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RAPID EDUCATION & RISK ANALYSIS

COX'S BAZAR

October 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

USAID/Bangladesh commissioned a Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA) to understand the impact of the Rohingya influx on pre-primary through secondary education in Bangladeshi schools in Cox's Bazar. The specific objectives of the RERA were to (i) gain a broader understanding of the risks, needs, assets, and capacities of the education sector in Cox's Bazar, and (ii) inform education programming to support Bangladeshis in Cox's Bazar, particularly host and impacted communities.

METHODOLOGY

A RERA is a “good enough” qualitative situation analysis that examines the education sector, the learners, and the community as a dynamic system of multiple contextual risks and assets. The RERA in Cox's Bazar was conducted in October 2018 and focused on the situation of Bangladeshis in a limited, purposive primary data sample of schools in 32 communities in 6 upazilas (sub-districts) across Cox's Bazar: Ukhiya, Teknaf, Ramu, Cox's Bazar Sadar, Maheshkhali, and Pekua. The RERA reached 900 respondents through 141 focus group discussions and 33 key informant interviews.

CONTEXT

The rapid influx of more than 727,000¹ Rohingya people from Myanmar since August 2017 presented a shock to the communities in Cox's Bazar, a diverse district already under significant stress. Cox's Bazar is one of Bangladesh's poorest and least disaster-resilient districts. Prior to the Rohingya influx, education outcomes in Cox's Bazar were already among the lowest in the country. Schools across the district had a history of under-enrollment and poor retention, and the majority of heads of household had not received any education. Throughout Cox's Bazar, these schools are feeling the impacts of the Rohingya influx.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Overall conclusion: The latest Rohingya influx has deepened the plight of already struggling school communities throughout Cox's Bazar district.

EDUCATION

School communities have demonstrated abundant humanitarian goodwill toward the arriving Rohingya refugees.

- Communities still express empathy for and solidarity with the Rohingya people, drawing on their shared religious and cultural foundations.
- In the aftermath of the influx, schools provided substantial space and land as temporary shelters for the Rohingya people.

The quality of education in Cox's Bazar is declining.

- Education quality was weak before and has been further weakened by increased student-teacher ratios and reduced teaching time.
- Schools are losing teachers to new employment opportunities with the humanitarian organizations assisting with the Rohingya influx, and as a result there is a teacher shortage.

The influx has impacted access to education, especially for female students.

- Increased traffic, travel time, and the cost of travel negatively impact access to school.
- Increased road traffic is especially intimidating to girls who face harassment and intimidation.
- Early marriage may be increasing as parents are less able to send their daughters to secondary school due to increases in poverty.
- An increased police presence can compromise females' sense of safety in impacted schools.

Recent gains in school retention are now being reversed.

- Primary and secondary school enrollment rates are slipping.
- Dropout rates are increasing due to logistical challenges, financial barriers, opportunities for employment with humanitarian organizations, and general insecurity.

The influx disproportionately impacted the poor and the most marginalized.

- Rising costs of commodities and transportation impacted the affordability and opportunity cost of education.
- More students are coming to school hungry as families are cutting back on food budgets and reducing their overall caloric intake.
- Students with disabilities may have reduced teacher attention.

CONTEXTUAL RISKS

The influx is exacerbating the district's pre-existing contextual risks.

- Respondents perceive rising crime and drug trafficking.
- The influx has accelerated environmental degradation, such as through deforestation, and increased exposure to mudslides and erosion.
- If there were a disaster, communities appear under-prepared to meet both their own needs and the needs of the Rohingya community in school shelters.

School communities express growing frustration over the impact of the Rohingya influx.

- Communities express enormous humanitarian goodwill and empathy for the plight of the Rohingya people, but their generosity is repeatedly tested as they see their communities experience ongoing degradation to their quality of life.
- Communities perceive the humanitarian focus on the Rohingya as unfairly overlooking them and the costs of the influx they must bear.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

School communities are insufficiently resilient to the range of increasing risks.

