Access to Education for Rohingya Refugee Children in Bangladesh

By

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that:

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing a degree at BRAC University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The thesis titled "Access to Education for Rohingya refugee Children in Bangladesh" submitted by Ahmed Khan (20217005) of summer, 2024 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of BSS in Anthropology on 03-10-2024.

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Abbreviations and Acronym

BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CFS	Child Friendly Spaces
CODEC	Community Development Centre (Bangladesh)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
NGOs	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
TLCs	Temporary Learning Centre
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UN	United Nations

Abstract

The thesis examines the nature of education that Rohingya refugee children accessed in Bangladesh with emphasis on the challenges the children come across in a seemingly endless humanitarian crisis. The purpose of the study was to examine the intervention by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as agents of change towards increase access to education especially with a focus on Friendship NGO. The data collection methods included the following: Three focus group discussions that were conducted in the Ukhia region and an interview focused on a key informant from the Friendship NGO. Although the data collection process was supposed to be conducted on site various factors such as security threats and bureaucratic procedures restricted the process, and as a result key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted remotely. To understand the cultural background of the study community, primary data was collected through focus group discussion (FGDs) conducted by Friendship NGO staff with the parents of Rohingya children and secondary data collection for contemporaneous background information. The findings reveal that socio cultural, language and environmental characteristics of the Learners negatively affect educational interventions in the form of Curriculum developed from Myanmar based, language disparities and home schooling environment respectively. However NGOs' intervention has remained challenging by structural factors like insufficient utilization of internet, politically instable environment, infrastructure and economic crunch which hinders realization of education for the Rohingya children. This research promotes culturally relevant programs that may address obstacles in education and identity formation among the Rohingya children, who have a bleak future ahead of them, in order to enhance the possibility of a better future for these children.

Key Words: Humanitarian Crisis Rohingya Refugee, Children Education, Friendship NGO, Bangladesh,

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The number of refugees around the world is reaching alarming proportions, and finding lasting solutions for refugees has become a major challenge worldwide. Many countries are facing a refugee crisis and are struggling to meet basic needs such as shelter, food, education, and healthcare (E. Pascucci, 2021; M. Wardeh & R.C. Marques, 2021). Refugees in most cases experience hard times and face numerous challenges to their lives and safety around the world (MN Momem, 2021; J. Hiitola, 2021). As per United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) latest estimates, the number of forcibly displaced people has exceeded 117.3 million at the end of 2023 for the first time in history, including more than 37.6 million who are refugees, this global refugee crisis is a pressing issue due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events seriously disturbing public order while among the refugees 6.9 million are asylum-seekers, the majority of refugees originate from just countries like Syria (6.4 million), Afghanistan (6.4 million), Venezuela (6.1 million) and Ukraine (6.0 million), the burden of hosting refugees predominantly falls on low- and middle-income countries, which host 75% of the world's refugees (UNHCR, 2024). Despite the magnitude of the crisis, richer countries often treat refugees as someone else's problem, leading to an imbalance in responsibility (Amnesty International, 2015). The experiences of refugees vary greatly across different countries and contexts, with stories of resilience and hardship from Syria to Rwanda (Global Giving & Adler, 2022). The crisis is further complicated by capacity issues, as providing necessities and ensuring the protection of rights for such a large number of refugees is a significant challenge (Concern Worldwide, 2024). The refugee crisis requires a global, cooperative response that prioritizes the protection of human rights and the provision of safe, legal routes to sanctuary (Amnesty International, 2015).

The number of refugees remains high in both developed and developing countries, whereas 69% of refugees and other people in need of international protection live in countries neighboring their countries of origin (UNHCR, 2024). Similar to these trends, the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh began in the 1970s with a significant influx in 2017 when over 750,000 Rohingya fled violent military crackdowns in Myanmar's Rakhine State (UNHCR, n.d.), both countries being next door neighbors geographically. As of 31 December 2023, nearly one million Rohingya refugees reside in camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district and Bhasan Char Island, as the crisis is now well into its seventh year since the large-scale refugee influx in August 2017 (UNHCR, n.d.).

The Rohingya refugee crisis has been a continuous disrupting factor in bilateral relations between Myanmar and Bangladesh since the late 1970s. The crisis is seen as composed of various clusters of past and present human rights violations in Myanmar which has caused their forced migration to neighboring countries like Bangladesh contributing to security and socio-economic problems. In 1978, about 200,000 refugees crossed into Bangladesh to flee persecution by the Myanmar army in the Arakan region (Kais, n.d.). However, the situation escalated in 2017. This exodus was called a "textbook example" of ethnic cleansing by the United Nations (Safi, 2017). Only about 50,000 Rohingya from earlier caseloads have been granted refugee status, allowing them to leave the camps for employment or to buy goods and services (Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, 2020). The refugees' lack legal status and livelihood opportunities, and their movements outside the camps are restricted. They are entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance and at heightened risk of exploitation and abuse. The camps have seen escalating violence by armed groups and criminal gangs, according to Bangladesh authorities who reported that armed groups killed over 40 Rohingya refugees in the camps in 2022, and at least 48 refugees were killed in the first half of

2023 (Human Rights Watch, 2023). The refugees also face disease outbreaks, malnutrition, inadequate educational opportunities, and risks related to neglect, exploitation, and violence, including gender-based violence risks, child marriage, and child labor (UNICEF, 2024). Many researchers like Shahin and Hasan (2023) believe that the crisis has far-reaching implications for domestic and regional politics as well as for relations with major world powers.

As of October 2019, approximately 911,566 Rohingya refugees were living in Cox's Bazar district, of which 905,754 were living in 34 refugee camps (ISCG Situation Report: Rohingya Refugee Crisis, Cox's Bazar | July 2019 - Bangladesh, 2019), including Kutupalong, which was the largest camp in the world as population of Rohingya refugees (UNHCR & Siegfried, 2022). There are currently more than 1 million Rohingya migrants living in Bangladesh (Momem, 2021), making it the largest number of Rohingya migrants in the country and 4.7% of refugees in the world. The Rohingyas are a stateless ethnic minority of Myanmar who are both inside and remotely dislodged because of political and mutual struggles. As indicated by the worldwide legitimate definition, "an individual who isn't considered as a public by any State under the activity of its regulation" is stateless (UNHCR, 2014, p. 8). That implies the individual doesn't have an identity of any country. Rohingyas from Rakhine State have been denied citizenship in Myanmar starting from the presentation of the Citizenship Regulation in 1982 (Joined Countries Activity for Participation Against Dealing with People (UN-ACT, 2014) and they became stateless. Thus, the Rohingya's absence of citizenship turned into the anchor for a whole system of unfair regulations and practices that laid the setting for many years of misuse and double-dealing. To stay away from fierce abuse, segregation, viciousness, torment, treacherous arraignment, murder and outrageous destitution for quite a long time, this ethnic minority escaped from their homes and looked for shelter in adjoining

Bangladesh and neighboring nations (UNHCR, 2012). Rohingyas turned into the casualties of these prejudicial regulations and practices.

Due to the displacement from Myanmar, Rohingya are living in refugee camps, and Bangladesh has the largest number of displaced Rohingya in the world, and most of them are children who need quick support in different regions, such as social assistance, food, security and education (Shohel, 2020). Also Sultana et al. (2023) suggests there are significant differences in the difficulties and coping mechanisms of registered and non-registered refugees although the primary issues faced by both are economic in nature, followed by problems related to health services, food, residence, education, social interactions, and security. These economic challenges often manifest as difficulties in finding stable employment and generating income, which in return affects their ability to access food, healthcare, secure housing, and education.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Children, who constitute almost 60% of the Rohingya refugee population, are particularly vulnerable, and exposed to disease outbreaks, malnutrition, and inadequate educational opportunities (UNICEF, 2024). Additionally, they face risks associated with neglect, exploitation, and violence, including gender-based violence, child marriage, and child labor (Sultana et al., 2023). These children are always left with the effects of post-traumatic stress and have to mature under very bleak circumstances, as far as their safety, health and nutrition is concerned. From the year 2017, UNICEF has been offering some of the most important services to nearly 600 000 refugees and the local community including water and sanitation, nutrition, health, protection and education (UNICEF, 2024). However, the problems they encounter are much greater and require more attention, especially for such children. The current concern is to seek primary and lasting solutions that would solve these problems and make these children develop sustainably into safe,

healthy and productive individuals. Such interventions are not limited to emergency aid delivery and provision of medical help, food supplies, and clothing; they also entail programs of nature designed to focus on social reintegration, education, and counseling. The sufferings and problems of various refugees particularly of Rohingya children are still a sharper and contentious humanitarian issue that deserves attention and solution. The difficulties encountered by the evacuated children are major and the hardest one of all is education and this is about the daily, life-saving, life-sustaining, life-changing interaction. Education supports children's perspectives, is crucial to their development and can help reduce inequalities (Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Molla, 2021). UNHCR (2020) notes that countless young people continue to be born in exile camps and, without education, face increased risk of harm and reduced opportunities for development and progress. Providing education to displaced youth is essential as it can help break down any barriers between them and the rest of society, leading to better financial opportunities, greater self-confidence and further improvements in wellbeing. Education can also prepare them for future careers and add a practical touch to events. The situation of displaced Rohingya children is precarious, and it is critical to reintegrate them into classrooms.

Over the last fifty years, the concept of education has evolved from that associated primarily with schools and universities to one of deep-rooted progress as a major theme in Europe and later in some countries (Field & Leicester, 2002; Power, 2014). In the light of Article 13 of the Global Compact, the ability to direct includes four fundamental elements, namely: accessibility, openness, value, and completeness (United Nations General Assembly, 1966). Separately, displaced Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh face enormous restrictions on access to education, despite their fundamental right to it. As highlighted by UNHCR (2015), education helps individuals physically and psychosocially and also provides essential information and skills, increasing versatility and

reducing risks to children. According to the Reliefweb report and UNICEF indicators (2021), approximately 300,000 displaced youth are participating in training in 5,000 learning habitats. In any case, about 16% of young people between 3 and 14 years old and 81% of young Rohingya between 15 and 24 years old have no access to education camps (Hossain, 2023). Without access to school, they are at risk of exploitation, sex trafficking and abuse (Hossain, 2021). Also, parents who cannot find work and live within legal restrictions may at some point rely on child labor, particularly where schools do not have access to facilitate. While there has been a number of studies on the challenges faced by the Rohingya refugees and their children within the camps and their access to education in numericals and statistical data illustrating the magnitude of the issue, however the experiences of Rohingya children in relation to non-governmental organizations (NGO) interventions in education provision has received little concern. In this context, this dissertation examines the access to education for externally displaced Rohingya children living in refugee camps in Bangladesh, with a special focus on NGO interventions in providing education to Rohingya children and an analysis of the current education scenario with the stressing on the experiences of the childrens. To achieve the overall goal of the study, three separate objectives were investigated. The study aims to identify ways to improve their access to education and the findings could help aid workers and decision-makers better understand Rohingya children's access to education, leading to the development of new programs and improvements to the education system.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guide this dissertation:

1. What is the extent of educational access for Rohingya refugee children, and what is the nature and form of the education they receive?

2. What role does the NGO play in facilitating education for Rohingya refugee children, and how effective are their initiatives and interventions?

3. What challenges do Rohingya refugee children face in accessing education, and how do these challenges impact the effectiveness of interventions by NGO?

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this dissertation are as follows:

1. To evaluate the extent and quality of educational access for Rohingya refugee children.

2. To evaluate the contribution and efficiency of NGO in addressing barriers to education and overcoming challenges faced by Rohingya refugee children.

3. The aim of this paper is to review the challenges faced by the Rohingya children in refugee camps to get education and how the difficulties impact the functionality of NGO and other individuals' interventions.

1.4 Significance of the Research

In this dissertation, I examine one of the biggest gaps in the current literature; the subject matter is about education of Rohingya children's refugees, challenges they faced and especially how Non-Governmental Organizations can help them access it. Despite an increasing number of researches done on the Rohingya refugee crisis, hardly any study has exclusively focused on finding out how effective NGO interventions are in the educational sector and the experience of Rohingya children while accessing the education and this research therefore seeks to contribute towards filling this knowledge gap. This research is important, because it highlights the multifaceted educational difficulties of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, where one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world takes place. Thus, by looking into the involvement of NGOs mainly the Friendship NGO,

the study completes the understanding of educational intervention practice in such a fragile environment. In contrast to previous research efforts that mainly relied on numerical findings, this study aims to externalize Rohingya children and parents' experiential knowledge concerning social, cultural, linguistic, and structural education-related challenges. The conclusion accords a richer understanding of what these adversities mean concerning identity and cultural sustainability of children. Moreover, the study identifies various constraints of NGOs like political volatility and resource constrains and urges development of culturally appropriate and sustainable approaches needed in education. In the end, this study is expected to create awareness to policy-makers, NGOs, and other stakeholders about the need to fill the existing gaps with Interventions that are both short-term to meet the current education needs of the Rohingya children as well as one that will promote the development of these children in the long-run.

1.5 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation explores the access to education for Rohingya refugee children living in Ukhia Camp Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, exploring their experiences in obtaining education, the challenges they face, and the role of NGO/s in providing educational support. This dissertation is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the larger problem of refugees at global level, provides background on the Rohingya refugee crisis, later presents the statement of problem and also includes the research objectives and questions, and how this dissertation is organized. Chapter 2, which reviews existing literature on refugee communities and their vulnerabilities, their right to education both internationally and nationally, education for Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh, and the role of different organizations in addressing the educational needs of Rohingya children and the theoretical framework of the thesis. The third chapter consists of the methodology with the visual explanation of Data Collection, Restriction in fieldwork and

limitations of the study. Chapter 4 presents the results of this research based on my Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), Key Informant Interview (KII) while combining them with secondary data, I discuss and analyze my findings under the framework of resumption of an ordinary life to illustrate how access to education serves as a crucial element in restoring a sense of normalcy and stability for Rohingya refugee children, despite the ongoing challenges they face in the camps. This chapter also explores the ways in which educational interventions by NGOs contribute to this process, highlighting both successes and limitations. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation, summarizing my findings, analysis and discussion while also offering recommendations based on the study.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this research, the literature review's initial section presents an overview of the current global situation and facts regarding refugees, specifically refugee children, and their vulnerabilities. The aim is to comprehend the severity of the issue at hand and its global nature. The second section addresses the right to education of refugee children as acknowledged in the international legal framework and it stresses on the significance of education for particularly refugee children, emphasizing the necessity and responsibility for enhancements. Thirdly it concentrates on the education of Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh at present times to examine the circumstances and situation of these children in terms of education and related aspects within Bangladesh. In the fourth section it discusses the crucial role of different organizations in addressing the education needs and access for Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh considering the governmental limitations and shortcomings. The last section outlines the gaps in existing literature regarding the experiences and challenges faced by the Rohingya refugee children and their ability to access education despite the interventions and initiatives by different organizations including NGOs. Having established the aforementioned points, this thesis connects these points to showcase and explore on how to improve the access to education for Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh considering their experience, to prevent the loss of an entire generation on pure humanitarian grounds.

