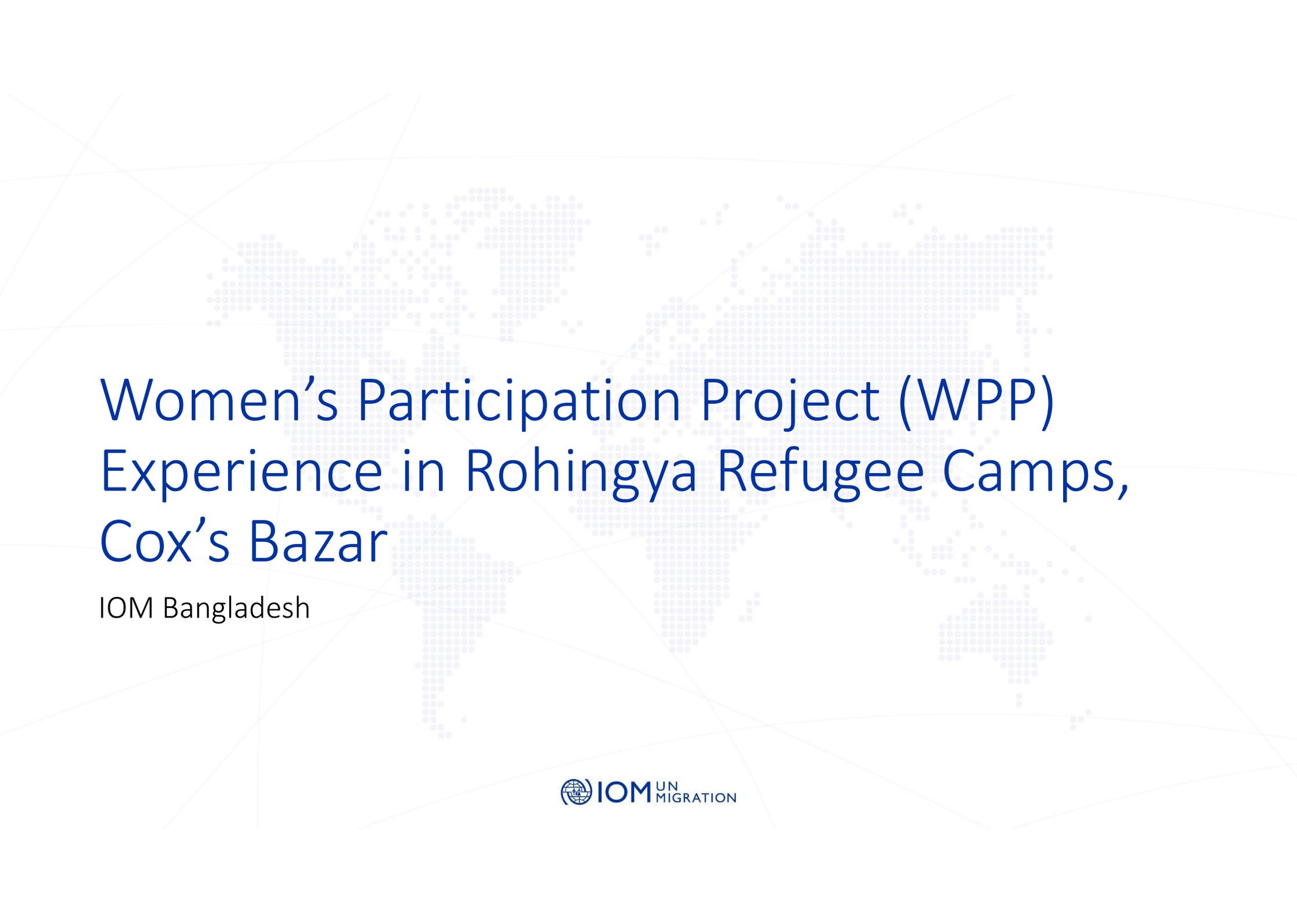


The Women's Participation Project (WPP) BANGLADESH 2018 - 2021





Women's Participation Project (WPP) Experience in Rohingya Refugee Camps, Cox's Bazar

IOM Bangladesh

Women's Participation Project

2018 - Piloted in Camp 24 (Leda), Teknaf and expanded to Shamlapur (2019) then Unchiprang (2021)

2020 - Piloted in the Mega camp: Camp 9, 18, 20E (KBE)

Objective: To support the meaningful participation of Women and girls in the camp life, governance and decision-making in their community.

