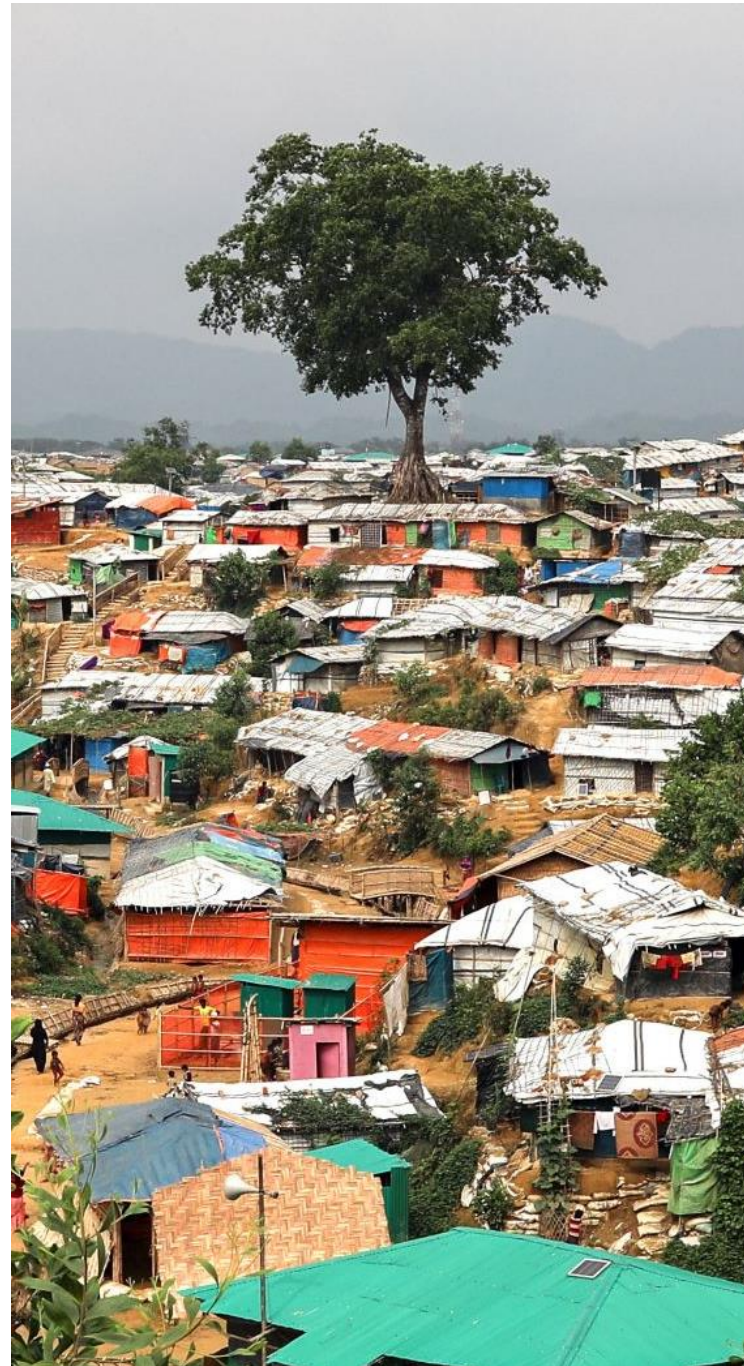


Final report on

Assessment on Social  
Cohesion, Resilience and  
Peace Building between  
Host Communities and  
Rohingya Refugee in Cox's  
Bazar, Bangladesh

2020



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## Acknowledgement

# Acronym

<b>ARSA</b>	Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
<b>BDRC</b>	Bangladesh Development Research Center
<b>BDT</b>	Bangladeshi Taka
<b>CIC</b>	Camp in Charge
<b>DAE</b>	Department of Agricultural Extension
<b>DPHE</b>	Department of Public Health Engineering
<b>DWA</b>	Department of Women Affairs
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FDMN</b>	Forcibly Displace Myanmar Nationals
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>ICJ</b>	International Court of Justice
<b>IDI</b>	In-depth Interview
<b>IGA</b>	Income Generating Activity
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Government Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate Partner Violence
<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee
<b>ISCG</b>	Inter Sector Coordination Group
<b>JRP</b>	Joint Response Plan
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>LPG</b>	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
<b>MFI</b>	Micro Finance Institutions
<b>MMC</b>	Market Management Committee
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organization
<b>NID</b>	National Identity Card
<b>NPM</b>	Needs and Population Monitoring
<b>RRRC</b>	Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNO</b>	Upazila Nirbahi Officer

<b>UP</b>	Union Parishad
<b>UZP</b>	Upazila Parishad
<b>VGd</b>	Vulnerable Group Development
<b>VGf</b>	Vulnerable Group Feeding
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

# Executive Summary

## Background and Objective

The recent military aggression has forced almost a million refugees to flee Myanmar and take shelter mostly in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh. Humanitarian partners, in close coordination with the Government, are delivering basic food assistance, shelter, water, emergency latrines, and informal education to Rohingya refugees. Nevertheless, the influx has overwhelmed existing response capacities, and has put immense strain on local livelihoods, ecosystems, and basic services in already deeply vulnerable host communities of Cox's Bazar district. These impacts have led to a lack of social cohesion and negatively affected the potential for inter-communal harmony between the two communities. In light of this issue, this study was undertaken to identify the issues that promote social cohesion, resilience, and peace between the host and refugee communities. The aim of the project was to draw durable solutions for strengthening social cohesion and peaceful co-existence of the host and refugee communities.

## Methodology

This study followed a qualitative approach to meet the study objectives. The study was conducted in Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas of Cox's Bazar district. A total of 8 FGDs with 59 participants, 25 KIs and 43 IDIs were conducted with key stakeholders of the refugee crisis, host community dwellers and with the Rohingya refugees. In addition to the primary investigation, two studies conducted previously by Innovision Consulting Private Limited were reviewed: Scoping study on Potential Livelihood and Enterprise Options for Host and Refugee Communities in Cox's Bazar (For CARE Bangladesh, December, 2019) and Host Community Intervention Feasibility Study (For International Rescue Committee, December, 2019). A number of works of literature have been reviewed to understand the present context of conflict and status of social cohesion and peace between the host community and Rohingya refugees and also find out scopes of an ecosystem approach to address the challenges.

## Historical overview

The 2017 influx has been the largest by far. However, it is not the first time Rohingyas seek refuge in Bangladesh. After the independence of Bangladesh, a large number of Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh following the renewed persecution by the *Maghs* in 1978. Prompt diplomatic action by the Government of Bangladesh compelled the Myanmar Government to take back the refugees. Within a few years, following "Operation Naga Min", around 250,000 Rohingyas fled Myanmar. The refugees were sheltered in 13 refugee camps constructed in the districts of Cox's Bazar and Bandarban of Bangladesh. Following an agreement between the two Governments, Myanmar initiated "Operation Golden Eagle", a total of 180,000 Rohingyas had been repatriated between 1978-1979. Following military oppression in Rakhine state, an estimated 250,000 Rohingyas fled Myanmar in 1991-1992. The repatriation began in 1992 and till 1997; over 230,000 Rohingyas had been repatriated. High food prices and forced labor imposed by the military drove thousands of Rohingyas into Bangladesh in 1996-97. Refugees during this period did not take shelter in the camps, rather stayed within the host communities. Although the repatriation process began in 1998, it was halted since 2005. The 2016-2017 influx has by far the largest one Bangladesh has experienced. Between August-December 2017, more than 700,000 Rohingyas were forced to flee and take shelter in Bangladesh. The violence resulted in the largest refugee crisis in the history of Bangladesh. An agreement has been signed between Bangladesh and Myanmar; however, there has been no progress on repatriation to date.

## Socio-economic impact of the Rohingya refugee influx on the host communities

While the Bangladeshis were the first to welcome the fleeing Rohingyas, their extended presence is creating tension between the two communities. The long-standing relationship between the two communities and the harmony has been disrupting due to extensive competition with the scarce resources of Cox's Bazar. The situation is worsening as the increasing tension is taking the form of

grievances in several aspects within the host population. The grievances of the host community are detailed below:

- **Livelihood of the host community dwellers has been severely disrupted:** The presence of nearly a million refugees is affecting the livelihoods of the host population living in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar district. Among the surveyed respondents who were engaged in agricultural production, fishing related activities, firewood collection and micro merchants were the worst hit by the influx.
- **Labor market disruption:** The competition with refugees for work willing to charge low wages has created many difficulties for residents to earn enough to meet daily needs.
- **Price hike of the commodities are straining host communities' economy:** The massive influx has caused a significant rise in the market demand for the daily commodities.
- **Land loss:** The significant land loss has impacted the host communities and their household economy.
- **Poor status of transportation:** The massive Rohingya influx has been severely damaging the roads and streets of Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas.
- **Security disruption:** The presence of nearly a million refugees has disrupted security of the host population. There are cases of robbery, theft and other social vices (gambling, using drugs etc.) in camp adjacent villages. In addition, 85-90% women and girls from host communities and Rohingya refugees are victims of Gender Based Violence (GBV) such as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), sexual harassment, eve teasing, dowry in the study locations.
- **Political grievances:** Political instability has risen due to the influx taking various forms including: increased corruption in the distribution of relief, perceived biasness of law enforcement bodies toward refugees over locals, decreased access to various public services etc.
- **Degradation of environment:** The deforestation for refugee resettlement has also impacted the environment of Bangladesh in addition to the country's vulnerability to climate change.
- **Loss of access to government services and institutions:** Access and quality of public services has been deteriorated due to the influx.
- **Impact on education:** Education facilities of the host population have been obstructed after the influx.
- **Deteriorating health and WASH facilities**

**Positive aspects:** Participants also recognized that some positive opportunities have arisen from the influx. Such as:

- Increased number of NGOs/development organization
- New job opportunities
- Flourishing local economy
- Improved transportation and communication system:
- Increased government services, health, education and WASH facilities
- Creation of women entrepreneurs in the locality

### **Existing and impending potential issues impacting the prospects for social cohesion, and peace between the host and Rohingya communities**

The compassion of the host communities which was exemplary at the beginning of the exodus in late August of 2017 now seems to have turned into fury. The key issues that are escalating and triggering conflict between the host and the refugee communities are:

- **Erosion of empathy for the refugees from the host community:** Due to land loss and loss of livelihood, the FDMN community is perceived as a burden by host community households to the point that a sense of 'other' has grown inside their minds.



- **Overlapped and unequal distribution of services by the NGOs/INGOs:** Rohingyas are receiving more aid compared to the Bangladeshis. This overlapping and unequal distribution of services by the aid agencies is fueling anger and sense of deprivation among the host communities.
- **Growing competition over employment/livelihoods:** 76% of the host community dwellers and 98% of the Rohingyas reported that, competition over employment is one of the major contributing factors of prolonging conflict between them.
- **Restrictions on Rohingyas movement:** 34% of the surveyed Rohingyas believe that this restriction on their movement could be one of the possible contributing factors for future conflict with the host communities.
- **Uncertain repatriation of Rohingyas:** Till now, two repatriation attempts were unsuccessful as Myanmar “failed to remove trust deficit” among the Rohingyas and there was “lack of conducive environment” in Rakhine for their return. Moreover, the Rohingyas are reluctant to relocate at Bhasan Char is further generating frustration and ambiguity among the host communities.
- **Uncontrolled birth-rate of the Rohingyas:** Participants expressed a deep sense of insecurity and the sense of being outnumbered. They worry that refugees are heavily armed and could quickly overpower them in the case of conflict. This creates a sense of helplessness.
- **Unregistered marriage and growing family disputes:** An additional growing concern has arisen in regards to unregistered marriages in the camps, primarily between local men and Rohingya women. Many of these are second marriages for the men, whose first wives often have not consented.
- **Lack of meaningful contact between the host communities and Rohingyas:** Lack of meaningful contact amplifies the issues of grievances and prevents a joint and meaningful approach to overcoming them.
- **Intention to decamp:** Our findings revealed that, some of the respondents from the host community suspect that, the Rohingyas have begun making plans to integrate into Bangladesh society and are taking strategic long-term measures in planning to do so. This suspicion is also contributing to future conflict between the two communities.
- **Growing rate of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and social vices (gambling, prostitution, using drugs, crime etc.):** Findings from the IDIs and FGDs with the host community dwellers revealed that, the rate of theft, robbery has increased notably. Armed groups among the refugees and local criminal groups were allegedly involved in kidnappings and smuggling of drugs. Gender Based Violence (GBV) and various social vices have disrupted the security system of both the host communities and Rohingyas. The grievance and frustration is causing depreciation of the two societies’ social values and provokes them in ruining the social order.

The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has added layers of new challenges for the host communities and Rohingya refugees. Such as:

- Loss of livelihood and reduction in income
- Increased rate of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and social vices
- Exacerbating inequality of services and severely impacting the host and Rohingya communities

## **Perceptions and attitudes of the host communities and Rohingyas towards conflict and social cohesion**

**Initial response to the influx:** At the beginning of the refugee influx, host community residents’ attitudes towards the Rohingya were deeply sympathetic. The respondents from the host communities have expressed the strong feeling of compassion they felt upon witnessing the suffering of other human beings. Moreover, religious similarity and sense of brotherhood encouraged them to welcome the fleeing Rohingyas. As the conflict is now rising to its peak, Bangladeshis were reported to have distinguished themselves as “The rightful owner of the resources”.



**Shifting attitudes of the host and Rohingya communities towards each other:** The initial outpouring of sympathy shown to the fleeing Rohingya refugees by the host community has gradually given way to more negative views over time. Some examples of these negative perceptions of the host communities about the character and behaviour of the refugees largely derive from rumours and general stereotypes against the Rohingya refugees, while other complaints highlight the daily inconveniences and sacrifices host communities have been forced to make without receiving adequate compensation.

On the other hand, over time the refugees feel discrimination and experience blame from the host community members for the abounding problems. Findings revealed that, the Rohingyas also feel that they face challenges and barriers from the host community that are turning into conflict.

### **Perception and expectations of the Rohingya refugee and host communities regarding conflict resolution:**

While the respondents were asked about their perception regarding harmony between them, host communities view on harmony between the two communities has become more negative over time. Meanwhile, 45% of the Rohingyas view on harmony with the host communities is neutral. This clearly shows that, the host communities are now struggling to bear the burden of the refugees and the compassion has turned into fury. The Rohingyas expressed more openness to future social cohesion and peace building programs, as they are uncertain about their repatriation. However, 80% of the host population rejected the idea of assimilation of Rohingya refugees into the host population, stating that it is preferable to continue hosting them locally as long as they are not permitted to exit the camps.

### **Key issues related to social cohesion, resilience and peace building between the host and Rohingya community**

Some of the key issues which directly impact the peaceful co-existence of the two communities are discussed in brief below:

- **Economic instability:** The negative economic impact due to the influx has severely disrupted the peace and social cohesion of the society.
- **Security disruption:** The most significant human security problems in both the host and Rohingya community are trafficking and gender-based violence targeting women and children. This has long been an issue in Cox's Bazar and the arrival of a large and very vulnerable population has amplified it.
- **Lack of awareness:** Our findings reveal that, majority of the surveyed respondents from both the host and Rohingyas are unaware of the rights, benefits and issues faced by each other which is increasing misunderstanding and generating conflict between them.
- **Sense of inequality:** The unequal distribution of services by the aid agencies is fuelling anger and sense of deprivation among the host communities which is now turning into one of the major triggering issues of conflict between the two communities.
- **Absence of a common platform for dialogue and engagement:** Our findings revealed that, there is a lack of a common platform for sharing their concerns and views with each other between the two communities, which is one of the reasons for misunderstanding and conflict.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the above issues, to address all the challenges of both the communities, a symbiotic environment in Cox's Bazar needs to be developed. In this regard, different stakeholders should consider what might be the shared social interests that could bring both communities together in a way that could foster more positive relations. The strategic recommendations for the key policy actors are described below.

- **Creation of an ecosystem:** Interdependent livelihood system can create greater social cohesion. Creation of jointly operated integrated marketplace can ensure formal trading of the Rohingya refugees and will ensure effective interaction between the communities. Local and national NGOs

can provide skill development training according to the need of the host and Rohingya communities so that they can be engaged in trading in the integrated market place.

