

People looking for alternate sources of water

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Concerns about cooking fuel

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## Reduction in tube wells is leading people to find other ways of meeting their water needs

Source: This analysis is based on community feedback collected by IOM and ACF from camps 1E, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8W, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 24 (N=1543) from July to December 2018. Focus group discussions were conducted in camp 24 on 20 January to explore the issues in more depth.

Access to water has become one of the most pressing concerns among the Rohingya community in Bangladesh. A spike in complaints about the distance to the nearest water source has been notable: feedback about this topic made up 77% of all water-related feedback received in the month of December 2018 – much higher than in previous months.

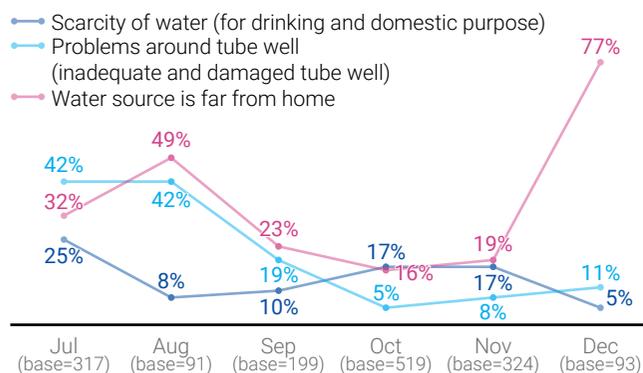


Figure 1: Water related concerns since July (N=1543)

Focus group participants explained that when they are unable to collect water from tube wells, they go to the nearest lake or natural spring to collect water – so a reduction in the availability of tube wells may explain the sudden increase of feedback about increased distances needed to collect water. Qualitative analysis suggests that previously accessible tube well water sources may indeed have become unavailable recently, for two key reasons:

### Increasing resistance from the host community to share water sources

Many Rohingya people use tube wells which are shared with host communities and report that they are facing more problems from the host community than before. In some places, the host community is preventing Rohingya people from using their tube wells by removing key parts of the pumping machinery, while in other places Rohingya people report being shouted at when they try to collect water.

### Reduction of times when water is available

Rohingya people said that after the original installation of water sources, the pumps were opened twice a day for 2-3 hours. But from December, this has been reduced to once a day for 1-1.5 hours. People said that this is not enough time for everyone to collect enough water to meet their families' needs (drinking, cooking, washing clothes, cleaning themselves and water for the toilet). People also said that they have to wait in a long queue and that it sometimes takes three hours of their day to travel, queue and collect water. If the water tank is not full, and the water pressure is not high enough, it can take even more time to fill the containers. People also explained that they could not store much water due to a lack of buckets, *kolsi* (water storage containers) and bowls. They often use the same containers for the collection and storage of water.

“Women suffer a lot when there is no male member of the family to collect water and they don't have enough containers to store water.”

– Woman, 18

# WHAT MATTERS?

Humanitarian Feedback Bulletin on Rohingya Response

Issue 20 × Sunday, March 03, 2019

The increased reliance on lakes and natural springs may also be resulting in a higher risk of water-borne diseases and, for some families, also results in increased costs. Female participants mentioned that, if men are not available in the house to collect water, they pay other people, often children, to bring water from the lake.

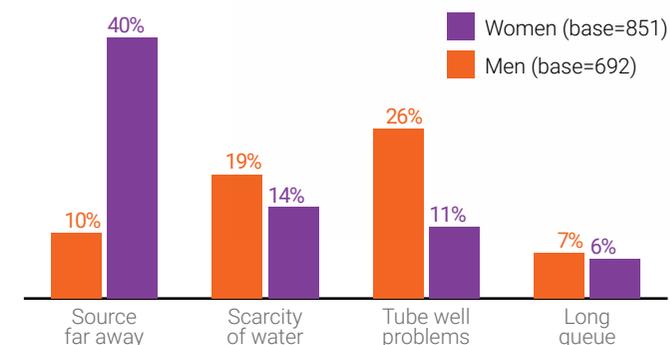


Figure 2: Water-related complaints between men and women

While concerns about water are more frequently raised by women, both men and women are worried about water. However, the water-related issues raised differ quite significantly between men and women. As the graph here shows, 40% of water-related feedback from women was about the distance from home to the water source – much higher than for men. This perhaps suggests a difference in perception of what an acceptable distance is. Given that most women would feel the need to wear a burqa to collect water outside of their home, and the likelihood of women having to either leave children at home or bring them with them on the journey, the distance to water is perhaps a more important consideration for women than men, as seen in the breakdown of feedback on this issue.

