



# Forced Displacement Literature Review

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# Systematic human rights violations, traumatic events, daily stressors and mental health of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

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This article **examines the relationship between systematic human rights violations, traumatic events, daily stressors, and mental health symptoms among Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh**. Almost 900,000 Rohingya refugees were living in refugee camps in Southeastern Bangladesh at the time of the study.

The analysis is based on cross-sectional data collected from a representative sample of 495 Rohingya refugee adults in camps in Bangladesh in July and August of 2018. The survey included questions on demographics, systematic human rights violations, traumatic events, daily stressors, mental health symptoms (including PTSD, depression, and anxiety), and functional impairment. The researchers used several measures, including scales adapted from existing instruments such as the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire and the Hopkins Symptoms Checklist.

Main findings:

- **Respondents reported high levels of systematic human rights violations in Myanmar.** These violations included restrictions on obtaining citizenship, working in government positions, obtaining official documentation, using the name Rohingya, expressing thoughts and feelings publicly, meeting in groups in public, travelling, religious practices, voting, legal services, building or repairing homes, pursuing education, marriage, medical services, employment, and having children. Additionally, respondents reported pressure to accept unwanted documentation.
- **Respondents reported experiencing a high number of potentially traumatic events in Myanmar.** The average number of traumatic events was 19, including exposure to frequent gunfire (99 percent), witnessing the destruction, or burning of villages (98 percent), witnessing dead bodies (92 percent), and witnessing physical violence against others (90 percent). Respondents also reported direct experience of torture (56 percent), being beaten (46 percent), being stabbed (29 percent), being shot (5), sexual assault (33 percent of women and 34 percent of men), and rape (3 percent of women and 1 percent of men).
- **Respondents reported experiencing numerous stressors in their current life in Bangladesh.** These stressors included insufficient income (95 percent), insufficient food (79 percent), limited access to education (72 percent), travel restrictions (66 percent), inadequate living space (62 percent), poor sanitation facilities (62 percent), ill health (62 percent), and poor access to water (60 percent).

- **Symptoms indicative of PTSD and emotional distress were common.** More than half (61 percent) of respondents had mental health symptoms indicative of PTSD, and 84 percent had symptoms indicative of anxiety and depression.
- **Experiences of systematic human rights violations, traumatic events, and daily stressors were found to be associated with symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety.** Higher PTSD scores were associated with older age, being a woman, a higher number of lifetime trauma events, higher levels of systematic human rights violations in Myanmar, a higher number of daily stressors in Myanmar, higher levels of feeling humiliated, and higher levels of feeling helpless. Higher levels of emotional distress were associated with older age, higher levels of daily stressors in Bangladesh, higher levels of daily stressors previously in Myanmar, a higher number of lifetime trauma events, and higher levels of systematic human rights violations in Myanmar.

The study concludes that **systematic human rights violations, traumatic events, and daily stressors have a significant impact on the mental health of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, leading to high levels of PTSD symptoms and emotional distress.** The paper emphasizes the need for interventions targeting these factors to improve the mental health of Rohingya refugees, and in particular, the importance of addressing systematic human rights violations and daily stressors in refugee camps.

## **Associations among past trauma, post-displacement stressors, and mental health outcomes in Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh: A secondary cross-sectional analysis**

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*Frontiers in Public Health*, Volume 10 (2022)

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This paper **examines the association between post-displacement stressors and mental health outcomes among Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.** Since 2017, more than 770,000 Rohingya refugees have fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh, with the total number of Rohingya refugees hosted in Bangladesh reaching 981,000 as of May 2024. The majority of Rohingya refugees are hosted in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, where they face daily stressors such as limited work and educational opportunities, inadequate humanitarian assistance, dangerous living conditions, and limited access to healthcare.

The analysis is based on data from the 2019 Cox's Bazar Panel Survey, covering 5,020 households and 9,386 individuals. The household surveys collected information about the household roster, food security, consumption, assistance, assets, household income, and the anthropometrics of one randomly selected child under the age of five. The individual surveys collected information about labor market outcomes, migration history, crime and conflict, and health.

