

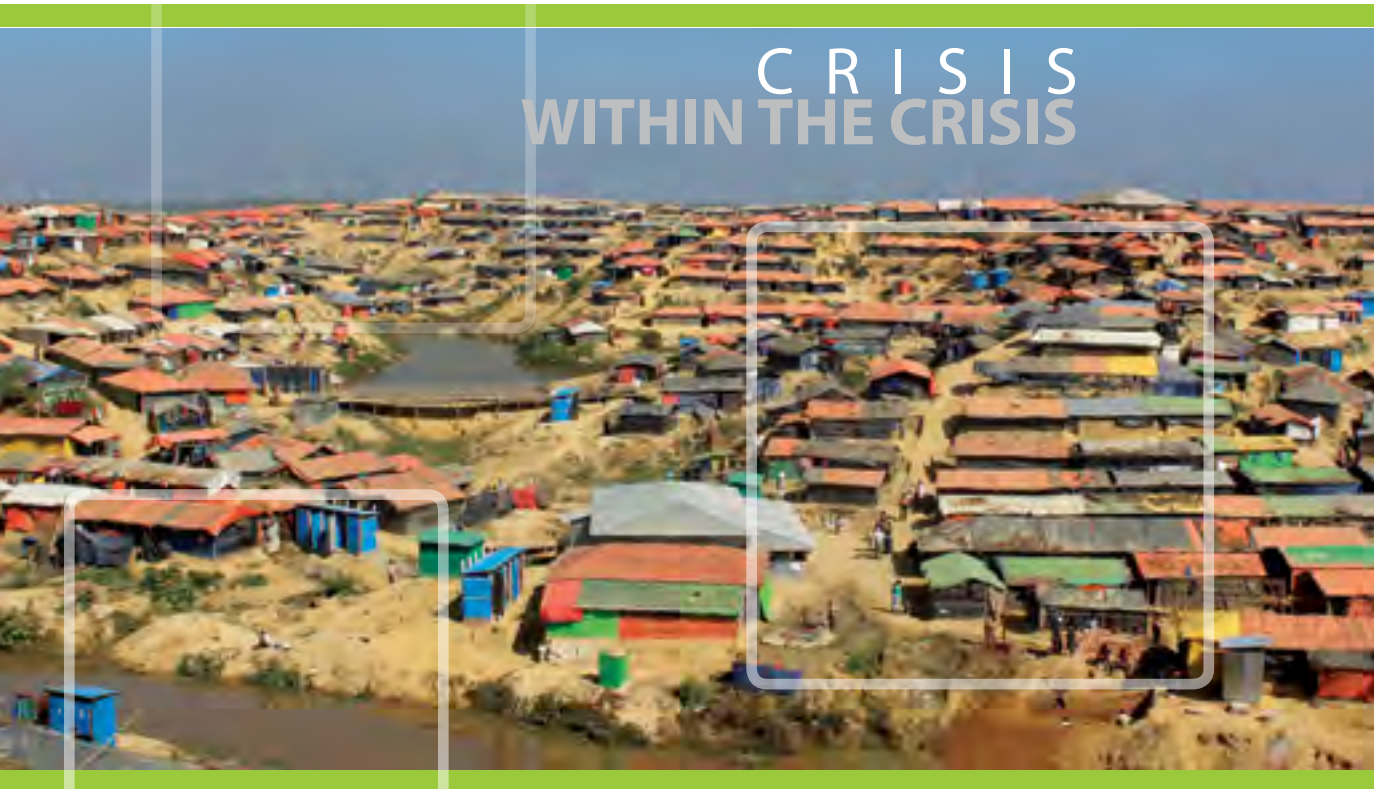
CRISIS WITHIN THE CRISIS

A study on impact of Rohingya influx on the host community



A study on impact of Rohingya influx on the host community
in Ukhiya and Teknaf, Cox's Bazar

CRISIS WITHIN THE CRISIS



July 2018

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ABSTRACT

Nearly one million Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) have taken shelter in Ukhia and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh since 25 August 2017. It has been 11 Months (July 2018) that this huge population has been living in the area where the size of the host community is 471,768. The adverse effect of the influx is clearly visible in the livelihood, agriculture, environment and water, education and health conditions of the local community. This study tried to look into that.

Appreciation

Bangladesh is hosting nearly one million Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) who fled their country to survive genocide. Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh showed humanity by shouldering the responsibility of providing shelter and relief to the persecuted Rohingya population. We feel proud that Bangladesh has stood by this vulnerable people, most of them women and children, with open arms and heartfelt sympathy. The international community has also extended humanitarian assistance to us.

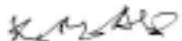
I must acknowledge that the host community was the first responders to these people in need, providing food, shelter and other supports to the refugees. To do this, they had to sacrifice a lot, including their agriculture, water and livelihood.

We have noticed that, not only for the FDMN influx, but also in some cases the emergency response and relief interventions for the refugees inflicted some damage on the local community. Had we been able to plan in a more holistic way, these effects on the environment and livelihood of the locality could have been avoided.

We felt a study is needed to assess the loss of the host community and to listen to their recommendations. COAST Trust responded to my advice to undertake this study.

I am glad to see that the research on the host community has been successfully conducted and the paper is going to be published soon. I hope this paper will help make development plans for the host community in Ukhiya and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar to compensate their damage.

I do encourage this kind of partnership among government institutions and non-government development organisations to initiate research and dialogue in favour of the people of the country.



KM Abdus Salam

(Additional Secretary)

Director General, NGO Affairs Bureau

Prime Minister's Office

Appreciation

The massive exodus of Rohingya, world's most persecuted stateless ethnic minority, has emerged as the fastest-growing refugee crisis in the history of mankind. Nearly 700,000 people crossed the border within five months from 25 August 2017. Combined with those taking shelter in Bangladesh before August 2017, the total number of displaced Rohingyas now stands at nearly one million. The number of shelter-seekers has simply outnumbered the local population who were the initial responders to these genocide survivors' immediate needs. Obviously, this massive inflow of distressed people has multiple implications for the host community and their livelihood. Now more than 11 months after the crisis began, it's time to have a close look at its ramifications and impacts on the host community.

Different national and international organisations have already conducted several studies on the impact of the Rohingya crisis. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) with the help of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) with the help of Bangladesh Agricultural University, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) with the help of Dhaka University, UNDP are few to be mentioned who have taken up initiatives to study the case from different perspectives. I am happy to know that COAST Trust, a national NGO, has also joined this research initiative.

I believe that the findings of this research will contribute significantly to existing knowledge on the multidimensional impacts of this humanitarian crisis on the lives of the local people.



Mohammad Abul Kalam NDC
(Additional Secretary)

Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, Cox's Bazar

Acknowledgement

We are glad to publish this study paper on the host community of Ukhiya and Teknaf affected by FDMN influx, particularly since 25 August 2017. They have been silently bearing the brunt of this unbearable situation only for the sake of humanity, to stand by the Rohingya people who fled Myanmar to survive a genocide. We acknowledge their sympathy and commitment in this regard.

We are grateful immensely to Mr. KM Abdus Salam, additional secretary and also director general of NGO Affairs Bureau, Bangladesh, for inspiring us to initiate this study and his guidance to conduct it. In fact, this study was proposed by him and we have been happy to carry this out.

We are also grateful to Mr. Mohammad Abul Kalam NDC, additional secretary and Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), Cox's Bazar, for reviewing the official information cited in this paper.

We express our respectful gratitude to Mr. Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, for extending necessary support and encouraging us to conduct this study.

We are obliged to Professor Emeritus Ainun Nishat, BRAC University and Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER), and Dr. Atiq Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Center for Advance Studies (BCAS), for giving us some valuable insights about the study.

We also are grateful to the public representatives, the UP chairmen and members and the local government officials of Ukhiya and Teknaf for their assistance.

The study has been conducted by the research team of COAST Trust, led by Barkat Ullah Maruf, assistant director, and assisted by Sayed Aminul Huq, deputy director, and Ferdous Ara Rume, assistant director, and the field staff led by Moqbul Ahmed, Shahinur Islam, Jahangir Alam, Md. Eunos, Iqbal Hossain and others. We express our gratitude for their efforts.

We want to acknowledge the effort of CCNF (Cox's Bazar CSO NGO Forum) and its Co-Chair Mr. Abu Murshed Chowdhury for their assistance and cooperation.

The support and proposition for this study doesn't necessarily mean this is their opinion or official endorsement to all of its content. COAST Trust takes the responsibility for the entire content of this paper.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury
Executive Director
COAST Trust

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**Legend**

- Village boundary
- Ukhiya boundary
- Road boundary
- Water
- Sea
- National Highway
- District Highway
- Other Road

