

Improving nutrition and environment in the Rohingya Camps with Vegetable Gardening

Context and project overview



The majority of Rohingya that reached Bangladesh after the violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017, made a living from agriculture. In Bangladesh, they are living in camps and have neither access to agricultural land nor are they allowed to work on the land of the host community. Even though some Rohingya still manage to illegally work outside the camps, the majority of Rohingya are fully dependent on food relief from the international community to ensure basic food intakes.

The drone image of a typical camp setting shows that except for some small patches of open space on steep slopes there is hardly any scope to establish gardens inside the camp. However, to allow every Rohingya family still to cultivate some vegetables, HEKS/EPER promotes the cultivation of climbing vegetables, by making use of the roof space.

Vegetable Production in the camp

To cultivate vegetables on the roof only a small pit is required next to the shelter from where climbing vegetables can grow up and cover the 15-20m² roofs fully with leaves. HEKS promotes mainly Cucurbitaceae like bottle gourds or pumpkins as also the leaves can be eaten which increases the overall production and allows consumption for a long period.

The soils in the camps are characterized by low organic matter and low fertility, hence, to achieve an adequate harvest, fertilizer must be applied. HEKS/EPER cooperates with the Swiss Red Cross and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society that operates a waste management project in a Rohingya camp and produces compost from organic waste. HEKS/EPER distributes this compost along with the seeds and some other agricultural inputs in all three horticulture seasons. Before each season the Rohingya receive a short training, which allows them to adapt their agricultural knowledge from their rural villages in Myanmar to the conditions in the camps in Bangladesh.





Project objectives

This project serves multiple purposes. It allows Rohingya to diversify their food intake by consuming more vegetables. As the vegetables grow on the roofs, the temperatures inside the Shelters significantly decrease and improve the people's thermal comfort. Finally allows the Rohingya to engage in some forms of Agriculture, hence something they were used to do back home in Myanmar. In an environment where Rohingya are fully dependent on external support, producing vegetables on their own is a small contribution to people's dignity.



Target groups

33'000 Rohingya Refugees (7'000 households) living in camps 14, 15, and 16.

The project is supported by



Country: Bangladesh

Project Duration: 01-12.2021

HEKS/EPER No.: 610.439

Budget: 200'000 USD

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Factsheet Vegetable Gardening

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