

Report on the Second Survey

Impact of the Rohingya Crisis on the Host Communities

IC Net Limited, March 2018

Who We Are

IC Net Limited (“IC Net”), a leading development consulting company in Japan, has been engaged in socio-economic development globally in various sectors including governance, agriculture, fisheries, rural development, gender, and peacebuilding. In Bangladesh, IC Net has implemented technical assistance in local governance and public investment, which has been mainly funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Background

Since August 25, 2017, 688,000 Rohingya people in Myanmar have fled to Bangladesh to escape violence, and Bangladesh has been offering safety and shelter to them. Meanwhile, the host communities (HCs) in Cox’s Bazar are overwhelmed by the influx of the Rohingya.

900,000

Rohingya population in Cox’s Bazar

688,000

No. of Rohingya who have arrived there since
25 Aug. 2017

Source: IOM, February 2018

Against such backdrop, IC Net carried out the basic survey in December 2017 to assess general conditions, and identify needs and priorities of the HCs. Based on the findings of the basic survey and consultations with relevant organizations and experts, IC Net implemented the second survey in

February 2018 to formulate a project framework, identify target groups and communities, define relevant activities, and identify partners in the government.

Under an overarching theme of revitalizing the HCs adversely affected by the Rohingya crisis, the second survey focused on livelihood improvement, environment and forest protection, and cross-cutting issues such as conflict prevention and gender.¹



Settlement in Palong Kali

Communities Overwhelmed by the Crisis

The survey targeted Ukhia and Teknaf upazilas (sub-districts) of Cox’s Bazar district, which are among the 50 most socially deprived upazilas in the country and host all official camps and settlements.²

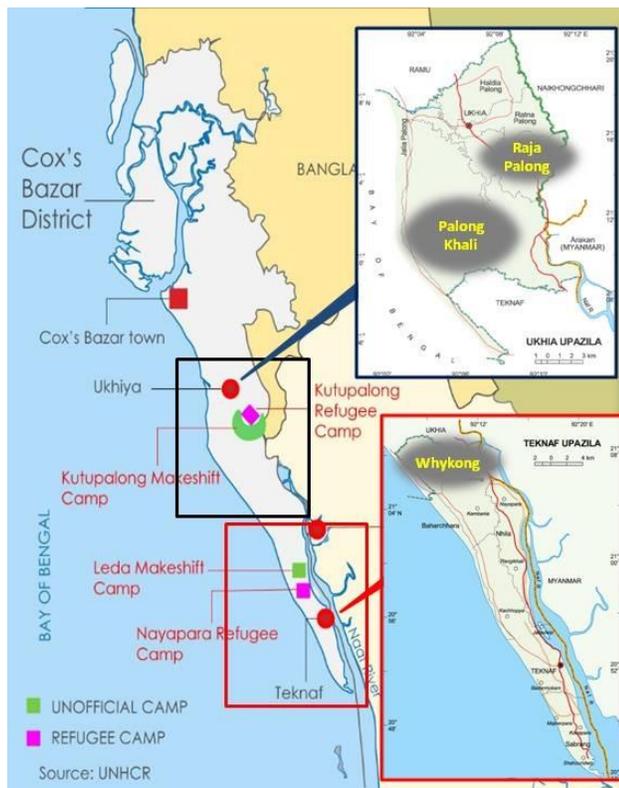
¹ The following people of IC Net carried out the surveys: Mr. Atsushi Tokura and Mr. Yoshinaga Nakamura implemented the basic survey; Dr. Akiya Seko, Mr. Yukitoshi Matsumoto, and Mr. Jun Yamada, the second survey. Both surveys were carried out in cooperation with Mr. Ali Imam Majumder, a former Cabinet Secretary, and Mr. Md. Shafi-UL-Alam, a former Member Directing Staff (Research and Consultancy) at BPATC, both in the Government of Bangladesh.

² Rohingya are living either in the registered camps of Kutupalong and Nayapara, unregistered settlements without registration, or in the HCs.

For the second survey, IC Net selected three unions of Ukhia and Teknaf upazilas, namely Raja Palong, Palong Kali (Ukhia), and Wykong (Teknaf), because of the severity of damage there from the Rohingya crisis.

Location	HC Population	Rohingya Population
Ukhia	207,400	761,059
Raja Palong	66,174	24,118
Palong Kali	38,139	733,970
Teknaf	307,300	129,737
Wykong	59,153	33,330

Source: Census 2011, and IOM (as of January 2018)



Source:
<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/in-focus/exodus/Story24.html>
<https://www.thebangladesh.net/upazilas-of-coxs-bazar/ukhiya-upazila.html>
<https://www.thebangladesh.net/upazilas-of-coxs-bazar/teknaf-upazila.html>

Findings

Loss of Livelihoods

Agriculture as well as sea and river fishing are the primary livelihoods in Ukhia and Teknaf. However, around 50% of the households rely on agricultural and non-agricultural unskilled labor.³ The influx of the Rohingya has further depressed livelihoods as poor households in the HCs must compete with the Rohingya who tend to work at lower wages.

