GROUND TRUTH SOLUTIONS

January 2019

Bulletin • Host community
Needs and outlook

Summary findings

Results in %

Are you aware of activities and support for locals led by aid providers in your area?

N=446

Do you regularly come into contact with aid providers in your area?

N=446

Do aid providers treat you with respect?*

N=130 Mean: 4.2

Do you feel aid providers take your opinion into account when providing services and support?**

N=239 Mean: 3.1

Do locals have employment opportunities in your area?

N=443

Are you and your immediate family able to make a living by working in the local economy?

N=441 Mean: 3.3

Do you feel safe in your place of residence?

N=451 Mean: 3.9

Do you feel safe in your day-to-day life?

N=451 Mean: 3.8

This thematic bulletin on needs and outlook presents findings and recommendations based on Ground Truth Solutions' (GTS) surveys conducted with 451 local people in Bangladesh. The survey, carried out in late 2018, was administered in the Ukhia and Teknaf subdistricts and is the first round of data collection to cover the opinions of the host community. GTS has already carried out two rounds of data collection and reporting covering Rohingya community perceptions. The goal is to use the views of affected people and the host community to inform humanitarian response and adjust programming accordingly. GTS will continue to track how these perceptions evolve over time, with the next survey round scheduled for spring 2019.

GTS has published a separate bulletin on social cohesion, which covers findings from both the Rohingya and host communities.

Binary questions

No Yes

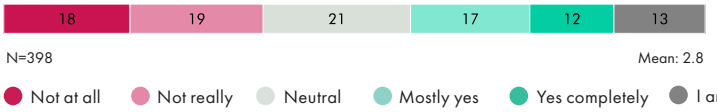
Likert scale questions

Not at all Not really Neutral Mostly yes Yes completely

*This question was only asked to those who said they come into regular contact with aid providers

**This question was only asked to those who said have received services/support from humanitarian or governmental agencies in the past 12 months

Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant?



N=398 Mean: 2.8

Not at all · Not really · Neutral · Mostly yes · Yes completely · I am already self-reliant

Do you generally feel optimistic about your future?

N=441 Mean: 3.4

Not at all · Not really · Neutral · Mostly yes · Yes completely

Key takeaways

The majority of locals living near Rohingya communities feel safe, although they feel slightly less safe in their homes than in their day-to-day lives in the area. There is no notable difference in how safe host communities feel compared to Rohingya. Several mentioned, however, that their homes are in need of repairs and this leaves them vulnerable to theft. While 9% of male respondents feel unsafe in their day-to-day lives – walking around their area, travelling to shops, etc – double the percentage of female respondents (18%) report feeling unsafe.

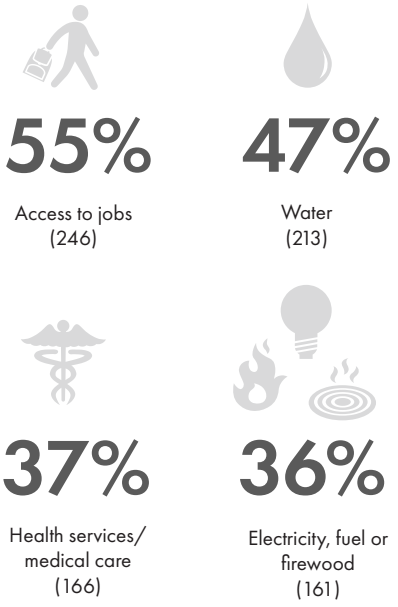
Fifty-nine percent of local respondents are aware of activities and support for Bangladeshis led by aid providers and humanitarian organisations in their area. Younger respondents are slightly more informed, with 66% of those between 18–30 years responding that they are aware of activities and support in their area. While 63% of male respondents say they know about activities and support available to locals, women feel slightly less informed, with 56% responding affirmatively. Only 29% of locals who receive support feel it will help them achieve self-reliance, compared to 57% of Rohingya.