The authors examined the association between post-displacement stressors, such as exposure to crime and conflict, and two mental health outcomes: depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Presence of depressive symptoms was assessed using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), while PTSD was assessed using the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ). The authors controlled for past trauma, employment status, receiving an income, food security, and access to healthcare.

Main results:

- **Prevalence of depressive symptoms was high among Rohingya refugees living in Cox's Bazar.** The prevalence of moderate or severe depressive symptoms was 30 percent and the prevalence of PTSD was 5 percent.
- **Most respondents (87 percent) reported experiencing at least one traumatic event.** The median number of traumatic events was three. The three most reported traumatic events were exposure to death (54 percent), torture (45 percent), and combat situations (45 percent).
- **Post-displacement stressors were common among Rohingya households.** These included direct experiences of crime and conflict in their neighborhood (39 percent of households), food insecurity (97 percent), insufficient income to meet household needs, low rates of employment (22 percent), and low rates of income from wages (27 percent).
- **Post-displacement stressors were associated with a higher likelihood of depressive symptoms.** Post-displacement stressors, such as crime and conflict in one's neighborhood, reduced household access to income, and travel time to access healthcare, significantly increase the likelihood of experiencing depressive symptoms. Exposure to crime and conflict in one's current neighborhood approximately doubled the likelihood of depressive symptoms, controlling for other risk factors including past trauma.
- **Trauma was associated with an increased likelihood of PTSD, while living in a household that received income was associated with a decreased likelihood of PTSD.** Post-displacement stressors were not significantly associated with PTSD when controlling for age, sex, marital status, migration history, and past exposure to trauma.
- **The displacement experience affects mental health outcomes differently depending on gender.** Living in Bangladesh in July 2017, i.e., not directly experiencing the 2017 genocide but spending more time in a Bangladeshi refugee camp, significantly increased women's likelihood of experiencing depressive symptoms but not men's likelihood of experiencing depressive symptoms. There was no effect of gender on the likelihood of PTSD.

Adjusting for past trauma and other risk factors, the authors conclude that **exposure to post-displacement stressors was associated with an increased likelihood of depressive symptoms.** The findings suggest that **interventions to improve post-displacement conditions for Rohingya refugees could significantly improve their mental health outcomes.**

# Gender-based vulnerability: combining Pareto ranking and spatial statistics to model gender-based vulnerability in Rohingya refugee settlements in Bangladesh

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*International Journal of Health Geographics*, Volume 19 (2020), Article number 20

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12942-020-00215-3>

This paper **investigates the spatial and thematic variations in gender-based vulnerability of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh**. As of March of 2019, there were over 900,000 Rohingya refugees living in the Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Bangladesh.

The analysis draws on open-source spatial data from the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), including REACH data on humanitarian infrastructure, United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) data on resource availability, and the 2017 Needs and Population Monitoring Survey conducted by IOM. Data gaps were addressed using probabilistic interpolation. The authors developed a vulnerability index and used a Pareto methodology to rank 145 refugee settlements for which sufficient data was available to calculate a vulnerability score. The vulnerability index includes variables relating to demographics, education, health, WASH, resource availability, and security.

Main results:

- **Approximately a quarter (24 percent) of settlements were ranked as ‘most vulnerable’** based on their vulnerability index score.
- Thirty highly vulnerable clusters were identified, predominantly in and around the town of Cox’s Bazar.
- **Clusters of low levels of gender-based vulnerability were identified near the Myanmar border in or near Kutupalong camp.**
- **Security and health-related variables were found to be the most significant drivers of gender-specific vulnerability in Cox’s Bazar.** Clusters of low security and education vulnerability measures were observed near Kutupalong camp.

