



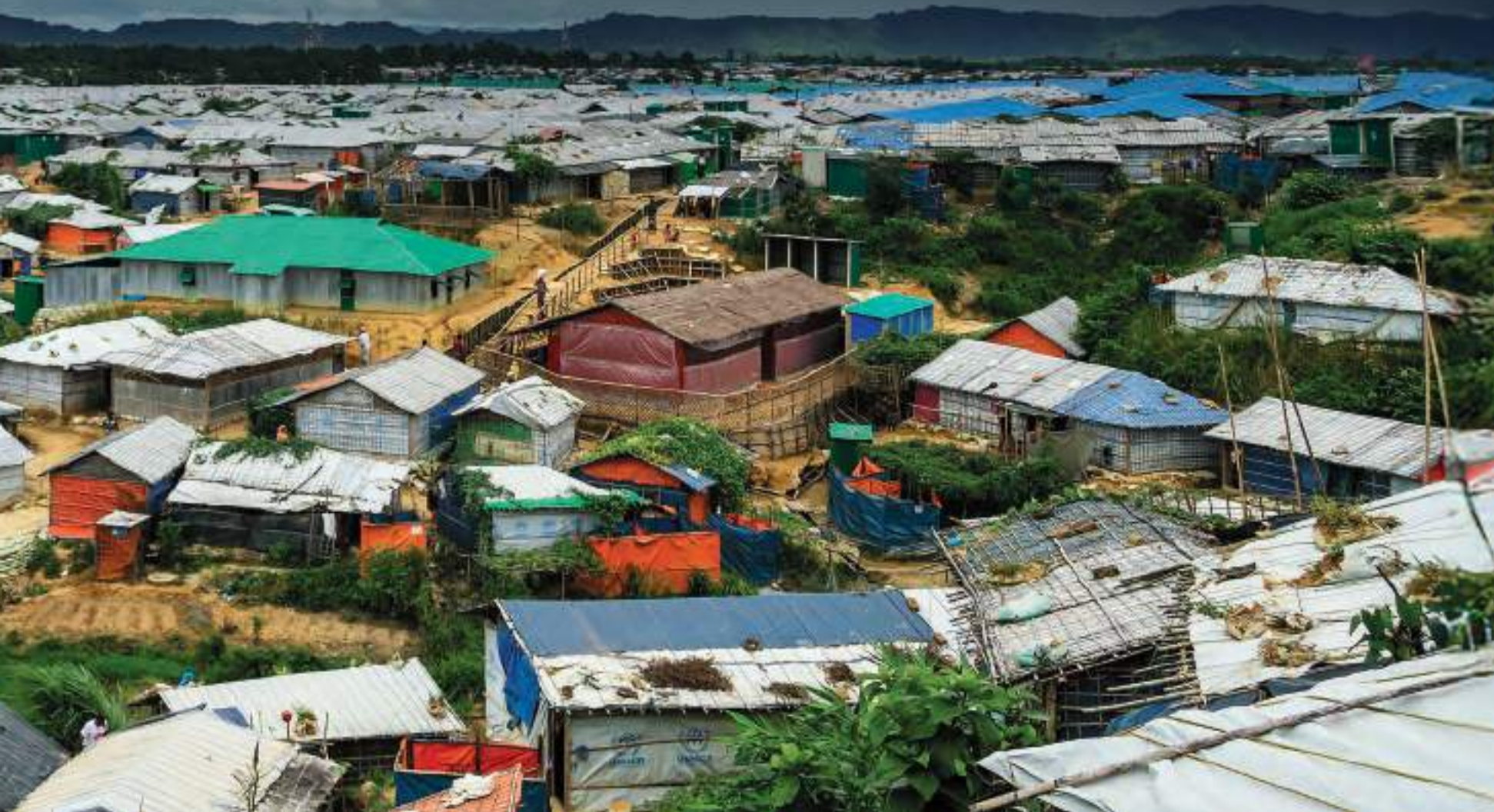
Threads of Hope:
Stories of Resilience and Renewal
Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme

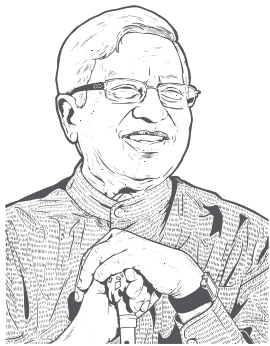
Threads of Hope: Stories of Resilience and Renewal



A glimpse of Myanmar from Balukhali Camp

From an elevated point above Balukhali Camp in Cox's Bazar, the distant mountains of Myanmar rise along the horizon — a stark reminder of the journey many Rohingya families have made.





Don't ever lose sight
of the mission to
**extend a hand to those
who need it the most.**

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed
Founder, BRAC

Foreward

In the face of displacement, disaster, and deep uncertainty, human resilience continues to light the way forward. The stories in this publication offer a window into that resilience; told through the voices of individuals who have turned hardship into hope, isolation into initiative, and silence into strength.