- **Awareness building:** Both of the host and Rohingya communities should be made aware of their rights and challenges that they face due to the influx. This will create a sense of understanding and empathy towards each other between the two communities. Moreover, both the host and Rohingya communities should be made aware of women and child protection and rule of law situation of their respective communities. These awareness building sessions can be integrated with existing health, education and livelihoods and humanitarian assistance programmes undertaken by the implementing partners, i.e. the local and national NGOs.
- **Engagement and Dialogue:** The communities can be brought together on similarities by arranging dialogue in-between community members and community leaders with the aim of fostering understanding of the principles and benefits of social cohesion and tolerance through accessing first separate, then joint capacity building and recreational opportunities. Furthermore, the youth population and elders can be engaged in this regard.
- **Advocacy:** Advocacy effort is necessary as certain activities such as improving the security of the host community, cannot be undertaken by the programme team themselves. Hence, the influential actors who can take such necessary actions have to be reached and lobbied, aiming at a particular outcome for the future of the host community. Special emphasis should be given on addressing issues related to “Gender Based Violence (GBV)” in both host communities and Rohingya refugees.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

For decades the Rohingyas, an ethnic and religious minority, have been experiencing persecution in Myanmar. Since the 1980s, almost a million refugees have fled from Myanmar into Bangladesh to seek protection from the extreme violence. Over 900,000 Rohingya FDMN (Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals) have settled in Cox's Bazar district, since August 2017 resulting in one of the world's largest refugee crises<sup>1</sup>. Majority of the refugees took shelter in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Bangladesh. This rapid and massive increase of the FDMN population has made the situation critical and has worsened the development indicators of the host community.

The scale of the influx of Rohingya refugees resulted in an extreme humanitarian crisis creating a severe strain on the host community and service providers. It has disrupted the local economy and has directly affected the host communities' food security, economic vulnerability, public services, market access, labor opportunities and environment. Despite shouldering the refugee burden, very little humanitarian assistance has been targeted to the host community in Cox's Bazar. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and aid actors are now facing critical questions regarding how to move forward in this crisis. Meanwhile, tensions between hosts and refugees have continued to grow, fuelling blame, exclusion, and discrimination. Moreover, there is no clear national framework to define the longer-term response which remains a barrier in the search for solutions.

In light of the above issues, the project 'Assessment on Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace Building between Host Communities and Rohingya Refugee in Cox's Bazar' was undertaken by DanChurchAid (DCA) to identify the issues that promote social cohesion, resilience, and peace between the host and refugee communities. This project wishes to develop durable solutions for promoting social cohesion and peaceful co-existence of the host and refugee communities.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Assessment

The broad objective of the study was to identify the issues that promote social cohesion, resilience, and peace between the host and Rohingya refugee communities. Under the broad objective, the specific objectives of the study mentioned in the ToR were as follows:

- To identify the impact of the Rohingya refugee influx on the host communities living directly adjacent to the camps.
- To map the developing concerns that affect prospects for social cohesion and peace between the Rohingya refugee and host communities, both current and impending potential issues that may arise in the future.
- To evaluate host & Rohingya refugee communities' awareness about, and recommendations on ways to increase social cohesion, resilience, and peace.
- To issue a set of policy recommendations for key actors aiming to promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence.

## 1.3 Scope

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<sup>1</sup> Inter Sector Coordination Group. (September, 2019). Gender reflections: Two Years of the Rohingya Refugee response. Retrieved November 6, 2019, from: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/gender\\_reflections\\_sept19.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/gender_reflections_sept19.pdf)

The findings of the study were derived largely from qualitative surveys. Some of the insights were also derived from recently available secondary sources. Given the qualitative nature of the research, the study does not provide a statistically significant quantitative analysis. However, some of the quantitative data were collected to understand the perception and recommendation of the host community and Rohingya refugees on social cohesion and peaceful co-existence between them. These quantitative and qualitative insights can be put together to draw a scenario of the current situation of social cohesion, resilience, and peace between the host and refugee communities and also to develop durable solutions for promoting social cohesion and peaceful co-existence between the two communities. Moreover, the study team has used cases as evidence to the analysis that is presented in this report. The primary qualitative data presented in this report may indicate the general trends but due to a low sample size, the data are not representative of all the host and Rohingya population segments of Cox's Bazar district.

## 1.4 Structure of the report

Chapter 2 provides the methodology of the study. Chapter 3 provides the historical evolution of the Rohingya influx in Bangladesh and the interventions that are being undertaken by the government of Bangladesh and development agencies in response to the influx. Chapter 4 describes the socio-economic impact of the influx on the communities. This chapter provides a ground for the chapters to be followed. Chapter 5 details out the existing and future potential issues impacting the prospects for social cohesion and peace between the host communities and Rohingya refugees. Chapter 6 presents the perceptions and attitudes of the two communities towards conflict and social cohesion. Chapter 7 provides policy recommendations for key actors to divert the conflict trajectory into a cohesive and symbiotic ecosystem between the two communities for promoting social cohesion and peaceful co-existence.



## Chapter 2: Methodology

The purpose of this assignment was to provide strategic policy guidance and programmatic recommendations aimed at fostering social cohesion and peaceful co-existence between the host and refugee communities. We conducted a mixed method approach which combines both primary and secondary data source including Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), In-depth Interviews (IDIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), document review of previous research and studies involving qualitative data. This mixed method approach guided us to conduct an in-depth analysis on enabling environment for promoting social cohesion, resilience, and peace between the host and Rohingya refugee communities. Based on the findings the consultant team assisted DCA to identify potential and existing conflict causes between the Rohingya refugee and host communities and developing concerns that affect prospects for social cohesion and peace between two communities. The assessment team has interviewed people from diverse age, gender and socio-economic groups within host and Rohingya communities. Below, the assessment matrix for the objectives has been given.

Table 1: *Assessment Matrix*

Study Analytical Framework			
Study Objective	Tool	Actors	Expected Outcome
Identifying the impacts of the Rohingya refugee influx on the host communities living directly adjacent to the camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review</li> <li>KII</li> <li>IDI</li> <li>FGD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IDIs and FGDs with the host community households</li> <li>IDIs and FGDs with the Rohingya refugees from camps</li> <li>KII with camp-in-charge (CiC)</li> <li>KII with key resource person (from concerned NGOs and/or relevant Government official)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timeline of refugee crisis in Bangladesh, its evolution and transformation through which it reached to current context</li> <li>Economic and social impact of Rohingya refugee influx on the host communities. The host community members were interviewed to understand the specific interests which they perceive being hampered due to the influx. Such that, the resources which are highly being contested within the communities were identified.</li> </ul>
Mapping the developing concerns that affect prospects for social cohesion and peace between the Rohingya refugee and host communities, both current and impending potential issues that may arise in the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>IDI</li> <li>FGD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IDI and FGD with host community households (will include youth, elderly, female, male)</li> <li>IDI and FGD with Rohingya</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of key issues/areas (livelihood activities, education, health, protection and WASH) that are either creating cohesion or are escalating conflict between the host and the refugee communities</li> <li>Key areas of focus while identifying the issues - under-</li> </ul>

		<p>from camps (will include youth, elderly, women, male)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KII with camp-in-charge (CiC)</li> <li>• KII with key resource person (from concerned NGOs and/or relevant Government official)</li> <li>• KII with Local Community leaders from the host communities</li> </ul>	<p>funded or have significant gaps of meeting community critical needs, resolving conflict, potential to resolve conflict, escalating conflict between two communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of key social and economic barriers faced by the host and refugee communities that is generating conflict</li> <li>• Identification of means and available support services by public and private entities to resolve the conflict and to ensure social cohesion between the two communities</li> <li>• Documentation of the interaction points and nature of interactions within the communities and the specific triggers and causes how those interactions turn into conflict.</li> <li>• Similarly peace making incidents/events were identified from those IDIs and FGDs</li> </ul>
<p>Evaluation of host &amp; Rohingya refugee communities' awareness about, and recommendations on ways to increase social cohesion, resilience, and peace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDI</li> <li>• FGD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDI and FGD with host community households (will include youth, elderly, women, male)</li> <li>• IDI and FGD with Rohingya from camps (will include youth, elderly, female, male)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions, lived experiences and expectations of the refugee and host communities regarding conflict resolution between them</li> <li>• Need analysis and evaluate the level of awareness of both of the communities regarding conflict and social cohesion.</li> <li>• Identification of required interventions and mechanisms to address the conflicts as per the suggestion of the two communities</li> </ul>
<p>Issuing a set of policy recommendations for key actors aiming to promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KII</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KII with Local Government officials (UZP/UP members) from Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas</li> <li>• KII with key resource</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of establishment of linkages to facilitate and strengthening resilience and peace within the host and the Rohingya communities</li> <li>• Identification of pathways for self-reliance</li> <li>• Identification of the potential entry points and how those align with the project goals, thus</li> </ul>

		person (from concerned NGOs and/or relevant Government official)	providing with high level recommendation, designed to help the key actors aiming to promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence
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## 2.1 Our approach to the assignment

### **Objective 1: Economic and social impact of Rohingya refugee influx**

The socio-economic impact of the Rohingya refugee influx was identified by assessing the macro, meso and micro economic impact of the influx on both the host and refugee communities. Moreover, in order to have a thorough understanding of the Rohingya refugee influx, the consulting team also listed down all the relevant service providers in the study locations of various important services e.g. livelihoods, health, protection, education and WASH in the host and refugee community. It gave us the list of international, national and local NGOs working in the host and refugee community areas along with the activities the NGOs are undertaking. Coverage of the services was understood from the FGDs and IDIs with the host and refugee community members. The interviews and discussions allowed us to understand the level of access the community members have to the services being provided. The gaps were also identified along with it as we are now able to know the specific deficit in the existing service provision or absence of the service itself due to the influx.

### **Objective 2: Identification of the developing concerns that affect prospects for social cohesion and peace between the Rohingya refugee and host communities**

The interaction points in between the two communities were documented. From the FGDs and IDIs with members of the host and Rohingya communities shed light on the nature of interactions within the communities and the specific triggers and causes how those interactions turn into conflict. Similarly, peace making incidents were also identified from those IDIs and FGDs.

### **Objective 3: Perception, lived experience, awareness and expectations of the refugee and host communities regarding conflict resolution and social cohesion between them**

In our understanding, conflict and lack of social cohesion are two of the major contributing factors that create disagreement of economic and natural resources. To understand the nature of conflict due to an influx of Rohingya community, the following key research questions were probed:

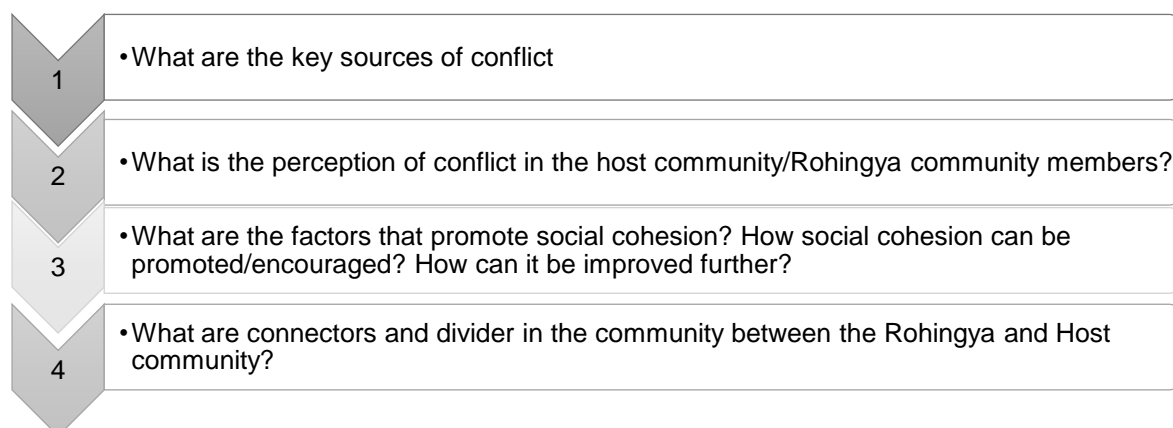


Figure 1: Key research questions

Table 2: Key research questions and approach

Research Question	Tools	Respondents	Methodology
What are the key sources of conflict?	KII IDI FGD	Host community members (IDI and FGD)  Local leaders such as UP chairman, Imam of local mosque or elders in the community (KII)  Local government representative (KII)  Rohingya from camps	The local leaders and the households helped us to understand the specific experience they have had with conflict. In the process, the team formed an understanding of the timeline of the influx e.g. in the 1980s, 2013 and 2017, and how over time the population of Rohingya community kept on expanding and how the increasing numbers of Rohingya community over time caused more pressure on the limited resource and infrastructure of the host community. On top of that KII with important NGOs working in both inside the camp and in the host community helped us to realize the nature of conflict and the trigger points.
What is the perception of conflict in the host community/Rohingya community members?	KII IDI FGD	Host community members (IDI and FGD)  Local leaders such as UP chairman, Imam of local mosque or elders in the community (KII)  Local government representative (KII)  Rohingya refugee from camps	After conducting IDIs and KIIs with households and local leaders, the team acquired an understanding of the local perception (causes of conflict, which factors can contribute to future conflict, how it can be resolved etc.) regarding conflict. The differentiated perception was understood by talking to them.
What are the factors that promote social cohesion? How social cohesion can be	KII IDI	Host community members (IDI and FGD)	The host and Rohingya community members guided us through the story of social cohesion. The key informants from the NGOs already working with social

promoted /encouraged? How can it be improved further?	FGD	Local leaders such as UP chairman, Imam of local mosque or elders in the community (KII)  Local government/NGO representative (KII)  Rohingya from camps	cohesion helped us find ways in which social cohesion can be improved from experience of their work.
What are connectors and divider in the community between the Rohingya and Host community?	KII  IDI  FGD	Host community members (IDI and FGD)  Rohingya community member (IDI and FGD)  Local leaders (KII)  Local government representative (KII)	In order to understand the interactions and transactions within the host community and the Rohingya community, IDIs and FGDs were conducted with in both the communities. The resources over which the members have conflicts had been understood from the interviews (KIIs) and discussions with the local leaders and local government representatives.

#### **Objective 4: Issuing policy recommendations for key actors aiming to promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence between the two communities**

In this objective, the consulting team focused on the potential entry points for the key policy actors who can help with their experience, existing structures and knowledge, in helping DCA to provide high level recommendation aiming to promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence of the host and Rohingya communities.

The study team talked with ISCG officials, National NGOs/INGOs and Government officials. The potential implementing partners were identified, and reached out. The local NGOs were interviewed to understand their current partnership modality and how DCA may engage such partners in the project interventions. Moreover, to understand the key stakeholders in the host community, the local leaders (Union Parishad Chairman, elders etc.) in the community were interviewed to understand their opinion and perception on their role in the community. This is because these power holders can be enabled as change making agents in the community to ensure peace and social cohesion between the two communities.

## **2.2 Data Collection**

### **2.2.1 Primary investigation**

The data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-depth interviews (IDIs) with community dwellers, Rohingyas and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the different local, regional and national level public and private sector stakeholders. Respondents from the host community were selected in a random manner. Snowballing was also applied in order to reach to suitable respondents for deep-dive investigation. DanChurchAid extended their support to reach to the host community households, Rohingya refugee respondents and also to other public and private sector stakeholders.

**Key informant interviews (KIIs):** The assessment team conducted KIIs with Government officials, camp in charge (CiC) and key actors from Government and development agencies. KIIs with Government officials provided with an overview of the Upazilas that helped the study team to define key interventions need to be undertaken to address the challenges and to ensure better living condition, social cohesion and peace between the host and Rohingya communities. Interviews with the key stakeholders helped the study to validate the field findings and to capture their opinion and views with regards to the key research questions. The interviewee list is illustrated in Table 5.

*Table 3: Key informant interviewed*

<b>Key informant interviewed</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
National Coordination Officer, ISCG, Transfers Working Group	1
Government Officials (UP, UZP)	5
Assistant RRRC, Cox's Bazar	1
District/Upazila officials (Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Forestry, Social Service, DPHE, etc.)	9
INGO/NGO representatives	6
Livelihoods Officer, UNHCR	2
Camp in Charge (CiC) of Camp 21	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

**In-depth Interviews (IDIs):** A total of 43 IDIs were conducted with the host population, Rohingyas and different representatives of support service providers (both public and private) to the two communities. Community dwellers were interviewed in order to understand the situation of cohesion and conflict between the host community and the Rohingyas. In addition, the interviews provided a detailed understanding on underlying constraints impeding the development of cohesive ecosystem between the communities. The sample size of the IDIs is detailed in Table.

