The influx of Rohingya refugees in 2017 had a major impact on local economy in Cox’s Bazar district, affecting host communities’ food security, income, market access and employment opportunities. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and local workforce struggle to advance because of low investment rates, inadequate skills and a lack of access to market.

Helvetas, with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, supports the vulnerable host community in the Ramu sub-district to recover and improve their livelihood condition through skills and entrepreneurship development.

Through an apprenticeship-based training youth get the opportunity to develop their skills as per market demand. The on-the-job and theoretical training and career counselling increases the job-seekers chances for long-term employment and stable income. At the same time, the project supports the SMEs that train the apprentices to get access to finance, make investments and improve their business development skills.

Extreme poor and vulnerable host community members have the opportunity to start or expand a business as microentrepreneurs by receiving a trade-specific technical training and grant support. This is complemented by financial literacy training and peer-to-peer self-help groups that ensure the sustainable improvement of their business and livelihoods.

In addition, Cash-for-Work repair of vital roads and embankments provide an extra income opportunity in lean season. At the same time, the improved public infrastructure enables improved access to markets and education facilities of the whole community.
PROJECT COMPONENTS

SME Support
- Capacity Development of SMEs
- Business management & financial literacy training
- Grant support and access to finance
- Market linkage creation
- Mentoring and follow up support

Entrepreneurship Development
- Technical training
- Grant support and access to finance
- Preparation of Business Plans
- Formation Self-Help-Groups
- Market linkage support and follow up

Apprenticeship Support
- Dual apprenticeship-based skills development program
- Employability skills for better jobs
- Certification through RPL
- Job placement support & Career-Counseling

Cash-for-Work
- Alternative work opportunities for the extreme poor
- Infrastructure development
- Identification of CfW projects linked to market demands
- Disaster Risk Reduction

MAJOR RESULTS
✓ 30 SMEs expand their business and improve their skills
✓ 800 micro-entrepreneurs start, recover or expand a business
✓ 86 apprentices complete a dual apprenticeship based skills training & improve their employability
✓ 784 disadvantaged people have an alternative income opportunity through

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF
Project duration: 01/12/2020 - 28/2/2023
Project Area: 4 Unions in Ramu Upazila, Cox’s Bazar District
Reach: 3000 vulnerable households
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« With my three apprentices, we run a women-owned tailoring shop. They are now experts in dressmaking and have already found a job. »