

Report

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL NGOS IN THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE RESPONSE

Good Practices from IASC Task Force 5

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Strengthening the capacities of local and national NGOs in the Rohingya refugee response

Strengthening the capacities of local and national NGOs in the Rohingya refugee response - Food Security Sector
in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Authors Zolboo Bold-Erdene, Acting Coordinator and Information Management Officer, Food Security Sector (WFP), Zolboo.bold-erdene@wfp.org



Geographical coverage

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh



Actors and Stakeholders

All members of the donor community, partners in the Joint Response Plan (JRP) and overall sector's objectives.



People of Concern

Rohingya refugees in refugee camps and host communities. Provide available sex-and age-disaggregated data, including the nature of the involvement of men and women, youth, elderly and/or disabled people, and refugees/internally displaced persons (IDPs)/host community/settled population/pastoralists.



Context

Violence in Rakhine State, which began on 25 August 2017, led to mass displacement of civilians and the suspension of most aid activities. Some 626,000 Rohingya refugees were estimated to have crossed the border into Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Those fleeing are concentrated in two *upazilas*, Ukhia and Teknaf, putting an immense strain on infrastructure, services and the host population. Pre-existing settlements and camps have expanded with the new influx, while new spontaneous settlements have also formed and are quickly growing. Significant numbers of new arrivals are also being absorbed into the local host community.

The speed and scale of the influx has resulted in a critical humanitarian emergency. The people who have arrived in Bangladesh since 25 August came with very few possessions. They have used the majority of their savings on transportation and constructing a shelter. They are now reliant on humanitarian assistance for food, and other life-saving needs. The Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar is highly vulnerable, having fled conflict and experienced severe trauma, and now living in extremely difficult conditions.

Massive and immediate scale-up is required to save lives and manage conflict, with urgent needs in food security; nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); shelter; site management; health; and protection in both settlements and host communities. All new arrivals, (about 626,000 people) and old unregistered refugees are in need of emergency food assistance.

This good practice was identified and documented through a template developed on the basis of the [2021 IASC Guidance on Localization](#), which aims at supporting efforts to strengthen the meaningful participation, representation, and leadership of local and national humanitarian actors (L/NAs) within IASC humanitarian coordination structures. Its objective is to share knowledge and inspire progress and positive change regarding the meaningful participation of local actors in Humanitarian Coordination platforms. The original draft of this good practice template was developed by the [KORE \(Knowledge Platform for Emergencies and Resilience\) team](#) in the Office of Emergencies and Resilience of the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#) and was tailored to the needs of this IASC initiative.



Implementation and objective

Localization in the context of the Food Security Sector (FSS) in Cox's Bazar includes advocating for and strengthening the capacities of local and national NGOs in the Rohingya refugee response. While there is no official strategy outlining the elements of localization, the sectors, including FSS, take proactive actions towards localization, having recognized the need to strengthen local capacity.



Methodological approach

Representation and participation

- Local and national non-governmental organizations (L/NNGOs) are an active part of FSS, participate in all meetings and Working Groups, and report regularly their activities to the sector. L/NNGOs are highly encouraged to participate in the JRP, which the sector develops through a transparent peer review process, ensuring adequate consideration for L/NNGO's presence within the plan. In 2022, 17 out of the 54 active partners were L/NNGOs.
- All partners operating in the Rohingya camps, including L/NNGOs, engage in the camp level coordination efforts through coordination meetings with the Food Security Sector camp focal points and the CiCs (Camp-in-Charge, Government officers in charge of camp level operations). FSS also engages the CiCs on an ad-hoc basis to discuss issues of duplication of efforts.

Leadership

- The Food Security Sector in 2022 was co-led by the World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), as well as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) as NNGO Co-Coordinator. BRAC held a co-coordinator role for the sector from 2021 to 2022.
- FSS has a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) whose main role is to steer the sector's direction based on strategic consensus. The SAG is composed of UN agencies and INGOs, as well as NNGOs. NNGOs' leadership role is important to represent the perspective and priorities of local contexts in the humanitarian community.
- FSS also actively engages government stakeholders as sector counterparts including, Department of Agriculture Extension, Department of Livestock Services, Department of Fisheries, and the Forest Department, through organized events such as markets, thematic field visits, and overall coordination of relevant activities.

Capacity strengthening

- FSS regularly conducts capacity strengthening initiatives such as training courses, joint field visits, and workshops to discuss activities and technical issues. Some of the trainings facilitated by FSS included: Climate Smart Agriculture Nutrition Integration in Livelihoods Programming, Emergency Preparedness and Response, while workshops included sharing of lessons learned and challenges on FSS activities by partner agencies. Through each of these activities, FSS advocates for and ensures presence and participation of all relevant L/NNGO partners. For training registrations, FSS gives stronger consideration for L/NNGO selection; when planning field visits, FSS approaches L/NNGOs to showcase their activities etc.

Partnership

- 17 out of the 54 active partners of FSS in 2022 were L/NNGOs, conducting various food security and livelihood interventions both for the Rohingya refugees as well as the host communities.

Resourcing

- The main resourcing component of FSS is the inclusion of L/NAs and NNGOs in the Joint Response Plan (JRP), which acts as a fundraising document, outlining relevant partner's activities as they are aligned with the sector objectives. As JRP partners, L/NAs and NNGOs have higher visibility of their funding needs to the donor community.
 - In addition, L/NAs and NNGO are actively involved in sector meetings where donors and key stakeholders are invited to participate and are exposed to FSS advocacy and resource mobilization efforts.
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Sustainability

Not only is the practice of inclusion of L/NAs and NNGOs in the sector's humanitarian response sustainable, it is necessary. As funding levels decline due to the protracted crisis status of the Rohingya refugee humanitarian response, many UN and INGOs will need to scale down their activities, in which case L/NAs and NNGOs will need to scale up to fill the gap as possible.



Key learning

Early in any humanitarian response, L/NAs and NNGO agencies should participate alongside UN and INGO operations. The earlier the capacity development of L/NA and NNGOs, the smoother the transition in shifting operational responsibility. Localization, in this regard, would also be more impactful for beneficiaries as there may be cultural nuances that might be overlooked by UN and INGO operations.



Contact details

Zolboo Bold-Erdene, Acting Coordinator and Information Management Officer (Food Security Sector), Zolboo.bold-erdene@wfp.org
