

A COAST Foundation publication 2026

SHIELDING **CHILDREN** BUILDING HOPE

IMPACT
ASSESSMENT REPORT
UNICEF Child Protection
Project for Rohingya Refugee
Children in Cox's Bazar



KEY ACHIVEMENTS

85% of adolescents gained critical life skills and protection knowledge.

80.39% of children consistently demonstrated positive life skills and protective behaviors.

65% of adolescents showed increased confidence, resilience, and leadership.

3,400+ vulnerable children received Child Protection and GBV case management support.

88% of beneficiaries were satisfied with case management services.

12,000+ adolescents successfully graduated from vocational training programs.

1,500+ adolescents engaged in income-generating activities after training.

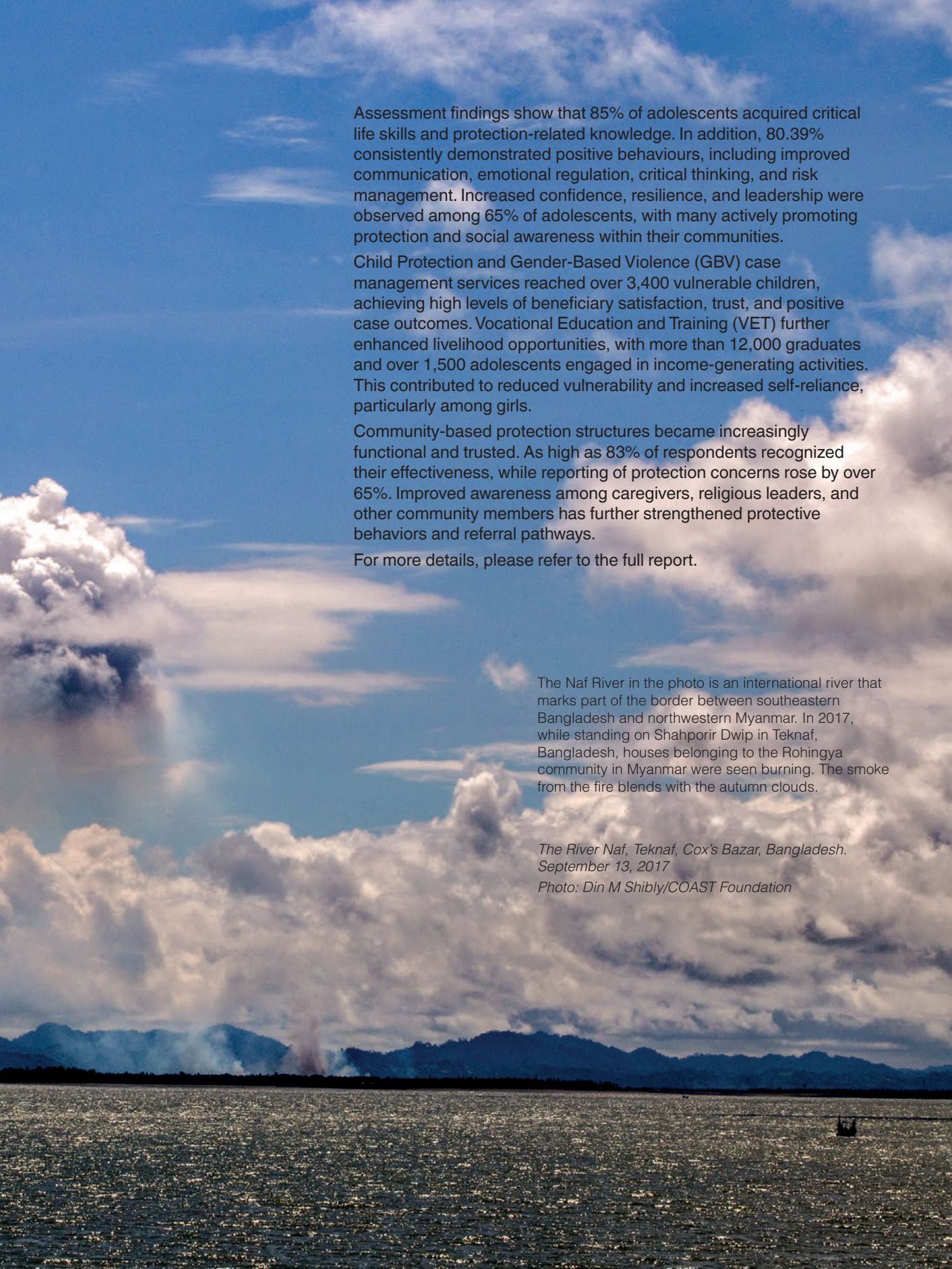
83% of respondents recognized community-based protection mechanisms as effective.

75% of families reported improved awareness of child protection and available support services.

65% increase in reporting of child protection concerns through community structures compared to the baseline.

KEY IMPACT

Since 2018, the Strengthen the Protective Environment for Children and Adolescents (SPE4CA) project, supported by UNICEF, has made a significant contribution to strengthening the protective environment for children and adolescents in the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh. The project delivered an integrated package of interventions, including life skills education, psychosocial support, vocational training, case management, and community-based protection mechanisms.



Assessment findings show that 85% of adolescents acquired critical life skills and protection-related knowledge. In addition, 80.39% consistently demonstrated positive behaviours, including improved communication, emotional regulation, critical thinking, and risk management. Increased confidence, resilience, and leadership were observed among 65% of adolescents, with many actively promoting protection and social awareness within their communities.

Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) case management services reached over 3,400 vulnerable children, achieving high levels of beneficiary satisfaction, trust, and positive case outcomes. Vocational Education and Training (VET) further enhanced livelihood opportunities, with more than 12,000 graduates and over 1,500 adolescents engaged in income-generating activities. This contributed to reduced vulnerability and increased self-reliance, particularly among girls.

Community-based protection structures became increasingly functional and trusted. As high as 83% of respondents recognized their effectiveness, while reporting of protection concerns rose by over 65%. Improved awareness among caregivers, religious leaders, and other community members has further strengthened protective behaviors and referral pathways.

For more details, please refer to the full report.

The Naf River in the photo is an international river that marks part of the border between southeastern Bangladesh and northwestern Myanmar. In 2017, while standing on Shahporir Dwip in Teknaf, Bangladesh, houses belonging to the Rohingya community in Myanmar were seen burning. The smoke from the fire blends with the autumn clouds.

