

RESILIENCE AMIDST ADVERSITY

Annual Report 2023



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International Rescue Committee, Bangladesh
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International Rescue Committee, Bangladesh

2023 **ANNUAL** **REPORT**



Photo: Two Rohingya youths skilled in solar panel maintenance

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FROM THE GROUND

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023 spoke louder than words



We expanded our primary health services and supported **86,140** clients with primary health care support with 1,359 deliveries attended by skilled health personnel.



We reached **260,092** clients through community awareness against gender-based violence



3,657 clients experienced expanded access to the justice systems



We reached **54,527** clients and shared knowledge of positive coping mechanism for child protection



We introduced 'play to learn' to **17,964** parents and children for early childhood development



We provided training to **21,871** clients on climate-smart agriculture to build a climate resilient society



We reached to over **1,000** households in the Saint Martin's island with multipurpose cash assistance after Cyclone Mocha.



Our collaborative advocacy resulted in increase of food rations to **\$10** per month per people and FD7 approval for **one year** in the Rohingya response

As we enter a new calendar year, I want to express my gratitude towards all of our clients, supporters, partners, and colleagues working in the humanitarian context in Bangladesh. Together, we served 451,487 unique clients countrywide in 2023. Notably, more than 68 percent of our clients were women whose well-being we could support and uplift.

2023 was a challenging year for all of us, with many obstacles we faced regularly in our working areas, especially multiple climate-induced disasters, fire incidents

and funding decay in the Rohingya crisis. Still, I want to focus on how swiftly we handled these challenges. Our achievements spoke louder than words. We contributed in improving the health, nutrition, protection services, education and skills of our clients. Moreover, we contributed to the justice system by analyzing the legal gap between the host community and relevant legal stakeholders, also ensuring coordination to improve the local justice systems. Our women and child protection programs increased community awareness and empowered our clients through information, knowledge, and skills required for a dignified life. We successfully set up the Resettlement Support Centre for RSC Asia to support the Rohingya refugees to resettle in the United States.

2023 has been a challenging year to battle the effects of climate change and serve the community adversely affected by it. Despite those challenges, we thrived with our skills and dedication. We organized and trained new mobile medical teams (MMTs) to support the refugee communities during disasters and disseminated multi-purpose cash support to rebuild the lives of vulnerable host communities. We expanded our MHPSS services to support the psychosocial well being of our clients. Our PERU teams have been first responders providing critical protection services during the emergencies. Our collaborative advocacy brought some positive changes to our clients' lives. We expanded our partnership to the southern Bangladesh to include the most climate-vulnerable communities with the essential services.

I want to thank the Government of Bangladesh, Donors, UN agencies, partners, media, all other humanitarian actors and well-wishers for their support. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all my colleagues at the IRC for their leadership, dedication, and interventions throughout 2023.


2024 will bring its own challenges as we continue our work in the 7th year of the Protracted Rohingya Crisis. We renew our ongoing commitment to continue to support the Joint Response Plan 2024, for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis. We will also continue to expand our work in Climate Migration to support the climate vulnerable and displaced people. I believe, the year comes with fresh energy, confidence, contribution, and strong collaboration. Let's make the desired change together. Thank you all!


Hasina Rahman
Country Director
IRC, Bangladesh


2023


At a glance

UNIQUE CLIENTS

↓ ↓
 **451,487**

 **306,222**
Rohingya

 **145,265**
Host Community Members

 **307,070**
Female

 **144,417**
Male


FUNDING & GRANTS

 USD **16.31M**

23 Projects

PROGRAM & PARTNERSHIP

 **9**
Major Interventions
Health, Women's Protection & Empowerment, Protection & Rule of Law, Child Protection, Education, Economic Recovery & Development, Emergency Preparedness & Response, Refugee Resettlement, Advocacy & Communication.

 **10**
Local partners (five women-led)

LOCATION

 **31**
Rohingya camps

 **27**
Host community locations

ON THE FRONTLINES OF THE MOST SEVERE CRISES IN BANGLADESH

Since 2017, we have been serving the most persecuted minorities in the world - the displaced Rohingya community who have taken refuge in Bangladesh. This crisis has become a protracted one and is impacting adversely in the lives of nearly 1.5 million Rohingya and the surrounding host communities in Cox's Bazar. We are responding with all our resources to improve our clients' health, education, protection, and skills so that they become resilient, resourceful, and capable of rebuilding their lives with the hope of a better future.

Along with the Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh has also become a climate hotspot, creating a risk of 15% land loss and internal displacement of nearly 30 million people from the coastal areas of Bangladesh imminently due to increasing temperature, consequential sea-level rise, and extreme weather events. In these circumstances, since 2022, we have been working in southern Bangladesh with national organizations to build the capacity of the local organizations towards resilience and support them in getting access to life-saving health, protection, and education services.

Women, children, adolescents, persons with disabilities and special needs, and older adults need special attention and support to cope with this change. We are standing firm with them. We are also seeking commitment from the UN nation-states, donor agencies, and international communities to build strong collaboration and ensure uninterrupted and sustainable funding for durable solutions to the Rohingya and climate crisis in Bangladesh.