Agriculture

The major crops in Ukhia and Teknaf are as follows: rice; vegetables (cauliflower, cabbage, hyacinth bean, string bean, petsai cabbage, potato, maize, onion, garlic, coriander, chili, okra, lemon, gourd, radish, eggplant, tomato, and cucumber); fruits (watermelon, muskmelon); and betel leaf and betel nut. In the upazilas, farmers tend to grow vegetables and fruits in the backyard of their homestead.

One of the challenges in agriculture in the upazilas is the scarcity of cultivable land because of hilly



Cultivating vegetables in the backyard

terrain. In Teknaf and Ukhia, 28% of the farmers have less than 1.5 acres of farmland, and 16% are landless. The situation in Ukhia is even worse as 55% of the farmers there have less than 1.5 acres of land and 16% are landless.⁴ Land owners rent out their land for such purposes as shrimp farms

³ Rohingya Emergency Vulnerability Assessment, WFP, 2017.

⁴ From an interview with the upazila agricultural office

as well as betel leaf and nut farms. Many households provide seasonal labor to those farms. The establishment of camps and settlements has further decreased arable land. Agriculture in the upazilas also faces the lack of irrigation, post-harvest facilities, market, and technological know-how, which poses a considerable challenge to farmers.⁴

Excerpts from interviews with HC residents

- The influx of the Rohingya with their cattle and other belongings devastated the standing crops in the HCs.
- A large area that was to be used for cultivating seasonal vegetables is now used for the Rohingya settlements.
- The installation of thousands of shallow and deep tube wells in and around the camps has lowered the underground water level, which has made many irrigation pumps in the area dysfunctional.
- A vast quantity of bamboos has been used in the camps and settlements, which has also caused paucity and price hikes of bamboos that are necessary for betel leaf gardens.
- Local farmers have become poorer than before, and they cannot afford to pay back the agricultural loans.

Fishery

Fishery is the most important livelihood in Ukhia and Teknaf, and poor households earn most of their income from fishing either on the shore or in the Naf river. The peak season for fishing is from June to August. Poor households share a small paddle boat and fishing nets with other households.⁵ Many in the upalizas also engage in shrimp farming⁶ and fish farming of such species as tilapia. Dried fishes are widely sold in Cox's Bazar.



Dried fish production in Teknaf

According to an upazila fishery officer, more than 1,000 fishing families have been affected by the fishing ban in the Naf river because the Rohingya have crossed the river to enter Bangladesh. As they lost their main income source, they cannot pay back the loans from lenders or owners of fishing boats.

Excerpts from interviews with HC residents

- People have been forbidden to fish in the Naf river for the last seven months.
- Because of financial constraints, the fishermen have been compelled to stop sending their children to school.
- A few fishermen tried to catch fish in the river. One was shot and killed by the border force of Myanmar, and others were arrested.
- The leader of the fishermen association has recently been attacked by frustrated members.
- A rehabilitation program should be undertaken for the distressed fishermen. They may be trained for marine fishing. The locality also has many ponds that can be used for fish farming.

⁵ Livelihoods in the Teknaf-Ukhia Peninsula Baseline Study, WFP, 2017.

⁶ Nearly 10 shrimp hatcheries operate on the coast side of Cox's Bazar.

Livestock

Interviews have revealed that the Rohingya crisis has caused the pastures and fodder for cattle to be lost or terribly diminished.

Excerpts from interviews with HC residents

- Many owners of poultry farms have been compelled to close their farms, and many have rented out their land to the Rohingya for habitations.
- The high demand for milk, eggs, and meat has caused an unusual increase in their prices, and a lack of animal protein is a serious concern, particularly for children.

Moreover, the government's social forestation projects,⁷ which provide some income for poor households, were severely damaged in the crisis.

Excerpts from interviews with HC residents

- The roots of many felled trees are removed and used for firewood, which can eventually cause huge landslides during the rainy season.
- Many hilltops, slopes, and forests are now occupied by camps, settlements, as well as storage and tents for relief goods and services. They are gradually occupying wider areas and spreading to the neighboring villages.
- The social forestry program has been destroyed, which caused huge financial losses to the program participants in the HCs. They are deprived of their due share of benefits.

Serious Deforestation



A settlement in a forest

Firewood is the main cooking fuel in the HCs. Most households either collect firewood in forests or purchase them in the market.³ The influx of the Rohingya has caused further deforestation because settlements for them are established in the forests, and the Rohingya also collect firewood for cooking. In addition, there is a serious concern on landslides due to the massive deforestation particularly during the monsoon season between April and September.

