

# Rohingya crisis

## Host Communities Review

The Rohingya influx in Cox's Bazar has put pressure on the district's Bangladeshi community, particularly in the upazilas of Teknaf and Ukhia where the Rohingya now constitute at least one third of the total population. The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) aims to meet the needs of 300,000 (54%) Bangladeshi of Teknaf and Ukhia, in the seven unions with the highest proportion of Rohingya people. However, host communities in Teknaf and Ukhia have indicated feeling ignored by humanitarian organisations and reports of tensions between the Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities have emerged. This brief aims to provide an overview of what is known about the communities in Cox's Bazar, which are now host to around 900,400 Rohingya people. As the majority of the Rohingya population is situated in Ukhia and Teknaf, this brief mainly focuses on these two upazilas where possible.

For the purpose of this brief, the host community refer to all Bangladeshi people living in Ukhia and Teknaf upazilas of Cox's Bazar, and are often referred to as 'host communities' throughout the brief. Given the size of the influx, the entire population of the two upazilas is estimated to be affected by the influx.

Cox's Bazar is one of 20 (out of 64) identified 'lagging districts' of Bangladesh, and Ukhia and Teknaf upazilas are among the 50 most socially deprived upazilas (out of 509). Difficult terrain, bad roads and insufficient infrastructure contribute to poor living conditions. A lack of cultivatable land and consequent dependence on markets for food in Ukhia and Teknaf drive high levels of food insecurity, and vulnerability to price fluctuations and food availability. The area has limited access to drinking water, particularly in remote rural areas, and only one third of people have a drinking water source in their dwelling. This, combined with low access to improved sanitation facilities, has contributed to high levels of malnutrition. Access to health facilities is restricted by distance and limited capacity of facilities to provide services. There are serious protection concerns related to trafficking and organised crime that persist in Cox's Bazar, due to the combination of poverty with its position on the border with Myanmar and the Bay of Bengal.

Rohingya populations, in fluctuating numbers, have been present in villages in Ukhia and Teknaf since 1991. Their presence has, at some points, positively impacted the local economy as the population of these upazilas took advantage of new labour and livelihood opportunities provided by aid workers in and around camps. However, over time, their presence has increasingly strained already scarce resources. The rapid arrival of 688,000 Rohingya refugees since August 2017 has been a significant shock to a community which already experiences underemployment, under-investment and poor access to services as challenges to development (ISCG 21/01/2017).

The aim of this brief is to investigate the situation and needs of host communities in Cox's Bazar. This brief first evaluates host communities' needs related to all sectors. It also looks at potential sources of tension among host communities and the Rohingya population.

### About this report

This thematic report is based on secondary data as well as informal discussions with key stakeholders.

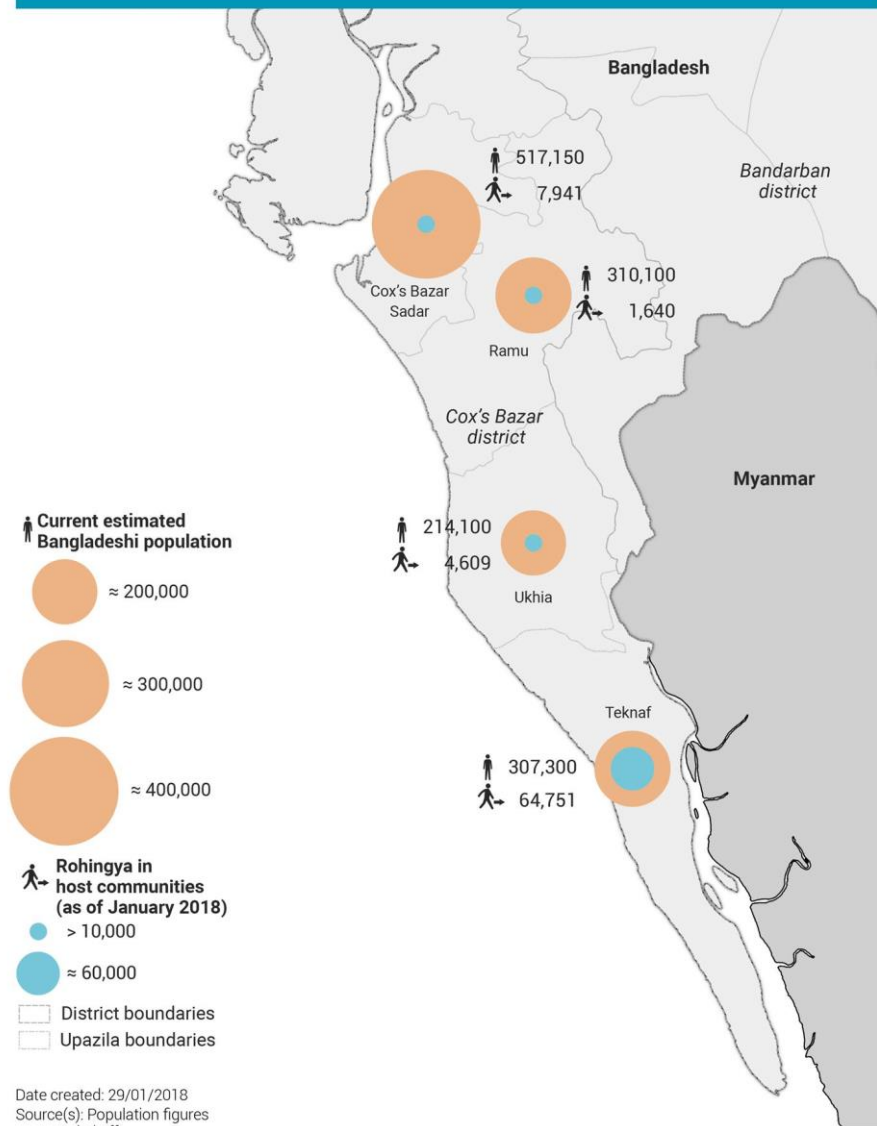
ACAPS welcomes all information that could complement this report. For additional comments or questions please contact [fv@acaps.org](mailto:fv@acaps.org). For a situation analysis from November 2017 click [here](#). A historical review can be found [here](#).

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## BANGLADESH

Rohingya population in host communities of Cox's Bazar



Date created: 29/01/2018  
 Source(s): Population figures are rounded off.  
 Government Census 2011,  
 IOM NPM Round 8;  
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## Contextual information

Cox's Bazar is a district of southeastern Bangladesh within Chittagong division, bordering Myanmar. The Rohingya population fleeing violence in Rakhine state of Myanmar now mostly reside in camps and settlements (91%), or Bangladeshi villages of the Cox's Bazar district (IOM 05/2017). There are eight upazilas (sub-districts) in Cox's Bazar. Of these, Rohingya refugees can be found in Cox's Bazar Sadar, Ramu, Ukhia, and Teknaf. Ukhia and Teknaf have the largest Rohingya populations with all official camps and settlements located in these two upazilas. The largest settlement is in Ukhia and has over 500,000 Rohingya people. In Teknaf there is a more even distribution of people between host communities and settlements.

There are generally four groups distinguished:

- Rohingya in registered camps: Rohingya people living in Kutupalong Refugee Camp and Nayapara Refugee Camp. This includes both registered refugees prior to the August influx as well as new arrivals.
- Rohingya in settlements: unregistered Rohingya people living in settlements.
- Rohingya in host communities: Rohingya population living among the host community
- Host community/Host communities: Bangladeshi people and villages who/which have been directly or indirectly affected by the Rohingya influx.

The delineation of host communities as compared to makeshift settlements is not always clear as settlements continue to expand and have come to include Bangladeshi communities. Some of the Rohingya population who are counted as living in host communities, are in effect living in makeshift shelters that are expansions of already existing settlements.

For the purpose of this brief, host communities will refer to Bangladeshi living in Ukhia and Teknaf, as they are the two upazilas hosting most Rohingya people.

Upazila	Population (2011 census)	Estimated Population (excluding Rohingya) (2017)	Rohingya population in HC (Jan 2018)	Rohingya population in camps (Jan 2018)	Total Rohingya population in both camps and HC (Jan 2018)	%Rohingya in total population (Rohingya and HC)
Cox's Bazar Sadar	459,000	517,150	7,941	-	7,941	1.5%
Ramu	266,600	310,100	1,640	-	1,640	>1 %
Teknaf	264,400	307,300	64,751	64,986	129,737	29%
Ukhia	207,400	241,100	4,609	756,450	761,059	76%
Total	1,197,400	1,375,700	78,941	821,436	900,377	39%

Population figures are rounded off. Source: Government Census 2011, IOM NPM Round 8; ISCG 07/01/2017

The number of Rohingya people living in host communities was found to be slightly lower in January than the numbers reported in December (ISCG 31/12/2017). Next to likely changes in the delineation of Rohingya and host communities, this may also be explained by the fact that the Rohingya population previously living in these locations have relocated to other sites where access to assistance is better. There are also reports that refugees living outside settlements are increasingly unwilling to be identified as Rohingya, for fear of being forcibly relocated. It is estimated that the population residing within host communities is higher than the above figures indicate. Trends in relation to this should be monitored to avoid gaps in humanitarian assistance.