2.1 Refugees and their Vulnerabilities

Approximately 110 million individuals worldwide were forcibly relocated by mid-2023 due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events that significantly disrupted

public order, as per the UNHCR Refugee Data Finder (2023). In 2019, over two-thirds of the global refugee population originated from five specific countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia (Hossain, 2021). This suggests that Myanmar is a significant contribution to the previously indicated amount. According to the UNHCR Refugee Data Finder (2023), 75% of the world's refugees and other individuals requiring international protection are located in low- and middle-income countries. In other words, economically challenged nations, often referred to as third-world countries, are hosting the majority of the global refugee population. Bangladesh is one such country (LMICs) (World Bank, n.d.). The exact global figure of forcibly displaced people is still unknown but believed to be significantly higher. As of the end of 2022, there were approximately 108.4 million forcibly displaced individuals. Out of this number, an estimated 40% were children or adolescents under the age of 18, amounting to 43.3 million children. Additionally, between the fiscal years of 2018 and 2022, 1.9 million children were born with refugee status, resulting in an average of 385,000 children born as refugees per year (UNHCR, 2023).

Children are often considered the most vulnerable population worldwide. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recognises children as a vulnerable category and emphasizes the importance of investing in their well-being, especially when they are in disadvantaged environments (OECD, 2019). Children who are separated from their primary carer face an increased risk of experiencing sexual exploitation, abuse, child labour, and a lack of access to school and other essential support for their well-being and growth (Moniruzzaman, 2021). The act of separating children from their primary or previous carer can lead to the risks mentioned earlier. The risks faced by refugee children are even more severe, as reported by UNHCR (2003). These risks include a heightened vulnerability to sexual exploitation, abuse, and violence due to

their dependence, limited capacity to defend themselves, and being among the most susceptible to military recruitment. Individuals experience psychological discomfort and bad health conditions (Moniruzzaman, 2021), resulting in instability in both their personal lives and society at large. According to Imam Supaat's (2017) documentation, evidence indicates that refugee children may experience emotional and psychological effects, which can have a lasting impact on all aspects of their lives.

Refugee children suffer increased hazards, making education a crucial means of protection for them (UNHCR, 2003). Education is essential for saving lives and can play a critical role in reducing the dangers and vulnerabilities that individuals encounter. Additionally, it provides important stability and benefits. Although the issue is important and pressing, the UNHCR (2023) has reported a considerable growth in the number of school-aged refugees, reaching 14.8 million. This is a substantial rise from the 10 million reported in 2022. Out of this population, it is projected that 51% of refugee children, which amounts to more than 7 million, are not attending school. In the academic year 2021-22, more than 70 countries that host refugees have reported average gross enrolment rates for refugees. These rates indicate that for pre-primary education, the enrolment rate is at 38%, for primary education it is 65%, for secondary school it is 41%, and for university education it is just 6%. These figures demonstrate a significant decline in educational participation among refugee children as they progress to higher levels of education. Surprisingly, the statistics provided do not take into account the circumstances of refugees originating from Ukraine, as reported by the UNHCR (2023). These data highlight the pressing necessity for collaborative endeavors to tackle the obstacles to education among refugee children and guarantee their opportunity to get high-quality schooling for an improved future and quality of life.

2.2 Right to education

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 acknowledged Education as a fundamental human right (United Nations, 1948, Art. 26). Similarly, the United Nation (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in its Article 28 also affirms this right (United Nations, 1989, Art. 28). Refugee children face limited access to school compared to non-refugee children, despite the global acknowledgment of education as a fundamental right (UNHCR, 2021). Education is widely recognised as a vital tool for attaining different aspects of development, such as its influence on economic growth, empowerment, poverty reduction, and the safeguarding of human rights (Hopper, 2018). Article 22 of the UNHCR (1951) in the international legal framework establishes the unique right to education for refugee children (United Nations, 1951, Art. 22). Ensuring equal access to education for refugee children and children born in the country of resettlement. Education is of utmost importance for the well-being, future chances, and general development of refugee children. It provides them with the opportunity to integrate into society, contribute to their communities, and experience personal growth (Hossain, 2021). The sheer presence of legal provisions is a significant achievement. However, refugee children encounter obstacles when it comes to accessing school, leading to the lowest enrollment rate globally. As an example, the gross enrolment rate for elementary school is at 77% for refugee children, while it stands at 102% in low-income and middle-income countries. There is a notable disparity between boys and girls, since only one-third of refugees have access to secondary school, and just 3% are able to attend higher educational institutions (Prodip & Roy, 2023). This highlights a deficiency in ensuring the "right to education". Education equips individuals with the cognitive skills necessary to influence the future and make important contributions to their current host country. Additionally, quality education plays a crucial role in safeguarding children by ensuring

their regular attendance in secure environments. Education possesses a transformative aspect, as it has the capacity to equip individuals with the necessary skills and talents to reconstruct and revitalize society (Khin, 2018). Education empowers individuals who face socio-economic and cultural marginalization to overcome poverty and actively engage in their communities. It is a crucial, lifelong process that not only saves lives but also sustains and transforms them. Furthermore, education forms the basis for children's future success. Education in emergency situations offers prompt physical and psychosocial safeguarding, along with vital information and competencies that can save lives (Shohel, 2022).

2.3 Education for Rohingya Refugee Children in Bangladesh

As discussed in earlier chapters, individuals requiring international protection reside in nations adjacent to their countries of origin, which is a global trend of refugee communities seeking safety in any region of the world. At the end of 2018, Bangladesh hosted a significant population of 906,600 refugees, primarily from Myanmar. Additionally, Myanmar had the fourth highest number of refugees, with a steady count of 1.1 million (UNHCR, 2023). The overwhelming majority of individuals are Rohingya refugees, a marginalized ethnic group from Myanmar currently residing in 34 densely populated camps in the Cox's Bazar districts of Bangladesh (Rahman & Buck, 2023). From 1991 to 2017, a significant influx of Rohingya refugees migrated from Myanmar to Bangladesh (Akter et al., 2020). As of May 2022, there were 926,486 Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar district. More than half of them, 52%, were under the age of 18 (Cox's Bazar Education Sector Strategy, 2022-2024). Bangladesh has been grappling with the issue of forcibly displaced Rohingya communities from Myanmar for over twenty years, which has recently escalated into a more significant problem (Ahsan et al., 2019). According to Folven (2022), almost 51% of the Rohingya population in Bangladesh consists of children.

In addition, Bangladesh has not signed the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, which means that Bangladesh is not legally obligated to provide assistance to refugees (Forced Migration Review & Janmyr, n.d.). Consequently, Rohingyas lack official recognition in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh government has stated that although they have not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, they have hosted the refugees in order to fully adhere to the international protection system. This is because Bangladesh is a state party to several key international human rights treaties, which obligates them to uphold the fundamental rights of the refugees and ensure equality under the law. Ensuring the provision of essential services, facilities, and security is a mandatory responsibility, and safeguarding these rights has become a significant hurdle for Bangladesh (Basudhar, 2023). All schools and Learning Centres (LCs) in the Rohingya camps and host communities were shuttered in March 2020. As a result, educators were compelled to seek alternate measures for more than 350,000 Rohingya children (including 168,000 females) and 745,000 Bangladeshi children (including 365,050 girls) whose education was interrupted. Despite the implementation of distance learning, these disadvantaged children faced unequal access to remote learning methods due to limited electricity, restricted internet connectivity, and a lack of gadgets, such as radios (UNICEF, 2021).

Approximately one million Rohingya individuals without citizenship reside in the refugee camps located in Bangladesh. Despite the presence of formal agreements, the process of returning the Rohingyas to their homeland has been delayed due to a multitude of complex obstacles. Currently, the Rohingya situation persists as a crucial humanitarian emergency (Hoque, 2021). These camps already showed a noticeable deficiency in education. The Bangladeshi government has previously prohibited formal education for Rohingya children who arrived at the refugee camps (Folven, 2022). Furthermore, these youngsters are being deprived of the opportunity to get education and

attend school. Children residing in the camps face the dual risks of being exposed to hazardous and coerced employment, while also being deprived of one of the fundamental and highly esteemed human necessities - education. Humanitarian organizations are concerned that this situation may result in a generation of Rohingyas being deprived of opportunities and prospects, commonly referred to as a "lost generation" (Hoque, 2021). In response to this matter, the Bangladeshi government made the decision on 27 January 2020 to grant Rohingya children the opportunity to receive a formal education. Multiple studies substantiate that over 100,000 Rohingya infants have been born in the camps since 2017. Over 500,000 children are being raised without receiving a formal education. Consequently, Rohingya children are being forced into dangerous child employment and are frequently subjected to forced labor, primarily outside the camps (Folven, 2022). The issue of limited educational opportunities continues to be a serious worry, and the situation has escalated beyond being solely a humanitarian disaster. The school system in the camp regions encounters numerous obstacles, such as insufficient funding, inadequate learning facilities, absence of a comprehensive curriculum, scarcity of educational resources, low student enrollment, and a significant number of unskilled teachers (Rahman, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the issue as a result of the closure of numerous learning centres (Folven, 2022). Regarding Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs), the camp regions lack access to 3G or 4G internet connections (Rahman, 2021).

2.4 Role of Different Organizations in Addressing Education Needs Rohingya children

The commitment of NGOs to human rights is the foundation of their involvement in Rohingya education. Manuchehr (2011) provided evidence that several international organizations such as UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNDP, ICRC, and numerous other NGOs are committed to advancing human rights in accordance with humanitarian principles. Although NGOs are

implementing numerous projects, their primary focus is on registered children. UNHCR and other NGOs often fail to consider unregistered Rohingya youngsters (Uddin, 2021). If this tradition persists, the dedication of these NGOs will be unsuccessful. Consequently, the outcomes may deviate from the anticipated predictions. Nevertheless, NGOs have limited ability to completely shape outcomes. Mac Ginty and Peterson demonstrated the potential of NGOs to contribute to the attainment of desired outcomes in their inquiry. NGOs frequently lack the ability to conduct autonomous analysis of the situation and actively engage in international initiatives. NGOs often do not have the resources to effectively monitor and forecast the state of affairs and anticipate changes in the socio-economic environment, which restricts their adaptability. In Cox's Bazar, numerous NGOs promptly implemented emergency measures in response to urgent demands, without sufficient time to fully understand the complexities of the problem and plan accordingly. They had a limited amount of time to recruit proficient employees. NGOs may have had diminished efficacy in influencing outcomes as a result of these issues. According to Mac Ginty and Peterson, NGOs are never without the ability to act, but humanitarian NGOs need to consider both the global dynamics of the crisis and the capabilities of local actors in their response. Due to the proactive efforts of the Bangladesh government and other local players, the Rohingyas have found a more favorable living situation in Bangladesh. Uddin found that the living conditions of Rohingyas in temporary camps had improved due to the provision of care and essential supplies by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and NGOs. However, they also face criticism for issues such as a lack of accountability, high administrative costs, bureaucratic obstacles, reliance on foreign donations, and a lack of transparency study done by Mac Ginty and Peterson (2019), Manuchehr (2011), Uddin (2021), and Islam (2016).

Prior to 2015, the Bangladeshi government did not grant authorization to any agency to provide non-formal basic education to refugee children. Shohel stated that the GoB ultimately legalized non-formal basic education by establishing temporary learning centers in tent settlements only for registered children, allowing both international and national NGOs. The UNHCR and other NGOs provided elementary education to these documented Rohingya children. NGOs currently provide education to Rohingya children through Temporary Learning Centres (TLCs), Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS), and Adolescent Clubs. Moniruzzama's investigation revealed that Centre, Space, and other comparable initiatives offer only little transitional education through their project implementing partners. These facilities have associations with UNICEF, UNHCR, CODEC, BRAC, MUKTI, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, and other organizations. TLCs are responsible for providing primary education to students under the age of 14. Additionally, Shohel (2020) found that CFSs provide both early instruction and games. Shohel's report discusses Rohingya mosques that provide religious education to Rohingya youngsters. Nevertheless, volunteer teachers from Bangladesh and Rohingya communities provide instruction in transitional education within TLCs. Moniruzaman discovered that English is taught by local or Bangladeshi facilitators, whereas Burmese is taught by Burmese facilitators in learning facilities. Education for the Rohingya was not accessible in Myanmar. Bangladeshis are engaging in efforts to study English, Burmese, and Arabic as sacred languages. Nevertheless, the regulatory government of Bangladesh oversees the activities of the Rohingya camps. The Rohingyas continue to experience a sense of deprivation of autonomy. The influx of Rohingya refugees in 2017 posed new challenges for NGOs and GoB due to the limited capacity of existing educational institutions to absorb a large number of young refugees. The size of makeshift villages was insufficient to offer fundamental education to everyone. In his study, Shohel identified various innovative emergency delivery methods

employed by NGOs to educate all displaced youngsters in makeshift settlements. These methods included utilizing Madrasas, Community centers, Mobile libraries, Radio education, Self-learning kits, and Parent literacy strategies, among others. The need for child-friendly facilities further complicates the planning and implementation process. When integrating barriers and endeavors to shape desired results, the significance of all groups' commitments, particularly NGOs in temporary settlements, is heightened. In its report, UNICEF pledged to give top priority to providing high-quality, multilingual education that focuses on teaching essential life skills as well as foundational reading, language, and numeracy. UNICEF provided a set of principles and commitments aimed at enhancing the education of the Rohingya population. Manuchehr discovered that the worldwide initiative for education during emergencies has the potential to motivate governments, international organizations, humanitarian agencies, and financial institutions to uphold their commitments to children of all backgrounds. Hence, the educational efforts of NGOs in Cox's Bazar for Rohingya children require global acknowledgment and assistance to enhance results (Shohel 2020, Moniruzzaman 2021, UNICEF 2018, Manuchehr 2011).

2.5 Unexplored Research

Current literature on the education of Rohingya refugee children primarily focuses on the broader challenges faced by refugees, access to education and the role of NGOs and governmental bodies in providing educational resources within refugee camps. Numerous reports detail the dire conditions in the camps, the barriers to education for refugee children, and the efforts of various organizations to address these issues. For example, studies highlight the lack of education opportunities, the overcrowded and under-resourced learning centers, and the psychological and social challenges faced by children in these environments (Shohel, 2022; Rahman & Buck, 2023). Nonetheless, such researches generally put more focus on statistical contexts and broader concerns

of education for refugees rather than going into details about what it is to be a Rohingya Refugee child. Moreover, there is a tendency for existing data regarding NGO interventions and educational programs to be concentrated on logistical and operational considerations like number of learning centers set up, curriculum followed, and total enrollment rates. Nevertheless, although they are crucial signifiers they render little insight into what these educational initiatives mean to children or their communities or how helpful they are in meeting unique cultural and psychological requirements of Rohingya children.

Furthermore, there is scant research on how these educational programs affect children in the long run; for instance, their social integration, mental well-being and prospects. It is widely acknowledged that NGOs play an important role in education yet not much is known about how these institutions interact with local communities as well as the effect of such interactions on educational chances. Among such stakeholders are NGOs, government and the refugee communities themselves whose relationships have a lot of complexities that need to be studied more so that educational programs can be culturally relevant, viable and helpful to children.