*Table 4: List of IDIs*

<b>Actors</b>	<b>Upazila/Camp</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Rohingyas from camps	Camp 15 and 21	9
Host community households (daily laborers, farmers, fishermen, housewives, small businessmen and youths)	Ukhiya and Teknaf	25
Support services/Bank/MFIs (both Public and Private)	Ukhiya and Teknaf	6
KII with key market actors (Bazar committee chairman/contractor) within the host and FDMN communities	Ukhiya and Teknaf	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>

**Focused Group Discussion (FGD):** A total of **8 FGDs** were conducted with community dwellers from both the host community and from the Rohingya community. 4 FGDs were conducted with the host community dwellers from Ukhiya and Teknaf upazila and 4 were conducted with the Rohingya refugees from camp-15 and 21. DCA staffs worked as interpreters for the FGDs with the Rohingya refugees. The FGDs were attended by a total of **59 respondents**. Respondents for the FGDs were selected randomly from the host and Rohingya communities. However, snowballing approach was applied for deep-dive investigation. FGDs were conducted with host community dwellers to understand the state of cohesion or conflict with the Rohingyas. The FGDs reflected their expectation, experience and perception on the Rohingya refugees and the impact of the recent influx on the communities. Table 3 details the list of FGDs conducted:

*Table 5: List of FGDs*

Participants	Upazila	Union	Number of FGDs	Number of participants
FGD with the host community dwellers	Teknaf	Whykong	2	14
	Ukhiya	Jaliapalong	2	16
FGD with the Rohingya refugees	Camp 15 and 21		4	29
Total			8	59

## 2.2.2 Secondary literature review

A number of literatures have been reviewed to understand the current socio-economic and socio-cultural impact of the influx. In addition, the historical overview of Rohingya influx in Bangladesh was presented based on review of literature. In case of the current situation of conflict and cohesion between the communities, review of literature complimented the primary investigation findings for a comprehensive analysis. The following situational analysis studies were reviewed in order to generate evidence to the analysis of current societal situation in Cox's Bazar due to the influx:

- Impacts of the Rohingya refugee influx on host communities- UNDP, 2018
- Humanitarian Response- ISCG, 2019
- The Humanitarian Data Exchange.
- Review: Rohingya influx since 1978- ACAPS-NPM
- Joint response plan for Rohingya humanitarian crisis- Strategic Executive Group
- Previous study reports by Innovision Consulting on Rohingya Crisis.

In addition to the situational analysis studies, contemporary articles published in national and international print media were reviewed. A number of scholarly articles were reviewed to generate theoretical basis for the analysis presented in this study.

## 2.2 Study locations

The study was conducted in two camps and sample locations within the two upazilas of Cox's Bazar district mentioned in the ToR: Ukhiya and Teknaf upazila. For the Rohingya assessment, two camps (Camp-15 Jamtoli from Ukhiya and Camp-21 Chakmarkul and Omani site from Teknaf) were visited. Moreover, for assessing the impact of Rohingya

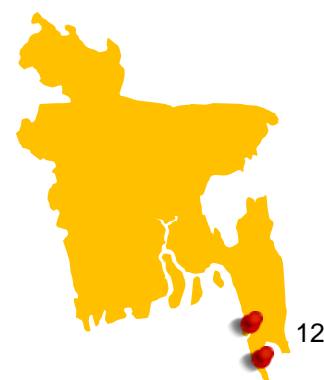


Image 1: Study Locations



refugee influx on the host communities, one union of Ukhiya (Jaliapalong Union) and one union of Teknaf (Whykong Union) were concentrated.

## 2.3 Data Analysis

Detailed interview notes were produced after each interview. Several discussion sessions were held among the team to draw on key messages at the beginning of the data analysis. All data was then analysed systematically by themes. The study findings were then plotted against key indicators set in the analytical framework for further analysis.

## 2.4 Limitations of the Study

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, collecting data for the study proved challenging. Interview with government officials was difficult to arrange within this short span of time. The proposed samples for the study from the study locations can only indicate trends and are not representative of the population as a whole. Moreover, there weren't enough sources of latest reliable quantitative data. Hence the assessment team had to rely on qualitative field findings. The data was collected from October 12, 2020 to October 15, 2020. Overall, given the unprecedented circumstances, respondents found it difficult to speak on future plans and possible impact of the influx on their lives and livelihoods which have been more exacerbate due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, with most of them stating that they had very little reference to base their responses on. Moreover, female FGD and IDI respondents were conserved in terms of self-reporting cases of gender-based violence.

## Chapter 3: Setting the Scene

### 3.1 Historical overview of Rohingya influx in Bangladesh

1942 witnessed the first significant displacement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when over 20,000 Rohingyas fled to the Bengal in the then pre-partition India (ACAPS NPM, 2017). Since the independence, Bangladesh experienced 4 major Rohingya influx in the years 1978, 1991-1992, 1997 and 2016-2017. The recent exodus (in 2016-2017), however, is the largest till date when more than 740,000 Rohingyas had to flee Myanmar and took shelter in Bangladesh (ACAPS NPM, 2017). Although the significant portion of the Rohingyas, who came to Bangladesh before 2016 had been repatriated into Myanmar, a large number of Rohingyas stayed back. A brief overview of the major influx is stated as follows:

**The 1978 influx:** After the independence, a large number of Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh following the renewed persecution by the *Maghs*<sup>2</sup>. However, prompt diplomatic actions by the Bangladeshi Government compelled the Burmese regime to take back the refugees and rehabilitate them in Myanmar.

Within a few years, the military Junta launched “Operation Naga Min” or Operation King Dragon and killed over 10,000 Rohingyas. Following the military aggression around 250,000 Rohingyas fled Myanmar and took shelter in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2019). The military operation was initiated following the efforts to register citizens and screen out foreigners from Myanmar (ACAPS NPM, 2017). The refugees were sheltered in 13 refugee camps constructed in the districts of Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban of Bangladesh. The camps were established with UN assistance. The two Governments signed an agreement for repatriation of the refugees in 1979. According to the agreement, the Myanmar Government took back the refugees under a program titled “Operation Golden Eagle” (Ahmed, 2019). A total of 180,000 Rohingyas had been repatriated between 1978-1979 (ACAPS NPM, 2017).

**The 1991-92 influx:** Following the Junta’s<sup>3</sup> rejection in Myanmar’s parliamentary polls, the military targeted the Rohingyas in 1990. The increased presence of Myanmar military in the Rakhine state prompted the exodus of an estimated 250,000 Rohingyas. The refugees were provided shelter in 19 camps constructed in Cox’s Bazar. The GoB took measures to settle the Rohingyas in the camps and restricted movements of the refugees. As a result, the integration with the host population was limited during this influx. The repatriation began in April, 1992. A MoU was signed between GoB and UNHCR in 1993 to facilitate further repatriation. Between 1993 and 1997 over 230,000 Rohingyas had been repatriated (ACAPS NPM, 2017).

**The 1997 influx:** High food price and forced labor imposed by the military drove thousands of Rohingyas into Bangladesh in 1996-97. However, the refugees during this period did not take shelter in the camps, rather stayed in the host communities with the local inhabitants. This is due to the civil unrest and restriction of movement imposed on the Rohingyas. During this period, the Rohingyas got mixed with the Bangladeshis making the counting of the new arrivals difficult. Repatriation resumed in 1998 with only 800 Rohingyas repatriated from the camps (ACAPS NPM, 2017). The repatriation process was almost halted since 2005.

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<sup>2</sup> The Magh is the term used in the history of Bengali and others people of South Asia for the Arakanese or Rakhine people of Arakan.

<sup>3</sup> A military junta is a government led by a committee of military leaders.

**The 2016-2017 influx:** In October 2016, following a military operation in the Rakhine state of Myanmar had resulted in over 87,000 Rohingya people to flee Myanmar and take shelter in Bangladesh. Majority of the refugees took shelter in Ukhiya Upazila of Cox's Bazar district in the newly formed Balukhali makeshift settlement (ACAPS NPM, 2017). The military crackdown was followed by an attack in Border Guard Police by a Rohingya armed group, Harakah-Al-Yaqin (Faith Movement) in Rakhine state of Myanmar (UNHCR, 2018). Violence resulted in mass movements from August, 2017. Between August to December, 2017, more than 700,000 Rohingyas were forced to flee and take shelter in Bangladesh. This period witnessed 300 villages burned to ashes and killing of around 10,000 Rohingyas by the military (Ahmed, 2019). The violence resulted in the largest refugee crisis in the history of Bangladesh.

*Table 6: Period of arrival of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh<sup>4</sup>*

Arrival period	Number of persons	% of total
Before 9 October, 2016	72, 821	8%
Between 9 Oct 2016 and 24 Aug 2017	93, 645	11%
<b>Between 25 Aug 2017 and 31 Dec 2017</b>	<b>712,179</b>	<b>80%</b>
January 2018-Present	13,223	1%

The GoB and GoM signed a repatriation agreement on November 23, 2017. The agreement was based on the earlier repatriation agreement of 1993. According to the agreement, the Rohingya individuals must provide proof of residency in Myanmar and should voluntarily wish to return. After their repatriation, the Rohingyas will be settled in temporary camps in the Rakhine state with movement restriction until their accommodation near their former home is ensured (Paul, 2017). However, there has been no progress on repatriation till date.

**Present context:** During the 1978 influx, as many as 20 camps were set-up by the GoB in Cox's Bazar district. However, with the repatriation of most of the refugees all the camps were closed except the Nayapara and Kutupalong camps, giving shelter to the remaining 21,621 refugees (Ullah, 2011).

While the repatriation agreement between GoB and GoM has been signed, a UNHCR survey reported that only 30% of the Rohingyas wished to repatriate. The survey also reported that a sizable number of Rohingyas has been living with the host population (Ullah, 2011). A total of 33,000 Rohingya refugees were registered in Bangladesh prior to 2017. The refugees were officially resided in UNHCR managed camps. However, it is estimated that an additional 200,000-500,000 Rohingya individuals were living in informal settlements and with the host population in Bangladesh (ACAPS NPM, 2017).

The recent exodus has impacted the socio-economic condition of the communities of Cox's Bazar. The influx has instigated an imbalanced competition over scarce resources and consequently impacted on the Bangladeshis' livelihoods. In addition, the ecological impact of the influx is severe. To understand the reasons behind the consequences of the influx, we looked into the stance of Bangladesh with the other countries hosting refugees.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/5bbc6f014.pdf>

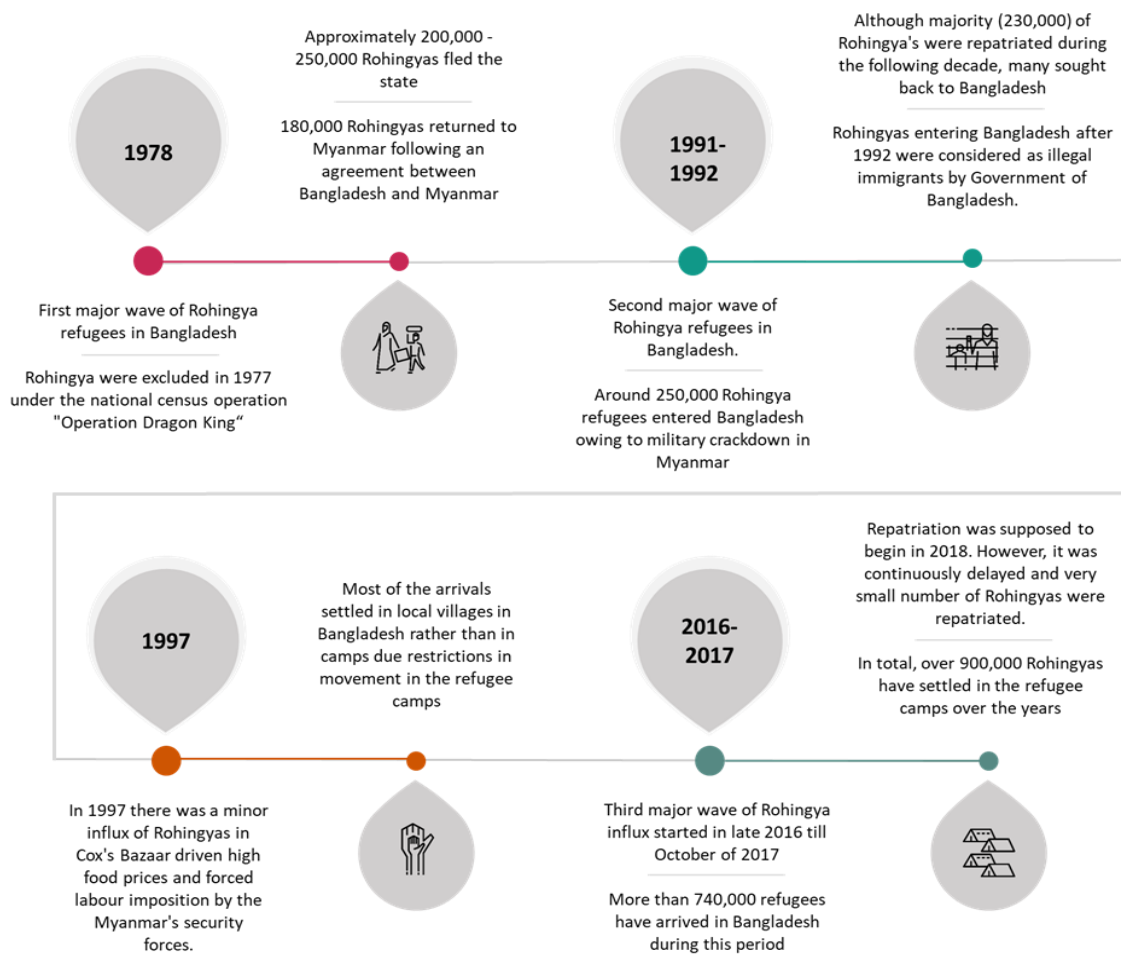
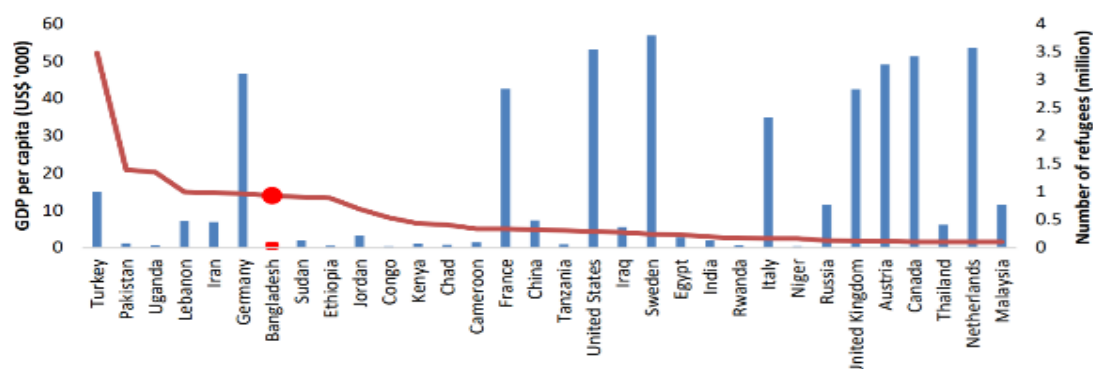


Figure 2: Timeline of Refugee Influx (Years and Events)

**Bangladesh is amongst the poorest countries to host such a large number of refugees:** Bangladesh, situated in the south-east Asia, is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The country is home to nearly 160 million people. Bangladesh shares with Myanmar only 6.14% of its total land boundary in only 2 (Bandarban and Cox's Bazar) of its 64 districts (Guhathakurta, 2017). Bangladesh is among the poorest countries in the world to host such a large number of refugees. Figure 3 illustrates the stance of Bangladesh with the other countries hosting refugees. As can be seen in the figure, Bangladesh is hosting large number of refugees with a low GDP per capita.

Figure 3: GDP per capita against number of refugees hosted



Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar districts, however, are the main host Upazilas of the Rohingya refugees. While Cox's Bazar is currently hosting about a million refugees, the district itself is one of Bangladesh's poorest and most vulnerable areas, with 17% of people living below the extreme poverty line, compared to the national average of 12.9%<sup>5</sup>. In addition, Ukhiya and Teknaf are among the most socially deprived Upazilas of Bangladesh (ACAPS-NPM, 2018). The strain on the economy of the two Upazilas, hence is increasing tension between the two communities. For these reasons, the GoB has continued its diplomatic efforts for the Rohingya repatriation. The repatriation efforts that has been made is discussed below.

**Rohingyas are receiving more aid compared to the Bangladeshis:** Since the 2017 influx, the GoB and development agencies have been serving the needs of the Rohingya refugees. In addition to the Rohingyas, the host community dwellers are also receiving aid. However, the Rohingya refugees have been receiving more compared to the Bangladeshis. The figure below illustrates the funding allocation for the Rohingya refugees and for the Bangladeshis<sup>6</sup>.