The authors conclude that **there is significant spatial heterogeneity of gender-based vulnerability in Rohingya refugee settlements in the southwest of Bangladesh**. Security and health variables were identified as the most significant drivers of gender-specific vulnerability in Cox’s Bazar. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions and resources to address the specific vulnerabilities faced by Rohingya women and girls in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

# Family planning knowledge, attitude and practice among Rohingya women living in refugee camps in Bangladesh: a cross-sectional study

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*Reproductive Health*, Volume 19 (2022), Article number 105

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-022-01410-0>

This article **assesses the knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) of family planning and associated factors among Rohingya women living in refugee camps in Bangladesh**. As of March 2021, there were approximately 884,000 Rohingya refugees living in 34 camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh.

The study was conducted in Rohingya refugee Camp-4 in Cox's Bazar in December 2019. The study population consisted of 400 married Rohingya refugee women of reproductive age (18 to 49 years old) who had been living with their husbands and had delivered at least one child at least one year before the survey was conducted. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire that included questions on socio-demographic characteristics, access to family planning services, and knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) of family planning.

Main findings:

- **More than half of the participants (52 percent) had no formal education, and more than three-quarters (78 percent) were housewives.** On average, the participants were 26 years old and had 4 children.
- The participants accessed information from various sources, including the radio (58 percent) and internet (26 percent). **For information related to family planning, 45 percent relied on NGO and health workers.**
- **Most participants had knowledge of one or more contraceptive methods, and about three-quarters regularly used contraceptives during the survey period.** The main reasons given for not using contraception were their husband's disapproval, a desire to get pregnant, and the belief that contraception is a sin.
- Most participants had benefited from one or more family planning programs or services provided by an NGO or the government.
- **Overall, 56 percent of the women had good family planning knowledge, while 44 percent had poor knowledge.** More than half of the women lacked knowledge about the appropriate age of marriage for a girl. About 60 percent of the women were unaware that birth control did not cause physical harm.
- **Overall 54 percent had a positive attitude to family planning.** More than two-thirds of the women thought family planning methods should not be used without the husband's permission. Fifty-seven percent of participants thought that a couple should continue

bearing children until a son is born. Forty percent of the women were ashamed and afraid to discuss family planning matters with their husbands.

- Participants who had a profession, had fewer children, whose primary source of family planning knowledge was through a physician/nurse, had family planning interventions in the camp, and had talked with a health care provider about family planning were found to have better knowledge and attitudes on family planning.

The authors conclude that **Rohingya refugee women were a marginalized population in family planning and their comprehensive KAP of family planning was poor.**

Contraceptive uptake among the Rohingya women was low due to a lack of education and family planning awareness.

## **Estimating stillbirth and neonatal mortality rate among Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, September 2017 to December 2018: a prospective surveillance**

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BMJ Global Health, Volume 7 (2022), Article e008110

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2021-008110>

This article **investigates neonatal mortality and stillbirth rates in Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh.** An estimated 882,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar were forcibly displaced to Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh in 2017 and 2018.

The analysis is based on a prospective community-based mortality surveillance in 29 of 34 Rohingya refugee camps between September 2017 and December 2018, covering 811,543 Rohingya refugees with 19,477 estimated live births. The surveillance data were linked with publicly available data on health facilities, population size and geospatial information.

Main results:

- Overall, 530 neonatal deaths and 280 stillbirths were reported during the surveillance period, resulting in an estimated neonatal mortality rate of 27.0 per 1,000 live births and a stillbirth rate of 15.2 per 1,000 total births.
- Most neonatal deaths (76 percent) and stillbirths (72 percent) occurred at home or in the community.
- A positive correlation existed between the camp population size and number of health facilities inside the camp.
- There is no statistically significant correlation between the camp neonatal mortality rate or stillbirth rate and the number of health facilities inside the camp.



- **Camps that were located closer to a secondary health facility had a lower neonatal mortality rate compared to camps closer to a labor room/sexual and reproductive health unit.** Labor room/sexual and reproductive health units provide care for pregnant women for uncomplicated labor and childbirth, while secondary health facilities are meant to have capacity to manage both complicated and uncomplicated labor and childbirth.