So, this paper intends to bridge these gaps by concentrating on the real-life experiences of Rohingya children in accessing education within Bangladesh's Rohingya refugee camp. It seeks to unravel what kind of education they are perceived to be providing, incidences affecting their access, and how such incidences shape their identities, preservation of culture and bring about their general wellbeing. Through an anthropological filter, this research will help understand better the cultural, social and psychological facets involved in educating these displaced children from Burma who have fled war-torn Myanmar; it will go beyond the existing numbers-based information by providing a more holistic view of their lives as learners. Additionally, this study intends to examine critically the success of NGO interventions with the focus on Friendship NGO,

from children's parent perspectives, and communities towards improving educational outcomes further including making sure that these disadvantaged children do not lag behind others.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

2.6.1 Resumption of an Ordinary Life

This thesis draws its complete theoretical foundation from the work of Ravi KS Kohli. He argues that the reality for many children who have left their homes because of forced migration is that their search for an ordinary existence still continues, despite reaching their resettlement context. According to Kohli (2014), education plays a crucial part in helping refugee children return to their regular lives. As per Kohli, forced displacement causes unanticipated transitions in life for refugee children. Forcible migration symbolizes the "end of everyday life." According to the author, these children of forced migrants constantly desire to live an average life, even in their resettlement environment, despite their current predicament as refugees. In addition, it requires some time for the children of refugees to get integrated into the new community and adjust to the new sociocultural setting of the resettlement context. The route to an "ordinary life" is shaped by a multitude of interconnected contextual factors, such as their aptitudes, experiences, expectations, and life events, in addition to outside assistance from society. Children who are refugees go through a sequence of moves in terms of time, place, and psychological elements, as defined by (Kohli 2014). He conceptualized refugee children's experiences using three notions: transition through "safety," "belonging," and "success", as the children move within and across spatial, temporal and maturational dimensions of change (Kohli, 2011, 2014). Kohli's three concepts are recognised within the literature on refugee education. For example, schools as places of safety with the potential for providing spaces for healing are well documented (e.g. Hayward, 2019). These can be associated with mental health support within schools to alleviate psychological distress (e.g.

Sullivan & Simonsen, 2016) associated with pre-migration experiences. Threats to a sense of safety once in a resettlement context endure through insecure status (Sleijpen et al., 2017), through experiences of bullying (Guo et al., 2019) and through culturally unfamiliar pedagogies and practices and lack of specialized teachers (Hek, 2005).

At the same time, early childhood education and the competent style of teaching can also help refugee children and their families build an identity and feeling of belonging (Mitchell et al., 2020). Gifford et al. (2009) argue that post-migration education might serve as an important factor in the process of newcomers' transition to their new communities. However, this can be done only while respecting the differences in experiences and identities (Due et al., 2016). Fostering the just, fair, and legitimate involvement of refugee children in the educational system helps them become resilient and prepares them to fully participate in society (UNHCR, n.d.). A sense of belonging must be understood as a multifaceted and ongoing process (Hiorth, 2019), one that nurtures social ties forged across various social systems (Stewart, 2019). Children of refugees experience feelings of being different, racism, and cultural differences, which foster an appreciation for life and lead to a state of conditional belonging (Wernesjö, 2020). Wernesjö's (2020) research on conditional belonging is related to Kolhi's depictions of children who are unaccompanied providing 'thin' versions of themselves when they first arrive until they feel comfortable enough to provide true 'thick' descriptions of themselves in their resettlement environment (Kohli, 2014). McIntyre (2018.) explained how schooling can assist refugee children to develop a sense of belonging. The author claims that increasing the sense of belonging among refugee children in the new resettlement context can be achieved by providing clear signposts tools to serve with educational systems and cultural norms, recognising each person's assets in order to make them feel

appreciated in school, teaching tolerance, promoting diversity, and working with peers to build a new society where they belong and preparing them according to their future goal (McIntyre, 2018).

According to MacIntyre et al. (2018), success is a lifelong process that nurtures an individual's sense of worth and ability to make meaningful decisions for themselves as well as for society at large. This also enables them to feel authentic and easily balanced. Educational success for refugees is a very convoluted process with many connected barriers. Educational success is therefore very long-term and complex due to a variety of reasons: the new cultural and linguistic context, trauma due to forced migration, low socioeconomic status, a lack of support in the host community (Cerna, 2019), the inability of the host country to adjust towards the needs of the new arrivals (McIntyre et al., 2018), the unrecognized pre-exile educational experience (Rutter, 2006), teachers who are inexperienced and unprepared (McBrien, 2019), and inadequate pedagogy with no relation to any culture background, (Hek, 2005). It is, therefore, very important that the success indicator for schooling is built on an important turning point for the refugees and that it be varied depending on their history, experiences of being refugees, and the context of resettlement (Vervliet et al., 2015).

Similarly McIntyre and Neuhaus used the Kohli's theory of "Resumption of Ordinary Life" in his article, "Theorising policy and practice in refugee education: Conceptualising 'safety', 'belonging', 'success' and 'participatory parity' in England and Sweden," (Mcintyre & Neuhaus, 2021). Below (figure: 02) is visually represented through a mind map of his article. This mind map

embodies three essential concepts of safety, belonging and achievement which are consistent with the foundations of Kohli's theory.
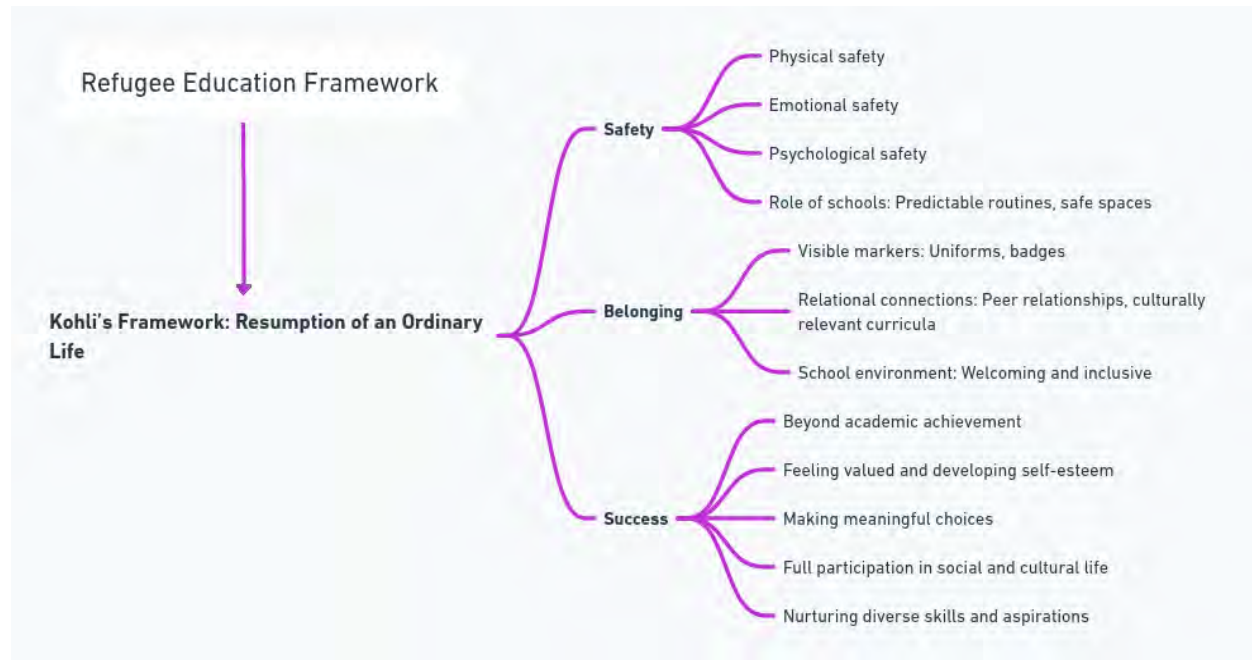
Figure 1: Refugee Education Framework

The diagram shows the role of safety as a key factor, emphasizing its physical, emotional, and psychological dimensions that are necessary for the adaptation and learning process of refugee children. The aspect of belonging is depicted as a relational process fostered by schools through welcoming environments and culturally relevant interactions which reinforce children's sense of fitting in. Success lastly is not only exhibited in terms of academic performance but also the wider aspect of personal growth, self-worth and social taking part. This mind map visually underscores these components' interrelatedness showing how they continue to affect the general well-being and successful integration into education systems among refugees; thereby making it possible for educators and policymakers to have a holistic view when supporting normalization among refugees.

Kohli presented three key ideas in the sphere of social work "safety, belongingness and Success" while examining how refugee Children acclimatize themselves to a different place and become normal human beings. In my dissertation, I applied Ravi Kohli (2014) "Resumption of an Ordinary Life" idea to investigate the education access for Rohingya children as well as the learning atmosphere fostered by NGOs in the Rohingya refugee camp located in Bangladesh.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology chapter gives a general overview of the research designs and strategies that were used in order to fulfill the aims of this study. Essentially, this chapter lays out the methodological framework by explaining all the strategies and procedures applied for data collection and analysis as per unique challenges encountered. In light of security threats, political instability, and technological limitations, adjustments were made in choosing methods so as to ensure robust and significant data collection. In this chapter, it is shown how these approaches helped develop a more nuanced understanding of the subject matter while still working within constraints by using a multi-faceted research strategy that included remote key informant interviews, secondary data collection, and Friendship NGO mediated focus group discussions. Also, this chapter explore ethical consideration that relate to vulnerable populations.

3.1 Study Approach

The study reported in this thesis is a qualitative exploratory research meant to investigate accessibility of education for refugee children from the Rohingya community in Bangladesh especially looking at the effort made by NGOs and life experiences of the children themselves. Thus, the aim of this study is to understand ways in which the Rohingya children can go to schools with the kind support of Friendship NGO and the problems they encounter. An exploratory approach is appropriate for studying a fluid and dynamic refugee crisis, enabling a flexible and adaptive methodology that understands complex social phenomena (Creswell, 2014).

The primary approach taken for this research is qualitative. This involved focus group discussions (FGDs) held with parents, key informant interviews (KIIs) conducted with officials from non-

governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as various secondary sources that were used for contextualizing the findings. Ultimately, this study aims to inform future research and possible policy measures that could improve educational opportunities and experiences for Rohingya children.

3.2 Study Area

The reason for choosing this study area is because Friendship NGO is currently implementing education activities in this district of Bangladesh. Due to some problems of security and accessibility of information, some of the data was collected by the Friendship NGO staff for me. Ukhia is a sub-district in Cox's bazaar district in Bangladesh and has been hosting the refugees from the violence-faced Myanmar's Rakhine state. Myanmar forces committed widespread violence on the Rohingya people in Northern Rakhine State in August 2017 resulting in a massive influx of refugees in Bangladesh. This humanitarian crisis has placed more than one million forcibly displaced Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar with the population estimated to be about 1.45 million living in 34 densely packed camps.

However, the concerned refugees first arrived in Bangladesh after the exodus of 1978 though Rohingya migration started long back in early seventies (UNHCR, 1977). Due to the fact that this crisis has been ongoing for several years, several unique difficulties have arisen for the Rohingya children living in these camps – difficulties in being provided education. These are the socio-cultural, linguistic and environmental challenges which the study addresses based on experiences of these children. By studying the part of NGOs, especially Friendship NGO, the findings can improve the understanding in how these organizations support education in such conditions.

Figure 2: Study Area (Ukhia)

3.3 Initial Plan for Fieldwork

The research was initially designed to conduct on-site ethnographic fieldwork in the Ukhia District Rohingya Refugee Camps of Cox's Bazar. One week of fieldwork was planned between June 25 and June 31, 2024, during which I aimed to collect data on the lived experiences of children living in refugee camps, particularly with respect to their access to education and interventions by NGOs through interviews with NGO representatives, parents and children. My plan was:

1. Interviews with NGO representatives who work in the educational sector can provide a good understanding of what their organizations do for education in the respective Camps.

2. Conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with parents and community representatives to understand how they view their children's education and collect information about their children's educational experiences.

3. Interact with children at learning centers to find out about their daily education schedules and look around children's learning environments.

My supervisor facilitated me to contact a key organization working on education about Rohingya children. The Friendship NGO has been working with Rohingya Refugee people in specific areas. The objective of this fieldwork was to collect real-time data on how children access education in refugee situations. I had everything ready for this fieldwork visit: the NGO was supportive of my research, I had interview questions developed and FGDs framework designed. But everything did not come up as expected; there were unscheduled challenges that forced me to think of different means of data collection.

3.3.1 Barriers to Conducting Fieldwork

Security concerns posed the greatest challenge. As an international student at BRAC University, permission to conduct fieldwork in the refugee camps was required from the university's International Office. But due to the situation of especially active and potentially dangerous situations existing at Myanmar- Bangladesh border the permission was denied. Its security situations have never been stable, with intermittent outbreaks of violence as well as fears for lives for international researchers (UNHCR 2023). Thus Rohingya refugee camps are treated like sensitive areas, limiting direct access by international researchers and demanding lots of

documentation (Islam et al., 2022). Furthermore, the security challenge was compounded by logistics such as limited access to refugee camps, political tension among others, along with the complicated bureaucratic procedures of obtaining government authorization for fieldwork within a restricted zone (Prodip, 2017). This had significant implications since it meant that I could not carry out any face-to-face fieldwork which formed a foundation upon which my research was based.

3.3.2 Alternative Strategy for Data Collection

My situation on the ground was such that it was impossible for me to carry out any kind of field work myself. In discussions with my supervisor, my methodology was modified. I had once considered asking a local person to help with the research so that he or she could conduct the fieldwork in my place. However, finding a suitable candidate with the requisite research skills proved challenging as the tasks that require a deep understanding of the project and the community being studied. Additionally, it would have been difficult to ensure ethical oversight and proper training for the local researcher in conducting FGDs and interviews.

After considering several options, we chose to pivot toward conducting remote key informant interviews (KIIs) and relying on secondary sources. This approach allowed for some degree of data collection without compromising the safety of the research participants or the researcher. Remote interviews have become increasingly popular in sensitive and conflict-affected areas where field access is limited (Sullivan, 2012), and this decision was aligned with the emergent design of qualitative research, which allows for adaptation to changing conditions (Maxwell, 2013). The revised data collection plan centered on conducting three key informant interviews with:

1. With representatives from Friendship NGO, directly involved in educational interventions.

2. With experts at the Center for Peace and Justice at BRAC University having extensive knowledge of the situation in the Rohingya camps.

3. With a professor from Dhaka University, who had conducted previous research on the Rohingya crisis?

Although one interview with Friendship NGO was successfully conducted, widespread political unrest in Bangladesh during July 2024 made further interviews difficult. A nationwide student protest led to internet outages across the country, which severely restricted access to digital communication tools (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2024). These internet disruptions also affected the refugee camps, eliminating the possibility of conducting FGDs remotely via platforms like Zoom.

