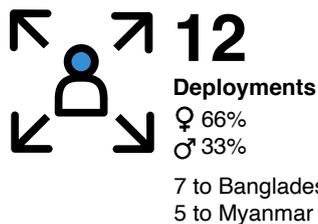


# Myanmar and Bangladesh



The February 2021 **military coup** in Myanmar **heightened vulnerability** to human rights risks across the country and for approximately 600,000 Rohingya who live in Myanmar. Since then, unchecked COVID-19 cases and high fatality rates, coupled with widespread violence, have exacerbated a spiralling humanitarian catastrophe. The program has remained steadfast in both Myanmar and Bangladesh, providing **life-saving assistance**, as well as **strategic planning and guidance**, both in-country and from afar.

## Health security in Cox's Bazar

In line with Partnerships for Recovery, Australia Assists has prioritised investment in fragile health systems, providing surge support to improve **distribution of medical products** and bolster **infectious disease response** in Cox's Bazar.

- Health Migration Nurses Philippa and Dale, worked with [IOM](#) in COVID-19 Isolation Treatment Centres, **upskilling local staff** to bolster treatment, screening and triage standards. This work had far-reaching benefits as trainees shared the knowledge they had gained with other medical facilities in the region.
- Navjuvon worked with [WHO](#) to source temperature-controlled **warehouse space** to store a 180m<sup>3</sup> consignment of critical medical supplies (weighing 12,600kg). Neil put his structural expertise to use for [UNHCR](#), **setting up an Isolation Treatment Centre** able to serve 1,444 patients.

## Promoting peace in Myanmar

In position prior to the crisis in February 2021, the program was already embedding **women, peace and security (WPS)** principles with partners in Myanmar, with three female deployees focusing their attention on **accountability to affected populations**. With [UN Women](#), Jess mapped and analysed key WPS actors in Myanmar to **develop a joint WPS strategy** and operational plan. Annie progressed OCHA Myanmar's national dashboard and worked closely with the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Network to help reduce incidences. This work helps fulfil a commitment by UN Women and OCHA to **use power responsibly** and ensure mechanisms are in place to ensure they can be **held to account** by the communities they seek to assist.



*Through effective accountability to affected populations initiatives, local voices are better fed into humanitarian programming - and humanitarian action better reflects their needs.*

— Australia Assists deployee, Annie.

## Partnership management and humanitarian access

Coordinating and negotiating the safe, effective and efficient delivery of **humanitarian assistance to Rohingya and host communities** remains a program priority. Working with UNHCR Bangladesh, Anita paved the way for **positive partnerships** with the [Office of the RRRC](#), supporting NGOs with access passes and sharing regular updates on dynamics unfolding within and outside of Cox's Bazar.

At OCHA Myanmar, Sarah developed a multi-sectoral Operational Access Tracker to help humanitarian actors work together and inform government operations in Rakhine. The tool provides a new, coordinated approach for sectors to monitor, report and analyse programming barriers at the activity level, and work harmoniously toward solutions. The model has since been considered by OCHA Headquarters for **wider adoption and implementation** in other humanitarian contexts.



*[They] are very good at including the national staff in their work. Probably more so than other deployees. I get the impression that RedR has a particular focus on this. They bring national staff into the work and transfer their knowledge. It's something we can learn from. It should be the goal for all deployees.*

— UNHCR Bangladesh.

## Review of Australia Assists' Support to the Rohingya Crisis; 2017-2020

The program has provided more support to the Rohingya response than to any other humanitarian crisis, with **60 technical specialists** deployed to eight UN agencies and the Inter-Sector Coordination Group since 2017. The Review provides detailed analysis of the program impact to date. It found that the collective impact of the program's response had been significant, yielding both **critical impact and value for money**. It confirmed:

*"Australia Assists' support to the Rohingya crisis, through RedR Australia, was critical. Between 2017 and 2020, the program provided life-saving assistance, helped protect the most vulnerable, and meaningfully supported more sustainable and targeted responses. Deployees achieved significant outcomes in extremely testing circumstances. Their accomplishments are a testament to both the quality of individuals deployed and RedR's operations and work at large."*

## Rohingya Review Recommendations – taking action

The Review identified that some deployees who worked with program partners in the field:

*"experienced workplace challenges, ranging from poor organisational culture to interpersonal dynamics that impacted deployee wellbeing and stress levels. This affected around 10 percent of deployments, disproportionately impacting women...[and] at least four deployees experienced toxic workplaces where bullying, harassment, sexism and misogyny were commonplace"*

The report recommended that RedR consider conducting research to **better understand the experiences** of Australian deployees working in UN agencies through the lens of Australia's **commitment to gender equality**. This recommendation was not only accepted by RedR Australia and DFAT, but funding was reallocated to **conduct joint research** with the Australian Red Cross on the issue.