- School infrastructure that was already inadequate and has been further strained by the influx and is in need of repairs. Schools double as cyclone shelters, which can result in schooling being interrupted during disasters.
- School preparedness and disaster risk-reduction efforts are insufficient and were developed for the pre-influx reality.
- Respondents shared that there is uneven collaboration between the schools, parents, School Management Committees, and Disaster Management Committees.
- Intra- and inter-community cohesion and goodwill are assets to build on, but insights from the sample show that they are at risk of breaking down if not deliberately bolstered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

STUDENT ACCESS AND LEARNING

- Ensure that the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) is fully implemented in Cox's Bazar district, particularly as it relates to school quality and education during emergencies.
- Target programming to improve access to and quality of education, especially for girls, the poor, children with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.
- Support school feeding programs to counteract the increased food insecurity in the district.
- Expand cash stipend programs for economically vulnerable primary and secondary students and students with disabilities, to offset the economic incentives to drop out of school to help their families financially.
- Improve schools' infrastructure, including washroom facilities and classrooms.
- Work with out-of-school and at-risk populations to prevent dropout and provide alternate pathways to certified learning.

- Partner with local organizations and schools to develop public awareness campaigns to reduce harassment and intimidation of girls and to establish safe routes to and from school.
- Support governmental partners in enhancing local police officers' use of community-based approaches, to improve confidence and trust between police and school communities.

TEACHERS

- Advocate for teacher placements in government schools, and consider measures to create incentives for teachers to live and work in remote or more challenging schools.
- Provide cash assistance and food bonuses for economically vulnerable para-teachers, and supplement assistance programs for government teachers, as necessary.
- Supplement teacher recruitment in primary and secondary schools, particularly for early-grade para-teachers who speak Chittagonian.
- Provide teacher training on the delivery of basic skills instruction, social-emotional learning, social cohesion, and student-led disaster-risk reduction.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- Create resilience profiles of school communities across the district.
- Conduct assessments with school communities to identify back-up learning environments and shelters in the case of a natural disaster.
- Support the rehabilitation and/or construction of schools serving as shelters in the highest-risk communities, including measures to ensure that facilities are available and accessible for persons with disabilities, girls, and women.
- Carry out a review of school-based participatory disaster risk-reduction guidance and methodologies.
- Provide small grants for community-based and local organizations to enhance bottom-up school community collaboration and planning within an overall framework of school community resilience, including ways to improve the functioning of School Management Committees.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

- To minimize the risk of exacerbating tension and grievances in Cox's Bazar district, development and humanitarian partners should carry out conflict sensitivity self-assessments and impact assessments to gauge the extent to which staff understand conflict sensitivity, the conflict sensitivity of their interventions, and to identify options for corrective action.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The *Rapid Education and Risk Analysis: Cox's Bazar* report represents a broad and intensive collaboration between USAID/Bangladesh, USAID/Washington, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, and selected school communities in Cox's Bazar district.

Several people played key roles in the RERA exercise and made important contributions to this report.

USAID/Bangladesh Mission Director Derrick Brown and Deputy Mission Director Zeinah Salahi offered Mission-wide leadership to the exercise. Kate Maloney, Tarek Ahmed, and Muhammad Moinuddin at USAID/Bangladesh provided strategic direction and guidance to all phases of the RERA, from conceptualization and design to facilitating outreach to partners, participating in fieldwork, and contributing substantive comments to the final report. Ashley Henderson and Rebecca Rhodes at USAID/Washington joined the RERA in the field and offered substantive guidance and input to the entire exercise. Alauddin Bhuiyan at the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education served as a crucial liaison at the ministry, offering guidance and joining data collection in the field. Planning, recruitment, and budgetary guidance and support were carried out by Corrie Sutherland at Dexis Consulting Group.

Finally, the process benefited from the contributions of a group of advisors—James Jennings, Colette Chabbott, and Gwendolyn Heaner—who provided ongoing support on data collection and analysis and offered substantive input to the RERA methodology, planning, and final report.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid influx of more than 727,000 Rohingya people from Myanmar since August 2017 has dramatically impacted the surrounding communities in Cox’s Bazar, including in the delivery of and access to education. Prior to the influx, primary education outcomes in Cox’s Bazar were among the lowest nationwide. There are indications that the Rohingya influx has brought additional stress to the Bangladeshi school communities in Cox’s Bazar.