Note

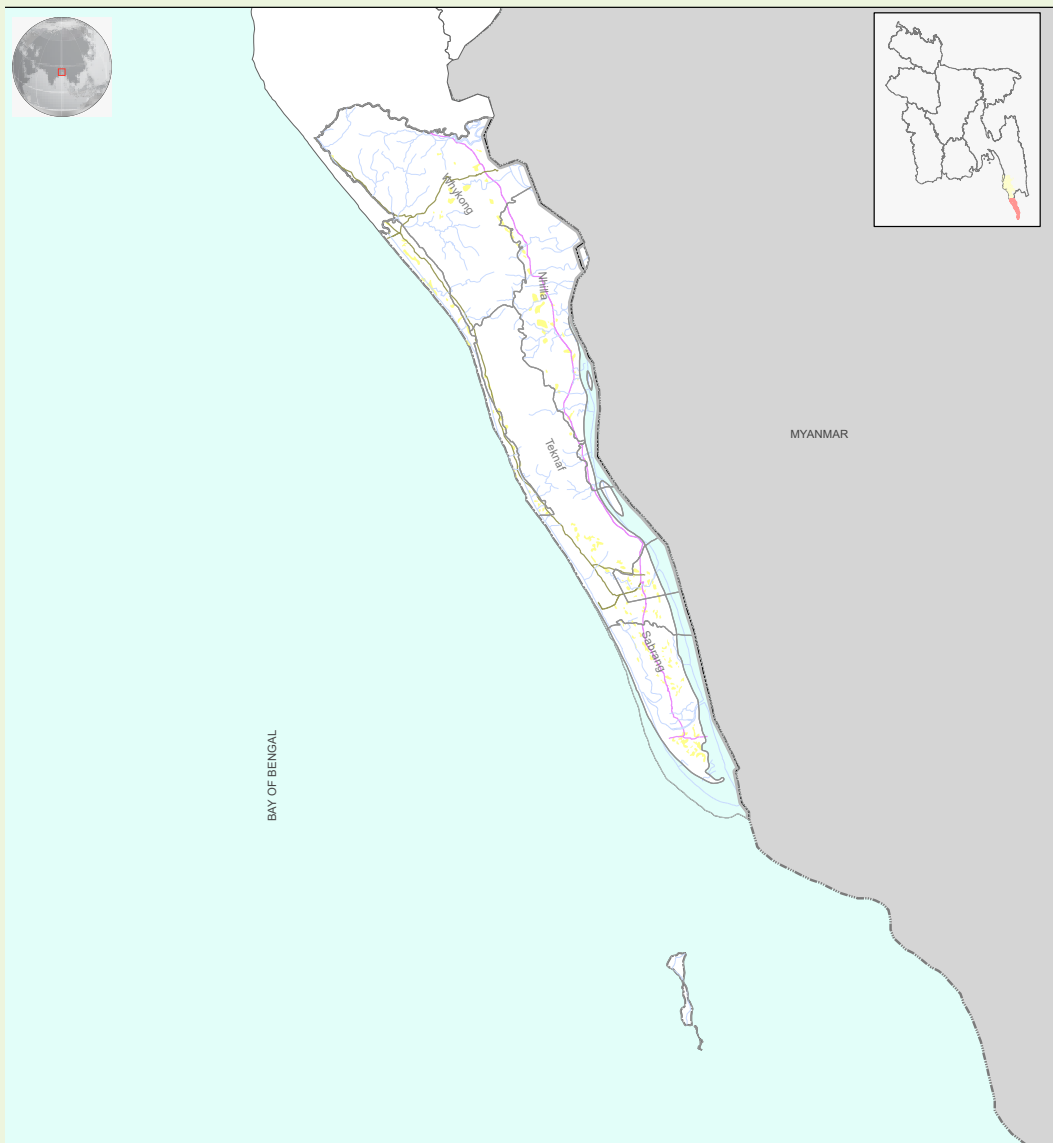
The map reflects the administrative boundaries and does not intend to represent officially accepted roads and settlements of the upazila. The road network was compiled from GIS satellite data (2016). The settlements are sourced from CO-Change (2017).

Map Data source: <https://www.coxs.gov.bd/>
 Created Date: 12-Apr-2017










Map Data Source: www.coxs.gov.bd (2016)
 Map Attribution: www.coxs.gov.bd



Disclaimer: This map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute any official statement or endorsement by ISCG. The map is provided as a reference only and should not be used for any other purpose.



Legend

-  International Boundary
-  Upazila Boundary
-  Union Boundary
-  Settlement
-  Water
-  National Highway
-  Regional Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  River

Note

This map highlights the administrative boundary, river and water body, national highway, regional highway, upazila roads and settlements of the upazila. The road networks are sourced from GoB, overlaid with OSM. The settlements are sourced from OCHA as of Jan 2013.

Map Doc Name: AdminMap_Teknaf_ID027

Creation Time: 10 July 2017

Geo Data Source: GoB, OSM, OCHA

Web Resources: <http://cxbcooperation.org>



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Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designation used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

List of Acronyms

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BGB	Border Guard Bangladesh
CCNF	Cox's Bazar CSO NGO Forum
FDMN	Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICVA	International Council for Voluntary Association
INGO	International NGO
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KMS	Kutupalong Makeshift Settlement
KRC	Kutupalong Refugee Camp
ISCG	Inter Sector Coordination Group
LNGO	Local NGO
LA	Local Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MS	Makeshift Settlement
NGOAB	NGO Affairs Bureau
NPM	Needs and Population Monitoring
RC	Refugee Camp
RRRC	Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad (Union Council)

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

The Rohingya people of Rakhain State of Myanmar have fled to Bangladesh in order to survive a massive genocide that took place there in August 2017. A report published in New York Times says at least 6,700 Rohingya people, including 730 children, were killed by the Myanmar military and others in response to the attacks on police posts by Rohingya insurgents in Rakhine State in August 2017¹.

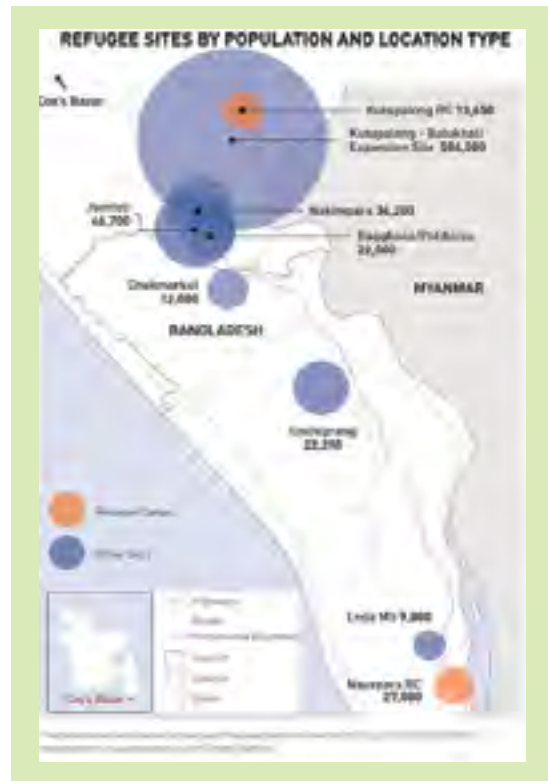
Since 25 August 2017, a total of 671,500² Rohingya (officially called 'Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals', in short, FDMN) have fled Myanmar and taken shelter in different refugee camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar district in Bangladesh. Before 25 August 2017, a total of 212,518 of the FDMN have been already living in Cox's Bazar for years. So, the total number of the refugees is 883,868.

The refugees are now living in Cox's Bazar district in the existing camps and settlement extensions that have been additionally established to accommodate the newly arrived refugees. A huge number of settlements have also been built by the refugees themselves with or without support of the locals and the authorities in the extended and adjacent forest areas of Kutupalong and Balukhali, two main settlement locations in Cox's Bazar.

The other camps are (alphabetically): Bagghona/ Potibunia (Camp 16), Chakmar Kul, Jamtoli (Camp 15), Hakimpara (Camp 14), Leda, Nayapara and Unchiprang.

Many of the FDMN (cumulative number is 112,787) took shelter in the houses of the host community in Cox's Bazar Sadar, Ramu, Teknaf and Ukhiya³.

The Kutupalong refugee camp has been accommodating registered refugees since



¹ NY Times, Feb 13, 2018, "Besieged Rohingya Face 'Crisis Within the Crisis': Deadly Floods"

² ISCG Situation Report, 25 Mar 2018

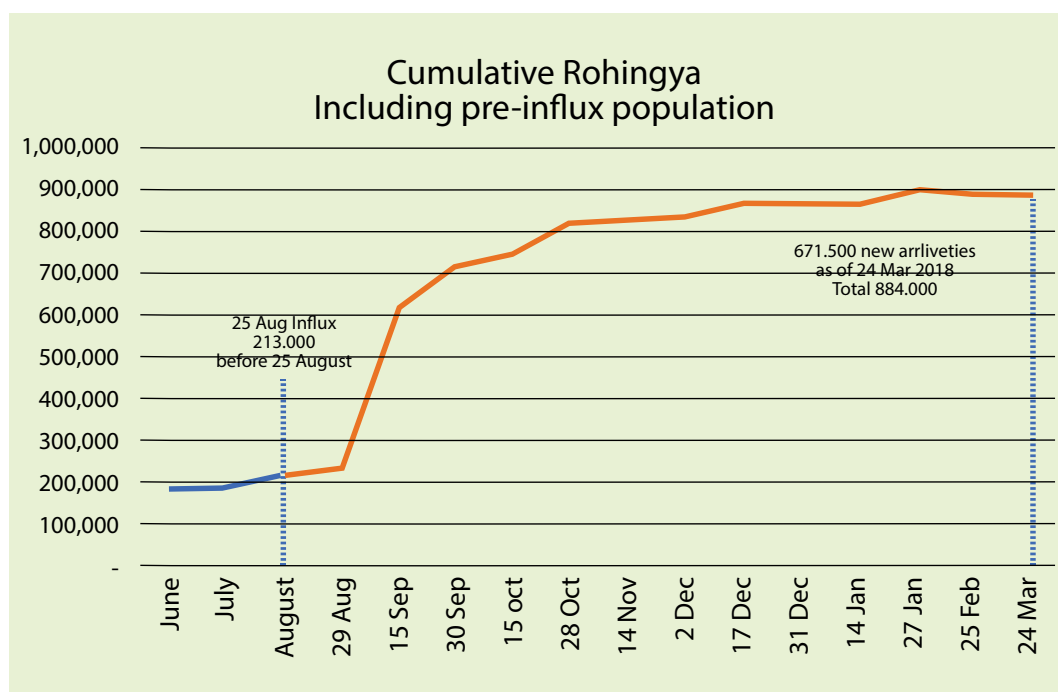
³ ISCG Situation Report, 25 Mar 2018

1992, and the Rohingya refugees who continued to arrive in Cox’s Bazar over the years settled around the official camp, forming the Kutupalong Makeshift Settlement (KMS). Together, the Kutupalong Registered Camp and the KMS comprise the largest among all the settlements of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Another large influx of Rohingya took place in October 2016 and they took shelter mainly in Kutupalong MS and Balukhali MS. A portion of them took shelter in the houses of the host community in Ukhiya and Teknaf.

