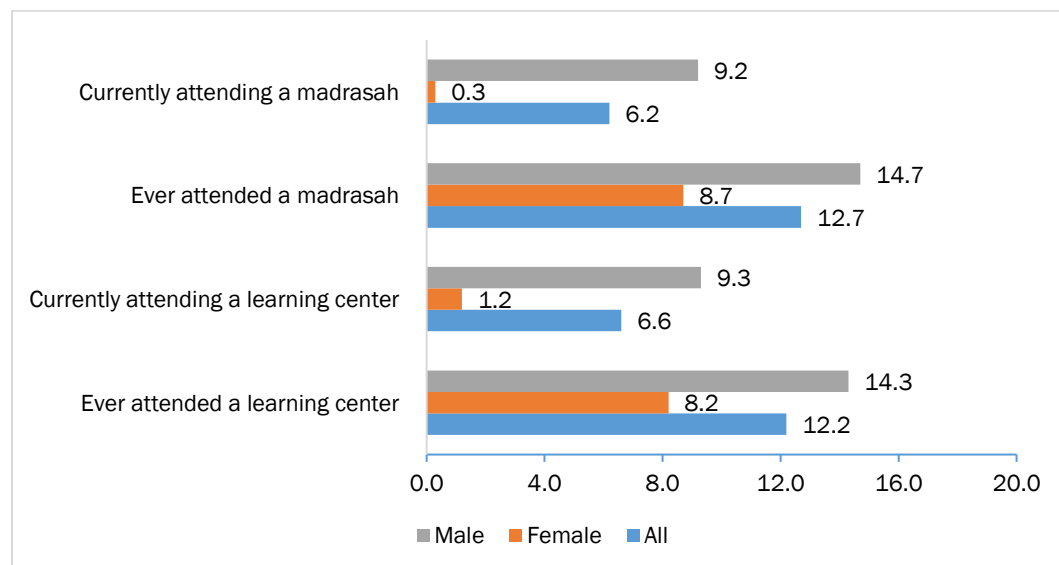
Schooling status	Male	Female	All
Ever attended school in Myanmar	61.6	43.1	55.4
N	805	404	1,209
Reasons for not receiving education			
Didn't have financial affordability	69.3	31.3	53.1
No perceived need for schooling	16.2	23.9	19.5
Limited access to school	11.3	18.7	14.5
Limited availability of schools	1.3	6.5	3.5
No separate school for girls	-	6.5	2.8
No provision for higher education	0.3	2.6	1.3
Others*	1.6	10.5	5.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	309	230	539
Highest degree obtained			
Primary incomplete	54.4	72.4	59.1
Primary complete	10.7	9.8	10.5
Secondary incomplete	24.4	16.7	22.4
Secondary complete or higher	10.5	1.1	8.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	496	174	670
Type of educational institute attended			
Government school	89.9	69.5	84.6
Private school	4.9	22.5	9.4
NGO school	0.4	1.7	0.8
Madrrasah	4.8	6.3	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	496	174	670

*Others include: Too young to go to school, family restriction.

Access to learning center in Bangladesh

Young Rohingyas' access to a learning center is shown in Figure 1. It is not common for Rohingya youth to attend a learning center in the camps in Bangladesh. Only 12 percent of young Rohingyas ever attended a learning center and the rate of male attendance is almost twice that of female attendance (14% vs 8%). Similarly, 13 percent of young Rohingyas ever attended a *madrrasah* (adjacent with Mosque for learning Quran) in the camps in Bangladesh and more males attended the *madrrasah* than females. The current *madrrasah* attendance among young Rohingyas is 6 percent, while it is 7 percent for current learning center attendance. Currently, less than 2 percent of female Rohingyas are attending the learning center and *madrrasah*.

Figure 1. Percentage of Rohingyas age 15-29 according to learning center and madrasah attendance in Bangladesh



Household income source

In the camps, Rohingyas mostly survive on humanitarian assistance, yet most turn to different income sources to meet the needs of their households. One-tenth of female respondents reported not having any source of income for their households, while only two percent of male respondents stated so.

Daily labor is the major source of income for Rohingya households as reported by more than half the respondents (male 57%, female 49%). Selling of relief goods (10%), small business (9%), and remittances (5%) are other important sources of household income, with notable gaps between male and female responses. In addition, five percent of males mentioned jobs in NGO programs as a source of household income, while the percentage was much lower among females (2%). Teaching/tutoring services were found to be another source of income for about five percent of households (Table 3).

Table 3. Main source of household income in Bangladesh reported by Rohingyas age 15-29

Source of household income	Male	Female	All
Day laborer	57.0	49.0	54.3
Selling relief	6.6	17.6	10.3
Small business	10.4	6.4	9.0
Remittance	6.3	2.5	5.1
Teaching/Tutoring	4.7	4.0	4.5
NGO job	4.6	1.5	3.6
Others*	8.7	8.9	8.6
No income source	1.7	10.1	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	805	404	1,209

*Others include: Mechanic, carpenter, working in restaurant, etc.

Camp experience and mobility

As of March 2021, on average the Rohingya respondents had been staying in the camps for 40 months and the difference in the duration of stay between male and female respondents was negligible. When asked about expected duration of stay in the camps, slightly over two percent wished to leave the camps immediately, and they were mostly males. Less than one percent were reluctant to return to Myanmar. Largely, young Rohingyas were undecided, as 94 percent were uncertain about their fate in returning to Myanmar or the duration of a future stay in the camp.

Table 4. Camp experience and mobility among Rohingyas age 15-29

Camp experience and mobility	Male	Female	All
Expected duration of stay in camp			
Until Myanmar takes back	4.2	1.2	3.2
Leave immediately	2.6	1.3	2.2
Don't want to go back	0.3	1.0	0.5
Undecided	92.9	96.5	94.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	805	404	1,209
Reasons that encourage staying in the camp*			
Camp provides food and relief	92.3	88.1	90.9
Easy to obtain welfare benefits	69.1	65.4	67.8
Camp provides healthcare	57.5	57.2	57.4
Camp offers education	32.4	28.0	30.9
Bangladesh where human rights are respected	32.8	19.1	28.2
N	805	404	1,209
Intention to move	44.2	22.0	36.8
N	805	404	1,209
Place to move			
Inside Bangladesh			
Chattogram	43.3	2.3	35.1
Cox's Bazar (outside the camp)	9.0	4.5	8.1
Dhaka	5.3	3.4	4.9
Other districts (Bandarban, Barishal, Noakhali)	2.2	-	1.8
Undecided	40.2	89.8	50.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	356	89	445
Outside Bangladesh			
Malaysia	28.7	5.6	24.0
Saudi Arabia	21.6	11.3	19.6
Myanmar	8.2	65.2	19.6
Canada/USA/UK/Australia	19.9	10.1	18.0
Other countries (UAE, Oman, Turkey)	3.4	-	2.7
India	1.1	1.1	1.1
Undecided	17.1	6.7	15.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	356	89	445
Reasons to move			
Find work or employment	75.3	4.5	61.1
Freedom from camp life	7.3	53.9	16.6
Study/Training	12.1	-	9.7
Go back to own country	3.1	28.1	8.1
Traveling/Pilgrimage	2.2	6.8	3.1
Reunited with family members	-	6.7	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	356	89	445

*Multiple responses

The survey gathered young Rohingyas' views on what encourages them to stay in the camp. Over 90 percent of them, irrespective of gender, considered food security as the reason to stay in the camp. Access to welfare benefits is another major reason to stay. More than two-thirds of young Rohingyas, irrespective of gender, think that it is easy to obtain welfare benefits in the camp. Access to healthcare encourages 57 percent of young Rohingyas to stay in the camp, while access to education encourages 31 percent. Male and female differences are negligible on the perception of accessing healthcare (58% vs 57%) and education benefits (32% vs. 28%). Nearly 30 percent mentioned that Bangladesh is a place where human rights are respected, with a notable difference between male and female responses (33% vs 19%).

