



JSSE

[Journal of  
Social  
Science  
Education](#)

2021, Vol. 20(2) 103-129

Edited by:  
Mehmet Açıklan, Olga  
Bombardelli, Gina  
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Article

## Preparedness for education to Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh - potentials and challenges to citizenship education

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**Keywords:** Education, citizenship, Rohingya refugee, children, Bangladesh

- Identify the existing opportunities and challenges for the education of refugee children
- Citizenship and civic education of refugee children is seen as an asset to reduce inequality for their future livelihoods
- What significant initiatives were launched to support refugee children in developing key competence
- Explores how to respond more creatively and collaboratively to support the refugee children education in this critical situation
- How governmental and non-governmental organizations are willing to support their education process

**Purpose:** The number of Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh is more than fifty percent who are out of formal education since the persecution and the mass atrocities which started in 2017 by the Myanmar government in Rakhine. They need education as their rights and means of future livelihoods that can contribute to both the refugee and host society in the future. Thus, perceptions into formal education can help refugee children to reduce inequality in general and build capacity from a socio-economic and moral perspective.

**Methodology:** The article endeavors to document the existing pros and cons of Rohingya refugee children's education in Bangladesh. Therefore, the study offers insights examining the existing framework of education for citizenship and civic education of refugee children as well as the opportunities in the future in terms of quality, quantity, and level of education. In direction to investigate the education process in the context of refugee children the study primarily based on secondary sources of data to grasp the conclusion.

**Findings:** The results indicate that limited initiative has been taken by the host country and other supporting regional and global non-state actors for Rohingya refugee children. However, the number of education centers need to increase immediately as many more children are out of formal education. In addition, it is crucial to start a junior schooling system for teenagers as well as recruit trained and efficient teachers with a structured curriculum. Furthermore, the government of Bangladesh is adamant to open a formal education system, though the international partners are continuously urging for it which is also

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crucial for education and citizenship education with a well-structured curriculum.

The teachers and students need additional support in terms of training and motivation to keep the process ongoing which is found more challenging for both of them while the host country's schooling shutdown since March 2020.

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#### **L**

**Limitations:** Findings of this study on refugee children's education in Bangladesh cannot be generalized to another context.

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**Suggested citation:**

Hossain, A.N.M. (2021): *Preparedness for education to Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh - potentials and challenges to citizenship education*. Journal of Social Science Education 20 (2). <https://doi.org/10.11576/jsse-3980>

Declaration of Conflicts of Interests: none

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline. - Kofi Annan

The figure of refugee<sup>1</sup> and displaced people has increased in numbers all over the world that history never witnessed. According to the current report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR), the amount of forcibly displaced persons is 79.5 million, where 26 million refugees, 45.7 internally displaced people, 4.2 asylum seekers as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations at end-2019. Among them only 25.9 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate (UNHCR, 2020). As of 2019, more than two-thirds of the world's refugees are from just five countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia. According to the UNHCR, Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees 3.7 million, Pakistan 1.4 million, 1.2 Uganda, Germany 1.06 million while the fourth largest number of refugee by country of origin persisted steadily at 1.1 million from Myanmar and Bangladesh continued to host a large population of 906,600 refugees at the end of 2018, almost entirely from Myanmar. More than half of these populations of Rohingya refugees are children.

This generation is the greatest reversal in education probably in human history. In that way, it is inevitable to argue about the conditions for the conflict and violence but for those millions of children, who have fled the country and are living in the neighboring country most of whom were in school. The international community has to do something different for those children. The future of any society depends on its youth and investment in the children. When conflict erupts the path to their education is often blocked. This is true for the refugee children from Syria to South Sudan and Yemen to Myanmar. Thousands of refugee children are in their perilous journey, once they reach safety guiding them back to the classroom is essential. It gives them a safe place to learn and to play. Without education, they are especially vulnerable and easy targets for sexual violence, exploitation, trafficking, forced recruitment, or extremist doctrines. Whether in camps or cities school offers these eager learners a lifeline through citizenship and civic education that equip them with the skills and confidence to actively contribute to their communities and societies. The role school, in citizenship education, plays in a refugee child's life can be transformative. It is the one asset that they will take with them wherever they go when we invest in education who invest in the future. Millions of refugee youth deserve an opportunity to enrich their minds to expand their horizons and to help their communities improve and grow.

Development citizenship entails formal and non-formal educational activities where social inclusion and solidarity of youth is the main intention of strengthening active citizenship (EU Youth Strategy, 2010-18). It is essential for active participation and mutual understanding to encourage active citizenship through 'participation in civil society and representative democracy' and 'volunteering as a vehicle for social inclusion

and citizenship' (EURYDICE, 2012). A well-known Tibetan Proverb said "a child without education is like a bird without wings", while Nelson Mandela considered "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Citizenship education "refers to aspects of education at the school level that prepares students to become active citizens by ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to contribute to the development and well-being of the society in which they live" (EURYDICE, 2012).

Education matters to the young people around the world facing the trauma of displacement. Refugee children in the world registered to the United Nations refugee agency of those children sixty percent are out of school. This amount of dropped children from school is the destruction of human potential on an unimaginable scale. These children have a right to expect something better from us and that we should make universal education for refugees one of our overarching and most pressing of all development priorities. Rohingya refugee children altogether about five hundred thousand are out of school now.

The refugee is living below the poverty line and this driving the children into labor markets in parts of the world. They are out and working that's a function of poverty and the fact that they are the savings of their parents are being eroded. This is a tragedy for many reasons. Every kid everywhere the world deserves the opportunity of decent quality education but these children doubly deserve it now because firstly, these are children who have been traumatized and witnessed appalling stuff, they have been subject to the murderous activities of Burmese armed militias in Rakhine. *Secondly*, these children have got a tough ticket in life, they need a chance to build the skills and confidence that they will need as adolescents and adults to build a better life for themselves to contribute either to the host country or back in their home country where the school can provide a bit of decent counseling in a school-based environment for citizenship education can be the first step to rebuilding their lives.