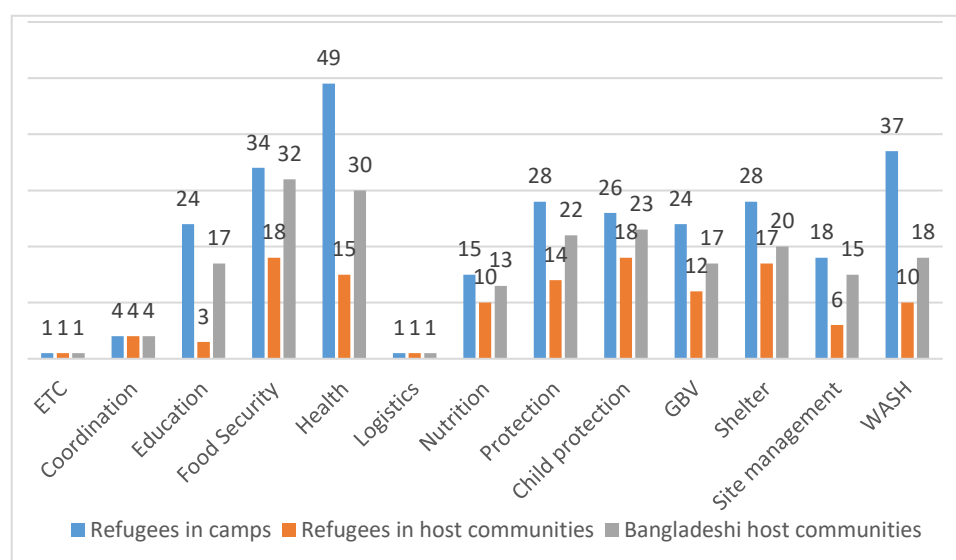


Figure 4: Number of development partners (including implementing partners): sector disaggregated

<sup>5</sup> <http://blog.brac.net/new-opportunities-in-the-face-of-new-challenges-in-coxs-bazar/>

<sup>6</sup> Source: [UNHCR](#)

**Diplomatic efforts for Rohingya repatriation:** A repatriation agreement was signed between GoB and GoM on November 23, 2017 (Paul, 2017). However, the repatriation did not begin till date. On November 11, the Gambia filed a case against Myanmar under the Genocide Convention with the International Court of Justice (The Guardian, 2019). On 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2020, the ICJ orders Myanmar to take steps to prevent genocide of the Rohingyas (Swart, 2020). Bangladesh remained engaged with the world, especially with India, the US, the European Union and China to ensure safe repatriation of the Rohingyas.

### 3.1 Interventions that are being undertaken

The GoB and the development agencies undertook several initiatives to support the host community dwellers and Rohingya refugees. The 2017 influx called for attention for aid to support the large refugee population. Since the beginning of the influx, development agencies have been providing aid with support from the GoB.

**Support from the GoB:** The GoB has been the primary authority since the beginning of influx to extend support to the refugees. The GoB has been extending support through providing lands, increasing the security system, establishment of effective governance mechanism and allocation of lands for setting-up camps. Figure 5 illustrates the Government initiatives for the Rohingya refugees:

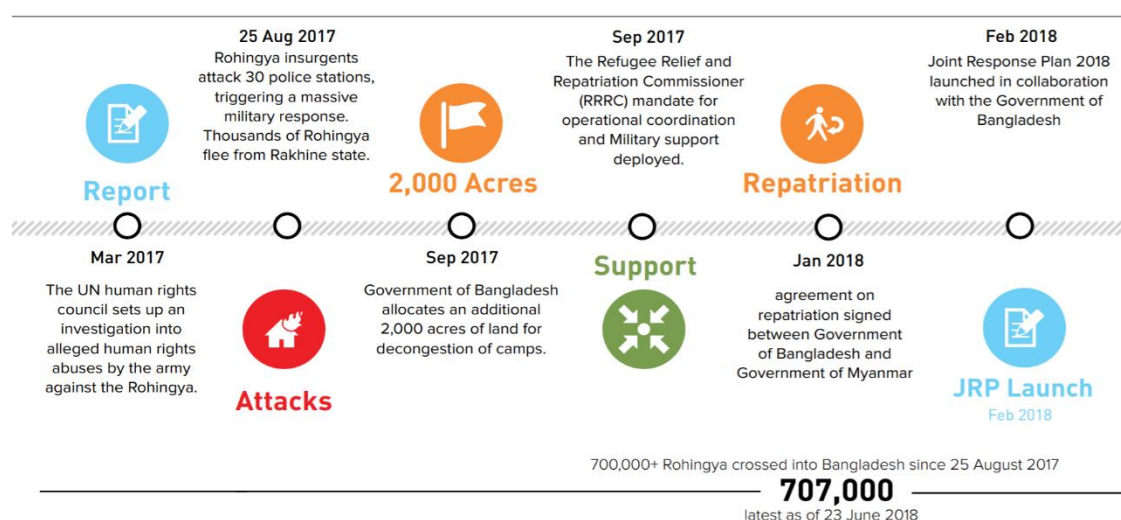


Figure 5: Government support and initiative for the Rohingya refugees

**Development agencies' initiatives:** Since the beginning of 2017 influx, donor agencies from around the world have extended their support through allocating funds to tackle the refugee crisis. Such as:

- According to JRP 2019, the total appeal for the FY 2019 was USD 920M of which USD 313M (34%) was received till July, 2019 (Relief web, 2019). Building on the efforts and success of previous years, the appeal aims to raise \$877 million to respond to the needs of approximately 855,000 Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, and over 444,000 vulnerable Bangladeshis in the communities generously hosting them. Vital services and assistance including access to food,

shelter, clean water and sanitation require urgent funding and 55% of the overall appeal, with food needs alone accounting for almost 29%<sup>7</sup>.

- Since 2017, the EU has provided over \$156.67 million in aid to respond to the Rohingya crisis both in Myanmar and in Bangladesh. In 2020, EU releases new tranche of \$11m aid for Rohingyas<sup>8</sup>.
- Recently in 2020, the UN World Food Programme will implement a \$35 million project to provide work opportunities and community services among the Rohingya population. This includes food assistance support to 700,000 people as part of the Covid-19 humanitarian response in the camps. The project will scale up self-reliance opportunities for extremely vulnerable families in the camps and target young people with volunteering opportunities to promote social cohesion after post COVID-19 restrictions. The self-reliance programmes aim to improve the economic and social resilience of 60,000 displaced Rohingya population households. The project will also aims to provide work opportunities for around 40,000 Rohingya households which is equivalent to reaching more than 20% of the camp population, to help improve camp conditions through public works such as site, accessibility, and drainage improvement as well as reforestation.<sup>9</sup>
- The Germany government has contributed a new USD 4.5 million funding to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to support the Rohingya community in Bangladesh. WFP provides food assistance to 860,000 Rohingya people each month and is supporting around 600,000 people in the host community in Cox's Bazar.<sup>10</sup>
- UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has welcomed the generous, multi-year contribution of 14 million euros (approximately BDT 139 crore) from the European Union, which will support UNHCR's continued protection and assistance of Rohingyas and host communities in Cox's Bazar.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.1. Coordination between the institutions to support both the host and the Rohingya communities

Since the 2017 influx, both the GoB and the development agencies from around the world extended their support to tackle the massive influx. Both the host communities and the Rohingya refugees have been supported through an effective coordination between the Government and the development agencies. Host community necessities have been identified and supported accordingly in addition to the aid provided to the Rohingya refugees. Hence, to support both the community's coordination is critical for effective use of scarce resources of these two Upazilas (Byron, 2017). Support for the host communities' initiative has been launched by UNHCR in 2019. The initiatives for the host communities include construction of schools, construction of housing units for the population living next to refugee settlements, washing and toilet facilities and distribution of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders (New Age, 2019)

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2020/03/03/2020-irp-launched-un-appeals-for-877m-to-look-after-rohingyas>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2020/01/02/eu-releases-new-tranche-of-11m-aid-for-rohingyas>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/wfp-implement-35m-project-rohingya-refugees-1909089>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/un-world-food-programme-germany-provides-45m-rohingyas-1934597>

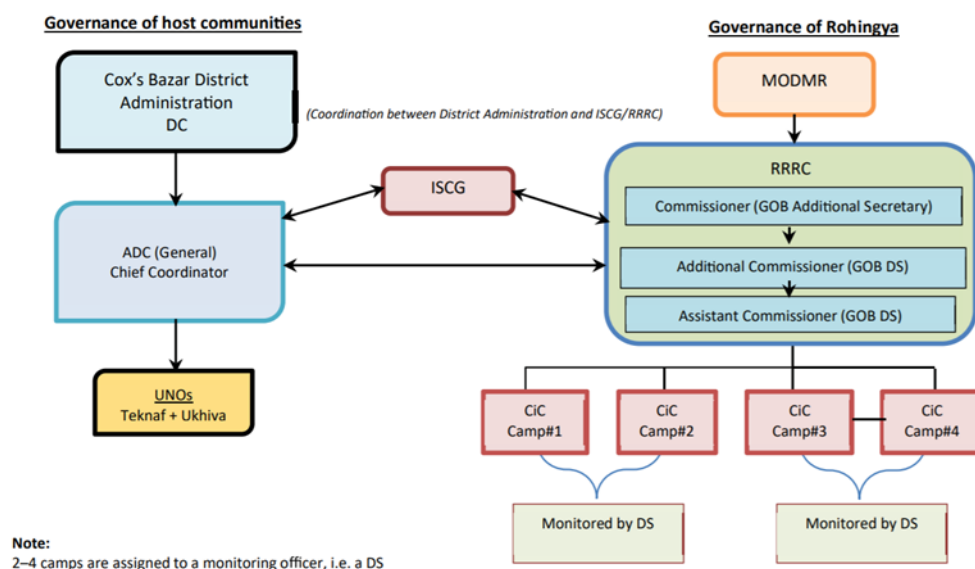
<sup>11</sup> <https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/news/unhcr-welcomes-eus-support-rohingyas-host-communities-coxs-bazar-1986217>



The progress and achievements since the first day of the massive Rohingya influx are remarkable, but strong international solidarity and funding support for the refugees and Bangladeshi communities will be essential to help the Bangladesh government and humanitarian partners to continue meeting the challenges until Rohingya refugees can return home voluntarily in safety and dignity.

In order to ensure an effective governance system, the GoB and the development partners have been working in collaboration to address the needs and challenges of both the host community and of the refugees. Figure 6 illustrates the current governance system in Cox's Bazar district:

Figure 6: Governance structure of the host community and the Rohingya refugees<sup>12</sup>



<sup>12</sup><https://www.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub2019/Impacts%20of%20the%20Rohingya%20Refugee%20Influx%20on%20Host%20Communities.pdf>

## Chapter 4: Socio-Economic Impact of the Rohingya Refugee Influx on the Host Communities

### 4.1 Arising conflict

The structural theory defines conflict *“as a product of the tension that arises when groups compete for scarce resources”* (Folarin, 2013). The definition views conflict as a product of tension that arises when groups compete for resources. The long presence of refugees in a community can increase tension through creating strain on host communities’ economic resources. The increased tension between the communities can further lead to conflict.

Rohingyas have been seeking refuge in Bangladesh since the 1980s. Primarily the Bangladeshi host community dwellers were the first to respond to the crisis. Host community dwellers have been providing food, shelter to the refugees. At first, there was harmony and peace between the two communities until 2017. However, the recent massive influx and the extended presence of the Rohingya refugees have impacted the ‘good feeling’ of the Bangladeshis. The long-standing relationship between the communities and the harmony has been disrupting due to extensive competition with the scarce resources of Cox’s Bazar. Anecdotal cases show there were some conflicts between the two communities as Bangladeshis struggled with resources during 1990-2016.

The situation is worsening as the increasing tension is taking the form of grievances in several aspects within the host population. Furthermore, the influx has impacted the livelihood, ecology and security situation of Cox’s Bazar leading the two communities to a conflicting environment. The grievances of the host community are detailed below:

### 4.2 Impact on host community Lives and Livelihood

**Livelihood of the host community dwellers has been severely disrupted:** The presence of nearly a million refugees is affecting the livelihoods of the host population living in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox’s Bazar district. Agricultural and non-agricultural day labor is one of the prevalent livelihoods of the region. According to a survey<sup>13</sup> conducted in March-April 2019 in Ukhiya and Teknaf, it was reported that 62% of the ultra-poor population is engaged in either farm or non-farm day labor work.

Among the surveyed respondents who were engaged in agricultural production, fishing related activities, firewood collection and micro merchants are the worst hit by the influx. 98% of the surveyed respondents from the host communities reported that their income has decreased after the influx. Firewood collectors now have no place to collect the firewood as many camps have been constructed in the forest areas. Moreover, findings reveal that, the local demand for firewood has been declined to approximately 40% revealed by the respondents due to increasing use of LPG gas. Due to the fear of theft of their livestock by the Rohingyas, many of the dwellers had to sell their livestock as they now cannot graze their livestock at the nearby hillside where camps have been established.

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<sup>13</sup> The survey was conducted for the “Market Assessment and Value Chain Analysis Study for Gender-inclusive Pathways out of Poverty for Vulnerable Households in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh” (April, 2019)

Where every household was supposed to get one ration card, many Rohingya families collect ration against multiple ration cards by registering multiple ration card in the same family. Through this clever endeavour, they sell many humanitarian reliefs items outside the camps. This is why now majority of the micro merchants are now struggling with credit burden as the Rohingyas are now selling the relief items at a cheaper rate in the local market. Due to price hike, the number of customers has also declined. Number of fishers has increased to 60% as the Rohingyas are now replacing the local fishers. As a result, there is lack of fish in the sea/river which has resulted in high price of fish and has affected the demand-supply situation of the fish market.

With a fall in daily labor wages and a rise in the prices of basic staples, people living in poverty are resorting to desperate measures to cope, including the selling of small assets and livestock, taking on increased debt and risky migration. Many poor people were forced to change their profession (from agricultural production/fishing shifting to day labor ship, shrimp/crab/salt farming, auto rickshaw pulling, mobile servicing etc.). It is also reported by the host community respondents that some NGOs prefer the Rohingyas over the host population in times of providing jobs/day labor works.



“Previously, we used to divide the fish that we caught from the sea into 5-6 shares. Usually the owner of the boat and boatman take 2 shares from it and we the local fishers share the other portions among ourselves. But now, as Rohingyas go along with us in the same boat to catch fish, we have to divide the collected fish into 8-9 shares. Moreover, availability of fish has been decreased than before as number of local and Rohingya fishers has increased. Sometimes we have a conflict over the sharing of collected fish with the Rohingyas.”

- Md. Mohin (30); Jaliapalong, Ukhiya

*“At present I have to sell the betel nuts at BDT 150-180/kg which I used to sell at BDT 300-400/kg in the local market. Reduction in income from my business of betel nuts has forced me to start tailoring as an alternative way of earning money to survive with my family of eight.”*

- Fatema Begum (32); Jaliapalong, Ukhiya

**Labor market disruption:** A significant number of community dwellers are engaged in labor work in all the study areas. Majority of the respondents from Ukhiya and Teknaf reported that the labor market has been disrupted by the Rohingyas after the influx. The Rohingyas are disrupting the labor market by offering labor work at a lower price. Whereas a daily labor of host population could work 20-22 days/month before the influx, at present they can only manage to work 10-15 days/month. The daily wage has also been declining for the past 2 years. While Bangladeshi labors do not work for less than BDT 500-700/day, Rohingyas reported to work at a rate of BDT 200-300/day.

According to a BRAC report on the impact of Rohingya refugees on host communities, there is a significant depression in wage rates in Ukhiya and Teknaf<sup>14</sup>. According to the survey, the average wage for day labor has decreased by 55%, particularly in agriculture, salt fields and earthen work. Our primary investigation suggests that the labor market disruption has negative impact on the host population. The Rohingya labors are allegedly travelling around the villages, especially in Ukhiya and Teknaf and offering labor work in a much lower rate. As a result, employers do not intend to hire the Bangladeshis anymore. Whereas the employers are gaining more profit by engaging the Rohingyas, Bangladeshis, in large numbers, are losing their jobs. Although it is illegal to employ the Rohingyas, host communities claim that the practice has been running rampant without regulation. Surveyed poor host community households are offering labor on credit in search for work. Unnatural competitiveness has been fuelling the tension between the communities and is reaching towards conflict.

“My husband is the only earning member in our family of three (03). We depend solely on his day labor (work in paddy field/pulls van/auto rickshaw) income. Before the Rohingyas came into our country, he used to earn BDT 800/day which has reduced to BDT 400 due to cheap labor offering by the Rohingyas. Previously, the owners/mahajans willingly used to offer us work. However, now we have to struggle every day to find work for our living”

**-Bulbul Akhter (27); Jaliapalong, Ukhiya**

**Price hike of the commodities are straining host communities’ economy:** The massive influx has caused a significant rise in the market demand for the daily commodities. According to the study titled “Impacts of the Rohingya Refugee Influx on Host Communities conducted by UNDP, Rohingya influx has caused 50% price hike of essential commodities<sup>15</sup>. The unnatural rise in the price has caused significant disruption in the supply-demand situation in the markets of Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas. Moreover, a section of traders is also exploiting the situation, mainly in two upazilas of the district, to manipulate the market for making a windfall profit.

