Reset Rohingya Response: Engage Local NGOs for Low-Cost Management

Background: Bangladesh is hosting 1,156,001 Rohingya refugees who fled their country to escape genocide by the Myanmar Military. Local people of Cox's Bazar, Local Government Institutions, local, national and International NGOs came to assist the affected populations. In the 8th year of the Rohingya crisis, funds have become one of the major challenges. It has a huge impact on the US government funding cuts on lifesaving assistance among Rohingya communities and others. Besides, Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher called for Humanitarian Resets**,** indicating to prioritize local and national partners for funding. But the local NGOs are experiencing the opposite one.

Objectives of the study: The objective of the study is to know the localization of aid and partnership types in Rohingya refugee response and to know the program and operational costs.

Methodology of the study: This study follows a mixed qualitative and quantitative method for analyzing the data. Survey method has been used for collecting data from the Rohingya refugee households. This study was conducted from July to September 2025.

Limitation: It was not possible to consider some costs like Rohingya refugee receiving continuous services like education costs for their children, all kinds of site development works like roads, infrastructure costs and operation and management costs.

Findings of the study:

Significant Funding Declined: The study analyses the funding flow since 2017 to as of 18 September 2025. Only 38% funding requirement has been met as of September 18, 2025. This indicates a severe financial crisis for the response.

Largest Sources of Coordinated Plan Funding:

Top Donors in Rohingya Response	Coordinated fund (US$) in 2025	%
Government of USA	85.28	24%
European Commission	66.62	19%
Government of Australia	47.93	14%
Govt. of Bangladesh	**39.98**	**11%**
Government of UK	24.00	7%
Government of Canada	16.94	5%
Government of Japan	16.31	5%
Government of Sweden	12.33	4%

The study indicates that the Government of the United States of America is still the biggest donor in Rohingya response, contributing $85.28 million (24%) of all reported coordinated funding. The most dramatic reduction comes from the **Government of the United States of America**, which cut its funding by **72%**. Similarly, the **Government of the United Kingdom** has reduced its commitment by **48%**.
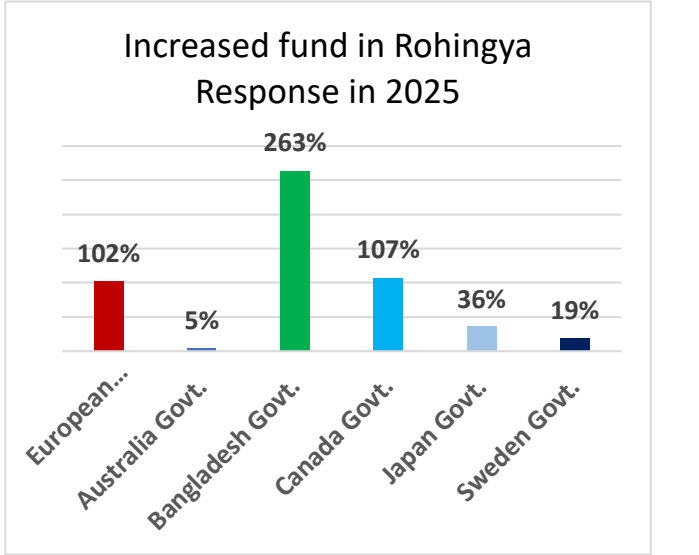
Top Two Donors in Rohingya Response	Funding for coordinated plan (US$ Million) in 2025	Coordinated Funding in 2024 US$ Million	Funding Reduction than 2024 US$ Million
US Govt.	85.28	300.6	215.28
UK Govt.	24.00	46.0	21.97

According to the UN, out of the $852.4 million required for the Rohingya in 2024, the US contributed $301 million—55 percent of the total $548.9 million provided by foreign donors last year. Therefore, its suspension of funding is bound to have disastrous consequences.

Bangladesh Government Hugely Increased Response Cost:

Top Donors in Rohingya Response	Funding for coordinated plan (US$) in 2025	Coordinated Funding in 2024	Increased fund in 2025
European Commission	66.62	33.0	102%
Australia Govt.	47.93	45.8	5%
Bangladesh Govt.	39.98	11.0	263%
Canada Govt.	16.94	8.2	107%
Japan Govt.	16.31	12.0	36%
Sweden Govt.	12.33	10.4	19%

The **Government of Bangladesh** increased its funding by a massive **263%** than the funding scale in 2024**.** This amount came by taking a loan from the World Bank**.** Bangladesh Govt. increased costs for in-kind support, security, and infrastructure within the camps.