More than one-third of young Rohingyas have the goal of moving to a new place either inside Bangladesh or outside the country. Inside Bangladesh, they expressed a move to Chattogram (male 43%, female 2%), and outside the camp to Cox's Bazar (male 9%, female 5%). Outside Bangladesh, their preferred locations are Malaysia, Myanmar, and Saudi Arabia. The intention to return to Myanmar is substantially stronger among females than males, while males are much more inclined to go to Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and other countries than females. When asked about the reasons for moving, 75 percent of males said to find work or employment as the main reason, while only 5 percent of females so reported. Overall, 17 percent of Rohingya youth stated finding freedom from camp life as another reason for moving, with a large male-female gap in that perception (7% male and 54% female).

ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

To improve the food-relief program for Rohingyas, the World Food Program (WFP) along with partners introduced an e-voucher-based food-distribution scheme. Under this scheme, Rohingyas are provided with a prepaid food-assistance card containing BDT 910 (USD 9) for each member of the family per month. They can debit the voucher to purchase food from WFP-designated outlets inside the camp. The cardholder can choose from a variety of 20 different food items.

Table 5. Food items purchased utilizing e-voucher

Food items received through e-voucher*	Male	Female	All
Rice	96.8	98.0	97.2
Edible oil	86.6	92.8	88.7
Onion	89.8	81.9	87.2
Garlic	84.0	77.5	81.8
Dried red chili	77.3	75.5	76.7
Salt	76.5	74.0	75.7
Sugar	65.5	78.2	69.7
Egg	62.7	68.8	64.8
Potato	57.1	56.4	56.9
Dried fish	57.6	53.5	56.2
Lentil	47.3	49.0	47.9
Turmeric powder	40.6	56.7	46.0
Fresh vegetables	31.7	21.5	28.3
Chili powder	29.8	21.0	26.9
Green chili	24.0	17.6	21.8
N	805	404	1,209

*Multiple responses

Access to food assistance among Rohingyas is illustrated in Table 5. Food items received against the e-voucher show that demand is not the same across items. The household acquisition of food items as reported by the respondents also differs by gender. An overwhelming 97 percent of respondents reported receiving rice by their household. The next most frequently collected food items were edible oil (89%) and onions (87%), and more females mentioned the household acquisition of edible oil than males (93% vs 87%) while onions were mentioned by a greater percentage of males than females (90% vs 82%). Two-thirds or more reported using the e-voucher on essentials like garlic, dried red chili, salt, sugar, and eggs. Potato, dried fish, lentils, and turmeric powder are other notable food items Rohingya households collected through the voucher.

The perception of young Rohingyas on the advantages and disadvantages of using the e-voucher is presented in Table 6. The variety of food items offered under the e-voucher and the freedom to choose food items were the two major benefits as mentioned by 76 and 84 percent of respondents. However, the perception varies by gender. Ninety three percent of female respondents reported that the variety of food items was a benefit of using the e-voucher compared to 68 percent of male respondents. Adequate supply of food is the third most-commonly perceived benefit (35%). Roughly 30 percent of male respondents reported fixed price as another benefit of using the e-voucher, while only 2 percent of females reported the same. This could be because female Rohingyas are less familiar with the market price of foods.

Table 6. Perception toward e-voucher usage among Rohingyas age 15-29

Perception toward e-voucher	Male	Female	All
Benefits of using e-voucher*			
Freedom to choose food items	82.1	86.1	83.5
A variety of food items	67.6	93.1	76.1
Adequate supply of foods	42.7	19.8	35.1
Good-quality food	27.2	17.8	24.1
Fixed price	28.1	2.2	19.4
N	805	404	1,209
Disadvantages of using e-voucher*			
Allocated money inadequate	78.6	81.9	79.7
No encashment of e-voucher	53.0	40.4	48.8
No nonfood items (household goods, hygiene goods, fuel)	25.8	56.4	36.1
Allowed to use e-voucher in a fixed outlet	13.0	27.5	17.9
Outlet/trader too far	9.3	21.8	13.5
N	805	404	1,209

* Multiple responses

With regard to the disadvantages of using the e-voucher, nearly 80 percent of both the male and female sample pointed out that money allocated against the e-voucher is inadequate. Over 50 percent of female respondents considered the absence of nonfood items in the e-voucher package as a disadvantage, while 26 percent of male respondents so reported. Forty percent of females denoted non-encashment of the e-voucher as a disadvantage, while more males (53%) reported the same. This may indicate that young male Rohingyas prefer encashment or cash assistance compared with their female counterparts. Less than 20 percent mentioned the restriction of using the voucher at a fixed outlet and distance of the outlet as an inconvenience.

Table 7 shows additional food items Rohingyas needed to purchase in addition to receiving food assistance through the e-voucher. Buying additional food items (98%) is universal among Rohingya households. Almost all respondents mentioned buying fresh fish since this item is not provided under the e-voucher package. Even though the e-voucher offers fresh vegetables under its basket, 91 percent of respondents mentioned buying fresh vegetables, which indicates a wide gap between need and assistance. Two-thirds reported the household

purchase of betel nut. Meat is another frequently bought item as reported by 57 percent of the overall sample, with little variation between male and female responses. Other frequently bought items are condiments and spices, potatoes, and fruit, which also come within the e-voucher package. Purchase of additional food items in addition to receiving food assistance through the e-voucher is attributable to either insufficient amount or limited variety of preferred food items.

Table 7. Additional food items purchased

Additional food items purchased	Male	Female	All
Needed to purchase additional food items	98.6	98.0	98.4
N	805	404	1,209
Food items frequently purchased*			
Fish	99.5	98.0	99.0
Vegetables	90.1	91.9	90.7
Betel nut	69.9	62.4	67.4
Meat	54.7	60.6	56.6
Condiments and spices	45.3	55.6	48.7
Potato	52.3	20.0	41.5
Fruit	37.0	44.4	39.5
Egg	31.6	12.6	25.3
Rice	26.3	20.0	24.2
Cigarettes	22.3	18.9	21.2
Sugar	21.8	11.6	18.4
Bread/biscuits	10.8	32.6	18.1
Salt	20.2	6.1	15.5
Edible oil	12.5	13.4	12.7
Milk liquid/powder	7.7	20.7	12.0
N	794	396	1,190

* Multiple responses

Access to health services

In the last 30 days preceding the survey, 70 percent of Rohingya households visited health centers in the camps. For the survey, the young Rohingyas answered questions about the expenses related to healthcare. One-fifth mentioned that they did not incur any health-related expenses. More than half of the respondents mentioned spending up to BDT 1,000 (USD 10) for health-related expenses (Table 8).

Table 8. Health-seeking behavior of Rohingya households in Bangladesh

Health-seeking behavior	Male	Female	All
Visited health center in last 30 days	70.2	68.3	69.6
N	805	404	1,209
Expenses incurred in last 30 days			
No expense	17.0	22.5	18.8
<= 500 BDT	28.5	24.3	27.1
501-1,000 BDT	28.5	18.5	25.2
1,001-3,000 BDT	15.4	20.6	17.1
> 3,000 BDT	9.4	12.3	10.3
Don't know	1.2	1.8	1.4
N	565	276	841

ACCESS TO SKILLS TRAINING

Skills training in Myanmar

Access to skills training for Rohingyas in Myanmar is presented in Table 9. Overall, the scope of training was extremely limited to the Rohingyas in Myanmar. Only seven percent of the respondents received any skills training in Myanmar. The rate of receiving training is slightly higher among females than males (9% and 6% respectively). There was less variety in trainings for women as opposed to men. Three skills, namely tailoring (67%), handicrafts (36%), and teaching/tutoring (3%) were mentioned by females. Males, on the other hand, reported receiving a wide range of trainings. Among the trainings received by males, the top five were masonry (28%), mechanic (15%), cultivation (15%), driving (13%), and computer operation (11%).