*The River Naf, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.
September 13, 2017*

Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation



Rohingya Refugee Camp 14, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation/2025



Impact assessment report
**UNICEF Child Protection
Project for Rohingya Refugee
Children in Cox's Bazar,
Bangladesh**

SHIELDING **CHILDREN** BUILDING **HOPE**

Assessment period
February to April 2026

Editorial Panel

Advisor

M Rezaul Karim Chowdhury

Executive Director, COAST Foundation

Researcher

Md. Iqbal Uddin

*Joint Director - MEAL & Research
COAST Foundation*

Associate researcher

Tanjir Uddin Roni

*Project Manager, SPEA4CA
COAST Foundation*

Research team member

Moriom Akter

*Deputy Project Manager, SPEA4CA
COAST Foundation*

Text editor

Martin Swapan Pandey

*Joint News Editor, The Daily Star,
Bangladesh*

Photography

Din Muhammad Shibly

Documentary Photographer

And **COAST Foundation Archive**

Art Direction of the publication

Jason Sabbir Dhali

CreativOra, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Published in June 2026

For queries about this write-up:

info@coastfoundation.org

Production by **Xfactor**

Printed by Labiba Print Link

Dhaka, Bangladesh



27 Chapter 5: Challenges, Critical Risks Analysis, Lessons Learned, Recommendations and Conclusion



10 Chapter 3: Activities and findings



Acronyms

CBCPCs: Community-Based Child Protection Committees

SCAs: Social Change Agents

PCC: Parents and Caregivers Committees

CIC: Camp-In-Charge

CP: Child Protection

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

PESA: Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction

PFA: Psychological First Aid

FGD: Focus Group Discussion



8



Chapter 1:
Background and Objective



19 Chapter 4: Case Studies and Voices from the Community

Content

Chapter 1: Background and Objective	8
Chapter 2: Methodology of data collection, review, analysis and reporting	9
Chapter 3: Activities and findings:	
3.1: Impact of Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE)	10
3.2: Impact of Case Management Service	12
3.3: Impact of Vocational Education and Training (VET)	14
3.4: Impact of Community-Based Protection Mechanisms	17
Chapter 4: Case Studies and Voices from the Community	19
Chapter 5: Challenges, Critical Risks Analysis, Lessons Learned, Recommendations and Conclusion	27

Cover photo: Rohingya Refugee Camp 14, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. October 4, 2018

Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation

KII: Key Informant Interview

FDMN: Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals

NGO: Non-Government Organization

UN: United Nations

CM: Case Management

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

PSS: Psychosocial Support

PD: Project Design

VET: Vocational Education and Training



BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Since the onset of the Rohingya influx in August 2017, nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees have settled in camps across Ukhiya and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh. According to the Government of Bangladesh and UNHCR Joint Population Fact Sheet, more than 52% of the population is below 18. In addition, the host communities in the Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts have been severely affected by the influx. As a result, children in both refugee and host communities face heightened protection risks.

In response to these risks, COAST Foundation initiated Child Protection Case Management services in 2018 under the “Strengthen the Protective Environment for the Children and Adolescents (SPE4CA)” Project, supported by UNICEF. The project delivers integrated, community-based child protection services, including case management, psychosocial support (PSS), Psychosocial First Aid (PFA), Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE), Vocational Education and Training (VET), and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response.

Services are provided through Multipurpose Centers (MPCs), Adolescent Clubs, and community-based protection structures. The project is aligned with national child protection priorities, international humanitarian standards, and the Child Protection Sub-Sector (CPSS) framework. COAST partnership with UNICEF in

Cox's Bazar ended in March 2026. This assessment seeks to identify the major impacts, key challenges, and the way forward for future interventions.

<

In 2017, millions of Rohingya refugees suddenly flooded the Myanmar border of Bangladesh. They began arriving in droves, crossing the Naf River. The faces of children, men, women, and the elderly were all filled with fear and exhaustion. Some had walked for up to ten days to reach Bangladesh.

Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation/2017

1.2 Objectives of the Impact Assessment

Reports from UNHCR, UNICEF, and the Child Protection Sub-Sector (CPSS) continue to highlight widespread child protection concerns, including child neglect, psychological distress, violence, trafficking, and family separation in both camp and host communities. Data from the Child Protection Sub-Sector (CPSS) Child Rights Monitoring Mechanism (CRMM) and Joint Protection Monitoring in 2024 indicate rising concerns around child trafficking, recruitment, and abduction, particularly among adolescents aged 14–18. UNICEF's CRMM recorded 68 incidents involving children by armed groups, among other protection risks. These ongoing challenges underscore the need for sustained and strengthened child protection interventions.

In response, COAST's program addresses these risks through an integrated protection approach. The purpose of this assessment is to examine the extent to which the Child Protection program has contributed to positive changes in the lives of Rohingya children, adolescents, and their communities in Cox's Bazar District.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

The assessment used a mixed-methods approach to evaluate effectiveness, quality, and impact across camps and host communities.

2.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Primary Data Collection:

Primary data were collected through KIIs, FGDs, and Case Study analysis.



Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KIIs were conducted with project staff, camp-level service providers, community leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, and members of Community-Based Child Protection Committees (CBCPCs). A structured questionnaire was administered to assess the program's effectiveness and efficiency.



Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs were held with children, adolescents, parents/caregivers, youth groups, and community volunteers. Separate FGDs were conducted for girls and boys where appropriate to ensure safe and inclusive participation.



Case Studies Analysis

Selected Case Studies were collected and rigorously analyzed to illustrate success stories, challenges, and lessons learned.

Ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, child safeguarding, and "do no harm"—were strictly followed.

Secondary data review: Secondary data sources included-

- Child Protection situation analysis reports
- COAST project documents, monitoring reports, and case management records
- Published reports and assessments by other humanitarian agencies working in the camps

2.2 Data Analysis and Reporting

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages and means) to assess changes in key indicators related to skills acquisition, service utilization, participation, effectiveness, and service quality, applying a gender and protection lens throughout. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, perceptions, outcomes, and areas for improvement. Triangulation was used to validate findings across qualitative and quantitative data sources.

Chapter 3

ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS

3.1 Impact of Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE)

LSBE significantly improved adolescents' cognitive, emotional, and social competencies. Participants demonstrated enhanced communication, problem-solving, emotional regulation, decision-making, and personal safety awareness. Till March 2026, 64,604 adolescents have participated in six-month LSBE cycles for age groups 10–14 and 15–18 years.