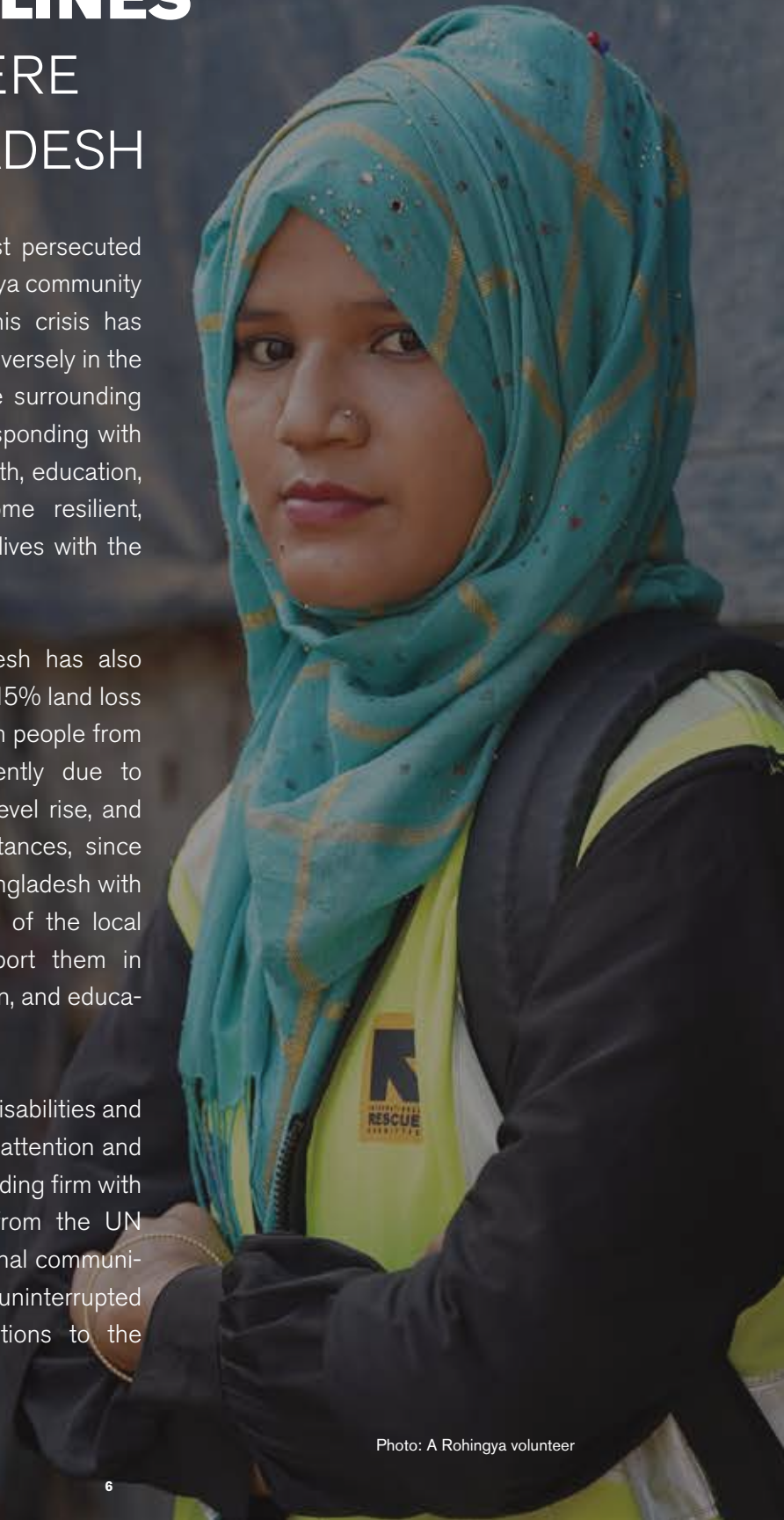


Photo: A Rohingya volunteer

OUR FOOTPRINT



Among
Rohingya Refugees
in Chittagong Division

 **31**
Camps

Within
Host Communities
in Chittagong & Barisal Division

 **27**
Locations

 IRC's Presence

 No Presence

Footprint in the ROHINGYA CAMPS



Footprint in the **BANGLADESHI COMMUNITIES**

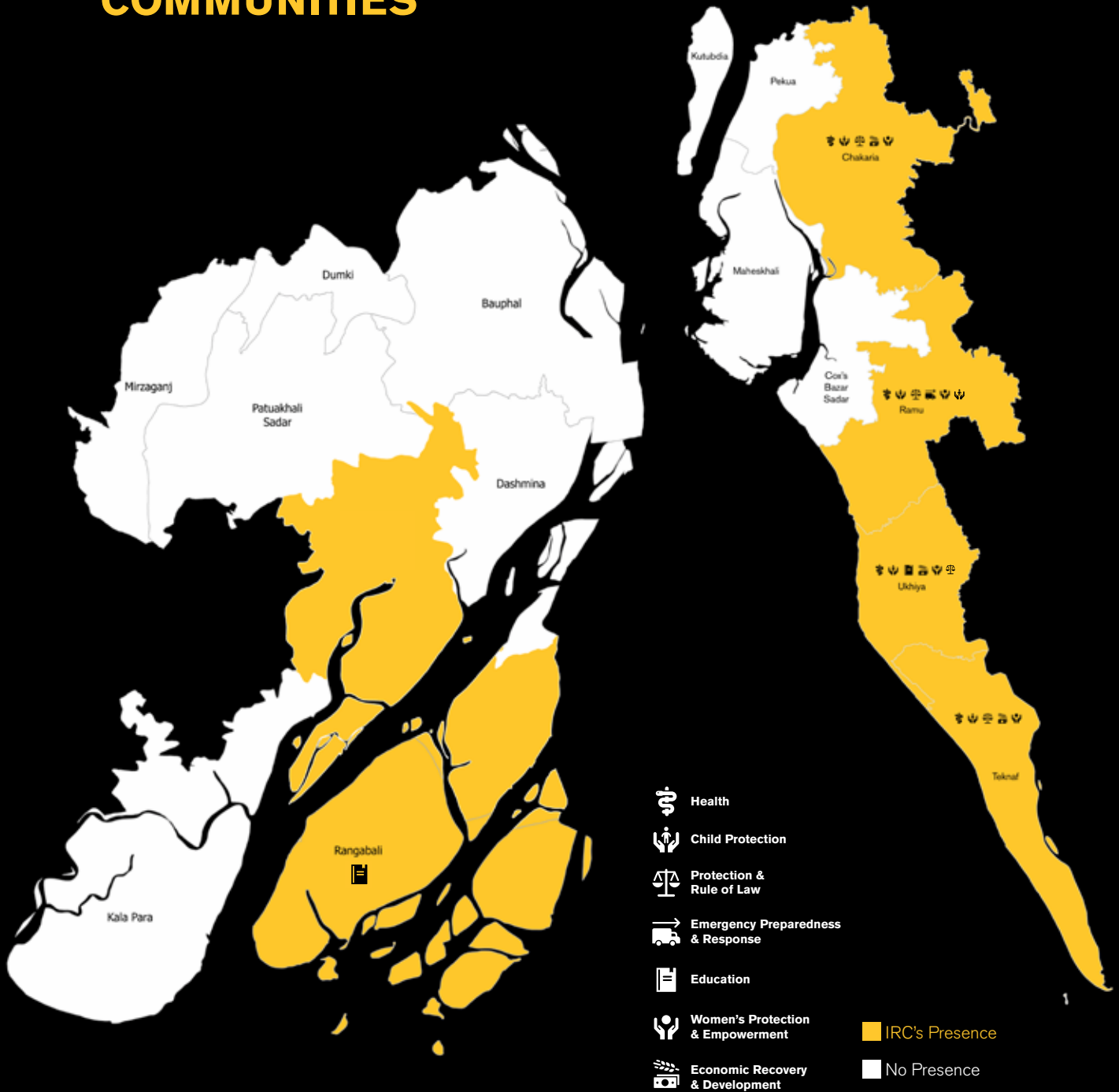




Photo: Inside a 24/7 Primary Health Care Center

Life Saving **HEALTH** Solutions

165,381 total unique clients

 **133,511** Rohingya

 **121,176** Female

 **31,870** Host

 **44,205** Male

Our health interventions covered the camps 1E, 1W, 2E, 2W, 3, 4, 4 Ext, 5, 6, 7, 8E, 8W, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 20E, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, Nayapara, and local communities Haldiapalong, Jaliapalong, Rajapalong, Sabrang, Whykong, Baharchara in 2023.

At the IRC, we constantly challenged ourselves and our peers to ensure the continuation of life-saving health solutions for both the Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar. This year, the Dengue outbreak was a significant concern in the camps and host communities, particularly exacerbated by extreme weather events and living conditions. We were one of the leading organizations to mobilize resources and coordination for the treatment and awareness of Dengue. In addition, prevalent skin diseases like Scabies affected a substantial portion of the Rohingya population residing in the densely populated camps. Our health team stood by our clients and provided them with quality and compassionate healthcare for their diseases.



Photo: One of our midwives, who plays a pivotal role in sexual and reproductive health management

Throughout the year, we continued our inclusive services to maternal, child, women, and girls health care, facility-based delivery, treatment to non-communicable diseases, psychosocial support, and community awareness under the umbrella of our Primary Health Care Centers, Sexual and Reproductive Health Facility including Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care Center, Women Friendly Spaces, Women and Girls Safe Spaces, and Emergency Referral Hubs.

216,612

Rohingya and host clients were treated in our out-patient departments

126,304

clients received sexual & reproductive health services and developed good SRH behavior

48,680

clients were treated for skin diseases including scabies

1,314

Dengue patients were cured after receiving treatment from our PHCCs

REBUILDING FROM THE ASHES

To support **32,514 Rohingya** in Camp 11, we are rebuilding our 24/7 Primary Health Care Center which was completely burned on March 5, 2023

Climate-induced disasters and structural hazards are two significant risks that can disrupt our services. But, as a humanitarian organization, we are committed to persevering and ensuring that our clients are not exposed to vulnerabilities. Our commitment was put to the test on March 5, 2023.