The unnatural increase in price has consequently straining the local economy and consequently exerting pressure, especially to the poor population residing in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas. However, it was reported that although the price of the daily commodities is rising, there is no food crisis at present in Cox’s Bazar. The price of foods containing protein, such as fish, eggs, meat, fresh vegetables and milk, has skyrocketed in Cox’s Bazar, especially in areas densely populated by refugees. However, the Rohingyas, after meeting the family needs, sell rice, lentils, edible oil, sugar, salt, and soap at a cheaper price on the local market which they receive as a relief item from donors / NGOs. Wholesalers buy food and non-food items from the Rohingyas and sell them to the organizations again.

Most people in the host communities have modest incomes from informal agricultural and non-agricultural work, and the rise in prices of commodities due to the surge of

<sup>14</sup> <http://blog.brac.net/new-opportunities>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.daily-sun.com/post.php?id=154444&cat=1&sub=1>  
[wages](#)



Image 2: Once cultivable land for the Bangladeshis is now home to the FDMNs

Rohingyas has reduced their purchasing power. Sometimes poor people pass their days in starving. Findings also revealed that, many households have reduced their protein consumption due to excessive rise in price of protein contained foods. Some of the respondents reported that, they used to eat fish/meat 2-3 times in a month. But now they reduced it to once in every three months. KIIs with different government officials also revealed that, house rent has grown five times after the arrival of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar district.

**Land loss:** According to an estimate by the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), at least 100 ha of crop land from Ukhiya/Teknaf peninsula were damaged by refugee activities. In addition, 76 ha of arable land were occupied by refugee settlements and humanitarian agencies (UNDP, 2018).

A significant number of people lost land where they had been residing, used to collect firewood, cultivate crops, as the camps were constructed in those lands. Production of various seasonal crops such as corn, eggplant, wheat, gourd, radish, spinach, sweet pumpkin has been hampered due to lower fertility rate of the cultivable land and is being imported from outside Cox's Bazar district. The significant land loss has impacted the host communities and their household economy.

**Poor status of transportation:** Road infrastructure of Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas has been severely damaged by massive Rohingya influx in Cox's Bazar. The presence of nearly a million refugees and the aid agencies created additional pressure to the road infrastructure. The damaged roads have been identified as one of the grievances by the respondents. The damaged roads and overpopulation has caused the transportation price to be increased, as reported by the respondents. In some areas of the district, transport fares have more than doubled. Over the past year, locals say, the cost of tricycle journeys has raised from BDT 20 to BDT 50. Moreover, the inhabitants are concerned of their security, especially of women's, during commuting. Number of security check post has increased than before. It has been expressed by the respondents that women are being harassed, allegedly by the refugees, as the transports are now congested and the streets are overcrowded.

**Security disruption:** The presence of nearly a million refugees has disrupted security of the host population. There are cases of robbery, theft and other social vices (gambling, using drugs etc.) in camp adjacent villages. The respondents from the host communities reported to be accusing the refugees for these incidents. The armed groups are rising among the Rohingyas who have been allegedly robbing villages and kidnapping Bangladeshis. In addition, 85-90% women and girls from host communities and Rohingya refugees are victims of Gender Based Violence (GBV) such as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), sexual harassment, eve teasing, dowry in the study locations. Owing to rising gender-based abuse, early marriage and polygamy rates have risen. Findings revealed that, in Doingakaka village of Whykong upazila, polygamy rate is increasing day by day.

**Political grievances:** Political instability has risen due to the influx. Respondents explained how this shows up in various forms, including: increased corruption in the distribution of relief, perceived biasness of law enforcement bodies toward refugees over locals, decreased access to various public services such as hospitals, and inadequate camp security and checkpoints to limit the mobility of refugees. Many respondents expressed a sense of humiliation at having to show identification at checkpoints just to travel within their own communities. These dynamics lead to a sense of animosity between local people and security actors.

Moreover, mechanisms of seeking justice and protection are mostly informal in both of the communities. Formal proceedings of seeking justice is time consuming as law enforcing agencies are mostly involved in resolving Rohingya related crime issues reported by the host communities. In addition, lack of trust in law enforcing authorities leads local people to attempt resolving disputes



privately, without referring problems to police or other security actors. As the local people feel the bureaucratic process is burdensome and pointless and there will be no chance of the offending Rohingya being apprehended. Cases were also reported of giving bribe to the law enforcing agencies for getting justice by the host communities.

**Degradation of environment:** The refugee crisis in Bangladesh has cost the country around 90 million dollars' worth 6,800 acres of forestland<sup>16</sup>. Forests had to be cleared and hills levelled to make room for constructing temporary shelter for the refugees. The deforestation has also impacted the environment of Bangladesh in addition to the country's vulnerability to climate change (UNDP, 2018). Increased temperatures, landslides, heavy rainfall, collapse of mountains are making the land more vulnerable to natural disasters.

Forest based livelihoods such as firewood collection activity; planting medicinal plants, honey collection etc. have been severely affected. In addition to collecting firewood for fuel, a large number of Bangladeshis were also reported to be collecting firewood for selling purpose. The growing dependency on fuel for both the communities has created tension due to scarce resources. In addition to the Bangladeshis, Rohingyas burn more than 1 million pounds of firewood daily. However, at present, Rohingyas and host communities are being supplied gas cylinders for cooking fuel, which consequently reduced the tension between the communities (Chowdhury, Benar News, 2018). Local demand for firewood has been declined to approximately 40% revealed by the respondents due to usage of LPG gas by the two communities. Moreover, KII with the forest department revealed that, 12,000 lakhs seedlings have recently been planted in 2020 in Inani point to mitigate the impact of environmental degradation. Moreover, many NGOs are also planting seedlings in the camp areas.

Species of wildlife are coming under threat due to the environmental degradation. Reproduction and habitation of elephant has been severely affected. Wild animals often come into the locality in search of food and destroy the farm land and vegetable garden of the poor people. Cases were reported of wild elephant attacks on the local people.

**Loss of access to government services and institutions:** Government authorities (Upazila Chairman and other officials) were seen by respondents as being too busy dealing with refugee issues. Because so many Rohingya refugees have attempted to procure false documents, locals face delays and challenges in accessing birth registration services/NID cards etc. There is heavy scrutiny alongside highly profitable corruption, as Rohingya refugees now pay large bribes for documents, reported by the respondents.

**Impact on education:** Majority of the children are going to Government primary schools and/or to Madrashas in the study locations. However, education facilities of the host population have been obstructed after the influx. Due to poverty, youths are being engaged in livelihood works from a very early age. For this reason, the dropout rate is getting higher day by day. Many teachers from local schools and colleges are leaving teaching jobs to get high income jobs with aid agencies in the camp areas. Findings also revealed that, due to far distance and increasing risk of violence, girls are not being sent to high schools. Child marriage is also existent in some of the communities, restricting education of women.

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<https://www.inquisitorbd.com/rohingya-crisis-is-bangladesh-a-victim-of-international-politics/#:~:text=As%20a%20result%2C%20200%2C000%20-250%2C000%20Rohingyas%20fled%20to,Saudi%20Arabia%2C%20India%2C%20and%20the%20Worl%20Muslim%20League>

**Deteriorating health and WASH facilities:** Respondents reported that, in the government community clinics and Upazila health complexes, there is a shortage of trained health staff. Most of the health workers, nurse and mid-wives are working in the hospitals located in the camp areas. Sometimes Rohingyas are referred by the NGOs private health care centers to access local hospitals and clinics which cause longer queues and affecting the quality of services in the local hospitals. Though the camp clinics had been built to treat both refugees and locals, the host community respondents reported that, in those clinics' preferences are given to the Rohingyas over them. In some communities there are no community clinics such as in Kharingaghana village of Whykong union. Community Groups and Community Support Groups are not existent. Rate of vaccination programs, medicine distribution, and pregnancy services has declined than before reported by the respondents. Moreover, the WASH situation is also deteriorating in the host communities. In some communities, some dwellers do not have sanitary latrine facilities and Tube-wells. Some of the respondents complained that, deep tube wells set up inside the Rohingya camps have reduced the overall groundwater levels in the area as a result they are experiencing scarcity of water. Additionally, cost of setting-up Tube-well and sanitary latrines got 4 times higher in two years. Construction of a latrine and installing tube-well usually cost BDT 30,000 to 40,000 which now cost more than BDT 100,000<sup>17</sup> as the aquifer level goes down and more depth is now needed for safe water. Due to lack of adequate sanitation and infrastructural facilities, the danger of health hazards is increasing. These crises will keep on increasing if high prices of products in markets persist, reported by the respondents.

## 4.1. Opportunities resulting from the refugee influx

Findings from the IDIs and FGDs revealed that, both male and female respondents from the host community acknowledged various benefits that had arisen from the response, but felt that these were mainly reserved for educated and non-local Bangladeshis, with poor people suffering the brunt of the problems while gaining few of the rewards.

**Increased number of NGOs/development organization:** While asking about the improvements in the host communities of Ukhiya and Teknaf after the influx, the respondents reported about the increased presence of different INGOs/NGOs in their locality. Moreover, in recent times, Bangladesh's government requested the NGOs and INGOs to provide at least 25-30% services to the host community, in the forms of infrastructure work which is increasing the capacity of the locals' educational system and providing livelihood opportunities to them.

**New job opportunities:** Before the INGOs arrived, the locals' source of income came mainly from the forest and agriculture, such as woodcutting and land cultivation. However, now many of them have been employed by the NGOs to work in the camps, mainly labor jobs and infrastructure camp development. A remarkable number of job opportunities with high salaries had been made available to the small number of well-educated and locally influential people. Moreover, the growing activity of NGOs in the area has boosted some local businesses, including the owners of engine-powered rickshaws or tom-toms whose customer figures have risen, reported by the respondents. The response has also opened up opportunities to learn new knowledge and many interactions are now

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.inquisitorbd.com/rohingya-crisis-is-bangladesh-a-victim-of-international-politics/#:~:text=As%20a%20result%2C%20200%2C000%20-250%2C000%20Rohingyas%20fled%20to,Saudi%20Arabia%2C%20India%2C%20and%20the%20World%20Muslim%20League>



taking place between locals and educated Bangladeshis from Dhaka and elsewhere, as well as with foreigners arriving to work on the response.

**Flourishing local economy:** The local markets have expanded greatly, now running seven days a week compared to twice weekly before reported by the respondents. Participants appreciated the increased market access but noted that most of the markets are owned and controlled by locally influential people, so this access brought limited financial benefit to local sellers. Similarly, due to increasing demands from the larger population, goods and groceries are now more widely available throughout the area though at higher prices.

Outside the camps, registered Rohingya refugees those who had arrived in Cox's Bazar during previous waves of displacement, have set up bustling marketplaces where the Rohingyas sell goods to locals at cheaper prices such as rice, lentil, oils and cosmetics. It has created opportunity for many local people to start-up their own shops in the local market.



*"Rohingyas sell their relief items at a cheap price and many people in my village used to buy goods from them at a cheaper price. This inspired me to open my own shop in this local market. Now it has been two years, I am operating my business in this local market of Jaliapalong. Many of my dealers are Rohingyas and there is no situation of conflict between us."*

*Towhidul Islam, a hawker from Jaliapalong market, Ukhiya*

Respondents also reported that, families living within or adjacent to the camps have benefitted well by selling or renting land to refugees as well as NGOs and NGO workers at expensive rates. Moreover, the business of tourism outlets has increased due to the influx of NGO workers staying in Cox's Bazar district. Infrastructure in hotels and restaurants has developed due to the presence of foreign staff members of these organizations.

"Different NGOs such as CARE, DCA, IOM, RIC are now working in our area for the betterment of our livelihoods. Recently, CARE Bangladesh has distributed arsenic free tube wells in our locality (1 tube well/10 families). There is a safe women and children space in our village established by DCA. Many micro credit organizations such as ASA, BRAC, RIC are now providing loans/cash allowance for income generating activities (IGAs). After the influx, we lost our income and it was difficult for us to start a new work without any capital. However, these NGOs are helping us by providing capital for work and skill development trainings. Our wives/females in the households are now getting engaged in different IGAs (cultivating vegetables, livestock rearing, handicrafts etc.). LPGs were distributed among the poor households to make up the loss of firewood. A NGO named

Rick is distributing BDT 1050/month to their beneficiaries for buying nutritional food. "

27

**Jaliapalong Union, Ukhiya.**

**Improved transportation and communication system:** The number of vehicles providing local transportation services has increased. Several new roads have been constructed, but all the old roads have been breaking down due to the operation of heavy vehicles. Communication system (internet connectivity) has improved than before.

**Increased government services, health, education and WASH facilities:** A number of new NGOs have arrived to set up clinics and hospitals in the camp and host areas. This has somewhat enhanced medical services in the locality, especially for pregnant women. The increased access to maternal care and delivery services was one of the most frequently mentioned benefits by the respondents. Some NGOs are also building new school classrooms in the host community. Participants also acknowledged receiving material aid such as tube-wells, latrines, LPG gas, hygiene kits, and household items from NGOs, but said these are inequitably distributed. Recently, BDRC and Red Crescent NGO have provided latrines to the host households in Juyarikhola village of Whykong union of Teknaf. KII with the official from the Social Welfare Department and Upazila Chairman of Ukhiya revealed that, Additional 20,000 new VGD/VGF cards have been issued in the recent year.

**Creation of women entrepreneurs in the locality:** The presence of the NGOs has a positive social impact. Such as, women especially are venturing out of the social boundaries imposed on them. Many local women had found jobs in the education, medical and aid sectors. Different NGOs are now engaging females from the host community households in different IGAs (cultivating vegetables, livestock rearing, handicrafts etc.) to supply the produced products in the camps.

## Chapter 5: Existing and Impending Potential Issues Impacting the Prospects for Social Cohesion and Peace Between Host Communities and Rohingya Refugees

While the Bangladeshis were the first to welcome the fleeing Rohingyas, their extended presence is creating tension between the two communities. Their compassion, which was exemplary at the beginning of the exodus in late August of 2017, now seems to have turned into fury. In this chapter, we have discussed the key issues that are escalating and triggering conflict between the host and the refugee communities.

**Erosion of empathy for the refugees from the host community:** The host community members worked as the first responders to the crisis and gave food and shelter to the FDMN community members. However, over the years, there has been an erosion of empathy for the refugees from the host community. The severity of the situation has created a sense of 'other' in the mind of the host community members. The biggest grievance in place is loss of land and loss of livelihood. In almost every IDI and FGD these two factors came up as reasons why FDMN community is perceived as a burden instead of opportunity by host community households to the point that a sense of 'other' has grown inside their minds.

**Overlapped and unequal distribution of services by the NGOs/INGOs:** More than 130 INGOs/NGOs are currently working in the camp areas. In close coordination with Bangladeshi authorities, they have set up health and learning centres, mobile clinics and friendly spaces for children, women and the elderly, as well as food distribution points, sanitation facilities and other infrastructure. However, the beneficiaries of these NGOs are mostly Rohingya refugees. In contrast, only a few numbers of NGOs work for the host communities.

For instances, refugees have been given gas cooking stoves to contend with the loss of available firewood, but the host community has not, though the loss of firewood supply affects the two communities in similar ways. Though some of the host community households have received LPG gas stoves since 2019, still the number is not noteworthy. And while Rohingya refugees receive electrically powered and deep tube-wells free of cost, those installed in the host community are only 150 to 200 feet, which is insufficient and costs four times higher than before. Different NGOs/INGOs distribute non-food items such as bathing soaps, laundry soaps, sponge sandals, hand gloves, Harpic, and liquid soaps which are next to unnecessary to Rohingya people who are not aware of their uses. Not only are they non-contextual items, but they also have been distributed disproportionate and unrealistically of high quantity by these NGOs/INGOs. Every household in every two months' period (runs over the year) gets 39 bathing soaps, 21 laundry soap, 4 pairs of sponge sandals among other non-food items which is more than enough for them. Findings from KII with RDRS revealed that, there are almost 97-98 learning centers of different NGOs in camp-18 whereas 42 learning centers is enough to provide educational facilities to the children of camp-18.

Moreover, the local economy of Cox's Bazar is suffering due to the presence of the humanitarian organizations. Entrepreneurs and traders are abandoning their businesses in favor for working with NGOs. As part of their work, aid agencies deliver food essentials, such as rice, lentils and vegetable oil, to the camps' residents. However, some of whom, in turn, sell the surplus items at black markets for a fraction of the price found in local markets which affect the stability of the market.

Though some of the NGOs have started focusing on the grievances of the host communities and are undertaking different interventions for them, there is still a sense among host community respondents that they are not receiving aid and services similar to what is provided for Rohingya communities. This overlapping and unequal distribution of services by the aid agencies is fuelling anger and sense of deprivation among the host communities.

**Growing competition over employment/livelihoods:** While the respondents were asked about the factors contributing to prolonging conflict between the host communities and Rohingyas, 76% of the host community dwellers and 98% of the Rohingyas reported that, competition over employment is one of the major reasons. The aid agencies working in the camp areas do not have any mandate on providing direct cash support to the Rohingyas. These aid agencies only provide relief (non-food) items to them. This is why the Rohingyas lack money to manage their livelihoods and forced to search for work outside the camp areas which is disrupting the local labor market situation for the host communities.

