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WHAT MATTERS?

Humanitarian Feedback Bulletin on Rohingya Response

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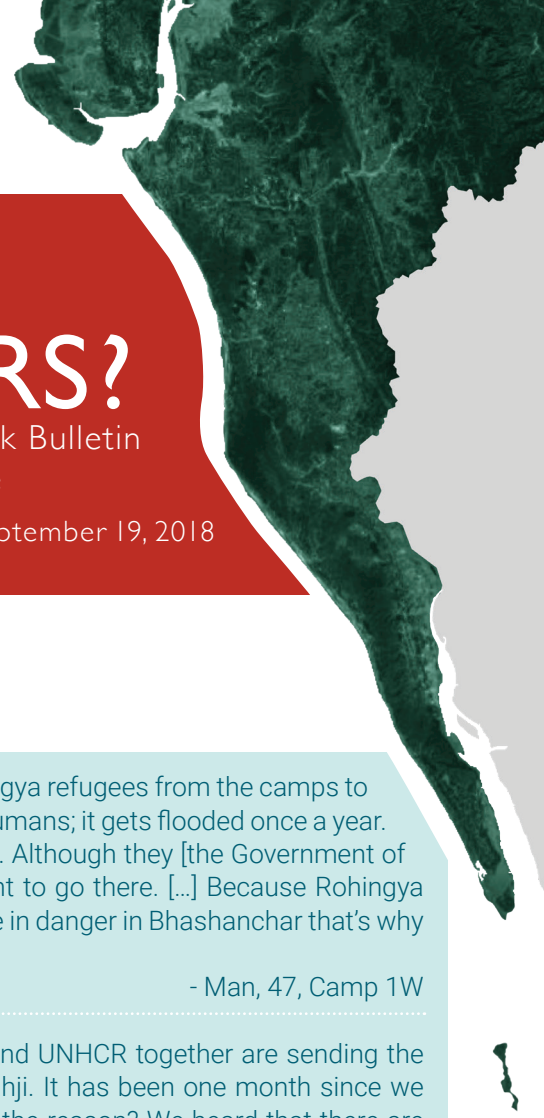


Rohingya community feedback – Bhashanchar and education

This analysis is based on feedback that has been collected on a daily basis by 18 Internews community correspondents, 40 CSI volunteers and one feedback manager. The feedback was collected in camp 1E/W, 2E/W, 3 and 4. In total, 301 interactions have been analysed to present the significant concerns and questions of the Rohingya community.

Internews

August 12th – August 30th 2018

Total Feedback		
301	181	120

Bhashanchar

> "We heard that the Government of Bangladesh will relocate Rohingya refugees from the camps to Bashanchar, which is an island formed in the sea. There are no humans; it gets flooded once a year. People fear living there, that's why Bangladeshi people do not live there. Although they [the Government of Bangladesh] want to relocate the Rohingya people there, we don't want to go there. [...] Because Rohingya people came to Bangladesh from Burma to save their lives; their lives are in danger in Bhashanchar that's why people are really scared."
>
> - Man, 47, Camp 1W

> "We have heard a rumour that the Government of Bangladesh and UNHCR together are sending the Rohingya refugees to Bashanchar. We have heard it from a mahji. It has been one month since we heard it from the mahji. We don't agree to go to Bhashanchar. What is the reason? We heard that there are different types of animals in Bhashanchar and also there are bandits. [...] We heard that Bhashanchar is formed not so long ago; there is a possibility that this island could sink soon. In addition, this island is not suitable for humans to live."
>
> - Man, 55, Camp 4

There are many concerns amongst the Rohingya community regarding relocation to Bhashanchar. Community members are afraid that there won't be any facilities and services for them and there are also concerns about flooding, wild animals and bandits. Moreover, the feedback reflects that some Rohingya people perceive relocation plans to the island as a strategy to get rid of them. They emphasise that they came to Bangladesh because they had no other choice to save their lives for some community members, relocating to Bhashanchar will put their lives at risks again.

