



# WHAT MATTERS?

Humanitarian Feedback Bulletin  
on Rohingya Response

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## Ration cards and water issues top the list of concerns

Source: Feedback collected by IOM between May and November 2018 from 12,373 Rohingya people in camps 8W, 9, 10, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 24 supplemented by qualitative data from weekly focus group discussions conducted by BBC Media Action in camps 1E, 18 and 24.



Feedback collected between December 17 and 22 by 20 Internews community correspondents and one feedback manager using KoBo Collect app in camps 1E, 1W, 2E, 2W, 3, 4 and 4-extension. In total, 195 interactions have been analysed to present the concerns and questions of the Rohingya community of which 82 feedback related to WASH facilities.



Recent community feedback data suggests that the supply of physical relief items is still the main concern among Rohingya people. Concerns about relief peaked in September (52% of the feedback given was on this topic). While relief concerns declined slightly in November (42%), this topic remains the primary subject of feedback amongst refugees.

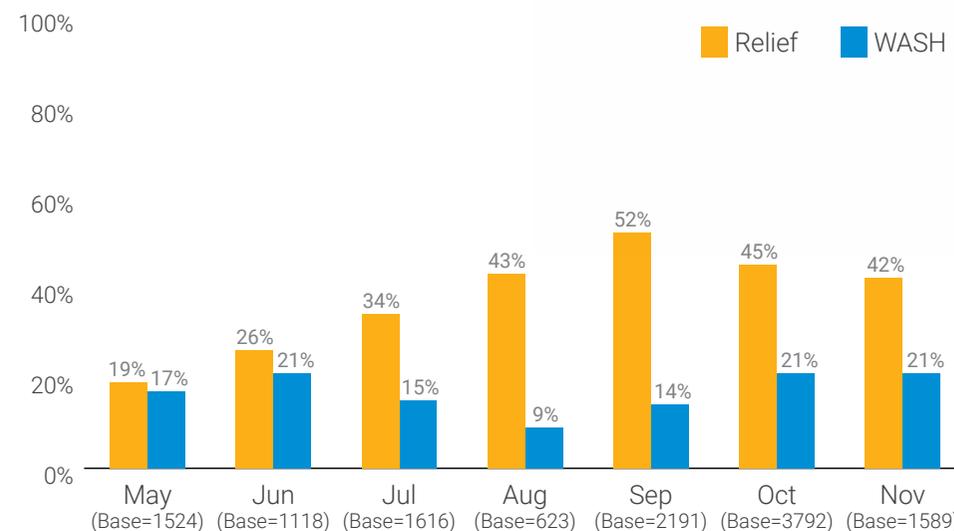


Figure 1: Concerns regarding relief and WASH over the months (N=12,373)

## Relief

The most common concerns around relief were problems related to ration cards and obtaining non-food items (NFI).

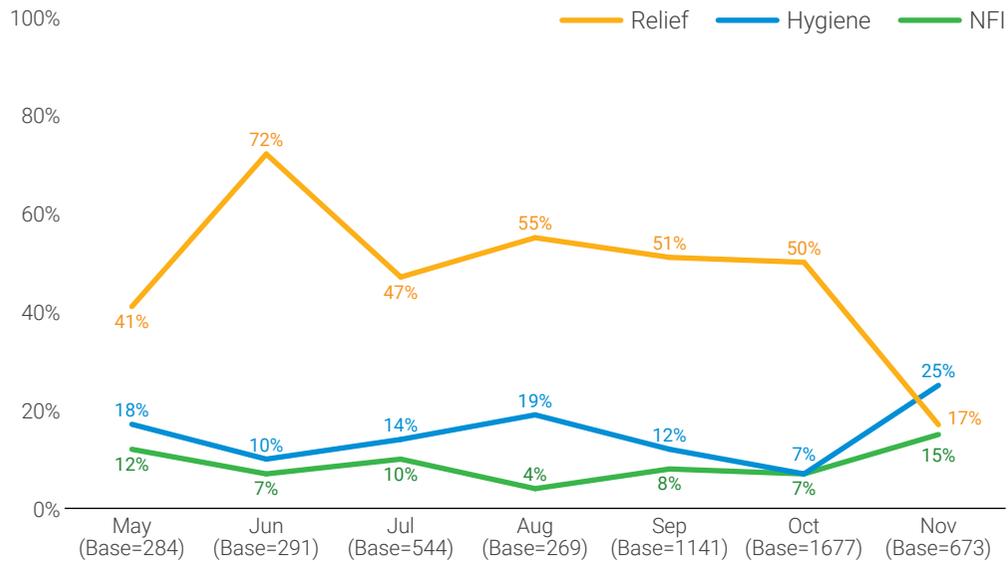


Figure 2: Major concerns related to relief (N= 4879)

People who had issues with cards included those who complained they did not receive cards and those who did not know how to be re-issued cards after losing them. Most of the feedback related to the WFP and IOM relief cards, although there was also some mention of the RRRC card. There was a sharp fall in the rate of feedback related to relief cards at the end of the analysis period, in November, which indicates that some progress may now be being made in this area.