From the quiet determination of Mohammed Hares, who helped restore peace within his home, to the resolve of Jaheda Begum, who bridged not just physical distance but also community divides, these stories remind us that meaningful change begins with empowered individuals. We see this again in Nur Kolima and Momtaz Begum's flourishing gardens, in Ayesha and Minara's journeys from homemakers to entrepreneurs, and in the transformative WASH interventions that are restoring dignity and health for thousands.

Each of these narratives is grounded in a common truth that with the right support, even the most marginalised voices can become agents of transformation. At the heart of this support is community-led development rooted in empathy, equity, and the conviction that solutions must be inclusive to be sustainable.

We are deeply grateful to the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for their continued partnership and investment in these lives and communities. Their support has enabled BRAC to design

and deliver holistic interventions across sectors—from gender-based violence prevention to livelihoods, disaster resilience, and water and sanitation.

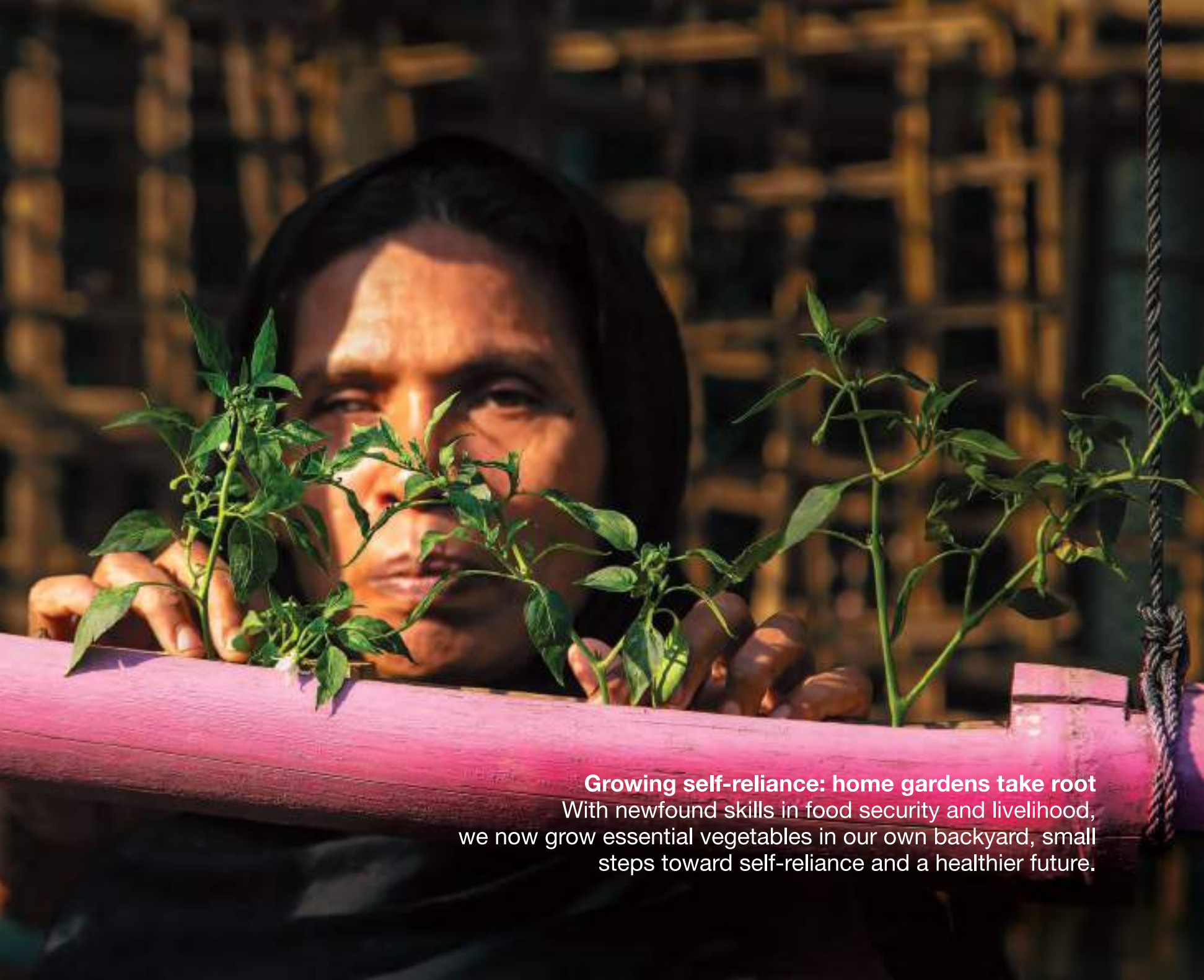
We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to BRAC's frontline staff, volunteers, community leaders, donors, partners, stakeholders, and the ministries and departments of the Government of Bangladesh, whose support continues to inspire and guide us and the communities we serve.

This publication is more than a record of progress. It is a celebration of courage, a reflection on possibilities, and a call to action. As you turn the pages, we invite you not only to witness these stories but to be moved by them. Because behind every statistic is a human being, and behind every challenge lies the potential for lasting change.

Let these stories remind us all: dignity is not a privilege but a right. And when people are given the tools to reclaim it, entire communities thrive.

