



Capacity strengthening | Material support

Self-protection outside community protection structures | Social cohesion

📍 Bangladesh

## Options to choose from

### Supporting refugees with a market-based approach

By Sayedul Hoque Shuvo, Senior Protection Officer at Oxfam



Rohingya women receiving monsoon-preparedness kit through Oxfam voucher programme in Camp 22, September 2019. Photo by Sayedul Houque Shuvo, Senior Protection Officer.

Tayoba,<sup>1</sup> a Rohingya refugee woman who arrived in Teknaf in Cox's Bazar district in August 2017 together with her husband and two children, is benefiting from Oxfam's market-based protection programme. She received 10 vouchers for her household, which gave her access to a three-day fair where she could trade the vouchers. Based on protection monitoring and extensive consultations with Rohingya communities living in one of the camps in Teknaf, Oxfam decided to provide 4,600 households with non-food items that would reduce their exposure to protection risks and increase their mobility. Protection risks linked to the lack of lighting, especially for women and girls, are well-documented and the risks are reported by both host and refugee communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Name has been changed to protect the person's identity.

Tayoba chose to exchange her voucher for three umbrellas, gumboots for her children, a document zipper bag, food container and a solar-powered torch:

- One umbrella is for her husband, one is for her son who goes to school, and one is for her to use while collecting water;
- the plastic zipper bag is to keep family identification documents, food cards and other important documents safe, which is essential especially during the monsoon season;
- the torch is to help Tayoba access latrines, collect water and continue household chores at night. Water sources are overcrowded so she has to wait in line for a long time, which means it is often dark by the time she gets access.

The local vendors who served her explained how many items she could purchase with her voucher. She found it hard to prioritize her purchases, as everyone in her family is in need. Nonetheless, she said she is grateful to Oxfam for this market-based voucher programme.

Building on the Global Compact on Refugees' recommendation to ease the burden on host communities,<sup>2</sup> instead of directly distributing in-kind non-food items, Oxfam made an agreement with local vendors in Teknaf, and supported them in procuring the amount and range of goods required from larger suppliers in Chittagong and Dhaka. While refugees and host community members ultimately receive non-food items that mitigate protection risks, local vendors and markets also directly benefit from this market-based approach, and social cohesion between host and refugee communities is indirectly fostered.

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<sup>2</sup> See United Nations, *Global Compact on Refugees*, 2018, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/5c658aed4.pdf> (accessed in November 2020).