

The Azadi Project

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Report for Cox's Bazar Program

~ January 2022 ~

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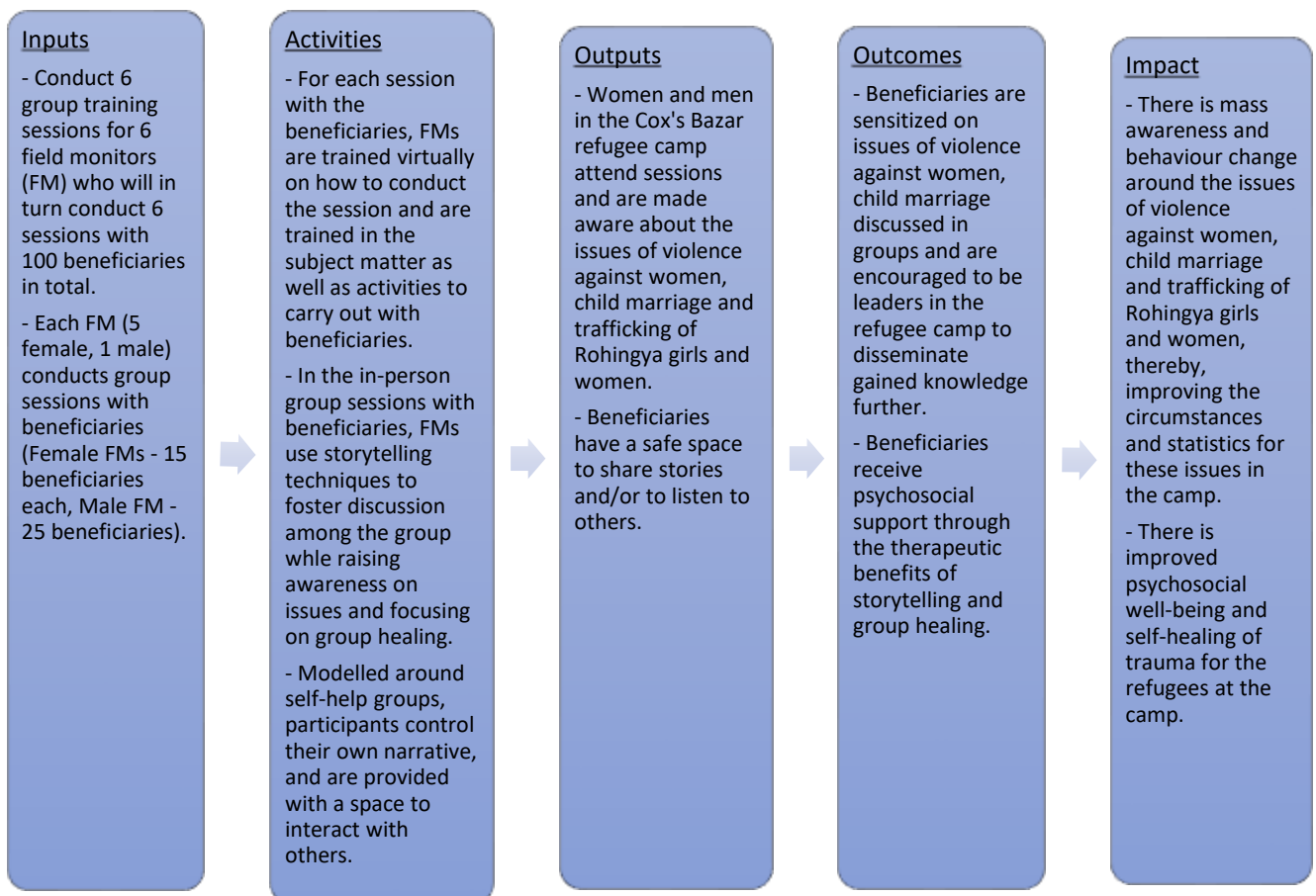
Introduction

The Azadi Project partnered with Rokeya Foundation in Bangladesh to carry out a storytelling, leadership and psychosocial support program from September 2021 – December 2021. Using a Training of Trainers (ToT) model, a total of 100 beneficiaries – 75 Rohingya women and 25 Rohingya men – participated in the program in the Cox’s Bazar refugee camp.