Cox’s Bazar comprises eight upazilas (sub-districts), but to date donor support to Bangladeshis in response to the Rohingya crisis has focused solely on the two upazilas closest to the camps, Teknaf and Ukhiya, which have most immediately experienced the influx. USAID/Bangladesh, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, and international partners have highlighted the urgent need for more information on the situation of schools in the communities hosting Rohingya refugees (“host communities”) in Teknaf and Ukhiya, *as well as* the other upazilas (“impacted communities”) in Cox’s Bazar.

USAID/Bangladesh commissioned a Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA)² to provide an understanding of the impact of the Rohingya influx on pre-primary through secondary education in Bangladeshi schools in Cox’s Bazar. The RERA focused exclusively on the education of Bangladeshis in a sample of upazilas across Cox’s Bazar. The RERA had two specific objectives:

1. Gain a broader understanding of the risks, needs, assets, and capacities of the education sector in Cox’s Bazar; and
2. Inform education programming to support Bangladeshis in Cox’s Bazar.

RAPID EDUCATION AND RISK ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Six main research questions guided the RERA:

- What is the impact of the Rohingya influx on government and non-government schooling for Bangladeshi students in Cox's Bazar at the pre-primary, primary, secondary, and technical-vocational levels?
- What is the status of education access, the learning environment, teaching and learning, teachers and other education personnel, education policy, and sector coordination in Cox's Bazar?
- What is the context for key cross-cutting issues, including gender, inclusive education for children with disabilities, and student well-being (including social-emotional learning)?
- What are the main contextual risks in Cox's Bazar?
- What is the interaction between the contextual risks and the education sector?
- What resilience factors are in place that influence access to and the safety of quality education? How can these factors be strengthened?

These research questions provided a framework within which more specific questions were designed for use in focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The RERA Team prioritized and adapted questions from the RERA Toolkit, based on the desk review's determination of the main contextual risks in Cox's Bazar. The questions were then refined in consultation with USAID, translated to Bangla and Chittagonian, tested with data collectors and translators, back-translated, and piloted in focus group discussions in Cox's Bazar.

TIMEFRAME

Planning for the RERA ran from September 13 to October 8, 2018. Primary data collection fieldwork was conducted on October 10–16, with follow-up key informant interviews and focus group discussions held through October 31. Inception briefings were held with the USAID Mission, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, development partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society representatives on October 7 and 8, and end-of-fieldwork validation consultations on preliminary results were conducted with the same stakeholders on October 17 and 18. Data analysis, data synthesis, and final report writing were carried out from October 17 to December 31.

RERA TEAM

The RERA Team represented a unique collaboration between USAID/Bangladesh, USAID/Washington, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, and international and local partners. The core members of the RERA Team included James Rogan (Team Leader), Ahsan Habib (Senior Education Specialist), Shahriar Shafiq (Education Specialist), Nurul Bagmer (Consultant), and Marie Pace (Conflict Specialist). Additional RERA Team participants were Kate Maloney (Education Team Leader, USAID/Bangladesh),

Tarek Ahmed (Education Team, USAID/Bangladesh), Alauddin Bhuiyan (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education), Ashley Henderson (Education Specialist, USAID/Washington), and Rebecca Rhodes (Team Lead, Reading and Literacy Team, USAID/Washington).

Corrie Sutherland, Senior Project Associate at Dexis Consulting Group, provided procurement, recruitment, contracting, and financial services for the RERA through Dexis’s Education Support Initiative. Exterion LLC was contracted to provide team leadership for the RERA.

A group of advisors provided strategic and expert review and input into the RERA methodology and final report: James Jennings, Colette Chabbott, and Gwendolyn Heaner. Two advisors worked remotely; one was based in Bangladesh.

The Institute of Social Business provided the following data collection and translation specialists: Abdullah al Mansur, Achia Islam Shaba, Amena Momtahena, Samia Nasir, Md. Anamul Hoque, AKM Mahfooz ul Huq, Shafiullah Kawsar, Ridwan Ripon, Md. Elahi Rawshan, Amit Hasan, M.A. Hannan, Trisha Chakma, Sajeda Yasmin, Salahuddin Pappu, Tribeni Chakma, Fatema Khanon Baby, Hosainur Mamun, Shahadat Kabir, Md. Akbar Ali, Nurul Alam, Sabuj Hosen, Jannatul Ferdous, Didar Hossain, and Nasrin Jahan Mukta.