Summary of Child Protection services delivered	
Service area	Total reached
LSBE	64,604
Psychosocial Support (PSS)	78,028
VET Enrollment	18,114
VET Graduates	12,493
CP Case Management	3,145
GBV Case Management	286
<i>* Male-Female Ratio 50% and Disability Inclusion 1%-3%</i>	

Key achievements

• **Enhanced Life Skills and Protective Knowledge:** A total of 548,763 adolescents (85%) acquired essential life skills and knowledge on communication, problem-solving, emotional regulation, decision-making, personal safety, sexual and reproductive health, and the prevention of harmful practices such as child marriage, trafficking, and child labor. This increased awareness has equipped adolescents with the tools needed to navigate risks and make informed choices.

• **Positive Behavioral Change and Practical Application:** At least 355,082 adolescent boys and girls (55%) are actively applying the knowledge and skills gained through the program in their daily lives. Adolescents reported using conflict resolution techniques, making safer decisions, promoting protective practices among peers, and raising awareness on key social and protection issues within their communities.

• **Strengthened Resilience, Confidence, and Leadership:** As many as 419,643 adolescents (65%) demonstrated increased self-confidence, assertiveness, and resilience. Many adolescents have become more engaged in community-based risk reduction and protection initiatives, contributing as active agents of change and promoting safer environments for themselves and their peers.

• **Improved Family Awareness and Supportive Environments:** An estimated 75% of families reported

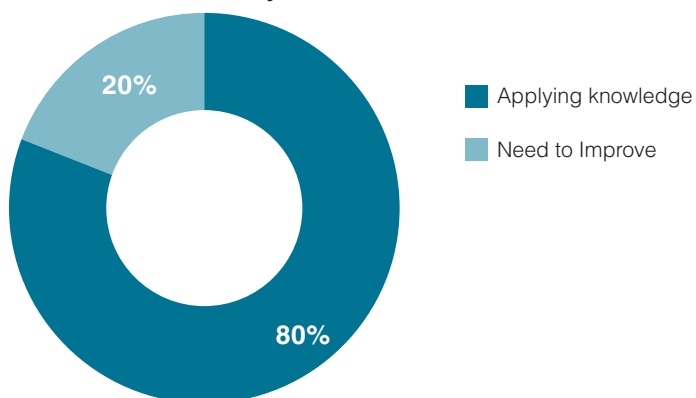
enhanced awareness of child protection, health, hygiene, and available support services. Increased family engagement has contributed to more protective and supportive environments for adolescents, reinforcing positive behaviors and reducing exposure to protection risks.

Key Results at a Glance (FGD & KII) – LSBE Intervention (Rohingya Camps)

Indicator	Result	Comment / Evidence
Participants enrolled	64, 604 adolescents	48% girls, 52% boys
Skills Acquisition	85% 	Knowledge of life skills, reproductive health, hygiene, and protection risks
Application in Daily Life	55% 	Adolescents actively use LSBE skills to solve problems, resist risks, and discuss protection issues
Resilience & Confidence	65% 	Improved self-confidence, risk awareness, and participation in disaster preparedness
Family Sensitization	75% 	Parents/guardians more aware of child protection, hygiene, and access to services
Reported Behavioral Change	70% 	Reduced aggression, better communication, assertiveness, and responsible decision-making
FGD & KII Feedback	90% positive 	Participants and caregivers report tangible improvements

The Application of LSBE Intervention in Daily Life

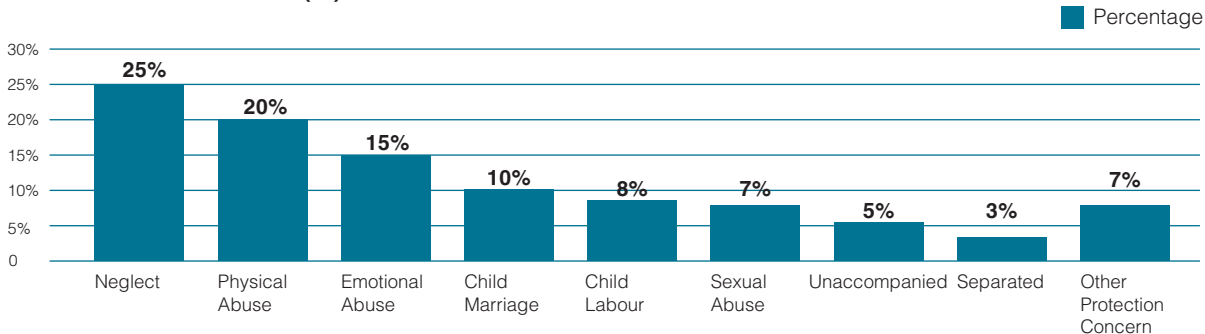
Participants' demonstration on life skills in daily life



To assess impact, a survey on the application of LSBE in daily life was conducted during the reporting period. Based on six components drawn from the modules, sessions, and awareness activities, the assessment found that 80.39% of children consistently demonstrated positive life skills and protective behaviors across communication, emotional regulation, critical thinking, risk management, and goal-setting domains.

3.2 Impact of Case Management Service

Case Concern-Wise Data (%)

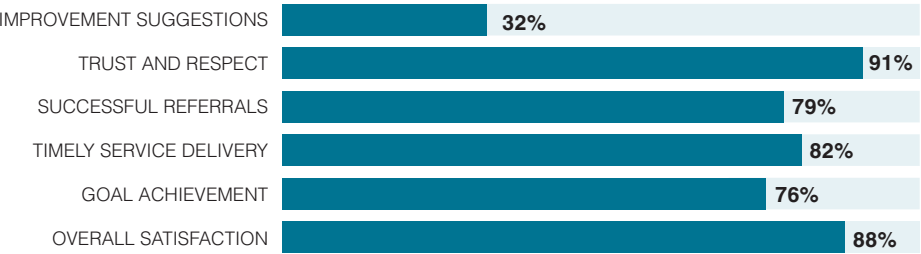


Between 2018 and 2026, COAST Foundation supported 3,145 Child Protection cases and 286 Child GBV cases.

Analysis of case concerns shows that neglect is the most frequently reported child protection issue, accounting for 25% of cases. This is followed by physical abuse (20%) and emotional abuse (15%). Child marriage (10%) and child labour (8%) remain significant threats to children's well-being and development. Other reported concerns include sexual abuse (7%), unaccompanied children (5%), and separated children (3%), further highlighting the multiple vulnerabilities faced by children in these communities.