Citizenship education is crucial for refugee children to develop knowledge and skills to understand their roles and positions within the society where they belong. It creates impact and drives them to analyze the prevailing structure and procedures to equip them to respond to the community and refugees' needs. In the context of Rohingya refugees, upgrading the concentration in citizenship education revitalizes and re-articulates the notion of citizenship to its broader terms which will lead to altering and eventually results in citizenship education. It will elevate knowledge and understanding of their communal structural change, personify the notable foundation to smooth development of diverse citizenship identities and represent a stimulus for citizens' (refugees) engagement in universal and multilateral society (Neubaur, 2012). This is significant for the Rohingya refugees to further develop their refugee status or citizenship outside of Bangladesh. Citizenship and civic education are imperative to the Rohingya refugee children to build and grow their civic sense, attitudes, perception, and actions in their refugee camps, crucial for their resettlement or repatriation. As

Rohingya refugees are excluded from Myanmar and lost their citizenship, the study calls for a broad understanding of the concept that guides the expansion of citizenship education in refugee camps which is comprehensive, radical, action-oriented, and participative.

The study aimed at how countries can respond more creatively and collaboratively to the challenge of supporting refugee children and young people in their education as well as education for citizenship. Although the scale of the challenge is very real and there is an opportunity to change the public narrative around global migration. It is widely known as the refugee crisis by highlighting the many ways in which organizations and individuals worldwide are stepping up with solutions and support and working with one another to create lasting change. The current study made the instance for this repository and circumstance for more interconnected responses to Rohingya refugee children's education across refugee camps and education for citizenship.

## 2 METHODS

The research was conducted on Rohingya refugee children education in Bangladesh, who constitute more than half of the total population of Rohingya. About one million Rohingya refugees fled Bangladesh after the military crackdown in 2017. These populations are solely inhabited in Cox's Bazar district of the southern part of Bangladesh.

This study is based on secondary sources of data. I gathered data from different sources. The Rohingya constituted an ethnoreligious minority in Rakhine of Myanmar. The Rohingya population was in conflict and violations in several decades and the issue is common in politics, population science, human rights, and other allied social and basic sciences. To gather relevant data a systematic approach was followed (Jession, Matheson, and Lacey, 2011), and data collected by using Google, Google Scholar, Pubmed, ResearchGate, ProQuest, Mendeley, Web of Science. The key words included the common terms related to the subject: Rohingya refugee, refugee education and citizenship education, refugee education in Bangladesh, citizenship, education. The study included research articles, reports of governmental and non-governmental organizations published in the English language and excluded the redundant studies where the full text was unavailable. The identified records were exported into Mendeley™ where the duplicate articles were erased. Then, for inclusion in the full-text screening for the article the titles and abstracts were screened for eligibility. All relevant articles were reviewed by titles and potential citations to assess the suitability of the study. I assessed the full text of the relevant articles, reports, and extracted the relevant data from all suitable research on the location of the research study, existence, and explanation of the keywords of interest. All reference lists of the identified articles, reports of a refugee children context were selected.

The unit of textual analysis of this study was Rohingya refugee and refugee children. Further, I included teaching staff, NGOs working on education, and agents of donor agencies and government organizations. I deliberately selected these to garner pertinent and authenticated investigations on the existing education system and prospects for refugee children.

This research included the teachers and other related agencies as I aimed to explore the relationship among the agencies to support the refugee children's education in Rohingya refugee camps. I tried to collect information related to the practical experiences of refugee children from different secondary sources to identify the pros and cons of the existing education system for them. Non-children were also an important unit of analysis for the study as the COVID-19 pandemic jeopardized the existing education system for both the refugee and host society. In addition, I intended to discover what they were planning to improve the education system for the refugee in the coming days. Also, I tried to explore the innovative measures that had been taken for the education of refugee children in this pandemic. Thus I comprised all of them to obtain rich and extensive data and to make my arguments nuanced and authentic. It also imposed to improve the validity of the data gleaned from different sources to reach the inferences.

I selected the literature for review under the following criteria:

1. the population of the study included explicitly Rohingya refugee children;
2. only the full-text reports, articles, and web sites in English were accessible;
3. the research article was a primary study, a review, or reports from government and internal organizations;
4. both the studies that used primary data and/or secondary data were used for analysis;
5. the outcome investigated were refugee children and education related outcomes.

The study was designed to extend the array and scope to explain the nature and extent of the available literature scrutinizing the features of refugee children's education and their crises in the light of citizenship and civic education. The study endeavored to spotlight the cruxes which are crucial for developing citizenship education for refugee children to make effective citizenship and civic sense through education for resettlement or integration in the future. However, great expectations are anticipated for the refugee crisis management by identifying the pros and cons of children's education for citizenship and civic education in refugee camps which are documented and acknowledged in this review. Where all crucial issues related to the contemporary Rohingya refugee children's education and education for citizenship and civic were discussed.

