

Rohingya crisis

Two years after the Rohingya influx in Bangladesh, access to services for refugees with disabilities remain critical

Montreal, 25 August 2019 – 25th August 2017 was marked by violence in Rakhine, forcing thousands of Rohingya to cross the border of Myanmar and seek protection in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The pace of new arrivals has made this the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world. Two years have passed and more than 900,000 refugees mostly women and children are still living in congested camps with no certainty about their future.

Humanity & Inclusion (HI), has been working in registered camps and host communities since 2007 and was one of the five organisations present in the area before the influx. While scaling up its intervention to respond to the needs of the refugees and host communities, HI has always remained engaged in promoting a humanitarian principled guided response in line also with international and protection standards.

While HI is working to ensure the Rohingya refugees most at risk are not left behind and benefit from an inclusive humanitarian response, critical barriers and challenges remain for refugees with disabilities two years after the beginning of the crisis. Although the exact number of Rohingya refugees with disabilities is still unknown, it is estimated that around 44% of the Rohingya refugees have a disability or a serious medical condition¹. An assessment² recently conducted by HI in the camps showed that all the persons with disabilities interviewed expressed challenges in accessing health facilities and none of them were benefitting from vocational, livelihoods or skills training programs. Many people with disabilities including older people have reduced mobility and are living in an unaccommodating environment increasing their social isolation, their inability to access essential services including distribution points and health facilities while also becoming more likely to face higher risks of abuse and exploitation.

"I needed a caregiver for moving around and it was impossible to have someone present all the time. My family members got annoyed having to help me day after day. Since I got a walking stick, I can move easily, join in social gatherings, and perform my own duties independently. I am now happy physically and mentally. Now I don't feel like a burden to my family." –Rehabilitation Beneficiary

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¹ REACH, UNHCR Multi-Sector Needs Assessment Cox's Bazar Rohingya Refugee Response, July 2018

² Inclusive access to services for persons with disabilities, Barriers and Facilitators Assessment report January 2019

Timely funding is still required to meet life-saving and humanitarian needs, as well as the acute needs of host communities. As of today, only 34% of \$920 million Joint Response Plan (JRP) 2019 appeal was met and commitment from the international community remains a priority to maintain social cohesion and prevent a deterioration of the situation, particularly for the most vulnerable refugees.

It is possible to arrange interviews with our experts in the field.

For more details: <http://blog.handicap-international.org/influenceandethics/2019/08/22/alert-bangladesh-2-years-after-the-rohingya-influx-access-to-services-for-refugees-with-disabilities-remain-critical/>

About Humanity & Inclusion (HI)

Co-winner of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) is an international aid organization that works alongside disabled and vulnerable people in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. Humanity & Inclusion has been working in Bangladesh since 1997 to ensure that people with disabilities are integrated into society.

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