



Bangladesh: Using audio drama to tackle mental health in the Rohingya camps

BBC Media Action Bangladesh conducted research to understand the impact of audio drama (Our Story) on the knowledge and attitudes of the Rohingya community to issues around mental health. The findings showed that members of the listening groups learned symptoms of mental health issues and where to seek help in the camps. They also showed signs of attitudinal change towards people with mental health issues.

Context

As the Rohingya refugee crisis goes into its seventh year, mental health issues among the Rohingya community are prevalent due to trauma, lack of livelihood opportunities and social and economic insecurity. Research conducted by BBC Media Action prior to the start of showed there is significant widespread stigma associated with mental health. It also showed that mental health is a new concept for the Rohingya refugees. The Rohingya language does not have a word to refer to mental health and the community uses various terms and phrases to refer to signs that

and act in private and public.

The project

Against this backdrop, BBC Media Action focused season three and four of its audio drama on mental health. It aimed to

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and understanding of mental health, for instance through identifying a person struggling with mental health issues and the services available in the camps, including counselling. It also highlighted the importance of discussion and showcasing how talking and verbalising emotions with a trusted person have a positive impact on mental health.

was the first audio drama series produced by BBC Media Action for the Rohingya community living in Ukhia and Teknaf camps in Cox's Bazar. The drama was designed for use in listening groups.

Research methodology

BBC Media Action conducted a longitudinal qualitative study with members of the Rohingya community to enable the researchers to observe change, if any, and attitude throughout season three and four of the drama. Two male and two female listening groups were selected, with a total of 70 listeners who attended the groups between February and June 2023.

In February 2023, a pre-assessment was knowledge, attitudes and discussion levels around mental health issues before listening to the drama. Between March and May of the same year, observation and feedback monitoring sessions were carried out with the same groups. In June 2023, almost a month after they attended their last listening group, post-assessment was conducted where participants were asked the same questions as in the pre-assessment to evaluate changes in their knowledge and attitudes towards mental health issues.

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