A devastating fire destroyed our 24/7 primary health care center in Camp 11, and the well-being of around 32,514 displaced Rohingya people living in this camp was on the line. After the incident, we immediately deployed two mobile medical teams, set up temporary tents, and continued service as a 24/7 health center. Later, we sought support from the health sector to continue the service from the Gonoshasthaya Kendra-UNHCR facility. However, by the end of March, we moved our service to a temporary facility, and with support from UNICEF, we established an integrated health facility with a nutrition center. As we are rebuilding our facility, we are emphasizing durable and climate-resilient infrastructure, including clean energy from solar panels.



Photo: Temporary treatment center after fire incident

I am Junayed, living in Camp 11. I can remember the night when the fire broke out in our camp. I was near the primary health care center when it caught fire. This health care center was our lifeline - which we saw burning. At that time, many volunteers like me came forward to move the equipment to safety.

Later that night, the IRC's doctors set up tables and chairs beside the fire and started aiding the fire-affected community. It was a life-saving decision that we could count on.

SHUBASH CONSORTIUM

Delivered Integrated Health, Protection,
Nutrition and Livelihood Services

The ShuBaSh ('living happily together') Consortium was a 2020 to 2023 integrated health, protection, nutrition, and livelihoods project funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration: towards improved health, safety, and well-being of women, men, and children in camps and host communities in Cox's Bazar. Led by the IRC, the consortium also comprised Concern Worldwide, and BBC Media Action, as well as local implementing partner NGOs: Aid Comilla, Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, Nari Maitree, Protyashi, Social Assistance and Rehabilitation for the Physically Vulnerable, Shushilan, and Translators Without Borders. The project employed an integrated multi-sectoral approach, at community level, including implementation of the minimum standard guidelines on accountability to affected populations; and built the capacity of the local partner NGOs over the three years. Community engagement approaches included impactful listening groups using BBC Media Action's Aa'rar Kissa for GBV prevention, health and nutrition education using TV screens, and integrated audio messaging during community meetings. The multi-sectoral interventions included prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition, context-adapted homestead gardening, small businesses, physical disability rehabilitation, GBV prevention and response, and operation of 24/7 primary health care centres. The co-location of GBV case management within the health and nutrition facilities allowed for effective awareness raising, identification and referral, ensuring timely access to protection, health, and nutrition services, for women, girls, and their families. Altogether, we reached 954,059 clients with this project over three years.