Food Security Skills and Livelihood





Growing self-reliance: home gardens take root

With newfound skills in food security and livelihood, we now grow essential vegetables in our own backyard, small steps toward self-reliance and a healthier future.

Planting Possibility: How Momtaz Begum's Garden Grew a Community

Through BRAC's homestead gardening initiative, supported by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), a Rohingya woman in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps cultivates more than vegetables — she nurtures resilience, independence, and community strength.

Momtaz Begum, a 43-year-old Rohingya refugee, fled her home in August 2017 due to escalating violence. After arriving in Bangladesh on 25 September 2017, she spent a year at the TV Tower Transit Camp before relocating to Camp 4 Extension in Cox's Bazar, where she resides with her family.











Australian AID DFAT
Community Garden
မိုးမြင့်
Initiated by: DFAT
Funded by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
Date: 2019
Burmese text: မြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော် အစိုးရ



The early years in the camp were marked by extreme hardship. With minimal infrastructure, no access to basic services, and limited support systems, survival was a daily challenge. Momtaz faced persistent food insecurity, poor soil conditions, pest infestations, and a lack of livelihood opportunities. Without a reliable income or access to fresh produce, meeting her family's nutritional needs seemed out of reach.

In January 2024, a new opportunity emerged through BRAC's Humanitarian Assistance for Rohingya and Host Communities in Bangladesh programme, supported by DFAT under the food security skills and livelihoods (FSSL) sector.

She received comprehensive support, including seeds, organic fertilisers, bamboo, rope, fencing nets, and watering cans. BRAC's agriculture volunteers provided continuous training and follow-up, guiding her in sustainable practices such as climate-smart agriculture (CSA), organic pest control, and mulching techniques.

From September 2024 onwards, Momtaz's garden flourished. She successfully cultivated a variety of vegetables, including sweet gourd, bottle gourd, yardlong bean, bitter gourd, country bean, ridge gourd, brinjal, lady's finger, snake gourd, tomato, cucumber, red amaranth and water spinach.

These harvests not only met her family's nutritional needs but also enabled her to share with neighbours, deepening community bonds. By selling surplus vegetables, Momtaz earned BDT 117,480 (USD 970) annually, contributing to her family's daily expenses.







“Without the initiative from the DFAT-funded project of BRAC, I might still be in despair. I hope this programme continues so that more women like me can stand on their own feet. I pray for everyone’s well-being”, stated Momtaz Begum.

Momtaz’s success did not go unnoticed. Her thriving garden inspired many other women in the camp to start their own homestead plots. The programme not only improved household food security but also sparked a grassroots movement towards sustainable agriculture, self-sufficiency and climate-conscious practices.

Momtaz Begum’s story is a powerful reminder that even in the most challenging environments, the right support can help individuals reclaim agency and build a better future. Through targeted training, tools, and encouragement, she transformed her family’s well-being — and became a role model for many in her community.

Protection





Where safety meets freedom: children at the protection centre

“At the protection centre, we can stay as long as we want”, shares a child. These centres offer a secure and nurturing space where children can learn, play, and simply be themselves.

Stitches of Change: From Homemaker to Entrepreneur

Just a few years ago, Minara Akhter — a 27-year-old woman from the host community felt her dreams slipping out of reach. A devoted mother of two, she lives with her husband and children in Camp 8E. Her husband, a tomtom driver, worked tirelessly but their income barely covered the essentials. With two children in school and no additional support, each day brought financial strain and emotional uncertainty.

Minara had studied only up to Class 7 and spent most of her time on household chores. Though she longed to contribute to her family's income, she did not know how until a new opportunity came knocking.













She came to know about BRAC's women-friendly space under the protection programme, supported by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), which offered skills training for women. With quiet determination and curiosity, Minara enrolled in the sewing course. At first, she lacked confidence in herself.

"I did not know if I could do it", she admitted. "But every day, I practised. Every day, I got better".

Through dedication and support from trainers, Minara mastered the basics of tailoring. What began as a small step soon became a meaningful transformation.

Today, Minara runs a small sewing business from her home. She now earns between BDT 2,000 and 3,000 per month (USD 17 to 25) — enough to help pay for her children's education and ease the family's financial burden. Her husband proudly supports her work, and her children now see their mother not just as a caregiver but as a role model.

"I was once just a housewife", she reflects. "Now, I am a tailor, a mother, and a proud contributor to my family's future".

But Minara is not stopping here. She dreams of one day opening her own tailoring shop and hiring other women like her who need a second chance. Her journey is not just about stitching garments — it is about stitching together hope, dignity, and ambition.