### 3 DEMOGRAPHY OF ROHINGYA REFUGEE AND REFUGEE CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH

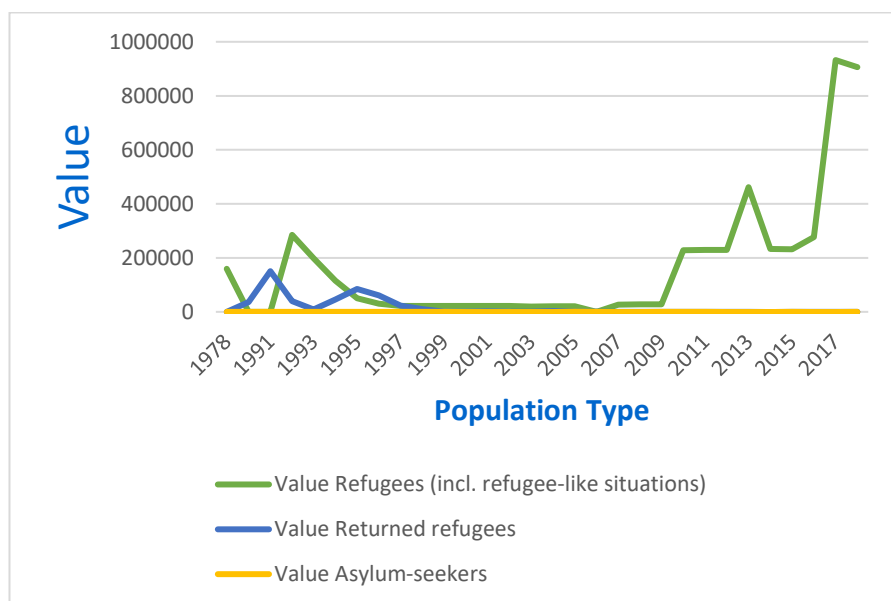
The Rohingya refugee is the largest displaced people in south-east Asia. “This was not the first—nor likely to be the last—catastrophe to fall upon the Rohingya, but it has been the most devastating since anti-Rohingya violence in the country began escalating in the early 1990s.” (Fair, 2018). In addition, it was a place of anxiety for fifty years with prolongs civil war and pre-democracy struggles under the military (Aung, 2016). This emergent body of literature dealing with the creation of refugees through forced removal, particularly wherever this occurrence slides into ethnic cleansing and the concern to the studies on genocide (Stone, 2018; Bessel and Claudia, 2009; Siddiqui, 2018 ). It is also favorable, while increasingly furnishing, to the operational architecture of the international non-state actors from aid to coordinate their humanitarian development actions to classify the international laws that secure the rights of the refugees (Gemie et al, 2012; Cohen, 1949). So these all ultimately concentrating on the embryonic field of *refugee*—that comprises both the experiences of refugees from composition to migration and the responses from aid agencies and different non-state actors including host country to exemplify their experiences, not just like a persecuted and rescue seekers (Castles, 2012; Benezet, 2015; Kushner, 2006; Kushner, 2017; Gatrell, 2013). The government of Myanmar exercised the power against Rohingya as “*a semi-organized social movement with clear political goals*” where the instance is palpable (Van Klinken, 2017; Hossain, 2020a).

The political landscape of Myanmar was founded by the British colonial power with a fragile architectural base that used different ethnic groups against them to cemented their rule. Rohingya people were used by the British during their regime in Myanmar against other minority groups to pave their rule over there. However, after the independence in 1948, these Rohingya people were dominated by the government and continuously excluded from the uniqueness of the mainland of Myanmar for more than a hundred years (Ahsan, 2016; Kipgen, 2016). This happened because the colonizing nations affected the history of political ideologies and policies, in general, to set up the common social and economic policies of colonized nations (Johnson, 1967). Rohingya Muslim minority suffered a lot from other minor groups after the retention of jingoistic factions and establishment of “disciplined democracy” by the armed dictators as they asserted it as an effort to re-establish the order in increasing political chaos (Taylor, 2006).

Nowadays *refugee crisis*, from its genesis, demands interdependent, more collaborative, and nation-transcending initiatives because the history of a refugee is not just of their movement from one to another place but urge to understanding the past of refugees and their significance (Gatrell, 2013 ). In other words “*it is very much focused on security and border control, citizenship and statelessness, national identity...the role of NGOs and international organizations such as UNHCR in aiding refugees, creating and*

*maintaining camps, and resettling refugees”* (Gatrell, 2013 ). Rohingya people start coming into Bangladesh at the very beginning when Bangladesh come into being after the liberation in the year 1971. However, the flow was very low at that time but in 1991, about three hundred thousand people entered Bangladesh as refugees however, the refugees, at that time, usually get back to their homes that stopped in 1999.

**Figure 1. Trends of Rohingya refugees flows in Bangladesh (UNFPA, December 2019)**



Currently, the Rohingya refugee is in the world’s most densely refugee camps in Bangladesh and enduring hardship for livelihood. The international community failed to convince the Myanmar authority to create favorable conditions to enable the voluntary return of Rohingya refugees to their home and the international community again remains paralyzed for them. While the great powers in Asia are playing their role as Bertil Litner precisely pointed out “The Great Game of East- referencing the strategic competition between India and China in Southeast Asia” (Linter, 2015; Fair, 2018; Murshid, 2018).

### 3.1 Demography of Rohingya Refugee in Bangladesh

The Rohingya started to flee from Myanmar to Bangladesh in 1978 after a few years of liberation of Bangladesh. However, it was about three hundreds thousands people who fled to Bangladesh in the last decade of the twentieth century but this figure has been changed due to many socio-political reasons of Myanmar’s domestic politics and civil war. Political unrest in Rakhine again reveals more than seven hundred thousands refugee and they fled to Bangladesh again in 2017 and later when the military crackdown started at Rakhine Myanmar. In general, it is widely known that women and children are the most vulnerable group in war and conflict. It is clearly shown in Table 1



that fifty two percent of Rohingya refugees are women while fifty one percent of the total population are children. Among all of them, about fifty percent are adults. The serious part of this population is the vast majority is children who need food, education, and health with other basic opportunities for their future which is inadequate and somehow absent for them.