In Myanmar, it was customary for young Rohingyas to receive training from individuals since only 16 percent reported receiving training from institutions, suggestive of lack of institutional training opportunities for Rohingyas in Myanmar. Among those who had received training, over four-fifths reported to be trained by mentors, family members, or relatives. Only 9 percent of males received training from institutions in Myanmar and institutional training was much higher at 26 percent for females.

Table 9. Training received in Myanmar by Rohingyas age 15-29

Training indicator	Male	Female	All
Ever received training	5.8	9.4	7.0
N	805	404	1,209
Types of skills training*			
Tailoring	4.3	66.7	32.6
Handicrafts	2.1	35.9	17.4
Masonry	27.7	-	15.1
Commercial vegetable farming	14.9	-	8.2
Mechanic (Electric and electronics work)	14.9	-	8.1
Driving	12.8	-	7.0
Teaching/Private tutoring	8.5	2.6	5.8
Computer operation	10.6	-	5.8
Carpentry	4.3	-	2.3
Paramedical work	2.1	-	1.2
N	47	38	85
Sources of training*			
Institution			
Myanmar government institution	8.5	5.3	7.1
UN agencies	-	7.9	3.5
NGO	2.1	13.2	7.1
Individual			
From superior/skilled person	44.6	36.8	41.2
From family/relatives	42.6	39.5	41.2
By own efforts	2.1	2.6	2.4
N	47	38	85
Reasons for not receiving training*			
No provision of training for Rohingyas	40.1	43.7	41.3
Not enough education	35.8	24.9	32.2
Social/family barrier	4.2	73.0	26.6
Not aware which organization provides training	26.5	14.0	22.4
Not perceive the need	24.4	15.6	21.5
N	758	366	1,124

*Multiple responses

Among respondents who never received any training in Myanmar, four out of ten mentioned the absence of the provision of training for Rohingyas there. More than one-third of male respondents regarded their education level as insufficient to receive training, while a quarter of females so reported. Ignorance about the organizations that provide training was another major reason among male respondents for not receiving training (27%); however, females were half as likely to report the same. Three-fourths of females mentioned social/family barriers for not taking training in Myanmar, which indicates the restrictive mobility of Rohingya women. One in every five respondents did not perceive the need for training (Table 9).

Skills training in Bangladesh

Access to training opportunities for Rohingyas in Bangladesh is shown in Table 10. The skills-training opportunities for Rohingyas are limited but more diverse in Bangladesh. About one-third of the respondents were aware of the training opportunities available inside the camps, and more females were aware of such opportunities than males (44% vs. 27%). Only seven percent of respondents received training in Bangladesh, which is the same as in Myanmar (7%, see Table 9). Among the respondents who received training, skills varied by gender. Both male and female Rohingyas received trainings on four skills: tailoring/dress making (male 7%, female 60%), paramedical work (male 14%, female 3%), English language (male 7%, female 11%), and financial literacy (male 5%, female 5%). There are other skills for which either males or females received training. Thirty percent of male recipients reported having training on mechanical skills, followed by computer operation (23%) and masonry (7%).

Table 10. Training received in Bangladesh by Rohingyas age 15-29

Training indicator	Male	Female	All
Know about training programs inside camp	26.8	43.6	32.4
Ever received training	5.3	9.2	6.6
N	805	404	1,209
Types of skills training*			
Tailoring/dress making	7.0	59.5	31.3
Mechanic (Electric, electronics work, mobile repair)	30.2	-	16.3
Embroidery/block/boutique	-	32.4	15.0
Computer operation	23.3	-	12.5
Paramedic	14.0	2.7	8.8
English language	7.0	10.8	8.8
Financial literacy	4.7	5.4	5.0
Masonry	7.0	-	3.8
Teaching	2.3	2.7	2.5
N	43	37	80
Sources of training			
UN	9.3	-	5.0
NGO	74.4	94.6	83.8
From skilled person/professional	16.3	2.7	10.0
From family/relatives	-	2.7	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	43	37	80
Reasons for not receiving training*			
Not aware of any training program	77.3	62.1	72.4
Nobody advised me	13.4	19.9	15.5
Social/family barrier	0.7	24.0	8.3
Not aware which organization provides training	8.9	6.3	8.1
No opportunity inside the camp	5.8	9.8	7.1
N	762	367	1,129

*Multiple responses

Female respondents received a greater variety of skills training in Bangladesh than in Myanmar. About two-thirds of female recipients had tailoring/dress-making training. The other most commonly mentioned trainings for females were embroidery/block/boutique (32%) and English language (11%). NGOs were almost the sole source of training for females (95%). Seventy-four percent of males reported NGOs as the training provider followed by supervisor/skilled persons (16%) and UN agencies (9%).

Of the 1,209 respondents, 1,129 did not have any training and they were asked the reasons. Ignorance about any training program (72%), no interpersonal advice on training (16%), and ignorance about the organizations that provide trainings (8%) were the top three reasons mentioned by the respondents who never received any training in Bangladesh. Eight percent of the overall sample mentioned social/family barrier as the reason with a large male-female gap (male 1% vs female 24%). Seven percent reported an absence of training opportunity inside the camp (Table 10).

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Work opportunities inside the camp

Table 11 presents existing work opportunities inside the camp for young Rohingyas, and 91 percent reported the availability of income-earning opportunities. The most frequently mentioned livelihood opportunity available inside the camp was day labor (86%), with a notable difference between male and female responses (92% vs 76%). About 69 percent of young Rohingyas mentioned small business as another livelihood opportunity available inside the camp and males are more likely than women to report such opportunity (74% vs 60%). Tailoring was another widely mentioned work opportunity and it was reported more by females than males (88% and 56% respectively). Another frequently mentioned work opportunity is masonry (62%), and male responses were more than two-fold those of female responses (77% vs 32%). The next frequently available work was teaching/private tutoring (48%), and it was known to more males than females (51% vs 40%). Forty-six percent of the respondents were aware of the opportunity to work as construction laborers, and male Rohingyas were more likely to mention such opportunities than their female counterparts (50% vs. 38%).

Table 11. Work opportunities inside the camp reported by Rohingyas age 15-29

Work opportunities	Male	Female	All
Work available inside the camp	90.3	91.8	90.8
N	805	404	1,209
Type of work available*			
Day labor	91.6	76.3	86.4
Small business	73.8	60.4	69.3
Tailoring	56.0	87.9	66.8
Masonry	76.8	32.4	61.8
Handicrafts	39.3	81.4	53.6
Teaching/Private tutoring	51.2	40.4	47.5
Construction labor	50.1	37.5	45.8
Paramedical work	40.7	15.9	32.3
Hawker	37.6	21.0	32.0
Carpentry	32.1	12.4	25.4
Hotel/restaurant service	34.3	4.9	24.3
Mechanic (Electric, electronics work, mobile repair)	26.7	16.7	23.3
Barber/Parlor work	33.4	3.5	23.3
Computer operation	14.3	1.9	10.1
NGO work	8.1	4.9	7.0
N	727	371	1,098

* Multiple responses

More males mentioned the availability of paramedical work than females (41% vs 16%), while handicrafts were mentioned by a greater proportion of females than males (39% vs 81%). More than one-third of male respondents mentioned the opportunity to work as a hawker, while 21 percent of females so reported. Opportunity to do mechanical work was known to 27 percent of males. One-fourth of the respondents reported the availability of hotel/restaurant work inside the camp where the male percentage is around seven times that of females (34% vs 5%). Similarly, more males mentioned the availability of barber/parlor, carpentry, and computer operation than females. It is evident from the findings that apart from tailoring and handicrafts, male awareness of the availability of other in-camp livelihood activities is substantially higher than females.