Overall, these findings underscore the need for strengthened child protection interventions. Priority areas include prevention, family support, reduction of violence, and targeted services for children at risk of abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

Key Findings from Case Management, KII & FGD



The case management findings demonstrate a high level of effectiveness and client satisfaction. Overall satisfaction with case management services reached 88%, while 91% of beneficiaries reported being treated with trust and respect, reflecting the quality and client-centred nature of service delivery. Additionally, 82% of respondents were satisfied with timely service delivery, and 79% reported successful referrals to appropriate support services. The data further show that 76% of cases achieved their intended goals, indicating positive outcomes for children and families. While 32% of respondents provided suggestions for improvement, the overall findings highlight strong performance in service quality, responsiveness, and beneficiary trust, while also identifying opportunities to further strengthen case management interventions.



*Focus Group Discussion with Rohingya community people at Camp 19.
Photo: COAST Foundation Archive*

Most key informants agreed that case management interventions had a positive impact on client safety, well-being, and resilience. Case workers observed increased confidence and stability among survivors following interventions, particularly where comprehensive support packages were provided.

“

Now our parents discuss with us before making a family decision. They would not do so in the past.”

Jomila Khatun, a female Rohingya Caregiver, told an FGD discussion.

Findings from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) indicate that project activities contributed to several positive changes:

1. Increased community awareness led to higher reporting of child protection cases.
2. Case management services improved children's safety and protection.
3. Parents became more supportive and informed following counselling.
4. Children's mental well-being improved after receiving support.
5. Community-based protection groups became more active and responsive.
6. Strengthened referral mechanisms improved access to essential services.
7. Expansion of case management services is needed to reach all vulnerable children.



3.3 Impact of Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Vocational Education and Training (VET) interventions contributed positively to adolescents' and youths' self-reliance, dignity, and future orientation. Beyond skills acquisition, participation in VET improved self-esteem, decision-making capacity, and aspirations for safer livelihood pathways, particularly among adolescents at risk of child labour or early marriage. Vocational education was provided across six trades: Tailoring and Dress Making, Sanitary Pad Making, Soap Making, Solar Panel Installation, Repair and Maintenance, Computer Operation, and Photography and Tourism. Among the participants, more than 1,500 adolescents were engaged in income-generating activities (IGA).

*Rohingya Refugee
Camp 14, Ukhiya,
Cox's Bazar,
Bangladesh
Photo: COAST
Foundation Archive*

Period	Program	Total Enrollment	Total Graduates	Completion Rate	Remarks
2020	VET	1,350	482	36%	COVID-19 disruptions
2021	VET	4,800	2,629	55%	Post-COVID recovery
2022	VET	3,619	2,490	69%	Improved retention
2020–2022	VET	9,769	5,601	57%	Dropout rate: 2–3%
2023–2025	VET	8,345	6,892	83%	Dropout rate: 1.5–2%. Only 127 adolescents dropped out in the past two years, a very low attrition rate in a humanitarian setting.
Total		18,114	12,493		Strong upward trend

Among them, more than 1500 adolescents were engaged in Income Generating Activities (IGA).

Number of the employment status of the Graduate Adolescents

Job in other Agencies	Small business	Self-Employed	Total (M+F)
 Male  Female 361 87	 Male  Female 78 2	 Male  Female 343 630	1,501
448	80	973	1,501

Key achievements

- More than 1,500 adolescents (12%) of all graduates transitioned into Income-Generating Activities.
- Self-employment dominates (65%), reflecting movement restrictions and limited access to formal jobs.
- Female participation is highest in self-employment (630 female), highlighting VET as a strong GBV risk mitigation and empowerment tool.
- Male adolescents were more likely to work with other agencies, while females preferred home-based IGAs.
- 69% overall completion rate
- 12% livelihood transition rate
- 50%+ female participation in IGAs.
- 1.5–2% dropout rate (best-performing phase)

3.3.1 Key Findings from FGD

FGDs with adolescents, parents, and community leaders consistently confirmed the protective and economic value of VET and IGA: Key themes include:

- Reduced engagement in child labor and risky activities
- Improved household coping capacity
- Increased self-esteem and future orientation
- Delayed early marriage decisions, especially for girls

3.3.2 Findings from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KIIs with trainers, program managers, and protection staff revealed:

- 90% of KIIs stated VET reduced adolescents' exposure to protection risks
- 85% reported improved attendance when life skills were integrated
- Strong correlation between VET participation and reduced referrals for child labor and early marriage.

Vocational education was provided across six trades: Tailoring and Dress Making, Sanitary Pad Making, Soap Making, Solar Panel Installation, Repair and Maintenance, Computer Operation, and Photography and Tourism. Among the participants, more than 1,500 adolescents were engaged in income-generating activities (IGA).

3.3.3 Integrated Analysis: Protection + Livelihood Nexus

Triangulated evidence from quantitative data, FGDs, KIIs, and case studies confirms that VET and IGA function as protective interventions, rather than solely economic ones.

Key Outcome

The integrated analysis of quantitative findings, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and case studies demonstrates that Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Income Generating Activities (IGA) contribute significantly to both economic empowerment and protection outcomes for vulnerable adolescents and youth.

69% Overall Completion Rate: Nearly seven out of every 10 participants successfully completed their VET and livelihood training programs, indicating strong engagement, relevance of training content, and sustained participation despite challenging socio-economic conditions.

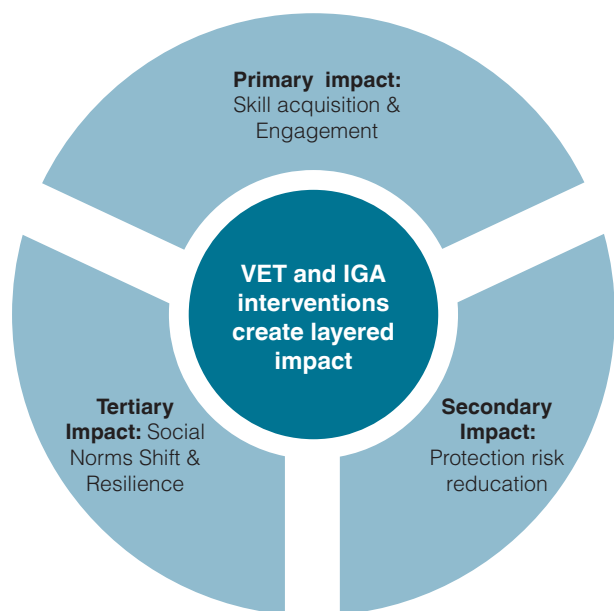
12% Livelihood Transition Rate: Nearly 12% of program graduates successfully transitioned into income-generating opportunities, including self-employment, small businesses, apprenticeships, and wage-based employment. This reflects the program's contribution to improving economic self-reliance and reducing livelihood-related vulnerabilities.