The influx since 25 August 2017 led to a rapid and massive extension of the previous Makeshift Settlements and eventually merged Balukhali and Kutupalong together. There was no other place but the reserve forest to accommodate this large number of refugees who crossed the Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

The graph below shows how the Rohingya refugees arrived in Cox’s Bazar by months since 25 August 2017.



From ISCG Situation Report, 25 March 2018

⁴ Global Trend of Forced Displacements, UNHCR, 2016

⁵ Global Trend of Forced Displacements, UNHCR, 2016

⁶ Cox’s Bazar Statistics 2011, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

⁷ Cox’s Bazar Statistics 2011, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization and World Bank population estimates. 2017

⁹ Cox’s Bazar Statistics 2011, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

1.2 Global Trend of Refugees

According to the Global Trend of Refugees of the UNHCR, Bangladesh is now the sixth largest refugee hosting country after Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran and Uganda. Bangladesh has come to the 6th position crossing Ethiopia after the latest Rohingya influx.

There are 65.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide and 84% of them are hosted by the developing countries⁴. Bangladesh is not even a developing country. The government of Bangladesh hosted this huge population, going beyond its capacity, only to respond to a humanitarian crisis and to shelter the genocide survivors. If they were refused to enter Bangladesh, several hundred thousand of those persecuted people, including children and women, could have died or been killed.

Table: Top refugee hosting countries in the world⁵

Hosting Country	Refugee population (million)
Turkey	2.90
Pakistan	1.40
Lebanon	1.00
Iran	0.97
Uganda	0.94
Bangladesh*	0.88
Ethiopia	0.79

**Bangladesh was not in the list of UNHRC statistics before the Rohingya influx of 25 August 2017.*

1.3 Host community and geographic characteristics of Ukhiya and Teknaf

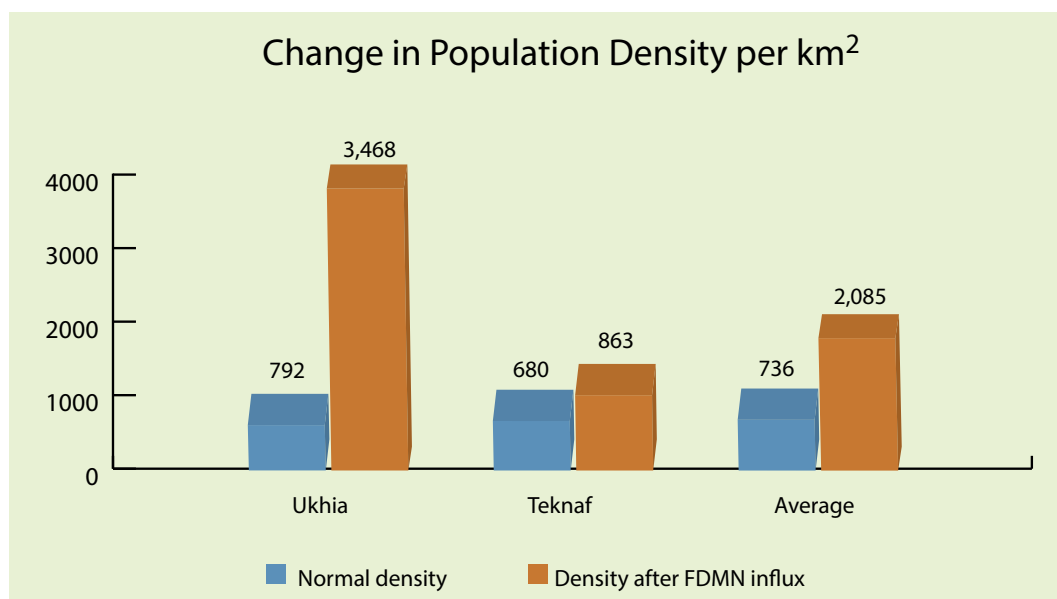
The total population of Ukhiya is 207,379 and that of Teknaf is 264,389⁶. The literacy rates in these upazilas are 36.3% and 26.7% respectively, according to the population census of 2011. The population density in Ukhiya is 792 and in Teknaf is 680⁷ per km², much lower than the national average of 1,265⁸.

The geographic characteristics of these two upazilas are mainly hill and forest area, a reason why the population density in these areas has been below the national average.

In Ukhiya, nearly 60% of the total area is forest land and in Teknaf it is more than 41%. This feature of having forest land is quite rare in Bangladesh, except in the Sundarbans area.

Forest area in Ukhiya and Teknaf⁹

Upazila	Total area (km ²)	Reserve forest (km ²)	% of total area
Ukhiya	261.80	155.14	59.25%
Teknaf	388.66	159.8	41.12%



After hosting the Rohingya refugees, the host community has become the minority on its own land and accounted for only 34.8% of the total population¹⁰. The population density in Ukhiya has increased to 3,468 per km² and the average density of Ukhiya and Teknaf increased to 2,085 per km². This demographic shift within three to four months has created an unbearable condition in the locality economically, socially and culturally.

The impact of this shift in the population density is not that visible in Teknaf, but it is quite visible in Ukhiya. In cases, it has created great crisis and conflicting situations.

1.4 Rationale of the study

COAST Trust is a regional NGO working in the coastal area to bring changes in the lives of the poor and disadvantaged coastal poor in Bangladesh. COAST has a policy to endow a portion of its microfinance income for the emergency response. And that's why the organisation was the first responder to the FDMN influx right after 25 August 2017. Initially, COAST tried to provide cooked food, clothes and emergency health assistance to the exhausted, persecuted people. Later, with the assistance from partner organisations, COAST provided them with other supports.

Having studied the interventions for the Rohingya refugees, COAST Trust understands that the host community has been suffering a lot. This suffering is not only for the influx of this huge number of people, but also due to the humanitarian response and other interventions launched by national and international humanitarian and development organisations without any impact assessment or any consultation with the host or refugee community. Particularly,

¹⁰The total population in Ukhiya and Teknaf now is 1,355,636, including the newly arrived Rohingya refugees.

COAST Trust found that the local elected people's representatives in Ukhiya and Teknaf are hardly informed about the interventions.

The local economy is shattered and the local people are losing their livelihood. The problem has become acute, which is why COAST Trust felt it necessary to conduct this study to assess the impact of the imposed crisis on the host community.

COAST Trust has conducted this research during February-March 2018, acting on the advice of Director General of NGOAB (NGO Affairs Bureau) Mr. KM Abdus Salam. Deputy Commissioner of Cox's bazar Mr. Ali Hossain also gave a similar advice.

1.4.1 Not just a report, a development campaign process

Hosting nearly one million refugee is a great stress for any community in the world. In the long run, this can lead to unexpected situations, including conflict. The study found that this stress on the host community has been rising fast. It started going beyond their tolerance level when their livelihood was hit by the refugee crisis.

Also, much of their land is now occupied by national and international NGOs, including various UN agencies, working round the clock to provide food, shelter, medical and other supports to the Rohingya people. This is also causing a great strain on the host community. There have been cases of conflicting situations among the local people and NGOs.

People also took to the streets demanding for the NGOs to leave their areas. In Ukhiya, the local people brought out a procession with a call 'Save Ukhiya from NGOs'. One of their slogans was: 'Go back NGOs, Save Ukhiya'. This shows how dissatisfied the locals are about the NGOs and their activities. In other areas of Bangladesh, NGO interventions are widely accepted by the people and there are good examples of development cooperation with the government and local people.

COAST's observation is, it happened in Ukhiya only because the local leaders were ignored. In some cases local leaders were even challenged. A case study illustrates the intensity of this kind of conflicts (*section 4.3, page 27*).

COAST Trust believes in working in a sustainable approach, particularly engaging the local government and the people's representatives who are the most important stakeholders of any development initiatives at the local level. This study report is not just a report holding a number of impacts observed on the ground. Rather, this study is conducted through the engagement of the local government, especially the chairmen and the members of the Union Councils in the affected area. COAST believes, this is an inclusive approach for any development intervention or any humanitarian response.

Two separate public dialogues were organised for sharing the study findings with the local government leaders. Government officials as well as representatives of UN agencies, donors, I-NGO, local NGO and local civil society were also present. CCFN and ISCG were the co-organisers of those meetings. The audience ratified the findings and recommendations.

2. Methodology

2.1 Literature Review

The primary literature reviewed includes the regular situation reports published by ISCG (Inter Sector Coordination Group) and by other actors working here, as well as the articles published in the national and international media and official documents of Bangladesh Government on this topic.

However, a database made from secondary information has provided vital information needed for comparison and drawing conclusions. It includes the district statistics of the population and economic census provided by the BBS (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics), other published research papers on agriculture, livelihood, economic development and other issues.

2.2 Questionnaire Development and Fieldwork

After the literature review, the research team developed different questionnaires and the format for data collection from the field. The field workers were trained on the questionnaire through simulation on how to collect data according to the format.

It was decided not to conduct a survey first and that's why the questionnaire was not developed to produce an SPSS¹¹ database on it. Instead, we decided to probe through individual interviews and FGD (Focus Group Discussion) to find out actual insights on what really is going on and what are the real needs on the ground.

A team of 10 officials of COAST Trust, including senior and frontline staff members, visited the affected areas, conducted FGDs and in-depth interviews (both structured and non-structured) with different groups of the community, including farmers, women, teachers, students, casual labourers, market committee, *Majhis*¹² of refugee camps, journalists, local government bodies and other stakeholders.

COAST now has 256 trained frontline staff members recruited for the emergency response and relief work in different refugee camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf. Most of them have come from the local community and other upazilas of Cox's Bazar and Chittagong. As a result, they are quite aware of the impacts of the FDMN on the host community, as they themselves have been facing it every day. That's why they were selected as key informants for this research and they were able to provide first hand information.

Further, they have been going inside the camps every day and have been observing many changes, particularly in water, forest and farmland. They have seen up close how education and healthcare services for the host community are being affected. That is why they have been a

¹¹ Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

¹² *Majhi* means the leader of the boat. Here it means the selected representatives of blocs of the refugee camps for effective coordination and information collection.