Meanwhile, the growing competition and demand in the local market due to dramatic increase in population after the influx has strained resources, infrastructure, public services and the local economy. Due to increasing competition over employment between the host communities and Rohingyas, most of the host community dwellers have lost their source of livelihood. 98% of the surveyed respondents from the host communities reported that their income has decreased after the influx. Many poor people were forced to change their profession (from agricultural production/fishing shifting to day labor ship, shrimp/crab/salt farming, auto rickshaw pulling, mobile servicing etc.) though a few of them changed profession considering the situation as kind of opportunity. Some people are getting or planning to get migrated to other districts in search for work. These tensions between hosts and refugees have continued to grow, fuelling blame, exclusion, and discrimination.

**Restrictions on Rohingyas movement:** The restrictions on Rohingyas right to work in the local economy prevent them from seeking employment and livelihood options. 34% of the surveyed Rohingyas believe that this restriction on their movement could be one of the possible contributing factors for future conflict with the host communities. Moreover, the refugees feel discrimination and blame for the abounding problems.

**Uncertain repatriation of Rohingyas:** Till now, two repatriation attempts were unsuccessful as Myanmar “failed to remove trust deficit” among the Rohingyas and there was “lack of conducive environment” in Rakhine for their return. The failure of the attempts made host community frustrated to some extent. In this regard, to mitigate the rising conflict between the host communities and Rohingya refugees, the government of Bangladesh had approved the Ashrayan-3 project (the official name of the Bhashan Char project) for the relocation of little over 100,000 Rohingyas of Cox’s Bazar district<sup>18</sup>. The facilities on the Bhashan Char Island developed by Bangladesh Navy are far better than those of the congested camps in Cox’s Bazar which will offer educational and livelihood options and help decongest the present camps. Despite this reality the government is yet to convince the Rohingyas and the United Nations about the relocation for various reasons including proper and timely projection of positive aspects of the island and inspection by UN experts. Moreover, the displaced Rohingya population prefers living in the cramped camps rather than living in a potentially better-sheltered and relatively more comfortable facility on Bhasan Char.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2020/10/17/bhashan-char-superior-to-cox-s-bazar-but-rohingyas-un-not-yet-convinced>

While conducting IDIs and FGDs with the Rohingyas from the camps, it was revealed that, many Rohingyas disagree with the relocation plan in an isolated place like Bhashan Char. Most Rohingya refugees are unwilling to relocate there as they fear death by starvation, floods, and a lack of humanitarian aid and service. These Rohingyas think that they have been here for a long time, and they do not want to change their place of residence again. Moreover, the block Majhis and Rohingya leaders also warned the other Rohingyas not to get convinced by the plan of relocation in Bhashan Char. Some of them believe that despite of their displacement, they are still living close to their homeland. This is generating frustration and ambiguity among the host communities.

**Uncontrolled birth-rate of the Rohingyas:** UNICEF says more than 60 babies are born every day in the camps leaving host communities minority in number day by day<sup>19</sup>. KII with the upazila livestock officer from Teknaf revealed that, a moratorium was locally imposed in Teknaf upazila on the issuance of birth certificates due to corruption and many Rohingyas are attempting to get them for availing Bangladeshi citizenship. This has led to frustration among members of host communities, as their children are also being denied the right to citizenship. Moreover, this is causing delay in school enrolment and job by the host community children and youths. As Rohingya refugees have become the majority population in the area, locals feel a growing sense of insecurity due to being outnumbered.

**Unregistered marriage and growing family disputes:** According to the host community women participants of the study, local men from the host community "easily become fascinated" by exceptionally beautiful Rohingya refugee women. As a result, there are a growing number of "short-term marriages" as well as divorces. Most of these marriages are unregistered and often undertaken without the original wife's permission. This has become a major source of tension between local husbands and wives, and has led to broken families and disputes.

One of the women respondents from Jaliapalong union of Ukhiya upazila said that, "The Rohingya refugee women receive rations so the lazy men from here are happy to relax with them and have no need to work. On the other hand, the Rohingya refugee women think that if they marry a local man then they would be able to get Bangladeshi citizenship." It was difficult to measure how frequently this is actually occurring, but it was a topic of much speculation and gossip. Some of the respondents from the host communities also complained that Rohingya refugees are polygamous and this practice is influencing the local men of the host communities which are deteriorating our cultural values.

**Lack of meaningful contact between the host communities and Rohingyas:** From the FGD and IDI with members of the host and Rohingya communities, we have shed light on the nature of interactions within the host community and the Rohingya refugees. There are some instances where the Rohingyas and host community members are engaged in interactions and transactions. Such as,

- There are some Rohingya markets where Bangladeshis and the Rohingyas engage in transactions.
- The grocery shops inside the camps have constant communication with the Bangladeshis.
- The Rohingyas reach out to the upazila health complex/medicine and other shops from the local markets as and when necessary.
- Local and Rohingya fishers goes for fishing together.

<sup>19</sup>

<https://www.inquisitorbd.com/rohingya-crisis-is-bangladesh-a-victim-of-international-politics/#:~:text=As%20a%20result%2C%20200%2C000%20-250%2C000%20Rohingyas%20fled%20to,Saudi%20Arabia%2C%20India%2C%20and%20the%20World%20Muslim%20League.>

- Local merchants/hawkers of Ukhiya and Teknaf used to collect goods from Cox's Bazar and Chittagong district to sell in the local market. But now they are buying relief items at a cheaper price from the Rohingyas of Whykong, Kutupalong and Ukhiya.

However, the above-mentioned instances of economic interactions are at a very niche level as the sense of trust in-between the communities are only prevalent for the wholesale shops who are able to sell on credit in the camp level shops. Moreover, IDIs with the local fishers reveal that, they don't unnecessarily talk with the Rohingya fishers while sailing on the same boat for fishing. This lack of meaningful contact amplifies these issues of grievances and prevents a joint and meaningful approach to overcoming them.

**Intention to decamp:** Our findings revealed that, some of the respondents from the host community believe that, the Rohingyas have begun making plans to integrate into Bangladesh society and are taking strategic long-term measures in planning to do so, such as becoming fluent in Bangla, learning Bangladeshi history and culture, vigorously building relationships with locals etc. This was seen as unacceptable and a major concern by the host population. Some respondents indicated that they were suspicious of unethical locals who are providing assistance to facilitate this. This suspicion is also contributing to future conflict between the two communities.

**Growing rate of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and social vices (gambling, prostitution, using drugs, crime etc.):** Since the influx, there has been overarching fear within the host community in Cox's Bazar that their security is under threat even more so than before. The crime rate has been rising and people feared that it will intensify in the near future. In the first seven months (January-July) of 2020, 178 cases have already been filed against Rohingyas. But law enforcers claimed that this is just the tip of the iceberg, as a large number of crimes (including murder, abduction, and sexual harassment) that take place inside the camps go unreported<sup>20</sup>. Recently, several murder cases took place and the respondents alleged that local political cadres who had hired some Rohingyas as hit men in order to accomplish political goals. Inside the camp, drug trafficking, theft and murder have also taken place. IDIs and FGDs with the Rohingya refugees revealed that, criminal and gang activity ongoing in the camps. They assumed that this was connected to Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) (locally usually referred to as Al-Yaquin) and Mujahid group. Moreover, armed groups are rising in Ukhiya and Teknaf upazila day by day. Respondents from the host community dwellers and Rohingya refugees reported that, gang members associated with armed groups know martial arts and are adept at using weapons. They are believed to be responsible for robbery, abduction, ransom cases, and the use of force and threats to maintain power over the people. They also commit crimes in collusion with local criminal networks. Locals know Kutupalong Registered Camp (Camp 2) as a complex place and a "land of criminality." The "old" Rohingya refugees who arrived after 1991 dominate the camp criminal networks and have established a nexus of power alongside host community criminal actors.

Findings from the IDIs and FGDs with the host community dwellers revealed that, the rate of theft, robbery has increased notably. Armed groups among the refugees and local criminal groups were allegedly involved in kidnappings and smuggling of drugs. Recently, in South Shilkhali village of Baharchara Union of Teknaf and adjacent villages, organized robber grouped by Hakim Dakat has kidnapped Bangladeshis. The host community dwellers reported that, they have been feeling fearful of the armed group's potential future misdeeds. Moreover, the host communities assume that, many Rohingya refugees were involved in methamphetamine (yaba) usage and trafficking and had enticed

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/refugee-camps-coxs-bazar-rohingyas-tangled-crimes-1951517>



host community youth to become addicted to it. They feel that, that Bangladesh has been victimized by the drug trafficking problems created by Myanmar. Rohingyas have their syndicate members on the other side of the border (Myanmar) and through the syndicates, they smuggle yaba inside the camps. The police database shows 22 narcotics cases filed in 2017, which jumped to 95 cases in 2018, 152 cases in 2019, and 136 cases in the first seven months of this year. In addition, in the last two years, around 67 Rohingyas were killed in gunfights with law enforcers for their alleged involvement in narcotics smuggling and robbery, according to the database<sup>21</sup>. Respondents from the host communities feared that in coming days' refugees would be emboldened to commit bigger crimes.

***One NGO representative from RDRS stated, "There are two sides of the camp: the day environment and the night time environment. During the night, no host community people willingly enter the camp as it is very dangerous. Moreover, the Camp in Charge (CIC) also leaves the camp areas before dusk."***

Bangladesh has a patriarchal social structure in which gender-based violence is prevalent. Majority of the women and girls are victims of Gender Based Violence (GBV) such as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), sexual harassment, eve teasing, dowry in the study locations. Besides the sense of fear, they have, there are quite unwilling to self-report incidences of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) or other Gender-Based Violence (GBV) faced by them. In most cases, they preferred to give an overview by mentioning that such occurrences take place in their community, but not conceding if it has happened to them. During our field investigation, we found an initial reluctance in self-reporting intimate partner violence. Following up with this phenomenon, we reached out to the officials of the Upazila level DWA officials and NGOs working against Gender Based Violence (GBV) who reported that during their field visits they have faced this as well. However, due to the tradition of patriarchy it is not easy to stop. The following table shows the status of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and its consequences in the host communities and Rohingya refugees.

*Table 7: Status of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and its consequences in the host and Rohingya communities*

Respondents	Type of gender-based violence occurred	Percentage (%) of incidences of violence reported by the respondents	Reason behind violence	Consequences
Host Community	Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), eve teasing in public spaces, sexual harassment	85-95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dowry</li> <li>- Disagreement on household matters</li> <li>- Extra marital affairs with the Rohingya young girls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cases of intimate partner violence (IPV) are not self-reported by the females fearing repercussions on their households.</li> <li>- From an IDI with a host community</li> </ul>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/refugee-camps-coxs-bazar-rohingyas-tangled-crimes-1951517>

				<p>woman living in Jaliapalong Union, it was learnt that women often stay back in such marriages without much any change in circumstances thinking of their children's future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social expectation on women to continue the marriage with abusive partners restricts them to get divorced.</li> <li>- The young girls, who are victims of eve-teasing have to face repercussion after informing their family which includes stopping the girl from continuing classes at school and getting the girl married off early. This preference even goes to the point of child marriage/early marriage.</li> <li>- Practice of covering themselves has risen among the village women due to fear of being abused in the public spaces.</li> <li>- Polygamy rate have increased in the study locations. Findings reveal that, in Doingakaka village of Whykong upazila, polygamy rate is increasing day by day.</li> </ul>
Rohingya	Intimate	75-80%	- Disagreement on	- Women prefer to



refugees	Partner Violence (IPV), eve teasing inside the camp areas, unregistered marriage with the host community men, Rape		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>household matters</li> <li>- Unemployed Rohingya males suffers from frustration which leads them to engage in IPV and inter-household disputes</li> <li>- Unemployed and drug addicted youths often tease the adolescents Rohingya girls during commuting</li> <li>- To get Bangladeshi citizenship, Rohingya young girls marry local men without proper registration of their marriage by Bangladeshi law.</li> </ul>	<p>abstain from self-reporting such incidences (IPV) as they think their husbands and other family members will be facing harassment from law enforcement agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Early marriage rate is increasing due to the fear of eve teasing.</li> <li>- Due to early marriage, uncontrolled birth-rate of the Rohingyas has increased.</li> <li>- Growing number of “short-term marriages” as well as divorces due to unregistered marriage with the local men.</li> <li>- Unregistered marriages with the local men are often undertaken without the original wife’s permission. This has become a major source of tension between local husbands and wives, and also led to conflict between the host communities and Rohingyas.</li> </ul>
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The above-mentioned issues occurring due to Gender Based Violence (GBV) and various social vices have disrupted the security system of both the host communities and Rohingyas. The conflict and tension between the two communities has increased than before and expected to be increased in near future due to these issues. Moreover, grievance and frustration are causing depreciation of the two societies’ social values and provokes them in ruining the social order.

**Covid-19 pandemic has added layers of new challenges:** The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has added layers of new challenges for the host communities and Rohingya refugees and needs to

an already complex and massive refugee emergency. These newly added challenges have exacerbated the existing tensions between the two communities and sparked new issues of conflict.

- **Loss of livelihood and reduction in income:** Majority of the surveyed poor households from the host community's loss their livelihoods during the lockdown. (Day laborers were the worst hit) Respondents reported that, they had to sell their assets and are now under credit burden.

*"Just before government's announcement of the state lockdown, I bought green coconut from Teknaf worth of BDT 65,000 to sell in the Inani Beach tourist point. All the coconuts became rotten as it could not be sold during the lockdown. This loss has forced me to take loan from my relatives to survive with my family during this hard time."*

**Amin Hossain (27); Shikderpara, Jaliapalong, Ukhiya**

On the other hand, to contain the spread of the pandemic in the refugee camps the government of Bangladesh has severely restricted the kinds of services (cash for work programs had been stopped) delivered to the Rohingyas by the aid agencies. As a result, the Rohingyas became unemployed during the lockdown and had to rely on only food assistance and basic facilities which were not enough for their survival.

- **Increased rate of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and social vices:** Case of domestic violence or gender-based violence such as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), sexual harassment, inter-household disputes, early marriage were reported during the lockdown in both host and Rohingya communities. Due to increased unemployment rate during the lockdown, various social vices (gambling, using drugs, etc.), theft, and robbery have significantly increased. Authorities had suspended internet use for security reasons, and recent reports said that armed groups among the refugees were allegedly involved in kidnappings and smuggling of drugs during the lockdown<sup>22</sup>.
- **Exacerbating inequality of services and severely impacting the host and Rohingya communities:** Respondents from the host communities reported that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the surge of aid by different INGOs/NGOs is understandably concentrated on the refugees. For instances, the US \$35 million grant will go toward providing work opportunities and community services to Rohingyas. This includes food assistance support to 700,000 people as part of the Covid-19 humanitarian response in the camps. In addition, during the lockdown, around 315,000 Rohingya refugee children and adolescents have been out of their learning centres. In this regard, UNICEF and partners continue efforts to help Rohingya children learn at home, engaging parents and caregivers to support learning and providing workbooks and visual aids during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>23</sup>.

On the other hand, education facilities of the host community children were closed down since March and no one is considering this issue claimed by the host respondents. Due to complications brought

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.rcinet.ca/en/2020/05/19/rohingya-refugee-camps-in-bangladesh-brace-for-covid-19-and-cyclone-amphan/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/rohingya-children-bearing-brunt-covid-disruptions-bangladesh-refugee-camps-education>

on by the Rohingya crisis, host communities are now demanding aid as well. They cannot help but feel marginalized in their own communities reported by the surveyed respondents from the host communities.

## Chapter 6: Perceptions and Attitudes of the Host Communities and Rohingyas Towards Conflict and Social Cohesion

### 6.1 Initial response to the influx

At the beginning of the refugee influx, host community residents' attitudes towards the Rohingya were deeply sympathetic. The respondents from the host communities shared their experiences of supporting and saving the lives of the fleeing refugees. Many of them recalled how they provided immediate humanitarian response (food, shelter etc.) to refugees before NGOs arrived to help. They expressed the strong feeling of compassion they felt upon witnessing the suffering of other human beings. Many also reflected on feeling of a sense of Muslim solidarity. Religious similarity and sense of brotherhood encouraged the Bangladeshis to welcome the fleeing Rohingyas. In many of the KIIs, we found a subtle soft corner within the host community respondent. Such that, after mentioning the problems they are incurring due to the influx, they would provide with a sympathetic conclusion due to the religious similarity calling them 'Muslim brothers and sisters.'

However, in the months that followed, scenario has changed during the 2017 influx as the Government and Development agencies came together to take care of the massive influx. As the conflict is now rising to its peak, Bangladeshis were reported to have distinguished themselves as "The rightful owner of the resources".