A population breakdown by union including the number of organisations working in each union is found below. This was only compiled for Ukhia and Teknaf, because of the high number of Rohingya in these two upazilas.

Union	Bangladeshi Population (2017 projection)	Rohingya population in camps and settlements	Rohingya population in HC	#operational partners in HC (Dec 2017)
<b>Teknaf upazila</b>				
Baharchara	33,500	-	7,749	144
Nhilla	54,465	32,111	50,619	181
Teknaf	55,475	-	-	16
Teknaf Paurashava	29,070	-	759	20
Sabrang	67,876	-	3,004	54
St. Martin	7,796	-	-	-
Whykong	59,153	32,875	455	29
<b>Ukhia upazila</b>				
Jalia Palong	55,369	-	2,388	29
Haldia Palong	55,200	-	356	7
Rajaplong	66,174	23,188	930	34
Ratna Palong	26,197	-	227	7
Palong Khali	38,199	733,240	730	92

Source: Government Census 2011; ISCG 4W 29/12/2017, IOM NPM round 8

## Host communities review

### Natural environment of Ukhia and Teknaf

As with the majority of Cox's Bazar district, Teknaf and Ukhia are mostly rural. The mix of hilly areas and flat lands with sandy soils on the river and coast means that there is little cultivable land. Sustained deforestation, which has increased with the influx, coupled with construction of settlements, causes environmental damage, increases the risks of landslides in hilly areas, and compromises livelihoods.

## Key issues

**Cultivation and land use:** Unlike most of Bangladesh, about half of Cox's Bazar district is hilly; on the eastern border with Myanmar are the Arakan hills. The soil in Teknaf and Ukhia, which together make up around 651km<sup>2</sup>, is sandy and not very suitable for agricultural cultivation. In Teknaf, only 5.5% of the land is cultivable with a cropping intensity of 136%, well below the 193% national average. Most of Teknaf consists of highlands. The rest is tidal floodplain (19.57%) with high salinity and piedmont plain (9.03%). 39% of Teknaf comprises of forests (Tani and Rahman 31/07/2017). In contrast, Ukhia is mostly flat lands to medium hills with sandy soils (Akhter *et al.* 2009).

The Naf river, located east of the upazilas and forming a natural border with Myanmar, inundates land close to the river banks during the rainy season (June–September). This land on the riverbanks is mostly used for shrimp cultivation, an important activity in the region and a source of labour income for poorer households (WFP Livelihoods Baseline Study 2017).

**Forestry:** Both the host and Rohingya populations are dependent on firewood as a source of fuel and as an income-generating activity. The arrival of large numbers of Rohingya people has further resulted in the clearing of forest due to the lack of space to accommodate the new arrivals: between 25 August–18 December 2017 an estimated 1,060 hectares was destroyed (The Daily Star 18/12/2017). This, together with the increasing number of people collecting firewood is a serious concern for the host community, who fear a loss of firewood as a source of trade and income, timber availability for construction, and cooking fuel (see food security) (IOM 06/2017; WFP SAFE 11/2017, UNDP 06/12/2017). Social forestation projects provide some employment for community members where they are paid for the upkeep of forests; a livelihood which will be affected by deforestation.

It is not solely the Rohingya influx that has strained forestry. The cultivation of betel leaf, a prime industry in the Cox's Bazar region, significantly contributes to deforestation. As the crop needs shade, locals cut wood to create shade structures, and trees are sometimes cut in order to create space for betel leaf gardens to grow (Rahman *et al.* 2014).

Hilly areas in the district are prone to landslides due to the unstable soil structure and bedrock of the hills. Deforestation increases the risks of landslides during the start of pre-monsoon and monsoon rains (April–September) because it alters soil characteristics and deteriorates soil quality, weakening soil stability (Zaman *et al.* 2010). The hilly areas where shelters have been built are thought to have become more vulnerable since the influx (ISCG 24/11/2017, WFP seasonal calendars).

## Food security

Food insecurity is an underlying concern in Cox's Bazar district. The IPC analysis (last conducted in 2015) found that 27% of people faced Moderate Chronic Food Insecurity (IPC Phase 3), and 7% faced Severe (IPC Phase 4) Chronic Food Insecurity outcomes (IPC 12/2015). Findings from the REVA in December 2017 estimate 38% of host community households in Ukhia and Teknaf are food insecure. A further 17% of households in host communities cannot meet the per capita minimum expenditure basket (REVA 12/2017). Low levels of household food production make host communities heavily dependent on markets to meet their food needs. Most essential commodities seem to be available in sufficient supply although recent increases in food prices have reduced access. Host communities report increasingly resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as borrowing food and relying on help; indicators that food security may become worse.

## Key issues

**Food consumption:** Dietary diversity is low in Ukhia and Teknaf, particularly amongst poor households (ACF 01/2016, REVA 12/2017).

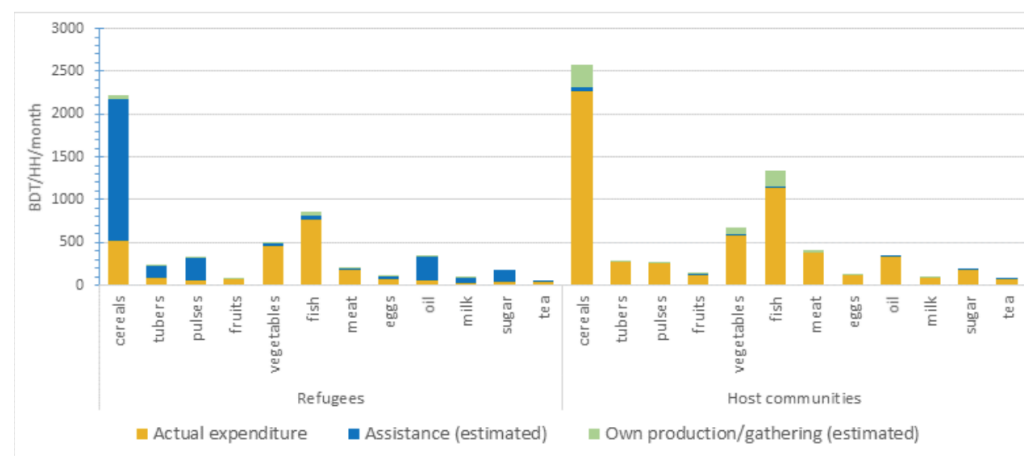
Female-headed households are considerably more affected by food insecurity than male-headed households. As of December 2017, 45% of female-headed households were vulnerable or very vulnerable, compared to 35% of male-headed households. An estimated 38% of assessed female-headed households record poor food consumption, compared to 27% in male-headed households. Only one in three women in the host community have access to a minimum diversified diet – this is almost as bad as the one in four ratio amongst the Rohingya population (REVA 12/2017). Food insecurity in female-headed households can be explained by the fact that women culturally engage less in income-earning activities and have fewer economic opportunities, thus are reliant on more precarious livelihood activities.

Children in host communities are part of school feeding programmes providing an important source of calories. School feeding in the form of fortified biscuits is targeted at communities with high numbers of poor and very poor households (WFP Livelihoods Baseline Study 2017).

**Markets:** Food prices have increased since the influx. Cox's Bazar district is reliant on food imports due to low levels of agricultural production (see Livelihoods). Host communities report a significant increase in the price of main food commodities (rice, ata/flour, pulses, soybean oil, potato, sugar and salt) since the recent influx; reports differ by how much (REVA 12/2017, Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017). The increase in food prices can be explained by the significant increase in the number of consumers on markets, as well as higher transport costs (ACF 09/2017, WFP 11/2017). The high cost of

food reduces host communities' ability to purchase food, particularly for poor households (ACF 09/2017). Food prices are likely to continue to increase and further restrict purchasing power and access to food. This indicates that food availability is not reported to be an issue, yet access to a nutritious diet is already an issue and may become more of a concern.

Host communities allocate around two-thirds of their monthly budget to food expenditure (REVA 12/2017). As many poor households do not have land to cultivate (see livelihoods), most households rely on markets to purchase food. Around 80% of kilocalorie requirements for host communities are met through buying foods at markets (WFP Livelihoods Baseline Study 2017).



Average monthly expenditure at markets from host communities and Rohingya households. Prices are absolute values in BDT. Source: REVA 12/2017

As the above graph shows, most food spending is on cereals, mainly rice. Rice is the staple food across Bangladesh and is imported from Chittagong and Sylhet (WFP 11/2017). As of December 2017, over 92% of Bangladeshi households in Cox's Bazar purchase rice from markets, while household's own production only plays a minor role in meeting cereal needs (REVA 12/2017). The next highest food expenditures were on fish and vegetables (REVA 12/2017, WFP Livelihoods Baseline Study 2017).