“ A card was issued to me, but the mahji collected the kit in my name. He kept half of it and gave the other half to me.”

– Woman, camp 24

The non-food items (NFI) that people mentioned needing most were shelter kits, cooking kits and hygiene kits. People talked about how they needed bamboo, tarpaulin and other materials to rebuild or strengthen their houses.

In October and November, people also mentioned the need for floor mats and blankets to cope with the approaching winter.

## WASH

Since their arrival in Bangladesh, Rohingya people have been provided with WASH-related materials and access to basic facilities such as washrooms, latrines, and tube wells. However, there are currently a number of issues being reported relating to access, maintenance issues, quality concerns, and heavy usage of limited facilities.

WASH-related issues are the second most prevalent topic mentioned in feedback. Around a fifth of the people giving feedback mentioned WASH-related concerns in June and again in October and November, potentially due to activities connected to global handwashing week (22-28 October) raising this topic in people’s minds. The number of people giving WASH-related feedback was lower in July, August and September.

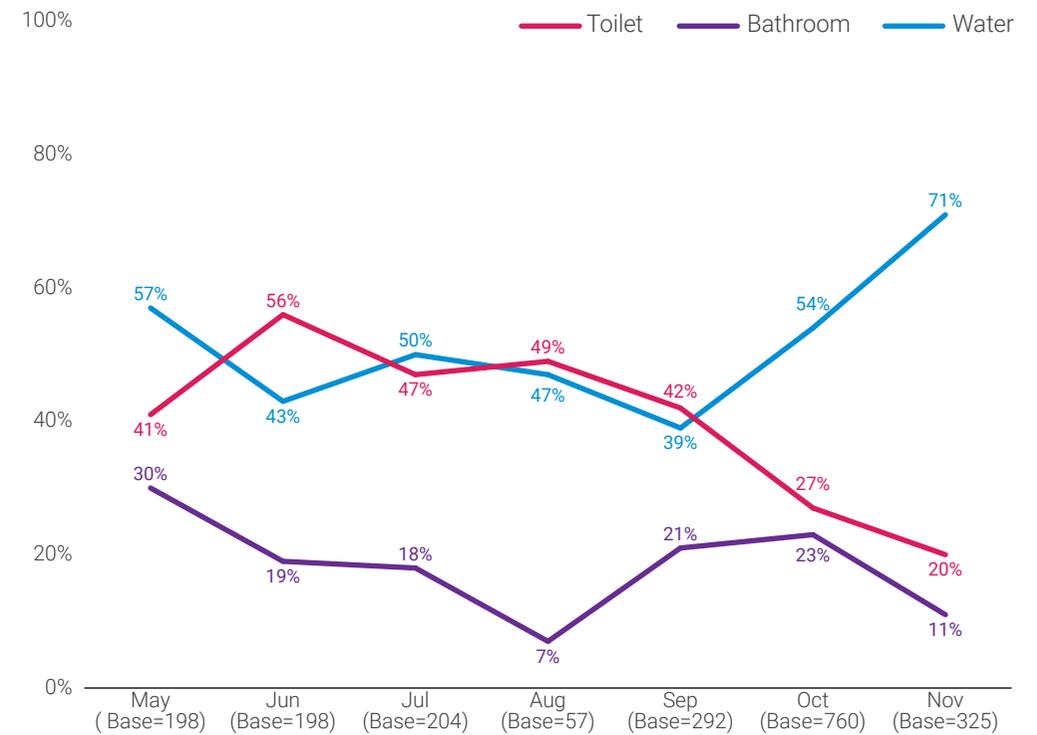


Figure 3: Major concerns related to WASH (N= 2034)

The most common WASH-related issues voiced concerned problems with securing water – particularly in October and November when water-related concerns increased sharply. People complained about the inadequate number of tube-wells and the need to spend lot of time and effort collecting water. They also mentioned that many of the

Summary of most common WASH-related problems raised by the community:

- ✓ Insufficient number of tube wells, toilets, washrooms, drains, and dustbins.
- ✓ Women, children and older people are particularly struggling with washrooms and toilet access due to distance, privacy, and safety concerns.
- ✓ Most of the toilets, drains and dustbins need better maintenance and regular cleaning.
- ✓ Collecting water from shallow tube wells is very difficult during the winter with lower water levels.
- ✓ Community members are suffering from various water – and air-borne diseases and skin diseases because of a lack of access to WASH facilities.
- ✓ Women face issues with disposing of menstrual hygiene products and lack adequate facilities for hygienic practices.



tube-wells were damaged or broken, making water collection even harder. Some also mentioned that they needed pots to carry or store water. This situation remains same in December also, as some of the Rohingya community members mentioned –

“ Rohingya refugee communities are struggling to get water. In our block, we had one tube well given to us by the army. We used to drink water from that tube well but now it’s out of order. As the tube wells are not repaired, we have to go to other blocks to collect water which has been difficult for us. If any NGO can repair the tube well that would be very beneficial for us.”