389,361

clients were reached among
the vulnerable Rohingya &
host communities

180,927

clients reported trust in our
health facilities and showed
improved health seeking
behavior

100%

rape survivors visiting our
health facilities received
emergency contraception
within 120 hours

89%

clients reported improved
sense of safety & wellbeing

7%

increase from 65% to 72%
observed in exclusive
breastfeeding among the
clients

2%

decrease in Global Acute
Malnutrition among the
Rohingya from 14% to 12%



Photo: An awareness session

Protecting & **EMPOWERING** Women

161,927 total unique clients


 **88,234** Rohingya

 **121,878** Female

 **73,693** Host

 **40,049** Male

Our women's protection & empowerment intervention covered the camps 2E, 3, 4, 4 Ext, 5, 6, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 22, 25, and local communities Haldiapalong, Jaliapalong, Palongkhali, Ratnapalong, Sabrang, Whykong, Baharchara, Joarianala, Fatkerkul, Eidgor, Dulhazra, Dakkhin Mithachory, Chakaria, and Cox's Bazar Sadar in 2023.



Throughout the year, our clients developed positive behavior to address violence against women and girls through our SASA! Together sessions. Our male clients created supportive environments for their female counterparts after being supported by the Engaging Men in Accountable Practices approach. Meanwhile, adolescent girls are equipped with essential life skills to reduce the risks of violence and for their safe transition into adulthood. Moreover, the women showed increased financial literacy and decision-making skills to the new entrepreneurship opportunities through our Economic And Social Empowerment approach. On top of that, the protective environment and social cohesion improved among our clients as we identified potential gender-based violence risks and developed and implemented risk mitigation plans with women's support, community watch, and self-help groups within the communities.

260,092

Rohingya and host clients became aware of gender-based violence

81,541

clients developed positive behavior to address violence against women and girls through SASA! Together approach

14,709

clients could maintain personal wellbeing as they received psychosocial and non-food item support after climate-induced and structural disasters

Our clients stood firm in the context of climate-induced disasters, fire incidents, displacement and loss of shelters, competition over natural resources, consequential incidents of gender-based and intimate partner violence, and privacy, hygiene, and security concerns.

In addition, we proactively responded to the economic stress and loss of traditional livelihoods in the host and neighboring communities of Ukhiya, Teknaf, Ramu, and Chakaria.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE **CASE MANAGEMENT**

Towards a new beginning of life

Survivor-centered case management is core in gender-based violence response which is globally approved and adapted through an interagency coordination body. It is a comprehensive, collaborative, and multi-sectoral process that assesses, plans, implements, coordinates, monitors, and evaluates available resources, options and services to meet a survivor's needs aiming at effective outcomes through quality service delivery. In Cox's Bazar, the International Rescue Committee is the leading agency coordinating gender-based violence case management in the Rohingya response, while contributing to the capacity building of the other agencies involved in case management.

Through three to five days' rigorous case management sessions and year-long refresher training, our clients enhanced their access to knowledge, skills, and a range of services including sexual and reproductive health, improved their psychological well-being, created social networks, and accessed specialized services concerning gender-based violence. Above all, our clients felt safe and encouraged to voice for themselves and raise collective attention to their rights and needs. When a survivor seeks support, we manage the case following six steps: introduction and engagement, assessment, planning case action, implementation of the case action plan, case action plan review (and revision if required), and closure and feedback by the client. Throughout this journey, the survivors can heal and recover themselves, aware of choice and freedom, and at the end become confident and empowered.



Photo: Protection service provision

Protection & **RULE OF LAW** for All

38,210 total unique clients

 **26,624** Rohingya

 **21,155** Female

 **11,586** Host

 **17,055** Male

Our protection & rule of law intervention covered the camps 1E, 1W, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 15, 16, 21, 25, Baharchara, and local communities Cox's Bazar Sadar, Dakkhin Mithachory, Dulhazra, Eidgor, Fatkerkul, Hnila, Joarianala, Palongkhali, Rajapalong, Sabrang, Saint Martin's, Teknaf Sadar, and Whykong in 2023.

We contribute to a safe environment for the stateless Rohingya living in the Cox's Bazar camps, surrounding host and climate-vulnerable communities through our protection-based support to those facing protection risks due to climate-induced disasters, fire incidents, violence, denial of access to rights, and harmful cultural practices. This year, our clients were able to develop self-protection capacities and access protection services due to a framework that we created with relevant international instruments and standards to strengthen the protective environment.



3,657

clients' access to justice increased after they sought legal counselling and mediation services

2,112

clients could maintain personal wellbeing as they received psychosocial and non-food item support after climate-induced and structural disasters

2,023

clients became empowered as they received timely and accurate information through our two-way communication channel 'InfoSheba'

Photo: An awareness session

Monitoring the trends and concerns of access and rights violation, violence and exploitation is the core of our protection and rule of law programming. This year, we focused on systematic protection monitoring that informed the stakeholders with priorities to foster joint advocacy and decision-making. Additionally, our clients gradually recovered from the impacts of violence and became resilient with diverse support from our community-based protection committees. Besides, our clients from the Rohingya refugee and Bangladeshi communities empowered themselves with information from our two-way communication channel – InfoSheba – having timely, accurate, and consistent information through online and offline platforms. We also strengthened the informal justice systems; therefore, our clients sought legal counseling and mediation services to access legal services. Lastly, we integrated protection with all our programs for broader coverage of services.