BREAST
MILK
NATURE'S
PERFECT
FOOD

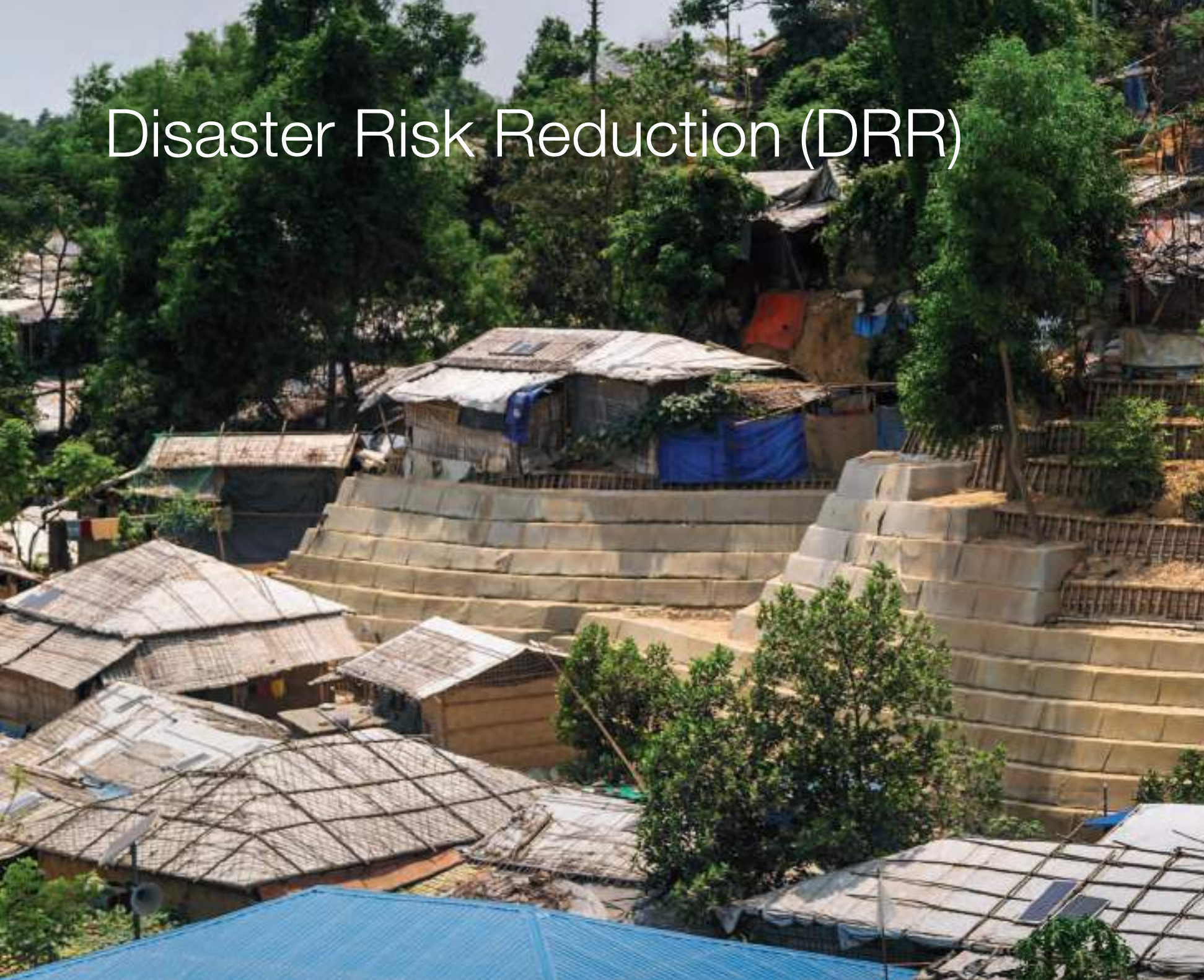
WORLD B...
NG



“Each stitch is a step towards independence”, Minara says with quiet confidence.

Minara’s story is a testament to the power of skills training and community-based support. Through BRAC’s women-friendly space initiative, she found more than just training — she found her voice, her confidence, and a path forward. With every garment she sews, Minara is reshaping her future — thread by thread.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)





Engineering safety: slope protection in Rohingya camps

To prevent landslides during the intense monsoon season, reinforced slope protection structures have been installed across vulnerable areas of the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar.

Building Bridges: Jaheda's Journey Beyond Boundaries

In Jumerchora, where infrastructure challenges worsen during the monsoon season, one woman's role in community development is helping reshape lives one bridge at a time.

Every year, the monsoon brings renewed hardship for Jaheda Begum, a 35-year-old resident of Jumerchora, a host community adjacent to the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar. Poor road conditions and a lack of proper infrastructure make mobility difficult for both the Rohingya and host communities, especially during heavy rains.













To address these challenges, BRAC's disaster risk reduction (DRR) programme — supported by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) — initiated the construction of a wooden bridge and a herringbone brick (HBB) road to improve access and safety in the area. For Jaheda, this was more than just a development initiative; it was an opportunity to contribute.

"I wanted to help build something that would benefit not just my family but the entire community", she shared.

Jaheda joined the labour team, taking part directly in the construction process. The experience not only provided a steady income but also renewed her sense of dignity and purpose.

Beyond financial stability, she discovered something more meaningful: community recognition.

“Through this initiative, my efforts were valued — not only within my household but by the wider community”, she reflected.

Her involvement challenged traditional gender norms and demonstrated what local women could achieve when given the opportunity.