The workshop focused on the art of storytelling and its therapeutic benefits, by creating a safe space for the beneficiaries to interact in. Through this, it also aimed to sensitize and create awareness about gender-based violence, trafficking, child marriage and create women and men leaders within the refugee camp to disseminate this knowledge further.

Azadi virtually trained six field monitors from Rokeya – five women and one man, who in turn conducted the in-person workshop with the beneficiaries in 6 groups in the camp. The two levels of training happened simultaneously, where each session of training with the field monitors was followed by the group session with the beneficiaries in the camp. Throughout the program, a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan was implemented to observe the process of program activities and evaluate the outcomes of the program.

MEL Framework



Aim and Objectives of the MEL Assessment

To monitor the process and to assess the success of the program, the MEL plan focused on ascertaining to what extent the program activities have been able to achieve the program objectives, how well the program model fared, and what learnings can be extracted from the run of the program.

The following objectives were included in the assessment:

To study

1. Whether the beneficiaries were sensitized and made aware about the issues of violence against women, child marriage, and trafficking of Rohingya girls and women.
2. Whether the workshop provided a safe space for the beneficiaries to talk, share their stories, and foster group healing.
3. Whether the beneficiaries gained storytelling skills to be able to share their stories and control their own narrative.
4. Whether the hybrid ToT model was successful in the implementation of the program.

These objectives were set keeping in mind that the evaluation can only focus on the short- to medium-term outcomes of the program and the long-term impact cannot be ascertained yet. Additionally, a crucial aspect of what learnings can be gathered from the process was also covered.

MEL Methodology

The MEL assessment used a participatory approach, including all stakeholders in discussions at all points of the program. Both quantitative and qualitative tools were used for the MEL process. Data was collected both at the baseline as well as the endline for a robust evaluation.

For quantitative analysis:

1. Questionnaire: A survey especially designed for the study was filled by beneficiaries before and after the workshop. Consisting of multiple-choice questions, it aimed to gauge their comfort level with the group sessions, their psychosocial well-being, their knowledge on the issues of violence against women, child marriage, and trafficking of Rohingya girls and women. The questions were in line with the type used by practitioners/researchers for psychological surveys.

For qualitative analysis:

1. Feedback discussions: The field monitors participated in a feedback session with the Azadi program facilitators to provide insights into the program implementation, the program model, the program content, overall challenges, and points of success.
2. Beneficiary feedback: The beneficiaries were involved in the feedback process and the collected data is a useful source of learning for the MEL process.
3. Personal interactions: Through the course of the workshop, the field monitors engaged with the beneficiaries closely. Their interactions proved to be a sound source for the evaluation, keeping in line with the objectives.

Findings and Discussion

A total of 100 beneficiaries; 75 Rohingya women and 25 Rohingya men, participated in five group sessions in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp. All beneficiaries participated in all sessions and filled two questionnaires, one at the beginning and one at the end. Based on their survey responses, the following results have been framed along with the qualitative analysis.

Successful creation of a safe space by field monitors

Through the quantitative analysis, 96% of the beneficiaries reported that the workshop provided them with a much-needed safe space to share their stories and discuss the issues, while 3% reported being "somewhat" comfortable to do so. At the beginning in the first group session, the field monitors worked toward creating this safe space with the participants. This explains the increase in the positive response, as in the beginning only 79% of the respondents said they felt comfortable sharing in the group session.



Photo: Beneficiaries attending a group session with a field monitor in Cox's Bazar.

The respondents reported that they felt comfortable and safe to share their thoughts in the group sessions. Some beneficiaries shared personal stories on gender-based violence, child marriage, and/or child trafficking, which helped facilitate the discussion and build a space for group healing.

The qualitative analysis, however, does point to the fact that many beneficiaries also concealed their stories and were not fully forthcoming. Some said that they felt shy to talk about these topics, or were apprehensive about others knowing their personal stories, and/or needed more time to open up. Feedback from the field monitors reveal the following:

“Overall, this psychosocial support provided to the Rohingya women at the camp was a new experience for them and should be continued.”