**Table 1. Gender Distribution of Rohingya Refugee Based on Age**

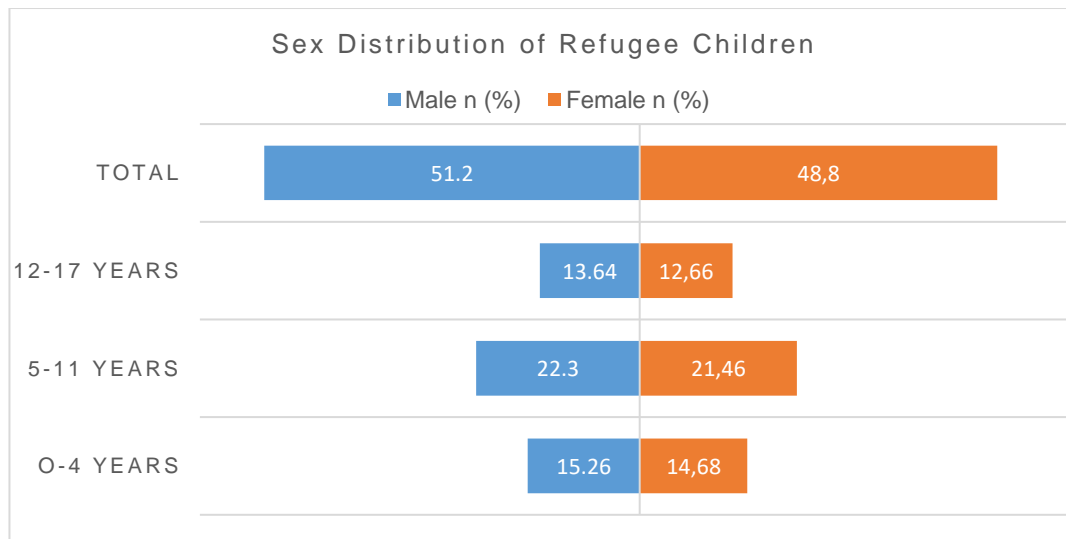
Age Group	Male	Female	Total	
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	
Infant-4 years	8	7	15	Total Children
5-11 years	11	11	22	51
12-17 years	7	7	14	
18-59	20	25	45	Total adult
60+	2	2	4	49
Total	48	52	100	

Source: UNHCR, 2020c

### 3.2 Demography of Rohingya Refugee Children

Just more than half of the Rohingya population consists of children (Table 1). Among all children, about seventy percent of children are adolescent (Figure 2) who needs care because they are suffering from stress and trauma. It is true for these children and adolescents that they are traumatized, mourning, living below poverty, and in a broken family (Figure 3) with cultural shocks. However the infant also needs an immunization, vitamin capsule and other basic health facilities for mothers and caregivers. The children who were seriously harmed by this distress voyage required special support as they can develop by learning and create the possibility of integration or repatriation in the future (UNESCO, 2005). The mental health of these children is seriously jeopardized through the incidence of their past life which needs to be addressed properly and need intervention. However, few NGOs are providing the facility to children with the cooperation of international organizations but further improvement is urgent for the children as a whole.

**Figure 2. Gender Based Age Distribution of Rohingya Refugee Children in Bangladesh**

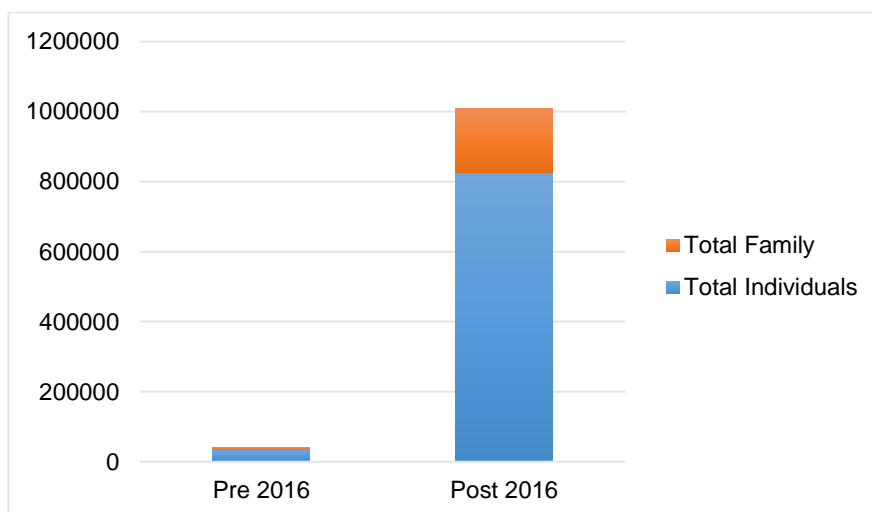


Source: UNHCR, 2020c

### 3.3 Family and Individuals of Rohingya Refugee

The family itself an institution where a child starts his/her socialization and civilization process. Refugee people are on a journey where life and living remain uncertain until peaceful resettlement, integration, or repatriation where they can start a decent life. Most of the Rohingya refugees crossed the border during the military crackdown at Rakhine in 2017, the highest numbers of refugee came from Myanmar at this time who joined the predated and become in total 910,357 (UNHCR-WFP, 2019).

**Figure 3. Refugee Population Pre and Post- 2016**



Source: UNHCR, 2020c

The doctrines of national unity demonstrated by control over power, common language, culture, and religion are essential to the self-identification of states, inclined to express themselves in fanatical attitudes, and repression of those who were perceived as ‘others’. The Rohingya minority is the real example of Myanmar who was dominated, oppressed, and excluded from the center of the benefits of power and prospects.

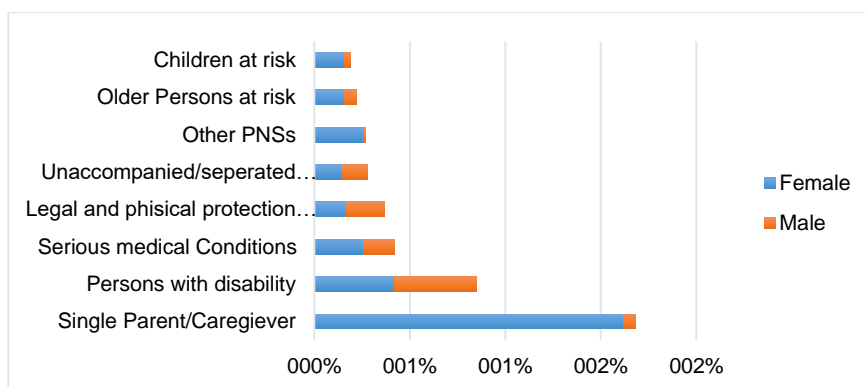
**Table 3. Distribution of family size in Rohingya refugee camp**

Family Size (Members)	Percentage	Average Family Size
1-3	33	4.6
4-5	34	
6-7	21	
8-9	10	
10+	2	

Source: UNHCR, 2020c

Refugees have been given an individual (Ministry of Home Affairs) MOHA card. But the main fault line of this registration is the missing link between the individuals with their other family members which was pivotal for house-hold assistance among the refugees. Though with the cooperation of leading non-state actors (i.e., UNHCR, EU) these problems are minimized. A significant achievement in 2019 was the biometric registration of Rohingya refugees who were aged 12 or more and given an identity card. This secures their identities, enhances their protection, and lays the foundations for an even more targeted, effective, and efficient humanitarian response going forward. This is the biggest biometric registration exercise undertaken by UNHCR in Asia (UNHCR, 2020b). The average size of family four-to-five persons which was the highest percentage of family size in refugee camps, while thirty three percent family had one-to- three members. Among all the refugee people ten percent of families had eight to nine member and only two percent had more than ten members in their family (Table 3).