Deteriorating Quality of Life

Rice, fish, and vegetables are the most important foodstuffs for the HC residents. Because of the low level of agricultural production in the upalizas, the HCs depend heavily on markets for food. In Ukhnaf and Teknaf, around 40% of the households are considered vulnerable or highly vulnerable in food



Interview with residents in Raja Palong

⁷ Social forestry involves poor rural households from the planning stage to the harvesting stage to ensure adequate management of planted trees and sufficient livelihoods for the people who plant the trees.

security. Female-headed households are considered the most vulnerable group in the HCs.³

A major increase in food prices, due to high demands and higher transport costs caused by the influx of Rohingya, further reduces the HCs' access to food.

Excerpts from interviews with HC residents

- The crisis has caused serious traffic congestion and increased transportation costs.
- The price hikes of agricultural products in the local market cause untold sufferings in the locality where many people are under the poverty line.
- Some Rohingya are setting up shops in the HCs and sell the surplus of their relief goods such as rice, edible oil, pulses, soap, shampoo, blankets, and medicines, as well as locally procured vegetables and groceries, which causes a huge loss for local businesses.
- Some Rohingya work as drivers of rickshaws, bikes, and other vehicles, and competition in the local labor market for unskilled labor became intense.

Proposed Support Framework

With compassion and sacrifice, the HCs have provided generous support to the Rohingya people. However, during our interviews, many residents of the HCs raised concerns that frustrations are mounting in the HCs, and the tension between the HCs and the Rohingya might escalate if no measures are taken.

While many aid organizations have struggled to support the Rohingya by providing relief items, they are overwhelmed by the urgent and

enormous needs of the Rohingya. Only a few organizations address the plight of the HCs although many people there lost livelihoods as mentioned above.⁸

Target

We at IC Net would address the needs of the HCs to restore livelihoods of the vulnerable population there and ensure social cohesion in the affected upazilas.

Our support would:

- Target the people in the HCs who have been most severely affected by the Rohingya crisis;
- Have a sustainable impact on the livelihoods of the HCs and strengthen the HCs' resilience to help the Rohingya; and
- Be inclusive, pay close attention to the needs of women, and ensure their active participation.

In particular, our support would focus on impoverished households, particularly fisherfolk who lost their livelihood because of the fishing ban in the Naf river.

Envisioned Support Content Promotion of Fish Farming and Value Chain Development

While fishing in the Naf river has been banned since the influx of Rohingya in 2017, fish farming of such species as tilapia, catfish, and carp, as well as shrimp culture, may be promoted and improved. This would provide income in a relatively short period to the households who lost their livelihood in the crisis. Integration with livestock/poultry may further improve their livelihood. The support to fish farming shall be market-oriented by strengthening its value chain from production, processing to consumption,⁹ so as to ensure profitability.¹⁰

⁸ To improve livelihoods in the HCs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has recently started an agricultural project. Thus far, 500 farmers of the HCs have received agricultural training as part of the Farmer Field School (FFS). They are expected to receive mini-tillers, irrigation pumps, and inputs such as seeds and fertilizers (Source: IOM Bangladesh: Rohingya Refugee Crisis Response External Update 9—15 February 2018)

⁹ The crisis accidentally created a large market for fish and vegetables in the HCs as they are some of the most favored foodstuffs among the Rohingya.

¹⁰ WFP plans to scale up its e-voucher program that enables Rohingya people to purchase more nutritious diets and empower women. In the long run, the program will cost less than distributing food (WFP website).

Promotion of Backyard Agriculture and Agroforestry

Many households in the HCs grow vegetables and fruits in their backyard mainly for their consumption. This undertaking may be improved with technical know-how to increase productivity. Bangladesh has some experience in agroforestry as well, and poor households may be able to augment their income through agroforestry.

Agroforestry promotion can be linked with the Forest Department's social forestry program by having households grow vegetables or fruits in forests, thereby creating employment opportunities and fulfilling the households' demand for firewood while allowing the households to earn supplementary income or food. For any agricultural promotion, it is essential to consider coordination with the aforementioned FAO project.

Other Areas of Support

As mentioned earlier, the issues on livelihoods among poor households are intertwined with those on food security and deforestation. Livelihood promotion by such means as fish farming and backyard agriculture may have a positive impact on the HCs' food security, while social forestry and agroforestry may help mitigate further deforestation in the long term.

Additional measures to address these issues should be considered, including piloting of an

alternative fuel¹¹ in the HCs, and support to nutrition improvement.

Way Forward

The preparation for small-scale pilot activities will start soon. At first, we will carry out a questionnaire survey of the households who were engaged in fishing in the selected unions to obtain in-depth information on their livelihoods and needs. Meanwhile, a detailed technical survey by fishery and agriculture experts will also be implemented to assess the related value chain as well as the technical feasibility and cost of interventions.

We have rich global experiences in supporting fisheries and agriculture. We may not necessarily introduce new technologies but make the best use of local resources to strengthen capabilities of residents in the HCs.



IC Net Seeks Partners to Support Host Communities

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¹¹ UNHCR and its partners have distributed compressed rice husks (CRHs) to around 70,000 Rohingya families as an eco-friendly fuel, and plan a pilot LPG (liquid petroleum gas) initiative (UNHCR Operational Update 23 Jan-5 Feb 2018).