3.4 Final Data Collection Approach

Given the continued barriers, I was forced to rely heavily on secondary data and limit primary data collection. Through contact with Friendship NGO, I arranged for the organization to conduct three FGDs with the parents of Rohingya children, specifically focusing on their perceptions of the educational opportunities and children's experiences with education available. To complement these FGDs, I relied heavily on secondary sources, including reports from NGOs, academic studies, and governmental documents, to enrich my understanding of the broader context in which these educational interventions were taking place. Although the challenges I faced, this double sampling approach of both primary and secondary data enabled me to maintain this research's purity. The main focus of the primary data collection for this thesis was on two primary qualitative techniques: Quantitative data; Qualitative data; Key Informant Interviews (KIIs); Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

3.4.1 Key Informant Interview (KII)

Interviews were mainly concerned with grasping how NGOs are aided by expert insights into the education sector within the Ukhia refugee camp, because the Friendship NGO's educational learning centers are only active in Ukhia. A semi-structured interview was carried out with one senior representative from Friendship NGO that allowed probing into specific areas of interest alongside maintaining some level of flexibility when it comes to embracing new themes thus giving the insight on how NGOs are mitigating the educational barriers in the camps. The interview was recorded using voices; afterward, it was transcribed for analysis purposes.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Mainly three FGDs were conducted, the wealth of insights from FGDs on children's education access are collected through various means such as; moderating with a pre-prepared interview guide for the Friendship Organization staff who helped conduct FGDs. Parents were given an opportunity to express their thoughts and experiences regarding their children's education access, which was how FGDs were planned. Using this method made it possible to have different opinions about inaccessible education problems. Each individual FGD consisted of 10 participants who were recorded for later translation purposes as well as transcribing and analyzing what had been said therein. Babbie (2020) states that FGDs are effective in accommodating various points of view thus encouraging interaction among the participants leading to deeper understanding on the matter at hand. They also provide an elaborate and intimate understanding of shared experiences making them especially important for community-led initiatives (Krueger, 2014), they become increasingly relevant within refugee camp contexts because group dynamics often unveil collective attitudes and worries (Hynie, 2018).

3.5 Secondary Research

I employed secondary data from various credible sources, among them UNHCR, Human Rights Watch and academic research on refugee education. For instance, data on enrollment of education, drop-out rates and resource challenges in the camps was obtained from UNHCR's Global Report on Refugee Education (2022). These secondary data allowed me to build comparisons between the context of the study and international frameworks regarding education of refugees (UNHCR & Dryden-Peterson, 2011), which contributed to my study with more richness than if I used only primary data collection techniques.

The credibility of the study results was ensured by method of data triangulation and validity of the results was ensured by inter qualifier reliability. In the present study data was compared by using different sources of information like KII, FGDs and secondary data collected from NGOs and books, articles available in universities. This led to the improved continuity of the NGO intervention in education and its effect on the Rohingya children and the parents' perception of their children's education. Referencing the main findings of the study with the published literature on refugee education made it possible to enhance the credibility of the collected primary data as well as guarantee the cross comparison of two different types of data.

3.6 Data Analysis

The primary approach for understanding the collected data was based on thematic analysis due to the ability of this method in identifying, describing and categorizing patterns within qualitative data. It was deemed chosen for that reason as such main themes correspond to the exploratory objective of this study by eliciting main findings involving refugee education, parental attitudes and roles of Friendship NGO. For the purpose of analyzing the interview transcripts as well as the focus group discussions, thematic analysis was the most suitable method of interpreting the

different types of qualitative data obtained from different sources. Data from KII and FGDs were transcribed, coded thematically to determine major themes concerning barriers to educational access. By doing so, prominent trends within the collected information were discovered that linked back to the theoretical framework of the research. As stated by Braun & Clarke (2006), thematic analysis involves these stages:

Data analysis was a process accomplished in several stages:

1. Transcription and Translation:

FGDs and Interview were carefully transcribed word for word, then translated from their native tongue (Burmese) into English at costs that could be incurred as part of the expenses involved in doing so. This ensured correctness and helped to make answers clearer. The transcripts were then read several times in order to decipher what was coming up.

2. Coding:

Three stages were utilized to code the data:

- The first stage involved broad coding of the data according to education and livelihood related categories within camps.

- In the second stage, these codes were further refined into themes based on NGO interventions and the challenges they face.

- The last stage composed overall themes that included barriers to education, roles played by NGOs in addressing them, and parental perceptions.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict ethical guidelines in line with protecting vulnerable populations like refugee children. The ethics code adopted in this study followed BRAC University's research ethics code and was guided by UNHCR's recommendations on Research involving Refugees (UNHCR & Jacobsen and Landau, 2003). The purpose of study was disclosed and consent was obtained from participants prior to FGDs or interviews being conducted. Attention was paid to let individuals know they would be free to pull out from the examination at their chosen moment, with nothing happening after this option. Maintaining privacy has been achieved through the whole process of research; hence all materials were anonymized during transcription as well as analysis so that identities of both participants could be protected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018).

Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND DISSCUSSIONS

4.1 Access to Education

In the present work, the theme "Accessing education" consists of several dimensions of the situations of Rohingya children in the Ukhia camps where Friendship NGO operates. This is intended to form the basis for examining education access through secondary data findings, literature review of this study alongside FGDs and KII techniques to include 4 dimensions. Regarding their geographical and climatic characteristics, hard terrains coupled with varying weather conditions are hurdles that poor people in poor regions with tendencies of using child labor make families barely survive instead of prioritizing on education which in turn results to children working as laborers besides gender issues that offer cultural restraints and traditions thus resulting to low enrollment rates and poor educational participation levels are some parts that shape their educational potentiality. With regard to each of the sections these challenges indicated complex issues of access rather than a simple answer to RQ1 which was 'yes' or 'no'.

4.1.1 Geographic and Climate Barriers

Ukhia had long been notorious for a problem of its geographical condition which posed difficulty in the movement and establishment of structures. Ukhia is another remote village located in the Cox's Bazar district of the southeastern part of Bangladesh, owing to which the geography of the land that includes hills, dense vegetation, and tropical monsoon climate makes transport functionality difficult along with the accessibility. This was due to the fact that some of these roads were rendered almost inaccessible whenever there is heavy downfall during the rainy periods (monsoon) due to blocked passages by heavy floods. Besides, poor quality roads are easier to be

identified in Ukhia during such seasons. They also found that poor quality roads are most common during such seasons. Certain areas can only be explored on foot, up steep slopes, along paths that are often overgrown and muddy to boot with the thicker growth closer to the interior.

Moreover, these areas are characterized with poor communication networks both internally and externally which makes transport very costly and time-consuming leading up often into situations where some people never receive necessary services like education, health care among other essentials within their respective neighborhoods because they do not know how much they have been charged (Hossain & Moniruzzaman 2021). Thus substandard urban conditions linked closely with poverty require urgent responses from authorities concerned so as they do not have adverse effects on those living there such as diseases or lack of food supplies.The infrastructure within the camps worsens the geographical problems discussed above. During monsoon season, access to schools is disrupted as educational facilities get damaged. As per the statement given by the Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship NGOs' education project,

> *"First of all, I mean you know that infrastructure is a challenge because the centers*
>
> *that we constructed here are not permanent structures and each year these are made*
>
> *with bamboo and thrashes. So each year through a monsoon the centers are damaged*
>
> *and we have to reconstruct or repair these structures again and again."*

This is a significant barrier to consistent educational access, as the temporary nature of these facilities makes them vulnerable to environmental factors, which can interrupt the educational process. This situation not only disrupts the educational process but also creates a sense of instability among both students and teachers. The lack of stable infrastructure prevents the creation of a safe learning environment, which is critical for refugee children as they seek to resume an

ordinary life. While many parents mentioned the challenges posed by the long distances their children must travel to attend school. FGD 1, Parent 1 (P1) stated:

> *"There are no such challenges in life but distance can be an issue for some of us who live far away from school; like me - I reside at C4 and my son/daughter goes to a primary school at C1. C-4 is located quite far from C-1. This makes it difficult to travel that length."*

Because of this distance, people will find they need to go through a lot of burden and stress every time schools get closed down while it is raining or snowing hard. Because there are no means of transport available, children have no option but to walk long distances in heavy rains or muddy paths as well. The inability to rely on infrastructure together with how far apart these camps are from one another makes it hard for students to reach education institutions easily. According to studies conducted by WorldBank Group, school students can perform better when their classrooms have comfortable environments (Barrett et al., 2019). The barriers caused by weather patterns and the state of roads limit educational opportunities since they pose physical and logistical problems which hinder learning activities.

Hence, Rohingya children's education in such camps is influenced by not only what is taught but also how it is learnt and in what conditions. Too much physical strain may result in mental health issues and behavioral disorders that discourage students from going to school (Liu & Huang, 2021), hence it is possible that among other things these physical strains lead to frustration and fatigue among Rohingya refugee pupils which could lower their likelihood of attending learning centers implying a need for better infrastructure and support systems to promote education accessibility for them.

4.1.2 Poverty and Child Labor

Poverty is a significant barrier to educational access for Rohingya children, exacerbated by the ongoing food insecurity crisis in the refugee camps. According to new data from the International Rescue Committee (International Rescue Committee [IRC], 2024), food insecurity in Cox's Bazar has reached alarming levels, with a 33% reduction in food rations in 2023, the number of Rohingya refugees without adequate food rose from 44%, leaving 70% of refugees without proper food.   This severe deprivation forces many families to prioritize immediate economic needs over long-term educational goals, often leading to child labor as children are compelled to work to support their families rather than attend school. The Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship expressed the same concern. He explained that,

> "*Due to poverty, parents are facing significant difficulties. There are various economic opportunities available both within and outside the camp. As a result, many parents, particularly for their adolescent children, prioritize earning money over pursuing education.*"

> "*It's an economic crisis for these families, making it very challenging to manage. In many cases, learners are in shift-based education. Some students attend school during one shift and work during another, while others work during one shift and attend school during the remaining hours. This flexible arrangement allows a few learners to continue their education despite their work commitments.*"

This sentiment is further echoed by data from the IRC's health and nutrition programs, which show that malnutrition rates are particularly high among women and children.

Figure 3: Impact of poverty and child labor on Education in Rohingya Refugee Camps

The above figures **(03)** illustrate the significant challenges Rohingya refugee children face in accessing education due to poverty and child labor. In camps with BPRM intervention, 30% of children receive three or more meals daily, compared to just 16% in camps without such support, emphasizing the importance of external aid (IRC, 2024). Additionally 8% of Rohingya children are engaged in child labor, which further limits their educational opportunities (UNICEF & Kibria, 2014). Nevertheless, some economic activities do exist within and around the camps, particularly in Ukhia upazila, where the large Kutupalong refugee settlement is located which is the same area where Friendship NGO is working (IRC, 2024). These conditions highlight the extreme poverty within the camps not only limiting the accessibility of education but also affect the consistent education and resulting in child labor. Children who attend school often face interruptions due to

work demands, disrupting their education and underscoring how poverty undermines the accessibility of education for Rohingya children.
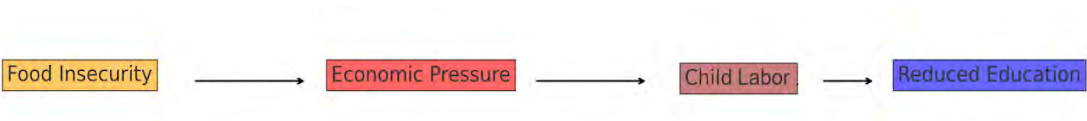

Figure 4: Cycle of Reduced Education

Although UNICEF (2024) reports that around 8% of Rohingya children are forced into labor, I have doubts about this figure. Given the recent refugee influx, extreme poverty, high levels of food insecurity, and the low number of refugees granted official status, which severely restricts their employment opportunities, the actual percentage of children engaged in labor is likely higher. Rohingya refugees face prohibitions on leaving the camps for work and must rely on whatever limited and lower-wage labor opportunities are available within and around the camps, such as agriculture and small-scale trade. These conditions inevitably lead to a greater number of children entering the workforce. As a result, many learning centers have adapted by implementing shift-based education to accommodate the working schedules of these children. The researches from International Labour Organization (ILO) also confirm that poverty is the most insidious driver of exploitative child labor, forcing families into desperate measures that compromise the future of their children.

4.1.3 Gender-Based Barriers

Gender-based barriers present some of the most significant challenges to educational access for Rohingya children, particularly for girls. The FGD with parents of Rohingya refugee children reveals deeply ingrained socio-cultural norms that significantly hinder the access to education and educational opportunities for both girls and boys. Notable mentions by the parents in the FGDs were;

"Once a girl turns 8 or 9, the community believes she is too old to continue her education and no longer needs to attend school." P2 FGD1

"A girl of 8 or 9 is still a child, but by the time she is 14, 15, or 16, she should be married. At that age, school is no longer appropriate for her." P3 FGD1

"Boys are responsible for managing the outside world and supporting the family financially." P4 FGD1

The belief that girls upon reaching a certain age are too old to continue their education is rooted in traditional gender roles that dictate a girl's primary responsibility as being within the household, eventually leading to marriage at an early age, which is the "gender stratification", where such norms are perpetuated through the socialization process, where girls are conditioned to prioritize domestic roles over educational attainment. Even though early marriage is often seen as a protective measure against sexual violence and as a means to preserve family honor in many traditional societies, including within refugee communities. However the absence of education makes girls more vulnerable to early marriage, which then perpetuates a cycle of poverty, abuse and limited opportunities (UNICEF, 2018). The decision to withdraw girls from school at an early age can be seen as an indicator and dependent on socio-economic status. Low parental education levels and economic instability are significant predictors of child marriage and child labor (Subramanee et al., 2022), as families' perception of education and the economic burden outweigh educations' potential and future benefits, while for boys, the expectation to contribute financially to the household leads to early entry into the workforce, often in exploitative conditions leading to child labor just because of predefined gender roles. Which I would refer to as a form of "Structural violence", i.e; the social structures that harm or disadvantage individuals by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. The lack of access to education for both girls and boys within this

community is a form of structural violence that perpetuates inequality and limits opportunities for social mobility.

> *"Our culture doesn't prevent girls from studying; it's the teachings of the Quran and Hadith that restrict their education."* P5 FGD1

> *"Rohingya culture is very different from Bangladeshi culture."* P6 FGD2

> *"It would be better if boys and girls were taught separately, and girls should only be taught by female teachers."* P7 FGD1

Furthermore, above responses in the FGD reveals complex interplays, which provide a deeper insight of the barriers to co-education and the gender-based disparities that arise from the influences by cultural norms and religious beliefs within the Rohingya refugee community. Theories on "cultural reproduction" suggest that parents, consciously or unconsciously, pass down cultural values and norms that maintain the status quo, including the subordination of girls and the prioritization of boys' economic contributions and educational access (Bourdieu, 1977). The restriction on girls' education is justified by references to religious teachings, while sparing the culture that it does not inherently oppose education for girls, but then religious interpretations are used to limit their access, particularly as they reach puberty. This resonates with "cultural relativism", where the community's practices are seen as a reflection of their religious and cultural values. However, it is crucial to recognize that interpretations of religious texts can vary significantly. Even though in some communities similar religious texts are interpreted in ways that support female education, highlighting that the restriction in this context is not universally applied but culturally specific (Kandiyoti, 1988). The assertion that cultural distinctiveness of the Rohingya community affects their attitudes towards education for girls, co-education and their preference for gender-segregated education, with girls being taught only by female teachers,

reflects a broader cultural norm that emphasizes "modesty" and the "protection of female honor", which reflect their creations of "gendered spaces", i.e; the physical and social spaces occupied by men and women are distinct and regulated by cultural norms. In many traditional societies the separation of genders is seen as essential to maintaining social order and moral integrity (Ortner, 1974).