**Figure 4. Specific Needs of Rohingya Refugee Individuals**



Source: UNHCR, 2020c


The vast majority of the refugee has their specific vulnerabilities where 4.3 percent of the total population identified with at least one specific vulnerability (UNHCR, 2020c). Among all refugees, 1.62 percent of females were single parents or caregivers while only 0.06 percent of the male were single parents or caregivers (Figure 4). It is also found that 0.42 percent of females and 0.43 percent of males are disabled and many are serious medical conditions. Some of them need legal and physical protection while few were unaccompanied children and few at risk (Figure 4).

#### **4 CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

Social equity and cohesion is a political priority at the local and global level. Education is identified as a key lever to involve children and young people in social and political life. Primary schooling for children enhances and offers better chances for their future (Eichler, 2019). Active citizenship promotion got importance in policy documents and recognized as a distinctive goal for education systems which yields development cooperation in several parts of the world. School education can help to expand the social and civic competences, concerning knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This approach demands a new method of teaching and learning in a number of subject areas including citizenship education. Citizenship itself a transdisciplinary approach however this is rarely used in the context of education (Marej, 2020; Schaller, 2004). An extensive spotlight on practical skills, learning outcomes and assessment requires skilled and competent teaching staff for successful implementation of key competences. While there are numbers of greater opportunities, it is crucial for the students to participate actively- i.e., activities in school, youth group activity, cultural events, and civil society organizations (European Commission, 2009b). It is necessary to measure the progress of implementation of key competence through the new method of assessment for developing skills and changing attitudes which require numerous significant initiatives to support refugee children in developing key competences.

Solem (2017) considered citizenship education configures a variety of individuals into a 'community with shared values and shared identity.' Besides, refugees within a camp can shape to visualize a citizenry where education plays a vital role in building a community and holding shared identity and respect to others. As a result, community building is the first building block for refugees' citizenship during their distress voyage. They are confined in a camp for peace and not recognized as citizens of their country of origin and host society. With the cooperation of international humanitarian organizations, the government should identify a suitable path for building community among them. Solem (2017) and Keating (2016) have seen education as synonymous with citizenship education to refugees in the refugee camps for peace while it intends to develop skills, dispute-free crisis management, and cross-cultural communication.

**Table 4. Dimensions of citizenship education prototype: strategy and practice**

Required Competences/Skills	Political Education; Critical Analysis; Dispute-free crisis management; Shared dialogue and communication Analytical interaction.
	
Required Values	Respect to universal human rights and democracy; Equity and tolerance; Harmony and interrelation; Stand for the significance of community engagement.

Modified by author from Keating (2016)

In addition, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) claimed that citizenship education inspired the students to be a following category of citizen -‘responsible, participatory and justice oriented,’ which is crucial for maintaining peace, stability, and security in the refugee camps for further resettlement or migration. In sum, Keating's (2016) definition and Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004) classification of citizenship education focus on educating refugee students to build consciousness on ‘political, social and economic system’ for furnishing the skills to develop peace and managing crisis (Solem, 2017). It also helps the children to be conscious of their rights and protection.

#### 4.1 Curriculum for the Citizenship Education

Every human society requires a specific manner for the children to making sense of their experiences about the world around and needs some ‘set of norms, knowledge, and skills (Egan, 1978)’ for their continuity. The curriculum is imperative for early childhood education. It helps the teachers to travel and create interest in their students and to focus the pathway through which children can transfer the acquired knowledge. Education and training are two sides of the curriculum which take into consideration the socio-political and economic needs of the society. It incorporates the means to develop skills and scholarship to the contents for general understanding that helps to identify the interconnections for alternate prospects (Paige & Lloyd, 2016) that compatible with socio-cultural and economic factors for future sustainability (Pauw et al., 2015). The question concerning their curriculum of education for Rohingya refugee children is very crucial and has significant implications for their future life however it is not questioned in general during the initiation of the curriculum in any society. Typically it enshrined with traditions, rituals, and immemorial practices however there are no boundaries but for children it a concern. The objectives of the curriculum of refugee children developed by this community who has a systematic value and philosophy of perceptions about them. The scholars' responsibility in this sector is to translate these objectives into

specific behavioral objectives that can lead to a better life in the future (Sikkema, 1958). Because curriculum works as a ‘narratable pathway towards the formation of identity’ (Goodson & Deakin Crick, 2009) which is appreciated, endorsed, and signified. There are four essential aspects (i.e., elaborate, implement, apply, and evaluate) for a curriculum to strengthen the teaching and learning process if we wish to carry out reasonably. Missing any of these components reduces the relevance for satisfactory learning both for teachers and students.

#### **4.2 Teachers Training for Child Education**

Knowledge on objectives and theoretical basis of the curriculum, among the teachers, yields to manage the practical environment. It is not only the means that we want to attain but also to create a free, simple, and supportive environment for them. It works as a guide for both of them while it bears a vision that we want to achieve. Curriculum objectives are not ‘simply matters personal preference of individuals or groups’ (Herrick and Tylor, 1950) but those objectives will be accomplished from diverse sources. It will help the teachers in a bidirectional way to support the students to grow inclusively that covers diverse aspects of their development. It is a great concern for the teachers that they are forming the future generation who will lead the regional and global future. These children have diverse characteristics that will help to contribute to the different sectors for development in the future. It is important that how the basis of these children be shaped so that individually or collectively can acquire skills to improve their role as a part of society and serving to progress.