The authors conclude that **mortality and stillbirth rates among Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are a cause of concern.** The results suggests that **proximity to secondary health facilities may have a protective effect on neonatal mortality rates.** The findings emphasize the need to prioritize programmatic activities to increase the utilization of health services and improve the quality of care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period in humanitarian settings.

## **Malnutrition trends in Rohingya children aged 6–59 months residing in informal settlements in Cox’s Bazar District, Bangladesh: An analysis of cross-sectional, population-representative surveys**

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*PLOS Medicine* (2020)

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**This paper estimates malnutrition rates among Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh.** Since April 2017, more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees have fled violence in Myanmar, settling in makeshift settlements in Cox’s Bazar District, Bangladesh.

The analysis is based on three cross-sectional population-representative cluster surveys covering all informal settlements of Rohingya refugees in the Ukhia and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox’s Bazar District. The first round was conducted during the acute phase of the humanitarian response (October–November 2017), and the second and third rounds were conducted 6 months (April–May 2018) and 12 months (October–November 2018) later. Anthropometric indices (weight, height, mid-upper arm circumference, oedema) and hemoglobin were measured in children aged 6–59 months.

Main findings:

- **The prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) as assessed by weight for height declined** from 19 percent in round 1 to 12 percent in round 2 and 11 percent in round 3.

- **The prevalence of anemia significantly declined between the first two rounds** from 48 percent to 32 percent. Prevalence increased significantly to 40 percent during round 3 but remained below the round 1 level.
- Reported receipt of both fortified blended foods (13 percent) and micronutrient powders (10 percent) were low during round 1 but increased significantly within the first 6 months to 50 percent and 30 percent, respectively.
- Although findings demonstrate improvement in anthropometric indicators during a period in which nutrition program coverage increased, causation cannot be determined from the cross-sectional design.

In the acute phase of the humanitarian crisis, the nutritional status of Rohingya children in makeshift settlements of Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh, exceeded the World Health Organization (WHO) global emergency thresholds for both wasting and anemia. In the period 6-12 months after the initial assessment, there were significant improvements in both acute and micronutrient malnutrition. These improvements coincide with a scaleup of humanitarian interventions, including those to prevent and treat cases of malnutrition. Ongoing activities to improve access to nutritional services may facilitate further reductions in malnutrition levels to sustained below-crisis levels.

## **Incidence of child marriage among refugees and internally displaced persons in the Middle East and South Asia: evidence from six cross-sectional surveys**

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This article **investigates the incidence of child marriage among displaced and host populations in humanitarian settings** in Bangladesh, Nepal, Djibouti, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen.

The analysis is based on data collected through cross-sectional surveys of displaced and host populations in the six countries between 2018 and 2019. Data was collected from female heads of household and one or two adolescent household members (aged 10–19). The overall sample of adolescent girls ranged from 1,031 in Bangladesh to 1,969 in Iraq.

The cumulative incidence of child marriage was estimated across age cohorts of displaced groups in four of the six settings for which age cohort data was available (Djibouti and Iraq were excluded). The cumulative incidence of child marriage between displaced and host populations was calculated in four of the six countries for which data was available for both

groups (Lebanon and Nepal were excluded). Data were analyzed separately for each country and then pooled to generate cross-country estimates and associations.