A validation workshop is held on 17 February 2018 in Cox's Bazar. Primary findings are presented and local leaders, journalists and activists provided their feedback on it. Photo: SM Tauhidul Alam, COAST

great resource for this research. All of the findings has been reflected through the 'Participatory Observation' nature of the study.

Random sampling ensuring participation of all clusters and groups was one of the tools used in this study. For example, when we conducted FGDs with primary and high school teachers we ensured participation of government primary schools, registered primary schools, non-government primary schools, government and non-government high schools, madrasas under Madrasa Educational Board, Qwami madrasas and Ebtedayi madrasas, government and non-government colleges in the locality. For FGDs with women, we ensured participation of different income and age groups. Among them were illiterate, literate and educated women.

As part of the study, we also accompanied newspaper editors, university professors, experienced NGO workers, foreign expatriates and other dignitaries who visited the sites and spoke with the local people. It really enriched the thinking process of the study team.

2.3 Validation workshop

A validation workshop was held on 17 February 2018 in Cox's Bazar. It was participated by UP members and chairmen of different union councils under Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazila as well as local journalists both from local and national newspapers and electronic media. Representatives of different INGOs, NGOs and CSO representatives also took part in the workshop.

The main objective of the validation workshop was to share the raw findings with the key stakeholders of the locality and incorporate their opinions in it. Several findings were rechecked and found different than the previous ones after this validation workshop.

Through several structured exercises, a few more important issues and topics were identified for further investigation and analysis.

After the validation workshop, the research team revisited the refugee camps and adjacent villages several times to find out more information on the impact on the host community.

2.4 Public Dialogue: Facilitating face to face dialogue with policymakers

A public dialogue was jointly organised by COAST Trust and CCNF (Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum) on 31 March 2018, at the conference room of hotel UNI Resort in Cox's Bazar titled "Impact of FDMN Influx on the host community: emphasising monsoon crisis mitigation".

The main objective of this dialogue was to learn from local representatives about the impacts on their community. The dialogue was joined by 55 out of the 65 elected local government representatives. They shared a number of unheard stories as well as placed some demands in this dialogue.

There were also a number of distinguished representatives from the government, the UN and other INGOs. They too shared their ideas and experience.

2.5 Five broad areas identified to look into

We have selected five broad areas to categorise the findings:

- (1) Environment (with three sub-areas a. Forest, b. Water, and c. Pollution),
- (2) Agriculture,
- (3) Livelihood,
- (4) Education, and
- (5) Health.

Other than these five broad areas, there are several important findings, including the impact on security, economy and culture.

3. Objective of the study

Almost all the development actors, including UN agencies, INGOs and local organisations, are busy with different relief projects and other programs and services for the refugees, with little attention to the impact of their interventions on the local host community and environment as well as on the social and cultural sides. The entire economy of Ukhiya and Teknaf has been shattered and the local community is paying its price. In some cases, dissatisfaction of the host community is manifested in their anger and conflicts with the Rohingya population and some NGOs.

The basic objectives of the study, therefore, are not only to find out the impacts, but also to bring it to the discussion table with all stakeholders.

- To identify the visible impacts on agriculture, environment (forest, water and pollution), livelihood, education and health.
- To find out the way out from the host community's viewpoint.
- To offer short and long-term recommendations to address what has already happened.

4. The findings

From the field study, interviews and FGDs, a number of important findings have been identified. Investigation into a simple comment by an individual revealed surprising information. Also, there are some very significant correlations between the findings and the actions policymakers need to take in future in the area.

For example, the number of tube-wells failing to pull water from under the ground one after another clearly shows that the water level is going down day by day. This is a serious concern for future because once the ground water goes down, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to grow crops in the region in the long-term. Teknaf is already experiencing shortage of ground water, and experts are suggesting not to pull even a single drop of water from the area. Ukhiya, which has always been rich with ground water, now faces the risk of losing its ground water as 1 million additional people extract ground water every day for drinking and other daily needs.

It is not surprising though. When 1 million people living on a very small piece of land in an emergency situation, it is bound to have serious impacts on natural resources such as water, forest and the overall environment. That is what is happening in Teknaf and Ukhiya.

All of the canals and streams in the area have been similarly affected. For centuries, these canals and streams have been a major source of water for the local communities. But for the past 11 months, they cannot use this surface water for irrigation or household chores anymore. Monsoon rain might wash away some of the dirt temporarily, but after that it will be polluted again. Normally, these canals and streams are filled with fresh water during monsoon and it meets the local demand for the whole year. But this year, and maybe for the next few years, the local people will not be able to use that water if something is not done about it.



Modhur Chora canal in Balukhali camp, totally polluted with the human waste dumped from hundreds of thousands of households and turning it into a sewerage drain. The colour of the water turned yellowish-gray and it stinks. Water of this canal was normally used for bathing, washing clothes and other household chores including cooking. But now it is completely unusable. Photo: Shahinur Islam, COAST

All the findings from the interviews, FGDs and discussions were recorded on a daily basis. Later they were compiled and categorised into five areas: (1) Environment (Forest, Water and Pollution), (2) Agriculture, (3) Livelihood and Employment, (4) Education and (5) Health.

There are several other findings such as social and cultural impacts on the host community, which didn't fit into any of the five categories. Those have been mentioned separately at the end of this report. Some of them are not measurable, nor are they manifested yet, but have a potential impacts in the long run. Their impacts will be visible in the coming days and months.

4.1 Impacts on Environment

The host community, like those living in other rural areas in Bangladesh, depends largely on natural resources. Those resources are essential part of the natural ecosystem. Instead of destroying the nature like in the urban culture, people of rural areas live with the nature. For example, *Jhum* agriculture system is a way of growing crops inside the forest without ruining the forest. While many of them depend on the forest for their living, they do not disturb the nature that much. Over consumption of natural resources is prohibited in this culture. Symbiosis is a part of some local religious practice in this sub-continent since ancient time.

The host community used to take their cattle to the forest to feed them and to collect dry leaves and fallen branches of trees for cooking. Children used to collect fruits from the forest and meet their need of nutrition. Poor children cannot afford snacks between their meals. So the wild fruits available in the forest are all they can afford to have as their snacks. When such a resource is taken away from them, it is difficult for them to survive. That is why, the impact

on environment is the most serious among the other measurable impacts, both long-term and short-term. Some of them might be easy to address, but it will take years to address some others. Three aspects of the impact on environment are pointed out in this study findings: a. Forest, b. Water and c. Pollution.

4.1.a Forest

The threat to the reserve forest in Ukhiya and Teknaf is a great concern. The ratio of forest populated land in Bangladesh is already below the danger line. Forests in Ukhiya and Teknaf are the most precious ones in Bangladesh which are under threat now due to the FDMN influx. The manifested impacts are described below.

1. There are nearly 194,000 Rohingya households¹³ in the refugee camps and the number is still increasing. All of them need to cook twice or thrice daily. Many of the households have been given gas stoves by NGOs running relief operations there. Exact numbers are not available, but it is estimated that 20,000 to 25,000 families got gas stoves. As a result, they do not need to collect firewood for cooking. Even if it is considered that another 20,000 families are not using firewood, there would be around 150,000 families who are using firewood for cooking. The firewood is collected from the forest on the west side of the camps.

In that case, at least 2,250 tonnes of firewood is burnt (150,000 families x min 15kg firewood daily) daily only for cooking. Government officials in Cox's Bazar estimate that an area equivalent to at least 4 football fields are being cleared every day¹⁴.

2. Total 5,800 acres of forestland in Ukhiya and Teknaf has been occupied for establishing camps¹⁵ for the refugee population. All the hills have already become treeless to make room for settlements. People have been living on the hill land for ages and they know how to keep the land safe. There is always a chance of landslide in rainy season as the soil is very soft there, not rocky like in the mountain areas.



The main reserve forest of Ukhiya is situated at the West side of the combined extended camps of Kutupalong and Balikhali. It is seen in the morning that hundreds of people are coming back from the forest with logs and branches every day. Some government officials mentioned in the public dialogue that, if this rate of deforestation continues, the entire forest of Ukhiya and Teknaf up to the sea beach of the west side will be wiped out in no time. Photo: Shahnur Islam, COAST Trust

¹³ NPM R7 Report, Needs and Population Monitoring, IOM, December 2017.



All the hills occupied by the FDMN are almost treeless. It will take years for the nature to get back its former shape after the successful repatriation. Photo: Shahinur Islam, COAST Trust.

But, the influx and the need for building refugee camps allowed no time to think about the safety and they cut down all the trees in the first place and made temporary sheds on the slopes of the hills. This poses a huge threat of landslide in the rainy season.

3. The entire forestland (especially of Ukhiya) is at a great risk. Already, 1,485 hectares of forestland have been encroached¹⁶. Plundering of the forest is also a cross-cutting issue for the livelihood of the host community, as its livelihood heavily depends on the forest in many ways.

4.1.b Water

Ground water is key for survival and reckless consumption of this natural resource might bring a disaster in the region in years to come. According to experts, each person living in such camps need at least 10 litres of water every day for drinking, bathing and washing. Another five litres per person is needed for other household works such as cooking. That means, 15 million liters of water is pulled out of the ground every day.

It is feared that the ground water in Ukhiya will soon shrink further, although it is difficult to say exactly how soon. Teknaf is already in the danger zone. Even deep tube-wells, 600 to 1000 feet deep, can hardly find water in Teknaf, local people said.

Key findings about water are as follows:

- 70% shallow tube-wells are running out of water already. Ten field-level staffers of COAST

¹⁴ *The Risky Refuge, The Daily Star, Front Page, 01 April 2018*

¹⁵ *Cox's Bazar Forest Office. This data is also recognized by the RRRC office.*

¹⁶ *Daily Star, 20 January 2018.*

Trust were assigned to check with five *Majhis*¹⁷ each in different camps in Kutupalong, Balukahli, Potibunia, Unchiprang and Hakimpara. Thus, fifty *Majhis* were interviewed and every *Majhi* had, on an average, 60 shallow tube-wells in their blocs. Of the 300 shallow tube-wells visited, 209 had no waters. Fifty of them had technical faults, but the rest of them simply ran out of water.

