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Providing refugee women, girls with life skills

UNFPA, WFP launch new project

Staff Correspondent

The UN Population Fund and World Food Programme yesterday launched a new joint project in Cox's Bazar to provide Rohingya women and teenage girls with life skills and vocational training.

UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo; WFP Country Director in Bangladesh, Richard Ragan; UNFPA Country Representative Dr Asa Torkelsson; Bangladesh's Women and Children Affairs Ministry Additional Secretary Aynul Kabir inaugurated the project at Unchiprang Rohingya camp yesterday.

The project called "Women-Led Community Center" (WLCC) focuses on female empowerment and vocational training, including tailoring and gardening. There are ten WLCCs in total at the refugee camps and host community in Cox's Bazar.

"Through the WLCCs, UNFPA is expanding its intervention in Cox's Bazar with an increased focus on women and girls' empowerment and self-reliance skills that will allow them the opportunity to improve their lives," said Dr Asa Torkelsson.

The centres will also allow men and boys to participate, and provide local communities an open space for cultural events, she said.

WFP has been implementing a 'Skill Development Through Self-Reliance' project since August 2018. Through WLCC, it will provide extended vocational training to women and girls at the centre with an initial focus on tailoring.

“Women and teenage girls in refugee and host communities generally have very few opportunities to become self-sufficient. This is a concern for WFP as they often bear the brunt of food insecurity at the household level, and have less to eat as access to food is difficult,” said Richard Ragan of WFP Bangladesh.

The WLCCs are additions to the 20 'UNFPA Women Friendly Spaces' in the camps, which have reached over 1,35,000 women and girls -- providing them access to midwifery and other services for protection and empowerment.

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