Main results:

- **In Bangladesh, there was no significant difference in the hazard of child marriage between Rohingya refugees and hosts or across refugee age cohorts.** 16 percent of sampled Rohingya refugees married before age 18 compared with 12 percent of hosts, but the difference in child marriage hazard was not statistically significant. 15 percent of Rohingya aged 15–19 years married before age 18 compared with 10 percent among Rohingya aged 20–24 years, but the difference in hazard across age cohorts was not significant.
- **In Nepal, younger cohorts were significantly less likely to marry compared to older comparators,** with 10 percent of IDP women aged 15–19 marrying before age 18, compared with 32 percent of aged 25–29 IDP women. The difference in hazard of child marriage was statistically significant.
- **In Djibouti, refugees had a lower hazard of child marriage compared to hosts.** 8 percent of Yemeni refugees married before age 18 compared with 20 percent of Somali refugees and 30 percent of hosts. Hosts had a significantly higher hazard of child marriage compared with Somali and Yemeni refugees. Among refugees, Somalis had significantly higher hazards than Yemenis.
- **In Iraq, child marriage hazard did not differ significantly between displaced and hosts.** 21 percent of IDPs married before age 18, compared with 19 percent of Syrian refugees and 14 percent of hosts, but differences in the hazard of child marriage across groups was not significant.
- **In Lebanon, younger cohorts were less likely to marry compared with older comparators.** 33 percent of Syrian refugees married before age 18 compared with 92 percent among 25–29 years old Syrian women, and the difference in the hazard of child marriage was statistically significant.
- **In Yemen, IDPs had a significantly higher hazard of child marriage compared to hosts, and among IDPs, younger cohorts were more likely to marry, indicating an increase in child marriage rates after conflict.** 29 percent IDPs married before age 18 compared with 18 percent of hosts, and the difference in hazard was significant. 25 percent of 15–19 years old IDPs married before age 18 compared with 16 percent of the older age cohort, and the difference in the hazard of child marriage was significant.
- **Overall, the average hazard of child marriage was significantly higher among displaced than in host populations, after adjusting for country context.** In the pooled analysis, 23 percent of displaced married before age 18 compared with 18 percent of hosts. Displaced girls had a 30 percent increased hazard of child marriage compared with host counterparts.
- **On average across settings, younger age cohorts had a lower hazard of child marriage compared with older cohorts.** Younger age cohorts were at 64 percent lower hazard of child marriage compared with host women after adjusting for country contexts.

**The results did not provide definitive evidence that displacement and humanitarian crisis necessarily increase rates of child marriage.** Rather, the impact of displacement on child marriage rates is likely context-specific and dependent on the prevailing drivers of child marriage that vary by setting. For example, in both Bangladesh and Nepal there are dowry cultures where wealth is transferred from the bride's family to that of the groom; in times of uncertainty families may opt to delay the age of marriage because they are unable to provide dowries. In Yemen, where bride price is customary, economic deprivation may have led families to resort to child marriage as a coping strategy.

## Navigating nature's toll: Assessing the ecological impact of the refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

*Heliyon*, Volume 9, Issue 7 (2023), Article e18255

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This paper **examines the ecological impact of the Rohingya refugee influx in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.** More than 720,000 Rohingya refugees have fled Myanmar since August 2017 and have settled in camps in the Teknaf and Ukhiya Upazilas of Cox's Bazar district.

The research area focused on the Cox's Bazar district, particularly the Teknaf and Ukhiya Upazilas, where the majority of Rohingya refugee camps are located. The analysis is based on high-resolution multispectral satellite images from Sentinel-2A and Sentinel-2B satellites from before the Rohingya refugee influx (2017) and after it (2021), as well as Landsat 8 Operational Land Imager (OLI) images to estimate changes in land surface temperature. The authors use various machine learning and fuzzy model techniques to investigate changes in land use and land cover (LULC) patterns, the valuation and functioning of ecosystem services, and ecological quality before and after the Rohingya influx.

Main findings:

- The increased number of Rohingya refugees has led to a 10 percent decrease in forest area and an 8 percent increase in settlement areas. The increased settlement in the study area has led to the conversion of 5,488 ha of forest cover into settlements.
- The estimated total ecosystem services value (ESV) in the research area was \$67.83 million in 2017 and \$67.78 million in 2021, respectively. Between 2017 and 2021, the timber industry is estimated to lose US\$5.33 million (or 22 percent) in economic surplus from ESV.
- The reduction in forest lands has contributed to a 14 percent decline in raw materials and a 15 percent decline in biodiversity.
- The ecological quality (EQ) conditions in the area have deteriorated from "very good" or "good" to "bad" or "very bad" following the Rohingya influx.