Data entry services were provided by Saleh Ahmed Efad, Tasfia Noor, Kausar Ahmed Opu, Alpona Shirin, Shakhaoat Hossain Sohagh, Salman Siddique, and Jotirmoy Bose Joy, on behalf of Bengal Creative Media, Ltd.

FIELDWORK PLANNING

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The RERA followed a qualitative data collection approach, using the methods detailed in Table 1.

TABLE 1: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

TOOL/ METHOD	DESCRIPTION	RESPONDENTS/SOURCES
Key Informant Interview	Key informant interviews provide an overview of the situation and in-depth expertise. Purposive sampling was used to reach respondents who hold particular expertise and who could offer divergent and diverse views. Key informant interviews also allowed snowballing to identify additional informants, background documents, and verification of findings from focus group discussions. Open-ended discussion questions were developed for the interviews, but the format also allowed flexibility for in-depth probing.	Head teachers, district education officials, Government of Bangladesh officials, international and local NGOs, international organizations, experts
Focus Group Discussion	Open-ended discussion questions were developed for each respondent type (students, parents and community members, teachers), and some questions were asked of all respondent types. During the focus group discussions, the	Teachers, students, community members, parents, out-of-school youth

data collection team coded responses mentioned by the group, based on predetermined response types, and took detailed notes (see LIMITATIONS, below).

This coding served two purposes: (1) to encourage the data collection team to probe for different types of responses within a group, and (2) once the data were cleaned, to enable numerical analysis (not to be confused with quantitative analysis, given the method of collection, which was not representative or close-ended) of the data to compare across communities, genders, group types, etc.

Desk Review

Desk review refers to the identification and analysis of secondary sources to adapt the RERA design and methodology to the RERA purpose and local context. This includes identifying the primary data collection sites, prioritizing and adjusting the main research questions and specific research questions for focus group discussions and key informant interviews, and drafting key sections of the final report. Desk review also helps identify key informants and triangulates primary data collection responses.

Existing resilience analyses, disaster assessments, situation assessments, conflict analyses, humanitarian needs assessments, response plans, development plans, country analytical reports, government reports and data, disaster data, program and project reports, journal articles

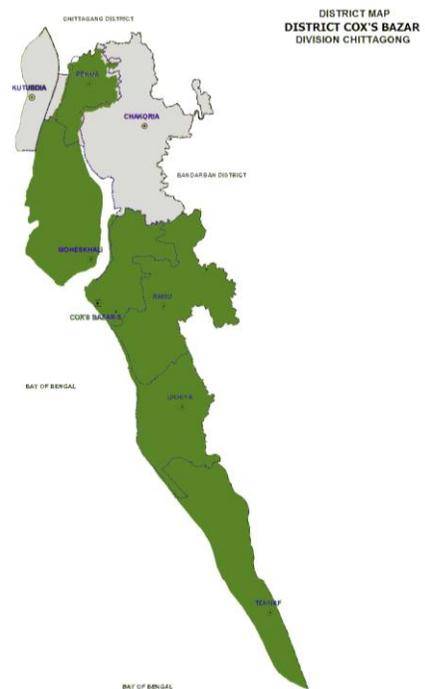
SAMPLE SITE SELECTION

The process of selecting primary data collection sites occurred in three steps. First, the RERA Team secured permission and support from the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to carry out data collection in schools in Cox’s Bazar. Second, the RERA Team, in consultation with USAID/Bangladesh, determined the upazilas for primary data collection, based on a desk review of contextual risk factors and educational outcomes, with the goal of offering a diverse, district-wide perspective. Third, the RERA Team identified school communities at the union level that would offer broad insights into each upazila and the situation of host and impacted school communities. This step involved advance site visits by members of the RERA Team and collaboration and consultation with national and district education officials. Sites within each union where different school types were located were ultimately chosen.