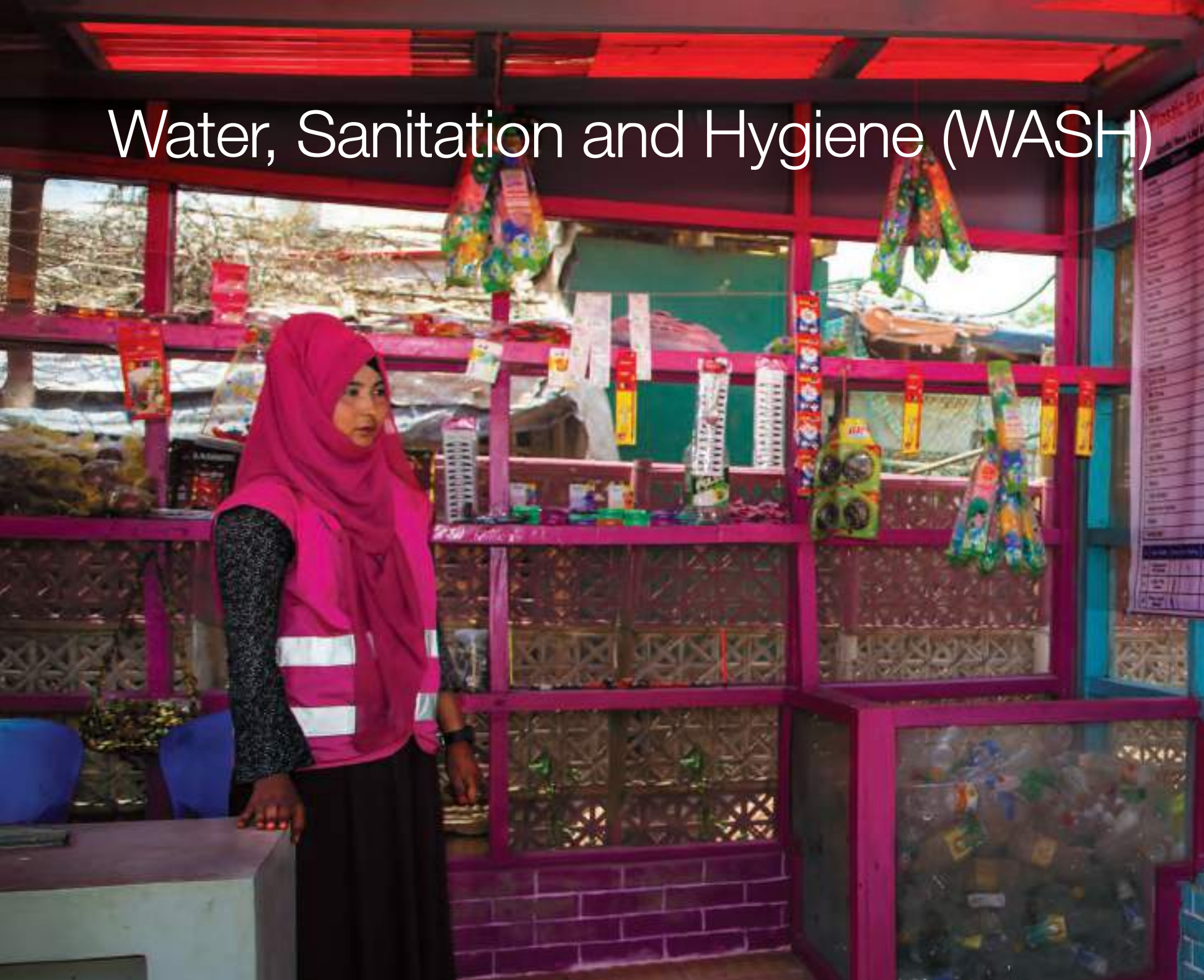
Today, the wooden bridge and newly built road stand as symbols of progress and connection in Jumerchora. For Jaheda, they are also deeply personal achievements.

“This bridge has done more than connect the Rohingya and host communities”, she said. “It has created safer pathways and expanded opportunities for everyone”.

She now crosses the bridge with pride, knowing she helped transform a shared need into a lasting solution.

Jaheda Begum’s story is one of resilience, empowerment, and collaboration. Her role in the DRR project exemplifies how inclusive, community-led initiatives can strengthen both physical infrastructure and social cohesion — building bridges in every sense of the word.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)





Turning waste into joy: the plastic-for-toys exchange

Children in the camps eagerly collect and bring plastic bottles to the exchange centres, trading them for toys they love — an initiative that fosters both environmental awareness and joy.

From Crisis to Care: Dignity Through Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

In the humanitarian landscape of Cox's Bazar — home to nearly one million Rohingya refugees — access to safe water, adequate sanitation, and proper hygiene is not only a matter of health; it is a matter of dignity, equity, and survival. With support from the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), BRAC's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme is transforming lives in the Rohingya camps and surrounding host communities through inclusive, sustainable, and community-led interventions.

At the heart of BRAC's water solution is a hybrid-powered water supply network that ensures a consistent and equitable supply of chlorinated water for drinking and domestic use. The system is designed with measured sustainability, powered by a combination of renewable and conventional energy sources. Water quality is strictly monitored both in the field and in laboratories to meet stringent chemical and biological safety standards.