More than 50% Female Participation in IGAs: Women and adolescent girls represented over half of all participants engaged in Income Generating Activities, demonstrating progress toward gender inclusion, women's economic empowerment, and increased access to livelihood opportunities for groups traditionally facing barriers to employment.

1.5–2% Dropout Rate: The program achieved an exceptionally low dropout rate of only 1.5–2% during its strongest implementation phase, suggesting high participant satisfaction, effective follow-up mechanisms, and the relevance of interventions to participants' needs and aspirations.

Triangulated Analysis: What the Data Tells Us

Theme	FGD Evidence	KII Evidence	Quantitative Alignment
Retention	Motivation & routine	Mentorship & life skills	1.5–2% dropout
Livelihood	Household contribution	Self-employment viability	1,501 engaged in IGA
Gender	Delayed marriage	Female-friendly design	630 female self-employed
Protection	Reduced risky behavior	Fewer CP referrals	High completion
Sustainability	Fear of income loss	Need for follow-up	Moderate



The assessment found that the integrated package of Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE), Case Management, Community-Based Protection, and Vocational Education and Training (VET) interventions was highly relevant and effective in improving child safety, well-being, and resilience. Case Management, in particular, remains a proven and essential intervention in humanitarian contexts. Continued and expanded donor investment will enable COAST Foundation to scale up coverage, strengthen protection systems, and ensure that vulnerable children receive timely, individualized, and life-saving support. This will contribute to safer communities and improved long-term outcomes.

3.4 Impact of Community-Based Protection Mechanisms

Community-based protection mechanisms, including CBCPCs, PCCs, and youth groups, were found to be functional and increasingly recognized within the camps. Over 80% of respondents identified these mechanisms as effective in addressing child protection concerns. These structures contributed to early risk identification, referrals, awareness-raising, and community-level mediation.

Engagement of Parents, Religious Leaders, and Community Leaders: Parents, religious leaders, and community leaders demonstrated improved understanding of child protection roles, contributing to reduced harmful practices and stronger referral pathways.

Functionality of Community-Based Child Protection Committees (CBCPC):

CBCPCs, PCCs, and youth groups were widely recognized as effective:

- 83% perceived CBCPCs as effective.
- Reporting of protection incidents increased by over 65%.
- Sustainability was strongest where gender balance, leadership, and mentoring were present.

Youth Leadership: Youth leaders played a vital role in peer awareness, disaster risk reduction (DRR), peacebuilding, and early reporting of protection concerns. Youth engagement enhanced trust, participation, and sustainability of protection efforts.

Table: Perceived Effectiveness of Community-Based Protection Mechanisms.
(Evaluation Survey Results)

Indicator	% Respondents Agreeing
CBCPCs effectively address child protection concerns	83%
PCCs support positive parenting and child safety	79%
Youth groups contribute to awareness and peer support	76%
Community mechanisms respond timely to protection risks	71%
Referral pathways are known to committee members	74%

A total of 83% of respondents recognized CBCPCs as effective, indicating strong community legitimacy. Slightly lower scores of 74% on referral effectiveness reflect service access constraints rather than awareness gaps, as confirmed by KIIs.

FGDs with parents, religious leaders, and caregivers revealed significant improvements in child protection awareness, though risks remain.

Table: Community Awareness Levels (FGD-Based Scoring)

Child Protection Theme	High Awareness	Moderate Awareness	Low Awareness
Risks of child marriage	68%	24%	8%
Importance of school attendance	74%	20%	6%
Positive parenting practices	61%	29%	10%
GBV prevention and reporting	57%	31%	12%

The findings indicate strong levels of awareness among caregivers and community members across key child protection issues. Awareness was highest regarding the importance of school attendance, with 74% demonstrating a high level of understanding, followed by awareness of the risks of child marriage (68%). Knowledge of positive parenting practices was also substantial, with 61% reporting high awareness.

In addition, 57% of respondents demonstrated high awareness of gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and reporting mechanisms. Across all thematic areas, low levels of awareness remained below 12%, indicating that community-based awareness and sensitization efforts have been effective in strengthening knowledge and promoting protective attitudes and behaviours toward children.

Table: Factors Influencing the Sustainability of CBCPCs

Sustainability Factor	Committees Performing Well
Gender-balanced representation	81%
Regular monthly meetings	76%
Ongoing mentoring/support	69%
Clear role understanding	73%

The assessment found gender-balanced representations in 81% committees, reflecting inclusive participation and equitable decision-making processes. Further, 76% committees reported holding regular monthly meetings, demonstrating sustained engagement and functionality. A significant proportion (73%) of committee members demonstrated a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, contributing to the effective implementation of protection activities. In addition, 69% of the committees continued to receive mentoring and technical support, which has helped strengthen their capacity and sustain performance over time.

3.4.1 Key Findings on Community Engagement through FGDs & KIIs

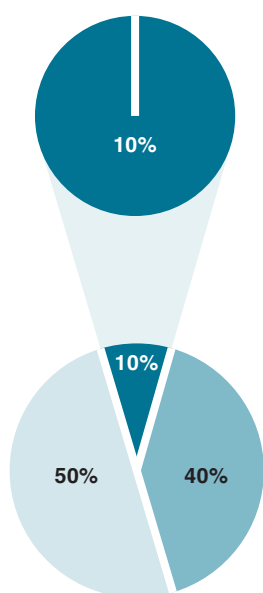
A total of 83% of respondents perceive CBCPCs as effective mechanisms for protecting children. Reporting of child protection incidents has also increased by more than 65%, driven by improved trust, awareness, and confidence in community structures. Awareness of child protection issues, GBV prevention, and positive parenting practices has improved considerably compared to

previous years, contributing to positive behavioral change and a stronger sense of community responsibility for child well-being.

Community groups, including CBCPCs, SCAs, and PCCs, are actively engaged in identifying vulnerable children, facilitating referrals, and addressing protection concerns through regular meetings and community engagement activities. Adolescents and youth have become more actively involved in raising protection concerns through SCR platforms, strengthening peer awareness and promoting early identification and reporting of risks. Community engagement initiatives have also contributed to increased school and MPC attendance, as well as creating a safer overall environment for children. While child marriage and other protection risks remain present, prevention efforts and community awareness have improved. Referral pathways are generally well understood within the community, although some barriers to accessing services still persist. The sustainability of these positive outcomes is strongest where community structures are supported by effective leadership, gender-balanced representation, regular meetings, and ongoing mentoring.