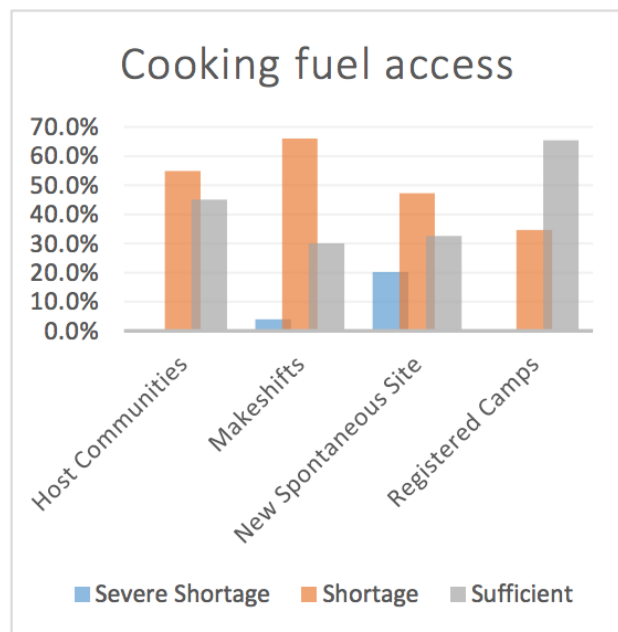
The new influx originally gave small and medium traders, particularly at markets located close to large settlements such as Kutupalong and Balukhali, an increased number of customers. However, congestion on roads has increased and pushed up transport costs, which, in turn, may have decreased traders' profit margins (UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017).

Market dependence in Cox's Bazar is not new and as such most essential commodities seem to be available in sufficient supply due to strong supply chains from Chittagong. (REVA 12/2017, CWG 12/2017; WFP 26/11/2017).

Common coping mechanisms adopted by host communities are similar to those employed throughout Bangladesh to address food insecurity and are also similar to those reported by the Rohingya. They include borrowing money to buy food and reducing consumption expenditure (UNHCR 2012). According to the REVA, seven out of ten households in host communities are forced to adopt one or more coping strategies, similar to the Rohingya population. Coping mechanisms identified include relying on less preferred food (50%), borrowing food and relying on help from friends or relatives (45%), as well as reducing portion size (24%) and number of meals (23%) (REVA 12/2017). A UNDP and UN Women assessment also identifies that selling of small assets and livestock, and temporary migration to Cox's Bazar town are also increasingly used (UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017). These coping mechanisms are likely to further deplete poor households' livelihoods and contribute to chronic food insecurity.

**Cooking:** Host communities use solid fuel in the form of firewood for cooking. Almost all households (>90%) buy firewood while 57% supplement this by collecting it in the forest (WFP 26/11/2017). Collecting firewood becomes more difficult during the monsoon season from June–September. Firewood is the one key commodity related to food security that is not easily available in the market, it is difficult to access for both the host communities and the Rohingya population (REVA 12/2017, CWG 12/2017; WFP 26/11/2017).

Deforestation and the increasing number of households in need of firewood limit its availability (see Environment) (WFP 26/11/2017). As the table below suggests, although host communities do not yet report severe shortages, around half report that their access to cooking fuel has been impacted. Host communities are resorting to coping mechanisms including exchanging food for fuel and undercooking food, as well as skipping meals (WFP 26/11/2017). This is likely to contribute to food security, malnutrition and health issues.



Graph 2: Severity of cooking fuel shortage among communities

Source: WFP 26/11/2017

## Nutrition

Food insecurity and poor food consumption contribute to high malnutrition rates in Cox's Bazar. These rates are also likely to be influenced by water quality and poor sanitation and hygiene practices for children under the age of 2 years. Although rates of acute undernutrition are lower in Teknaf and Ukhaia than the national averages, stunting rates are notably higher, indicating chronic malnutrition driven by poor socioeconomic conditions and possible early exposure to illnesses. In the face of the potential difficulties in accessing an adequate diet and challenges in drinking water sufficiency and sanitation (see WASH), under-nutrition may increase. Malnutrition is responsible directly or indirectly for 35% of deaths in children under 5 (WHO).

### Key issues

**Acute undernutrition (wasting):** Acute undernutrition, or wasting, reflects recent nutritional status and is driven by food shortages, recent illnesses, poor child caring

practices and/or breastfeeding habits. According to the 2016 SMART nutrition survey, global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates measured by Weight for Height Z score and/or oedema were at 10.7% for both Teknaf and Ukhaia and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rates at 2% - both in the high WHO categories (ACF 01/2016). Both GAM and SAM rates in Teknaf and Ukhaia are lower than the national rates of 14% and 3.1% respectively (BDHS 2014).

	Teknaf HC	Ukhaia HC	WHO thresholds	National average
<b>Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM)</b>	12.1%	9.4%	GAM: < 5%: Acceptable 5-9%: Medium 10-14%: High ≥ 15%: Very high *SHPERE standard for emergencies: SAM >2%	14.0%
<b>Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)</b>	2.8%	1.3%		3.1%
<b>Stunting</b>	48.3%	42.6%	< 20%: Low 20-29%: Medium 30-39%: High ≥ 40%: Very high	36.0%
<b>Underweight</b>	32.8%	32.8%	< 10%: Low 10-19%: Medium 20-29%: High ≥ 30%: Very high	33.0%

Sources: ACF 01/2016, BDHS 2014, ACF 2017

At the beginning of 2016, GAM was higher in Teknaf (12.1%) than in Ukhaia (9.4%). One possible explanation could be the difficulty to access safe drinking water in Teknaf, which increases risks of contamination and weakens the immune system. GAM in 2016 decreased compared to 2014, when it was at 16.5%. This could be attributed to the nutritional programs or the timing of the assessment, which was done post-harvest in 2016, when presumably more food was available. The decrease in GAM does not signal an improvement in the nutrition situation as stunting and wasting remained at similar levels to 2014 (ACF 01/2016).

SAM rates were at 2% in 2016, equal to the WHO emergency threshold. Teknaf also records higher SAM rates of 2.8%, compared to Ukhia with 1.3% (ACF 01/2016). Government health facilities struggle to respond to SAM cases, and the lack of guidelines for management of SAM cases of children under six months old at the upazila health complexes means that these children do not have access to nutritional treatments (ICSG 06/2017).

As of late 2017, host communities around Thangkhal settlement reported that the amount of food they were consuming had not changed, however, the quality of food had declined (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017). Increase in market food prices (as noted earlier) is likely to be the key factor restricting access to quality food, impacting dietary diversity and potentially increasing malnutrition.

**Chronic undernutrition (stunting):** Chronic undernutrition, or stunting, reflects long term nutrition issues and results from prolonged or repeated episodes of nutritional deficiencies, or exposure to respiratory diseases as a young child. Stunting prevalence is much higher in Ukhia and Teknaf than the national average of 36% (BDHS 2014). Stunting prevalence at the beginning of 2016 was 42.6% for Ukhia and 48.3% for Teknaf. This exceeds the 40% WHO very high threshold. Children who suffer from chronic malnutrition are at risk of permanent health damage. (ACF 01/2016).

**Underweight** reflects both acute and chronic changes of nutritional status overtime. Prevalence of underweight in host communities of Teknaf and Ukhia was at 32.8% at the beginning of 2016, exceeding the 30% WHO very high threshold and around the same as the national rate of 33% (BDHS 2014). Two children in five were estimated underweight. This is driven by chronic episodes of hunger, insufficient food intake, and food insecurity (ACF 01/2016).

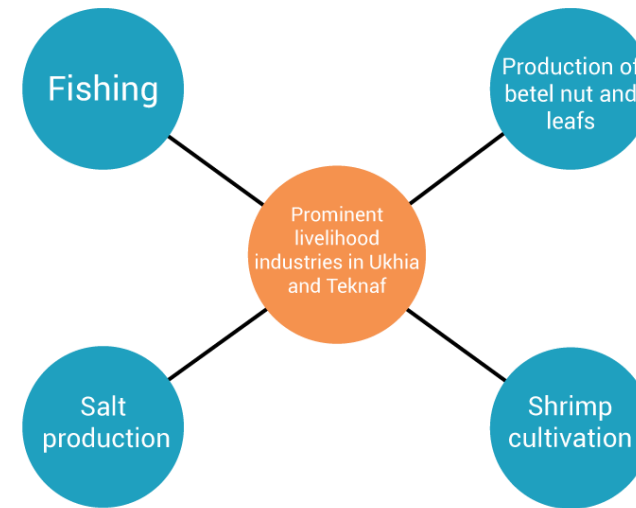
## Livelihoods

The primary industries in Ukhia and Teknaf are fishing (and the subsequent dry fish industry) both at sea and in the Naf river, salt production, production of betel nut and leafs, and shrimp cultivation. Primary exports of the region are fresh and dry fish, salt, and betel nuts and leafs. Cox's Bazar has a large tourism industry: large-scale tourism projects provide work opportunities in the construction industry, as well as other tourism-related activities (transport, etc). However tourism does not seem to be a significant contributor to livelihoods in Ukhia and Teknaf.