Work opportunities outside the camp

Table 12 describes prevailing work opportunities outside the camp for young Rohingyas. Opportunities to work outside the camp are not as accessible as inside the camp. Forty-one percent of the respondents reported the availability of income-earning opportunities for them outside the camp, with a large difference between male and female reports (55% vs 12%). Among young Rohingyas who were aware of out-of-camp opportunities, 96 percent mentioned day labor as an opportunity available outside the camp, and male and female responses were almost the same. Masonry (44%) is the second most frequently mentioned opportunity outside the camp in which male responses (46%) are more than double those of female responses (22%). Construction labor (41%) is the third most frequently mentioned opportunity outside the camp, with more males being aware of this opportunity than females. Hawker and hotel/restaurant service were other notable opportunities, primarily known to male respondents (27% and 23% respectively).

Table 12. Work opportunities outside the camp reported by Rohingyas age 15-29

Work opportunities	Male	Female	All
Work available for Rohingyas outside the camp	54.9	12.4	40.7
N	805	404	1209
Type of work available*			
Day labor	96.2	92.0	95.7
Masonry	46.4	22.0	43.9
Construction labor	42.1	32.0	41.1
Hawker	26.5	10.0	24.8
Hotel/restaurant service	22.9	12.0	21.8
Tailoring	17.7	12.0	17.1
Carpentry	14.9	14.0	14.8
Small business	14.5	8.0	13.8
Domestic worker	14.0	12.0	13.8
Handicrafts	13.8	10.0	13.4
Mechanic	12.0	10.0	11.8
Paramedical work	10.9	6.0	10.4
Barber/Parlor work	7.5	4.0	7.1
Computer operation	5.7	-	5.1
Teaching/Private tutoring	5.4	2.0	5.1
N	441	50	491

* Multiple responses

Work experience in Myanmar

Table 13 shows the work experience of young Rohingyas in Myanmar. It was very uncommon for Rohingya women to be involved in any form of employment or work in Myanmar (95% non-employed), while more than half of Rohingya men were employed. About one-fifth of male respondents were engaged in wage employment, while female respondents did not exhibit such engagement. More than one-third of male Rohingyas were self-employed, while female economic participation as self-employed is negligible (5%).

The respondents who had been economically active in Myanmar were asked about their main livelihood activity there. Among economically active male respondents, one-third mentioned running their own business and another one-fourth reported working as a farmer. Day laborer was the next common economic activity among men in Myanmar (17%). In addition, a small proportion were engaged in service or teaching (5%) or worked as fishermen (6%). Among the female respondents who had been economically active in Myanmar, more than half mentioned their involvement in tailoring.

Table 13. Work experience of Rohingyas age 15-29 in Myanmar

Livelihood activity	Male	Female	All
Work status			
Employed	19.7	0.5	13.2
Self-employed	37.4	4.7	26.5
Non-employed	42.9	94.8	60.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	805	404	1,209
Key livelihood activity			
Own business	32.9	-	31.5
Farmer	24.6	-	23.6
Day laborer	16.6	-	15.8
Fisherman	5.7	-	5.4
Teacher/Service	5.2	-	5.0
Tailoring	-	52.4	2.3
Handicrafts	0.2	19.1	1.0
Others*	10.0	4.7	9.8
Didn't mention	4.8	23.8	5.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	459	21	480

* Others include: Mason, driver, carpenter, boatman, paramedical service, hotel/restaurant service, handicrafts, domestic worker

Work experience in Bangladesh

Table 14 summarizes the work experience of young Rohingyas inside the camp in Bangladesh. Inside the camp, 44 percent of young Rohingyas were involved in some kind of economic activity with a highly remarkable difference between male and female participation (66% vs 7%). One-third of male respondents reported non-engagement with any form of work, while female non-participation was extremely high (93%).

The respondents who had been economically active in Bangladesh were asked about their main livelihood activity both inside and outside the camp. Among the economically active male respondents inside the camp, 60 percent reported working as a day laborer and another 11 percent were running their own business. In addition, 15 percent were employed in NGOs or working as teachers/tutors. Masonry, construction work, and paramedical work are other occupations for males. On the other hand, tailoring/handicrafts is the main

economic activity of women (58%). One-fifth of the economically active female respondents were engaged in teaching/tutoring. Additionally, about eight percent of females were employed in NGOs, and male participation in NGO jobs is almost the same (9%).

Outside the camp, 27 percent of male respondents reported working, and as expected female participation in work outside the camp is almost absent. Outside the camp, male respondents were engaged primarily as day laborer or construction laborer (data not shown).

Table 14. Work experience of Rohingyas age 15-29 in Bangladesh

Income-generating activity	Male	Female	All
Economically active			
Inside the camp only	43.5	6.7	31.2
Outside the camp only	4.8	0.3	3.3
Both (inside and outside)	22.1	-	14.7
Not involved	29.6	93.0	50.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	805	404	1,209
Key activity inside the camp			
Day laborer	59.6	4.2	57.1
Small business	10.9	-	10.4
NGO job	8.8	8.3	8.8
Teaching/Private tutoring	5.8	20.8	6.4
Masonry/Construction work	8.4	-	8.0
Tailoring/Handicrafts	0.6	58.3	3.1
Paramedical work	1.2	-	1.1
Others*	4.7	8.4	5.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	522	24	546

*Others include: Hawker, mechanic, barber/parlor work, carpenter, hotel/restaurant service, salesman, domestic worker

Challenges to employment

Table 15 illustrates the challenges to wage employment faced by young Rohingyas; three-quarters of them consider limited education, lack of skills, and lack of job opportunities as the key barriers to accessing wage employment. Other challenges to wage employment include mobility restrictions outside camp (41%), lack of information (27%), and government employment restrictions (19%). Differences between male and female responses for most of the challenges are notable but inconsistent.

Table 15. Challenges to wage employment faced by Rohingyas age 15-29

Challenges to wage employment*	Male	Female	All
Limited education	77.1	83.3	77.3
Lack of job opportunities	75.7	66.7	75.5
Lack of skills	71.2	100.0	71.8
Mobility restrictions	40.6	50.0	40.8
Lack of information	26.6	33.3	26.7
Government employment restrictions	19.2	16.7	19.1
Family/social barrier	11.1	16.7	12.3
N	271	6	277

*Multiple responses

Access to business in Bangladesh

Table 16 summarizes access to business in Bangladesh for young Rohingyas, and only eight percent had access. When asked about sources of financing to start a business, it was found that 72 percent of male respondents who had businesses used their own money, while others took loans from relatives/friends. Sixty-five percent of female respondents mentioned using their own money and the remaining 35 percent took loans from relatives/friends. Female Rohingyas did not venture to have businesses outside the camp, while only two percent of male Rohingyas had their businesses outside the camp.

Table 16. Access to business in Bangladesh among Rohingyas age 15-29

Issues	Male	Female	All
Have business/enterprise	9.7	5.7	8.4
N	805	404	1,209
Sources of financing to start business			
Own money	71.8	65.2	70.3
Loan from relatives/friends/gift	28.2	34.8	29.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	78	23	101
Type of business/enterprise			
Grocery	29.9	-	25.0
Market food seller	19.4	-	16.3
Tea stall	17.9	-	15.0
Hawker	16.4	7.7	15.0
Tailoring/dress making	3.0	76.9	15.0
Handicraft	1.5	15.4	3.8
Barber	1.5	-	1.3
Others*	10.4	-	8.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	67	13	80
Location of business			
Inside camp	95.5	100.0	96.3
Outside camp	1.5	-	1.3
Both (inside and outside)	3.0	-	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	67	13	80
Business operation infrastructure			
Marketplace	38.8	-	32.5
Inside the house	23.9	92.3	35.0
Shop	13.4	-	11.3
Not fixed place (mobile)	23.9	7.7	21.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	67	13	80
Monthly income from business/enterprise (Bangladesh Taka)			
	7,180	1,785	6,304
N	67	13	80

*Others include: Electric shop, auto driver, mobile servicing shop, etc.