InfoSheba

A 'Signpost' window for empowerment through information

We lead InfoSheba, a part of 'Signpost' which is a community-led platform that empowers our clients and the community with accurate, concise, actionable, and timely information to make critical decisions on the issues that matter most to them. This platform delivers critical information using digital tools, channels, and social media.

InfoSheba is part of a global initiative named Signpost, the world's first scalable approach to running community-driven, responsive information platforms. To positively impact our clients' lives, we build programs through partnerships across industries and sectors, being deeply connected with the contextual knowledge that only local communities have. Currently, in Bangladesh, along with in-person one-to-one meetings, we are disseminating information through our Website and Facebook page.



InfoSheba is a place that we can rely on for accurate information

Rahela Begum
Rasul's mother

I live with my son, Rasul, in one of the largest camps in Cox's Bazar. Rasul faced difficulty walking, and me, unsure of the cause, sought a solution. However, I did not know where to seek the solution. In this moment, learned from a community volunteer that the IRC could support providing necessary information, making referrals, and creating a connection between them and the service providers. Me and my son visited IRC's InfoSheba corner one morning. We talked to an information officer, who provided accurate information and referred us to a relevant service provider. Later, the InfoSheba team followed up with me and the service provider to ensure Rasul got the much-needed wheelchair. Now, my son is adapting to his new mobility aid, moving with greater flexibility and independence.



Photo: Inside a Safe Healing and Learning Space for Rohingya children

Child's Rights through **CHILD'S EYES**

32,353 total unique clients

 **27,776** Rohingya

 **15,499** Female

 **4,577** Host

 **16,854** Male

Our child protection intervention covered the camps 1E, 1W, 5, 6, 8E, 14, 18, 22, and 25, and local communities in Chakaria, Dakkhin Mithachory, Dulhazra, Eidgor, Fatkerkul, Joarianala, Ukhiya in 2023. We express our deep appreciation to Comic Relief for their generous support in child protection for last five years.

We believe our investment in child protection is crucial for shaping a better future. Every day, we extend our commitment to protect children from neglect, physical and mental abuse, distress, trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labor, and child marriage, as they frequently increase in the context of climate change, displacement, hostile living conditions, societal stereotypes, poverty, and criminal activities. Throughout the year, our team implemented child protection risk prevention and response activities in the Rohingya camps and host communities, empowered communities with knowledge and skills, strengthened community-based protection mechanisms, and enhanced the accountability of community and service providers to enable a protective environment for children.



54,527

clients' became aware of child rights and child protection issues and ready to develop positive coping mechanism

1,700

clients known and practiced social and emotional learning to overcome their harsh realities

1,560

clients developed essential life skills and coping strategies to protect and thrive themselves

2023 has been a successful year for us as we could support a significant number of adolescents in developing essential life skills and positive coping strategies towards positive impacts on their lives. Moreover, we worked with the parents and caregivers in developing positive parenting skills. Consequently, these caregivers were better equipped to support their children across various developmental stages during challenging situations. Therefore, good and healthy relationships developed among parents, caregivers, and children to understand and support each other.

Lifesaving case management service has been one of our strengths in responding to the protection concern of the Rohingya and climate-crisis-affected children. We managed cases with the highest confidentiality and quality to address the needs of unaccompanied and separated children, fostering reunification with their caregivers or alternative care support along with other children who are at risk of different kinds of violence and exploitation.

A SPACE WHERE **CHILDREN** CAN THRIVE



Our safe healing and learning spaces offer a safe, caring, and predictable environment for the Rohingya and host community children who need support to protect themselves from violence, conflict, and crisis. This year, 400 girls and 400 boys spent productive time in 109 sessions with trained facilitators in the spaces during the day to internalize social and emotional well-being, become confident about self-capacities, and thrive daily with the necessary skills – learned through the social and emotional learning curriculum. However, supporting only the children is not enough. Therefore, we cooperated with 600 parents through eight sessions so that they could effectively manage stress, foster positive parenting practices, and build strategies to support their children's social needs. We want to take this year's learning further and continue our safe healing and learning spaces to be children's companions in fulfilling their dreams.



My name is Sayed I want to make motor cars

Last year, when I was six, apa (learning facilitator) taught me to draw motor cars. I did not know that drawing motor cars would be that easy. This year, I can build my own motor cars with these blocks.

Apa said, as we grow, our dreams grow too. Since then, I dream to make a real car that I can ride with my friends in the neighbourhood. My sister will be amazed. Sometimes, I will give her ride too.

I love to be in the fun center (safe healing and learning space). Here, I feel secure. Here, I learn to make friends, being happy, new games, and new rhymes. And, when I sleep, I become eager to spend another day dreaming.



Photo: Early childhood development

Education for **RESILIENT** Future

41,029 total unique clients

 **29,977** Rohingya

 **21,680** Female

 **11,052** Host

 **19,349** Male

Our child protection intervention covered the camps 2E, 11, 15, and 22, and the local communities in Haldiapalong, Jaliapalong, Rajapalong, and Palongkhali in 2023 with our national partner Prottayashi.

This year, more incidents of cyclones, floods, and landslides hindered the access to education of the Rohingya and host community children than last year. The fragile infrastructures in the camps made access to education more difficult for the Rohingya children. In response to the access issue, we increased our learning facilities in the host communities and camps from 80 to 150, nearly increasing the number of clients double to be reached.

To successfully implement the Myanmar curriculum in camps, we started working with the Rohingya learning facilitator to enhance their proficiency in the Burmese language. Moreover, we finalized our plans to develop a Burmese language lab where teachers can access resources, practice language, and develop their skills. This will translate into more children enjoying studies in their official language.

