

# Newsletter

Rohingya Response Programme | April - June 2025

World Refugee Day 2025

Celebrated in Solidarity with Rohingya Refugee Community



Football matches in several camps were organised to celebrate the day

Under the **Community-Based Protection (CBP)** project, ActionAid Bangladesh Rohingya Response Programme observed World Refugee Day across 14 Rohingya camps under the theme “Solidarity with Refugees.”

More than 3,500 community members – men, women, children, elderly, people with disabilities and gender-diverse groups actively participated in diverse, inclusive events across the camps.

Activities ranged from football matches, cultural programmes and storytelling sessions to art competitions and religious discussions. Five community artists also presented their artwork at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Camp 12.

Members from different camps celebrated the day in their own unique way. In Camp 8W, children shared hopes of attending school safely;

in Camp 24, around 100 refugees drew paper lanterns with their hopes written on them and hung them in the community centre; Nayapara Registered Camp (NRC) organised a walk for solidarity. Football matches in several camps empowered many girls.

12 years old Noor kaiya shared, “Playing together gave us joy and confidence.”

CiC and UNHCR officials attended programmes in various camps, reinforcing institutional support. Despite challenges such as unexpected rainfall and space constraints, the event promoted unity, confidence and community ownership.

World Refugee Day 2025 reminded everyone that refugees are not merely victims but instead they are resilient individuals who have the right to dream and hope like any other human being.

## Building Resilience Against Climate Hazards

As the 2025 monsoon season intensifies, our **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)** team has sustained its proactive multi-hazard response across Camps 21, 26, 27 and Nayapara RC.

With increased incidents of windstorms, landslides, and heavy rainfall, CCCM remains at the forefront of coordination, preparedness and emergency action.

From April to late June, at least 57 windstorm incidents and 4 landslides were recorded in the area, affecting 311 households and 1,682 individuals. 23 households were displaced and 108 individuals had to relocate to safer sites.

AAB's CCCM teams supported these activities, especially during critical weeks between 28 May and 4 June, when families in high-risk areas were sensitised and assisted with relocation to Temporary Communal Shelters (TCS).

The damage assessment found 286 shelters partially damaged and 4 completely destroyed, along with infrastructure losses including 29 latrines, 4 retaining walls, and 3 tap stands. We coordinated closely with Shelter and WASH sector partners, ensuring that emergency shelter kits were distributed to at least 63 affected households by early June.

Affected individuals were reached through more than 100 awareness sessions on early



*CCCM volunteers are disseminating early warning messages to relocate from risky to safe areas.*

warning signals, risk communication and household preparedness. Volunteers routinely monitored over 40 flood and landslide prone zones, raised concerns and supported the evacuation of vulnerable households.

This community-driven, coordinated and inclusive approach not only strengthened household resilience but also encouraged relying on early warning systems and rapid response efforts.

As climate-induced hazards are becoming a regular occurrence, CCCM team remains committed to maintaining safeguarding approaches and ensuring safety for the Rohingya refugee community.

## Canadian Delegates Visit Upcycling Centre



*Visitors at the Upcycling Centre with project staff*

Fatma Ben Sayeh and Annie Thibault from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) along with representatives from the High Commission of Canada to Bangladesh, visited our Upcycling Centre.

This centre under the **Green Skills Development (GSD)** project, is supported by the World Food Programme (WFP).

At the Upcycling Centre, Rohingya participants are turning discarded packaging from WFP's specialised nutritious foods and fortified biscuits into creative, functional products. These include gardening bags, laptop bags, hand bags, shopping bags, lunch bags, party bags, tote bags, mats, and more. The goal of this initiative is to recycle waste into usable products and empower refugees into skilled workers.

During the visit, Fatma Ben Sayeh and Annie Thibault shared their appreciation by saying, "We are very pleased that Canada's support allows for this kind of product development. Thanks for your work."

## A Celebration of Cultural Diversity

*“This is the very first time that I have been invited to such an event as a special guest and welcomed with flowers. I feel truly honoured to be a part of this programme and happy that our community is included”*

On 25th May we celebrated World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, by organising a vibrant public event under the SASA! Together initiative of **Gender-Based Violence** project at camp 27.

The event promoted cultural diversity, ensured inclusive participation and encouraged collective dialogue to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through community-driven approaches.



*Participants enjoyed a variety of games and received token of appreciation*

The programme featured a series of interactive and reflective sessions. Key activities included a welcoming speech, community reflection segment and the display of food stalls exhibiting local food made by community members.

The Clay Pot Breaking game, was a creative way for the community to learn about breaking free from harmful traditions. The aim for impact ball tossing game encouraged participants to make



*Diverse group of people joined the event to celebrate the day.*

personal pledges for positive change.

Guru Ma – a prominent gender diverse population (GDP) leader, expressed deep appreciation for the inclusive nature of the event.

*“This is the very first time that I have been invited to such an event as a special guest and welcomed with flowers. I feel truly honoured to be a part of this programme and happy that our community is included,”* she exclaimed happily.