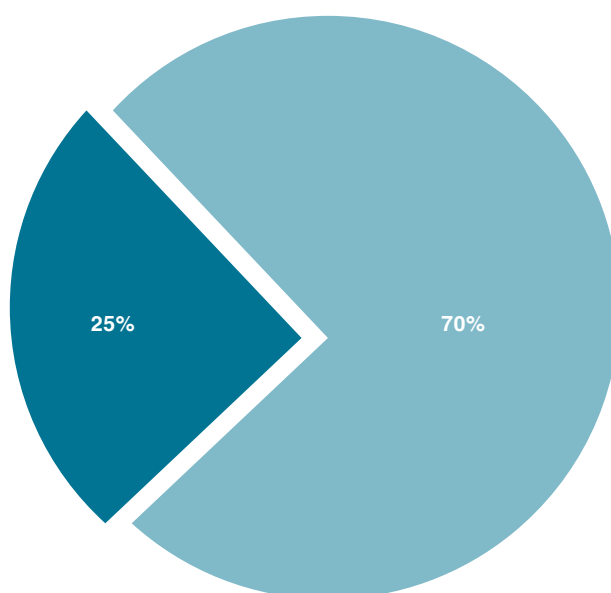
Level of Child Protection Knowledge

■ High ■ Moderate ■ Low



Improvement in CP Knowledge after Community Engagement

■ Before Intervention ■ After Intervention



Overall, 50% of respondents demonstrated a moderate level of child protection knowledge, while 40% showed a high level of understanding. Only 10% had low level of knowledge. The results further show a substantial increase in child protection awareness following community engagement activities, with the proportion of respondents demonstrating improved knowledge increasing from 25% before the intervention to 70% after the intervention. These findings suggest that awareness sessions, community meetings, and engagement initiatives have been effective in enhancing understanding of child protection issues, promoting positive attitudes, and strengthening community capacity to identify and respond to protection risks affecting children.

CASE STUDIES AND VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

As a result of this collective effort, the girl's family signed a written commitment stating that they would not arrange her marriage until she reaches the age of 18. This case highlights the critical role of coordinated action, community engagement, and rapid response in protecting children from harmful practices.

Coordinated Action Defied Child Marriage in Camp 8E

In Camp 8E, a timely and coordinated intervention led to the successful prevention of a planned child marriage, demonstrating the effectiveness of integrated child protection efforts.

On the morning of 19 December 2025, a Case Management Volunteer from COAST Foundation received information that a marriage had been arranged between a 16-year-old girl and a 20-year-old man in Block B- 70. Recognizing the serious protection risks and legal implications associated with child marriage, the volunteer immediately alerted the case management team.

Responding without delay, COAST Foundation's Social Worker and Field Coordinator (Child Protection Focal Point) visited the location and informed the Camp-in-Charge (CiC). The CiC acted promptly, mobilizing support from the Armed Police Battalion (APBN). A police team, led by a Sub-Inspector, arrived at the scene and worked in close coordination with COAST Foundation staff to stop the marriage.

The intervention was further strengthened by the active involvement of key community stakeholders, including the Head Majhi, Sub-Majhi, Imam, and other influential members. Through dialogue and community sensitization, the family became aware of the harmful consequences of child marriage and agreed to cancel the arrangement.

As a result of this collective effort, the girl's family signed a written commitment stating that they would not arrange her marriage until she reaches the age of 18. This case highlights the critical role of coordinated action, community engagement, and rapid response in protecting children from harmful practices.



*Rohingya Refugee Camp 14, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh
Photo: COAST Foundation Archive*



*Rohingya Refugee Camp 14, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh
Photo: COAST Foundation Archive*

From Silence to Safety: Early Intervention Through Case Management

Shafika, a 17-year-old girl living in Camp 14 with her family, faced intense pressure from her father to get married before the age of 18. Despite her aspiration to continue her education and become independent, her father remained determined to arrange her marriage. When Shafika resisted, she was subjected to physical abuse, further exacerbating her distress.

The situation came to the attention of a COAST Foundation Case Management Volunteer, who promptly reported it to the social worker. Following an initial assessment, the social worker met with Shafika and her mother to better understand the family context. It emerged that her father believed child marriage was beneficial and necessary.

In response, the social worker conducted a series of counselling and awareness sessions with the family, focusing on the harmful consequences of child marriage and the importance of education. Positive parenting approaches were also introduced, emphasizing how care, support, and understanding could improve Shafika's mental and physical well-being.

Gradually, these efforts led to a shift in the parents' perceptions. The father began to recognize the impact of his actions and acknowledged the importance of supporting his daughter's future. He ultimately stopped pressuring Shafika to marry and agreed to support her continued education. He also expressed regret for his previous behaviour.

As a result of the intervention, the family environment became more supportive and cohesive. Shafika is now able to pursue her education with the encouragement of both her parents.

This case highlights the transformative impact of case management services in addressing harmful practices, strengthening family relationships, and promoting the well-being and rights of vulnerable children.

Healing and Hope: Psychosocial Support for a Survivor of Violence

Saiful, a 16-year-old Rohingya refugee from Myanmar living in Camp 19, had been struggling with depression and a lack of adequate emotional and psychological support.

His withdrawal from daily activities and lack of interest in his studies had become a source of concern within his family. During a routine visit, a COAST Foundation social worker observed Saiful's father physically disciplining him. When approached, the father explained that he was frustrated by his son's behaviour and did not fully understand the underlying causes or the harm his actions were causing. Recognizing the need for immediate intervention, the social worker engaged with the father, explaining the negative impact of such treatment on Saiful's mental and physical well-being. She also introduced positive parenting techniques to help him better understand and support his son in a more constructive and empathetic way.

At the same time, Saiful was enrolled in psychosocial support services and Life Skills-Based Education sessions at the Multipurpose Center. With consistent support and a safer home environment, he gradually began to re-engage with his surroundings. Over time, he returned to school and actively participated in group activities, regaining a sense of confidence, hope, and purpose. Today, Saiful is optimistic about his future and aspires to become a teacher. His journey reflects a significant transformation—not only in his own well-being but also in family dynamics. His family and community express deep appreciation for the Child Protection Project, which provided the guidance and support needed to help him rebuild his confidence and rediscover his dreams. This case highlights the critical role of psychosocial support and positive parenting in promoting recovery, resilience, and long-term well-being among vulnerable children.