# Cooking fuel remains a primary concern, despite gas cylinder distribution

Concerns related to cooking, particularly challenges collecting firewood, have been a priority for the Rohingya community since arriving in the camps. In August 2018, agencies started distributing gas cylinders to help combat this issue, and some agencies have also been providing firewood as part of relief distributions.

However, despite these initiatives, the lack of firewood remains a key concern for the Rohingya community. The proportion of listener groups raising this issue is growing, with the highest ever proportion of listener groups (22%) raising firewood as an issue in January 2019 (see graph below). Focus group participants emphasised they have also discussed their struggle to get firewood with NGOs at various forums. Feedback collected through community correspondents also indicates a number of concerns amongst the Rohingya community related to fuel sources used for their daily cooking needs.

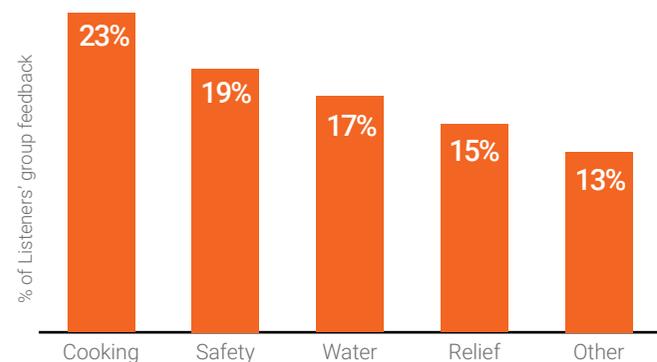


Figure 1: Major concerns among Rohingya community, Oct 2018 to Jan 2019 (N=1308)

Current concerns on fuel access and use relate to:

- Insufficient firewood
- Tension with the host community when collecting firewood from the hills
- Internal conflict among the Rohingya over excessive smoke produced when cooking with wood
- Issues with getting gas cylinders refilled

Source: Feedback from 1,308 listener group meetings conducted by IOM and ACF from October 2018 to January 2019, with a total of approximately 27,000 participants. This feedback was collected from camps 1E, 2, 3, 9, 10, 14, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 25. Feedback was also collected between January 5 and January 17 by 20 community correspondents and one feedback manager using the KoBo Collect app in camps 1E, 1W, 2E, 2W, 3, 4 and 4-extension. In total, 415 interactions have been analysed to highlight the significant concerns and questions of the Rohingya community of which 7% related to fuel issues. In addition, focus group discussions were conducted in camp 23 to help better understand the reasons behind these concerns.

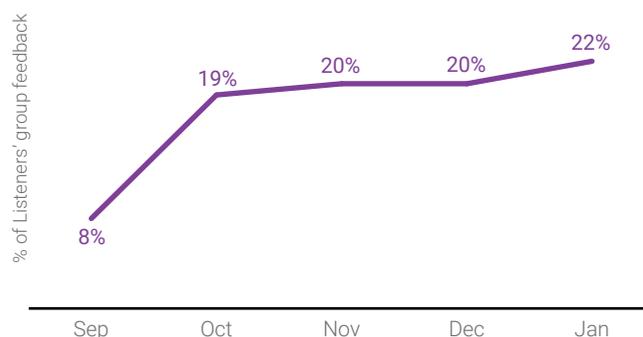


Figure 2: Complaints about lack of firewood raised in listener groups

The vast majority of feedback related to cooking is about difficulties collecting firewood: very little feedback is about the need for gas stoves or gas cylinders. This suggests that, even in blocks where stoves and cylinders have been distributed, there are either gaps in provision, or a perception amongst the community that provision is not sufficient for their needs.

Households that receive gas are ineligible for wood distributions, meaning that a household that is unable to get a gas refill in sufficient time will resort to foraging for firewood and other flammable materials, as before. However, those without a stove at all who are still receiving distributions of firewood say that the wood they are provided with is completely finished in 7-10 days, leaving them to find alternative ways to get wood or other fuels for the rest of the month.