The restriction on girls' mobility during and after puberty is a common practice in patriarchal societies, where a girl's chastity is closely guarded, often at the expense of her education and personal freedom. They are more likely to be married by 18 than to finish school, while two out of three won't even start secondary school just because of their age and gender, based on current trends, the global goal of ensuring all girls receive 12 years of quality education by 2030 won't be reached for a further 150 years, and as a matter of fact, by 2030, 1 in 5 girls in crisis-affected countries still won't be able to read a simple sentence (ReliefWeb, 2019). Moreover favoring or prioritizing boys, as identified in the KII by the Quality Assurance Coordinator,

> *"There is a cultural bias that favors boys. After girls start menstruating, they are usually not allowed to go outside, which is why they can't attend Learning Centers."*

Which is a significant barrier to achieving gender equality in education. This bias is not only reflected in parental attitudes but also in the broader community's educational practices. The reluctance to allow post-pubescent girls to attend Learning Centers, due to concerns about their interaction with boys, is a direct result of this bias. Women and girls are socialized to accept and even perpetuate norms that limit their own freedom in exchange for social protection or approval which is what academics call a "patriarchal bargain"(Kandiyoti, 1988). This bargaining

is evident in the acceptance of restrictions on girls' education, which is seen as necessary to maintain their honor and social standing.

This generational transmission of norms is evident in the FGD data, where parents' attitudes towards education reflect broader community values that devalue girls' education and reinforce traditional gender roles. This further makes one think that educating the parents, ensuring less economic burden and awareness campaigns and engaging with religious and cultural figure heads within a community setting particularly these camps are more crucial than the TLCs for these children?

4.1.4 Enrollment and Retention Rates

Enrollment and retention rates are critical indicators of educational access and are significantly influenced by the aforementioned barriers. While initial enrollment might be relatively high, retention is a significant challenge, particularly for girls. According to a report by UNICEF (2023), the gross enrollment rate for primary education among Rohingya refugee children stands at 82%, but this drops drastically to 40% by the secondary level. This disparity underscores the retention challenge, especially for girls, whose enrollment drops even more sharply with only about 21% enrolled in secondary education due to factors like family restrictions, the need to help at home, and the lack of male-female separated classes. Some of the parents recognize the importance of education, but they are often unable to keep their children in school due to cultural and economic pressures. For instance, in FGD3 P8 added,

>*"If the girl child goes to school, it reduces a lot of pressure from their parents."*

This statement suggests that the decision to send girls to school is often based on immediate practical considerations, such as reducing household burdens, rather than long-term educational

goals. As discussed earlier, the distance to schools is also a significant factor leading to children dropping out. Additionally, cultural bias is a significant factor contributing to the lower retention rates among female students. As of October 2023, approximately 330,207 Rohingya children (161,201 female and 169,006 male) have access to inclusive learning services through 5,494 established learning facilities. However, as they grow older they are more likely to drop out (ReliefWeb, 2024). According to a study by the International Rescue Committee (2024), only 5% of Rohingya girls aged 15-18 in Bangladesh are attending school, compared to 24% of boys. When girls are enrolled, they are often not allowed to attend school regularly due to cultural restrictions, leading to sporadic attendance and eventual dropout. In contrast, for boys, while cultural barriers are less pronounced, economic factors play a more significant role in determining retention. Many boys are expected to work to support their families, which often leads to them dropping out of school before completing their education and indulging in child labor. Quality Assurance Coordinator explained,

> *"Reducing the dropout in the secondary level is also a challenge, because there are different kinds of planners, and in many cases, students drop out due to teachers' facilitation, home-related challenges, and economic pressures."*
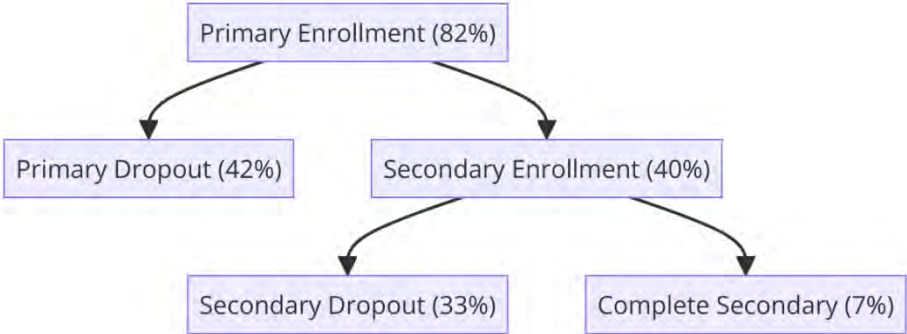

Figure 5: Children's Enrollment Rate in Learning Centre

Moreover, the data indicates that the multiple barriers to education in the Rohingya refugee camps significantly hinder this process. The lack of consistent access to education prevents children from achieving the stability and routine necessary for their psychological and social development. A 2022 report by Save the Children highlighted that the dropout rate for Rohingya boys after primary school is 30%, primarily due to economic demands on their labor. The analysis of enrollment and retention rates shows that while access to education is initially available, maintaining this access is significantly hampered by a combination of cultural, economic, and infrastructural barriers. High dropout rates, particularly among girls and at the secondary level, indicate that the extent of educational access is limited and inconsistent. Additionally, the education received is often disrupted and incomplete due to these barriers, leading to gaps in learning and development. Therefore, the low retention rates serve as a critical indicator of the challenges in achieving sustainable and meaningful educational access for Rohingya children in the refugee camps. UNHCR (2021) reported that only 7% of Rohingya children complete secondary education, a statistic that underscores the severity of the retention problem. Overall, I would deduce that providing access to education itself remains a challenge considering the barriers but retaining the continuous process of education to an extent for it to serve the larger goals of such educational programs is a bigger of an issue than the mere construction of TLCs and enrolling learners.

4.2 Role of Friendship NGO & the Program Implementation Strategies

Under above theme in this study is to shed light on the role of Friendship NGO, illustrate the educational sector's operations, and the program implementation strategies in the educational provision of Rohingya children in the Ukhia camps, where Friendship NGO is actively involved and from where the FGDs were conducted too. This is to cover the RO2, assessing the role and effectiveness of NGO in facilitating educational access and overcoming challenges faced. It is to

understand how the organizations/NGO/s operate and coordinate within the camps, how educational programs initiatives and interventions are implemented and facilitated, how effective they have been, with the help of insights from secondary data, literature review of the study, combining it with KII.

4.2.1 Overview of NGOs

The role of NGOs and other agencies is critical in facilitating education for Rohingya refugee children and the program implementation and the strategies employed significantly influence the effectiveness of educational interventions for Rohingya refugee children. Various approaches taken, successes and obstacles faced by these organizations in implementing educational programs in the camps are discussed below. One of the primary strategies employed is the establishment of learning centers within the camps. The Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship NGOs' educational program explained that these centers are designed to provide a safe and structured environment for children to learn. He stated,

> *"We are in 9(nine) partners, in partnership with UNICEF, and all initiatives are taken by them along with the Education Sector, which coordinates the educational efforts across the camps."*
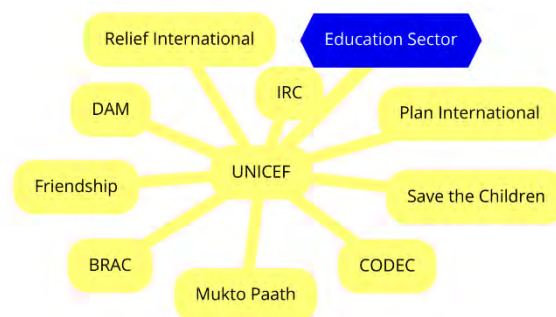

Figure 6: UNICEF Partners

It has been mentioned that FRIENDSHIP, BRAC, CODEC, DAM (Dhaka Ahsania Mission), IRC (International Rescue Committee), Save the Children, Plan International, Mukto Paath and Relief International work in partnership with UNICEF for the proper coordination and monitoring with Education Sector to ensure that all educational programmes are standardized with the International standard. In implementing the Myanmar Curriculum Pilot, which focuses on older Rohingya children who have been out of school, the help of the Government of Bangladesh and UNICEF has been invaluable (UNICEF Canada, 2019). However, there are still several challenges such as legal and political that threaten the development of these strategies to enhance the educational chances of the Rohingya children and stop them from getting recognized educational certification in future. The educational infrastructure by now has been provided by different organizations been pivotal for Rohingya refugee children to have some form of education. Some of the organizations that have played a big role in putting up TLCs and CFS are the UNICEF and Save the Children. UNICEF has reported setting up more than 3,400 learning facilities that children of 315,000 learning across a number of them in Cox's Bazar (UNICEF & Reidy, 2020). This infrastructure is to guarantee that children have an environment that they can study and live in while in the camps that they are in due to harsh realities in life. However, challenges remain in integrating these efforts with government policy, as the education provided to Rohingya children is still not formally recognized by the Bangladeshi authorities (UNICEF, 2020), as the agencies and GoB awaits the repatriation of these rohingya refugees, for the purpose there successful reintegration in their homeland society.
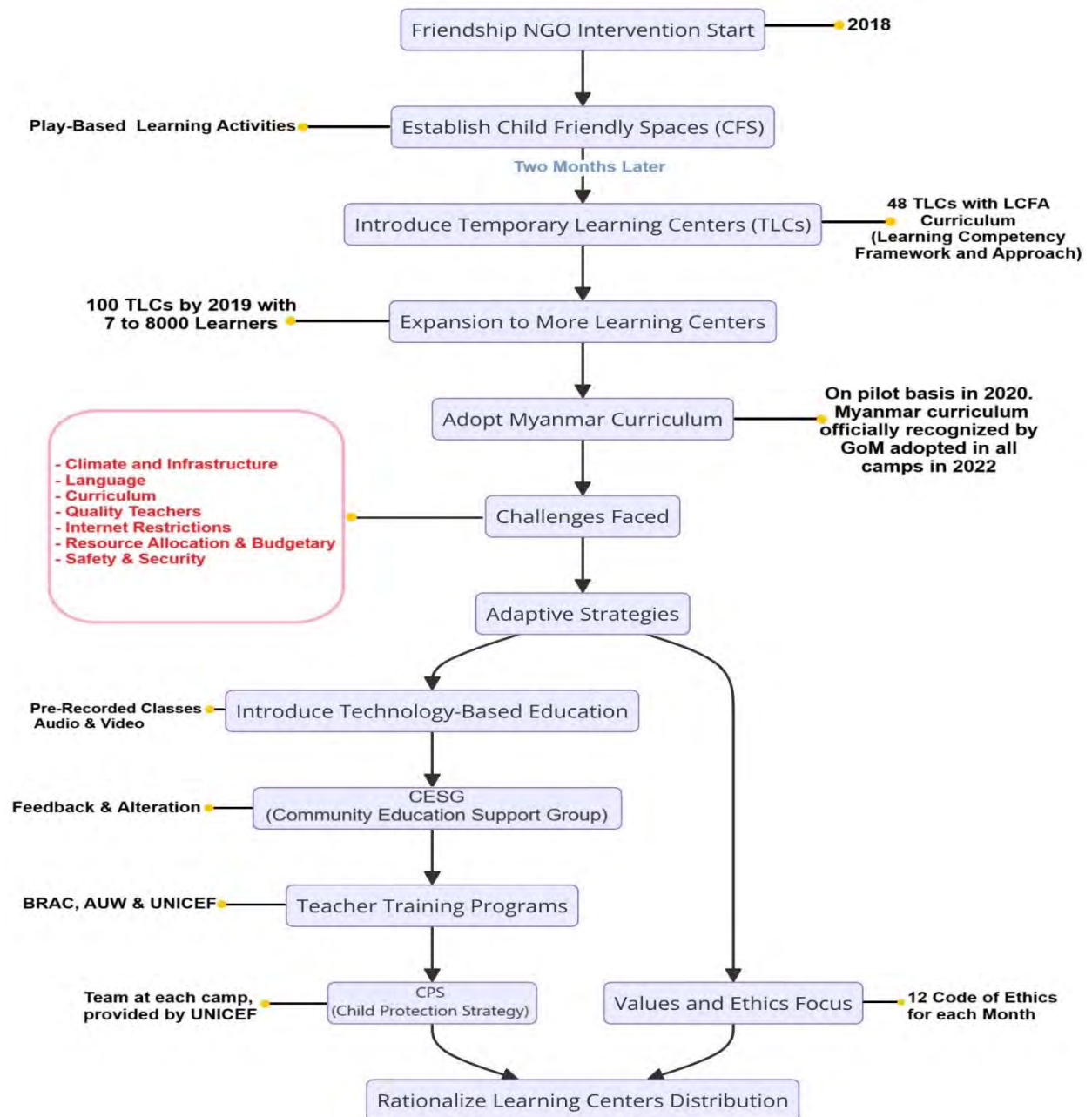
4.2.2 Program Implementation Strategies

Figure 7: Friendship NGO Program Implementation

Since its formation, Friendship has served a significant purpose educating children in remote and

hard to reach areas of Bangladesh and been instrumental in helping to educate Rohingya refugee

children (Friendship, n.d). They have been actively involved in the Rohingya refugee crisis since

2017, initially focused on creating Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) to address the immediate needs of children by providing safe, play-based activities. In 2018, the NGO expanded its efforts by establishing Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs), which offer basic education, play-based activities, and psychosocial support. The progression from CFS to TLCs reflects a structured and phased approach, transitioning from basic child protection to formal education. These TLCs utilize the Learning Competency Framework and Approach (LCFA) to cater to the educational needs of displaced children.

> *"After the Child Friendly Spaces, we initially established 48 learning centers, using the LCFA curriculum which focuses on literacy and numeracy. This program, launched in partnership with UNICEF, started with over 3,000 to 4,000 children.*
>
> *By 2019, 100 learning centers were added with 7000-8000 learners. The LCFA curriculum began from around 2017-2018 and went on up to 2020. The pilot of the Myanmar curriculum took place in 2020 and was formally acknowledged by the Myanmar government in the year 2022 where it was adopted across all our educational facilities."*
>
> *"We as an organization value ethics and morals hence we are guided by our twelve ethical codes including compassion, kindness and fairness. Each month we included these themes into our curriculum so as to instill upright moral values among our students."* ~ Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship

Friendship NGO provides a great range of educational interventions for school aged children in refugee camps, hence rapidly expanding its programs to meet the increasing demands of these children. The expansion which is centered on four camps in Ukhia town was made possible through partnership with UNICEF and establishment of Friendship as a strong local player. In

order to ensure that upon returning home to Myanmar they have an education recognized there, this organization originally applied LCFA but then switched over to applying the Myanmarese curriculum from 2020 onwards. One of the unique components of Friendship's strategy involves stressing values and ethics, using such themes as empathy, compassion and justice every month within their curriculum. In this way, through such an approach to moral education, the NGO is swiftly able to set itself a part of all others as far as the believed concern towards the development, not solely academically but morally as well. In addition, for Rohingya children refugees one of Friendship's main focuses is psychological and emotional issues because most of them have gone through displacement and violence, which has left severe scars on them. As a result, they cooperate with UNICEF by including such elements as psychological assistance in their educational curricula in order to address such concerns.