Gabriela Cunha Ferraz – GBV Focal Person of UNHCR, acknowledged the programme’s approach to inclusivity and community engagement efforts.

Mohammed Saker – a community teacher and SASA! Together activist shared, “My home is now free from violence. I feel proud to be a SASA! Together activist.”

The event reaffirmed the importance of cultural expression to promote peace, respect and gender justice, while reinforcing ActionAid Bangladesh’s commitment to creating inclusive, violence-free communities.

## Living Together, Upholding Humanity

ActionAid Bangladesh and SHED collaboratively observed the International Day of Living Together in Peace on 17 May 2025 at Peace Café, Camp 24, under the project **Youth-led Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Initiatives in Bangladesh and Myanmar**, to promote tolerance, inclusion, solidarity, and peace among Rohingya and host

communities.

In the context of the Rohingya refugee response, the day convened special significance as it reflected the importance of coexistence, mutual respect, and community resilience in humanitarian settings in Teknaf and Ukhiya.



*Young Rohingya boys expressed their thoughts of social coexistence through drawings.*

The day started with an awareness session on why peaceful existence is crucial to promoting peace and resilience in the community, particularly with the leadership of young people.

Then the young people of both Rohingya and host

## Uniting for a Green Future

We celebrated the World Environment Day 2025 at Camp 27, Jadimura, Hnila, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, under the global theme "Ending Plastic Pollution".

The **Natural Resource Management (NRM)** project jointly organised the event with WASH Partners, UNHCR, NGO Forum (NGOF) and ActionAid Bangladesh's Site Management Team, with the active support of the CiC.

The day began with an interactive community awareness session led by the NRM Team at the Camp-27 Site Management Support (SMS) office. The session engaged more than 80 participants, including Majhis, Community-Based Protection (CBP) members, and youth volunteers from Nurturing of Youth in Camps (NYC) Project and Green Skills Development (GSD), focusing on the impact of plastic pollution on health and the environment.

Participants reflected on individual and community roles in reducing plastic use, supported by visual materials and real-life examples from the camp setting. The community demands that a shift within the plastic supply chain system would improve the conditions in camps.

Following this, a collaborative inter-agency discussion was held at the CiC office. The

community identified existing issues and challenges that were hindering the peace process.

Young people further recognised how youth leadership could play a significant role in initiating peace and social cohesion. They imagined their ideas into different meaningful drawings and wrote slogans, promoting peace and importance of living together, in the posters.

They created human chains in the camps holding the posters and chanted "Youth for Peace" and "Together youth can make one world."

The celebrations ended with one young woman from the camp and one young man from the host reflecting on the activities. They remarked that they never felt hostile for the entire period of the programme they attended together for the first time. The day celebration helped them forget their differences, they added.



*The day was celebrated through different activities.*

roundtable discussion served to reaffirm collective commitments to reducing plastic waste and strengthening nature-based solutions through coordinated action and shared responsibility.

The celebration ended through tree plantation activity, symbolising environmental restoration and partnership. The event saw enthusiastic participation from community members, partner organisations, and stakeholders, demonstrating a united front in the journey towards environmental sustainability and resilience.

## Asu Wada's Journey from Unawareness to Resilience

Asu Wada, a Rohingya refugee and his family faced the challenging journey of rebuilding their lives in Bangladesh. Struggling to find safe shelter, like many other families they settled on unstable hill slopes.



*Asu Wada helps to identify dangerous landslide zones and protect children in the camp.*

Those areas are highly vulnerable to landslides, especially during the rainy season, often causing serious injuries and even fatalities. However, Asu's family was not aware of this risk and did not know any prevention measures.

He started learning about this risk after joining the **Nurturing of Youth in Camps (NYC)** Project, funded by the World Food Programme (WFP) and implemented by ActionAid Bangladesh. With guidance from project's staff, Asu enthusiastically took part in a range of activities, including Life Skills Training, Mentorship, Gender Champion Training, and the crucial Preparedness and Resilience Enhancement (PRE) programme.

"This training helped me understand landslide

risks and how we can reduce their impact," Asu shared. Previously, unaware of seasonal hazards, he learned to identify danger zones and take preventive actions.

As the monsoon approached, NYC project staff, along with the Camp-in-Charge (CiC), Site Development (SD), and Site Management Support (SMS) teams organised joint visits to assess high-risk areas.

As a PR participant, Asu played an active role in these efforts, identifying vulnerable zones and raising awareness among nearby households. He and his team spread life-saving messages and safety tips, especially targeting families with young children.

Through this work, Asu's confidence and leadership skills grew. "Alhamdulillah, thanks to the NYC project's support. Though there have been no major landslide incidents this year but if something happens, I am ready to help my community," he shared with pride.

Asu's dedication has earned wide recognition from the CiC, SMS and SD teams, local Majhis, imams, and other community stakeholders. This appreciation strengthened his resolve.

"I'm grateful to the WFP and ActionAid Bangladesh for empowering me to support my community. I'll continue working to protect children and promote disaster awareness," he expressed.