Due to lack of cultivable land, most households are dependent on seasonal labour and poorer households mostly rely on unskilled work.

Although the Rohingya arrivals have created some new employment opportunities for the host community, with aid agencies providing work in camps and the Rohingya population providing a new market for local communities, high labour availability means

that host communities are struggling to compete with the Rohingya population who work for lower wages. This may exacerbate already precarious livelihood activities.



## Key issues

Inadequate infrastructure, poor roads and limited manufacturing industries contribute to poverty in the district (ACF 01/2017). The district has been hit by three cyclones in the past three years, affecting livelihoods in the region (see *Cyclones*). Teknaf is a poorer upazila than Ukhia and has almost as many Rohingya counted as located in host communities as in settlements. Teknaf has comparatively been most severely affected economically by the August 2017 influx, experiencing increased transport costs and times, a reduction in sea related activities (tourism, fishing) and a smaller increase in demand on markets than in Ukhia (UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017).

**Land scarcity:** Lack of cultivable land is an issue in Teknaf and Ukhia. Land scarcity means that only medium and better off households are able to afford land to cultivate. Land owned by the most well off and not used for agricultural purposes is rented out for salt and shrimp farms, betel nut and leaf gardens, and construction of hotels and restaurants. The poorest households may own land, but if they do it is a small plot, just

enough for their house. More often they do not own land and either squat on government land, rent, or are given it for free by wealthy landowners (WFP Livelihoods Baseline Study 2017).

A WFP baseline study of livelihoods in Ukhia and Teknaf categorised host communities into four income groups, and identified the average cultivated land and assets owned by each group (see below).

Wealth groups	% of village	Cultivated land	Other assets
Very poor	23-45%	-	-
Poor	27-50%	-	Sharing boats or nets
Middle	18-36%	1-3 kani	-
High	4-10%	1-3 kani	Land for rent, betel trees and gardens, boats, nets

1 kani = 0.4 acres. Source: WFP Livelihoods Baseline Study 2017

Lack of cultivable land is exacerbated by saline intrusion during storm surges, particularly associated with tropical storms and cyclones. This reduces agricultural production as the crops do not often survive the salt water intrusion and land use switches from agricultural cultivation to shrimp farming and salt production.

New Rohingya arrivals in the host community around Thangkhal settlement have settled on cultivable land reducing the host communities' agricultural activities and production and restricting access to other fields. Open defecation on fields reportedly disincentivises host communities from working the land (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017).

**Ownership of livestock:** Though some households in Cox's Bazar keep livestock, mostly poultry, ownership of livestock is not widespread as land to keep animals as well as to produce fodder is scarce (ACF 01/2017). The poor and very poor do not own livestock and exclusively rely on other activities for livelihoods further increasing their reliance on markets for food (WFP Livelihoods Baseline Study 2017).

**Labour opportunities:** Most households of Teknaf and Ukhia rely on seasonal labour including fishing activities, shrimp cultivation, salt production and cultivation of betel nut and betel leaf as major sources of livelihoods. Lack of training opportunities means most households resort to non-agricultural unskilled labour (37%), followed by skilled small business holders and trade (16%), fishing (13%), and unskilled agricultural labour (13%)

(REVA 12/2017, UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017). Due to limited agricultural production in the district, the very poor are often dependent on day labour, and sell their labour to nearby industries such as fishing, working at the ports, manual labour, or in hospitality (ACF 01/2017). Isolated communities have limited access to markets and may need to rely on one source of livelihood such as collecting firewood or selling dry fish (ACF 01/2017). Fishing season is at its peak from June–August. Bans on hilsa fishing to protect this type of fish are usually in effect for several days or weeks around breeding season (September–October). This affects fishermen's livelihoods as fishing is prohibited. Those who do fish risk fines, and the confiscation of nets and catch if apprehended (Daily Star 01/10/2017).

While Cox's Bazar is a tourist destination, popular for its long beach, tourism is mainly centred around Cox's Bazar Sadar. The number of people employed in the tourism industry is hard to ascertain; one study estimates 19,000 people (1%) of the district's population are employed in tourism. This may be explained by underdeveloped tourism infrastructure and a lack of data (Roy and Hoque 2015).

**Wages:** As of November 2017, daily wage was estimated at 400-500 BDT per day in Cox's Bazar district, but is likely lower in Ukhia and Teknaf as there are fewer livelihood opportunities (CPD 11/11/2017). The increased number of people in the upazilas is likely to also be pushing wages down. As of December 2017 there are reports that the daily wage continues to decrease although reports differ on how much (REVA 12/2017, UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017).

Rohingya do not have permission to work and thus resort to the opportunities in the informal sector, which are usually the most insecure and the least lucrative. This in turn reduces the wages (or employment opportunities) for the lower-paid section of the host community workforce.

**Employment opportunities:** While local Bangladeshi workers may lose jobs to the Rohingya population, the crisis has also generated some new employment opportunities. Aid agencies provide host communities with job opportunities in camps and the Rohingya population provide a new market for locals who are selling fish, vegetables, bamboo and firewood inside in camps (CPD 11/11/2017). Organisations on the ground have suggested livelihood opportunities to look into for Bangladeshi residents include increasing brick production, expanding bamboo matting fabrication capacity, and treatment of borak bamboo.

Employment opportunities are reportedly declining overall for poor and poorest households due to the high labour availability. Increased competition on the unskilled labour market means that poor host communities' households are now employed for half-day, rather than full-day labour (REVA 12/2017, UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017).



## Health

Although host communities majorly rely on medicine shops/pharmacies rather than government health facilities for healthcare, overburdened health facilities are likely to impact host communities as they reduce their access to health services. Overall in Cox's Bazar the local population are dependent on health services of lower quality than the rest of the country. Prior to the influx public health facilities lacked adequate medical equipment, medicine, and trained medical staff. Complicated referral processes, shortages of ambulances and other logistical constraints were obstacles to health service provision (UNFPA 2016). Distance to health facilities is identified as an issue for host communities in Ukhia and Teknaf. Poor roads and transport systems, particularly during the rainy season, make accessing and operating health services challenging (IOM 2015, Kuam *et al.* 2014).

### Key issues

**Access to health services:** In Ukhia and Teknaf, (including within and outside camps and settlements), there are 200 healthcare facilities providing various levels and types of health care. The distribution of healthcare facilities is uneven, and facilities are particularly lacking in western Ukhia and southern Teknaf (Health Sector & WHO, 12/2017). Cox's Bazar does not have trauma care facilities, the nearest is in Chittagong (WHO 21/10/2017). Immediately following the influx, Sadar hospital in Cox's Bazar and Teknaf and Ukhia upazila health complexes were overburdened responding to the increased population's acute health needs (ISCG 31/10/2017). As of December 2017, the upazila health complex in Ukhia has seen a 25% increase in consultations and admissions since the influx. The Teknaf upazila health complex bed occupancy increased by 44.4% immediately after the influx, but this figure has decreased as of December (Health Sector & WHO 12/2017).

Overburdened local health facilities and congestion from new arrivals affects host communities' access to health facilities. Host communities living around Thangkhal settlement reportedly resort to private clinics for minor health problems and have to travel longer distances for more significant health problems. Congestion on the roads and in the community also hampers access to health facilities (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017). Doctors in villages provide health services for both host communities and the Rohingya population. Host communities living near camps and settlements may access health facilities at these sites. However, it is unclear whether host communities do actually use on-site health facilities, and whether they know that these actually exist. According to anecdotal evidence, Bangladeshi residents have expressed discontent because they need to pay for transport to reach these health

facilities, and they need to pay for health services, unlike the Rohingya population. Pharmacies are the most accessible place for host communities to seek healthcare (IOM 06/2016).

**Health-seeking behaviour:** An IOM study found that the host community seems to be more familiar with utilising medicine shops/pharmacies to acquire prescriptions and medicines than with government health facilities. Reasons for this include distance from health facilities, non-availability of healthcare providers, and poor roads and transportation systems. People report that they receive quicker and cheaper health services from shopkeepers. As shopkeepers are not licensed practitioners, this raises concerns about the quality of health services provided (IOM 2015).

**Medicine:** As of December 2017 it is estimated that only 30% of essential drugs for Upazila Health Complexes are available. This may indicate that demand is outstripping supply of medicines since the influx. Antibiotics are also very limited in Teknaf (IOM 2015, Health Sector and WHO 12/2017). Overcrowding in health facilities is likely to reduce available medicine for both the Rohingya population and host communities.