### 6.2 Shifting Attitudes

#### 6.2.1 Shifting attitudes of the host population

The initial outpouring of sympathy shown to the fleeing Rohingya refugees by the host community has gradually given way to more negative views over time. They faced growing difficulties in their daily lives and their sense of compassion has dwindled.

When asked to share any negative interactions with the Rohingya refugees that they had experienced first-hand, very few examples were raised by the host community respondents. This is because among the surveyed respondents only a few of them had direct interaction with the Rohingyas and they reside far away from the Rohingya camps. Moreover, only a small number of the respondents had set foot in the camps. Some examples of these negative perceptions of the host communities about the character and behaviour of the refugees largely derive from rumours and general stereotypes against the Rohingya refugees, while other complaints highlight the daily inconveniences and sacrifices host communities have been forced to make without receiving adequate compensation. This coincided with Rohingya receiving more systematized aid services, which reduced the amount of face-to-face interactions between refugees and the host community.

Findings revealed that, the host community respondents perceive a general sense that Rohingya refugees "have it better" than host communities due to receiving widespread aid and support. They have also marked that many Rohingya refugees have become "very rich" due to receiving vast sums of aid. The host community respondents also claimed that despite helping refugees during their time of need, Rohingya refugees now don't care about them and they lack sense of gratitude.

*"I have nothing against them (Rohingyas) personally. But this crisis is creating problems for me and my family. We supported the poor Rohingyas from our religious obligation. We did everything possible for them. But now we're losing all of our resources because of them. Even though we treated them as our Muslim brothers, they are targeting our own people in return, sparking riots and ruining society's order. We still sense their agony after all that, but they won't think twice about hurting us".*

*Aiyub Ali (58), Jaliapalong, Ukhiya*

Most of the respondents felt strongly that Rohingya refugees should be confined to the camps. Some were frustrated that due to weak law enforcement, Rohingya refugees frequently leave the camps to sell goods and to work, but host community members are strictly prevented from taking advantage of similar opportunities in the camps. Some of the respondents also shed light on the issue that for generations, many local families have built their livelihoods on land that is technically government owned, but held customarily by locals. However, after the influx, the land was suddenly taken back by the government in order to shelter the Rohingya refugees with no compensation provided to those who had long tended it. IDIs and FGDs with the host community members revealed that, they feel vulnerable and outnumbered by the refugee population. Moreover, they also claimed, as noncitizens, Rohingya refugees are not obliged to the rule of law and enjoy exceptional protection by authorities.

Despite receiving some benefits such as free tube-wells, latrines, cash support from different aid agencies, daily inconveniences such as traffic, congestion, environmental degradation and unequal treatment by the INGOs/NGOs create a sense of frustration and unfairness among the host community members. Majority of the respondents strongly believe that, the problems are still in an early stage but could become more problematic over time, causing social cohesion to be disrupted.

## **6.2.2 Shifting attitudes of the Rohingya refugees**

While conducting IDIs and FGDs with the Rohingyas from the camps, all of them accepted and appreciated the fact that the host community members were the first one who helped them in their distress. However, over time the refugees feel discrimination and experience blame from the host community members for the abounding problems. Findings revealed that, the Rohingyas also feel that they face challenges and barriers from the host community that are turning into conflict.

The restrictions on Rohingyas right to work in the local economy prevent them from seeking employment and livelihood options. Moreover, they claimed that they faced host communities' disagreement in engaging Rohingyas in terms of doing any trade. Findings also revealed that, there are some Rohingya markets adjacent to camp where Bangladeshis and the Rohingyas engage in transactions. The grocery shops inside the camps have constant communication with the Bangladeshis. The Bangladeshi acts as suppliers and the Rohingyas buy in bulk and sell those as retailers in the camp areas. However, this economic interaction is at a very niche level. Moreover, while entering into the camp with raw materials for their shops, the Rohingyas have to give illegal toll collected by the host community members. Cases were reported by the Rohingyas of giving BDT 15-30/day as a toll for their shop rent inside the camp. While asking about labor market disruption due to the influx, the Rohingya respondents expressed their justification for their action replying that due to lack of money and livelihood options, they are forced to offer cheap labor and they have no way other than that to survive by doing so.

The Rohingya respondents also explained that despite of getting aid support from different aid agencies, they still have complains about their standard of living and livelihoods. They are forced to live in makeshift room made of tarpaulin sheets and bamboo sticks. Some houses located in the corner of the hills making it vulnerable to natural disasters. Findings also revealed that, water supply

is very poor in block G, B and A of Camp-15, Ukhiya. There are cases of increasing disputes among the Rohingya and host households adjacent to the camp areas over WASH facilities (Tube-wells, latrines etc.). Quality of education is also questionable. No particular academic curriculum is followed reported by the Rohingya respondents. The Rohingya respondents reported that, they need to have access to education in the Myanmar curriculum, which they see as crucial to prepare for return and reintegration in Myanmar, when this is possible.

According to Rihch study report of 2019, more than 73% of the Rohingyas prefer to return back to their country as it is getting too difficult for them to stay here. The report also says 9% of the Rohigyas are confused whether they should go back or not. However, The Rohingyas will only go back when they and their families will be safe and see a pathway to citizenship in Myanmar.

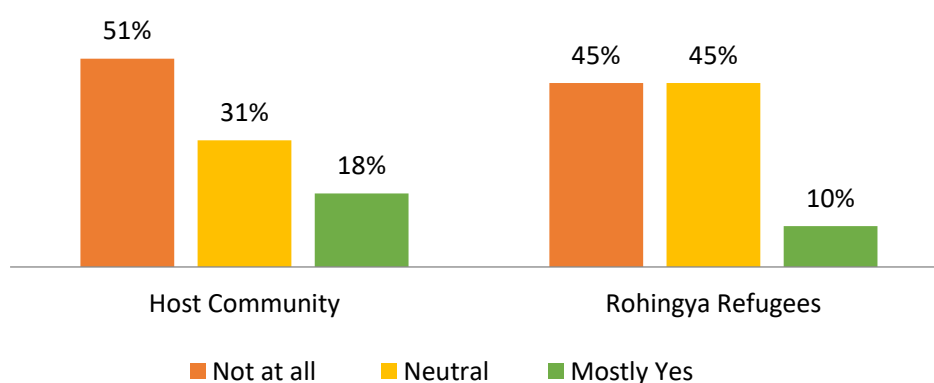
--Project Manager, RDRS

The Rohingyas are clear that they want to go home due to the challenges and barriers they are facing but only when they and their families will be safe and when they have access to basic rights and services and see a pathway to citizenship in Myanmar.

## 6.3 Perception and expectations of the Rohingya refugee and host communities regarding conflict resolution

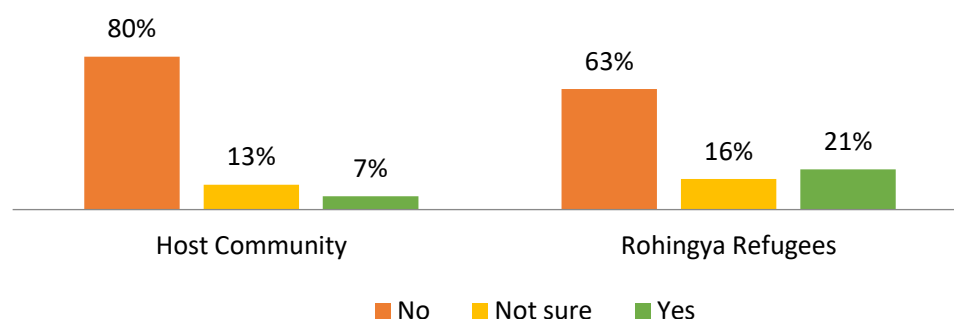
While the respondents were asked about their perception regarding harmony between them, host communities view on harmony between the two communities has become more negative over time. The compassion of most of the locals in Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas appear to have reached its limit, as many say, their lives were badly affected due to the lengthy stay of over 1.1 million persecuted Rohingya refugees. Meanwhile, 45% of the Rohingyas view on harmony with the host communities is neutral. This clearly shows that, the host communities are now struggling to bear the burden of the refugees and the compassion has turned into fury. Both Rohingya and Bangladeshi respondents who do not think their communities have a harmonious relationship name competition for employment and livelihoods as the main source of tension.

Figure 7: Perception of the two communities regarding harmony between them



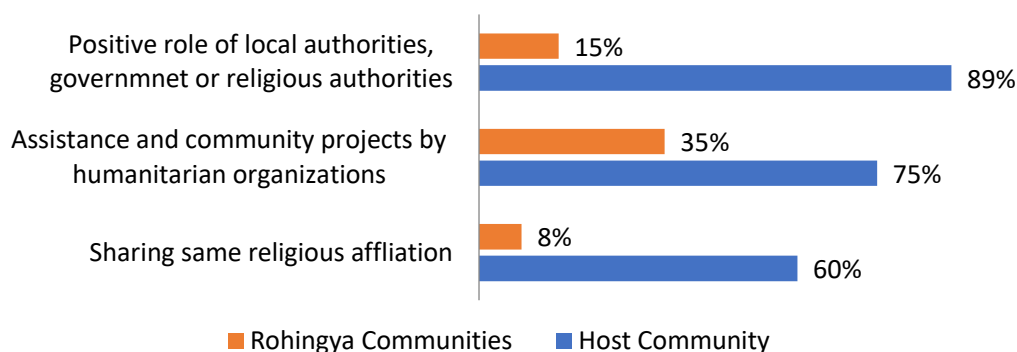
On the other hand, Rohingya (21%) surveyed remain more open to establishing social ties (opportunity to meet and talk) than Bangladeshis (7%). The Rohingyas expressed more openness to future social cohesion and peace building programmes, as they are uncertain about their repatriation. 63% of the surveyed Rohingyas said that they are unwilling to build any social ties with the host communities because they are conscious of the power imbalance between them and the host community and this is why they simply avoid engagement with those in the host community, due to their vulnerable status. However, 80% of the host population rejected the idea of assimilation of Rohingya refugees into the host population, stating that it is preferable to continue hosting them locally as long as they are not permitted to exit the camps. Rohingya communities

Figure 8: Interest of Socializing with each other between the two communities



In order to tolerate the situation moving forward, fostering peaceful coexistence between communities and invigorating the local economy are imperative. When asked the host communities what they believe could improve relations with the Rohingya communities, they called for increased support from INGOs/NGOs and the government as well as for positive role of local/government authorities. However, Rohingyas consider equal assistance by humanitarian organizations for both host and Rohingya communities can facilitate a harmonious relationship in future.

Figure 9: Contributing factors that can facilitate a harmonious relationship (multiple responses)



## Chapter 7: Key Issues Related to Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace Building Between the Host and Rohingya Community

In the previous chapters, we have already discussed the socio-economic impact of the influx on the host population and the impending issues that may arise in future to affect the prospects for social cohesion and peace between the Rohingya refugee and host communities. However, some of the key issues which directly impact the peaceful co-existence of the two communities are discussed in brief below.

**Key issues:** The key issues are as stated below in the figure;

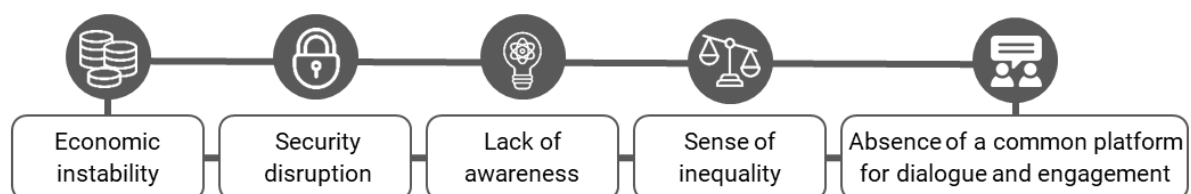


Figure 10: The Key Issues

**Economic instability:** From the findings of the study it is clear that, the root cause of the conflict between the two communities is competition over employment. The negative economic impact due to the influx has severely disrupted the peace and social cohesion of the society. Participants recalled in detail their willingness to provide immediate humanitarian response before NGOs arrived to help at the beginning of the influx. However, over the time, the extended presence of the Rohingyas in the local community created a tremendous negative impact on the daily lives of host community residents living closest to the camps. Economically, the competition with refugees for work willing to charge low wages has created many difficulties for residents to earn enough to meet daily needs. As a result, the compassion of the host communities which was exemplary in the early stage of the conflict has turned into fury for the Rohingyas. Tensions have already arisen between the two communities. The host population now feels under threat as they are outnumbered. In this regard, urgent action is needed to assist the mostly impoverished host community that bears an excessive burden from the crisis.

**Security disruption:** The most significant human security problems in both the host and Rohingya community are trafficking and gender-based violence targeting women and children. This has long been an issue in Cox's Bazar and the arrival of a large and very vulnerable population has amplified it. Findings revealed that, the GBV rate has increased to 80-90% in both the host and Rohingya communities due to unregistered marriage between them which in turn is fuelling conflict between them. In light of this issue, supporting a protection agenda should be a priority. Improving the conditions and security for both refugees and the host population is the best way to prevent the emergence of violence and conflict.

**Lack of awareness:** Our findings reveal that, majority of the surveyed respondents from both the host and Rohingyas are unaware of the rights, benefits and issues faced by each other. As one of the best ways to prevent anger and conflict between the two communities, awareness and protection of human rights should be promoted. Different human rights organizations can work in both the refugee and host communities to offer different mechanisms to build up protection capacity across the host



and refugee area. A full humanitarian and protection operation which would be sufficiently funded is the best buffer against any emergence of violence and conflict between the two communities.

**Sense of inequality:** Since the beginning of 2017 influx, the governments of Bangladesh and different donor agencies from around the world have extended their support through allocating funds to tackle the refugee crisis. However, the unequal distribution of services by the aid agencies is fuelling anger and sense of deprivation among the host communities which is now turning into one of the major triggering issues of conflict between the two communities.

**Absence of a common platform for dialogue and engagement:** Ukhiya and Teknaf are very Muslim conservative society. Religious similarity is the major reason to give shelter to the fleeing Rohingyas identified by the surveyed host community respondents. However, due to rising tensions and worsening situation between the two communities, the sympathy has been faded away and fuelling anger for each other. Our findings revealed that, there is a lack of a common platform for sharing their concerns and views with each other between the two communities, which is one of the reasons for misunderstanding and conflict. In this regard, it is important to increase the understanding of the principles and benefits of social cohesion and to create spaces for intercommunal dialogue and engagement between the two communities.

In light of the above issues, it is clear that peaceful coexistence of host and Rohingya refugee communities by any means is needed; emerging conflicts should be resolved promptly inside the camps and in the host areas by engaging all relevant stakeholders. The proposed key interventions for the key policy actors are described in the following chapter.

## Chapter 8: Recommendations and Conclusion

While the hospitality and generosity of the Bangladesh government and its people are unparalleled, the prolonged presence of this large influx of Rohingya people has significantly impacted the daily life of the host community. KIIs with different stakeholders revealed that, they assume, Bangladesh will be hosting Rohingya refugees for the long-term. As such, they felt that a degree of social integration may be the most realistic and safest option. Moreover, according to the 2019 Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis Joint Response Plan, social cohesion should be a priority for humanitarian programming<sup>24</sup>.

In light of this issue, to address all the challenges of both the communities, a symbiotic environment in Cox's Bazar needs to be developed. An interactive ecosystem will help both the communities grow in a sustainable manner. In this regard, different stakeholders should consider what might be the shared social interests that could bring both communities together in a way that could foster more positive relations. It is already clear that the shared religion is an opportunity to bring people together around a common identity, but perhaps other activities could be done too. Overarching strategic recommendations are awareness-raising networks/people's organization development, dialogue and engagement, capacity building and local level policy advocacy. The strategic recommendations for the key policy actors are described below.

### 8.1 Creation of an ecosystem

Interdependent livelihood system can create greater social cohesion. Host community should be made to supply the goods which the FDMN community needs. For instance, Rohingyas are dependent on the host communities for perishable items such as fish, meat, vegetable etc. as these are not included in their relief items. These items are being supplied to the camp in recent days. These opportunities should be recognized and promoted in the host community households. In this regard, host communities can be engaged in cattle rearing, homestead vegetable gardening, indigenous chicken rearing, dry or marine fish etc. Similarly, the goods that can be made by FDMN community for the host community should be promoted e.g. Crochet Muslim Caps made by FDMN community is sold at a premium price at the host community markets, handicrafts, grocery retailing<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, given the shared demand for economic opportunities, more joint programming which could include joint vocational classes or cash for work schemes that both groups can participate in together. This has the advantage of not only bringing the two communities together, but it does so in a way that also addresses some of their shared and pressing concern.