The authors conclude that **the influx of Rohingya refugees in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas has resulted in a decrease in forest area and an increase in settlement areas, leading to a decline in ecosystem service values and ecological quality conditions.**

The findings highlight the need for proactive measures to mitigate the environmental impact of large refugee settlements, including sustainable forest resource management, and to mitigate potential social tensions between refugees and host communities arising from increased competition for ecological resources.

## **Application of geospatial technologies in developing a dynamic landslide early warning system in a humanitarian context: the Rohingya refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh**

Bayes Ahmed, Md. Shahinoor Rahman, Peter Sammonds, Rahenul Islam, and Kabir Uddin  
*Geomatics, Natural Hazards and Risk*, Volume 11, Issue 1 (2020), Pages 446–468.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19475705.2020.1730988>

This article **develops a localized landslide early warning system (EWS) for Rohingya refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar district in Bangladesh.** The arrival of nearly 750,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh since 2017 has led to extensive deforestation and hill cutting in Cox's Bazar district. Refugee camps are located on hills and loose soil, making them highly vulnerable to rainfall-triggered landslides.

The authors employ advanced geoinformation techniques to develop the landslide early warning system (EWS), integrating landslide susceptibility zones, rainfall thresholds, and forecasted daily rainfall data. The analysis relies on land cover maps for four years (1998, 2001, 2017, and 2018) prepared using images from the Landsat satellite missions. The authors produced landslide inventory and factor maps using historical landslide information, from which they constructed landslide susceptibility maps, categorized into three susceptibility zones (low, medium, and high). Rainfall thresholds for different susceptibility zones were analyzed using historical rainfall information following landslide events.

The landslide EWS takes into consideration land cover changes, historical landslide events, local rainfall thresholds, landslide susceptibility maps, and a hazard matrix to dynamically relate 5-day forecasted rainfall and their spatial association with the susceptibility map.

Main findings:

- Approximately 5,800 hectares of forest land cover disappeared due to the 2017 Rohingya influx. Grassland type that contains deciduous forests was significantly reduced because of the influx.
- Land cover changes through hill cutting and slope modifications, and unplanned urbanization are predominantly responsible for slope failures.

- Consecutive 5-day periods of rainfall between 95–220 mm could initiate landslides in high susceptible areas.
- The EWS effectively predicted the 10 September 2019 landslide event, which was triggered by 422 mm of rainfall in 24 hours.

The authors conclude that **a large area has been deforested to build the refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar district that has significantly increased landslide vulnerability of the Rohingya refugees and their host communities**. The authors propose early warning scenarios for low, medium, and high susceptible zones that would be triggered by forecasted rainfall exceeding specific thresholds. Such an early warning system would support local authorities and international organizations to reduce disaster risks and save lives from landslides in Cox’s Bazar district. Moreover, the proposed EWS is replicable and can be contextualized in similar settings.

## **A Glimpse into the Minds of Thais: Unveiling the Factors Influencing Thai Local Attitudes towards Myanmar Refugees**

Watchara Pechdin and Mokbul Morshed Ahmad

Migration Letters, Volume 20, Issue 2 (2023)

<https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v20i2.2858>

This article **examines the factors affecting attitudes towards refugees in Thailand**. As of May 2024, there were 84,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar in Thailand.

The research was undertaken in the Koung Jor refugee camp, in Piang Luang sub-district, Wiang Haeng district, Chiang Mai province of northern Thailand, on the border with Myanmar. The camp accommodates around 400 refugees from Myanmar. Data was collected through a survey of 198 randomly selected participants who had had contact with the refugee camp. Participants were asked about their perceptions of the treatment of refugees by Thai authorities, host community concerns about the impact of refugees on safety and security, and host community views on whether refugees should have access to employment opportunities on par with nationals.