Key intervention: Baseline/ endline assessment, Women Committee formation, Capacity Development activities, Women-led projects, Emergency preparedness

Women's Participation Project

- Implementing WPP in 10 IOM camps. Expanding to 8 camps managed by Implementing Partners (DRC and CARE)
- More than 1000 women are involved directly in the women committees
- Involvement in Site Management (SM) activities, awareness-raising on COVID-19, Fire response, Cyclone/ Monsoon preparedness etc.
- Community engagement especially with women at sub block level
- Interest to participate more in the camp activities



Barriers/ Challenges to Women Participation

Camp Leadership structure

Dominating family members

Religious and Cultural practices

Safety and Security

Lack of access to Education and Livelihood opportunities



Good Practices

- Women committee formation and introduction to camp stakeholders
- Multi-layer capacity development activities for Women committee members
- Women-led projects/ Income Generating Activity (IGA) e.g. handicraft, embroidery, sewing, vegetable/ flower gardening
- Women's keen interest in basic literacy
- Awareness raising activities for community members (with men and boys)
- Involvement in camp management activities: Promote safety and security e.g. solar lights, women in CFW activities, in block level EPRP
- Strong partnership with IOM Protection team across different phases of the project and especially in capacity development and consultations



Lessons learned about engagement with Women committees

Women's Committees in CXB have proven to

- create a comfortable place for women to learn, engage and have a say, when Rohingya cultural and social norms would normally suppress this;
- and strengthen their contribution to camp management overall.

Lessons learned about engagement with Women committees, focusing on those that are related to governance and coordination

- Women's Committees highlighted the essential role of all stakeholders in camps particularly women/ girls and vulnerable groups – as governance or representation system continues to be an ongoing advocacy to government designated officials.





How women's participation has contributed to improve coordination in information sharing, access to different groups in the sites

- Women committee members underwent trainings on Women Empowerment, Participation and Leadership, PSS Self-Care, GBV/Protection themes, emergency preparedness(cyclone, monsoon, fire safety) and awareness on Covid-19
- Promoted awareness on different services and assistance available in the camps to the community and referral to FIC
- Women's participation in camp opens avenue for more inclusion in camp management and coordination with partners, and contributes to a more informed response assistance and service provision

What it has taken to reach this point, in terms of time and resources?



WPP incorporated in IOM Site Management programming. Dedicated staff for oversight and support to camp WPP focal.

WPP takes an enormous amount of staff resources to get it off the ground and sustain momentum, while meeting a project timeline.

The 2018/2019 Leda/Camp 24 WPP initiative seemed to be the most successful and thus has matured over time. The experience in Leda is so far the best model. In 2019/20, Camp 23/Shamlapur had a rocky start and, of course, the camp closure and relocations from the camp have been major setbacks.

In 2020/21, rolling out the WPP in multiple camps, simultaneously, pulled our staff resources to do the activities, in order to get them done by the deadline. Therefore, projectization is an unhelpful aspect of reality in implementing the WPP.

It takes time for the roots to grow and strengthen so that the committee has the capacity to function independently over time.





Interest in more engagement with other clusters

Engagement in Awareness-raising, Assessment, Referral, Reporting, Monitoring of basic services and Maintenance works

Challenges

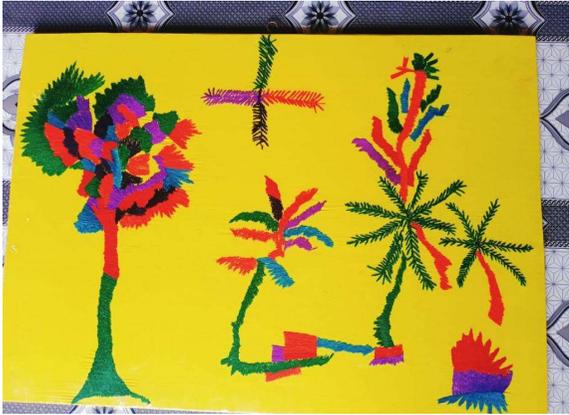
- Women committee members of WPP are overtime being trained on empowerment skills and playing leadership roles in the community which is not sometimes accepted by the community male members. Thus, women members including other women volunteers are being harassed and threatened by majhis, religious leaders and other criminal groups.
- Women looks more into being benefitted with materials support and other skills development trainings that may link them with some livelihood opportunities which is hard in the reality due to not having job opportunities for Rohingya.
- Challenging for the humanitarian actors to bring women together to organize events due to the COVID-19 health guidelines and other governmental restrictions.



Recommendations

- Develop key advocacy messages/events and awareness activities and have constructive engagement with male community members along with other authorities to encourage them for supporting the women in playing leadership roles and thus eventually minimize the risks of threats to the women.
- Continue to engage the women in structured workshop or coordination meeting with the government actors and community male members where they can raise their voice for their better acceptance.
- Promote and support the women of the project to be introduced with other self-organize/women's networks for the broader familiarity and to scale up their supportive networks.
- Increase engagement of other sectors, especially livelihood as related to women's economic empowerment and have more sustainable strategy activity plan.





Thank you.