> *"Indeed, I am likewise involved in Child Protection and self-learning. If a matter arises, it remains private and can only be addressed by me or the child protection focal point. Upon getting a case, we contact UNICEF where there is a unique department responsible for psychosocial support (PSS) and self-learning.*

> *They ensure the necessary support is provided. Additionally, we have a dedicated ESS (Education in Emergencies and Self-Learning) team in each camp. If psychosocial support or sessions are needed for the learners, we have skilled experts on-site to provide this support."* ~ Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship

Such support includes counseling services and psychosocial sessions to help children cope with their experiences and improve emotional well-being, integrated into educational programs by NGOs and UNICEF through its Child Protection Strategy (CPS). These services aim to manage childs' stress and anxiety, creating a more stable learning environment. However, due to the large

number of children in the camps, the services may be limited in scope and capacity, leaving some children without the necessary support. Moreover, the community perceptions and feedback are crucial for understanding the impact of educational interventions and guiding their development. Engaging with the community to ensure the programs meet their needs and expectations, regular community meetings and consultations are conducted to address these concerns.

"We hold monthly meetings with the Community Education Support Group (CESG) and actively engage with parents to ensure they feel involved and their concerns are addressed. We gather community feedback, particularly regarding teacher skill development and girls' access to education. Currently, we're also conducting community-led awareness sessions to help the community feel a sense of ownership over these programs." ~ Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship

Ongoing dialogue with the community is essential for building trust and ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of educational interventions. NGOs recognize the importance of community feedback and work to integrate it into their programs. Regular meetings with community leaders and parents are held to discuss progress and gather input for improvement. This approach enhances the programs and fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility within the community, which is vital for the success of these interventions.

"It's been a significant success, starting from just 48 learning centers to now having 473. Initially, we supported 2,000 to 4,000 children, but now we are reaching over 20,000, with a goal to support more than 35,000 by next year. Starting with the hope of helping these children, we've taken big steps and achieved substantial success. This progress reflects our commitment and vision." ~ Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship.

Over the time with continuous efforts Friendship alongside its partners has attained significant success as shown by above staggering numbers highlighted by the official, however success is always a byproduct of the process of overcoming obstacles, and the aim of this dissertation is to stress on the experience rather than statistical data therefore in the following section is dedicated to the challenges faced.

4.3 Challenges in Implementing Educational Programs

This theme encompasses several challenges faced by NGO/s while implementing the educational program and also the challenges faced by Rohingya children which shapes their experience of their educational access. This is to cover the RO3, for challenges in implementing and the challenges faced by children in accessing education with the help of insights from secondary data, literature review of the study, combining it with FGDs and KII using thematic analysis. I used six sub themes to analyze the challenges, categorizing them in language Barrier, curriculum, and quality of teachers, internet restrictions, and resource allocation difficulties for NGO lastly but one of the most significant is safety and security issues. It attempts to answer the RQ3 regarding the challenges Rohingya refugee children face in accessing education, and how these challenges impact the effectiveness of interventions by NGO while shaping the experience of these children.

4.3.1 Language Barriers

One of the significant challenges faced by NGOs in delivering education to Rohingya refugee children is the language barrier. The Myanmar curriculum, used within the camps, is in Burmese, a language with which many learners and teachers are not proficient. Additionally, while the government of Bangladesh prohibits the use of Bangla as a medium of instruction for Rohingya refugees, it is still the national language and is commonly spoken in the surrounding areas, creating a dissonance between the local linguistic context and the educational policies in the camps, this is

a part of the government's policy to prevent Rohingya from integrating and remaining permanently in the country (Human Rights Watch, 2022). This issue is compounded by the use of multiple languages, including Bangla and English, which can confuse younger children who may not be fluent in any of these languages. This linguistic complexity not only hinders students' understanding but also presents a significant obstacle for NGOs in delivering effective education.

> *"The language barrier is still a major challenge since the curriculum is in Burmese, and most of the children and teachers aren't fluent in it, while Bangla is a foreign language for them making it difficult to provide effective support."* ~ Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship

The concept of linguistic syncretism becomes relevant in such multilingual environments, as it refers to the blending and merging of languages when different linguistic communities come into prolonged contact, leading to the creation of new, hybrid forms of communication. In some refugee camps, where people are from Burma, Bangladesh and some from English speaking countries, they mix the language they speak to develop a creolized dialect that they use everyday. A research done on Kakuma refugees in Kenya discovered that due to the adoption of people from different backgrounds the switch between languages led to the synthesis of a mixed language for conversation which however caused issues whenever there was a lesson where the normative language was the standard and unknown to the students (Le, 2021). Likewise in the Rohingya camps, a new creolization of Burmese and Bangla could be used in everyday communication that assist refugees but hinder the provision of schooling.

4.3.2 Curriculum

> *When the program initially started, most subjects were facilitated by Bangladeshi teachers, while Rohingya teachers only handled the Burmese language subject as part*

of the LCFA curriculum. The adoption of the Myanmar curriculum, with its focus on the Burmese language, was intended to prepare students for eventual repatriation by providing them with education that would be recognized by the Myanmar government." ~Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship

The integration of educational curricula plays a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity and future prospects of displaced communities. For the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, the adoption of the Myanmar curriculum is not merely an educational shift; it represents a broader socio-political strategy aimed at facilitating their eventual repatriation. By aligning the curriculum with that of Myanmar and emphasizing the Burmese language, the program seeks to equip Rohingya children with the necessary skills and knowledge to reintegrate into Myanmar society, should they return. This approach can be understood through cultural assimilation and the theory of acculturation, where educational systems become tools for inculcating the cultural and linguistic norms of the host or original society (Berry, 1997). The majority of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are children and youth, making it a critical component of their long-term development, and the start of the 2023/24 school year marked the first time that Rohingya refugee children of all ages studied under the Myanmar Curriculum (UNICEF, 2024). However, transitions such as these are not without their consequences. While the goal of repatriation and cultural integration is clear, the shift in curriculum inherently brings challenges, affecting both the educational quality and the lived experiences of the students and teachers involved. As mentioned by Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship;

"After transitioning to the Myanmar curriculum, where all subjects and textbooks are in Burmese, the need arose to equip Rohingya teachers to teach various subjects effectively, posing a significant challenge. The host teachers continued to facilitate

only the English subject. Issue is the limited number of Rohingya individuals with education beyond graduation, making it difficult to find qualified teachers for secondary education in Burmese. Community consultations have revealed feedback from learners and parents indicating that teachers often struggle to provide adequate instruction. To address this, primary education employs a block teaching method, where one teacher covers all subjects in a center, except for English, which is taught by host teachers. In secondary education, the strategy is to develop subject-specific teachers, enabling those skilled in areas like science to teach across multiple learning centers. However, the Burmese language itself poses a barrier, with its unique accents and lack of local specialists capable of training Rohingya teachers or volunteers effectively."

The Myanmar curriculum poses significant challenges for Rohingya children, particularly due to the language barrier and lack of adequately trained teachers. Many teachers struggle to provide effective instruction in Burmese, resulting in a learning environment that fails to meet the students' educational needs. These challenges can be viewed through the theory of cultural capital, consisting of intangible resources that can have a significant impact on social mobility and success (Bourdieu, 1986), which suggests that the lack of appropriate cultural knowledge and linguistic skills among teachers reduces the quality of education for learners. This gap in cultural capital means that students may receive an education that is misaligned with their immediate needs and realities, impacting their ability to improve their socio-economic status. This perspective is supported by feedback from parents in focus group discussions, stating;

"Whatever our children are being taught is good. But the curriculum should be updated with practical knowledge and skill education. ~ P11 FGD3

The community's practical concerns, as many families focus on financial survival, view education as a means to economic improvement. They seek an education that not only fulfills formal requirements but also equips their children with skills that can be capitalized upon, enhancing their future employability and financial stability. Thus, while the curriculum aims to align with Myanmar's educational standards for the purpose of their repatriation back to their home country, it must also be adaptable to meet the immediate and practical needs of the Rohingya community.

4.3.3 Quality of Teachers

The quality of teachers is a critical factor influencing educational outcomes, and NGOs face considerable challenges in this area. Recruiting and retaining qualified teachers is difficult, especially when many teachers in the camps are themselves refugees with limited formal education and teaching experience.

> *"We face challenges with pedagogy, teacher skills, and recruiting qualified teachers, as well as difficulties in sustaining training due to a significant gap in subject knowledge. Teachers often struggle to absorb and apply what they learn. To address this, we have a technology-based program from Dhaka that manages video classes, which are facilitated in the peripheries to help overcome the shortage of skilled teachers."* ~ Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship

In refugee settings, teachers play a crucial role and are responsible for significantly impacting children's lives. So, to ensure broad access to education for refugee children, an adequate number of trained and equipped teachers are vital (UNHCR, 1994). The gap in teachers' subject-based knowledge and the limited previous professional or formal educational opportunities and experience as they themselves are refugees exacerbate the situation, leading to ineffective curriculum delivery and disengaged learners. Despite the challenges, there are ongoing efforts to

improve teacher quality within the camps, various initiatives aimed at enhancing teacher capacity, such as collaboration with organizations like Asian University for Women (AUW), BRAC and UNICEF, which have introduced teacher capacity development programs. On a larger scale, UNICEF and BRAC have developed extensive teacher training programs, with UNICEF reporting that they trained more than 8,900 teachers by 2021 to support the Myanmar Curriculum Pilot ((UNICEF, 2020). These programs aim to build the capacity of both local and refugee teachers, with an emphasis on creating trauma-sensitive educational environments. These programs focus on building the pedagogical skills of teachers and addressing the specific educational needs of refugee children. However, the informant acknowledged that these efforts are still in the early stages and that significant work remains to be done to ensure that all teachers are adequately equipped to provide high-quality education. Since without skilled teachers, the students cannot achieve the educational outcomes necessary to transition successfully into their new environment. The shortage of qualified and skilled teachers across the camps is limiting the scalability of the educational programs (UNICEF & Reidy, 2020). This shortage results in overcrowded classrooms and diminished quality education thereby making it harder for NGOs' to set up solid educational structures.

> *"Some Bangladeshi (Bangla Speaking) and Rohingya teachers are good, but children*
> *say they need two or three more."* P9 FGD3

This reflects that though there are able teachers, their quantity cannot satisfy the education needs of kids which leads to either over-crowded classrooms or reduced standards of quality education. The difference in culture as well as language between trainers and scholars complicates the process of teaching further leading ultimately to dropout rates that are higher and students that are disengaged. Besides, the gap between teacher and student cultures in addition to languages adds

another layer of difficulty to an already challenging task. It suggests demotivation of learners who in effect absent from class altogether because of misunderstandings occasioned by some slang terms or even trainers' accents across different learning areas including History or Geography for instance. However language barrier accompanied by poor training of teachers does favour the students to understand the syllabus, and as a result lead to a state of apathy culminating to increased rates of dropping out from school. Still no roof on where retainable incentives can be constructed as well as teacher support systems encourage this more; therefore under such conditions we have always experienced high replacement rates together with a scenario where substandard staffing levels have been filled by unofficial personnel thus an endless cycle of learners receiving poor education that denies them better lives in future. The traditional approach to teaching, as suggested by a parent in FGD2 emphasizes strictness and discipline:

> *"The teacher should scold the kids if they do not study, but also the teacher should*
> *make sure that the child understands the lesson."~* P10 FGD2

This reflects a desire for children to be disciplined and focused on education, it may not be effective for children who have experienced significant emotional and psychological distress. There is a clear need for trauma-informed pedagogical practices that can better support the students' learning and well-being.

4.3.4 Internet Restrictions

Another significant challenge faced by NGOs is the restriction on internet access within the camps, imposed by the Government of Bangladesh since September 2019. The Bangladesh government has restricted the use of SIM cards, telecommunications, and internet access in the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar (Human Rights Watch, 2020). This restriction was implemented to ensure security after a large gathering of Rohingya people marked the two-year anniversary of the

Myanmar exodus (NetHope, 2020). Although internet access has recently been restored, it remains inconsistent across all camps. These restrictions, along with the lack of technological resources, severely limit Rohingya children's ability to access online education opportunities. Limiting the use of technology-based educational resources, which are crucial for enhancing the learning experience. Even though the Friendship NGO has tried to bring unique learning opportunities, still there are some restrictions to implement them. As mentioned by Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship;

> *"Video classes are currently not allowed in the camps. Instead, we are using audio classes, where we record lessons and play them through radios."*

Although Friendship NGO has made efforts to integrate technology into education, such as planning to introduce tablet-based learning and pre-recorded video/audio lessons, for both learners and teachers, still the lack of internet connectivity is challenging which hampers education process since in a pre-recorded session learners can't experience an interactive learning environment while also unable to access online resources in an era when having internet connectivity is almost seen as a basic human right. Arguably despite managing different kinds of video/audio classes and technology-based programs, the absence of internet access within the camps remains a major hurdle in implementing these educational tools effectively. This restriction severely limits the ability of NGOs to deliver modern, interactive, and engaging educational content including tablet-based educational initiatives today and in future too if the restriction remains in place.

4.3.5 Resource Allocation Difficulties for NGO

The challenge lies in coordinating efforts across multiple organizations and stakeholders, such as the 26 implementing partners and 21 sector projects actively engaged in the education sector (JRP, 2024), to maximize the impact of educational programs. Efficient resource allocation is a

significant challenge that NGO face in delivering education to Rohingya refugee children. Disparities in distributing educational materials and qualified teachers remain an aspect of worry due to the large network and population. These logistical issues, coupled with the fluid nature of refugee camps where populations can shift rapidly make it challenging to ensure all children access the necessary educational resources. As acknowledged by Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship;

"Even when the necessary logistical supplies are available, the challenge lies in effectively coordinating how these supplies are accessed and used. It involves ensuring that materials reach the teachers and are used correctly to create and deliver effective teaching materials in the classroom. However, these days the budget and the monetary areas have shrunk a bit."
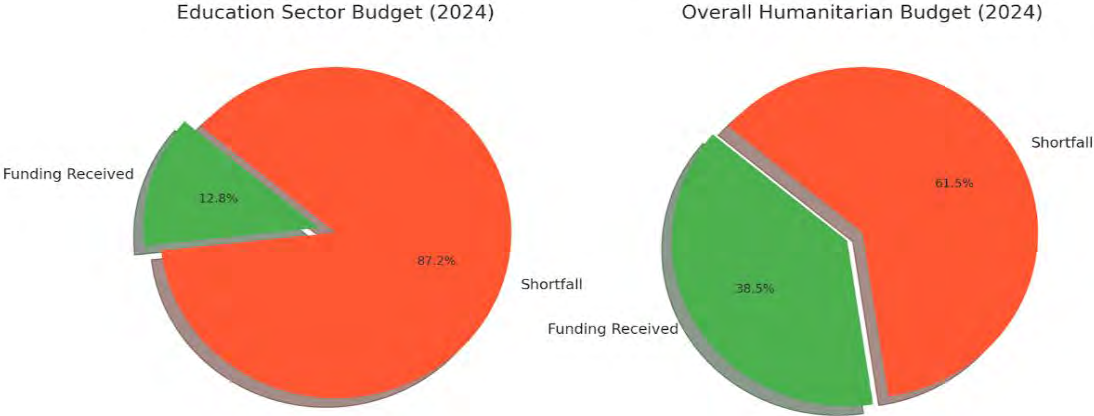
Figure 8: Education and overall Budget

Moreover the budgetary constraints pose another significant challenge for NGO, particularly in the context of a protracted refugee crisis. The education sector's funding requirement for 2024 alone stands at USD 68.5 million USD, with 8.8 Million USD funding received which covers only 12.8% of the needed amount till August 2024 (JRP, 2024), highlighting the scale of financial needs. The over-reliance on short-term external funding hampers the ability of NGOs to plan and

implement sustainable educational programs. This reduction in funding is evident across the broader humanitarian response, with the overall financial requirement for the Joint Response Plan for 2024 estimated at USD 852.4 million with the current (August 2024) funded amount standing at USD 328.0 million (JRP, 2024).