## WASH

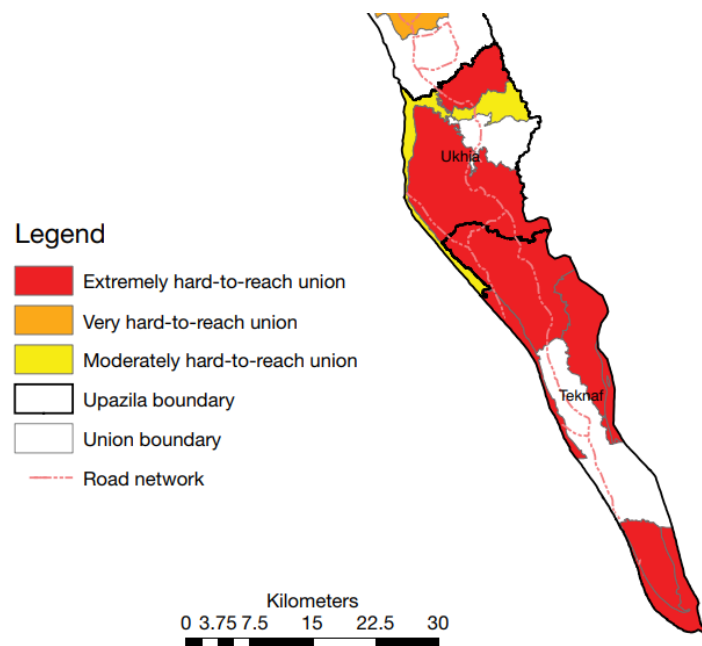
WASH is a significant underlying concern in Cox's Bazar with access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation below national average. The recent influx, almost tripling the population is further exacerbating the situation. Although water is generally accessible for residents of Teknaf and Ukhia, only 78% of people in Teknaf have access to improved drinking water sources compared to the national average of 98%. Host communities are increasingly concerned over the depletion of water sources. Sanitation in Teknaf and Ukhia is a major concern as coverage is low, with only around 30% of host communities' having access to a sanitary latrine as compared to the national average of 61%. Hygiene practice is generally poor with only a third of households reportedly using soap for handwashing. Risks of disease are increased by poor waste management and disposal of faecal sludge in open fields or water bodies. The increased demand on WASH services by the Rohingya arrivals has reduced the access in these areas. Some communities report a change in the ratio of tube-wells to households from 1:5 prior to the influx to 1:100 now.

### Key issues

#### Water

**Scarcity of water:** Over 80% of water in Ukhia and Teknaf comes from tube-wells with ponds and streams being the other main sources of water. Groundwater is scarce,

particularly in Teknaf. Shallow aquifers as well as fresh water sources are likely to dry up in dry season (December–March) (Sultana *et al.* 08/02/2016). Water is mostly obtained through shared shallow tube- and hand-wells (Chowdhury *et al.* 07/2017). Water from shallow tube-wells is considered more at risk of contamination than that from deep tube-wells.



Source: World Bank 2012

The World Bank assessed how easily unions could be reached with WASH services based on groundwater tables, sanitation coverage, exposure to natural disasters, and the levels of poverty and child mortality. All four assessed unions in Teknaf (Baharchara, Nhilla, Sabrang, Whykong) were classified as extremely hard to reach in relation to water supply. In Ukhia, Ratna Palong and Jalia Palong were classified as moderately hard to reach, Haldia Palong as very hard to reach and Palong Khali as extremely hard to reach (World Bank 2012). Host communities in Teknaf are further away from water sources than those in Ukhia, likely due to its hilly topography, where finding nearby water sources is difficult as the groundwater table is lower (ACF 01/2016).

The new influx of 688,000 people will continue to put strains on aquifers and fresh water sources, which are likely to dry up earlier than usual (usually around February), impacting water for drinking. Host communities have indicated being seriously concerned over the depletion of water sources and the potential impact this could have on their livelihoods (UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017). Host communities around Thangkhali settlement report that there is now one tube-well for over 100 households, compared to one tube-well for four

or five households prior to the influx. Tube-wells are either overstretched or have become dysfunctional (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017). An insufficient number of tube-wells results in long queues at water collection points, particularly during peak hours in the morning. Waiting times and collection distances have also increased due to frequent breakdown and malfunctioning of pumps due to excessive use (Chowdhury *et al.* 07/2017).

**Water quality:** The level of access to improved drinking water sources is only 78% in Teknaf as compared to the national average of 87% (UNICEF MICS 2012/2013). People mainly rely on shallow tube-wells, which are generally thought to be more prone to contamination and dry up quicker than deep tube-wells. In coastal villages tube-wells mainly dispense saline water. Salinity may be a further risk to water quality, as sea water levels rise and saline intrusion increases (Sultana *et al.* 08/02/2016). Water tasting like iron has been reported as an issue. Surface water sources such as rivers and streams are increasingly polluted as people use the river for washing clothes and waste disposal. (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017).

**Access to water points:** Access to water points is more difficult in rural areas. Even prior to the influx, only about one third of households in Cox's Bazar had access to water sources less than 15 minutes away. This compares to the national level where around 75% of people have water on their premises (ACF 01/2017, BDHS 2014). A 2017 study found that the majority of Cox's Bazar households are 15-30 minutes from water points (ACF 01/2017).

As of December 2017, host communities must use alternative routes and travel longer distances to collect water from tube-wells due to overcrowding on roads. Host communities around Thangkhali settlement have indicated that protection concerns for girls now restrict their ability to fetch water (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017).

## Sanitation

**Access to sanitation facilities:** Host communities in Ukhia and Teknaf have limited access to sanitation facilities. An estimated 25% of people in both Ukhia and Teknaf do not have latrines, significantly higher than the 3.3% national average. Further, only 36% and 31% of people in Teknaf and Ukhia respectively use sanitary latrines, compared to 61% at national level (BDHS 2014, Chowdhury *et al.* 07/2017). Latrine structures considered sanitary are kutchra – made of crude and mud/thatch construction deteriorate and become unsanitary easily due to poor maintenance and high costs of repair (ACF 01/2017, Hanchette 05/2016). This risks facilitating the spread of diseases and exacerbating nutrition issues. Unimproved latrines are located close to water points, increasing the risk of water contamination and the spread of disease (ACF 01/2016). There is a lack of awareness about

the importance of repairing blocked latrines and de-sludging them once they are full. Latrines in the area that were damaged by cyclone Mora (10,000 damaged in Teknaf and Ukhia) were often replaced with temporary latrines with poor faecal management. While this should have been a short-term solution only, longer term, improved latrines have not been installed and this exacerbates sanitation and hygiene problems (Chowdhury *et al.* 07/2017).

	Teknaf HC	Ukhia HC	National average
<b>Absence of latrines</b>	25%	25%	3.3%
<b>Access to sanitary latrines</b>	36%	31%	61%

Sources: BDHS 2014, Chowdhury *et al.* 07/2017

With the new influx, NGOs have provided latrines in some villages. These are situated in a prominent position and highly visible from the roads to enhance security. Host communities however do not necessarily use them (ACF 01/2017). Around Thangkhali settlement latrines are often located on hill tops or far from where people live, hampering access. The limited number of available latrines and long queues to use them further limits access. Lack of gender-segregated bathing facilities is a concern for girls' access to WASH facilities (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017).

**Open defecation:** 5% of the population of the area practise open defecation, compared to a national average of 1% according to census figures (Chowdhury *et al.* 07/2017; BBS, 2011; RC, 03/2017). Open defecation is reportedly practiced by both the Rohingya population in host communities and host communities themselves. As latrines are limited, people have to queue. As faecal sludge management is lacking, latrines are not always decommissioned, increasing open defecation. This takes place on cultivatable land and near rivers, posing concerns of water and soil contamination and disease spread. (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017, Chowdhury *et al.* 07/2017).

**Hygiene:** Use of soap is not widespread, possibly because people have to go long distances to collect water and face financial constraints in buying soap. Safe practices for carrying and storing water are not widespread (ACF 01/2017).

Remote southern unions of Teknaf demonstrate lower levels of hygiene education than northern unions of Ukhia, where hygiene education is considered satisfactory. However, it is common that people do not wash hands, or only use water, in critical times including after defecation (Chowdhury *et al.* 07/2017).

Other hygiene issues relate to menstrual hygiene. Women use old cloths and the washing of these is irregular due to taboos surrounding menstrual hygiene. In an effort not to expose their washed cloths publicly they are left to dry in unsanitary places (IOM 2016, ACF 01/2017).