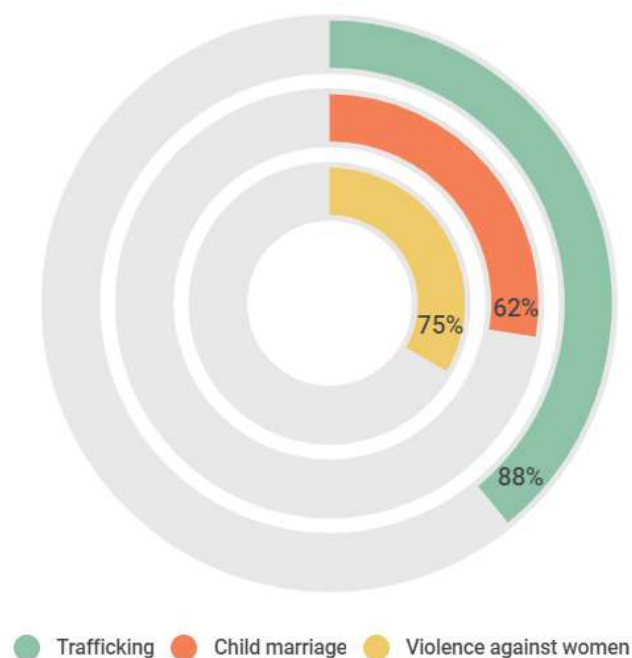
Improved understanding of prevalent social issues

The workshop dealt with raising awareness on three issues – violence against women, child marriage, and trafficking of Rohingya girls and women. The progress toward the long-term impact of mass

awareness and behaviour change was to some extent evaluated by short- to medium-term outcomes of increased understanding of these issues within the beneficiaries as a result of participating in the workshop. Through the surveys and through qualitative discussions with the field monitors, it is reported that at large there was significant increase in the beneficiaries' knowledge of the topics, which is the first step for the sustained impact. Even the field monitors reported increased awareness from the training on these issues. Following are the results as computed through the baseline and endline surveys filled by beneficiaries.

- **Increased awareness on gender-based violence:** 69.3% women report an increase in understanding about the topic, whereas 92% men report an increase for the same. For women, most of the remaining participants report existing knowledge.
- **Increased awareness on child marriage:** 61.3% women report an increased understanding about the topic, while 64% men report an increase.
- **Increased awareness on trafficking of Rohingya girls and women:** 85.3% women report an increased understanding, and 96% of men report the increase. A noteworthy point here is the activity that was carried out for the awareness session on this topic. A situational exercise was conducted with the groups where different actors involved in perpetuating and preventing trafficking were role played to make the participants understand what constitutes trafficking and how it can be prevented. It can be seen that this helped in the exceptional rise in awareness about this topic.

Increase in awareness from baseline to endline for all beneficiaries



It is important to note that the long-term sustainability of these results cannot be ascertained by this evaluation process, which has been done at the beginning, during, and right at the end of the

workshop. Thus, the long-term impact assessment is not under the purview of this MEL process, but the progress made toward the achievement of that long-term impact is something these results reflect.

NOTE: On analysis, some of the patterns of the survey responses seem random and not intentional, which indicates that respondents may have selected responses without thought, in some instances, for the sake of completing surveys. Therefore, these results should be taken into account along with the qualitative feedback from the facilitator on how the participants reacted and responded in sessions.

Spread of awareness beyond target population

In the feedback collected from the beneficiaries, it was seen that beneficiaries talked about the issues being discussed in the group sessions with other people not involved in the sessions such as neighbours. This welcome outcome is a positive sign of the progress toward creating lasting impact as described in the MEL framework.

Storytelling abilities and controlling own narrative

With regard to beneficiaries sharing their stories in the group and reporting comfort level in telling personal stories, the quantitative and qualitative analysis paint different pictures. This may be due to the unintentionality of survey responses as mentioned above. In the survey responses, 90.7% women and 100% men report being comfortable telling their stories. Even in the baseline survey at the beginning of the sessions, 86.7% of the women and all men said they feel comfortable doing so. However, in actuality, this overwhelming response was not reflected in the group sessions.

A few leaders emerged in the sessions who came forward and shared personal stories related to the topics being discussed, giving way for others to possibly open up if sessions are to continue further.

One of the beneficiaries recounted the story of how they married their daughter who was 16-years-old and her condition deteriorated when the young girl got pregnant.

“My young daughter died while giving birth. It won’t have happened if I would have gotten my daughter married at a proper age.”