Standing Together: CBCPC's Fight Against Child Labor

Child labor has been increasing in recent years, particularly within the Rohingya community, where many families face severe financial hardship. In their struggle to survive, some parents send their children to work, often without fully understanding the long-term consequences for their children's health, education, and future. To address this growing concern, members of the Community-Based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC) have been actively raising awareness about child labor and promoting child-friendly practices that support both immediate needs and long-term community development.

In Camp-12, MPC-3, a CBCPC member named Rofique observed a concerning trend during weekly gas cylinder distributions. Many children were carrying gas cylinders—each weighing about 14 kg—back to their homes. This physically demanding task is not suitable for children and can expose them to serious health risks. More importantly, this task can unintentionally lead to deeper involvement in child labor. When children are able to carry out such heavy work, some families may feel encouraged to assign them additional labor, thereby reinforcing the cycle of child exploitation.

Recognizing these risks, the CBCPC in Camp-12 initiated a community-wide awareness campaign focused on discouraging children from carrying gas cylinders. Rofique emphasized the seriousness of the issue, stating: "Engaging in such work, even once, can lead to long-term harm. We must stop normalizing this practice. It is our collective responsibility to protect our children from such





*Rohingya Refugee Camp 14, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation*

"This campaign is vital in our camp, where economic hardship often leads families to rely on their children for income. But we must remember our children are the future of our community and our nation. They deserve education, care, and a chance to grow into responsible citizens."

labor." Rofique is committed to expanding the campaign by involving more committee members and strengthening community engagement. He explained: "This campaign is vital in our camp, where economic hardship often leads families to rely on their children for income. But we must remember our children are the future of our community and our nation. They deserve education, care, and a chance to grow into responsible citizens."

Following the campaign, many parents pledged to stop sending their children to collect gas cylinders. This change reflects increasing community awareness of children's rights and the long-term harm caused by early labor.

This case highlights how poverty can drive child labor, particularly in vulnerable communities such as the Rohingya camps. At the same time, it demonstrates the effectiveness of community-based initiatives like those led by CBCPC members in raising awareness, changing behavior, and protecting children. As Rofique concluded: "The CBCPC will continue its efforts to build a thriving community free from child labor—one where every child has the opportunity to dream, learn, and succeed."

Unlocking Dreams: How Vocational Training Changed Asmaul Husna's Life

Asmaul Husna, a teenager from Kochubonia Para in Teknaf Sadar Union, grew up supporting her family while continuing her education as the sixth of eight siblings. When her father fell ill, financial hardship forced her to stop studying after completing her SSC. Despite this setback, she remained curious about computers, even though she had never used one.

Her life began to change when she enrolled in the free Computer Operation Training at COAST Foundation's Multi-Purpose Center (MPC). Initially intimidated, Asma gradually built confidence with supportive guidance and learned Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, basic troubleshooting, and online communication. Participation in Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) sessions further strengthened her resilience, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

Asma soon began helping her classmates, showing initiative and empathy. At home, she took responsibility for managing her family's poultry business—feeding chickens, collecting eggs, and selling them in the market—contributing to the household income. Reflecting on her journey, Asma said, "Before this training, I never even touched a computer. Now I can work with confidence and support my family. I want to inspire other girls to believe in themselves and never stop learning."

She now plans to resume her education and pursue a career in IT, particularly in web and graphic design, while encouraging other girls in her community to embrace education and technology. Her story shows how targeted support can empower young women to overcome hardship, build confidence, and create new opportunities for their future.

Asma is fixing the problem of a Computer.

Photo: Omar Faruk/COAST Foundationr





Mohammad Hossen, a former beneficiary of the Child Protection programme, now serves as a community volunteer, raising

Photo: COAST Foundation Archive

Mohammad continues to promote child protection messages and positive attitudes. Through his work, he contributes to creating safer environments for children and adolescents while serving as a role model for youth.

Empowering Story: From Sitting in Sessions to Standing for His Community

Mohammad Hossen, a dedicated community volunteer with COAST Foundation in Camp 14, represents the long-term impact of child protection interventions in transforming beneficiaries into community change-makers. He first engaged with the program as a participant in 2021, where he received Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE), Psychosocial Support (PSS), and vocational training in tailoring and dressmaking. These experiences enabled him to contribute to his household income and strengthened his sense of responsibility toward his family.

In 2023, Mohammad joined COAST as an ECE Facilitator, serving for two years. During this time, he actively facilitated sessions and remained involved in child protection and life skills activities. This role significantly improved his communication skills, confidence, and understanding of child rights and protection issues. In August 2025, he became an active member of the Community-Based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC) under COAST's Child Protection Project. As a community volunteer, he regularly supports awareness sessions, meetings, and discussions, with a strong focus on preventing child marriage.

Demonstrating his commitment, Mohammad successfully intervened in his own family when his elder brother attempted to arrange the marriage of a girl below 18. Through dialogue and raising awareness about the harmful consequences of child marriage, he helped both families understand the risks, leading to the marriage being

postponed until the girl reached the legal age. At both family and community levels, Mohammad continues to promote child protection messages and positive attitudes. Through his work, he contributes to creating safer environments for children and adolescents while serving as a role model for youth. He remains committed to supporting his family and continuing his role in safeguarding children's rights and well-being in his community.

Empowering Futures Through VET: Sajeda's Journey to Success

Sajeda Akter Eramony comes from Bhalukiya, a remote village in Ratnapalong Union, where her family relied on subsistence farming that struggled to meet basic needs. As the eldest of four siblings, she carried significant responsibility, with her father's limited income leaving little scope for opportunity.

Her situation began to change when COAST Foundation staff introduced her to a basic computer operation training program at the Ratnapalong Multipurpose Center. Using the center's computer facilities, she applied for jobs and prepared for interviews. Her hard work paid off when she successfully passed her first interview and secured a position as a Facilitator with Save the Children in Camp 17, starting in December 2024. With a monthly salary of BDT 21,000, Sajeda now contributes significantly to her family's financial stability, covering household expenses while continuing to pursue her own education.

Reflecting on her journey, Sajeda shared, "This training gave me the confidence and skills I needed to secure a job. It changed my life and my family's future."