Asu Wada's journey reflects the power of community-led resilience. His efforts are helping build a safer, stronger future for all in his camp.

## Turning Dreams into Reality

Sixteen years ago, Sharifa left behind her life in Myanmar and arrived in Bangladesh as a Rohingya refugee. Within two years of marriage, her husband left Sharifa and their children to fend for themselves. She began doing odd jobs, but the income was never enough to make ends meet.

Hopes of providing a better future for her children only remained a dream until Sharifa learned that the Women's Market of Camp 5 was providing women to operate a food business. Although she was unsure whether she would be

successful or not, Sharifa decided to apply.

To begin the business, Sharifa was given a fixed amount each month, but she wasn't making any profits. When ActionAid Bangladesh's **Women Empowerment** project with support of UN Women took over the management of the Women's Market, Sharifa began receiving entrepreneurship training sessions.

"I learnt how to manage the kitchen, improve my menu and understand the demands of customers", Sharifa reflected when asked about

how the sessions helped her. "Under new leadership the market became more organised, and I could buy supplies easily and store them securely in a locker." Soon, Sharifa's kitchen became a place of business that slowly but surely became profitable.

Today, Sharifa is no longer just a cook – she's a successful entrepreneur. Her restaurant helped to meet daily expenses, pay school fees for her children and additionally helped to bear the cost of her mother's medical bills. Her success inspired other women in the camp to embark on similar journeys.

"When they ask me how I did it, I tell them that you have to believe in yourself and take that first step even if it seems scary."

Sharifa's restaurant now has regular and fixed customers, and the number of orders keeps growing. She listens to feedback, adjusts and continuously attempts to improve.

What began as a modest kitchen has grown into a flourishing business, not only supporting her family but also inspiring other women to believe in their own potential.



*Sharifa is preparing food for her restaurant.*

"I want to continue growing my business and maintain the highest standards of quality and hygiene," she says. "If more women receive the kind of support I did, they too can find the strength to be successful just like I did."

Sharifa's journey proves that no matter where you start, with the right opportunities and mindset, anything is possible. She is now an independent woman who believes in her own strength and her story is an inspiration for Rohingya women.

## Stitching Hope

Naima (pseudonym) lived in a small village on Moheshkhali island. Although she was married for seven years, her husband neglected her and their two children.

Days turned into weeks and sometimes months, without a glimpse of his presence. Additionally, when Naima questioned his absence and infidelity her husband would become physically abusive.

She finally decided to leave him when he caused severe head injury, leading her to become hospitalized. Bruised but unbroken, Naima decided that she would no longer be a victim of circumstances.

With support from the One-Stop Crisis Cell, Naima joined a sewing training programme provided by the Women and Child Affairs Association through **Strengthening Gender**

**Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response services through OCCs at District and upazilla level and enhancing lifesaving response for women and girls through an integrated GBV-SRHG approach at host and Rohingya communities** project. This project is funded by UNFPA.

Through this programme, Naima learnt a new skill that helped to provide for her family and upon completing her training, she received financial support through the form of a sewing machine allowing her financial independence.

With each stitch, she healed her wounds. Her sewing skills ensured her children's needs were met and their dreams supported. Through her hardships, she became a self-sufficient woman, creating a brighter future for her children.

## Call for Ceasefire in Palestine from Global Climate Strike



*Young people demanded to end fossil fuel financing and immediate ceasefire in Palestine.*

Over a hundred young people and youth platforms joined the Global Climate Strike at the Central Shaheed Minar in Cox’s Bazar on 11 April 2025, demanding an end to fossil fuel financing and the prioritization of investments in renewable energy.

In solidarity with the people of Gaza, young climate activists also called for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine.

The event was organised by **Activista Cox’s Bazar**, a youth platform of ActionAid Bangladesh. There, the young climate activists highlighted the significance of increasing climate finance to support countries like Bangladesh in building resilience and adapting to the ever-increasing climate crisis through demonstrations featuring numerous colorful placards, festoons, and banners.

Climate activists emphasised that developed nations are primarily responsible for the climate crisis due to their continued financing of fossil fuels. Through neocolonial exploitation, war, and

violations of human rights, they are accelerating the planet's destruction.

Ayesha Siddika Riya, a young Activista, said, ‘With the way fossil fuel investments are increasing globally, our future is under serious threat. We cannot allow our future to be sold off.’

With placards, artworks, songs, and posters, young climate activists expressed their demands for climate justice. They carried messages like “Don’t Sell Our Future,” “Fix the Finance,” “Invest in Renewables,” “Stop Funding Harmful Agriculture,” “Climate Justice Now,” and “Support Climate-Resilient Agroecology.”



*They hold placards expressing their demands.*

The youth also called for resolving the safe water crisis in Cox’s Bazar, halting deforestation of mangroves, and continuing the fight against plastic pollution to protect the sea and environment.

ActionAid Bangladesh officials, along with over a hundred young climate warriors from six youth organizations in Cox’s Bazar, participated in and expressed solidarity with the peaceful strike.