Thus, even though only a few of the 100 beneficiaries shared their stories, there is evidence for encouraging open conversations in such a space. The field monitors reported that “women were very silent”, “men didn’t try to express themselves, spoke less”, but they reflect that:

“... beneficiaries may not have been forthcoming due to feeling shy about the topics, a general lack of interest, being apprehensive about others knowing their personal stories, and/or needed more time to open up. Continued efforts to sustain these sessions would help in more beneficiaries adapting.”

Success and challenges of ToT model

The workshop was successfully conducted with the training of trainers (ToT) model being used for implementation. Overall, the training of field monitors was received very well by the team and there was positive feedback for the facilitator and the training on the three issues at hand. This includes

- high appreciation for Azadi's facilitator in conducting the training for the field monitors,
- effective communication from the Azadi team to train and support the field monitors,
- quick adaptability to conduct sessions in another language (Bengali) to suit the field monitors' preferences, and
- unanimous recognition of the training content being highly useful.

“The opportunity to learn comprehensively about the three topics and then pass it on and explain it to beneficiaries was extremely valuable. We liked the focus of the training as these are necessary discussions.”
- One of the field monitors

However, there were challenges that were reported by the field monitors which include

- network connectivity issues for virtual sessions, and
- lower attention span in virtual sessions.

This may have had an effect on sessions with the beneficiaries in terms of being able to conduct seamless group sessions as needed. One of the field monitors reports feeling that some opportunity to practice conducting the trainings would have helped on the ground.

Learnings

The following learnings are based on qualitative analysis of the program and feedback from field monitors.

- 1. Success in ToT model, however, aspects of virtual training of FMs need improvement:**
The training of field monitors, who then went on to conduct sessions with the beneficiaries, worked as a model for program implementation. However, challenges with virtual training as mentioned above need to be addressed to improve the quality of the training.
- 2. Content of the training and group sessions work well:**
The focus on violence against women, child marriage, and trafficking of Rohingya girls and women was affective and useful in the sessions. It was reported to be practical, something that was needed, and important to discuss with beneficiaries.
- 3. Limited participation by beneficiaries reveals need for incentives:**
Field monitors report that in the group session, active participation by beneficiaries was low with them not showing interest or being too willing to attend sessions. One field monitor also explained that a lot of the beneficiaries are daily wage workers so being there for the sessions

may mean that they're losing out on money, or time which they could spend on collecting food or other essential items as they have to line up to receive a lot of these. This could explain their limited willingness to actively participate once they're there. The Rokeya program manager suggests that offering incentives to attend the sessions in terms of material benefits, money or food may improve outcomes in this regard. This suggestion was reflected in the feedback received from the beneficiaries as well.

4. Expansion of training to include livelihood activities, safety and security:

Field monitors mentioned that through discussion with the beneficiaries they felt that expanding the training to include activities that address changes in their daily lives is something that people in the camp need. Gaining livelihood skills, awareness on physical health and hygiene, personal and community safety and security, were some of the topics suggested.

5. Smaller groups of beneficiaries for each session may work better:

Groups with 4-5 beneficiaries may work better in enabling people to share their stories in the sessions. This would encourage beneficiaries to open up easily and remove hesitancy as well as enable field monitors to conduct sessions more effectively as they'll be able to train properly and make their interaction with each beneficiary more detailed.

6. Address feedback collectively to facilitate better storytelling by beneficiaries:

Cohesively addressing the feedback and analysis mentioned in this and the previous sections would help in facilitating more open sharing and better storytelling by beneficiaries. Patience in conducting the group sessions will go a long way, since the topics at hand are sensitive and participation cannot be forced upon.

Feedback from beneficiaries

"The workshop is very helpful for our community because of the topics discussed. We need to spend more time on this."

➤ **Increase frequency and length of sessions:**

Beneficiaries report that reducing the time between two consecutive sessions and increasing the time spent in each session will help improve their understanding of the topics being discussed.

➤ **Provision of food or monetary incentives:**

Most beneficiaries request assistance in enabling them to easily attend the sessions. Since most of them lose working hours and thus, money that is hard to come by when they attend the sessions, they report that monetary incentives or food provided at the sessions will help them recover their losses.