Sajeda's experience demonstrates how access to skills training and supportive resources can empower young women to overcome economic hardship, achieve independence, and inspire positive change within their families and communities.

Sajeda is with children in Save the Children's facility point as a facilitator.

Photo: Yasir Arafat/COAST Foundation





Shah Porir Dwip, Teknaf,
Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST
Foundation/2017

These challenges are further intensified by funding limitations and restricted operational coverage, particularly during extension periods, affecting the consistency and reach of services.

Chapter 5

CHALLENGES, CRITICAL RISKS ANALYSIS, LESSONS LEARNED, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Challenges

While the assessment highlights strong results across all components, it also identifies critical challenges that may undermine these gains if not addressed. Key constraints include limited resources and staffing, high caseloads, and increasingly complex protection risks, alongside concerns about the long-term sustainability of community-based mechanisms. These challenges are further intensified by funding limitations and restricted operational coverage, particularly during extension periods, affecting the consistency and reach of services. The findings across quantitative data, FGDs, and KIs point to several priority challenges:

- Limited access to essential services for newly arrived refugees, leaving many children without timely support
- Growing exposure to digital risks, including online gaming and gambling, contributing to addiction, behavioural issues, and harmful content exposure
- Security risks linked to child protection referrals, particularly in child marriage cases, where staff and community members may face threats from influential groups
- Reduced engagement of adolescents (15–18 years) due to limited availability of relevant VET opportunities
- High caseloads and pressure on frontline workers, affecting service quality and follow-up capacity



*Rohingya Refugee Camp, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. July 20, 2019
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation*



Critical Risk Analysis

What happens if the project closes?

The assessment clearly shows that the SPE4CA project has delivered strong protection outcomes across multiple areas. However, it also highlights that these gains remain fragile and highly dependent on continued support. If the project is discontinued, children and communities are likely to face immediate and significant gaps in essential services, reversing progress made over the years.

Key risks include

- Loss of access to case management services, leaving cases of abuse, GBV, and trafficking unidentified and unsupported
- Weakening or collapse of community-based protection structures (CBCPCs, PCCs, youth groups, peer support systems), reducing prevention capacity and early reporting
- Increase in harmful practices, including child marriage, child labour, and unsafe migration, particularly among adolescents aged 15–18
- Unaddressed psychosocial distress, leading to increased depression, aggression, and harmful coping behaviors
- Loss of youth engagement and safe spaces, reducing opportunities for leadership, resilience-building, and peer support
- Declining trust in protection systems, resulting in under-reporting and normalization of violence
- Rising exposure to emerging risks, including trafficking, risky migration, online exploitation, gaming addiction, and other digital harms in this protracted displacement context

Lessons Learned

The assessment highlights several key lessons that explain the program's success and provide direction for future investment:

1. Community engagement drives sustainability

Awareness activities extended beyond direct beneficiaries to the wider community, increasing collective responsibility for child protection. This broader ownership has been critical in sustaining positive outcomes beyond direct project support.

2. Adolescents and youth are effective change-makers

Their active participation in peer learning, awareness sessions, and community platforms has strengthened knowledge, challenged harmful practices, and improved early reporting of protection concerns.

3. Integrated approaches deliver stronger results

The combination of case management, life skills education, psychosocial support, community engagement, and livelihood interventions addressed both immediate protection risks and their root causes, leading to more lasting and holistic outcomes.

4. Livelihood support strengthens protection outcomes

VET and income-generating activities not only improved economic opportunities but also enhanced confidence, resilience, and future aspirations, while reducing exposure to risks such as child labour and early marriage.

5. Adaptive programing is essential

Evolving risks, including digital harms and changing community dynamics, require flexible program design and timely adjustments in strategy and resource allocation.

6. Skilled frontline staff are critical to impact

Well-trained and committed facilitators and case workers have been central to building trust, ensuring service quality, and enabling communities to take greater ownership of child protection efforts.

Recommendations

1. Expand life skills and behavioural programs to reach more adolescents, strengthening their resilience, decision-making, and protection awareness.
2. Strengthen case management capacity by ensuring adequately trained case workers and enhanced supervision to maintain timely, quality, and child-centered services.
3. Scale up market-oriented VET opportunities by aligning training with local demand, improving employability and sustainable livelihood outcomes for adolescents and youth.
4. Invest in community-based protection structures by providing ongoing training, mentoring, and leadership development to CBCPCs and related groups, ensuring long-term sustainability.
5. Adopt adaptive programing approaches by regularly reviewing emerging protection risks and adjusting strategies, resources, and interventions to respond effectively to changing needs.
6. Promote stronger community ownership by increasing community participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring, reinforcing long-term sustainability.
7. Enhance youth leadership and engagement by creating more opportunities for adolescents to lead awareness, peer support, and community advocacy initiatives.
8. Strengthen positive parenting interventions through targeted awareness and practical support, helping caregivers create safer and more supportive environments for children.
9. Improve monitoring, learning, and evidence generation to better capture impact, inform decision-making, and strengthen accountability to communities and donors.

Conclusion

The persecuted Rohingya people began to re-enter Bangladesh in 2017 to save their lives. Crossing the Naf River, the Rohingya took refuge in various parts of Teknaf, Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh, with their last remaining resources.

Shah Porir Dwip, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. September 13, 2017

Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation

The impact assessment demonstrates that the Child Protection Project has made significant and measurable contributions to improving the safety, resilience, and well-being of Rohingya and host community children and adolescents. Through an integrated approach combining life skills, case management, psychosocial support, community engagement, and livelihood opportunities, the project has delivered tangible results across multiple dimensions of child protection.

Despite ongoing challenges, the project has established a strong and trusted foundation for community-based protection and youth engagement. It has strengthened local capacities, increased awareness, and enabled children, families, and communities to play an active role in protecting children from harm.

At the same time, the assessment highlights that these gains remain fragile in a protracted humanitarian context. Continued risks, including child marriage, child labour, and emerging digital threats, require attention and adaptive responses.

Sustained investment, adaptive programming, and a focus on long-term sustainability are therefore critical to maintaining and scaling these gains in a protracted displacement context.



Rohingya Refugee
Camp 14, Ukhiya,
Cox's Bazar,
Bangladesh

Photo: Din M
Shibly/COAST
Foundation/2022



Principal Office

Metro Melody (1st Floor), House 13, Road 2, Shyamoli,
Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh

Phone: + 8802 4102 5889 - 92, ISD: +8802 223314729

Email: info@coastfoundation.org