The most common business for males was grocery (30%) followed by food shop (19%) and tea stall (18%). One-third of the respondents operated their businesses inside the house, and females were much more likely to have home-based businesses than males (92% vs 24%). Marketplace and shops are the two main facilities for males to operate their business (39% and 13% respectively). Of the male respondents who had businesses,

one-quarter had no fixed place for running the business. Average monthly income from business is BDT 6,304 (USD 63), with a substantial male-female difference in income (male: BDT 7,180 or USD 71 and female: BDT 1,785 or USD 18).

Barriers to business

In general, Rohingyas face difficulties in venturing into businesses in Bangladesh (Table 17). Respondents who had a business or were self-employed were asked about the barriers to start/run a business. Of them, 83 percent considered lack of capital as the main barrier to business, and this perception was stronger among males than females. Barriers were mostly mentioned by male respondents. Mobility restrictions outside camp (55%) is considered the second major barrier to business among male Rohingyas. Female Rohingyas considered lack of market linkage as another major barrier to business (62%). Lack of skills (27%) and government business restrictions (22%) are the two barriers reported solely by male respondents.

Table 17. Barriers to business perceived by Rohingyas age 15-29

Barriers to business*	Male	Female	All
Lack of capital	83.6	76.9	82.5
Mobility restrictions outside camp	55.2	23.1	50.0
Lack of market linkage	22.4	61.5	28.8
Low demand in market	23.9	15.4	22.5
Lack of skills	26.9	0.0	22.5
Government business restrictions	22.4	0.0	18.8
N	67	13	80

* Multiple responses

ACCESS TO MARKET AND FINANCE

Access to market

Table 18 depicts access to market opportunities for young Rohingyas. It is customary for Rohingyas to buy goods and commodities from the markets inside the camp (99%). In the past 30 days before the survey, overall 69 percent of Rohingya households bought goods and commodities from the markets inside the camp. There is a gender preference for the items purchased from the market. Except for a few items, males are more likely than females to buy food items from the market.

Fish was found to be the most needed food item. An overwhelming 95 percent of respondents, irrespective of gender, reported buying fish from in-camp markets. The other frequently bought food items are vegetables (87%) and meat (59%), with negligible differences between male and female responses. These three food items are not offered under the e-voucher package.

Rohingyas were found to purchase staple foods from the market, e.g., cereals, pulses, edible oil, salt, sugar, eggs, and so on, which are also provided under the e-voucher package. The purchase of items like eggs, sugar, and salt was mentioned mostly by males (39%, 27%, 25% respectively). Males were also about two times more likely than females to report on household purchase of condiments/spices (45%). The likelihood of reporting on household purchases of non-food items was greater among females than males. Women were twice as likely than men to report the purchase of clothes (67% vs 31%).

Table 18. Access to market by Rohingyas age 15-29 in Bangladesh

Issues	Male	Female	All
Place to buy goods/commodities			
Market inside camp	98.8	100.0	99.2
Market outside camp	21.0	5.7	15.9
N	805	404	1,209
Purchased goods from market inside camp in last 30 days	94.4	17.1	68.6
N	805	404	1,209
Top 10 items purchased from market inside camp*			
Fish	95.7	87.0	94.9
Vegetables	87.6	79.7	87.0
Meat	59.5	58.0	59.4
Condiments and spices	44.5	18.8	42.3
Eggs	39.0	2.9	36.0
Fruit	35.0	26.1	34.3
Clothes	31.3	66.7	34.3
Sugar	27.1	2.9	25.1
Salt	24.7	4.4	23.0
Cigarettes	21.8	10.1	20.9
N	760	69	829
Purchased goods from market outside camp	17.8	1.2	12.2
N	805	404	1209
Top 10 items purchased from market outside camp*			
Clothes	73.4	80.0	73.7
Fruit	48.3	40.0	48.0
Medicine	35.0	-	33.8
Beverages (cold drinks/energy drinks)	21.0	-	20.3
Cooking/home appliances	15.4	-	14.9
Tea/coffee	14.7	-	14.2
Condiments and spices	11.2	20.0	11.5
Baby milk powder	9.1	20.0	9.5
Building materials for housing	9.8	-	9.5
Bread/biscuit/chocolate/cake	9.1	-	8.8
N	143	5	148
Mode of transaction			
Exchange	1.6	-	1.1
Cash	84.5	66.6	78.5
Both exchange and cash	13.9	33.4	20.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	805	404	1,209
Top 5 items bartered in the market*			
Rice	98.4	97.0	97.3
Edible oil	91.2	5.2	46.5
Pulses	15.2	57.0	36.9
Soap	2.4	48.9	26.5
Semolina (<i>Suji</i>)	-	49.6	25.8
N	135	125	260

* Multiple responses

With regard to the markets outside the camp, only one-tenth of the respondents mentioned buying goods and commodities from those markets, and it was primarily males who reported such purchase behavior. As female mobility is culturally restricted, their access to markets outside the camp is much lower than males. Among the items bought from the markets outside the camp, three-fourths of the respondents, irrespective of gender, mentioned clothes. Fruit (48%), medicine (34%), beverages (20%), and cooking appliances (15%) are other frequently bought items from the markets outside the camp.

Cash transaction (79%) was exclusively used in buying food and non-food items from the markets both inside and outside the camp. One-fifth of young Rohingyas mentioned a mixed mode of transaction, both exchange and cash. Rice was the most exchanged food item (97%), followed by edible oil (47%), pulse (37%), and soap (27%).

Access to financial services

The overall access for Rohingyas to financial services is extremely limited. One-fifth of the overall sample mentioned using mobile banking, with almost the same behavior between males and males. Less than one percent accessed money exchange (Table 19). None of the respondents were aware of or accessed microcredit loans (not shown in table).

Table 19. Access to financial services by Rohingyas age 15-29 in Bangladesh

Access to financial services*	Male	Female	All
Mobile banking	18.5	21.0	19.4
Money exchange	0.4	0.7	0.5
Savings group/personal money lender	0.4	0.6	0.5
N	805	404	1,209

* Multiple responses

ASPIRATIONS

Aspirations to engage in income-generating activities

Table 20 depicts the employment aspirations among Rohingya males and females aged 15-29 years who were not working at the time of the survey. The table clearly exhibits gender stereotypes in future employment aspirations. The survey found that tailoring (34%), NGO work (17%), and teaching/tutoring (13%) dominated young Rohingyas' aspirations in terms of future employment. Among these three, females primarily mentioned tailoring (55%), while males mentioned NGO work (36%) and teaching/tutoring (27%). Only six percent of females aspired to NGO work and female aspiration to work as teachers or private tutors is even less (4%). Among females, handicrafts were the second most preferred type of work (13%). Small business is another preferred area of work, mentioned primarily by male respondents (13%). Similarly, seven percent of males mentioned day labor as future employment, while female preference for such work is almost absent. Almost all the respondents prefer to work inside the camp in the future. None of the female respondents had the intention of working outside the camp in the future, while only eight percent of male respondents so expressed.

Table 20. Aspirations to engage in income-generating activities of Rohingyas age 15-29

Future employment aspirations	Male	Female	All
Type of future employment/work intended			
Not interested	1.3	20.7	13.2
Tailoring	1.7	54.5	34.0
NGO work	35.7	5.6	17.3
Teaching/Private tutoring	26.9	3.5	12.5
Handicrafts	0.4	12.8	8.0
Small business	12.6	1.9	6.0
Day labor	6.7	0.3	2.8
Computer operation	3.8	0.3	1.6
Masonry	4.2	-	1.6
Others*	6.7	0.4	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	238	376	614
Location for future employment/work			
Inside camp	92.4	100.0	95.0
Outside camp	7.6	-	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	238	376	614

*Others include: Paramedical work, mechanic, hotel/restaurant service, salesman, carpenter, construction labor, etc.

Training aspirations

More than two-thirds of Rohingya youth intended to receive skills training (male 68%, female 72%). Respondents who intended to receive training were asked to choose three livelihood trainings. Findings suggest that female Rohingyas are interested in gaining skills for the type of work traditionally allocated to women, such as tailoring, handicrafts, and similar activities. Males, on the other hand, are mostly inclined to gain technical skills needed for the work traditionally carried out by men (Table 21).