#### **4.3 Citizenship Education for Sustainable Development**

Sustainability is the global concern for today in all respect to meet “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 8). However, many people around the world are, still struggling for life, food, safety, and equity and becoming homeless every day and less aware of sustainability for them in general. Many countries are responded promptly to these global calls with policy, program and to design an action plan and build educating capacity for future sustainability. Because education “...empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity” (UNESCO-ESD, 2018), which is crucial for refugee children for future in general and political stability and security in host society in particular.

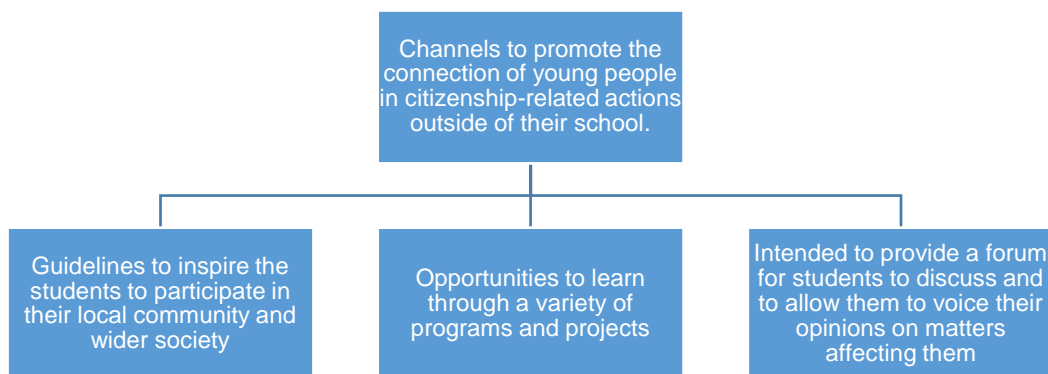
Education will help the children to take action as a citizen of their country and help them to be prepared for future action in their transformation. Because it will enable them to identify and develop crucial competencies on critical and creative thinking and

act properly to recognize their problems that challenging their future (Van den Branden, 2015).

#### 4.4 School Culture and Students Participation in Wider Society for Citizenship Education

The formal and explicit classroom teaching helps young people to become full citizens, though students also can learn about citizenship through other means. It is said that students may start learning about the democratic process by involving them in school-decision making procedures. As a result, students have ‘opportunities to learn about and experience citizenship education in a range of contexts (...) through whole-school processes’ along with the ‘activities and experiences involving the wider community’ (Kerr et al. 2004, p. ii). A wide range of programs and structures can provide real-world experiences to the students out of their school for citizenship. There are few channels that can help the students to connect them to promote the citizenship education outside of their school- i. guidelines to inspire the students to participate in their local community and wider society, ii. various scope to learn through projects and programs, iii. offering a forum that allows them to express their views on issues that affect them. So it is necessary to create some instruments to educate the students on citizenship education. Not necessarily, the student will learn everything in their class but a wide range of scope is needed for their further development. These instruments will open a new horizon to learn and play an active role through which they can learn more about their final achievement. It will broaden the scope to involve with their wider community in their locality that will help to discover the ways of democratic participation and gaining new experiences to identify and address the topical issues. In addition, these will strengthen the cooperation between the generations to discuss in local and regional forums and to voice their opinions on issues that affect them which is crucial for local and global problem solving and today’s world is seeking such youth for the future.

**Figure 5: Channels to Connect the Youth**



## **5 FINDINGS ON EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FOR ROHINGYA CHILDREN**

The world witnessed joint efforts with the government of Bangladesh, UN agencies, and the NGOs in refugee camps and host communities that saved many lives. But it is not yet ensured that refugees live in dignity and are self-reliant. While it is said that medium and long-term solutions are immediately needed both for the refugee and host communities. Education along with skill-building and livelihoods are inseparable for effective and durable resolutions with reintegration. Refugee children in numbers have increased as conflicts interrupt societies on a global scale. Peterson (2015) observed nearly 32 armed conflicts in 26 countries of the world that saw the highest number of refugees recorded since 2015 (Dryden, 2015). A country should arrange adequate facilities to provide appropriate education to refugee children when they receive them (Hamilton & Moore, 2003). “According to Article 22 of the UNHCR (1951), a child who is a refugee has the same rights as children born in that country of resettlement” (Eichler, 2019). It is necessary to offer education to them because this will create and enhance their opportunity in the future to integrate, migrate, or repatriate which is basic for their livelihoods. Bangladesh is not a signatory for any formal treaty for refuge and asylum while not willing to integrate a million refugees in Bangladesh yet.

### **5.1 Education for Refugee Children: Institutional and Structural Support**

The Rohingya refugee is living in the world’s most densely refugee camps. The great concern of Rohingya refugees was the continual rejection of formal education in refugee camps by the government policy. The government of Bangladesh was adamant that the refugee will not be permanently abode in Bangladesh and will return shortly to home when the conditions will be conducive. This decision was unfavorable to build concrete permanent educational centers with bricks by the donor and other humanitarian organizations. This government policy seized the educational rights of nearly four-hundred thousand Rohingya Children by prohibiting formal education, secondary education, education outside of the camps, permanent building (Human Rights Watch, 2019). However, the government of Bangladesh asserted that “educating refuge and displaced persons have the multiplier effect of empowering them, reduces their dependence on the host government and contributing to long term peace and social cohesion” in the funding proposal in 2018. Later on, the GoB deviated from their commitment and allowed only ‘informal’ education in English or Burmese and did not fund refugee education (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

NGOs made a small learning center with bamboo where only 40 students can join in the class. Due to limited space, it is not possible to increase the number of learning centers that force them to organize shifting for schooling while children get a chance for only two hours a day at school. In their class, there is no chair desk and electricity as



reported by Human Rights Watch 2019. The majority part of the children who used to come to the center is eleven years old or younger. Just more than four percent of students who are aged 14 years attend the center. While older children choose to join an Islamic religious school. There are numbers of religious school (Quami Madrasa) which are not structured education system not even similar to the general education system of Bangladesh. The prime minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina grants permission for establishing thousands of Quami Madrasa (the religious one does not follow the traditional Bangladeshi curriculum) in the refugee camps, however, these happened when the prime minister has claimed herself as anti-Muslim in her political ideology. In response to it, she made aligned with Hifazat Islam that once toppled the ruling government a few years back (Sharma, 2018). The perceptions of refugees and children about schooling sometimes very shocking and hindering for their skill development when a girl responded about the learning center that “it was serious, while the learning centers are for playing, not for education” (Human Rights Watch, 2019). A handful of university graduate Rohingya refugees is in the camps however it was tough for humanitarian and donor agencies to find a secondary school completed Rohingya to operate the learning centers. The refugee people were given equal opportunity with Bangladeshi nationals to recruit as an instructor for the learning centers. These paid jobs are one of the few options existing in the refugee camps.