Although awareness of activities and support is relatively high, only 29% of respondents report regularly coming into contact with aid providers. Of those who do, similarly to the Rohingya surveyed, the vast majority feel treated with respect by aid providers. However, there are mixed feelings as to whether aid providers take the opinions of locals into account when providing services and support. In fact, whereas 68% of Rohingya feel aid providers listen to them, only 42% of locals agree. Moreover, focus group participants spoke of the extensive negative impacts of NGOs and UN agencies on their lives, including a significant increase in road traffic and congestion which hampers locals' mobility, public spaces being occupied by humanitarian vehicles, as well as increases in the price of goods and rent. Some also mentioned that NGO staff come to speak to them but do not actually offer help.

Focus group discussions also revealed a general mistrust of local government representatives. **Most feel that elected officials do not represent their needs, nor do they serve people equally.** Some mentioned that officials come during an election and help only those with whom they have good relations. Findings from the survey point to similar sentiments, with a few respondents raising the issue that when assistance is provided through local representatives in a position of power, they often distribute the support based on favouritism, such as to relatives or friends. Despite concerns around fairness, most focus group participants and survey respondents expressed a preference for making any complaints about the support they receive through local government representatives at the ward-level, citing that they are largely unaware how to communicate directly with humanitarian agencies.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents think locals have employment opportunities in the area. However, **only 49% say they and their immediate family are able to make a living working in the local economy** and very few report receiving cash assistance. Focus group respondents mentioned that farmland is being repurposed to accommodate Rohingya communities, which has negatively impacted their livelihoods. Establishing the camps has also depleted over two thousand hectares of forest and cropland, with daily firewood collection of about 700 tons increasing the environmental impact, as well as siltation and contamination of agricultural land near the camps from faecal matter.[1] Survey respondents also said that Rohingya unofficially working in the local

Resources/services in need of improvement n=451



Only the top four responses are shown. Percentages do not total 100 because respondents could choose multiple options – the number of times an option was chosen is displayed in parenthesis.

> The elected chairperson gets the aid and keeps some of it for himself

How would you prefer to make any complaints you have? n=414

Only the top six responses are shown.

1 Inter Sector Coordination Group, "Support to Bangladeshi Host Communities and Institutions in the Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis" (May 2018)

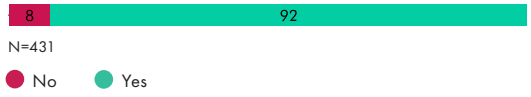
economy have driven daily wages down. The latest issue of What Matters? also details concerns among the host community that Rohingya are offering their services – as shopkeepers, carpenters, construction workers and Tom Tom drivers – at a fraction of what it would cost to employ a local.[2] As mentioned in the Social cohesion bulletin, the lack of clarity about what will happen with Rohingya and when is causing tensions between the two communities.

Despite the theoretical access to employment mentioned above, the **majority of locals surveyed still named access to jobs as needing the most attention, along with improvements to water and health services/medical care in the area**. Education is accessible, with 92% of parents reporting being able to send their children to education classes, 77% of whom express satisfaction with the education provided. Local respondents feel that those in their communities who are particularly poor, as well as people with disabilities, are in need of more support and services. About one-third of the local population live below the poverty line and 38% are vulnerable to food insecurity.[3]

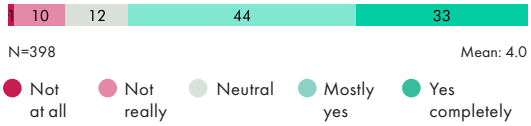
Just over half of local respondents feel optimistic about their future. This varies quite a bit based on location, with 74% of those in and around Camps 8E and 9 feeling optimistic, compared to only 38% in and around Camp 25 (Dokkin Alikhali). Somewhat unsurprisingly, outlook on the future and employment opportunities are linked. Twenty-one percent of those who think there are employment opportunities for locals feel pessimistic about their futures, compared to 49% among those who do not think there are enough jobs in the area. Respondents said that receiving cash assistance would make them more optimistic about their futures, as well as access to employment and education, expanded social services and improvements to housing and electricity.

> With the arrival of Rohingya, job opportunities have decreased and unemployment has increased. We will be hopeful about the future if unemployed locals are provided with job opportunities

Do you send your children to any education classes?



Are you satisfied with the education provided to your children?