Table 21. Skills of interest among Rohingyas age 15-29

Skills of interest	Male	Female	All
Intended to receive training	67.6	71.8	69.0
N	805	404	1,209
Individual preference in livelihood training*			
Tailoring/embroidery/dress making/stitching	23.0	94.5	47.8
Computer operation	46.5	2.1	31.1
Mechanic	44.3	-	28.9
Handicrafts	6.4	63.1	26.1
Masonry	32.0	0.3	21.0
Carpentry	19.9	-	13.0
Driving	19.9	-	13.0
Teaching services	16.4	5.5	12.6
Entrepreneurship/Small business	17.7	0.7	11.8
Paramedic	9.9	1.4	7.0
Garment-industry work	-	18.6	6.5
English Language	6.1	4.5	5.5
N	544	290	834

*Multiple responses

Computer training was the most widely mentioned skill of interest among male Rohingyas (47%), while female interest in that training is negligible (2%). Mechanic (44%) and masonry (32%) were the next most desired skills among males. Among the other preferred skills of interest, driving, carpentry, small business, and teaching were mentioned by about 20 percent of male respondents for each of those skills on average. On the other hand, 95 percent of the female respondents mentioned tailoring/dress making/embroidery, and as expected this training was cited by a much lower proportion of males (23%). Almost two-thirds of the females intended to receive training on handicrafts and nearly one-fifth on garment-work skills. Training to improve English language skills was mentioned by a small proportion of respondents (6%). With almost no interest from females, paramedical work was another notable skill of interest among males (10%).

IV. Findings from Qualitative Data

The study collected qualitative data through FGDs with Rohingya youth and KIs with program managers. The purpose of the FGDs was to gather the narratives and voices of young Rohingyas to understand their perceptions, needs, and aspirations on economic opportunities during their stay in Bangladesh before repatriation to Myanmar or a third country. A total of 16 FGDs were conducted with Rohingya youth (8 each with male and female groups). In addition, the study conducted 12 KIs with program managers from UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs working for the Rohingya community with the purpose of understanding their perceptions and views on the scope of potential skills-training interventions for the Rohingya community, and associated challenges and policy barriers. The following discussion highlights the key findings from qualitative data.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

During the FGD sessions, Rohingya youth shared their experiences on educational entitlement in Myanmar that contributed to illiteracy and poverty over the period. Survey data also demonstrated that approximately half the young Rohingyas attended school in Myanmar and more than half of those who attended school did not complete the primary level (see Table 2). The data indicate that some opportunities for schooling existed for Rohingyas in Myanmar but not everyone was able to avail themselves of those opportunities. Due to increasing political tension between the Myanmar government and Rohingyas, all educational opportunities were shut down completely in 2012.

“There was limited scope for Rohingyas to attend school in Myanmar. But after 2012, we lost all opportunities for education. Since then, no Rohingyas were able to go to school. You will find thousands of Rohingya youth who passed Grade 10 but could not continue education. We were not allowed to continue higher education or engage in any job in the capital city or other big cities in Myanmar. So, after completing even Grade 10, all youth had to come back home and join agricultural work.” (Male respondent, FGD 3, Camp 13)

Educational deprivation was more pronounced among Rohingya girls than their male counterparts. Rohingya community norms restrict girls’ mobility as a result of security fears and religious beliefs. Cultural norms coupled with limited opportunities made educational attainment more challenging for Rohingya girls than boys.

“In Myanmar, Rohingya adolescent girls faced various obstacles if they wanted to go to the school. Fear of abduction and insecurity were there. Besides, girls were not allowed to cover their head in the school. Even they couldn’t wear scarf to cover their body. Rohingya girls were asked to dress like Mog girls which is not permitted in our religion. For these reasons many girls discontinued schooling when they reached adolescence.” (Female participant, FGD 8, Camp 15)

In Bangladesh, there is a network of “learning centers” inside the camp to provide informal education for Rohingya children. However, very few Rohingya youth had access to these learning centers due to the age barrier. The survey also found that only 12 percent of young Rohingyas ever attended learning centers in the camps (see Figure 1).

“Although there was restriction for Rohingyas in Myanmar, we were able to study up to Grade 10 not more than that. We could study math, physics, chemistry, biology, English, and other subjects at the school. But in the camp, there is no scope for education for youth. Only children can go to learning centers, we can’t.” (Male respondent, FGD 4, Camp 4)

ACCESS TO WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Most FGD participants stated that they are fully dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. There are some work opportunities in the camps for Rohingyas, but they are not legally allowed to work. In Bangladesh, the participation of Rohingyas in economic activities is not sustainable as in Myanmar. In Myanmar, Rohingyas had land for cultivation, a body of water for fishing, and local markets for business. Similar access to these specific economic opportunities does not exist in the camps in Bangladesh.

In the camps, UN agencies and NGOs provide job opportunities for Rohingyas in child protection, education, wash, health, gender-based violence, construction, and site management sectors. Rohingyas are provided work opportunities according to their skills or capacities. KIIs helped us understand the mechanism of how the camp authority and humanitarian agencies manage work opportunities in the camp. There are opportunities to work under the cash-for-work scheme, or to work as unskilled volunteers, semi-skilled volunteers, and skilled volunteers in NGO programs inside the camp.

“A few work opportunities are available in the camp for Rohingyas considering the huge size of the population. Less than 5% of Rohingyas can get work. Among them, approximately 90% worked regularly as volunteers in different NGOs. In a humanitarian setting, this is so frustrating. Mostly, men are getting more work opportunities than women. Unskilled volunteers work as day laborers in wash, shelter, and road construction sectors. Semi-skilled and skilled volunteers work with different NGOs. For women, some organizations implement training on handicrafts, tailoring, cooking, sewing, embroidery, and stitching and engage them in a cash-for-work scheme.” (ID11, KII)

FGDs and KIIs also revealed that some Rohingyas run small businesses inside the camp, which include grocery shops, vegetable shops, tea stalls, barber shops, and tailoring shops. These self-employment activities are not permitted by the camp authority. Work opportunities, both permissible and nonpermissible, are not sufficient to fulfill the needs of the Rohingya community.

“We spend our entire day sitting idle. Only 3 to 5 persons from 100 can work every day as day laborers, which is also not regular. We don’t get work every day. We can work for three months in a year. Very few people run businesses or do NGO jobs inside the camp. Day labor is the most common form of work for men.” (Male respondent, FGD 2, Camp 13)

The Government of Bangladesh’s local administration (the camp authority) does not allow Rohingyas to run businesses inside the camp. As a result, the camp authority makes evictions if they see any shops inside the camp during their regular monitoring visits. According to the camp regulations, no marketplace can be built inside the camp for trade.

“We cannot run a small shop for business in the camp easily. In the beginning the situation was not as restricted as today. Now what we do is that we open temporary shops beside our shelters and hide those when the camp authority visits. If they find our temporary shops, they seize the goods and charge fines. (Male respondent, FGD 3, Camp 13)

Gendered division of labor is deeply rooted in the Rohingya community, which is transmitted from generation to generation. FGDs with girls helped us to understand the tradition of Rohingya women’s nonengagement in any work outside the home. Rohingya women are culturally destined to manage household and domestic chores.

“Rohingya women do not work outside to earn. Our husband, father, brother, and son work to fulfill household needs. When we reach age 10-12, we start learning how to cook and manage other household tasks from our mothers so we can manage household responsibilities after marriage.” (Female participant, FGD 8, Camp 15)

The Covid-19 pandemic hampered programmatic interventions in the camps. Many NGOs halted their community outreach and training programs after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which increased the problem of unemployment among the Rohingyas who were working as volunteers for NGOs.

