



OVERVIEW

Bangladesh continues to manage a massive humanitarian crisis. Since August 2017, in neighboring Myanmar, Rohingya people have been targeted by extreme violence—including killings, rape and the burning of villages—that has caused mass displacement. More than 688,000 Rohingya have fled Rakhine State, bringing the total number in Bangladesh to 900,000. They need essentials, including shelter, food, clean water, living supplies, protection and child safety. Their return to Myanmar seems unlikely in the short term as most of the refugees fear for their safety.

The refugee settlements have grown rapidly and spontaneously, leading to extremely congested shelters vulnerable to flooding, landslides and other hazards. The risks are especially high with the arrival of the cyclone season.

CARITAS RESPONSE

Caritas Bangladesh is working with Caritas Internationalis Member Organizations including Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to provide 265,636 people with comprehensive support, including:

Essential living supplies

- Blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets and other supplies.

Safe shelter

- Providing 7,540 safe, dignified shelters to as many families with support from local carpenters.
- Supporting site improvement and development in camp areas, benefiting 5,803 people.
- Demonstrating disaster-resilient construction improvements.
- Offering additional support to families with specific needs.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

- Constructing 2,387 gender-segregated toilet and bathing facilities
- Installing 2,419 tube wells with solar-powered pumps.
- Training volunteers, and developing messages to promote sanitation and hygiene.
- Facilitating water and sanitation infrastructure maintenance.
- Providing female hygiene supplies.
- Distributing 12,000 hygiene kits.



Through a CRS cash-for-work activity, Rohingya refugees used local materials to build structures such as drainage and terraces to mitigate erosion and flooding in the refugee settlement. Photo by Christopher Reichert/CRS

SETTLEMENT IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT

CRS and Caritas Bangladesh piloted a site-improvement project to help communities prepare for the cyclone and flood season. Using data from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees that identified areas vulnerable to flooding and landslides, and low-lying and steep areas, CRS and Caritas provided vital improvements to the congested, unsafe settlement, including cement-lined drainage, waste collection bins, bathing spaces, terraced steps, latrines, pathway lighting, improved shelters, retaining walls, wells, sandbag pathways and bamboo bridges. The improved pathways and lighting are particularly important for the elderly and others with specific needs.

Subcontractors provided technical expertise, and residents received

cash-for-work to install 1.3 miles of community infrastructure, such as retaining walls, pathways and drainage, which help mitigate flooding and landslides. Residents also participated in demonstrations and received technical support so they could help their vulnerable neighbors build shelters. Shelter kits were provided, including bamboo, rope and wire, to help families strengthen their structures.

In less than a month, the pilot community of 791 residents upgraded all 182 homes and built 20 bathing spaces. The pilot was cost-effective—at \$484 per family—and replicable, building on local knowledge and using local materials. Community leadership will mobilize labor for future shelter upgrades and maintain the refugee settlement.

Protecting women and children from trafficking and violence

- Sharing protection and anti-trafficking messaging.
- Training community members to counsel and provide referrals for specialized help.
- Constructing 6 child friendly spaces where children can play and learn safely.
- Educating men so they can advocate on behalf of women.

900,000

ROHINGYA PEOPLE HAVE FLED MYANMAR FOR BANGLADESH