- COAST Trust set up 10 deep tube-wells with minimum 680 feet depth in October-November 2017 in different camps. All of them had run out of water by January 2018, and their depth had to be extended by 30 more feet as the water level had gone down.
- 2 deep tube-wells established by *Ganasasthya* in Unchiprang camp failed to pull water even from 1,000 feet depth. It clearly shows that the first layer of the ground water has been used up.

4.1.c Pollution

The level of pollution in and around the refugee camps is alarming. Nearly one million people, living in a small area, have been producing a huge quantity of waste every day, without any proper disposal system. There are traditional recycling businesses that collect a number of disposable items from the villages to sell them. They are locally called *Bhangari* business. However, they only collect plastic bottles, broken plastic items like chair, mug, papers, cartons, broken glass etc. They don't buy plastic packets of chips and biscuits.

If half of the 1 million people throw one plastic packet of such snacks every day, it would be 15 million plastic packets a month. With no one to clean them, they eventually end up in canals and streams, polluting them. It is seen almost in every canals and streams that the piled up plastic packets are blocking the waterflow.

Toilets are being set up anywhere and everywhere and many of them are overflowing. Ideally, every household needs a toilet. But, in most cases 2 to 5 families share one toilet here.



Waste dealers are interviewed in Ukhiya. Photo: COAST Trust

¹⁷ *Majhi*- selected representative of a block of the Rohingya Refugee camp.

The findings are as follows:

1. 11 canals and streams that the study team visited were found badly polluted by human waste, plastic packets, kitchen waste and other things. However, during interviews and FDGs, participants said all of them are completely polluted.
2. The entire camp area stinks of waste, including human waste.
3. During the study period, about 100 tonnes of disposable wastes are collected by waste dealers (*Bhangari*) every month in Ukhiya alone. Only months before the study, they collected 60 tonnes per month.

There are 20 waste dealers in Ukhiya. Before the Rohingyas came, the waste dealers had to roam around the villages to collect the waste. Now, they get many times more waste from the camps alone. On an average, each of them collect five tonnes of waste a month.

4.2. Impacts on Agriculture

The agrarian people in Bangladesh are generally hard working. They hardly get frustrated even when their hard labour goes in vain, often in the form very low price of their crops. They do it again. They normally don't give up producing crops. Farmers can fight with the natural disasters even if they take away the crops. But near the refugee camps in Ukhiya, farmers are giving up producing crops.

Agriculture in Ukhiya and Teknaf has the most severe impact which in turn will affect the entire livelihood and income of the peasant community who comprise the majority of the population in the locality.

The forcibly displaced Rohingyas started crossing into Bangladesh on 25 August 2017 and they were shifted to the new makeshift camps on 11 September 2017 in line with the Bangladesh government decision. Before that they were stranded along the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road.

The government decided to provide them shelter between the previous camps of Kutupalong and Balukhali under Palongkhali union on the west side of the road. Now this huge camp is accommodating 584,000 refugees, marked in red on the map [*Expansion of existing refugee camps and settlements, page 24*]. The makeshift sites and spontaneous sites of the extended refugee camps occupied much of the arable land. Maximum of them are government property but there are some private land too.

One important issue is that there have been many landless people (tenants and partial tenants for farming) who used to grow crops on government land at the bottom of the hills located in the west side of the main road in Ukhiya. Those arable land are now occupied by the refugee camps.

Agriculture in this region is not like in plain land in other parts of the country. Farming in this hill area needs extra effort for the special characteristics of its soil and irrigation system. Irrigation here is mainly dependent on the natural water flow through canals and streams (locally called *chhora* and *jhiri*) and partially on the ground water pulled by deep tube-wells.

The canals and streams are now completely polluted and irrigation is severely hampered. At the current consumption rate, ground water may soon be all consumed.

The major findings are as follows:¹⁸

1. Due to the occupation, water crisis and pollution, some 130 hectares of land in Ukhiya and 250 hectares in Teknaf will not be able to grow crops in the upcoming crop season.
2. Huge crops have been damaged by the influx. The persecuted people in their hundreds ran for lives through cropland at night, on some occasions in heavy rain, damaging the crops. Many of them being farmers, they knew what it means, but they had no other way but to march through cropland.

In Ukhiya, crops on 100 hectares of land were damaged due to the influx, including rice on 60 hectares, vegetables on 20 hectares, and betel leaf on 10 hectares.

3. The Bangladesh authorities tried to accommodate the refugees into the forest area in Ukhiya to minimise the impact on agriculture. But in Teknaf it was difficult. So, sometimes the land occupied for the refugee camps there included arable land. As a result, 76 acres of arable land in Teknaf is now occupied, including 25 acres of private land.
4. Arable land adjacent to the camps, particularly at the bottom of the hills, is now polluted- 35 hectares in Ukhiya and 58 hectares in Teknaf. Farmers say it is not possible to grow anything on them. It might take three to four years to grow anything on that soil.



Damage in arable land (in hectares)

Issues	Ukhiya	Teknaf
Agriculture is hardly possible in upcoming crop season	130	250
Arable land fully polluted with human waste	35	58
Total damaged crops	100	(unavailable)

¹⁸ All data is collected from the Agriculture office of Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazila.



*Balukhali, Ukhia: Building of temporary makeshift camps for the FDMN is occupying crop land of the local community.
Photo: The Independendnt, 10 September 2017*

Nurul Huq lost his own land

Nurul Huq is from a farmer family in Ukhia, ward No-9, Purbapara. He had some good business and was able to buy 40 decimal arable land beside Modhur Chora near Kutupalong nine years ago for Tk 250,000. He had started growing vegetables on it.

On the morning of 11 September 2017, he found that some Rohingya families are building camps on his land. Naturally he tried to protect his land. He asked them to leave that place. But Nurul Huq found they were great in numbers. First he was able to drive away couple of families but later some other families came. Then he tried to force them to leave.

The refugees said they had been given permission to build their camps on this land by the army. They asked Nurul to go to the army officers. Nurul then got furious and tried to drive them away. He pushed some of them. Later, some of the Rohingyas went to the army officers in the camp and told them that Nurul beat them. The army officers eventually beat Nurul and forced him to leave.

Nurul was devastated. He not only lost his land, he also got beaten for trying to protect it. He does not know where to lodge a complaint and when he will get back his land.

Nurul said, "I am sympathetic towards the Rohingya as they have come here to save their lives. But I can't afford giving away my land to them. That's all I have to earn my living."



5. Another important and long-term impact on agriculture is the loss of the source of irrigation. Irrigation in Ukhiya and Teknaf is mainly dependent on the surface water and partially on the ground water pulled by the pumps. We have already mentioned in this report (environment section) that both surface water and ground water have been badly affected by the Rohingya influx, and it is going to affect the agriculture as well.
6. Donor/ NGO occupancy on the east side of the road is another concern for the host community. A large portion of the land is occupied by warehouses, offices and relief operations of the local and international NGOs as well as the UN and other donor agencies. There is no data on how much land is occupied by the humanitarian interventions for the refugees. However, this kind of occupancy also created conflicts between NGOs and local farmers.
7. Prices are very important for agriculture. In Bangladesh, sometimes we see that a good harvest is a curse for the farmers as it leads to a price fall.

The refugees get rice and other food items in relief in the camps. The relief amount is more than adequate and many refugees sell the surplus items in local market at a very cheap price.

Case filed against the local UP chairman

An international NGO (name withheld for privacy) chose a piece of land near Kutupalong Refugee camp for setting up some establishments for relief operation. That particular piece of land was government property, forest land to be specific, but was occupied by a local farmer (name withheld for safety reasons) for years. That land was the only source of income for him and his family.

So, when he saw that the INGO was building some establishments on the land, he intervened. He said it was his livelihood. But the INGO said it was government land and that he could not stop the organisation.

The man went to the UP Chairman of Palongkhali, Mr. Gafuruddin Chowdhury, asking for a solution. The chairman met the NGO officials and asked them why they didn't notify him before building the establishment, as is the local tradition. But the NGO didn't pay any heed to the UP chairman. Conventionally, people's representatives and the local government are notified by NGOs or even business entities before setting up these kinds of facilities.

The INGO people didn't listen to the chairman and continued their work. But the chairman didn't take it nicely and forced them to stop. In response, the INGO went to the police to file a case against the chairman for trying to obstruct humanitarian response for the FDMN.

The case is under investigation now. The UP Chairman, Mr. Gafuruddin Chowdhury, shared this in an open public dialogue in Cox's Bazar challenging the anti-people attitude of the INGOs, which is not good for development. Development interventions should be holistic and inclusive.



When the Rohingyas arrived in Balukhali (September 2017), it was harvest time. Growers said that was the last crop they brought home. These fields are now (April 2018) empty. Photo: Dhrubo Das

Food distribution chart per month by WFP standard per FDMN families

FDMN Family size	Rice (kg)	Lintel (Masur) kg	Edible Oil (Itr)
1-3 members (Once a month)	30	10	3
4-7 members (twice a month)	30	10	3
8 and above members (twice a month)	60	15	6

For example, in Ukhiya market, relief rice is available at Tk 30 to 35/kg whereas the price of coarse rice in the market is at least Tk 44. Masur Daal (lentil) is available at Tk 35 a kg while the normal price is around Tk 100 in the market. Soya bean oil is being sold at Tk 40 to 45 a litre while it sells at Tk 100 per litre in the local market. This black market sales is affecting the market stability, upsetting the supply chain as well as prices.

There is at least 12-15% price fall of rice in the local market due to this situation. It will surely have an impact on the production of rice and other food items in near future.

8. There are allegations that refugees are stealing crops, especially vegetables, given the supply shortage of vegetables in the local market.

4.3. Impacts on Employment and Livelihood

Employment and livelihood is the most affected sector due to the FDMN influx in Ukhiya and Teknaf. The situation is more acute in Ukhiya than in Teknaf.