“Almost all NGOs paused their programs during the Covid-19 pandemic. Very few organizations paid their volunteers without work during the pandemic. In the camp ecosystem, the NGO sector creates 95% of job opportunities, mainly in the child protection, education, wash, gender-based violence, and site management sectors, and almost all sectors reduced 95% of livelihood opportunities during the pandemic. Recently, some NGOs have started their operations in limited scale considering the regulations during prevalence of the Covid-19 infection.” (ID 10, KII)

ACCESS TO SKILLS-TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

In Myanmar, Rohingyas were not entitled to receive general education or any technical or vocational training. In Bangladesh, there are some skills-training opportunities provided in the camps by UN agencies and NGOs, but the training opportunities are not evenly available across the camps. Skills-development interventions are relatively new for Rohingyas.

“First two years after the influx, humanitarian agencies and development partners focused mainly on ensuring life-saving emergency services, including food, shelter, sanitation, health, and nutrition. From 2020, we started exploring livelihood and skill-development opportunities for men and women within the policy guidance of the Bangladesh government.” (ID 11, KII)

During FGDs with men, most respondents were unable to talk about available livelihood-training opportunities for men inside the camp. Few respondents mentioned that some men received training on mobile repairing, masonry, carpentry, and agriculture. None of the male respondents from eight FGDs received any skills training during the data-collection period. In contrast, female respondents from eight FGDs were found to be more knowledgeable about skills-training opportunities than their male counterparts. Some of them received training on tailoring, sewing, stitching, handicrafts, agriculture, and gardening from *Shantikhana* (women-friendly spaces) run by NGOs.

The survey data found that only seven percent of young Rohingyas received skills training in Bangladesh and more women received training than men (see Table 10 for details). KIIs with program managers provide some useful insights to understand the difference between male and female acquisition of skills trainings.

“There are specific interventions for Rohingya women through women friendly spaces inside the camp from the beginning of the emergency response. Those spaces were primarily built to provide support and counseling services on gender-based violence to women. Gradually, those spaces introduced some skills-development components for women. Beside counseling, now these safe spaces are used as training centers for tailoring, sewing, stitching, embroidery, and handicrafts.” (ID 8, KII)

Despite deep-rooted cultural norms and gendered division of labor in the Rohingya community, some minor but significant changes have taken place in the camps after implementing women-centered interventions. These interventions introduced the provision of skills trainings on handicraft, tailoring, cooking, sewing, embroidery, stitching, and female hygiene. These small-scale interventions were found to generate aspirations for work among women.

“At present, one percent of women work in the camps. We really want to work! If we receive trainings on tailoring or sewing and find work opportunities, we will be able to improve our living condition. We need financial support also to buy sewing machines, cloth, and cutting tools... Many girls and women have no male guardian in the camp. They are passing very miserable life. If those vulnerable women receive training on tailoring and sewing, they will be

able to stand on their own feet even after going back to Myanmar.” (Female respondent, FGD 6, Camp 1W)

During the FGD sessions, both male and female Rohingya youth shared their interest in receiving skills training in the camp to improve their livelihood condition. In general, men prefer to receive training on small business, computer operation, electronics, carpentry, masonry, and paramedical work, and women prefer training on tailoring, sewing, embroidery, and handicraft.

“We are millions living in a congested area. We have no future. We are thankful to Bangladesh for helping us survive and give a safe life... Few training centers will not be enough. In our camp, we have no training center for women. But I know there are Shantikhana (women friendly spaces) in other camps where trainings on tailoring, jute handicrafts, cooking are provided for batches of 15-20 women. If we receive training and get work opportunities, we will be able to improve our life.” (Female respondent, FGD 5, Camp 4)

POLICY REGULATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Rohingyas are not permitted to work and leave the camp. A large proportion of Rohingyas belong to the working-age population but remain unproductive. It causes frustrations across the community and can cause distress among Rohingya youth in various ways.

“The entire Rohingya community is going through a social trauma of unemployment. About half a million working-age populations are sitting idle without any work. The Bangladesh government’s policies do not permit them to work. They cannot even run a small shop inside the camp. They are not allowed to go outside the camp to sell their labor in the host community. (ID 2, KII)

Program managers emphasized easing some policy restrictions for proper utilization of skill-development trainings.

“There are some policy regulations in the camps that make the situation difficult to utilize the skills of Rohingya trainees. We provide skills training for them but, unfortunately, we cannot create market linkages to sell their skills. We cannot engage them in work to produce goods commercially and sell them in the market.” (ID 4, KII)

Program managers also identified some issues that discourage the Rohingya people from acquiring new skills. The Rohingya community had traditionally been dependent on agriculture, livestock rearing, and fishing for generations. Now they live in congested camps without any opportunity for cultivating and practicing their traditional livelihood skills. Inside the camp, there is no immediate opportunity for both men and women trainees to apply their acquired skills to earning money. Program managers were skeptical that Rohingya youth could lose interest in receiving skills training if acquired skills remain unutilized.

“If any Rohingya women want to start a tailoring shop after receiving training from us, they cannot be entrepreneurs, because they need permission to open a shop and then they will need capital. There are policy restrictions for setting up a business by Rohingyas. Besides, according to government policy, no organization can provide seed money to Rohingya beneficiaries to start any business.” (ID 7, KII)

Program managers emphasized the need to bring diversity to the trainings as most NGOs have adopted the same trades for trainings. The need for coordination among implementers to avoid duplication of trainings in the camps was strongly perceived by the KII respondents.

“Most NGOs provide training on similar types of skills to Rohingyas. In some cases, implementers replicated their existing models in the Rohingya setting, which was designed originally for the host community. We need effective coordination among us to avoid duplication of skills-development interventions for Rohingyas. We should remember that it is

the world's largest emergency humanitarian crisis, and we should follow humanitarian principles rather than considering them "project beneficiaries" like slum dwellers or poor people living in rural areas." (ID 11, KII)

V. Discussion

Five years have elapsed since the forced migration of Rohingyas from Myanmar to Bangladesh. The forcibly displaced Rohingyas are living in overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar with no freedom of movement outside the camp and without the right to work. Yet the majority of young Rohingyas want to stay in the camp, whereas a small percentage of Rohingyas want to leave the camp for better life opportunities. Food security and healthcare are the main things that motivate them to stay in the camp. A monthly e-voucher worth USD 9 is provided to each member of a Rohingya household to purchase food from the in-camp outlet. Even after the prolonged stay in the host country, Rohingya youth are mostly out of work.

The following section highlights the findings of this livelihood assessment study on young Rohingyas in Bangladesh. The section reviews the livelihood and work opportunities, challenges, needs, and aspirations of young Rohingya populations living in the camps or what they will need to flourish wherever they ultimately live.

ACCESS TO FORMAL EDUCATION

In Myanmar, schooling opportunities were limited for Rohingyas and many could not avail themselves of those opportunities. Roughly half the young Rohingyas attended school in Myanmar and more than half did not complete the primary level. Overall school attendance was much higher for males than females. In Bangladesh, there is no provision for Rohingyas to receive formal education. The Bangladesh government in collaboration with development partners provide opportunities for informal education from learning centers inside the camp. Findings from qualitative data suggest that very few young Rohingyas had access to the learning centers due to the age barrier. Survey data also show that only 12 percent of young Rohingyas ever attended a learning center in the camp. Also, the likelihood of attending a learning center is notably lower among females than their male counterparts (8% vs 14%).

ACCESS TO SKILLS-TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Access to skills-training opportunities was limited to Rohingyas in both Myanmar and Bangladesh. In Myanmar, the opportunities for Rohingyas to receive skills training from the institution barely existed. A small segment of Rohingya youth received livelihood training, primarily from individuals. The skills-training opportunity in Bangladesh is different from Myanmar when the source of training is considered. In Bangladesh, Rohingya youth received skills trainings mostly from UN- and NGO-supported programs. More females received training than males. Overall, females received training mostly on home-based work such as tailoring and handicrafts, whereas skills training for men ranges from agricultural to different technical skills such as mechanical work, masonry, paramedic, computer operation, etc. Overall, 93 percent of young Rohingyas did not receive any training in Bangladesh. Lack of awareness about training institutions/programs and lack of training opportunities were the major reasons mentioned by young Rohingyas who never received training in Bangladesh. Findings from qualitative data substantiate that most male respondents were not aware of the available livelihood-training opportunities for men inside the camp. In contrast, female respondents were found to be more knowledgeable about skills-training opportunities than their male counterparts. Some of them received training on tailoring, sewing, stitching, handicrafts, agriculture, and gardening from the women-friendly space (locally known as Shantikhana) run by NGOs.