Education

> “In our block, people discuss that our children who are 15 years old who already finished studying grade 7, 8, 9, and 10 cannot study here any more. We are really worried about it. Some of these children are getting addicted to drugs and they do not obey their parents. Their lives are being ruined. We are very upset about it. So, we want to request that NGOs set up schools for these children and hire some good teachers from the Government [of Bangladesh] to teach these kids; then their lives might be better. We are very worried about it [their children’s education]. [At the moment] they take our little children to school, but they just let them play there. When they return home from school and we ask what they learn in school, they cannot say anything; they only sing. That’s why we are really worried that their lives might not get better.”
>
> - Man, 28, Camp 4

> “There is no school in our area. The one that we have does not teach the children very well. That’s why when we ask our children to go to school, they cry and don’t want to go. […] If we get to see our children go to school and learn, it will make us very happy.”
>
> - Man, 25, Camp 1E

Education has been a key issue in community feedback over the last few months. While previous feedback regarding education tended to include requests for an increased number of schools, recently some Rohingya community members have instead raised concerns regarding the quality and relevance of schools. There have been concerns that children learn how to gamble in schools, which may come from games that include dice. Moreover, there are an increasing number of requests to set up schools for adolescent students. The community sometimes associates the limited education opportunities for adolescents with a concerning lack of opportunities for young people in general in the camp.

Early marriage:

A complex story, more than just age…

Recent qualitative research carried out by BBC Media Action reveals that people are aware that the legal age of marriage for girls is 18 years. However they consider it to be too late to marry off a girl. To them, the ideal age of marriage for a girl is between 13 and 16 years. They believe that a girl should be married off within two to three years of her first menstruation. Early marriage to Rohingya people means marrying off a girl within a few months of her menstruation.

After starting menstruation a girl is considered to be ‘zowan’ or ‘doñr’, which means ready for marriage. But marrying off a girl right away is thought to be risky as they feel the girl lacks the maturity and knowledge to handle life as a married woman. Instead, they prefer to spend the next two to three years giving the girl two types of training – one within the house and the other religious. The domestic training includes lessons about how to manage household chores, how to be a wife and how to satisfy the in-laws’ family. The religious training includes lessons on rules and norms, such as how to bathe after having intercourse, the duties of a wife and a husband’s rights. Without this training, people fear that a girl may not perform properly in front of her in-laws and not satisfy her husband, which could cause physical and mental torture or separation in the future. Rohingya people are generally unaware of the health risks of early marriage.

Back in Myanmar, marrying girls off before the legal age of 18 people was tricky. The system required them to show that the groom and wife were both over 18 and get permission from the *Ukatta*, (local leader) and the *Gañti*, the local offices of the government. However, Rohingya people would often find ways to marry off their daughters early. They used to bribe the *Lauka*, the officer at the local offices of the government, who would then increase the age of the girl on the family card and register to 18 years, so that she appeared eligible for marriage. The whole

> The best time to marry off a girl is within 16 years of age. […] After a girl has her first menstruation (*haiz*) she needs at best two to three years to understand and learn what to do in the in-laws house and, after that, she should be married off."
>
> - Male, Age 25, Camp 24, Teknaf

> Around 20 years of age a girl loses her beauty. She starts to look old. […] Society says the girl has aged and an aged girl does not get a good groom. She will have to marry an old man. If a girl is not married off at a proper age, people in society think that she has problems."
>
> - Female, Age 39, Camp 9, Ukhiya

process was very expensive and hazardous. The bribes ranged from 700,000 Kyat ($400) to 1,500,000 Kyat ($1000). But to the Rohingya people, the perceived benefits of marrying off a girl early outweighed these challenges.

Early marriage is considered to be on the rise (see here and here) in the camps of Bangladesh as it is much easier to marry off a girl here. Rohingya people say that there is no effective legal barrier and no binding minimum age. They only need to sign a piece of paper (White paper/Myanmar stamp paper/ Bangladesh stamp paper) and follow some rituals in front of some witnesses, the *Moulovi* (religious leader) and the mahji.

There are other perceived benefits of arranging early marriage – even within two to three years of menstruation. Firstly, many Rohingya people feel this is favourable from a religious perspective - the earlier you marry off your daughter the better. Secondly, younger brides attract a smaller dowry to be given to the groom. Thirdly, most people think that as a girl gets older her beauty starts to fade away and getting a groom becomes more difficult. Many Rohingya families also fear that, if a girl is not married, she could become involved with other love relationships outside of an arranged marriage that could be detrimental to the family's reputation.

The financial benefit of early marriage is particularly relevant in camps. A girl leaving to get married frees space in a small makeshift house and leaves fewer mouths to feed with the available relief. Families of the girls also feel that the safety and future stability of a girl is better ensured if she is married.

Rohingya men are providing more feedback but women are more satisfied with results

Source: A recent quantitative study carried out by BBC Media Action in July 2018 with a sample size of 1500, among whom 750 were from the Rohingya community. The respondents, both male and female, were proportionally selected from different camps.

