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UNICEF and Cambridge: A partnership to support teaching and learning in the Rohingya refugee camps of Bangladesh

Cooperating closely with UNICEF since 2019, Cambridge is working to assist in the delivery of a teaching and learning programme for Rohingya refugee children, connecting them with the future through access to a quality-assured, measurable education.

**TRANSFORMING
SOCIETIES THROUGH
EDUCATION**



The challenge

The displacement of more than one million Rohingya from Myanmar since 2016 has created not only a vast body of stateless people, but a crisis that threatens to lock the community into long-term cycles of poverty while cutting off access to education completely. Camps in Bangladesh alone hold 614,000 children and young people whose education has been critically disrupted, and whose future looks uncertain.

UNICEF, alongside other aid partners, has been working within the refugee camps since 2017 to support continuing education via some 2,500 learning centres. Despite excellent progress in this effort, certain problems still needed overcoming:

- A lack of authorised and quality-assured curriculum
- A lack of agreed and measurable learning outcomes
- Limited quality assurance of teacher professional development (TPD)
- High levels of teacher inexperience
- Classroom resources and materials of variable quality and usefulness.

Cambridge's wide-ranging reviews also revealed that some Learning Centres had materials and resources, such as teacher guides or 'School-in-a-Box', that were either not up-to-date, underutilised, or used too prescriptively. Critically, there was no IT infrastructure.

There was an inconsistent approach to assessment, with different strategies of assessment and progression testing applied across the partners. There was also little evidence of formative assessment being used in the classroom, and some indications that teachers occasionally applied inflated marking.

'At the moment we are trying to provide education within tight restrictions. It may not be as holistic as we would like, but we simply cannot wait until conditions are perfect.'



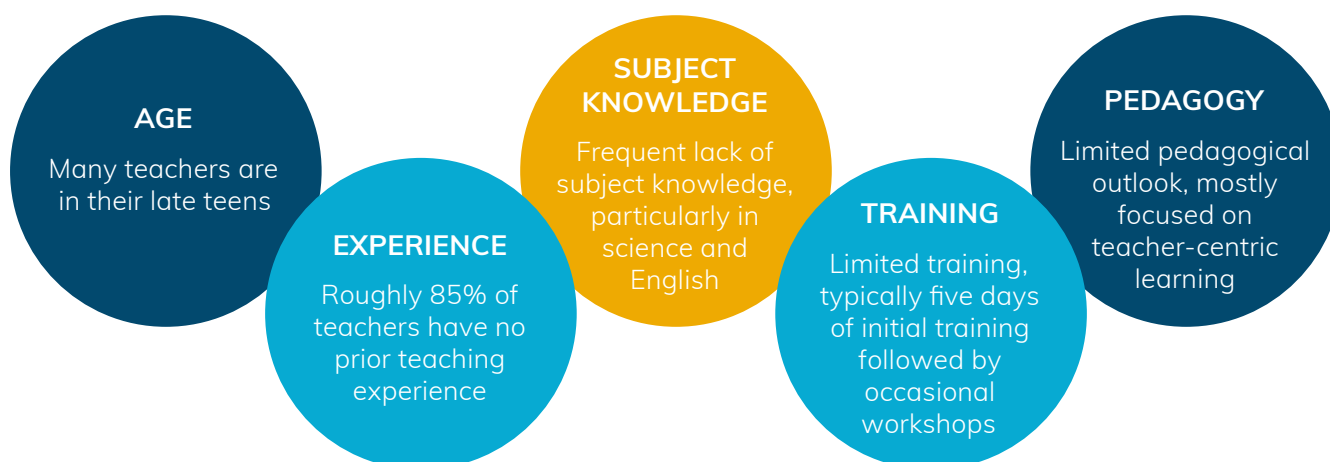
Tomoo Hozumi,
UNICEF

The most critical need identified was for teacher development, particularly in subject knowledge and pedagogic approach. Monthly refresher sessions and fortnightly teacher learning circles were in place, but needed demonstrable impact on teaching practices.

Wide-ranging research was conducted by Cambridge in the Rohingya community, which included:

- reviewing current assessment practices, quality assurance, analyses of TPD strategies and initiatives;
- observing teaching and learning practices to understand the context of the Myanmar Curriculum Pilot delivery and recommend actions for improvement; and
- consulting with key education sector stakeholders.

