

UNFPA, WFP open 'women-led community centres' at Bangladesh Rohingya camps

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The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) have jointly inaugurated Women-Led Community Centres in the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar.

These 10 centres in the refugee camps and host community are providing women and teenage girls with "integral life-skills and vocational training", the UN agencies said in a statement on Monday.

This joint project brings together UNFPA's "expertise in mitigating gender based violence and supporting women and girls throughout the camps, with WFP's demonstrated expertise in implementing livelihood projects".

Through these centres, UNFPA is expanding its intervention in Cox's Bazar with "an increased focus on women and girls' empowerment and self-reliance skills that will strengthen and allow them the opportunity to improve their lives via skills trainings, both in the short and in the long-term," said Asa Torkelsson, UNFPA representative to Bangladesh.

The centres will also allow men and boys to participate, and allow local communities an open space for cultural events, she said at the inauguration ceremony on Monday.

WFP has been implementing a 'Skill Development Through Self-Reliance' project since August 2018 and will be providing extended vocational training to women and teenage girls at the centre with an initial focus on tailoring. "Women and teenage girls in the refugee and host community 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, Country Director for WFP in Bangladesh.



"These skill development trainings will provide them with an opportunity to become economically self-reliant and improve their food security," Ragan said.

The Women-Led Community Centres are added to 20 UNFPA Women Friendly Spaces in the camps which have reached over 135,000 women and girls providing them access to midwifery and other important services for protection and empowerment.

Additional Secretary to the women and children affairs ministry Aynul Kabir, and UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo were also present.