#### **Interventions: Creation of jointly operated market place**

**Enabling partner:** Union Parishad, Camp in charge (CiC), Majhis, Micro-merchant leaders

**Activities:** Establishment of Market Management Committee (MMC) in each of the market places

**Implementing partner:** Local and National NGOs

**Activities of the implementing partner:** Local and national NGOs can provide skill development training according to the need of the host and Rohingya communities so that they can be engaged in trading in the integrated market place.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://challenges.openideo.com/challenge/2019-bridgebuilder-challenge/ideas/building-social-cohesion-between-rohingya-refugees-and-host-communities-in-cox-s-bazar-bangladesh-through-engagement-dialogue-training>

<sup>25</sup> Host Community Intervention Feasibility Study, IRC- 2019

**Details of the intervention:** Creation of jointly operated integrated marketplace can ensure formal trading of the Rohingya refugees and will ensure effective interaction between the communities. Strengthening existing market place where both Rohingya and host community micro-merchants are doing business side-by-side could be an option for intervention. For example, market next to Camp 25 is run by both community entrepreneurs. Establishment of physical marketplace is proposed in the camp adjacent sites or inside the camps where there is no such market. Given the restriction on Rohingya refugee mobility, the camp adjacent sites will ensure participation of the Rohingya refugees within the existing Government mandates for the refugees. The MMC will include representatives from respective male and female micro-merchants, Union Parishad, Camp in Charge and Majhis in addition to the market traders and consumer representatives. The committees will be responsible for overseeing and regulating the market activities. However, inclusion of committee members will depend on their functional role and direct stake on the markets. The MMC will ensure-

- Overseeing and managing demand and supply of goods and services.
- Inclusion: Participation of women, youth and the elderly in the markets.
- Market price: The products are being traded at an appropriate price and in settled regulations.
- Transaction: The Rohingya refugees are transacting through their vouchers

The Union Parishad representative will oversee the stakes of the host community traders and the Majhis will do the same for the Rohingya refugees. The CIC will coordinate the interaction between the communities. The presence of representatives from the public agencies and from the camp block heads (Majhis) will provide effective leadership to manage and control market activities.

Moreover, it has been observed that, market committees active in the existing markets are less participatory where the leadership lies with few influential which discourages the participation of weaker members. Training and technical support will be useful to address this issue. Besides, ensuring participation and empowering of women in the market committee will require training and motivation regularly.

**Role of DCA in the proposed intervention:** Under the project titled “Humanitarian assistance & resilience building for the Rohingya and the host community”, DCA is trying to contribute to sustainably mitigate the negative impacts of the humanitarian crisis due to the Rohingya influx in Cox’s Bazar. As a specific objective of this project, DCA is trying to ensure that the targeted households from host and Rohingya community have improved self-reliance through engagement in new business and income generating activities.

For proper implementation of the proposed “creation of jointly operated market place” intervention, DCA can provide skill development training and input support on specific trades as per the needs of the host and Rohingya community. For instance, as part of the “Humanitarian assistance & resilience building for the Rohingya and the host community” project initiatives, DCA is providing homestead vegetable gardening assistance in both Rohingya and Host Community. Under this project initiatives, DCA is providing skill development training on vegetable production to targeted host community households and those produced vegetables are being sold in the camp areas to the Rohingyas. In addition, the host sellers may also sell these produced vegetables to some Rohingya buyers in the integrated market place, who will in turn sell the vegetables to other Rohingyas in the adjacent camp markets. This will ensure a business relationship between buyers and sellers at the host group and camp areas. Similar interventions can also be undertaken for the Rohingya community. Such as selling goods that can be made by the Rohingyas for the host population. The goods will be collected by the host community entrepreneurs and this will ensure a market linkage between the two communities. The host community entrepreneurs will provide input support to the camp level

producers and purchase those products from the camp areas and will in turn sell them in the host areas.

Moreover, for creating women and youth entrepreneurs in the market, DCA can provide business management training (including business plan, market linkage, financial support/capital for business) vocational training, training on life skills etc.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Social cohesion and peace between the two communities.

## 8.2 Awareness building

Awareness has been mentioned as a necessary intervention for building social cohesion and peace between the host communities and Rohingyas. Our findings reveal that, both of the communities perceive a confused nature about the benefits and challenges posed by the influx that both of them face. In this regard, both of the host and Rohingya communities should be made aware of their rights and challenges that they face due to the influx. This will create a sense of understanding and empathy towards each other between the two communities. Moreover, both the host and Rohingya communities should be made aware of women and child protection and rule of law situation of their respective communities. These awareness building sessions can be integrated with existing health, education and livelihoods and humanitarian assistance programmes undertaken by the implementing partners, i.e. the local and national NGOs. Local and national NGOs are good at context-specific awareness-raising. Trainers' training on using different communication media and methods such as front yard meetings or docu-drama would enable the partners to effectively manage the awareness-raising activities.

### **Intervention 1: Higher education-based livelihood options**

**Enabling partner:** Department of Youth Development, local and international NGOs

**Activities:** ToT

**Implementing partner:** Local and National NGOs

**Activities of the implementing partner:** Front yard meetings, School Session with Docu-Drama with the learning centres students.

**Details of the intervention:** The enabling actors e.g., youth development and BRAC, can design conduct ToT for the implementing partners, so that they can create awareness amongst the children and parents on the importance of pursuing education via front yard meetings and school sessions.

**Role of DCA in the proposed intervention:** DCA can collaborate with other NGOs working on education in the camp and host areas. Moreover, in all engagements, DCA can seek to address the anti-Rohingya narrative that is emerging while education on human rights.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Resilience of the two communities.

### **Intervention 2: Scaling up information dissemination on social welfare and human rights**

**Enabling partner:** Department of Social Welfare, Human Rights Organizations

**Activities:** Content design for information dissemination, ToT

**Implementing partner:** Local and National NGOs

**Activities of the implementing partner:** Front yard meetings inside the camp and in the host areas, leaning centres in the camps and host areas.

**Details of the intervention:** Enabling partners can design ToT and content for the information dissemination sessions. The implementing partners such as different local and national NGOs can

create awareness amongst the host and Rohingya households about their rights, limitations, benefits and challenges through front yard meetings.

**Role of DCA in the proposed intervention:** DCA can also collaborate with their partner NGOs to arrange these awareness sessions with their beneficiaries both from host and Rohingya communities.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Social cohesion and peace between the two communities.

### **Intervention 3: Awareness on complications related to child marriage and women protection**

**Enabling partner:** Department of Women Affairs, Ain o Salish Kendra, Save the Children

**Activities:** ToT

**Implementing partner:** Local and National NGOs

**Activities of the implementing partner:** Front yard meetings, Discussion Session with Docu-Drama

**Details of the intervention:** Enabling partners can arrange ToT for local and national NGOs can work on this in collaboration.

**Role of DCA in the proposed intervention:** DCA can arrange Front yard meetings for the host and Rohingya community. This would be covering both child protection and women's protection content. DCA can also arrange discussion session through their GBV team with the children and women from the host and Rohingya community in their women and child safety corner.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Social cohesion and peace between the two communities.

### **Intervention 4: Awareness building on Village courts and formal justice mechanism**

**Enabling partner:** Ain o Salish Kendra, UNO, Union Parishad

**Activities:** ToT

**Implementing partner:** Local and National NGOs

**Activities of the implementing partner:** Front yard meetings

**Details of the intervention:** Enabling partners can arrange ToT for local and national NGOs who will be working in collaboration. The local leaders and Union Parishad Chairman can be engaged to take the settlement process to the village courts instead of the informal Salish system for better transparency. Moreover, Rohingyas should be orient to the rule of law and civic values; otherwise, any exercise in integration would create clashes and jeopardize the existing peace and stability.

**Role of DCA in the proposed intervention:** DCA to arrange Front yard meetings for the host and Rohingya community.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Social cohesion and peace between the two communities.

## **8.3 Engagement and Dialogue**

Over the years, there has been the erosion of empathy for the refugees from the host community. Though grievances run deep, from FGDs and IDIs with the host community, the sense of religious duty towards the refugees was identified. The communities can be brought together on similarities by

arranging dialogue in-between community members and community leaders with the aim of fostering understanding of the principles and benefits of social cohesion and tolerance through accessing first separate, then joint capacity building and recreational opportunities. Furthermore, the youth population and elders can be engaged. From IDIs with host community, it was learnt that host community youth and FDMN youth often arrange friendly football match. Such events (friendly football match, sporting events or art and culture) can be organized at greater frequency. However, such events should be carefully planned and implemented to avoid situations which may turn into a source of controversy or new conflict. It will address the barriers that inhibit positive engagement between the two communities due to fear, stereotypes and lack of contact, by increasing understanding of the principles and benefits of social cohesion and creating spaces for intercommunal dialogue and engagement.

### **Intervention 1: Dialogue in-between host community and FDMN community**

**Enabling partner:** UNHCR, Camp in charge (CiC)

**Activities:** Dialogue and Engagement arranged in-between host community and FDMN community.

**Implementing partner:** Local and National NGOs

**Activities of the implementing partner:** Arranging cultural and sports programs

**Details of the intervention:** The communities can be brought together on similarities by arranging dialogue in-between community members and community leaders. Events such as friendly football match, sporting events or art and cultural programs can be organized at greater frequency.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Social cohesion and peace between the two communities.

### **Intervention 2: Engage youth as ‘social change agents’ by giving them a platform for leadership to raise awareness on social cohesion and peaceful co-existence of the two communities**

**Enabling partner:** DWA, Upazila Youth Department

**Activities:** Structure design, ToT on leadership, advocacy and lobbying

**Implementing partner:** Informal youth organizations, adolescents’ clubs, Local and National NGOs

**Activities of the implementing partner:** Form a female and male youth club and connect them to art, song and other extra-curricular activities.

**Details of the intervention:** The Department of Women’s Affairs and Upazila Youth Department can design the structure of the youth clubs and conduct ToTs with implementing partners to help them form female youth clubs and help them connect to teachers for art, song, and other extracurricular activities. Similarly, male youth clubs can be strengthened to engage young population. It will give the male and female youths a platform for leadership to raise awareness on social cohesion and peaceful co-existence of the two communities.

In participation with the two communities, cultural activities such as drama, concert etc. can be arranged. The cultural shows can also be used to deliver crucial messages for development of the communities and for raising awareness on social issues such as child marriage, dowry system etc. The interactive sessions will be crucial to build harmony between the two communities.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Social cohesion, resilience and peace between the two communities.

### **Intervention 3: Engaging religious leaders**

**Enabling partner:** Dhaka Ahsania Mission

**Activities:** Engagement with religious leaders to address mobility and protection issues for women and children

**Implementing partner:** Local and National NGOs

**Activities of the implementing partner:** Discussion session with religious leaders and elders of the host and Rohingya communities.

**Details of the intervention:** Religious leaders have to be engaged to clarify the problems of child marriage and the importance of adulthood in the making of such an important decision. If the religious leaders can be convinced, they can work as social change making agents in the host community.

**Role of DCA in the above-mentioned proposed interventions:** DCA can arrange cultural events/activities such as drama, concert, friendly football match etc. in collaboration with other local NGOs. Cultural programs can also be organized for the students of the learning centers of DCA in the camp areas. In these programs, students from the host community schools can be invited. The interactive sessions between the host and Rohingya students will be crucial to build harmony between the two communities.

DCA can also help in arranging the male and female youth clubs in both the host and Rohingya communities. These youths can play a role of 'social change agents' in raising awareness on social cohesion and peaceful co-existence of the two communities. Moreover, the enabling partners can help DCA by using their experience to engage with the religious leaders to bring the necessary social change.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Social cohesion and peace between the two communities.

## 8.4 Advocacy

Advocacy effort is necessary as certain activities such as improving the security of the host community, cannot be undertaken by the programme team themselves. The villages which are under constant fear of raid by armed groups, suspected to be belonging to FDMN community must be secured. Hence, the influential actors who can take such necessary actions have to be reached and lobbied, aiming at a particular outcome for the future of the host community. Special emphasis should be given on addressing issues related to "Gender Based Violence (GBV)" in both host communities and Rohingya refugees.

### **Intervention 1: Advocacy effort to improve the security of host community villages**

**Enabling partner:** District Commissioner, Law enforcing Agencies-Bangladesh Army

**Activities:** Lobbying

**Details of the intervention:** The villages which are under constant fear of raid by armed groups, suspected to be belonging to FDMN community must be secured. The law enforcing agencies can set check posts to ensure the security of the two communities.

**Role of DCA in the proposed intervention:** DCA should map such areas and advocate for heightened presence of Bangladesh Army to create a sense of security within the host community. Moreover, DCA can partner with DWA and UNO office to scale up their service regarding 'Awareness on Women's Rights' at rural level. In addition, effective linkage between community women and local police stations or UPs should be ensured.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Social cohesion and peace between the two communities.

**Intervention 2: Strengthen the separate budget allocation mandate by the government for the host communities.**

**Potential Partners:** GoB, INGOs/NGOs, ISCG, UNHCR, RRRC

**Details of the intervention:** According to NGO Affair bureau and government mandate of 2019, all the INGOs/NGOs working in the camp areas should allocate 25-30% of their project budget for the host communities. This provision should be more strengthen among the local and national NGOs. Not only would this improve the host populations' lives, but it would also help reduce resentment at the perceived inequality of current distributions.

**Issues to be resolved by the intervention:** Social cohesion and peace between the two communities.

It can be concluded by noting that, through building knowledge and practical application of social cohesion and peace building themes and mutual understanding, the misperceptions and stereotypes of the 'other' feeling of the host and Rohingya communities for each other can be reduced. This is how it will create a safe space for facilitated dialogue and interaction between the two communities.



## Annex 1

We have discussed the proposed interventions on the two-way interaction between the two communities for ensuring social cohesion and peaceful co-existence in light of the DCA supported project activities. The following table shows the proposed interventions covering the 5w's (what? Who? Why? Where? When?) for better understanding of the DCA's roles and activities in those proposed interventions. It is important to note that, the study team have tried to describe the details



(what and for whom) and positive impact (why) of the proposed interventions. However, when and where the proposed interventions should be undertaken will be decided by the DCA team.

Proposed Intervention	What	Who	Why	Where	When
Recommendation 1: Creating an ecosystem: Interdependent livelihood system can create greater social cohesion.					
Creation of jointly operated market place	- Skill development training and input support on specific trades as per the needs of the host and Rohingya community	Rohingya and host community	- To ensure a business relationship between buyers and sellers at the host group and camp areas.  - To ensure a market linkage between the two communities.	In targeted host and Rohingya community	Mid-term and long-term initiatives
	- Business management training (including business plan, market linkage, financial support/capital for business) vocational training, training on life skills etc.	Women and youth of host and Rohingya communities	- To create women and youth entrepreneurs in the market		
Recommendation 2: Awareness Building					
Higher education-based livelihood options	- Arrange school session through Docu-Drama with the learning centres students	Children and youth from the host and Rohingya community	- For creating awareness amongst the children and parents from the host and Rohingya community on the importance of pursuing education	In targeted host and Rohingya community	Long-term intervention
Scaling up information dissemination on social welfare and human rights	- Arrange front yard meetings to address the anti-Rohingya narrative that is emerging while education on human rights.	Host and Rohingya community members	- For creating awareness amongst the host and Rohingya households about their rights,	In targeted host and Rohingya community	Long-term intervention

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information dissemination on communication mechanisms &amp; communication gaps in affected communities on challenges and needs.</li> </ul>		limitations, benefits and challenges		
Awareness building on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and formal justice mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arrange awareness sessions on conflict &amp; Gender sensitivity</li> <li>- Front yard meetings on different issues covering both child protection and women's protection content</li> <li>- Arrange discussion session through the GBV team with the children and women from the host and Rohingya community in their women and child safety corner.</li> </ul>	Community leaders (Imam, Teachers, Majhis), women and children from host and Rohingya community	Rohingyas and host community should be orient to the rule of law and civic values; otherwise, any exercise in integration would create clashes and jeopardize the existing peace and stability	In targeted host and Rohingya community	Long-term intervention
<b>Recommendation 3: Engagement and Dialogue in-between host community and FDMN community</b>					
Dialogue in-between host community and FDMN community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arrange cultural events/activities such as drama, concert, friendly football match etc. in collaboration with other local NGOs.</li> <li>- Arranging the male and female youth clubs in both the host and Rohingya communities</li> </ul>	Youths from host and Rohingya community	Contribute to increased dialogue and increased perceived trust between Rohingya refugees and the communities hosting them	In targeted host and Rohingya community	Long-term intervention
<b>Recommendation 4: Advocacy effort to improve the security of host community villages</b>					

Advocacy effort to improve the security of host community and Rohingyas in the camp areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner with DWA and UNO office to scale up their service regarding 'Awareness on Women's Rights' at rural level.</li> <li>- Ensure effective linkage between community people and local police stations or UPs for their security</li> </ul>	Host and Rohingya community	For ensuring security of the host and Rohingyas	In targeted host and Rohingya community	Long term intervention
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