## **5.2 Current Education Facility for Refugee Children in Camps**

Complex health support is essential for education for refugees as, in most cases, they are from a country where poor living conditions coupled with limited health facilities are prevailing before coming here (Minas and Sawyer, 2002) which is common to Rohingya refugees. These people need emergency health services for their life and education including the host community because demographic alteration can create difficulties for the refugees' healthcare system due to inadequate support systems.

Humanitarian organizations provide education and UNICEF had offered informal education in 2019 to the Rohingya refugee children who are from 4-14 aged. More than three hundreds thousands refugee children and adolescents were studying in 3200 learning centers where over 70 percent of learning centers were supported by UNICEF. This group of children was learning informal education based on the curriculum called “Learning Competency Framework and Approach” (LCFA). The lion's portion of children (more than 90 percent) were learning LCFA level 1 and 2 which were equivalent to preprimary level 2 in the formal education system. These refugee children taught five subjects are available for them i.e., English, Mathematics, Burmese, Life Skill for level 1 and 2, and Science for level 3 and 4. The life skills were only limited to create awareness about the diseases and allow them to play. The teachers are from the Bangladeshi community but for Burmese, there is a Rohingya refugee to instruct them. Though it was considered as development ‘over the status quo ante’ while the education quality was

very poor due to lack of lesson plan, textbook, and inadequate training for the teachers. All these reasons along with the policy of the government of Bangladesh did not allow the refugee children to sit for national examinations or promote them to formal education (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

### **5.3 Education for Adolescent**

Education will help the refugee children to take action as a citizen of the refugee camp in their host country and help them to be prepared for future action in their transformation. About twenty thousand adolescents providing education facility by UNICEF in Rohingya refugee camps. These refugee groups are constituted by children aged from 15 to 18. They have been given instruction on numeracy, life-skills and vocational training however this is not good enough for these group of people who should study higher secondary to prepare them for undergraduate level. Education itself a driver to change a life by developing their skills they can contribute to their society. Rohingya refugee people are facing an uncertain future in their studies and life as well.

### **5.4 Formal Education for Refugee Children in Bangladesh: Preparation and Future Expansion**

Rohingya refugee children are out of formal education. Currently, UNICEF allowed, by the decision of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), to start providing formal education following the curriculum of the Myanmar education system together with GoB and other humanitarian partners. As a pilot project, it was decided to provide education to ten thousand refugee children from the sixth grade to nine grade who had less access to education compared to their younger counterparts. To do so additional 250 new teachers will be recruited with the existing 8900 teachers. They will teach them double shift basis. The refugee people get confidence in their future as they will be allowed to start education based on their familiar curriculum. The opportunity to be a teacher was given to both the Bangladeshi and refugee community if they had appropriate academic qualifications. This will support to build their future to reintegrate into the education system of Myanmar when the favorable situation will be available for them to return voluntarily with safety and dignity. In addition, supporting humanitarian partners declared that they will expand education and skill development programs to expand the potentialities of the refugee children that will contribute to their further development. Where Rozina Aktar, a teacher for level 4 students rightly pointed out “Education takes people from the darkness and brings them into the light. “What drives me is the students’ ambition to learn.”<sup>2</sup>

### **5.5 Teaching Staff for Refugee Children Education**

Educating refugee children in Rohingya refugee camp is not a simple one while there is a lack of logistics and preparedness of the children as well. Teaching to newcomers can be a challenge because of language problems and then adapting to a new culture and environment. However, schools are still not able to offer the right inclusion strategy due to a lack of experienced teachers, useful methods, and facilitators (Block, Cross, Riggs, & Gibbs, 2014). This is factual for the Rohingya refugee children's education where there is no formal education is given nor adequate training is available for the teachers to develop their skills to deliver more and effective and practical learning. Education has long-term benefits that the individuals can transmit to society and the generations can get its dividend lifelong by their contribution to their community and society as a whole. The recruitment of teachers in refugee camps for their informal education had limited scope to attain the structural benefits of education by their teaching. It is not just because of their inability to deliver their lessons to the vast community of student adequate training and logistics are also insufficient for both of them. It is said that training can accelerate the performances through developing skills while limited training scope is available for these teachers to teach informal education to the refugee children.

### **5.6 Future Curriculum and Certification for Refugee Children Education**

In Bangladesh, refugee children need access to more robust educational services. Many thousands of children are out of school. Further, 97 percent of adolescents aged 15 to 18 years do not attend any type of educational facility (NRC, 2019). In 2020, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) authorizes the Myanmar school curriculum and has offered the humanitarian partners through the Joint Response Program (JRP) to grab the opportunity for education Rohingya refugee children. The preliminary phase is targeting 10,000 children in grades six to nine, which is under development. Both of the Rohingya refugee parents and children have wanted access to education in the Myanmar curriculum, which is crucial to prepare for them to return and reintegrate in Myanmar when it will be possible (UNHCR, 2020b). This is the latest initiative that has been taken so far for the refugee in response to their formal education. "In emergency context through the recovery, it is important that national authorities, educational institutions, and employers recognize curricula and the certificate awarded. Communities want to that their children's education has a value that national authorities recognize that value." (INEE, 2010).