Recommendations

- The 2019 Joint Response Plan explicitly refers to improving social cohesion. As the Social cohesion bulletin outlines, **a major route to improved relations is to extend programming among host communities**. In particular, there is an express demand for more livelihood programming, which would offset the perceived negative impact of having Rohingya in their community and help a vulnerable and needy population.
- There is a lack of direct and clear communication between humanitarian agencies and host communities. More could be done to **ensure host communities are aware of available aid and services, and how they can engage with providers directly**. As mentioned in the Social cohesion bulletin, this communication should also address issues around repatriation, where a lack of information is contributing to deteriorating inter-community relations. Better direct communication with and from humanitarian agencies could also help prevent the reported abuse of power among local government elites.
- Both recommendations above - additional support and better communication - should target women and girls, who traditionally suffer most in poor communities, and who seem to feel less informed about the work of humanitarian organisations.
- Given the interplay between humanitarian and development mandates when it comes to serving the local community, **every attempt should be made to work alongside, and in support of, development agencies addressing similar issues**. This would also go some way to ensure a smooth transition as and when humanitarian agencies leave the region.
- While there was an overwhelming sense that humanitarian organisations treat locals with respect, many reported negative consequences of having such a dense international presence in the area. **Agencies should continue to consider their impact on the local environment and, where possible, mitigate some of the pressures they place on the local community**.

> We will be more hopeful about the future if water, food, medical care, social services, latrines, etc. are provided

> If assistance or money is sent through any influential person, they give them to their own relatives. They do not give anything to the poor

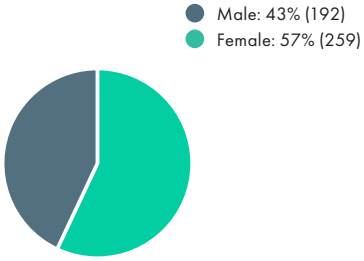
2 BBC Media Action, Internews and Translators without Borders, "What Matters?" (Issue 17, January 2019)

3 Inter Sector Coordination Group, "Support to Bangladesh Host Communities and Institutions in the Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis" (May 2018)

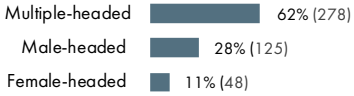
Demographics

451 host community respondents

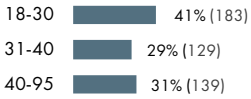
Gender



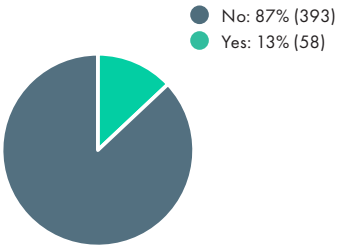
Head of household



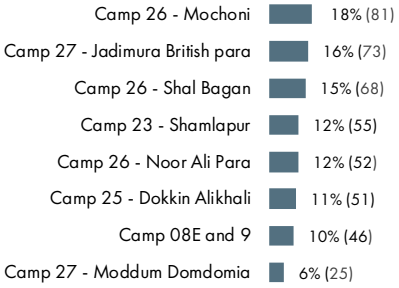
Age (years)



Respondents with a disability



Location



Authors

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Kai Hopkins - Senior Programme Manager

The majority of questions are closed and use a 1-5 Likert scale to quantify answers. All data were analysed according to demographic variables and disaggregated by gender, age, location, date of arrival in camps, disability and gender of the head of household. Where considerable, these differences are mentioned in the text. The surveys were conducted by trained IOM Needs and Population Monitoring enumerators who speak Bengali and Chittagong, and who received Rohingya language training from Translators without Borders. Data was collected using a random sampling strategy between 24–31 October. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) have partnered with GTS to capture host communities' perceptions and to work towards strengthening local capacities. The survey data was supplemented by 12 focus group discussions with members of the host community, led by BDRCS, and key Informant interviews among humanitarian agencies led by GTS.

Ground Truth Solutions is an international non-governmental organisation that provides the humanitarian sector with tools to systematically listen, learn, and act on the views of affected people. Our goal is to make the perceptions of affected people the touchstone and driver of humanitarian effectiveness.

For more information about GTS surveys in Bangladesh, please contact Kai Hopkins (kai@groundtruthsolutions.org) or Rebecca Hetzer (rebecca@groundtruthsolutions.org).

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