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WFP PEACE MEASURE

Conflict Sensitivity & Social Cohesion Measurement



World Food
Programme

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH

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World Food Programme
Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh



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This report has been prepared by Baisali Mohanty and Sharmin Jahan.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The main objective of this exercise was to pilot methodological approaches for measuring WFP's contribution to Peace by (1) identifying conflict triggers and how programmes should be sensitive to them and (2) measuring the effects WFP programmes have on social cohesion.

Summary findings

- Reduced income opportunities is **the most prominent risk in inducing intra-household, inter-household and inter-community level conflicts** across both refugee and host communities.
- Other major risks in the refugee community include health concerns, the inability of households to access basic products/services, and youth and gender-based violence (GBV). In the host community, socio-cultural constraints (child marriage and polygamy), access to nutritious food and lack of skills stand out as key risks.
- Key risks for women in the refugee community include GBV, reduced educational opportunities and deteriorating health. Men in the refugee community, on the other hand, face very different risks: corruption, theft and blackmail, lack of job opportunities, competition over common resources, and drug use.
- Likelihood of conflict is higher at the household level across all the catchments in the camps, attributed to the key risks associated with lack of income opportunities, living space and health concerns. In Teknaf and Ukhiya sub-districts of the host community, inter-community conflict is noted as more likely, possibly linked to perceived competition over essential resources and services between refugees and host community.
- WFP resilience-building activities¹ contribute significantly to social cohesion especially at the intra-community level (within communities).
 - Activity participants in both host and refugee communities demonstrate greater interaction among co-workers and with other community members than do non-participants. Interaction takes place predominantly at social events, during family emergencies, and through home visits.
 - Participants in the resilience-building activities also have more trust in and willingly participate in communal activities than non-participants. There is also a higher level of confidence among participants that changes brought about by the programmes will be sustainable. Confidence level is much higher in the host community.

¹ WFP's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) programmes.

- At the inter-community level, between host communities and refugees, most interaction are driven by household or individual needs and via social events. Plausibly, this could be owing to the implicit sense of empathy within the communities which is overshadowed in a situation of overt competition for resources and employment opportunities.
- The refugee community demonstrates greater willingness to engage with the host community than vice versa. They are more willing to share language skills, educational skills, and work-spaces than host community individuals. This could be because of the sense of gratitude within the refugees community for the Bangladeshis who supported the refugees to meet their critical needs.
- Access to food, income opportunities and ensuring education were identified as critical services for maintaining stability within the community.

Recommendations

- Contribution of WFP activities are more significant within the communities than between the communities. More efforts are needed to foster understanding between refugee and host community as one way of ensuring peaceful co-existence.
- In the refugee camps, efforts should be channelled towards expanding resilience building activities and creating synergies between the different activities implemented, enhance their duration and sustainability of the changes introduced by them.
- Programmatic interventions to be cognizant of pre-existing or underlying risks across different areas and between the different groups and prioritise activities or project amendments that contribute to reducing those risks.
- Continue to address gender-based violence, early marriage, polygamy and drug abuse, which have huge consequences on the core activities of WFP.
- Direct efforts to work with Government to increase host community participation in market spaces for the refugees like the WFP fresh food corners, farmers market, and organic community marketplaces. This would enhance common platforms of interaction and reduces fear between the communities.
- Conflict-risk mapping and measurement should be incorporated into the emergency and preparedness response systems across every stage, from the country office to the headquarters level.
- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks should integrate the key indicators linked to activities of social participation, social interaction, and response to conflict dynamics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Located on the southern coast of Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar is prone to severe climatic threats. The global coronavirus pandemic has added to the pre-existing set of crises in the area.

The United Nations World Food Programme, as part of the emergency operation in Cox's Bazar, has operationalized an integrated response whereby the most vulnerable population, numbering 857,937 Rohingya refugees², are assisted with life-saving food and nutrition assistance. Alongside this, WFP continues to support the population in-need in the host community, totalling 92,171 Bangladeshis³, with tailored livelihoods support and nutrition and supplementary food assistance.

Moreover, the proximity of the refugee and host-country populations, their widely divergent socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, and their unequal access to resources threaten to perpetuate tensions between the communities. Besides, there are conflict triggers between the host and refugee communities which are critical to map.

As part of WFP's effort to comprehend the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, which includes conflict sensitivity and social cohesion mainstreaming across WFP programmes, a pilot study was undertaken in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh to assess the contribution of WFP activities to peace, taking a community based approach. This pilot was executed with financial and technical support from the Peace and Conflict (PRO_P) team at WFP headquarters.



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