The broader view of the shrinking budgets suggest that monetary constraints limit the scope of educational initiatives and makes it challenging for Friendship alongside other partners to maintain consistent programs and the quality over time. These financial limitations also affect the ability of NGOs to provide adequate resources, training, and support to teachers and students, thereby compromising the effectiveness of the educational programs. The Education Sector plans to address issues of accessibility through flexible learning arrangements, including female-only classes and Community-Based Learning Facilities for adolescent boys and girls due to the barriers discussed earlier(JRP, 2024). Adding to the complexity, the value of food vouchers for camp residents was reduced from $12 per person per month in March 2023 to $10, and then to just $8 in June, which is equivalent to only 27 cents a day (United Nations & Mahmud, 2023). Lacking efficient coordination and adequate funding not just for education but for basic needs like food makes the experience of getting an education or even living in this setting extremely challenging. Without the necessary supplies and on an empty stomach, no amount of education can be beneficial, as children simply won't have the resources or energy to pursue learning. This aligns with research that shows nutritional status and food security are critical for cognitive function and academic performance, underscoring the importance of a holistic approach to humanitarian aid (Winicki & Jemison, 2003).

4.3.6 Safety and Security Concerns

"*The ongoing conflict in Myanmar raises serious safety concerns for children, who are at risk of abduction and involvement in illegal activities. This dangerous environment necessitates urgent measures to protect both children and teachers. Camps are located near ports and borders, hotspots for illegal activities, further endangering learners and educators. Frequent violence, including killings and gunfire, threatens the safety of those moving within the camps, leading to potential mental health issues. Clear safety protocols are essential to ensure the protection of children, teachers, and staff in these hazardous conditions.*"

Given the dark side of living in refugee camps where the environment is prone to lawlessness, violence, exploitative in nature due to numerous reasons, the safety and security concerns are a significant challenge within the Rohingya refugee camps. All including childrens and teachers face various risks, including violence, abduction, and in the face of broader instability of the region. The ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), posits that an individual's development is influenced by the various environmental systems they interact with. In this regard, in the camp infrastructure there is a great impact on the psychological and emotional development of children that is fraught with danger.

The insecurity that is obtained in these camp affects these children and makes them periodically stressed and anxious which makes it very hard for them to read and retain what has been taught. Also, because parents are afraid of the safety of their children, particularly the girl child, they do not agree to take them to school, a factor that consolidates the role of environment in negative influence on education and social inequalities along the gender divide. Some of the consequences of violence and instability for kids are poor developments observed in later development such as

poor cognitive prowess and familiarization with wrong behaviors (UNICEF, n.d.). Furthermore, parents manifested a lot of concern regarding transporting their children to school most especially the female pupils, because of the cult like group that takes the delight of abducting children most especially females with how and threats of violence. On a question regarding safety and security situation within the camp they anxiously responded,

"We are always worried about our girls. The kids are getting kidnapped from our camps. So, now we just hope for only one thing: that our child stays safe and doesn't get kidnaped." ~P12 FGD1

The fear often leads to lower attendance rates and higher dropout rates, particularly among girls, who are more vulnerable to these security threats; where gang violence, gunfire and other violent incidents have occurred near or within the camps (BBC & Ethirajan, 2023), nearly half (48%) of refugee households surveyed reported crime and violence as a protection concern, addressing these concerns is crucial for creating a conducive learning environment where students feel safe and supported (Relief Web, 2024). As per Friendship NGO official, to mitigate these risks different stakeholders with help of authorities have implemented several strategies aimed at enhancing the safety and security of students and teachers. These include increasing the presence of identified NGO and other organizational officials around/within learning centers and camps, implementing safe transportation options i.e grouped and bulked, and conducting safety awareness programs within the community. Despite these efforts, the persistent instability, violence, abductions and other crimes in the region continues to pose significant obstacles to the provision of safe and secure environment for children, they remain in continuous threat and anxiety.

4.4 Impact of Educational Interventions

This theme contains the findings, analysis and discussion of the immediate impacts of the educational interventions and initiative in the camps despite the numerous and identified challenges faced by children and NGO. It also discusses the future prospects of the Rohingya children. This is to cover the "effectiveness" of the programs through their immediate outcomes and future envisioned. I have used insights from secondary data, literature review of the study, combining it with FGDs and KII.

4.4.1 Outcomes & Future Prospects for Children

Despite the numerous challenges faced by learners and educational programs of the NGO/s in the camps, there have been notable successes in improving literacy rates and increasing school enrollment starting with only two to four thousand children in CFSs, and gradually enrolling more than 24 thousand children, and being able to envision to support more than 35 thousand Rohingya childrens by the upcoming year is a testament to the efforts of NGOs and other organizations to expand access to education within the refugee camps representing a positive short-term outcome. The success of these initiatives is evident in the satisfaction expressed by parents, who see increased school attendance and educational progress as a beacon of hope for their children's future.

> *"It is good that so many children are now going to school, it makes us feel that our children will have a better future and our children have learned to read and write, which is something we never thought possible in this situation. Children now respect their parents, are learning proper manners, and are also improving their communication skills"* ~P13 FGD2

"We do meeting at the end of each month; we talk with the teacher regarding childrens' progress and participation"~P14 FGD3

Parents' expression of pride on the progress of their children, particularly in learning to read and write provides further insights into the academic achievements of learners; this statement reflects the community's appreciation for the educational opportunities provided and the tangible outcomes that these programs have delivered. Parents have noticed positive changes in their children's behavior and attitudes, stemming from their participation in these educational programs. These observations suggest that the impact of education extends beyond academic skills to foster social and behavioral development, which is crucial for the holistic growth of children. Moreover, increased parental involvement is another positive outcome. These regular meetings between parents and teachers reflect a growing awareness and participation among parents in their children's education, ensuring that they stay engaged and that their progress is monitored. This level of involvement is vital for maintaining children's interest in education and encouraging continuous learning.

"The problem is that the child sometimes loses Educational materials, so it would be helpful if we could receive a bit more than what is usually provided." ~P15 FGD1

However, these positive outcomes coexist with significant challenges, including an overreliance on NGOs for support. Above statement reflects a dependency on excessive support rather than fostering a sense of responsibility among the children or within the household. This reliance can be traced back to the parents' own educational and socio-economic backgrounds, which play a crucial role in shaping children's character and personality. A lack of parental guidance and oversight may leave children's educational experiences unguided beyond the learning centers, undermining the role of the home as the first school for a child, at the same time it can be argued

that externally displaced individuals may that be adults even have a sense of what we call "home".

Nevertheless, this overreliance on external support and the resultant lack of personal responsibility can be understood through the "learned helplessness theory" (Seligman, 1972) which suggests that when individuals feel they have no control over their circumstances, they may become passive and overly reliant on others. In the refugee camps, parents' reliance on NGO/s to meet all their children's needs may unintentionally foster a sense of helplessness, reducing the likelihood of self-sufficiency and resilience. Addressing this issue requires empowering both parents and children to take a more active role in their development.

> *"No certifications have been given to the children yet. Although education will continue until grade 12, and we are currently at grade 11, discussions are still ongoing with the Myanmar government on how to provide certification that will be useful after repatriation. This is a policy-level issue managed by UNICEF and others, so we are not yet able to provide any certifications."* ~Quality Assurance Coordinator at Friendship.

While these programs have extended to secondary education, with offerings up to grade 12, a significant gap remains in providing recognized certification, which casts a shadow over the future prospects of these children. Without recognized certification, there remains inevitable uncertainty about the value and applicability of the education these children receive. This issue highlights the broader problem of "Credentialism" (Collins, 1979), where the value of education is closely tied to the recognition and certification it provides, which is critical for future employment and further education opportunities. Adding to these concerns is the anxiety over the sustainability of the educational programs themselves. An average fear was expressed by one parent:

"What would happen when the NGOs cease to exist? Whom shall our children be taught

by?" ~P16 FGD3.

This question encompasses the severe anxiety regarding the future, especially fears that educational advancements may be revoked upon withdrawal of external help. Heavy dependence on NGOs for education delivery means that this subject encapsulates the deep-seated anxiety about the future, particularly the fear that the educational progress made could be undone if external support is withdrawn. The continuity of these programs is susceptible to changes in funding, political will, or organization priorities. This dependence also raises a question about sustainability. Such uncertainties concerning educational development in refugee camps generally reflect a more vulnerable situation faced by refugees where long term planning is usually sacrificed at the altar of survival. This calls for an emphasis towards setting up a more permanent learning programme that transcends the presence of non-governmental organizations allowing children access education irrespective of aid withdrawal. Promoting resilience (Holling, 1973) in educational structures enables them to withstand shocks and stresses without losing what has been achieved so far with respect to Rohingyan children's future prospects.

Prospects for Rohingya children in the long run are largely dependent on how good their education is and whether it gets recognition from other people. There have been attempts to provide secondary education but there are significant problems mainly because they do not have certificates; so uncertainties still exist about whether these programs can last long. This makes it hard for these kids to go ahead with their studies or find good jobs, and they stand at risk of remaining poor without any kind of help. In addition to this factor, reliance on the Myanmar curriculum with no documents proving that graduates completed school may not help with

addressing specific concerns or aspirations that are related to schooling alone as far as these children are concerned. As confessed by Friendship NGO's Quality Assurance Coordinator;

"We need to think beyond the Myanmar curriculum and consider different kinds of initiatives that can help these children in the long run, such as vocational training and life skills programs."

Such a broader approach is essential to avoid "capability deprivation" (Sen, 1999), where individuals are denied the opportunities and freedoms necessary to lead fulfilling lives. Providing education that goes beyond basic literacy and includes practical skills and recognized certifications can enhance children's capabilities and prepare them for future livelihoods. Despite the challenges and uncertainties, there is hope that the education provided will serve as a foundation for a better future. As the NGO official hopefully said, the skills and knowledge gained through educational programs can provide children with opportunities, whether within the camps or beyond. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "social capital" (1986), which shows that education can build community resilience and hope, essential for overcoming the challenges of refugee life. Overall, although the initial results from various educational initiatives in the Rohingya refugee camps appear to be encouraging, their lasting success will depend on addressing issues related to quality and relevance of education as well as socio-economic constraints, certification problems and sustainability of educational provision. Empowerment and self-sufficiency can be achieved through such programs by building academic, social and practical skills; promoting responsibility and independence; ensuring that education is recognized and valued; establishing a resilient education system. The holistic approach discussed above is vital for changing the lives of both Rohingya children and their communities making sure that education offered in camps is not an end but rather means to greater chances and brighter future for all involved.

4.5 Application of the Theory

Resumption of an Ordinary Life in Rohingya Refugee Education

The analysis of educational experiences of Rohingya refugee children is best viewed through Ravi KS Kohli's framework of "Resumption of an Ordinary Life". Kohli (2014) established that displaced children who experience forced migration make efforts to lead normal lives again despite facing challenges to fit in the resettlement zones. At the core of this framework are three constructs of safety, belonging and success which Kohli has found to define the refugee children's' process of getting a normal life back. These conceptualizations help us analyse the ways in which Rohingya children cope with the infrastructures of education in the camps in Bangladesh. In this respect, education consequently plays a significant role in the process of resettling and providing stability as well as a sense of belonging to a community, which is essential for the children and helps restore their identities despite struggles that they may encounter.

Safety: Education as a Pillar of Stability

Kohli described safety as a fundamental concept through which children encounter trauma after being forced into migration. In a broader sense, education, particularly within the camps in Bangladesh for Rohingya children, offers not just a way for children to progress academically, or to find a new vocational future, but rather is a survival necessity in the psychological and emotional realm. There are obvious physical hardship factors such as mobile and makeshift schools which are prone to monsoons, and having poor ground to support this special facility, the establishment of education facilities gives a relief from the general dilution, and confiscation. The Friendship NGO and other such organisations help in avoiding these disruptions as they are involved in regularly repairing the destroyed infrastructure and make it possible for students to continue their

education. These structure can be seen to be instable just like the state of those structures represents the current vulnerability that is characteristic of refugee children. However, speaking of education as an anchoring element proves viable even in unstable environments: education helps children to find the reassurance of routines and get back to ordinary life, as Kohli said, safety is necessary if the ordinary life needs to be resumed.

Belonging: Fostering Identity and Social Integration

Belongingness is another important part that of Kohli's framework where refugees should also have social relations and culture attachment in new environments. In the Rohingya camps, this sense of belonging is nevertheless threatened by language and cultural factors that limit children and their performance in educational activities. The observations made at the field confirm the sentiment that lack of materials culturally appropriate and teachers who would understand the children's developmental situation only deepens the sensation of loneliness and rejection. Nevertheless, NGOs try to provide learning environments where the child may start to feel a part of the society. While not ideal, schools let the children make friends, belong to some social group, odd as it may be, and be loved in some way as opposed to just being outcast because of their refugee background. The function the KS identifies with belonging as a relational process is evidenced in these efforts whereby; education ceases to be a mere medium for learning but the reconstructive process of damaged brackets.

Success: Overcoming Barriers to Long-term Achievement

Another concept that also underpins Kohli's work is belonging – this is more or less an exploration of refugees and children constructing new social roles and cultural memberships wherever they find themselves. In the Rohingya camps, this sense of belonging is nevertheless threatened by language and cultural factors that limit children and their performance in educational activities.

The observations made at the field confirm the sentiment that lack of materials culturally appropriate and teachers who would understand the children's developmental situation only deepens the sensation of loneliness and rejection. These NGOs continue to fight for children to have opportunities to learn and start to feel like they are accepted in a bigger society. While not ideal, schools let the children make friends, belong to some social group, odd as it may be, and be loved in some way as opposed to just being outcast because of their refugee background. The function the KS identifies with belonging as a relational process is evidenced in these efforts whereby; education ceases to be a mere medium for learning but the reconstructive process of damaged brackets.