BBC Media Action July 2018

Community			
Rohingya	750	375	375
Host	750	375	375

Rohingya men are more likely to have given feedback than women, and a higher proportion have given feedback personally. However, Rohingya women are more likely to be satisfied with what happened after giving feedback.

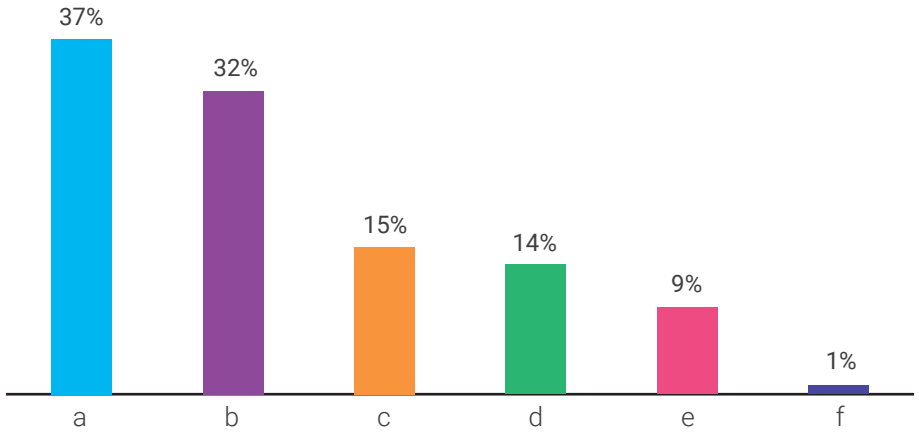
Only 15% of Rohingya women have given feedback personally compared with 27% of Rohingya men. This may be because women are sometimes restricted in leaving their house. Although a lower proportion of Rohingya women have given feedback, their levels of satisfaction were higher: 98% of women were satisfied with what happened in response to their feedback compared with 71% of Rohingya men. This may be because the nature of the issues they are raising is different.

Most Rohingya people said they would give feedback again, but women are more likely to say they would give feedback using a different channel next time. While 65% of men and 55% of women said they would give feedback again, in the same way, a quarter (24%) of women said they would give feedback again but in a different way, compared with only 10% of men. An explanation of this

can perhaps be found in related qualitative research carried out by BBC Media Action in July 2018, which found that women did not want to raise issues linked to gender based violence for fear of them being written down, as this could then result in backlash by the perpetrators, who could use the fact that it was written down as proof.

After giving feedback, 37% of Rohingya people said that their problem was resolved and 32% said they received a response right away. Two thirds (66%) of those whose problem was resolved said that they received a response within one week. Of all those who had given feedback, 15% of people said that nothing had happened yet in response to the issues that they raised.

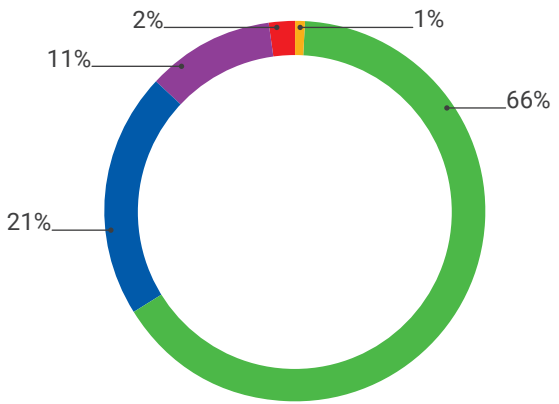
Figure 1: What happened in response to feedback?



Q. Have you or your family ever provided any feedback or complained about anything since you have been here? What happened next?

a. My problem was resolved
b. Received a response straight away
c. Nothing has happened yet
d. Someone else came to my shelter to talk to me about it later
e. I was advised to ask someone else
f. Received a response by text

Figure 2: Time taken to receive a response



Q. How many days did it take to receive a response?

Within one week
Within one month
More than 30 days
Never
Refused/No Answer

Base: Rohingya Community (n= 750)

BBC Media Action, Internews, and Translators without Borders are working together to collect and collate feedback from communities affected by the Rohingya crisis. This summary aims to provide a snapshot of feedback received from Rohingya and host communities, to assist sectors to better plan and implement relief activities with communities' needs and preferences in mind.

The work is being delivered in partnership with IOM, the UN migration agency, and is funded by EU humanitarian aid and the UK Department for International Development.

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions regarding *What Matters?*, you are welcome to get in touch with the team by emailing info@cxbfeedback.org

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