Increased fund in Rohingya Response in 2025

Rohingya Families yearly humanitarian assistance materials and relief items received from humanitarian agencies.

High Management Cost: COAST conducted an in-depth observation study among Rohingya families in different camps in last six-months (January to June 2025) what kind of services they received. It has found that per Rohingya household received food items through e-voucher which is equivalent $12 (per person) from WPF. That means every Rohingya received $72 equivalent food assistance from humanitarian agencies in last six months.

Areas	Fund received in 2025	Received	%
Fund came Per Rohingya family	$1473	$374	26%
Per Rohingya refugee	$307	$91	30%

So, management costs around 70% whereas program cost is only 30%. Most of the local NGOs have lost their funding and are now almost dire but they are low in management cost.

Projects have been approved by the RRRC Office and started in the last three months for Rohingya camps
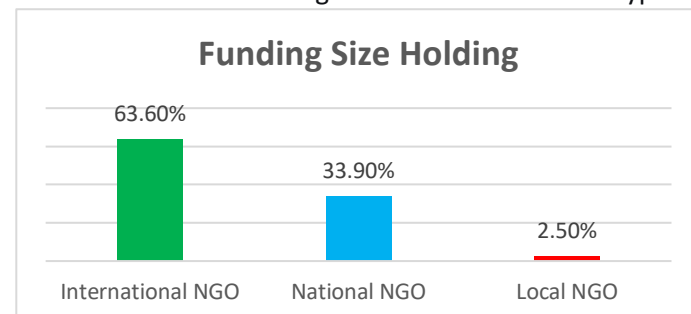
Types of Actors in Camps	Projects approved for Rohingya camps	%
International NGO	28	44.4%
National NGO	32	50.8%
Local NGO	3	4.8%
Total	**63**	**100%**

A total of 63 projects have been approved and initiated in the Rohingya camps within the last three months, June to August 2025. Seen the dominance of the International NGOs (44.40%) and National NGOs (50.80%) but very few, 4.8% of local NGOs.

Funding Size approved held by Actors in the last three months for Rohingya camps (million BDT).

Types of Actors in Camps	Funding Size (million BDT.)	Percentage of funding size
International NGO	330	63.6%
National NGO	176	33.9%
Local NGO	13	2.5%
Total	**519**	**100%**

A total of BDT. 519 million projects have been approved and initiated in the Rohingya camps within the last three months June to August 2025. Seen the significant dominance of the International NGOs (63.6%) and National NGOs (33.9%) and very few 2.5% of local NGOs in terms of funding size. This analysis examines the distribution of financial resources among different types of actors implementing projects in the Rohingya camps over the last three months. The data reveals a significant disparity between the number of projects and the volume of funding allocated to each actor type.

Funding Size Holding

A total of **519 million BDT** has been approved for humanitarian projects in the Rohingya camps within the last three months. This represents a substantial financial commitment to addressing the needs of the camp population.

- **International NGOs Dominance:** 44.4% of projects with 63.6% of funding.
- **National NGOs:** Projects 50.8% but funding 33.9%
- **Local NGOs: Severely Underfunded,** projects 4.8% but fund only **2.5%**.

This severe underfunding highlights a critical challenge: Local NGOs face significant barriers in accessing major funding streams, which limits their capacity to scale up operations and potentially hinders the effectiveness of hyper-local, community-driven aid.

Recommendations:

- Need a Reset of the existing system in Rohingya Response: Local-led action is an ideal solution
- No direct implementation by the UN and INGO
- Direct funding to Local NGO/actor at least 50%
- Appoint local staff and use local resources (salt, dry fish, cloths, other available goods)
- Invest in the livelihood and skill development sector.
- INGO and UN Offices should be revised and relocated from Cox's Bazar to reduce management costs.
- Need a comprehensive dashboard for the funding mechanism in Rohingya response