Next Steps

The Azadi Project's work at Cox's Bazar, with support from Rokeya Foundation on the ground in Bangladesh, has once again highlighted the dire situation at the camp when it comes to violence

against women, child marriage and trafficking of Rohingya girls and women. Through the workshop and the analysis, it is seen that there is a pressing need to have sustained programming and awareness-building on these issues to bring about behaviour change and lasting impact.

Made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, an increase in child marriage and the nexus of human trafficking of girls from Cox's Bazar has been witnessed. A recent report by Fortify Rights, a human rights organization, has reported incidents of minor Rohingya girls trafficked to Malaysia on the pretense of marriage¹. A research report funded by USAID highlighted how the return of protection staff from the camp during the pandemic led to an increase in trafficking and child marriage².

Recent data from the International Rescue Committee (IRC) too reveals that 94% of the cases of violence against women at Cox's Bazar are of intimate partner violence³. This shows how imperative it is to include men from the camp in the efforts to combat violence against women. Therefore, Azadi's model of including men in the training is crucial to bring about the necessary change.

Moreover, as the pandemic continues to rage, the program's hybrid ToT model would be central to continuing efforts toward the goal of awareness building and providing psychosocial support. Subsequently, The Azadi Project would continue to seek further funding to carry on the program at Cox's Bazar and strive to build meaningful partnerships in the camp to support its work.

¹ <https://www.fortifyrights.org/mly-inv-jnr-2019-02-21/>

²

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bd9f8a7710699aaf0e28fc6/t/5fa52c93711ea93e2d34e022/1604660411881/FC_Webinar_Emerging+Trafficking+Trends+in+the+Era+of+COVID-19_Slides.pdf

³ <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/new-irc-analysis-domestic-partners-perpetrate-94-gender-based-violence-against>

ANNEX 1

Survey questionnaire for beneficiaries

1. How often do you feel sadness?

- I do not feel sad
- I feel sad much of the time
- I am sad all the time
- I am so sad or unhappy that I can't stand it

2. How often do you imagine a negative future waiting for you?

- I do not view the future as negative
- I view the future as negative much of the time
- I view the future as negative all the time
- I view the future so negative that I can't stand it

3. Do you feel safe to talk freely in this group session?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

4. Do you feel comfortable to tell your own story to others?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

5. Do you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts in this group session?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you know about the following topics? Circle your answer (1 means least knowledge and 10 means most).

Gender-based violence in the camp: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Child-marriage among Rohingya girls: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Trafficking of Rohingya women and girls: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(Please fill both sides of the sheet)

For the following questions, please indicate how much you agree with each statement.

7. I am able to confidently speak about myself and my life.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. I am able to notice my emotions and deal with them in a positive way.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. I feel I can be a leader for people around me to help myself and others.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. I publicly raise my concerns against issues that women and girls around me face.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

ANNEX 2

Example of a filled survey with responses tabulated in Excel for analysis

| Survey Responses: Session 1 with Beneficiaries | | Name of Field Monitor: Jina | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| Name of Beneficiary | Gender | Q1. How often do you feel sadness? | Q2. How often do you feel waiting for you? | Q3. Do you feel safe to talk freely in this group session? | Q4. Do you feel comfortable to tell your own story to others? | Q5. Do you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts in this group session? | Q6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you know about the following topics? Gender-based violence in the camp Child-marriage among Rohingya women and girls Trafficking of Rohingya women and girls | Q7. I am able to confidently speak about myself and my life. | Q8. I am able to notice my emotions and deal with them in a positive way. | Q9. I feel I can be a leader for people around me to help myself and others. | Q10. I feel I do not have much to be proud of. | Q11. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my girls around me. | Q12. I publicly raise my concerns against issues that women and girls around me. |
| Jainira | Female | I do not feel sad | do not view the future as | Yes | Yes | Yes | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Hasna | Female | feel sad much of the time | view the future as negath | Yes | Yes | Yes | 2 | 6 | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Disagree |
| shahjahan begam | Female | do not feel sad | do not view the future as | Yes | Yes | Yes | 1 | 1 | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Disagree |
| Roksana | Female | am sad all the time | view the future as negath | Yes | Yes | Yes | 3 | 5 | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Disagree |
| Fatema | Female | do not feel sad | do not view the future as | Yes | Yes | Yes | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Disagree |
| Sabekumbar | Female | do not feel sad | do not view the future as | Yes | Yes | Yes | 6 | 3 | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Nurj jina | Female | do not feel sad | do not view the future as | Yes | Yes | Yes | 6 | 4 | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Arefa | Female | do not feel sad | view the future as negath/may be | Yes | Yes | Yes | 4 | 10 | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disag | Strongly Disagree |
| Rumida | Female | feel sad much of the time | view the future as negath | Yes | Yes | Yes | 3 | 5 | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree |
| Sofia | Female | do not feel sad | do not view the future as | Yes | Yes | Yes | 6 | 1 | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Haifa | Female | do not feel sad | view the future as negath | Yes | Yes | Yes | 1 | 7 | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree |
| Guliston | Female | do not feel sad | do not view the future as | Yes | Yes | Yes | 5 | 3 | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Fatema | Female | feel sad much of the time | view the future as negath/no | No | No | Yes | 3 | 4 | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Disagree |
| Hamida | Female | feel sad much of the time | view the future as negath | Yes | Somewhat | Yes | 6 | 3 | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disag | Strongly Disagree |
| Majida | Female | I do not feel sad | do not view the future as | Yes | Yes | Yes | 5 | 3 | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disag | Strongly Disagree |