There is a double effect on the livelihood of the local people, particularly for the poor and low income families. On one hand, the income has fallen by almost 50 percent for casual labourers



These types of land at the bottom of the hills are used for cultivation and growing crops. Now these are fully polluted with the human waste and are unsuitable for cropping. Photo: COAST Trust.

because Rohingya men are available in the market at lower wages. On the other hand, prices of daily essentials have gone up. Though a few items like rice and lintel are available at lower prices in the black market as a result of the relief surplus being sold by the Rohingyas, the overall living cost has increased.

The anger and frustration of the affected people were clear and visible during FGDs and informal interviews.

The major findings are as follows:

1. In Ukhiya upazila, 34 villages with a population of 58,000 (28% of the upazila's total population) have been directly affected by the refugee influx.¹⁹ An estimated 23,000 (40% of this affected) is day-labourer who solely depend on their daily wage earned during daytime in the market places, according to FDG participants, including UP chairmen and members.

The income of the day-labourers has dropped by 50 percent. The cost of casual labour in this area was Tk 400 to 500 per day, depending on the type of the work and availability of labourers. Now the wage has come down to Tk 200 to 250 per day.

The reason behind this is many refugees are looking for work. As a result, the wage is going down day by day in line with the demand-supply theory. On top of that, the Rohingya refugees are willing to offer their services at lower wages as they are receiving sufficient relief goods and they don't need to buy anything with what they earn and can save most

¹⁹ Calculated by the Union Parishad of Raja Palong and Palongkhali Union, where the most of the FDMN in Ukhiya are accommodated.

Crops are stolen

Rahima Khatun of South Roikkyong village in Chakmar Kul has a garden of papaya. Her husband works in Chittagong and sends hardly any money for the family. He comes home once in every two-three months. At the time, he brings some money and other gifts for his family. But in the mean time, Rahima needs to maintain the family. She used to sell the papaya in the local market. With that money she would buy some rice and other essentials. She would get a good price if she could wait until the papayas are ripe.

Since the arrival of the refugees in Chakmar Kul camp, a couple of kilometers away from their village, many of her big papayas get stolen. She suspects the hungry refugee children intrude into her garden at night. She has never been able to catch any one but she suspects Rohingya people, because the villagers never did it before.

She also said vegetables that are easy to pick and carry are easy target for theft. For example, papaya, beans, gourd, brinjal, water melon and the fruits. But those that take time to pick or collect, such as potatoes are not touched.



Photo: Rahima Khatun's son, by his mobile phone

of the money. But workers from the local community can't offer services at such a low wage as they need to spend their earning to buy essentials for the family and provide other supports.

During some of the FGDs, participants complained that the refugees are offering their services even for Tk 150. The result is obvious. Those looking for labourers hire the refugees at much cheaper rate. Even some NGOs and INGOs, who could have followed an equitable rule in favour of the host community, also prefer to hire the refugees to save money.

In the FGD in Kerontoli village, Chakmar Kul of Teknaf, people complained that contractors who are employing labourers to build offices or warehouses of NGOs have budget for day labourers at the rate of Tk 500, but they are hiring Rohingya refugees at Tk 200 a day, saving the rest of the money. They lamented the fact that they are being deprived of their rightful work and decent pays.

2. There are 600 fisher folk families in Teknaf who normally don't go to the sea for fishing. Instead, they go to the Naf river for fishing and 76 percent of their total family income

comes from fishing in the Naf²⁰. But now, they cannot fish in the Naf because since the influx the Myanmar forces fire shots if they see anyone on the river. These families are now earning their living by working as day labourers.

Many other people who are losing their livelihood are also crowding the local labour market. The situation is turning from bad to worse day by day.

3. Livestock is a great resource for villagers. Almost every household has some domestic animals like cow, goat, sheep or at least some poultry as an alternative source of income as well as a source of protein intake. In a crisis period, these resources become very useful for the poor families. They meet the emergency need for cash by selling them.

Before the massive refugee influx, Ukhiya people used to go to the forest with their domestic animals for grazing. They also used to collect dead branches of trees to meet the need of firewood for cooking. These were freely available. Grazing the livestock in the forest or collecting dry branches and leaves by the host community was never harmful for the forest as the total consumption was insignificant compared to the size of the forest.

Now that the refugee camps are set up in between the community and the forest, it is not possible to go to the forest with cattle. So there is another double financial effect on the host community. On one hand, their free source of livestock feed and firewood is gone. On the other hand, they need to buy grass and other feed for the animals as well as the firewood.

4. The price of firewood in the market has already doubled for high demand. Previously, the price of firewood was Tk 250 per *Maund*²¹, which is now Tk 400/ *Maund*. One family of 5-6 members needs at least 12 *Maunds* of firewood for only cooking per month, which costs them around Tk 4,800. Feed for one healthy cattle costs them around Tk 1,800 per month. Just before August 2017, they did not have to spend money on firewood and cattle feed. Some people in Ukhiya cannot afford these costs.

5. The host community could have benefited by the refugee influx. Some of the host community started small business inside the camps in September. Some of them established tea-stalls, small vegetable shops and some of them became hawkers. But the authorities decided not to allow the host community to run businesses inside the camps. They were expelled from the camps. Now the Rohingyas are running those small businesses.

The road from Balukhali Bazar to the camp inside has shops run by Rohingyas on both sides. The host community members argued that if allowed, they could run these shops. As a result, they have suffered a double blow: they had to stop the business and now they have to buy those items from the refugees at higher prices. Again, their income has not increased, although their expenses have gone up.

²⁰ Ghosh S K, M K Ahmed, S I Ahmed, M K Ahsan and M Kamal, 2015. Study on the socio- economic conditions of the fishermen in Teknaf. Res. Agric. Livest. Fish. 2 (3): 483-489.

²¹ *Maund* is a local unit of measuring weight, which is equal to 37.5 kg.

6. The local market has also been visibly affected. In the public dialogue, one participant said that if the Rohingyas were given cash instead of the relief goods for free, the local economy would grow. Because then the refugees would buy goods from the local market and both the demand and supply would go up. Also, it is hard for people to live without cash. That is why the refugees are selling the surplus relief goods (rice, daal and oil) in the local market, upsetting the demand-supply chain and thus increasing market prices.
7. The research team checked the prices of daily essentials in the markets of Ukhiya and Pekua in Cox's Bazar and Aman Bazar in Chittagong to compare the price in affected and non-affected area. The prices were taken for a couple of days in a row with regular intervals. The prices were then averaged. Several markets of Ukhiya and other places were also visited to make sure that the calculation is accurate.

A few items are in high demand and their prices are going up by the week. They include but are not limited to small fish, big fish, chicken and vegetables. There is a huge shortage of supply of these items. The following chart shows the rate of price increase:

Items of increasing price in the affected area (Ukhiya)

Item	Ukhiya	Pekua	Aman Bazar, Chittagong	Increased %
Small Fish	300	240	240	25%
Big fish	400	300	250	60%
Chicken	135	115	110	22%
Vegetables (Avg.)	40	28	30	33%

On the other hand, prices of some items have gone down as a result of falling demand.

Items of decreasing price in the affected area (Ukhiya)

Item	Ukhiya	Pekua	Aman Bazar, Chittagong	Decreased %
Rice (coarse) ²²	44	47	48	8%
Rice (fine)	52	55	58	10%
Masur Dal	105	110	115	9%
Soya bean oil	100	105	105	5%

8. The overall transport cost increased by 20 percent on an average as a result of increased mobility of officials and workers of local, national and international NGOs. A number of rickshaw, auto-rickshaw and human haulier drivers were interviewed separately and in groups to get a clear idea of the fare in June-July, and then compare it with that of August-September, 2017. The minimum inflation rate in this period was also considered.

²² Price of rice in the market is affected, but not decreased as much as it is affected. Because the rice market reacts nationwide as a whole due to the supply chain. So, this will not manifest the real effect. And the price is also will be found two types, one is the relief rice being sold in the market at a very low price e.g. 35 Tk per kg.

One most sought-after thing in Ukhiya now is houses for office or warehouse of NGOs, INGOs and UN offices. New recruits for relief projects also look for suitable accommodation. As a result, house rent has gone up by 30 percent to 40 percent. People who have been living here for long time as tenants have been hit hard by rent hike.

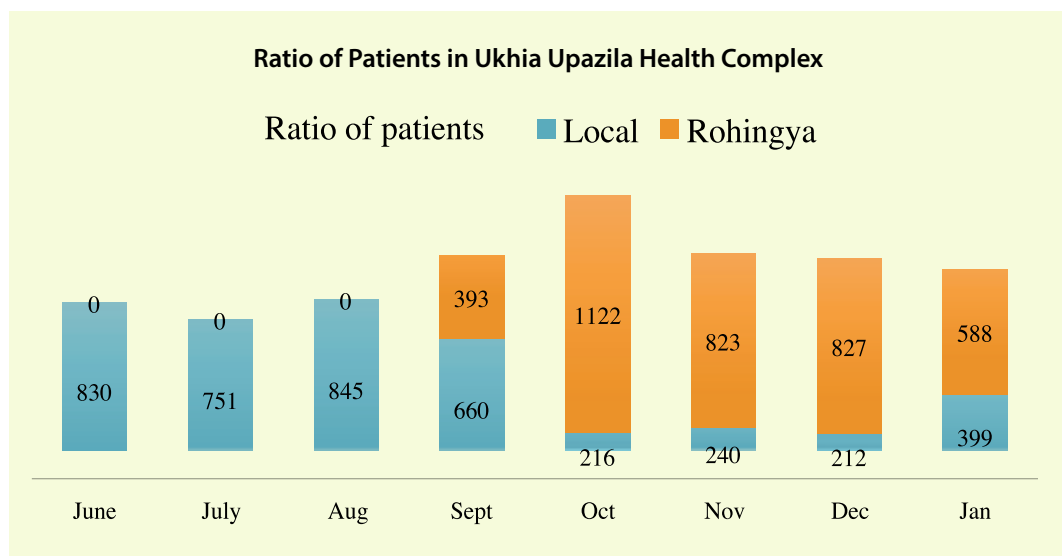
All of this has put a great financial strain on the host community, making them poorer.