**Waste management:** Poor waste management means that faecal sludge is often disposed in open fields or water bodies raising serious sanitation concerns (Chowdhury *et al.* 07/2017). Only 15% of host communities reported keeping household waste in specific waste containers before disposing. Similar low rates for disposing household waste in a designated place for waste disposal were reported (IOM 06/2016).

It is uncommon for people in host communities to burn waste. Often, waste is disposed of in areas surrounding the house or in nature. It is unclear to what extent the population knows about the linkages between waste and spread of disease. The amount of waste in host communities has reportedly increased with overcrowding (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017).

## Access

There are a number of factors that contribute to restricting general access to essential services and livelihood opportunities for host communities: challenging terrain and poor infrastructure, especially the road network; congestion and increased demand for services; corruption; limited attention from development partners and protection concerns. The large new influx of Rohingya population in host communities has strained the already limited access to essential services and employment opportunities available to host communities (see *Livelihoods, Health, WASH*). However it should also be noted that the influx has brought a broad range of new actors into the region and the situation of the host communities is beginning to be seen. The HRP included 300,000 Bangladeshi residents of Teknaf and Ukhia as part of the humanitarian caseload. The influx provides an opportunity to ensure the needs of host communities are not overlooked.

## Key issues

**Poor infrastructure:** Cox's Bazar district is one of the most underdeveloped and poor districts of Bangladesh. Despite the popularity of the beach area around Cox's Bazar Sadar as a tourist destination, the rest of the district has limited infrastructure and low. Difficult terrain and poor roads constrain both the development of infrastructure and the maintenance of existing infrastructure, limiting access to basic services. Large parts of the district are classified as hard to reach and some communities live in isolation. Transportation of goods and access to infrastructure and markets are therefore limited

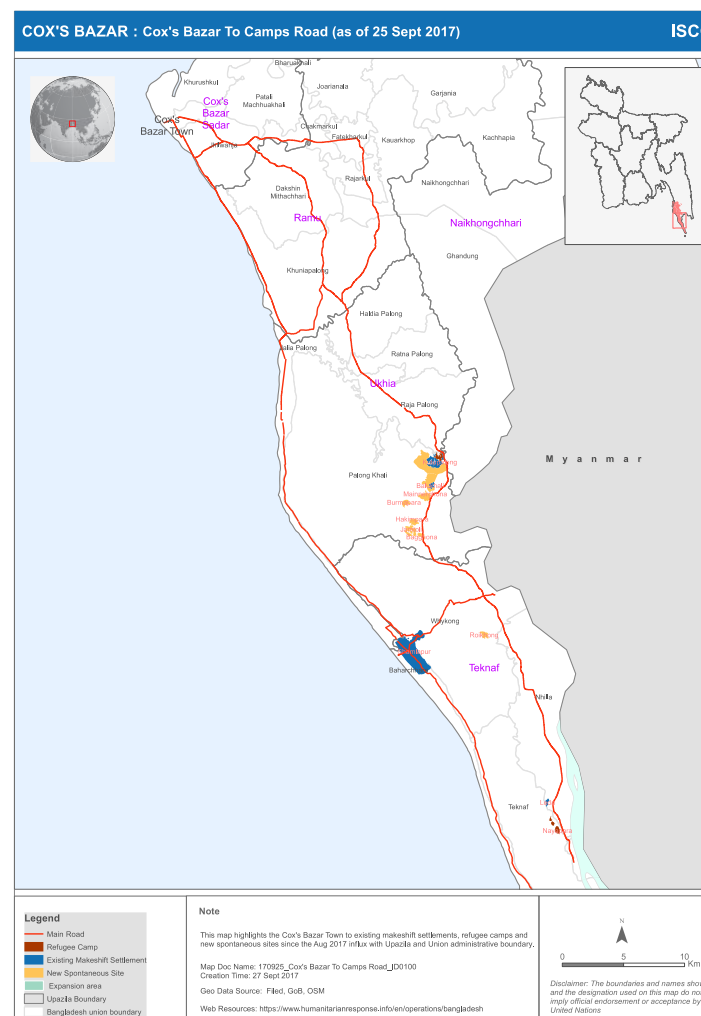
(ACF 01/2017). As of late of 2017, increased use of roads is reportedly causing damage with 37km of roads damaged as of December (UNDP 06/12/2017).

**Corruption and politicisation of assistance:** Bangladeshi communities are often organized around political affiliations to local leaders; this can foster unequal access to services for some sections of the population and the distribution of assistance that is not based on need.

**Limited assistance:** As discussed throughout this document, host communities of Teknaf and Ukhia already faced limited access to essential services and employment opportunities due to poverty and underdevelopment; these access constraints are exacerbated by the recent Rohingya influx, most notably for those poorest households who have found increased competition on the informal and unskilled labour market. Although 300,000 Bangladeshis (60% of the Bangladesh population) of Teknaf and Ukhia were targeted in the HRP, host communities report feeling ignored by humanitarian organisations as they are not prioritised in aid delivery. Some host communities living close to a camp or makeshift settlement may be able to access services provided there (e.g. use the health facility) there but are not routinely part of aid distributions.

**Congestion:** As of December 2017, congestion on roads around some settlements reportedly restricts people's movements and their access to services. Long queues are also reported as major constraints for host communities to access basic services (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017).

**Protection:** Women from host communities have reported increased limitations in their freedom of movement, as they now fear sexual harassment at the checkpoints that have been set up to monitor movement (UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017). Further, host communities' perceived fear of the new arrivals reportedly hampers movement and access to services (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017).



Infrastructure map Source: ISCG 27/09/2017

## Protection

Cox's Bazar district has long been known as a base for trafficking, organized crime and armed groups. Illegal activities are partly driven by unemployment and poverty and partly by proximity to the borders with Myanmar and India, the active seaport, and vulnerable coastline. Cox's Bazar has become a hub for trafficking narcotics, small arms and light weapons, human trafficking and armed robbery against ships (Safer World 2013). Transnational criminal organisations have utilised economically weak and marginalised

people, who are prepared to take greater risks to make money due to their vulnerability. The change in social dynamics brought about by the influx together with the increase in economic vulnerability and the pressure on local authorities including law enforcement creates a situation where these illegal activities may increase.

Other protection concerns including child protection, child marriage and gender based violence are practiced in Bangladesh and known to be likely to be exacerbated at times of social and economic stress.

### Key issues

**Drug trafficking** is identified by people of Cox's Bazar as their biggest concern compared to other forms of trafficking. This may indicate they see it as a very obvious issue and one which could directly impact them compared to other forms of trafficking which may not be seen as having a direct impact on their lives (Safer World 08/2013). Drug trafficking of yaba, a crude form of methamphetamine, has reportedly increased in recent years, with large quantities of drugs confiscated at the Myanmar-Bangladesh border in 2016 (IRIN 19/06/2014). Yaba and other drugs are reportedly more prevalent in urban settings of Cox's Bazar. Half of respondents to the Safer World assessment conducted in Cox's Bazar indicated that they are aware of yaba being available in their locality; this figure increased significantly for Teknaf where 87% of respondents indicated that they knew it is available (Safer World 08/2013).

**Human trafficking:** In 2012, it was reported that an estimated 100,000 to 200,500 women were victims of trafficking every year in Bangladesh. It is unclear whether this number refers only to women trafficked into prostitution or if it also includes women trafficked for other reasons such as forced labour (Safer World 08/2013). Bangladesh has ratified the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women for Children and Prostitution but not the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. This means that there are limited legal safeguards for people forced into labour.

As a border district, Cox's Bazar is particularly affected by this issue. As of January 2018, 21% of host communities indicated that people unknown to the community offered to take their children away for different incentives (jobs, better care), particularly boys (Education sector and child protection sub-sector 01/2018). There is no indication that the problem of human trafficking has decreased in recent years. People of Cox's Bazar are vulnerable to human trafficking in part due to their desire to migrate from the area for work, and many are trafficked to Malaysia and Thailand (Amnesty International 2015). A main reason identified for being pulled into human trafficking is poverty, followed by marginalisation

and general statelessness. Trafficking can be the result of abuse of trust or it can also be the result of kidnapping (Safer World 08/2013).

**Child labour:** Cox's Bazar is one of the six districts with the highest incidence of child labour countrywide. The proportion of children (10-14 years old) engaged in child labour in Cox's Bazar district is 9.4% compared to the national average of 6%. In Ukhia, the proportion is one of the highest with over 9%, and in Teknaf, it is between 7.1-9% (UNICEF 2014). Since the influx, there have been increasing concerns that children are dropping out to school to work as a result of increased employment opportunities in and around camps (CPD 11/11/2017). 85% of children in host communities engage in paid and unpaid work as of January 2018, one of the highest rates compared to other groups assessed (Rohingya in camps, Rohingya in settlements and Rohingya in host communities) (Education sector and child protection sub-sector 01/2018).