At the community level, tap stands are strategically placed to meet WASH sector standards, ensuring that no household is more than 500 metres from a water point. Community members collect a minimum of 20 litres of safe water per person per day, with queuing times kept under 30 minutes to ensure accessibility and efficiency, even in densely populated areas.

BRAC has adopted a comprehensive approach to sanitation by prioritising inclusivity and sustainability. Across Ukhiya, Teknaf, and the Rohingya camps, inclusive latrines have been constructed to meet the needs of women, children, the elderly, and persons with disability (PWD). These facilities are systematically maintained to ensure long-term functionality and cleanliness.

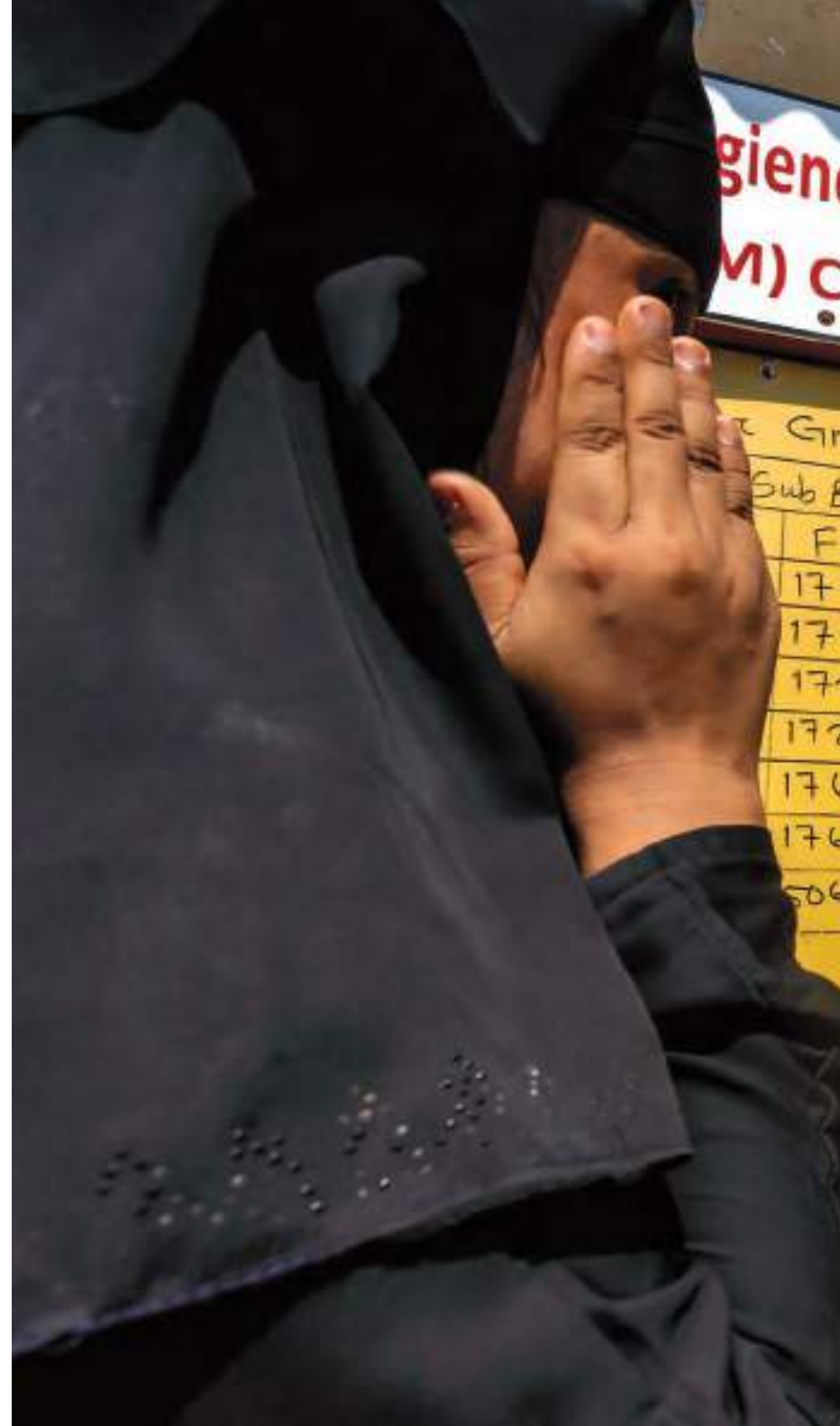
To manage waste effectively, latrines are mechanically desludged and connected to a structured faecal sludge treatment network. The process is digitally tracked through the Pit Intelligent Tracker (PIT) app, ensuring timely and transparent desludging services. Waste is initially transferred to Intermediate Faecal Sludge Treatment Network (IFSTN) stations and eventually processed at a faecal sludge treatment plant (FSTP) — minimising health risks and environmental hazards.