Main results:

- There were no significant differences in attitudes between male and female respondents.
- Concerns about the effect of refugees on safety and security increased with age.
- A shared ethnic identity (Tai ethnicity) was associated with supportive attitudes towards refugees, i.e., a belief that refugees were not fairly treated by Thai authorities and that they should have equal access to employment opportunities.
- Respondents who worked in agriculture were less likely to have concerns about the impact of refugees on safety and security.

- Respondents with lower incomes were more likely to have supportive attitudes towards refugees, i.e., a belief that refugees were not fairly treated by Thai authorities and that they should have equal access to employment opportunities.
- Respondents who had been in contact with refugees for more than ten years were more likely to believe that refugees were not fairly treated by Thai authorities and less likely to have concerns about the impact of refugees on safety and security. However, they were less likely to think that refugees should have equal access to employment opportunities.

The authors conclude that host community attitudes towards refugees from Myanmar in Thailand were associated with age, ethnicity, occupation, income, and duration of contact with the refugees.

## More is Better: Evaluating the Impact of a Variation in Cash Assistance on the Reintegration Outcomes of Returning Afghan Refugees

Hisham Esper, Nandini Krishnan, and Christina Wieser

*World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series*, Working Paper No. 9897 (2022)

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/191991641827471161/More-Is-Better-Evaluating-the-Impact-of-a-Variation-in-Cash-Assistance-on-the-Reintegration-Outcomes-of-Returning-Afghan-Refugees>

This paper **examines the impact of cash assistance provided to Afghan refugees returning from Pakistan on household outcomes post-return**. Between 2016 and 2018, UNHCR assisted more than 458,000 documented Afghan refugees who returned from Pakistan. Between July 2016 and March 2017, UNHCR increased its reintegration assistance amount from US\$150 per returnee to US\$350 per returnee, after which the allowance reverted to US\$150 per returnee.

The authors estimate the effect of the change in cash assistance on post-return integration outcomes. The analysis is based on three post-return surveys (on average data was collected 16 months after return) combined with administrative data from UNHCR's voluntary repatriation forms. The sample includes 1,331 returnee households who received a reintegration allowance of US\$350 (treatment group) and 3,009 returnee households who received a reintegration allowance of US\$150 (control group).

Key findings:

- **Households that received a larger reintegration allowance were more likely to purchase long-term assets, while those that received a smaller allowance were more likely to purchase consumption goods.** Households that received a larger allowance were more likely to purchase land (21 percent) compared to those that received a smaller allowance (7 percent). Households that received more cash were also more likely to use it for transportation and rental payments. Almost half of returnees who

received a smaller allowance spent more than half of it on food, compared to only 17 percent of those who received the larger allowance.

- **The likelihood of owning a dwelling is highly correlated with both the total payment received by the household, and the household size.** Households reporting owning their residence approximately 16 months post-return received US\$2,253 in reintegration assistance on average, compared to US\$1,655 for households not owning a house post-return.
- **There wasn't any long-term impact of reintegration assistance on the likelihood of employment.** Households receiving the smaller reintegration allowance were as likely as those receiving the larger allowance to have an employed household member.
- **There was no significant impact of the variation in cash assistance on the likelihood of enrolling all household children in school.** School education in Afghanistan is free, and an unconditional cash transfer to returnees might not affect school enrollment. Additionally, the data only permitted the authors to measure whether households enroll all their children in school.
- **Households that received the larger reintegration allowance were more likely to have legal documentation.** Households that received a larger allowance were more likely to have legal documentation for all household members (76 percent) compared to those receiving the smaller reintegration allowance (60 percent).

Overall, **there was a large positive impact of cash assistance on the likelihood of home ownership, legal documentation, and consumption patterns.** Households who received the larger reintegration allowance were 17 percentage points more likely to own a house, 30 percentage points more likely to have issued legal documentation for their household, and 40 percentage points less likely to have spent more than half of their reintegration assistance on food.