This year, our program reached the most climate-vulnerable communities in Moheshkhali, Cox's Bazar, and Ranggabali, Patuakhali. This initiative broadened the coverage of last-mile learning to the children of these two remotest areas. In the coming days, they will receive the necessary education to prepare themselves for skill development and livelihood activities. To enhance the quality of the services provided by the volunteers/teachers, we are planning to introduce AI chatbot into our programming which will be live next year.



Contributing to evidence generation for Education in Emergencies

Through the Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) project, we developed a framework to review education in Cox's Bazar, focusing on challenges in Rohingya communities. This year, we identified evidence gaps that are hindering policymaking and provision through stakeholders mapping, literature review, and interviews. We emphasized evidence-based interventions for vulnerable populations, providing insights into improving education provision in Cox's Bazar. Stakeholder workshops in November 2022 and January 2023 prioritized research themes, leading to formative research studies started in February 2023, using a systematic approach across four research types: Formative research, Design research, Implementation research, and Effectiveness research.

17,964

parents and children benefited from improved knowledge and practice of learning through play for early childhood development

5,178

children continued their learning and received basic education

1,436

Rohingya children were enrolled and continued their education in Myanmar Curriculum

IVR

Revolutionizing community outreach & participation

After learning from the COVID-19 lessons, we introduced the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to ensure our clients receive comprehensive, accurate, and timely information from anywhere under any circumstances. We started this community outreach practice to reach the parents and caregivers of young children remotely to ensure that they receive adequate support.

Realizing the benefits of IVR communication, we integrated this system into all our programs and digitized our community outreach practices. Our clients are now receiving information quickly and cost-effectively. We have also developed a system to obtain clients' feedback and opinions, turning it into a channel for two-way communication.



Accurate and timely information is the key for our children's wellbeing inside the camp. IVR is doing that.

Senu Ara Begum

I have been receiving the IVR calls since my first motherhood. I am Senu Ara Begum and I live with my son in one of the biggest refugee camps of the world. My camp is overcrowded and it is very difficult to maintain personal wellbeing. I, too, became concerned about my son as he was born underweight. So, IVR was a source of support for me. Since then I have been receiving information about childcare, cleanliness, nutritious food, learning through playing, and many more, and practicing those.

However, my son caught by an infectious eye disease. It was a helpless moment for me, but, I received support from the IRC's health services and they referred my son to an eye-specialized facility. Thanks to them, my son is getting well.



Photo: A self reliant client

Towards **ECONOMIC** Prosperity

3,721 total unique clients

 **100** Rohingya

 **1,395** Female

 **3,621** Host

 **2,326** Male

Our economic recovery & development intervention covered the camps 1E, 1W, 8E, and Baharchara, and the local communities in Chiringa, Dakkhin Mithachory, Dhemusia, Dulhazra, Eidgor, Fatkerkul, Haldiapalong, Joarianala, Kakara, Koiar Bill, Poshchim Boro Veula, Ratnapalong, Saint Martin's, Ukhiya, and Whykong in 2023.

21,871

clients developed their livelihood capacities after receiving training on climate-smart agriculture

20,900

clients were maintaining their homestead gardens and domestic farms contributing to their nutritional and livelihood needs

2,198

clients developed their skills after receiving 'Learn to Earn' trainings

In a climate-vulnerable situation, traditional livelihoods are often lost. Responding to this challenge, our host community clients focused on developing skills for alternative livelihoods, like dry fish processing, block-batik, tailoring, handicrafts, computer literacy, etc. Climate-smart agriculture has been proven to be an effective strategy for climate-resilient livelihood. This year, our clients could meet the nutritional needs of their families and contribute to their communities as they received training and business inputs, i.e. goat, chicken, and vegetable seed packages. Additionally, we worked with the Rohingya youths to develop their solar panel and gas stove repair and maintenance skills.



This year, several floods and cyclones devastated the Rohingya camps and host communities. Cyclone Mocha was the largest one that significantly damaged Saint Martin's Island –the southernmost part of Bangladesh. This island's most affected and displaced people could rebuild their lives and livelihoods as we provided them with multipurpose cash support.

LEARN TO LEAD

**A youth development module
for the future
community leaders**

'Learn to Lead' & 'Learn to Earn' changed my life in a positive way. I am Hafiz from a small village in Ratnapalong union of Cox's Bazar. This is my story of discovering self dignity and economic freedom.

As a member of the host community, my opportunities for earning a livelihood are limited. Furthermore, over the past five years, we have been facing extreme climate events such as flooding, cyclonic storms, and extreme heat. These events, in combination, pose a significant challenge to our traditional livelihoods.

However, my life has changed positively since I enrolled in the 'Learn to Lead' program and attended its sessions. The program helped me discover my capacities and equipped me with the necessary skills to start my own enterprise. Later, I also participated in the 'Learn to Earn' sessions that taught me about climate-smart farming.

Thanks to these programs, I am now working on growing my business.



Photo: Need assessment after a fire incident

Preparedness, **RESPONSE**, Resilience

48,819 total unique clients


 **36,884** Rohingya

 **30,901** Female

 **11,935** Host

 **17,918** Male

Our emergency preparedness & response intervention is integrated in all our programs running in 31 camps and 27 locations in the local communities in Cox's Bazar. In 2023, we prepared the communities for effective response and preparedness to disasters.



Our clients around some hard-to-live geographies in Bangladesh, experienced multiple floods, cyclones, and fire incidents throughout the year. Therefore, we doubled our effort by expanding our programs to the coastal areas of southern Bangladesh and Saint Martin's island and also integrating our strategy for building resilience against climate-induced and structural disasters in all our programs. As the disasters affected the communities with home and foodlessness, increasing displacement, lack of mobility, and resources, we responded to this situation also with necessary non-food items, dignity kits for women and adolescent girls, emergency referral services, and multi-purpose cash assistance, along with stakeholders coordination.

