

A Kids Reaching Kids Offering Update
Rohingya Children Project
Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Bangladesh Nazarene Mission (BNM) presently has wide range program coverage across 17 districts through its intervention in all over Bangladesh. Over the years since its establishment, BNM responded to natural disasters like floods, cyclones, deadly diseases, and most recently, to the COVID-19 pandemic. BNM is always ready to serve Christ's love where it is needed the most.

BNM initiated the Rohingya Children Project in 2019 to make a friendly space for the children of the world's largest refugee camp in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar. Among various vulnerable groups who live in the camp, BNM focused on the children in order to spread the love of God. As a means of sharing this love, BNM is offering trauma healing counseling services to the children, sharing biblical values, and offering non-formal education while also providing nutritious food. All these efforts are nurturing these children in their discipleship development. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and following the government's instruction, BNM paused the regular activities of the Child Friendly Center (CFC) beginning in March 2020 for a short period. Gradually, BNM adapted to the situation and re-structured its activities after following government guidelines.

Project Background

This project began in early 2019 with 200 children at Rohingya camp in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar. The project impacted lives of the children positively, so BNM extended the project duration in 2020. This project, designed to create a safe and child friendly facility for children, allows children to play and learn in a secure environment.

Three Major Components

The project has three major components. First, the Rohingya children who left their home country and its formal education system are provided with non-formal education. This education keeps them engaged in productive activities despite the absence of formal schooling. Children are taught both the English and Burmese languages, respectively, as well as learning mathematics through play-based activities. Secondly, this project offers health, nutrition, and hygiene awareness sessions to the children and adolescent girls. This year, the project's health education included information about COVID-19 to help stop the spread of this disease. Third and most importantly, this project provides counseling services to the children with mental challenges, particularly adolescent girls who have been tortured during the conflict in Myanmar. All these interventions are delivered from the CFC. In addition, outreach programs such as awareness sessions and counseling are planned and conducted on campsites, making the best use of available project resources.



COVID-19

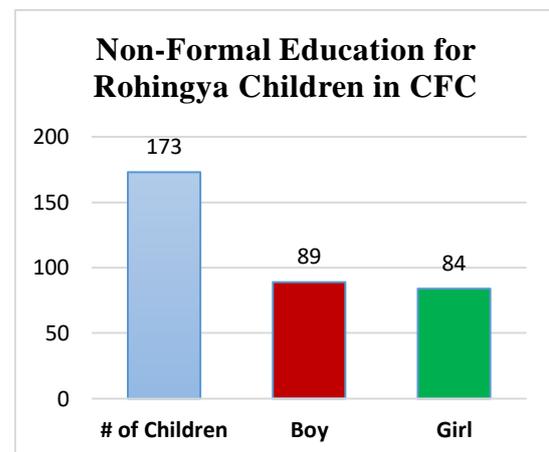
BNM had to cope with the government safety protocols and health measures on COVID-19. In March 2020, when lockdown was declared all around the country, BNM needed to modify CFC's regular activities per government instruction. In order to maintain social distancing and other COVID-19 safety measures, BNM followed an alternate strategy, where BNM staff in the project field started visiting homes to meet the children and their families, bringing awareness to COVID-19 issues. In addition, the staff distributed hygiene supplies (soaps, masks, detergents, hand sanitizers, etc.) and pandemic awareness resources (sticker, leaflet etc.) among the project beneficiaries.



CFC Core Interventional Activities

Currently, around 173 children are enrolled and participating in the education sessions conducted by CFC. The participants include 89 boys and 84 girls between the ages of 5 to 12 years.

At CFC, children enjoy their time; the center is arranged and decorated appropriately in child friendly ways with necessary materials, furniture, and accessories like alphabet chart, rhyme posters, shapes, pictures, white board, color box, shelf, chair, and table. They follow a routine of activities that helps them to be disciplined. CFC activities are designed to help the children grow mentally, physically, and spiritually.



Non-Formal Education for the Rohingya Children

The CFC is providing the Rohingya children access to pre-primary and primary education and teaching moral values while also helping them follow their dreams in the future. The lessons are provided in Burmese and the English language, respectively, following the government's restriction to use Bengali. Children also receive lessons in mathematics. All the necessary educational materials are provided for the children at the center. In this time of the pandemic, providing health and hygiene education is of utmost priority for the children.

Trauma Healing Counseling for the Children and Adolescent

The children are taught to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic that affects their lives. Among the Rohingya children and adolescents, especially girls are mentally distressed and suffer traumatized disorder due the persecution they've experienced in Myanmar. The project is providing need-based counseling to those that suffer such trauma. These counseling services are conducted both individually and in groups based on the situation of the victims. Normally, these counseling sessions are held during the second half of the day.

Health Nutrition Education

The project delivers health and nutrition sessions to the Rohingya children, adolescents, and households. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the center has been providing information and bringing awareness to health, nutrition, and hygiene practice as BNM conducts health and nutrition sessions.

The children receive basic instruction on health and hygiene while the adolescents receive information on sexual and reproductive health issues. The children are encouraged to share what they learn with their family members. As a way to stop the virus from spreading, the CFC staff arranges demonstration sessions on hand washing and other basic hygiene practices. To ensure the nourishment of the children, the project provides nutritious snacks after sessions. Children participate in several indoor games such as carom, ludo, jump rope, puzzle, etc. to keep them engaged in activities that contribute to their physical and mental growth. All the activities are done while following health protocols and social distancing.



In addition to the project activities, BNM is maintaining close contact with the government and civil authorities, giving them timely feedback. BNM regularly attends GO/NGO coordination meetings to share its project progress status with all working organizations in the community.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The project is being monitored regularly to ensure that it contributes to a healthy and secure environment for the children. The BNM program team, along with its director, conducts regular visits to the project sites to discuss and measure the effectiveness and progress of the project with the beneficiaries. BNM monitors all aspects of the project, including staff activities and their interaction, with the targeted beneficiaries. Furthermore, BNM finance department also conducts internal auditing to ensure the compliance of financial integrity in the project.

This project has created a child-friendly space for the vulnerable Rohingya children who deserve every opportunity to grow in a safe environment like any other children. BNM is grateful to KRK and SDMI for their support of this project.

Picture Gallery (Rohingya Children Project)