4.4. Impacts on Health

There are two main impacts on health due to the Rohingya influx. First, members of the host community have contracted some diseases that are uncommon in many parts of Bangladesh. Second, due to the huge pressure of the Rohingya population, health facilities in the area are struggling to pay adequate attention to the medical needs of the host community. The Upazila Health Complex is the highest government health facility at the upazila level.

The Ukhiya Upazila Health Complex has capacity for 70 beds. According to its register, some 800 patients come to this hospital every month for health care (both in and out patients). The following chart shows a normal flow of local patients there until August 2017. But since October, on an average only 216 local people received medical services from this hospital. This clearly shows how the local people have been sacrificing considering the emergency need of the Rohingyas.

The in-charge of the Ukhiya Upazila Health Complex said that, patients from the host community never complained about the refugees crowding the hospital. Many of them even stayed on the floor as all the beds were occupied by the Rohingya patients. This is a great gesture of humanity by the local people for the suffering Rohingyas.



According to the register of the hospital



Kerontali Govt. Primary School, Teknaf is still occupied by the Army relief operation. Photo: COAST Trust

It is suspected that there could be 6,200 diphtheria patients among the Rohingyas who fled Myanmar. At least 38 Rohingyas died from diphtheria and 62 diphtheria patients from the host community were identified when they came to the hospital. There could be more patients who never reported²³.

The Bangladesh government is providing vaccine to the Rohingyas as well as the host community living close to the camps and is at the risk of being infected. Villagers of South Roikyong and Kerontoli said at least 15 percent of the host community are still out of the vaccination coverage.²⁴

Different diseases pose a threat of spreading across the host community for using the polluted surface water. Some 60 percent of the host community depend on the water of canals and streams for daily household works²⁵.

Community clinics are the remotest government facilities to provide minimum health care services to the poor who cannot afford treatment in big hospitals. Kutupalong Community Clinic was found over-crowded by refugees and the clinic register shows some 65 percent of their daily patients are Rohingyas²⁶.

²³ According to the Ukhia Upazila Health Complex.

²⁴ According to the Ukhia Upazila Health Complex, 100% of the host community who live adjacent to the camps are vaccinated. Specially children of the host community is specially taken care of by the government of Bangladesh.

²⁵ Estimated by the FGD in South Roikyong and Kerontoli in Teknaf and Balukhali Purbopara in Ukhia.

²⁶ From the register of Kutupalong Community Clinic

4.5. Impacts on Education: A generation loss

Government primary schools are normally the first choice for running emergency operations in remote areas where buildings for this purpose are hardly available. During floods and cyclones, people take shelter in primary school buildings. That is acceptable during emergency period, for a couple of weeks. But when school buildings are occupied for long, educational activities are hampered.

Five government primary schools in the refugee camp areas were found occupied by the army or other agencies for emergency relief operation and coordination. The research team found Kerontoli Govt. Primary School and Unchiprang Govt. Primary Schools have been occupied for months. Unchiprang Govt. Primary School became free of such occupation only in January 2018. But Kerontoli and Lomba Bill primary schools remain occupied. The yearly final exam in 2017 was not held in these two schools.

An estimated 3,000 students study in these five schools, with about 600 students in each school.

Initially the persecuted Rohingyas took shelter in primary school buildings, particularly during heavy rains. They stayed there for around a week. The school furniture and toilets were damaged due to the extra pressure.

Since the influx, about 15 percent students have been remaining absent from class²⁷. During interviews and FDGs, some families said they do not feel safe to send their children to schools alone. Normally, children in these areas walk to their schools alone. Now that the roads are always crowded and chaotic with heavy vehicles, it is difficult for the children to go through it.

In Teknaf's Kanjorpara High School, some 25 percent female students stopped attending their classes since the Rohingya exodus. A separate FGD was held with the teachers of this school. They said parents of these girls do not feel safe anymore to send their daughters to schools due to the crowded transport and chaotic situation in the locality. Particularly, the grownup girls are avoiding schools in fear of being kidnapped or being sexually assaulted.

In Howaikyong, there are three non-government high schools with 10 casual teachers who used to get Tk 4,000-5,000 a month. Seven of them left the schools after they were offered relief operation jobs at high salaries. Though the relief operation jobs are temporary and for the emergency period only, the salary is higher than that of even permanent teachers.

The research team also conducted a separate FGD with the students who have joined this kind of relief operation jobs in NGOs in Ukhiya. Most of them are from Ukhiya College. One accounting department student said there were 45 third-year honours students. All but three of them are working with different NGOs. They are not going to their classes since November 2017. Nobody knows when they will be able to go back to their classrooms. Several exams have been postponed due to the absence of majority of the students.

²⁷ Monthly attendance report of the schools.

Participants said it was better to start a career after completing their education. Otherwise, it is almost impossible to complete master's degree while in a job. Some thought they would not be able to complete their education ever.

Some 60 percent students remain absent from different classes in Ukhiya College. The HSC test exam was not held due to poor presence of students.

The FGD participants said that if this continues, the education of an entire generation will take a hit. For the current students of Ukhiya College, if things continue for another six months like this, they will be out of the regular education cycle.

4.6. Other impacts

Some cross-cutting issues were also found outside the five broad issues discussed above.

The Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road remains extremely busy most of the time due to the presence of extra number of vehicles for relief and emergency operation. Often, it creates traffic jam that lasts for hours. Heavy vehicles, such as relief trucks, sometimes take the diversion roads through the community to avoid intersections and get back to the main road later. Local roads are not meant for withstanding such heavy loads. So they have been badly damaged already.

All relief trucks are now instructed to come to the DC Office in Cox's Bazar town for checking and monitoring. As a result, all the town roads have been badly damaged, as those were not constructed for the heavy vehicles.

Temporary roads inside the camps or towards the camps are built rapidly without any proper plan. Sometimes they are built overnight, often blocking canals and sewerage systems. The road towards the Kutupalong refugee camp is just one example. There is no channel or culverts under the road to let the rainwater pass from one side to the other, although this is the normal practice of road construction in Bangladesh.

There are security forces including the army, BGB and police who are monitoring the Rohingya camps. But they don't stay after dark near the camps, which is very risky. Locals said anything can happen anytime as the camps remain unguarded at night. There have been incidents of abduction, killing and rape inside the camps. Locals want an increased security after dark.

Sometimes there are conflicts between the host community and the refugees for different reasons including cultural difference, competition in the labour market, competition in buying vegetables and other products from the market, land occupation, jealousy over relief materials.

A BBC undercover investigation found that women trafficking and prostitution have increased inside the camps and in Cox's Bazar town by abusing the Rohingya women and girls²⁸.

²⁸ BBC.COM/Asia, *The Rohingya children trafficked for sex*, 20 March 2018

5. Recommendations

5.1 Short Term

Cooking fuel

In order to save the valuable forest of Ukhiya and its ecosystem, the massive level of firewood collection must stop immediately. Alternative fuel supply to all FDMN families should be ensured by different agencies working there.

Assessment and compensation

An extensive HH Assessment is needed for the determination of the loss (Agriculture, Forest, Water, Irrigation) of the host community. The affected families should be identified immediately and duly compensated for their loss.

Security

Security should be increased inside and outside the refugee camps, particularly at night. Police camps should be set up in each camp, otherwise things may get out of control.

Street lights

Street lights should be set up inside the camps as well as along the community roads for the security of women and girls in the night.

5.2 Medium term

Alternative IGA and agricultural input

Alternative IGA (Income Generating Activities), including cow/goat rearing, small business/entrepreneurships, introducing high value crops could be the form of compensation. The host community said they wanted no relief materials.

Input and agricultural technology should be supplied in compensation so that they can come out of poverty and can increase farm production.

Safety Net Program

Special Social Safety Net Programme should be introduced for the host community instead of common/traditional practices in other areas Bangladesh.

Water and irrigation

Pollutants floating on canals and streams should be removed immediately. Necessary actions should be taken to clear household and human waste from canals and streams and to ensure that they are used for irrigation and other household purposes. Particularly, tonnes of plastic packets that clogged the streams should be removed and an effective disposal system for this kind of waste should be introduced.

5.3 Long-term

Irrigation and water conservation

A long-term plan for irrigation from Reju Khal to the canals in Ukhiya and Teknaf should be considered. Long-term plans for different steps to increase surface water preservation and rainwater harvesting could be two effective solutions. There should be restriction on consumption of ground water, particularly in Teknaf.

Scientific research on water

A long-term scientific research should be initiated in Cox's Bazar district covering Ukhiya and Teknaf to find out the situation of the ground water, salinity intrusion and other contamination in the water table under the ground.

School buildings and cyclone shelters

School buildings should be rebuilt with special designs suitable for being used as cyclone shelters if needed. This will require a policy change so that it can be applied in the entire coastal area.

Embankment and roads

Damaged embankments should be immediately repaired and long-term plan is needed for building concrete block and other protections.

6. Media links

The Risky Refuge

Staff Correspondent, The Daily Star

Nearly two lakh Rohingyas are facing a grave risk of landslide at their makeshift camps in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar. All those camps could also be ravaged if there is a nor'wester or cyclone.

Initially when the Rohingyas crossed over into Bangladesh fleeing a brutal military operation in Rakhine State of Myanmar, the administration and the locals received them on humanitarian grounds.

They have settled on forestland and hills. Now, a disaster is looming large as all the trees around their makeshift camps have been felled.

"The Rohingya people are clearing forestland equal to four football fields every day for collecting fuel wood," said Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mohammad Abul Kalam.

Because of the indiscriminate tree felling, the hills have become barren, increasing the risk of landslide, he added.

"So we are relocating them from the hill tops and slopes to safer places. We have to move about 1.5 to 2 lakh people within the next one to two months before the monsoon begins. So far, we have relocated 10,000 of them."

Since August 25 last year, Kalam said, nearly 6,92,000 Rohingyas arrived, raising the total number of refugees to over one million. The government officially allocated 5,800 acres of forestland for their settlement.