“ From the very beginning, we were concerned about our cooking. For cooking we used to collect firewood but now this is not available. And no-one provides firewood as relief so our children collect leaves and plastics which we use for cooking. But these create so much smoke and we cannot cook properly. We have complained about this issue so many times”

– Woman, 25, Shamlapur

“ We get a bag of firewood for 1 to 4 persons in a month but we are only able to use them for five to ten days...we have to buy extra firewood for cooking.”

– Man, 36, camp 2E

Selling or bartering relief products such as lentils and oil to get firewood is a common occurrence. A bundle of firewood costs around BDT 150 and will be enough for a family of five or six for two to three days. For female-headed families where there are no men able to collect firewood, buying is their only option. To afford it they have to sell some of their relief goods, often oil or lentils. Sometimes they use dry leaves as an alternative fuel.

People also reported travelling to distant hills to collect firewood. Men usually go to the hills to collect firewood, sometimes joined by women and children over 10 years old. It is risky because it often leads to resource conflicts with the host community and local people are likely to shout verbal abuse if they catch Rohingya people collecting wood in their area. Collecting firewood is also highly discouraged by the Bangladesh government for environmental reasons, and refugees say that officials from the government's forest department will seize cutting tools and firewood if they are caught. To avoid these kinds of situations, people report usually traveling in groups of ten or fifteen people.

“ We move in groups while going to the mountains to collect firewood because we will be able to help each other should there be any trouble.”

– Man, 27, Shamlapur

Beyond the difficulties and dangers of collecting fuel, refugees say that smoke created by cooking with wood has significant negative respiratory impacts and also creates friction in the community as it quickly spreads throughout the tightly packed houses of a block.

## Gas stoves are helping to solve the problem – but the community have concerns about these, too

To address some of the environmental and health concerns linked to wood burning, gas cylinders have been distributed throughout the majority of the camps starting in the first half of 2018. However, many community members who received gas cylinders describe inconsistent refilling schedules and confusion over the gas token system that leaves them without the fuel necessary to cook their food.

Some Rohingya people report that they were never given gas cylinders to cook with and have continued to rely on wood distributions and foraging for fuel sources to cook all of their meals, throughout their stay in Bangladesh.

“ It is a big problem for us that we have not been getting firewood for about 3 months. The firewood distributors told our community that our distribution point had been changed and that we would be able to collect our firewood from a new site. We went there and some of the families were provided with gas stoves, but five families from our block were missing from the list. We have been cooking by purchasing the firewood with our own money and we are not sure why we are not being provided with firewood. Aren't we Rohingya? Now all the families have been given gas stoves but the five families still have no stove provided.”

– Woman, 31, camp 1E

The majority of focus group discussion participants had received gas stoves and cylinders and understood that they would get a refill after a certain period of time, depending on the size of their family. Female participants who had recently received gas stoves were, however, concerned about what would happen if the gas ran out before they got a refill.

Wider feedback related to the gas distribution system reinforces that there is significant confusion over the process for cylinder refilling. Inconsistent receipt of refills at the block level and confusion on where to get the tokens for gas has negative implications on food preparation and consumption activities.

“ In our block, an NGO distributed gas stoves for about six months. Those who have a family of seven have had their gas cylinder changed eight times, but mine has not been changed once. During the gas cylinder token distribution, when I asked them for a token, they told me that I was not on their list so I could not have a token. After then, I contacted the office and I was told that I would be provided with a token the next time. Now, a different organisation has taken over the distribution. People from the new organisation came to distribute gas tokens but I was still not given any. When I asked the token distributors, they told me I should meet with their boss. When I went to the office, he was not available....”

– Man, 35, camp 4

The fact that complaints regarding lack of firewood remain prominent, and even appear to be increasing, despite the roll-out of LPG stoves and cylinders, could indicate:

- 🔥 Worries about the amount of gas being distributed; and a perception within the community that gas is not being distributed in sufficient quantities to meet all of the household's requirements.
- 🔥 Lack of awareness about LPG and lack of understanding about how to use the LPG systems efficiently.

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)

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