**Child marriage:** Child marriage is common in Bangladesh, over 50% of girls are married before the age of 18 (UNFPA accessed 19/12/2017). Child marriage is used as a coping mechanism for the poorest host community households and known to increase after shocks such as natural disasters. As of January 2018, 23% of host communities reported an increase in child marriage practices within three months, indicating an increase in the use of this practice as a negative coping mechanism (Education sector and child protection sub-sector 01/2018). There are concerns that the increased strain on resources due to the recent influx of Rohingya people may boost the use of child marriage as a coping mechanism (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017, Child Protection Sub-Sector 10/2017).

**GBV:** Domestic violence is common amongst both host communities and refugees. Host communities are not inclined to officially report it, as it is not a criminal offense in Bangladesh and it is culturally and historically considered a family problem. (UNHCR 2007). Safer World 08/2013). Physical assault was reported as the main type of GBV, followed by rape and sexual assault. The primary source of help in GBV situations is relatives.

### Housing and essential household items (NFIs)

Host communities live in poor quality houses. Around a quarter of houses made of temporary materials and are vulnerable to environmental factors such as strong winds and flooding. Land scarcity results in overcrowding, which is increasing with the newly arrived Rohingya population, in terms of quality of housing and access to essential household commodities such as cooking utensils. Many Bangladeshi households may not be much better off than the refugees.

## Key issues

**Poor quality housing:** Housing conditions in Teknaf and Ukhia are poor. Most people live in houses built with polythene roofing (ACF 01/2017). According to the 2011 census, approximately 20% of houses in Ukhia and Teknaf are classified as jupri; housing made of temporary materials. Almost 70% of houses in Ukhia and 46% of houses in Teknaf are kutcha; houses made up of mud brick walls, bamboo, sun-grass, wood and CGI roofing (BBS, 2011). These structures are vulnerable to the environment, heavy winds, rains and flooding which is a concern in an area prone to natural disasters including cyclones.

**Overcrowding** is an issue due to land scarcity and the difficulty to acquire land on which to build. Over one third of host community households live in homes with only one room, although this is similar to national rates (ACF 01/2017, BDHS 2014). Bangladeshi households have been hosting new Rohingya arrivals, exacerbating overcrowding. In a Shelter/NFI joint needs assessment conducted in two host communities of Teknaf, 77% of the respondents stated that they host one or more refugee families, with a majority (64%) indicating that they live under a different roof but in the same compound (Shelter NFI joint need assessment 11/2017). At the end of January 2018, a new law was allegedly adopted to fine Bangladeshis who host Rohingya in their houses (no further information on this law was available at the time of writing).

As of December 2017, host communities around Thangkhali, Ukhia reported concerns of a lack of privacy, especially when using WASH facilities, due to overcrowding caused by the new arrivals (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/2017).

**Key household items (NFIs):** Presumably a long-standing issue due to high poverty levels in the district, 13% of people assessed in host communities in November 2017 reported that they lacked pots and pans to cook. Concerns of poor stove quality and safety are high amongst host communities, as they make cooking food challenging. Most people cook inside their shelter, yet the use of firewood to cook inside shelters has been linked to respiratory diseases (WFP 26/11/2017, Shelter NFI joint need assessment 11/2017).

## Education

Cox's Bazar performs poorer on all school related indicators than the national average. The literacy rate is 39.3%, significantly lower than the national average of 61.5% (ACF 01/2017). School attendance is also low, partly due to high incidence of child labour in Cox's Bazar (UNICEF 2014). Children seeking employment to help their families following the Rohingya influx because of the growing employment challenges faced by adults discussed above may result on even lower school attendance rates as well as the associated protection risks faced by children not in school.

Literary rate and school attendance per gender in Cox's Bazar and national average

Literacy and school attendance	Gender	Cox's Bazar	National
Youth literacy rate (15-24 years)	Boys	58%	74%
	Girls	63%	77%
Adult literacy rate (> 15 years)	Male	44%	57%
	Female	38%	49%
School attendance rate at 5	Boys	21%	21%
	Girls	21%	22%
School attendance rate at primary	Boys	70%	76%
	Girls	73%	78%
School attendance rate at secondary	Boys	58%	73%
	Girls	70%	80%
Proportion of out-of-school children (6-10 years)	Boys	30%	24%
	Girls	27%	22%
Proportion of out-of-school children (11-15 years)	Boys	41%	28%
	Girls	30%	20%

Source: BBS 2011 Census

## Key issues

**Access to school:** In Ukhia and Teknaf, there are about 5,000 primary and 8,000 secondary school students. According to a recent joint assessment conducted by the Education sector and the Child Protection sub-sector, host communities cited child labour as the main reason for not sending boys to school (38%), and high school costs (28%) for not sending girls to school (Education sector and child protection sub-sector 01/2018). School costs significantly impact poor households and may contribute to reducing children's access to school. Pocket money for children to buy snacks at schools is reportedly a major source of expenditure in host communities (WFP Livelihoods Baseline Study 2017).

Children from host communities near Thangkhali settlement report that increases in transport costs and that congestion on roads lengthens travel time to school. They are also reportedly struggle to meet the increased costs of transportation, which is likely to reduce some children's access to school. Parents from this host community are reportedly restricting girls from going to school due to protection concerns. Road safety is also a major concern for children, with increased road traffic and road accidents

reported (Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision 12/201, Education sector and child protection sub-sector 01/2018).

**Attendance:** School attendance is lower than national average. Cox's Bazar has one of the highest incidences of child labour in Bangladesh, which means that a large proportion of children work rather than go to school (UNICEF 2014). Many poor households rely on children for generating income.

As of late 2017, students in host communities are reportedly dropping out of school or skipping classes in order to assist their families with income-generating activities. Host community children reportedly go to settlements to obtain food and other relief items through distributions. In addition, children sell items at markets in settlements (CPD 11/11/2017).

**Teaching material:** Shortages in teaching material has been highlighted by host communities as of January 2018 with 52% of teachers in host communities listing the provision of teaching materials as a priority for teachers to conduct their classes (Education sector and child protection sub-sector 01/2018).

## Communication with communities

Host communities report not understanding the situation regarding the current Rohingya influx, how this is likely to unfold, and how it will impact them. They report having limited access to the information they need. Language differences have been an obstacle to communication between host communities, Rohingya people and aid workers, and may perpetrate misinformation.

### Key issues

**Language:** Language differences can be a barrier to effective communication and hamper access to information. According to an Internews assessment, 64% of Bangladeshi living in the four upazilas of Cox's Bazar hosting the Rohingya population, speak Chatgaya, a Chittagonian dialect. The remainder speak Bangla. Only 4% of Rohingya speak Bangla and the rest speak Rohingya. Rohingya and Chatgaya have 70% overlap in vocabulary. However, as the two languages are not identical, miscommunication and translation issues are frequent (Internews 24/11/2017). This may reinforce misconceptions and fear towards the Rohingya community. Translation issues (as the translators hired by international organisations are mostly Chatgaya speakers from the district) may also lead to misunderstanding of aid workers and exacerbate information gaps regarding support available to host communities.

**Information:** Mobile phone, television, face-to-face communication, radio and Facebook are the main sources of information for host communities. Mobile phones are a primary means of communication and are the preferred method of receiving information (Internews 24/11/2017). Host communities report a general lack of understanding on what is happening surrounding the current Rohingya influx and how it is likely to impact them. An assessment found that only 16% of surveyed people in host communities felt they had sufficient information to make informed decisions. Insufficient and inaccurate information has contributed to tensions between the local residents and the Rohingya arrivals (UNDP & UNWomen 06/12/2017). Host communities seek information on how to stay safe, prevent attacks or harassment, and how to get help if they have been harassed/attacked (Internews 24/11/2017). Outreach radio programmes to increase information dissemination are ongoing (ISCG 03/12/2017).

## Sources of tension

The Rohingya population has historically been scattered across Bangladeshi villages of Cox's Bazar and have had considerable interaction with local communities. While large number of arrivals of Rohingya people in the early 1990s resulted in the creation of official camps, different subsequent influxes also resulted in the formation of unofficial, makeshift settlements that became more and more permanent over time. As these settlements became too small to accommodate the numbers of Rohingya people they were extended and have come to envelop Bangladeshi villages.

In spite of some reports of tension, the cultural similarities between the Rohingya population and host communities, and the long history of cross-border movement has also facilitated integration. Host communities have provided significant services and support to the Rohingya people. Particularly in the 2017 influx many locals distributing in-kind goods, food, cash, and have opened their homes to shelter Rohingya people. In the past, host communities have benefited from employing the newcomers for agriculture or construction work. Intercommunity marriages have also taken place integrating the Rohingya into society. However, competition for limited resources has caused tensions and the Rohingya population has at times been blamed for being the cause of trouble and disorder in communities (IOM 06/2016). Despite this, a 2012 study by Safer World found that there was a great deal of similarity between the main concerns of host communities and Rohingya residents of south east Bangladesh.