Solid waste management is equally robust. Green and red bins help households safely segregate waste. It is then transported to material recovery facilities (MRFs), where organic waste is composted and inorganic waste is sorted for recycling or disposed of in a sanitary landfill. The landfill, located in Camp 20 Extension, is engineered to handle non-recyclable waste in an environmentally sound manner.

One creative idea making a big impact is the Plastic Exchange Centre, a community-driven initiative where residents of the camps trade collected plastic bottles for essential goods. This not only reduces plastic pollution inside the camp area but also fosters a culture of recycling and resource efficiency in the camps.

BRAC is also strengthening local economies through market linkages for rural sanitation centres (RSCs) and sanitary napkin enterprises. These initiatives promote economic empowerment while meeting WASH needs.

Recognising the unique challenges faced by adolescent girls, BRAC has prioritised the upgrade and repair of school sanitation facilities — especially girls' toilets equipped with menstrual hygiene management (MHM) pits. Safe drinking water is also made available for all students, reinforcing a healthy learning environment.



e Management Corner

Group

Block - C-37

CN	Day
6569	Saturday
2237	Sunday
2238	Monday
2235	Tuesday
6566	Wednesday
6567	Thursday
764	Friday





To address gender-specific WASH needs, BRAC has established women hygiene centres within the camps. These centres are safe, private spaces that offer facilities for MHM, laundry, drying, bathing, and group meetings. By providing a space for both hygiene and dialogue, the centres also contribute to reducing gender-based violence (GBV) risks.

In host community schools, MHM corners have been introduced to ensure adolescent girls have access to hygiene kits, private changing areas, and rest spaces during menstruation. **These initiatives restore dignity, reduce school absenteeism, and build confidence among young girls.**

Through thoughtful design, continuous monitoring, and community engagement, BRAC's WASH programme is creating safe, inclusive, and sustainable water and sanitation ecosystems in one of the world's most complex humanitarian settings. Whether it is through a tap stand delivering safe water, a girl's toilet with a disposal pit, or a mother exchanging plastic bottles for cooking oil — each intervention is a step towards health, dignity, and hope.

Skills Development





Empowering through fashion: garments from Ukhiya

At the Ayesha Abed Foundation Centre in Ukhiya, women craft world-class garments — blending traditional skills with modern design while building sustainable livelihoods.

Sewing a New Life: A Story of Strength and Self-Reliance

Ayesha Begum's story begins with loss and hardship but unfolds into one of quiet strength, perseverance, and transformation.

Orphaned at a young age, Ayesha found shelter in her uncle's home. However, with many mouths to feed and limited resources, her presence became an added burden for the family. Deprived of proper care and unable to continue her education, she was married off early. Her husband, like her, came from an impoverished home. As a day labourer, his income was unstable; some days brought work, others brought none.













Yet Ayesha refused to let poverty define her. Drawing on basic tailoring skills she had learnt from her aunt as a child, she started going door to door, offering household help and stitching services. It wasn't easy, but she was determined to support her growing family in any way she could.

In 2019, a new opportunity emerged.

When the Ayesha Abed Foundation (AAF) began operations in the region, Ayesha heard they were recruiting and went to inquire. After six workers had been selected, she became the seventh team member — a milestone that marked the beginning of a new chapter in her life.

Her first wage was just BDT 1,200 (USD 10) — a modest start, but enough to plant the seed of hope. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck the following year, AAF pivoted to mask production. Ayesha contributed to this effort and earned additional income during that difficult period. With her carefully saved earnings, she made two significant purchases: a small plot of land to call her own, and an autorickshaw for her husband, offering him a more stable source of income.

Today, Ayesha earns between BDT 20,000 and 25,000 per month (USD 165 to 206) — a dramatic transformation from her days of uncertainty and door-to-door labour. She now supports her mother-in-law, two sons, and a grandson, providing stability and comfort to a family she has built with love and resilience.







“I never imagined life could change like this”, Ayesha says. “From having almost nothing to now being able to support my family, it feels like a dream”.

Ayesha is more than just a success story; she is a symbol of emotional strength, perseverance, and self-reliance. Her journey is a powerful reminder that with the right support and opportunity, even the most vulnerable individuals can rewrite their future.

AAF is proud to have been a part of Ayesha’s journey — a journey that turned hardship into hope and survival into empowerment.

Protection





A place to dream: protection centres for children

Cramped shelters leave little room for children to play at home. Protection centres offer a safe, structured space where they can laugh, learn, and dream beyond their daily struggles.

Healing Begins at Home: The Story of Mohammed Hares

Growing up in Camp 10, 18-year-old Mohammed Hares lived in a home overshadowed by domestic violence. His mother and younger sister silently bore the weight of fear, while Hares, though deeply affected, felt helpless in the face of the suffering around him.

“I didn’t know how to help,” he recalled. “I was hurting too, but I didn’t have the tools or confidence to speak up.”

That began to change when Hares joined the Male Role Model (MRM) workshop under the Australian government’s department of foreign affairs and trade (DFAT)-supported Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention Programme, implemented by BRAC. Over the course of 30 interactive sessions, he learned about gender equality, power dynamics, anger management, and most importantly the positive role men can play in ending violence.