The RRRC was speaking at a seminar titled "FDMN (forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals) influx impact among host community: approach for mitigation emphasising next monsoon crisis".



Trees on the rolling hills of Ukhia have been razed to make way for an extension of a Balukhali Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar. The photo was taken in early March. Photo: Mokammel Shuvo

Public representatives, government officials and representatives of international non-government organisations were present at the seminar, organised by Coast Trust and held at a hotel in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The local community is also facing serious problems because of the unprecedented refugee crisis. The water streams in the areas are getting polluted by waste from the refugee camps. A large number of refugees have also been settled in agricultural land, leaving many local farmers worried. As the public representatives are enraged by troubles resulting from the refugee influx, the commissioner said, the government has taken up a scheme to compensate 3,36,000 people out of half a million host community members.

“But you have to be patient as we were not ready for this problem. It was created by Myanmar and it just fell upon us.”

Regarding the repatriation process, he said, Bangladesh has signed an agreement with Myanmar. So far a list of around 8,000 refugees has been handed over to Myanmar and the country has recognised 556 of them as their citizens so far.

“So the repatriation process is going on. But it will take time.”

It took 13 years, from 1992 to 2005, to send back only 2,36,000 Rohingya refugees earlier. So it is easily understandable that it will take a while to repatriate over one million people.

The RRRC said it is the duty of the international community, including the UN bodies, to persuade Myanmar to take back their nationals as soon as possible, he said.

Maruf Barkat from Coast Trust presented a situation report while Rezaul Karim Chowdhury moderated the session.

Nayeem Gowhar Warah of Dhaka University and Disaster Forum; Sumbul Rizvi, senior coordinator of ISCG, Elisabeth Pelster of UNHCR and Manuel Moniz Pereira of IOM also spoke at the programme.

Dr Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus of Brac University, and Dr Atiq Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, presented their observations about the Rohingya camps.

They said several thousand camp dwellers will face environmental disasters during the monsoon and if cyclone hits. The camps, made mostly with polythene and bamboo, will be wiped out if nor'wester strikes.

KM Abdus Salam, director general of the NGO Bureau, who was present at the seminar as the chief guest, said international non-government organisations would have to involve locals in their work and inform them about the progress to earn their trust and respect.

Public representatives who attended the event, mostly union parishad chairmen and members from the areas in Ukhiya and Teknaf where the Rohingya camps are located, expressed their grievances.

"All the streams in my areas are polluted now. People used to drink water from the natural streams in the forest. But Rohingya people have polluted those. They also cleared the forest, set up camps in the agricultural land," said M Gafuruddin Chowdhury, chairman of Palongkhali Union Parishad.

NGOs have been razing the hills in his areas to make refugee camps, he said. "If they do not stop hill cutting, I'll go to court and file cases against them," said Gafur.

"They were our guests but now it seems that we have to leave the area as they have become the majority and are carrying out anti-social activities in the area," he said.

Noor Ahmed Anawari, chairman of Hoaikyang Union Parishad, said locals are facing problems in different sectors like communications, education, environment and agriculture.

"The government should compensate the local people immediately otherwise the situation would go beyond control."

Aziz Uddin, chairman of Baharchhara Union Parishad, said teachers of primary schools and madrasas are quitting and taking jobs at non-government organisations for higher salary.

"Students are facing severe teacher crisis in the schools. The government should immediately address the issue," said Aziz.

Web link: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/Ukhiya-bursting-the-seams-1556272>

7. Annex

Impact of FDMN Influx on the host community: emphasising monsoon crisis mitigation



Mr. KM Abdus Salam, DG of NGO Bureau is delivering the concluding remarks at the Public Dialogue held in Cox's Bazar

The public dialogue held in Cox's Bazar on 31 March 2018

A public dialogue was jointly organised by COAST Trust and CCNF (Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum) at the conference room of hotel UNI Resort in Cox's Bazar titled "Impact of FDMN Influx on the host community: emphasising monsoon crisis mitigation". The people's representatives of those localities, the members and chairmen of the Union Councils spoke about the impacts on their community. They spoke about the problems they are facing and made specific demands to address those.

A number of distinguished representatives from the government, donor agencies, the UN and other INGOs joined the dialogue to listen to the host community members and share their own experience and ideas.

Invited guests and participants

The turnout of other stakeholders was also remarkable. The invited guests and speakers include Mr. KM Abdus Salam, Director General (DG) of NGO Bureau and Additional Secretary along with Mr. Mohammad Abul Kalam NDC, Additional Secretary and Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) from the Government of Bangladesh.

The dialogue was also participated by Dr. Ainun Nishat, Professor Emeritus, BRAC University and Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER), and Dr. Atiq Rahman, Executive Director of Bangladesh Center for Advance Studies (BCAS). Both of them occasionally advise the government of Bangladesh on different issues. Other key speakers were Mr. Nayeem G Wahra, Dhaka University and Disaster Forum; Ms. Sumbul Rizvi, Senior Coordinator of ISCG; Ms Elisabeth Pelster of UNHCR, Mr. Arash Irantalib Tehrani of Canadian High Commission and Mr. Manuel Moniz Pereira of IOM.

Mr. Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Co-Chair-Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum and Executive Director, COAST Trust; and Mr Abu Morshed Chowdhury Co-Chair - Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum and Chairman- PHALS jointly moderated the dialogue.

People's representatives

Chairmen of different Union Councils under Ukhiya and Teknaf who participated in the dialogue are:

- Principal Nur Ahmad Anwary, Hwaikyong;
- A M Gafuruddin Chowdhury, Palong Khali;
- Moulana Aziz Uddin, Baharchara; and
- Abul Hossain, Panel Chairman of Hnila.

UP members Ms Khurshida Begum and Md Shajahan, from Rajapalong; Mr. Nurul Absar Chowdhury, Mozaffor Ahmad and Mr. Nurul Amin from Palong Khali; Mr Jalal Ahmad of Hwaikyong; Mr. Hossain Ahmad, Mr Abul Hossain and Ms Marzina Akhtar Siddiqee from Hnila; and Mr Sona Ali from Baharchara spoke in the meeting and described the degenerated condition of Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas after the influx of Myanmar citizens. They expressed their grievances in the meeting.

Arguments, demands and stories put forward by the people's representatives are:

- Social Safety Net programmes for the vulnerable groups of the local community stopped 3-4 months ago. It should have special features for the host community of Ukhiya and Teknaf as they are affected by the FDMN.
- Local people used to dig holes beside their homesteads to get water. They have stopped doing it as household and human waste lay all around the camps.
- Underground water should be preserved and that's why no deep tube-well should be set up. Streams and canals should be immediately dredged and prepared for monsoon.
- Embankments are badly damaged and it should be repaired before monsoon, otherwise it will be disastrous.
- School buildings and its furniture have been damaged. Plans must be made to build schools designed to be cyclone shelter when needed.
- Refugee camps are almost treeless. NGOs could help in planting trees beside every household in the camps. It can protect them against landslides and cyclones.

- Biscuits and toys are given to the FDMN children as children of the host community look on. The host community children should be given some toys as well.
- Long-term remedies and compensation should be offered to the affected farmers.
- A number of teachers should immediately be employed in the primary and secondary schools in this locality as many teachers left the schools.
- Students who joined different humanitarian projects should be allowed to sit for the public exams otherwise their education will suffer serious blows. It will be a great loss for the community.
- Security should be increased in the camps at night. Many Rohingya people are engaging in crimes. Police should conduct raids to look for arms, if any.

Speeches and comments

Mr KM Abdus Salam, DG of NGO Bureau, said as the chief guest at the dialogue that the local people sacrificed a lot and they have been patient enough. "We need to continue doing this a little further as we kept trust on our prime minister who is dealing with it." He added that it was very difficult to hide information in this digital era. NGO interventions must satisfy people's need for information as it impacts their lives. "We have to change the attitude to hide that we used to have in the 80s."

Mohammad Abul Kalam NDC, the Additional Secretary of Government and Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), said, "The FDMN people are clearing forestland equal to four football fields every day to collect firewood for cooking and this is very alarming."

He also mentioned that all the agencies working here with FDMN should consider that the Bangladesh government is the sole authority and no one should try to do things bypassing the government. He informed that the JRP (Joint Response Plan) will allocate 25 percent of its fund for the development of the host community.

Ms Sumbul Rizvi of ISCG said in her speech that the Myanmar government is responsible for this disastrous situation and the host community is paying the price. The host community should be included in the humanitarian intervention programmes as they are the sufferers and it is not possible to solve any problem without them.

Ms Elisabeth Pelster of UNHCR said, "We are procuring locally, not even from nationally. We explicitly want to work with the local partners where possible. Our intention is to capacitate the local partners."

Dr. Artiq Rahman of BCAS said the entire world condemned Myanmar for this situation and the FDMN have to go back to their land, there is no doubt about that. Nobody knows how long it will take. But what we all know and what is inevitable in the next three months is that the rain is coming and that will cost us a lot.

Mr. Manuel Moniz Pereira of IOM said every crisis has a certain impact on the host community all over the world. In this case the number of refugee is really huge. We are committed to support the affected host community. Already we have started a dialogue with the Union Parishad and the local community.

Dr. Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus of BRAC University, said the government should address some emergency problem within the next 15 days, including clearing the drainage system so that the rainwater can move. The amount of rainfall in this area last year was over 400 mm. We should consider that every formula can't be applied everywhere. Teknaf has special problems and it needs special interventions to address them. The damaged embankment should be immediately repaired before the monsoon comes.

He also said there are many interventions of local and international NGOs, but there are hardly any coordination and communication among them. Many of them are overlapping even as many problems are yet to be addressed.

Mr. Nayeem G Wahra of Dhaka University and Disaster Forum said that in a crisis like this sometimes we can't help, but still there are things we can do and we need to identify them. Those could include rainwater harvest. Last year we missed the opportunity. We need to be able to do this time. Every household should be capacitated to harvest the rainwater and more importantly the streams and canals should be prepared to hold the rainwater for long time. The newly constructed roads should have culverts under them so the water can move from one side to another.

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