



“

We are developing unique solutions with upcycling knowledge. Thanks to PLEASE Project, this wouldn't have been possible for us without them.

THE STORY OF YOUTH GROUP FROM ROHINGYA CAMP



MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR UPCYCLING GOODS

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam once said, “Learning gives creativity, Creativity leads to thinking, Thinking leads to knowledge, Knowledge makes you great.” In this world, we can solve every single problem with our creative minds.

The world we live in now is the result of certain people working on their cognitive skills. The realm of possibility is endless. Our job is to address problems creatively without putting undue burden on our environment.

Imagine the steep hillsides of the Rohingya camps, where life can be tough and solutions can’t wait. Here, PLEASE Project is using fresh ideas and local know-how to tackle urgent challenges. One of the biggest problem is plastic packaging waste, it piles up everywhere, choking open spaces and harming the fragile environment.

To tackle this, BRAC has introduced upcycling. Transforming discarded plastics into something new and useful, while

inviting young people to roll up their sleeves and be part of the solution.

So, what is upcycling? It’s a creative makeover that turns ‘waste’, like empty coffee sachets or sturdy packaging plastics into beautiful, functional items like twinkling jhumar, a clever flower vase, hand-woven placemats, or even a stylish tablecloth.

By teaching these skills to youth, especially young women, BRAC not only helps clear the camps of plastic litter but

JHUMAR MADE OUT OF REUSABLE PLASTIC



also gives them a chance to earn by selling their handcrafted creations.

A group of 45 youths mostly young women, gathered for an intensive upcycling training organised by BRAC under its waste innovation initiatives. Their mission was simple: to learn how creativity, skill, and purpose can turn discarded plastic into something beautiful and useful. But what they left with was far more powerful a sense of agency, confidence, and possibility.

What followed was more than just a series of training days. It became a space where youth could ask questions, make mistakes, support each other, and innovate.

The items needed to make upcycled products are very simple and easily accessible. They include scissors, stitches for sewing, a glue gun, a measuring tape.

Remarkably, the initiative exceeded its gender inclusion targets, with female participation leading the charge.

It was a cultural shift witnessed in real time.

“Girls in the camp are often left out of skills training. But this time, we were the first to be invited,” shared one young woman, proudly showing off a jhumar made from colorful plastic sachets.



TABLE MAT MADE OUT OF COFFEE SACHET

The most powerful part of the story lies not in what was taught, but in what grew from it. Youth participants have begun sharing their skills with siblings and neighbours. Some are designing new products beyond the training syllabus. Others are planning to sell their creations at local camp markets.

This initiative is not a standalone activity, it is part of a wider movement by the project to embed circular economy thinking and behavioural change in Cox's Bazar and the

camp. These young learners are now ambassadors of that change, standing at the intersection of environmental recovery and social renewal.

The story of the Youth Upcycling Camp is more than a project milestone. It is a reminder that even in the most fragile places, learning can light a path forward, especially when youth are trusted to lead the way.

As BRAC continues to scale these efforts, the journey of these 45 young people will remain a testament to what is possible when institutions invest not just in solutions, but in the potential of people.

Story Captured and Documented By

Environmental Engineers Limited (EEL)

Designed By

Uday Shikder, BRAC

Edited by

Rukhsar Sultana, BRAC

Photos By

Environmental Engineers Limited (EEL)

Rukhsar Sultana, BRAC

BRAC

BRAC Centre
75 Mohakhali
Dhaka 1212
Bangladesh

T: +88 02 2222 81265
F: +88 02 2222 63542
E: info@brac.net
W: www.brac.net

FOLLOW US

/BRACworld