8
Responding to
Violence through the
Community

12
Responding to
Violence through the
Community

14
Responding to
Violence through the
Community

16
Responding to
Violence through the
Community

18
Responding to
Violence through the
Community

approaches in
violence prevention
(Role Model)
and its impact

community
cultural practices
Role Model
in community
Model
community



community work (inter-organisational)

men

in the community relating

and concern

rights









"The sessions changed the way I think," Hares shared.

"I understood that respect and care are the foundations of a strong family."

Armed with this knowledge and a renewed sense of responsibility, Hares embarked on a courageous journey. He sat down with his father and started a difficult conversation. Speaking calmly and respectfully, he shared what he had learned in the MRM sessions, urging his father to consider the impact of violence on their family.

To his surprise, his father listened.

Supported by family counselling and follow-up by protection staff, small but meaningful changes began to take root. Over time, fear gave way to peace. Communication improved. Laughter returned to the household. The atmosphere transformed from tension to trust.

But Hares did not stop there.

Inspired by the change within his own family, he began sharing his story with peers in the camp. He became a local advocate, encouraging other young men to reflect on their behaviour and become part of the solution.

“I’m proud to be a Male Role Model”, he said. “If I could help change my family’s life, others can too”.

Today, Hares is seen as a quiet leader in his community. Young men and parents alike seek him out, curious about the sessions and how they can bring change into their own homes.





- GROOMING**
- Don't side Talk
 - Mobile Silent
 - Attention please
 - Time Maintain
 - Near Disturbances
 - Respect
 - Keep Silent
 - House Time Hand
 - Maintaining Confidentiality

• Trafficking
YPSA
Tavara
Pin: CR12335464

REFERRAL PATH-WAY

Camp-10. MPCC

- 4 Forced / Injurious
- 5 Denial of Resources / Opportunities
- 6 Emotional Abuse

• Safe
IOM- Hot
01872 7
UNHCR- Ho
Shirin
018473272

Protection
Protection Focal
UNHCR
Command Syde
06-060646

• Medical/Health
Facility Manager
IOM- (K-12)
Dr. Mahi
Phn: 01670 319580
Parigat point/om
IOM
cell: 01710 282132

• MHPSS
IOM
Nest/eg)
7750
Sunday
0889080

• Shelter & N
Site Development
IOM
Frontlik
Cell- 01670 405252
Kamruul
Cell -



“We all deserve a life free from violence. I’m grateful for the MRM sessions; they gave me the strength to protect my family and help others. Change is possible, and I’m proud to be part of that change”.

Mohammed Hares’ story is a testament to the power of education, empathy, and youth-led transformation. His journey shows that when young men are empowered with the right knowledge and support, they can break cycles of violence and become agents of healing and hope.

Food Security Skills and Livelihood





A livelihood hub around Bhasan Char's central pond

The large pond in Bhasan Char is surrounded by 120 poultry farms and a lamb shed, forming a vital part of the island's food security and income generation efforts.

Harvesting Hope: A Rohingya Woman's Path to Self-Reliance

In the isolated and often harsh environment of Bhasan Char, resilience is not just a trait — it is a necessity. For 35-year-old Nur Kolima, a Rohingya participant of BRAC's food security and livelihood programme, supported by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), it has become her greatest strength.

Since enrolling in the programme in 2023, Nur Kolima has made remarkable strides towards self-reliance. With access to 10 decimals of land for cultivation, she received a range of agricultural support — from high-quality vegetable seeds (bottle gourd, sweet pumpkin, okra, Indian spinach, and water spinach) to soil-enhancing inputs such as organic compost and gypsum.













To ensure her farming practices were sustainable and environmentally sound, she also received integrated pest management (IPM) tools, including yellow sticky traps and pheromone traps. These reduced the need for chemical pesticides and helped protect local biodiversity.

Through consistent effort and guidance from BRAC's staff, Nur Kolima transformed her small plot into a thriving source of nutrition and income. Her yearly earnings now range between BDT 96,000 and 120,000 (USD 790 to 1,000), not only from her own harvests but also by assisting local farmers in marketing and selling their produce.

“I am proud to contribute to my family’s food security while generating income to improve our quality of life”, remarked Nur Kolima.

Today, her garden stands as a symbol of hope and empowerment in the camp. Beyond improving her own circumstances, Nur Kolima has helped build a local network of women engaged in sustainable agriculture. Her success is inspiring others in the camp to view farming not just as a means of survival but as a pathway to dignity and independence.







In Bhasan Char — where opportunities are scarce and challenges are constant — Nur Kolima has cultivated more than vegetables. She has nurtured confidence, stability, and a vision for a better future.

In a place where choices are limited and the future often uncertain, her garden is more than a source of food — it is a testament to growth, dignity, and resilience. It proves that with the right support, even the most vulnerable communities can shape their own futures and inspire change in others.



Battling mosquitoes, protecting lives in Bhasan Char
Mosquitoes remain a year-round challenge in Bhasan Char. Volunteers regularly spray repellent to reduce health risks and safeguard the well-being of residents.



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