



© UNICEF/UN0227741/BROWN

13-year-old Mohamed Faisal says getting an education is more of a priority for him than a prosthesis to replace the arm he lost during his flight from Myanmar last year.

But the constraints facing UNICEF and its education partners as they rolled out this complex enterprise were inescapable. Without an agreed and approved curriculum, children were taught with a variety of materials available to partners. So enthusiastic were the children to learn that classrooms were often over-crowded. In addition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities were in short supply.

"We succeeded in mushrooming the learning centres at a rapid pace, in order to meet the refugees' demand for education," says acting UNICEF Chief of Education, Bibek Sharma Poudyal. "Now we need to improve the quality of the learning they are offered, and expand it to provide for the requirements of adolescents."

Critical to this shift is a strategy now under discussion known as the Learning Competency Framework and Approach (LCFA), which maps out how Rohingya school-age children can acquire relevant education in a protective environment. It proposes the expansion of the current contact time for each child from two hours of daily teaching to four. Classes will eventually be provided up to grade 8 level, employing English, Burmese and local dialects used by the Rohingya as the

"Now we need to improve the quality of the learning they are offered, and expand it for adolescents."

languages of instruction.

A full range of learning and teaching materials will need to be developed.

A detailed assessment to place Rohingya children at their correct learning level is planned, but initial studies show that the vast majority of children under the age of 14 are at pre-school level, or - at best - the first step of primary.

"We are dealing with a refugee population which has been denied education over a long period of time," says Education Sector Coordinator Risto Ihalainen.