**Table 5: Summary of the socio-economic and security concerns identified by communities in the South-East border area (2012)**

Bangladeshi host communities	Rohingya community
Crime and fear of violence	Fear of violence
Cross-border trafficking	Human trafficking
Economic insecurity	Economic insecurity and resource competition
Insensitivity to host community needs (e.g. housing, education and healthcare) by international humanitarian agencies	Inadequate provision for basic needs (e.g. housing, education and healthcare)
Inter-communal tensions	Intra- and inter-communal tensions
Overpopulation	Statelessness and ongoing violence in Myanmar preventing safe return
Unemployment	Unemployment
Concerns about infrastructure	Problems with local authorities

Source: Safer World 2013

### Key areas of tensions

**Firewood collection** has consistently been listed as a main source of tension between host communities and the Rohingya population as both populations depend on firewood for fuel and as an income-generating activity. Sometimes encounters between the two groups result in physical altercations (Oxfam 11/2017). Increased fuel scarcity is exacerbating tensions with host communities (WFP 26/11/2017).

**Access to distributions:** In several locations, host communities live in or near a settlement. At the settlements, food and aid distributions are accessible primarily to the Rohingya population: the host community population is not officially allowed to receive shelter distributions and is not always included in food distributions. This leads to tension as the living conditions of host communities are not always better than those of the Rohingya.

**Water:** Particularly in Teknaf water is in short supply. The new influx in areas surrounding Nayapara, Leda, and Unchiprang, has put an additional strain on water supply. It is expected that both host communities and the Rohingya population will face shortages in the dry season, as shallow-tube wells and ring-wells are expected to dry up (usually in February). Water sources may dry-up earlier than usual due to the high number of new arrivals, though this is difficult to measure. The drying up of wells may lead to tensions.

**Labour and wages:** Both the host community and the Rohingya population rely on casual day labour for income. The large numbers of new Rohingya arrivals, who are often willing

to work for lower wages, has increased competition for livelihood opportunities (WFP and UNHCR 2012; K4D 20/10/17). Small-scale clashes have sometimes erupted over these labour market changes in the past. In 1999, 250 undocumented Rohingya families were expelled from St. Martin's Island following villager complaints that families were taking their jobs (HRW 2000). While tensions over wages between the two groups appear to still be very limited, there are concerns that these kinds of challenges could resurface (REVA 12/2017). At the beginning of 2018, anecdotal evidence suggests that host communities have expressed resentment for not being employed by NGOs.

**Miscommunication:** Host communities often hear rumours about the Rohingya population, for example that they may carry and spread HIV/AIDS and other diseases, are uneducated, engage in crime, and are a threat to security (UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017).

## Aggravating factors

### Cyclones

Cox's Bazar is prone to cyclones, and has been affected by cyclones every year in the past three years (Cyclone Mora May 2017, Cyclone Roanu May 2016, Cyclone Komen July 2015). The pre-monsoon cyclone season occurs from April–June; a post-monsoon season occurs in October–November. Each cyclone has resulted in severe damages and has rendered the district more vulnerable as complete recovery between cyclones has not been possible. Research suggests host communities have thus far experienced greater losses from these natural disasters than the Rohingya population, with losses of livelihoods and damages to housing and WASH facilities (ACF 01/2017).

Inhabitants of Cox's Bazar were heavily impacted by cyclone Mora in May 2017, where six people were killed and 218 people were injured. 17,000 houses were destroyed across Teknaf upazila, crops were severely damaged and livelihood activities were temporarily diverted towards reconstruction of houses. Access to water was restricted in remote areas, latrines were damaged and overcrowding in cyclone shelters was a major concern (ISCG 01/06/2017). Communities in Teknaf have not fully recovered. The district continues to face the risk of being impacted by another cyclone.

### Monsoon and landslides

Heavy rainfall during the monsoon (June–September) destroys crops and food stocks, reducing food availability. During heavy rains, flooded tube-wells may lead to contamination of drinking water. A new strategy adopted by some communities in the district is to "seal" or cap tube wells when flooding is imminent. This practise prevents



the contamination of the well. (ACF 01/2017). Flooded roads during the monsoon season restrict movement, especially for hard to reach communities, which rely on already poor roads. This further limits access to services and water points, leaving households to rely on collected rainwater (ACF 01/2017). Damage and destruction of crops from heavy rain and landslides reduces food available to host communities.

An estimated 300,000 people in Cox's Bazar district live in landslide-prone areas, this includes Ukhia and Teknaf. The latest deadly landslide in Teknaf was in 2008 when 13 people were killed. In 2009, five people were killed in Ukhia and two other districts (Dhaka Tribune 15/06/2017). The disruption to the terrain caused by deforestation and reworking the land to create settlements for the Rohingya population has disturbed ground and slopes. This is likely to have increased landslide risks in hilly areas.

## Poverty and deprivation

Although overall poverty levels in Cox's Bazar district are similar to the national average (around 18% of people living under the lower poverty line), according to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Cox's Bazar district is considered one of 20 (out of 64) 'lagging districts' of Bangladesh (based on indicators of poverty, literacy, nutrition, risks associated with environmental degradation, etc.). Cox's Bazar is one of nine districts performing poorly on all indicators (UNDAF 2012). Further, according to UNICEF's pockets of social deprivation evaluation, Ukhia and Teknaf upazilas are among the 50 most socially deprived upazilas of Bangladesh (out of 509), based on indicators of literacy, child labour, access to sanitary toilets and connection to electricity (UNICEF 2013). Lack of adequate infrastructure and poor roads contribute to poor coverage of basic services and also make access to these services difficult. The host community is therefore vulnerable because any shock that destroys or damages their assets will be difficult for them to bounce back from.

## Response capacity

### Local and national response capacity

Community based organisations have organised themselves into the CSO-NGO forum. In a published policy brief, they have advocated for more inclusion into the Inter Sector Coordination Group as well as a larger operational role, with decision-making power rather than implementing power only (CSO-NGO Forum 19/10/2017). Compared to the rest of Bangladesh there are fewer local NGOs with a history of operating in Cox's Bazar. Those with experience in the area are in demand as implementing partners for INGOs and UN agencies for the response to the Rohingya. While some organizations are actively

engaging in capacity strengthening of these local partners, there are concerns that the administrative processes and capacity of these organizations may not be strong enough to deal with the increased demands.

There are reports that the influx has stretched local governance institutions and civil servants to the extent that they have suspended social safety net programmes for host communities. There is a broad ranging social safety net programme in Bangladesh implemented by the Government, which are prevalent across Bangladesh for host communities (UNDP & UNWOMEN 06/12/2017). This can be seen as an indication that local authorities are stretched.

### International response capacity

Many large international NGOs as well as UN agencies have increased their presence or set up operations for the first time in Cox's Bazar. As most activity in Cox's Bazar was previously restricted to only a handful of I/NGOs and UN agencies, a lot of currently operating humanitarian organisations have no experience in the Cox's Bazar context. Though bringing technical expertise, staff turnover in the organisations is high, and contextual understanding varies. As organisations have arrived to address the needs of the large new influx, the needs for host communities have thus far not been the focus of international efforts.

In addition, the response in Cox's Bazar is coordinated and framed along the lines of a humanitarian emergency response with most of the operational organisations focusing on a humanitarian rather than longer-term development approach. Although this is to be expected, it may make the host communities invisible to the responding partners unless a deliberate effort is made to highlight their needs. As of 1 December 38 partners are operating in host communities, compared to 79 in camps and settlements (ISCG 4W 01/12/2017).

I/NGOs and UN agencies have targeted 300,000 people from host communities to be beneficiaries in the October Humanitarian Response Plan. Planned interventions can be found [here](#).

### Humanitarian and operational constraints

- **Hard to reach areas:** Ukhia and Teknaf are considered very hard to reach and extremely hard to reach respectively (JNA 06/2015). With only 9.5% of roads paved in this southeastern part of Bangladesh, rural areas with poor roads in Teknaf and Ukhia are likely to be more difficult to reach and operate in for humanitarian actors.

- **Permits to work in host communities:** I/NGOs working with Bangladeshi must obtain an FD-6 permit (different to the FD-7 permit to work with the Rohingya population). The process to obtain this permit is lengthy.

## Information gaps and needs

- Very limited information is available on the current impact of the high Rohingya population influx. This means needs assessments in host communities after the 25 August influxes are limited.
- Contextual information on host communities is not available in a way that consistent comparisons can be made across the district, it is sporadic and relatively outdated.
- There is a clear lack of information on unregistered refugees residing in host communities in all sectors.
- Information on the government activities including safety nets programmes in Ukhia and Teknaf
- Information on any on-going development programmes in Ukhia and Teknaf and operational NGOs prior to the influx
- Information on government-led initiatives to support host communities following the influx.

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