Ravi KS Kohli's Resumption of an Ordinary Life theory gives an adequate theoretical background for analysing educational difficulties and possibilities for Rohingya refugee children. Employing safety, relatedness and mastery as the key components of this theory, the current work shows how education helps restore normalcy and resilience in displaced children. The conclusions drawn from this research point to the fact that education goes far beyond being an instrument of knowledge acquisition, but its necessity in the rebuilding of human/business life. Despite the many obstacles that still exist, there are still many valuable contributions being made by NGO's with the key issues being more about limited resources and likely cultural differences for years to come, there is still hope ahead towards a normal and deserving future for these children.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the interface of NGOs in the delivery of education to challenge faced by Rohingya children is central and complex. Even with the huge effort being invested by such NGO's as the Friendship NGO to producing education to the required minimum education standards it is still an uphill task which is compounded by the following challenges logistical and linguistic barriers, cultural, financial and regulatory among others. A critical difficulty is that internet connection is generally prohibited in the camps and the introduction of these technologies into education processes. While audio classes and tablet-based lessons have been proposed, there is no connection which stifers these concepts, limits the range of subjects and reduces the frequency of active, entertaining lessons. Furthermore, continuing and consolidating the process of the curriculum's application as a style of preparation for the refugees, this can take a long time, questioning the Myanmar curriculum, its relevance, and effectiveness. Realistically, children may not get ready for the future whichever place they are heading for; they remain in the camps or elsewhere because of the unacceptability of this education besides political instabilities in Myanmar. These problems highlight the necessity for a context-appropriate and progressive educational framework that will solve the not only present, but also future needs of Rohingya children.

Therefore, this paper has shown that the Rohingya children refugees in Bangladesh face several socio-cultural, linguistic, environmental and economic challenges that make it extremely difficult for them to have any meaningful education and future success. Hills retrieved in this study included, relevance of the virtually taught curriculum to the contextual experience of the children, language, environmental factors of learning, socio-economic constraints thus dis-empowering

learners and therefore a disconnection prevails. The role of NGOs, as essential as they are, is limited by operational and funding related factors and the use of Myanmar curriculum has its sustainability question mark over the education that is offered while only the material of Myanmar curriculum is accredited but not the certification. To that end, it is essential to generate a better understanding of the way through which a more culturally appropriate and long-term educational model can be implemented that would respond to the Rohingya children's needs and equip them with the tools that they would require in the future – a future that is still very unclear for them.

5.1 Summary of the Research Findings

There are a number of other subtle differences which this research work has identified in the educational intervention towards the Rohingya crisis, especially the difficulties that have surround the provision of quality and durable education for the displaced children of Rohingya. The learning contexts of the Rohingya children who are refugees in Bangladesh has a number of socio-cultural, language, environmental and economic factors influencing the community and makes difficult for the children to learn and develop. Hence, the information derived from these children with the assistance of the sociological and anthropological concepts and theories, portrays the qualitatively and quantitatively challenges these children experience in education, the function of NGOs in children education, realizing these challenges and the future prospects of these children in view of the existing situation.

It will be recalled that socio-cultural incongruence was seen as one of the major issues affecting the Rohingya children, particularly in their learning environment, and in this case, the Myanmar curriculum is the basis for learning for Rohingya children in the camps. The idea of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) fits well here because the content is not culturally appropriate with regards to their past experiences let alone the present reality around them. Due to this depletion of

cultural capital, the group of students falls short of relating well with their education material and consequently erasing the effectiveness of the education they receive. This is made worse by the language barrier as Burmese is spoken by the teachers as well as the learners which is a language that they feel comfortable with. This also limits their understanding of the material taught in class as well as enhances their feeling of exclusion in the learning process. Education plays a very significant role where Rohingya children are concerned, especially with regards to language acquisition as it defines the future of these children. That, based on Burmese, which prepares them to return to Myanmar in the future, has both short-term and long-term problems. In the first sense, their problem with Burmese results in withdrawal and inability to follow instructions in class and this is worsened by the ban on use of Bangla in education within the camps for refugees. This restriction, despite the fact that Bangla is quite often heard in the neighboring regions, causes a form of 'linguistic separation' that does not allow the children to fully go and become a part of this reality they are in at the moment. There are also several languages being spoken in the camps such as Bangla and English which means the education process is carried out in a 'multilingual setting'. The phenomenon described by Le (2021) as 'linguistic syncretism' can be used to describe how this type of mixing of languages while helpful for sociable interactions in day-to-day life, translated into educational sphere hinders rather than assists the child as the skills in a particular language which is used in school and matches the means for academic achievement must be refined.

The possible future that these children have in view of the barriers and circumstances outlined in the study is bleak. These structural barriers, geographical, climatic, economic, and socio-cultural, restrict their access to education and thus hinders their chance at a sustainable educational and socio economic future because a vast majority of them are stateless. For example, the geographical

location of Ukhia area suggests a hilly region densely covered with vegetation and monsoon climatic region poses a significant problem of accessibility to education especially during the monitoring period when the pathways become more or less inaccessible. The fact that the education facilities are usually temporary, made of bamboo and other perishable forms do not help matters since they are susceptible to damage during harsh weather which in most cases need reconstruction after an annual wreck. This unpredictability interferes with learning processes thus causing irregular attendance that makes learners generally disengaged.

Anthropologically, the given concept is called the cultural conditioning, which helps define how the identified environmental factors result in learners' disengagement. It is also important to realize that the severe environmental conditions not only deny physical access to education but also impact on the overall state of stability of the children in the camps regarding their psychological and/or emotional states. This influences their study and learning ability, truancy and lateness to school, high dropout rate and low retention especially in secondary school learners. There are high dropout rates for Rohingya girls for instance, only 5% of girls aged 15-18 being in school as compared to boys who are 24% (IRC, 2024). This gender disparity is therefore a result of socio-cultural factors that encourage early marriage and child bearing among girls and poor healthcare services that denies girls education and propound "structural violence" (Galtung, 1969). The future of such children is worse off by these socio-economic challenges they get exposed to more so the pressure of having to contribute to the family's income. The economic crises within the camps compel the children, especially the boys, to make a move to look for jobs and this will hinder them from having their education. This is evident by the phenomenon referred to as the 'poverty trap', whereby, basic needs of the family dominate over education necessities hence these children will remain poor and will have poorer opportunities for the rest of their lives. Denial of quality and

timely education not only inhibits their education but also hinders their chance of social mobility for economic betterment thus being locked in a cycle of poverty.

5.2 Recommendations

Considering the findings and analysis of this research, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges faced by Rohingya refugee children in accessing quality education in Bangladesh. These recommendations are designed to be practical, aligned with the research objectives, and supported by secondary data.

The proposed recommendations therefore are to develop a hybrid curriculum or educational system with elements from Myanmar curriculum and immediately capitalizable skills as well as Rohingya children culture for example cultural crafts and art work done by children/ learners and sold or bartered in exchange for donations for exhibition in order to gear them towards self-reliance. This approach will ensure readiness of children in case they are repatriated to Myanmar besides availing all round preparation as they undergo their daily experiences. As stated by UNICEF (2023), in any culture the education improves student's participation and result level, and keeping with Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2024) Minimum Standards for Education, context specific curriculum anxiety is underlined. The development of curriculum would involve formation of a committee with the Rohingya teachers, generic Myanmar educationists and painters, defining core competencies, and incorporation of Rohingya history and culture. In addition, the use of arts teaching activity, according to the International Rescue Committee (2023) has the potential of enhancing mental health among refugees and social integration in camps. This would extend to the elaboration of an appropriate curriculum that would include art therapy at least once a week and sporting activities to promote self-esteem among the

students; training of specialized teachers from the Rohingya origin; and inter-camp events that would foster togetherness.

Further on, the use of flexible learning pathways will enable the students to advance through their programs at their own rate and as their pace, abilities and the circumstances will allow. Such pathways contribute to the achievement of education for the marginalized and enhancement of learning accomplishments (UNESCO & Wang, 2023). This entails the production of learning packages that are adapted to modular systems, adoption of a progression system that addresses competency, and offering of interfaces for learners who have large gaps in their learning cycles. Finally, advocacy for protective measures is necessary to ensure the recognition of the provided education and retention of Rohingya children in the educational programs. The recognition of refugee education can increase access to higher education and employment opportunities by up to 60% (Berg, 2023). Establishing an accreditation system, developing standardized digital credential systems that shall be under UNICEF being an UN body must be able to give it global standing in today's globalized world not considering refugees anywhere as someone else's' problem. Moreover, there must be continuous sessions and dialogue with community heads to reduce the gender disparities in the educational provision, while taking them onboard is necessary at the same time encouraging them to take an interpretation of the religious texts that is gender-sensitive and respectful, avoiding patriarchal bias and ensuring fairness and leniency towards women and girls is equally important. Additionally, promoting inclusive education policies is crucial, UNICEF, UNESCO and Global Partnership for Education continuously advocate for such inclusive policies that can increase school enrollment and retention rates for marginalized groups. This involves conducting comprehensive policy reviews, developing recommendations in collaboration with

Rohingya community leaders, and engaging in targeted advocacy campaigns with key decision-makers.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The following are the limitations that I have faced in completing this thesis and which has also limited its ability to cover the entire sector as well as exhaustiveness in data collection. The addictiveness that is intrinsic to qualitative research enabled me to modify my methods and still collect thick, substantial data. It allowed a multi-pronged research strategy involving remote key informant interview, secondary data collection, as well as FGDs mediated by Friendship NGO employees. The lingering question I ask myself is, "What would have happened had I done the fieldwork?" This makes me think about how my thesis could have changed. If I did fieldwork I would have had first-hand insight through direct observation which would have given me richer data on nonverbal cues and nuances in everyday interactions. Conducting fieldwork could have deepened the ethnographic texture of my work; however, it might have also introduced other challenges like personal safety issues or increased subjectivity. Thus, lack of direct observational study creates a gap rather than making it less valid – simply changing methodology and depth. Thus, the inclusion of fieldwork could have enhanced the anthropological framing for my analysis but that did not stop remote methods from generating enough data and insights to give it meaning. The major limitation was that I could not visit Refugee Camps due to some concerns about safety measures to be taken.

Hence, dependence on secondary data and sources and use of long-distance interviews contributed to limited contact with the researcher or other participants thus limiting the contacts with Rohingya children which are rich in first-hand impressions. Apart from this, the problems in accessing the internet or some political instability in Bangladesh has created immense problems in

communication or even scheduling interviews in totality. While conducting FGDs with the help of Friendship NGO, a good number of insights were gained; however, there could be some biases due to the lack of direct contact with respondents. Also, the Fieldwork conductor had little knowledge on the research goals and objectives. After listening to the audio recording of the interviews, I could sense the lack of knowledge in the given research, they couldn't ask follow up questions and even they were not letting the participant answer the questions on their own. It is recommended that such limitations should be addressed when there is a chance to gain access to these areas with the help of participation in peace-keeping activities and use of other types of approaches to data collection like, for instance, participatory observation.

5.4 Further Research

However, this study seeks to open new avenues and perspectives to understand the main educational issues related to Rohingya children who are refugees in Bangladesh which constitutes a basis for further research in the following areas. Other future research may evaluate how or whether education, or the suppression of, can affect pro-social behavioural development, personal identity and mental health of Rohingya children as they grow and become adults. Looking at the impact of the current education system on the experiences of the camps, research on how the camp experiences shape their future prospective, vocational choice and belonging either within or outside the institution would be useful knowledge.

Nevertheless, the presented work may be continued and extended to cover a wider number of NGOs apart from Friendship; the use of comparative research can be employed. This, would assist in distilling standards for effectiveness and determining whether or not the range of intervention models currently employed meet, or fail to meet the educational needs of Rohingya children appropriately. Further, some thoughts on how more refined coordination between the international

organizations, national governments, and local non-governmental organizations might enhance the results for the refugees could also be applied to gain a wider view of the issue. Besides, because there are still existing political and social issues in Myanmar and Bangladesh, the future research may investigate how the opportunities for repatriation and resettlement would influence educational prospect and children's expectation of them within the camps. Whether or not these educational programs envisage a future displacement or return to Myanmar and how they do so or do not do so are important for imposing the strengths of the curricula.

Last, research could be done on gender differences, particularly girls in the camps because they more restricted in going to school than boys by cultural, social and economic factors. Possible research directions for future studies Relating gender and access to education as well as gender and learning achievement might help identify ways to reach all Rohingya children with more timely, appropriate interventions. Specify, these areas of further research will be imperative to developing a foundation for feasible long-term solutions for enhancing this susceptible group's quality of life.

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire (Focus Groups)

The following is a list of questions that were asked during the focus group discussion and key person interviews were semi structured and the following is a breakdown of list of questions which have been raised to most parties to the two categories of informants

- As a starting point, may each of you briefly introduce yourself along with a little information about your background?

- What are the greatest barriers your children encounter in getting education?

- What role does language and culture play in their learning process?

- In what manner does one's geographical location in relation to schools influence their attendance and participation?

- Is there any particular period that you find your children cannot attend school as often as required? If so, why?

- In your own perspective, how will you assess or explain the kind of education your children attain in the camps?

- Do you require additional educational resources (books, supplies, etc.) for your children?

- How much are you and other community members concerned with the education of your children?

- Does your child have a chance to discuss his/her achievement with teachers and other officials of the school?

- Are children of different genders subjected to different hindrances as they seek education? If so, what are they?

- In some cases, may there be some cultural or social restrictions that limit girls' education to their current level?

- What personal ambitions do you have concerning your children's future education and employment?

- Honestly, would the current education system prepare your children for the opportunity that is ahead of them?

- In your opinion what more should be done to enhance education for your children?

Questionnaire (Key Informant Interview)

- Could you briefly explain your position and your organisation's actions connected with the Rohingya refugee issue?

- What do you think caused your organization to address the problem of education for Rohingya children?

- What are the main barriers to education among Rohingya children?

- What role does culture and/or language play in the education of Rohingya children?

- Are there any gender type difference regarding access and participation in education?

- What school-based programmes and interventions does your organization has made for the education of the Rohingya children?

- How can you evaluate the effectiveness of these educational programs?

- What strategies do you use to address the learning needs of children affected by Rohingya their crises?

Let me know your views; what more or what kind of help would improve the educational options for the Rohingya children?

APPENDIX 2

Consent Form

Title of Study: Access to Education for Rohingya Refugee Children in Bangladesh

Introduction

My name is Ahmed Khan, I am a Pakistani student, and I am conducting research as part of my degree of Bachelor of social sciences in Anthropology at BRAC University Bangladesh.

Interview Method

The interview will be held online on Zoom and the data obtained will be used exclusively for academic purposes.

Confidentiality

All sorts of electronic information shall be encoded and secured in a file that will only be accessible by the student through a password. All research records will be kept in a secured computer with a password. An individual's privacy will be secured in the sense that there will not be a single trace directing one back to the study.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

First of all, you have the right to withdraw from the research at any single moment and on this case, you won't have obligations. Additionally, you have the right to refuse to answer any given question and to remove yourself from the research process at any time during the process.

Right to question and make complaint

The participants are encouraged to ask me any questions regarding this research project at any time before, during, or even after the research is done.

Thanks for your time and contribution too!