AVAILABILITY OF WORK

Economic opportunities for Rohingya youth are scarce both inside and outside the camp in Bangladesh. However, even though work opportunities are relatively higher inside the camp than outside, most of these opportunities are more available for males than females. Day labor, small business, tailoring, masonry, private tutoring, handicrafts, and paramedical work are some of the more widely available work opportunities inside the camp. Males have a significantly greater opportunity to participate in economic activities than females. Except for tutoring and tailoring, other work opportunities are available to male Rohingyas at a much higher

rate. In addition, qualitative data reveals some employment opportunities inside the camp for Rohingyas. Rohingyas get the opportunity to work as “volunteers” in NGOs. These opportunities are available more for men than women. Most of the work opportunities available in the camps are not appropriate for female Rohingyas due to their cultural norms. Unskilled volunteers work as day laborers in wash, shelter, and road construction sectors. Semi-skilled and skilled volunteers work in NGOs. On the other hand, female Rohingyas can access training on handicrafts, tailoring, cooking, sewing, embroidery, and stitching and work under a cash-for-work scheme. Out-of-camp work options are not as plentiful as options inside the camp. Out-of-camp options were mostly limited to day labor, masonry, and construction labor, mainly for males. Opportunities for females to work outside the camp were negligible.

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

The economic participation of young Rohingyas was limited in both Myanmar and Bangladesh and workforce participation was highly gendered in both countries. While half of the male Rohingyas had some work experience, women’s work experience was almost nonexistent in Myanmar. Small business, cultivation, day labor, and fishing were the most reported economic activities of male Rohingyas in Myanmar. The work experience of young Rohingyas is not much different in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, two-thirds of male Rohingyas are economically active, while it is extremely low (6 percent) for females. Of the economically active males, 60 percent are engaged as day laborers, while female participation in that activity is negligible. Small business, tutoring, masonry, hawker, and mechanical work are other major economic activities for male Rohingyas. Tailoring/handicrafts is the main economic activity for female Rohingyas. Some males are engaged as paid employees, but wage employment is negligible among females. Among the Rohingyas who are involved in wage employment, the majority are involved in NGO jobs and others work as paramedics, salespersons, and in hotel restaurant service. About a quarter of male Rohingyas have experience working outside the camp; female participation working outside the camp is nonexistent.

Young Rohingyas’ level of education and skills is not adequate to get employment. Other notable challenges they face to becoming employed are lack of work opportunities, mobility restrictions beyond the camp, and government restrictions on work.

ACCESS TO BUSINESS

Only a few Rohingyas have been able to start a business in Bangladesh, for which they mostly used their own money while a few borrowed from others. The most common businesses for males were grocery shops followed by tea stalls and food shops. Females were involved in home-based businesses and earned substantially less than their male counterparts. Average monthly income from business for males was BDT 7,180 (USD 71) and for females was BDT 1,785 (USD 18). In general, Rohingyas face difficulties in venturing into businesses in Bangladesh. The lack of capital, mobility restrictions, lack of market linkage, and government business regulations were perceived as the main barriers by the Rohingya youth to starting a business. Qualitative findings also reveal that the camp authority does not allow Rohingyas to run any business inside the camp. The GOB’s local administration regularly monitors camp operations and if they find any shops in the camp during their regular monitoring visits, they evict those temporary shops. According to the camp regulations, no marketplace can be built for trade inside the camp. Moreover, Rohingyas are not allowed to access banking services and they are not entitled to receive micro-credit services.

EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS

A gender stereotype exists in future employment aspirations among Rohingya youth. Females are keen to gain skills for the types of work they traditionally carry out. Males, on the other hand, are mostly inclined to receive the technical or mechanical skills needed for work. In general, men prefer to receive trainings on small business, computer operation, electronics, carpentry, masonry, and paramedical work, while women are interested in developing their skills in tailoring, sewing, embroidery, and handicrafts.

VI. Conclusion and Way Forward

Bangladesh has hosted nearly a million Rohingyas for the past five years. Despite its vigorous diplomatic moves, the Myanmar government remains reluctant to allow the return of Rohingyas. This crisis without any near-term solution has become a concern for both national and international communities. Even though the best plausible solution for the Rohingya crisis is the safe repatriation to Myanmar, the recent military coup in Myanmar has made the possibility of their return even more unlikely.

The GOB with the support of the UN and other agencies is working to meet the Rohingya population's most immediate needs, including accommodations, safe water, food, sanitation, and other basic services, but their prolonged stay in Bangladesh is putting pressure on the country's economic, societal, environmental, security, and political resources. As a protracted crisis and with a massive influx of Rohingyas, attention needs to be given to the coping strategies and livelihoods they adopt to survive in the camps in Bangladesh. As this humanitarian situation is less likely to be resolved quickly, providing skills training accompanied with work opportunities for Rohingyas is a vital issue. The most prescribed solution to the protracted Rohingya crisis lies in the safe, dignified, and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingyas to their home in Myanmar, but until that time they can be provided technical and vocational skills training and income-generation opportunities.

Bangladesh is highly acclaimed for its generosity in shouldering the great burden of sheltering Rohingyas, but the country does not have a national policy permitting refugees to work. While there are no legal restrictions on informal work inside the camp, the restrictions on movement outside the camp make it difficult for Rohingyas to get work or employment and to move where economic opportunities are available. In the camp, Rohingyas mostly survive on humanitarian assistance, yet they turn to different income sources to meet the needs of their households. Selling of relief goods and remittances are often an important source of household income. Others compete for limited work opportunities or engage in informal economic activities to supplement aid. In the context of extremely limited work opportunities, young Rohingyas, primarily males, are inclined to leave the camp and move to a new place either inside Bangladesh or outside the country to find work or employment. In this context, it is crucial to provide the Rohingya youth with self-sustaining livelihood opportunities and socio-economic empowerment during their stay in Bangladesh.

This study highlights the need for sustainable livelihoods for Rohingya youth until their return to their home in Myanmar. Our study findings highlight the importance of providing young Rohingyas the opportunities to earn a living while in Bangladesh and advocates for their economic participation through the provision of skills training, entrepreneurship, and employment.

- **Livelihood training:** In Bangladesh, Rohingyas have few options for skills training. Most livelihood training comes from UN- and NGO-supported programs. Such training programs are attended by a small number of young Rohingyas, predominantly girls. Inside the camp, there are limited NGO training facilities. Furthermore, mobility restrictions prevent Rohingyas from seeking training outside the camp. Skills-based training will help Rohingyas learn different mechanisms of livelihood earning, which is supposed to sustain them if they get income-generation opportunities inside or outside the camp. Technical and vocational training and life-skills education should be prioritized so that Rohingya youth can utilize these skills here, and also upon their repatriation.
- **Work opportunities:** Work opportunities within the camp are limited, occasional, and sporadic. The level of education and skills of Rohingyas is not sufficient to get work or employment. Very few work opportunities within the camp, mainly for men, are available. Intention to do business is much stronger in men, but there are restrictions on mobility and no facilities for credit or microfinance within the camp. Rohingya women can be trained and supported for home-based business activities without facing cultural barriers. Work opportunities need to be improved within the camp for young Rohingyas

within the purview of UN and NGO programs. Creation of work opportunities outside the camp is a legal and complex process that depends on joint GOB-UN responses. It is necessary to reform GOB policies to provide formal access to work for Rohingyas. Such reforms can be built on the evidence from similar contexts where granting rights to work to refugees has been successful.

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