## **6 DISCUSSION**

Education and education for citizenship have focused globally as we are living in a globalized world where conflict and benefits both are coming simultaneously. This warranted to train more responsible and active citizens than ever before. Nowadays encouraging and actively involving youth in social and political life got priority at a local, regional, and global level. Social and civic competences are one of the key competencies of lifelong learning. Where active citizenship is considered one of the key objectives of the education system. This can be attained through involving students outside of their classrooms to know about the community, create and foster social change and development and fabrication with the greater society (Berman, 1990, Newmann, 1989). Where Rohingya refugee children have a limited scope to get involved in that way because the current curriculum is an informal one and not structured to citizenship education.

Education is regarded as a primary key to promoting active citizenship. Citizenship education is important and it helps students to introduce them to the wider part of society as they will take responsibility for their community and society in the future however it requires certain competencies (Zerkowska and Wenzel, 2020; Cohen et al., 2015). The refugee children have to adapt to new settings that affect their daily lives where the context and perspectives are different (Anderson, Hamilton, Moore, Loewen, & Frater-Mathieson, 2003) however most cases the majority of refugee are hosted by neighboring countries while their flights before and after are usually abnormal and traumatic. In this situation, mental health with other basic supports are essential for their survival and move forward. School education with its other extracurricular activities can create an environment that can pull these communities after sinking in the ocean of pains and sorrows of their past life. These children are under trauma since they fled even before that and confined in a camp and not allowed to move out so it is not possible to enlighten their potentials without school, curricula, and freedom.

EURYDICE (2012) found that policies have had a great effect on the study of citizenship education. Where education curriculum, parental involvement in an educational institute, the culture of schools, and participation in the community, supporting teachers, and assessment are found crucial for citizenship education. These components are invisible in the education system of refugee children while there is no formal curricula, structured educational format, and scope to involve parents and involve the refugee children in wider society as they are restricted in their camps. However, the issues were repeatedly come forward by the workers and agents of different NGOs, national and international development partners.

**Table 5 Overview of Potentials and Challenges for Citizenship Education in Rohingya Refugee Camps**

Level	Challenging Factors	Potential Factors
Micro-system	Frustration, Trauma, Mourning, lack of confidence, Disability	Confidence, Health, Knowledge about Language, Willingness to learn, Resilience.
Meso-system	New environment, single parents, Unaccompanied children, language barrier, Conflict with peers	Self-confidence, Joining in the Learning Center
Exo-system	Child trafficking, sexual exploitations, Forced migration, Family crisis	Family connection, Community attachment, Peer group, Social and Religious observation
Macro-system	Discrimination by policy, Oppressive attitudes of the host country, Policy Barrier, Cultural obstacle, Difficult to offer education	Education facility, Health care, Food Program, Emergency Support

Adapted by author

The refugee children instructed based on the informal curriculum which was questioned by the different partner in terms of quality (Human Rights Watch, 2019) however the quality of education offers ‘physical and psychophysical and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives’ (INEE, 2010) no formal education was not available for them in refugee camps however they have the rights to get an education. Many development workers who were engaged in the process of curriculum, teachers’ recruitment, training, and monitoring the process were affirmed that it is not enough for them to develop their potentials in the future nor oven basic in a true sense just to live and lead a normal life. Though citizenship education requires ‘the understanding and application of normative concepts’ (Marej, 2020) and considered interdisciplinary which is invisible in the structure of the curriculum of the refugee children education in Bangladesh. How citizenship education yields to the greater society are widely acknowledged and developing continuously in countries where it mingled with their education system.

However, in Bangladesh, this concept is still not operative in their education system in a structured way where many components are available and practices in a scattered manner (Alam, 2012). To get the ultimate benefits from citizenship education needs institutionalization and systematic application in the education system which is not possible for the refugee children in the existing education system prevailing the refugee camps. There is no such sign that the government of Bangladesh will be positive about their formal education to promote citizenship education in near future.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Rohingya refugees are struggling for dignity as well as safety. They are waiting for justice and rights three years after fled from Myanmar. The government of Bangladesh (GoB) and UN agencies in association with NGOs efficiently and commendably deliver life-sustaining assistance for their livelihoods in the world's largest refugee camp. The combined efforts made them out of danger i.e., stabilize the situation of the camps, monsoon preparedness, avoid epidemics of diseases. However, the refugees need dignity and rights, not just subsistence where citizenship education is pivotal for their emancipation from distressing life and it can be the first building block for their next step in life. The agencies urge for more funding from the global community for humanitarian assistance for the refugees while government policy needs to reform and allow them to be educated in a structured educational system which is still uncertain. Citizenship education in refugee children allows engaging in social and political life to burgeon and secure democratic values and promote solidarity during the time of growing diversity. As they are living out of the home and allowed only subsistence, deprivation from opportunities (i.e., education) can jeopardize their future livelihoods. 'It is known that the history of indigenous people is a history of colonialism, which has been fundamentally transformed after the emergence of the legal doctrine of self-determination, questioning its legitimacy and reducing its scope through its long term effects are likely to be profound' (Hossain, 2020b). They need adequate opportunities for education in general and citizenship education in particular for their right to learn and live in refugee camps and further resettlement.

Citizenship education will provide an opportunity for knowledge, skills, and attitudes for civic competences, which can only be acquired by a structured education system based on knowledge and social values and commitment to engage in broader society. Education can offer multidimensional benefits to this vast community of Rohingya, citizenship education can develop the competencies to integrate or repatriate or migrate elsewhere as educated migrants or asylum seekers are welcomed and a good option for the receiving country. This is high time both for Rohingya refugees and the host community to take initiative for education immediately. However, Bangladesh as a non-signatory sovereign state still stayed outside the purview of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee 1951. The repatriation or migration of Rohingya in a third country is still uncertain as the global crisis is creasing day by day and there is no good news from the refugee receiving countries. As a result, the Bangladesh government should allow national and international partners to start formal education for refugee children that will offer citizenship education to develop their potentials as a citizen and to contribute their community and other humans.

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**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> According to the Refugee Convention (1951) Article 1A(2) Refugee is a person who “Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.”

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/stories/expanding-education-rohingya-refugee-children-bangladesh>