ANNEX 3

Feedback collected from beneficiaries

| SL | Name of Field Monitor | Beneficiary Name | Queasion | Feedback |
|----|------------------------------------|------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Jannatul Bokeya Surma | Anowara | How could this workshop be improved or made more helpful for you? | <p>or incentive. Because we attend the session for long time. So in return we should get something that help out our daily life. Secondly, there is long gap between the sessions. If you keep doing session one after another that would be a part of improvement. Because of the gap we forgot about the session and less coming here won't improve anything. Thirdly, distribution could be added after the session. That would be interesting for beneficiaries and they will keep participating the sessions. Because that's what we get when we attend any session under any NGO</p> |
| 2 | Rumi | Surujul | | <p>The workshops were very helpful for our community because we are trying to get married to our daughter early with rich men who are living in Malaysia. Most of the women face domestic violence. Their husband torcher their wife, they don't understand this is one kind of mental torcher. So, we can understand this topic. I am already shared about the violence that happened with my neighbor. They also said this is well discussed.</p> <p>I am working as a day laborer in the camp. because my husband is old and sick. I have many younger children so I have to work outside. So when I came here for the session I have to stop my work. As like me all are women who come to the session, their husbands and kids left at home. Then their husband doesn't like it. So I want to say when we come to sessions if I get some incentives for participating in the sessions, that will be good. Then we can give this money to our husband. Husband will permit to participate in the sessions.</p> |
| 3 | Jinia | | | <p>These topics we discuss are very helpful for our community. If this session can be done every week, then we will be interested in learning. Or, when we come to the session, our husband and mother-in-law have to be held accountable. Because other NGOs pay for any meeting. But does,t pay any money here. So we are very poor. The food we get from the SIM card is not enough for our family. So we need money, if they give us some incentives we will benefit a lot.</p> |
| 4 | Shima, Feedback has taken by Jinia | | | <p>She said , These session were very useful for us .We have benefited a lot from learning these. We could have learned better if the session time had been extended. When we did the session , this time we would have benefited a lot ,if we had some snacks and some money.</p> |
| 5 | Tania | Sofia | | <p>Our all beneficiaries say we have discussed the topics once but they say if we discuss a topic two or three times they will understand better. Since the sessions have to take more time to understand better, to arrange some snacks. All the beneficiaries are said that they are all poor people so they will be happy to provide some incentives for them and will be more attentive to the session.</p> |
| 6 | Rifat | Md Rafique | | <p>On my site, I think we have learned a lot from your sessions about Child Marriage, Violence against Women, and Trafficking. In our community, we don't have much knowledge about that topics. We need to learn more about human rights and also attach more people in our session cause if we learn then we are aware of our community people. I conducted some sessions with a few people nearby me, they told me that session was very helpful. Now they know the law and what violence is, they want more sessions on more new topics. If you attract people by giving them some more facilities, they will be more attentive to these sessions.</p> <p>I am capable to aware of people but others aren't. In our camp, people don't have much work to do, if they will busy at work, they shouldn't have much time to involve any kinds of violence, abuse, or trafficking. So that my suggestion is if men will get some work to do and earn money that will be better for our community.</p> |