Teachers in the Rohingya camps – challenges

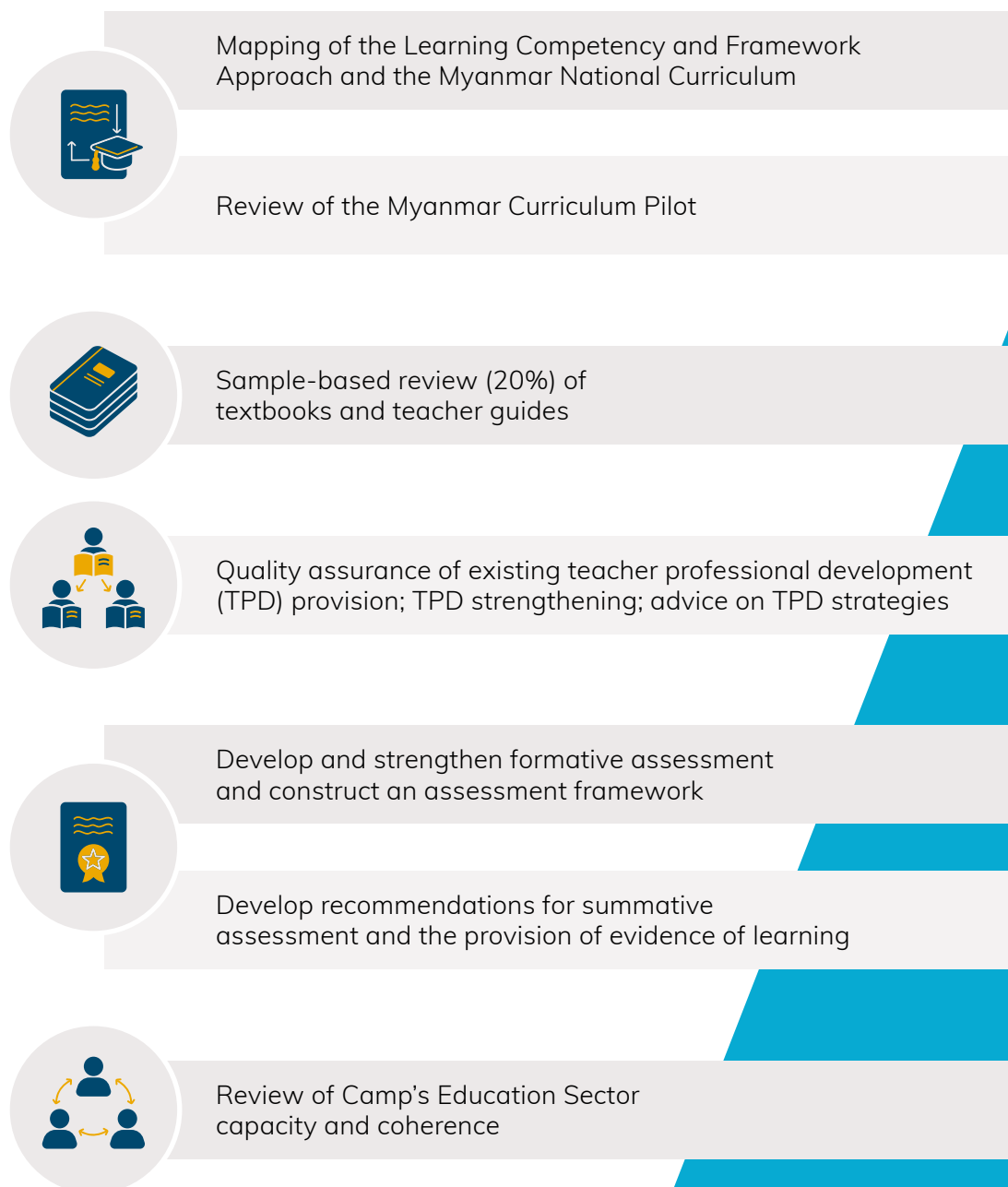


Our approach

In 2019, UNICEF engaged Cambridge to rationalise and optimise education for Rohingya 4–18-year-olds. The objective was to provide a coherent model for educating them within the camps, while also laying foundations for their future reintegration into a national education system.

Based on the research findings, Cambridge produced a comprehensive Programme Document, which defines the next steps in converting the research into an actionable response plan linked to specific indicators, baselines, targets, outputs and means of verification.

Rohingya Education – Assistance provided by Cambridge



The results

The Programme Document outputs establish the full programme of action for the period mid-2020 to mid-2022. The specific programme outputs are:

1. Comprehensive assessment framework, developed and in use, to support the teaching and learning of the Myanmar National Curriculum in the Rohingya refugee camps.
2. Teachers are applying effective assessment practices.
3. Established process in use for collecting, recording and storing individualised student records of learning.
4. Existing TPD provision is quality assured and advice provided on strategies to strengthen TPD.
5. Comprehensive review of the Myanmar Curriculum Pilot.
6. Review of system capacity and coherence to provide recommendations of next steps for implementation and scale-up of the learning provision.

The partnership of Cambridge and UNICEF has successfully built on the good work already achieved by aid agencies in the displaced Rohingya community. By conducting a thorough and sweeping audit of a complex and vulnerable demographic, points of weakness have been identified, and foundations laid and structure introduced. Cambridge's knowledge and expertise have informed the programme and the development of essential pedagogical tools and materials, such as teacher guides and textbooks, that have been specially tailored and produced to meet educational, cultural, and practical needs, to build a solid, comprehensive and robust educational system. This encapsulates Cambridge's vision of the future – where generations of both teachers and students will learn and excel, providing a platform for hope and aspiration in educational excellence.

Contact us

Cambridge Partnership for Education
The Triangle Building
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8EA
United Kingdom

@CambridgePfE 

showcase/cambridgepartnership 

cambridge.org/partnership