– Man, 45, camp 3

“ We are suffering a lot due to a lack of pure water and we do not have a tube well in our block. We always have to go to another camp to collect water. There are 110 households in our block. When we go to another block to collect water, residents of that block yell at us and sometimes do not let us collect water. We wait in a queue for a long time. We informed the mahji in our block and he is trying to get a tube well for our block. Some NGOs told us that they would dig a tube well in our block. They said they would do it, but they never did anything. How can we get a tube well for our block?”

– Woman, 26, camp 1E

Feedback from the Rohingya community highlights the water access and water use issues they are facing. People have to share a limited number of tube wells, which are their primary source of drinking water. They also face a number of issues due to the quality of the water, the distance of tube wells from their residence, and the types of tube wells available. Despite many NGOs providing tube wells in different locations in the camps, Rohingya community members have reported that

the number of tube wells is insufficient to meet their basic water needs.

Another problem with tube wells is that the water level goes down during the winter period and they cannot fetch water easily as many of the tube wells are shallow. Getting water from a shallow tube well requires pumping with a lot of force, which results in fatigue and muscle pain. Some Rohingya respondents also shared concerns regarding the quality of the water. According to them, the water contains high levels of iron which they believe is linked to health problems, especially for children and older people.

“ 110 families are sharing only three tube wells that were built by a UN organisation. We drink water from one tube well but cannot use the other two tube wells as the water is not clean. There are only a few tube wells and with so many people using them the tube wells are getting damaged frequently. The water is polluted, and we are suffering from skin diseases, diarrhea and other water-borne diseases. After we get sick, we go the doctor and take medicines. Then we feel better. After we drink the same water, we fall sick over and over. If we keep falling sick by drinking that kind of water and keep taking medicine, we don’t think we will have a longer life.”

– Man, 55, camp 2E

Many respondents reported that there was a significant distance between their houses and the nearest working tube well with drinkable water. The Rohingya community say that this is a major problem and is stopping them from storing enough water. Feedback suggests that many of the tube wells in the camps are damaged and not in a useable condition. Community members have made complaints, but respondents who shared this concern said that no organisations have yet taken steps to repair their broken tube wells.

## Toilets and bathing

The number of working latrines and washrooms is also a major problem reported by Rohingya refugees. The majority of them have no problem sharing washrooms amongst themselves but say that they want a place to wash nearby that is specifically for women. Older people and women face more problems with access to private places to wash and so often take showers at night, as they are not comfortable taking showers in open areas during daylight. During winter, the cold makes this more difficult. Some of them have to use their veil or wear a burqa. Concerns over privacy, modesty and safety have led to women taking fewer showers.

Latrines also feature strongly in feedback, with people noting that they have been using many of these facilities for more than a year and there are many reports of maintenance and cleanliness issues. Rohingya respondents reported that more and more toilets have become unusable because the septic tanks are completely full. Many people living in the camps say that they are suffering from diseases such as diarrhea, cholera and dysentery. They also reported that clean toilets are very far from their houses. Children, women, and elderly people find it difficult to go to the toilet at night, and say that this is becoming a safety issue.

“ We are facing problems with the latrines and bathing cubicles. An NGO has provided latrines which are now blocked. Some of the latrines are placed at the end of the block. To go to those latrines our ladies and older women have to wear a burqa. As the latrines are located at the edge of the hills, our young girls cannot go during the day time and they have to go at night. It would be better if the latrines were provided beside our houses. We women have to take a shower at night but in winter season it is not possible to do this regularly. These are the reasons that we need latrines and bathing cubicles closer to us. It would be better for us if you inform our problems to any NGO.”

– Woman, 50, camp 1W

Many people spoke about the problem of not having proper drainage or rubbish bins. Some of them reported that the drainage systems beside their houses have become full and unusable because they are clogged by waste thrown into them. Associated bad smells are an issue as well as concerns over air-borne diseases. Some respondents said that they wanted a covered drain to contain the waste water and smell and make it safer for their children. Some were also worried about children falling into a drain while playing and getting hurt, particularly at night.

“ In our block, the drainage system is one of the main problems. In front of my house there is a drain which is totally open and all the people in the block throw rubbish in there, blocking the drain. The foul smell of the drain makes us sick with diarrhea sometimes. It will be better for us if the drain is removed from beside our house or if it is covered so the bad smell will be reduced.”

– Woman, 34, camp 1E

Another hygiene issue relates to the disposal of menstrual hygiene products. As Rohingya women live in cramped spaces in the camps with shared toilets and washrooms, they say that it has become difficult for them to clean and dry the undergarments used during menstruation. They also have no specific place to dispose of their sanitary napkins. That is why some of the women of the camp say they face various types of dermatological issues and other diseases.

“ In Burma, when we had our periods we didn't have any problem because we used to wash our undergarments and reuse them. But in Bangladesh we are facing problems, because we do not have short pants or undergarments to wear. The houses are very close to one another here, so we are unable to wash our undergarments or bury the dirty ones. When we came from Burma, we received one bucket of sanitary items provided by the army which we have now finished.”

– Woman, 34, camp 1E

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](mailto:info@cxbfeedback.org)