4,800

dignity kits supported the women and girls in maintaining hygiene in critical post-fire, flood, and cyclone situations

1,000

households of the Saint Martin's Island rebuilt their lives and livelihoods with multipurpose cash assistance

140

disaster management committees were functionalized in Cox's Bazar for effective management of climate induced disasters

Photo: Clients received multipurpose cash assistance at Saint Martin's island after Cyclone Mocha

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION STRUCTURE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT



We prioritized strengthening community-based protection structures to build resilience in climate-induced disaster-prone communities. This action empowered the community members and enabled them to act as first responders during disasters or emergencies before professional aid arrived. Within the scope of this structure, the members identified the protection risks in the pre-, during, and post-disaster periods, engaging individuals, groups, and local communities.

We organized trainings, field exercises, and risk assessments with the community and developed community-centric risk mitigation plans. This practice created ownership in the community, accelerating community-level disaster preparedness to manage any disaster shock effectively.

Photo: Community based protection meeting

RESETTLING REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES

We are collaborating with the Government of the United States and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to resettle Rohingya refugees to the US as a part of durable solutions of this crisis.

We operate the United States Government funded Resettlement Support Center (RSC) Asia sub-office in Cox's Bazar to process applications of refugees who are referred by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) for resettlement consideration.

As of January 9, 2024, the RSC Asia Cox's Bazar sub-office has 40 national and five international staff. To meet the needs of the growing team, the workspace will be expanded to include a field site in Ukhiya, which is expected to open by the end of March 2024. At the Ukhiya site, staff will focus on administrative activities related to processing applications for adjudication by U.S. government officials.

For applicants approved to resettle in the U.S., RSC Asia provides cultural orientation classes to U.S. bound refugees and coordinates with USRAP-Bangladesh partner the International Organization for Migration responsible for arranging travel to the United States.

Round Table Discussion

November 15, 2023



Photo: Round Table Discussion

ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATION

Throughout the year, we have dedicated our efforts to amplify the voices of the Rohingya and people from the host and local communities in need of emergency humanitarian support. Our advocacy and communications aim to foster durable solutions to Bangladesh's Rohingya and climate crisis. 2023 was an eventful year for us, as we served as a Co-Chair of the Advocacy Working Group in the Rohingya refugee context. With this extended role -

We engaged in a high-level meeting in Bangkok on Rohingya crisis where we supported the need of fulfilling the basic necessities of the Rohingya people, building resilience, and bringing innovative solutions of this multi-dimensional crisis.

We collaborated with UNHCR to make multisectoral pledges & participated in the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) to advocate for health, protection, education, skills development, and climate resilience of Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar.

We participated in the Regional Humanitarian Partnership Week in Bangkok with Handicap International. There we participated in a panel discussion and photography exhibition to show the situations inside the camps in Cox's Bazar that drew the attention of the concerning communities towards this crisis.

We influenced policies by organizing the policy-makers and stakeholders in six high profile policy dialogues, five local level advocacy meetings, and developing 10 advocacy briefs and messages.

Our collaborative advocacy brought some exciting changes

This year, our collaborative advocacy increased the Rohingya's food rations from \$8 per person per month to \$10 per person per month.

In 2023, FD7 duration for Rohingya response projects increased to one year from six months, paving the path of longer-term intervention among the communities in need of life-saving health, protection, education, and livelihood support.



COMMS CHAMPION

Championing Communication within Programs

Comms Champions are the ambassadors of communication, documentation, and branding in our Bangladesh country program. All the participants were chosen from the project teams keen to learn the art of communication within the fast-paced humanitarian context.

This year, the second cohort of Comms Champions completed their two-day interactive training sessions to learn story spots, storytelling, photography, branding and compliance, the need for communications in emergency and humanitarian contexts, and many more.

Throughout the year, our Comms Champions made outstanding contributions to documenting the impacts on our clients' lives. They reached some hard-to-reach areas to bring out the stories of change to the broader community of donors, partners, supporters, and all relevant stakeholders so that the change inspires others and becomes a role model in the communities.

We were the
VOICE of the
crisis-prone
COMMUNITY

This year, we have organized the national media to amplify the voices of the empowered women, youths, and girls from the host communities affected by Rohingya and climate crisis. Their voices inspired the wider community in Cox's Bazar and beyond to tackle critical issues like child marriage, child labor, and violence against women and girls.

GENDER EQUALITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



Photo: Regional GEDI Workshop

We have integrated the Gender Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (GEDI) policies in our organization. Recently, we are developing capacities of our colleagues all over the world, including Bangladesh in improving the teams' technical skills to incorporate GEDI principles into our work and apply an intersectional perspective.

At the IRC, we employ **61%** women staff, and **50%** members of the senior management team are women.

WOMEN AT WORK (W@W) and GEDI CHAMPIONS

We ensure healthy work environment for our colleagues. Women at Work (W@W) is one of the employee-led initiatives to remove barriers that women face in workplaces. Since the start of our operations, through W@W, we provide all our female colleagues a space to connect and seek support and mentorship across the organization.

Within our organization, we celebrate gender diversity, equality, and inclusion. In this regard, we have our GEDI champions support the management teams to take decisions and colleagues engagement to ensure gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. This year, we celebrated 16 days of activism and installed women and child friendly spaces in our offices in course of upholding our GEDI agenda.

SAFEGUARDING & PSEA

We are on an organizational journey to strengthen our ability to prevent and respond to safeguarding violations in ways that center survivors and communities, are responsive to our teams and the contexts where we work, and contribute to a safe, caring and inclusive culture at IRC. The Safeguarding Minimum Standards are designed to be our tool to guide operationalization, but also to facilitate learning and further evolution of our work in this area.

Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2022-2024

MISSION

To help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster, including the climate crisis, to survive, recover, and gain control of their future.

STRATEGIC AMBITIONS

Client Ambition

- Increase the use of cash & vouchers (3% of the portfolio) to support basic needs in emergencies & access to services.
- Improve identification of clients' intersectional identities & needs through gender & social inclusion analysis, tailored program design & appropriate resources allocation.
- Increase meaningful client participation & voice in our programs, esp. children & youth and their parents & caregivers.
- Ensure robust & safe client feedback & safeguarding mechanism.

Partner Ambition

- Increase partner-led programming esp. in all new areas, shifting to be more of a thought leader & technical advisor.
- Target 30% of funding to go to local partners (19 partners, 50% women-led).
- Invest in systems/resources that allow us to more meaningfully support local strategic partnership.

Diversity Ambition and GEDI

- Lead the integration of protection & gender mainstreaming principles across the humanitarian response in Bangladesh.
- Increase engagement & accountability of males in programming.
- Create work culture which empowers field staff & encourages shared learning, commitment & participation, gender sensitivity & greater understanding & action on diversity.
- Build a reputation as an employer of choice for women & minorities.

CLIENTS

Vulnerable, left behind women, children, and youth impacted by conflict or climate-induced displacements with multiple intersectional identities (e.g. elderly, PWD, ethnic minorities, at risk occupations)

VISION

To protect, empower, and meet the needs of the most vulnerable women, children, and youth through technical expertise and partnerships in the areas of integrated protection, health, education and economic wellbeing before, during, and after displacement caused by conflict and climate induced disaster.

OUTCOMES

Safety

- People are safe in their homes and receive support when they experience harm.
- People are safe in their communities and receive support when they experience harm.
- Women and girls are protected from and treated for the consequences of gender-based violence.

Health

- Women and girls achieve their sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Adolescents and adults are physically and mentally healthy.

Education

- Young children have developmentally appropriate cognitive, language, motor and social-emotional skills.
- School Aged Children have improved literacy, numeracy and social-emotional skills.

Economic Wellbeing

- People meet their basic needs and protect livelihoods during emergencies.

Our Projects

We have implemented 23 diverse projects in both host and Rohingya communities funded by Institutional and Private donors. These projects included humanitarian as well as emergency responses. The client reach was more than 450,000.

1. Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC), funded by Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).
2. Strengthening Protection, Health and Resilience of Refugees and Host Communities in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh funded by Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO).
3. USAID's Youth are Resilient, Interconnected, Socially Cohesive and Engaged (YouthRISE) Activity, funded by BBC Media Action and USAID.
4. Education for Rohingya Refugees and Host Communities in Bangladesh, funded by Plan International Bangladesh and Education Cannot Wait (ECW).
5. Amplifying Early Childhood in Emergency Settings, funded by Sesame Workshop and LEGO Foundation.
6. Strengthening Rohingya Children, Families and Communities to protect, prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children, funded by Comic Relief.
7. Leadership for Learning through Displacement, funded by Teach For All
8. Arnhold Education Opportunity, funded by Arnhold Foundation.
9. Signpost, funded by Breakthrough Prize Foundation.
10. Lifesaving Health and Protection services for Rohingya and host community in Cox's Bazar, funded by Stichting Vluchteling (SV).
11. Comprehensive, Integrated Multi-Sector Response for Rohingya Refugees and Host Communities in Cox's Bazar, funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM).
12. Integrated Protection and Resilience Interventions for Host community in three subdistricts (Ramu, Chakaria and Ukhiya) of Cox's Bazar District, funded by Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).
13. Emergency Support for the flood affected people in Cox's Bazar district, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).
14. Health, protection, and cash assistance for refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and IDPs in Rakhine, Shan and Kachin States, Myanmar, funded by German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO).
15. Integrated protection, and Health program for Rohingya Refugees and Host community in Cox's Bazar, funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC).
16. Delivering Health, Nutrition and Livelihood, and Protection services for Rohingya Refugees and vulnerable host communities in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM).
17. Crisis Response Fund for fire response in camp 11, funded by International Rescue Committee.
18. Sustainable and comprehensive protection program for host communities impacted by the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, funded by Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).
19. Emergency Protection services to the fire-affected populations in the Rohingya camp, funded by Irish Aid.
20. Establishment of an Integrated Primary Healthcare and Nutrition Facility in Camp 11, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, funded by UNICEF and CERF.
21. Cyclone Mocha Response, funded by the International Rescue Committee.
22. Rebuilding Rohingya Camp 11's Primary Health Care Center (PHCC) after Fire, funded by Stichting Vluchteling (SV).
23. Integrated SRH, emergency referral and GBV service delivery for Rohingya and host communities, funded by UNFPA.

We Appreciate **YOUR SUPPORT**

Arnhold
Family
Foundation



The LEGO Foundation



Our Progress Towards **LOCALIZATION & PARTNERSHIP**

Adhering to the Government of Bangladesh's localization agenda, this year, we have signed 15 partnership agreements with our ten partners – nine national organizations, five women-led. We channeled 32 percent of our funds through our partners. Along with sharing the resources, we also focused on developing the capacities of our partners through the collaborative exchange of knowledge, skills, and expertise. This initiative enhanced the overall effectiveness of our service provision and partnership management.



PROTTYASHI



independence
 HUMANITY POLICY *neutrality* RESPONSE
 INCLUSION INTEGRITY **transparency**
gender EQUALITY
access
CLIENTS
 REFUGEE RESULTS
 behaviors ACCOUNTABILITY
responsible SERVICE ACTIONS
 EQUITY *sustainability*
 EMERGENCY *impartiality*

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