SITE LOCATIONS AND TYPES

Data collection took place across the Cox’s Bazar district. Sites were selected in 32 communities in Ukhiya, Teknaf, Ramu, Cox’s Bazar Sadar, Maheshkhali, and Pekua. Sites were located in two unions in Ukhiya, Teknaf, and Cox’s Bazar Sadar, and in one union in Maheshkhali, Pekua, and Ramu (see Figure 1). The types of schools included multiple levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary, and technical-vocational) and different types of

FIGURE 1: RERA SAMPLE SITES
(in green)



service providers (government, non-government, and madrasah). A table laying out the school community sites, key factors informing their selection, and school types selected for primary data collection fieldwork is included in the Annex.

TABLE 2: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS CONDUCTED, BY TYPE OF LEARNING CENTER AND RESPONDENT

TYPE OF LEARNING CENTER	HEAD TEACHER (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS)	PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS (FOCUS GROUPS)	STUDENTS (FOCUS GROUPS)	TEACHERS (FOCUS GROUPS)	OTHERS (E.G., DIRECTORS) (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS)	TOTAL INTERVIEWS
Pre-primary school	2					2
Non-government primary school	1	1	2	1		5
Government primary school	8	9	19	12	1	49
Secondary school (private)	6	7	16	16		45
Madrasah school (K–12)	7	6	15	15		43
NGO (pre-primary school)					4	4
BRAC Adolescent Development Centre			4		2	6
Upazila Resource Centre			2		1	3
Technical and Vocational Education and Training system (TVET)	3	1	8	7		19
Total interviews and focus groups	27	24	66	51	8	176
Total people reached	27	144	396	312	8	881

RESPONDENT SELECTION

Key informants were selected in two steps:

- The first group of key informants were identified by the RERA Team and USAID partners to provide contextual information for the desk review. A diverse array of experts were sought to cover education, disaster risk, crime, conflict, resilience, and humanitarian action.
- Additional key informants were selected in conversations with local and international partners before and during fieldwork.

Participants for focus group discussions were identified in collaboration with school head teachers. The RERA Team guided head teachers in identifying a diverse range of students and teachers to participate in each focus group discussion. Discussions were primarily conducted in either Bangla or Chittagonian (or, in some instances, Chakma), reflecting the language used by the participants. Additional key informant interviews with government officials, international and local experts, international organizations, and NGOs were also held, off-site from school communities.

DATA COLLECTION

DATA COLLECTOR SELECTION AND TRAINING

Bangladeshi data collectors with qualitative data collection experience were contracted through a local firm to support the RERA Team. Data collectors worked as both facilitators and note-takers; they included males and females, and they spoke Bangla, Chittagonian, and/or Chakma. Many came from Cox's Bazar district.

The RERA Team organized a full-day training for local data collectors and translators in Cox's Bazar Sadar. The training covered the RERA methodology, research questions, discussion protocols, facilitation, note-taking, and ethics, and included time for pilot focus group discussions with students at a madrasah in Cox's Bazar. Importantly, the training included a session to discuss and refine the translations and objectives of the questions to be used in the focus group discussions.

DATA ENTRY

Given the timeframe of the RERA, a team of data entry specialists was contracted to enter data daily and perform quality control through feedback loops. The data entry team received notes from the data collection fieldwork teams each afternoon, translated the notes into English, and entered them into an Excel database. RERA Team members met with the data entry specialists each afternoon to receive feedback, answer questions on the quality of the notes, and address any issues that required correction or attention.

SENSITIVITY

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

Conflict sensitivity was applied to all aspects of the RERA. The RERA Team was 40% female and 50% Bangladeshi. Two RERA Team members were experienced conflict sensitivity specialists. The RERA

Team remotely conducted a conflict sensitivity self-assessment. Recruitment and deployment of fieldwork teams factored in gender, local language capabilities, identity, and place of origin. Research questions were developed and translated after iterated vetting with local experts on the RERA Team and data collectors for appropriateness and sensitivity. Daily RERA Team debriefs were conducted with data collection and data entry teams to provide constant feedback loops on methodology, approach, and any issues related to conflict sensitivity, in order to take corrective action the next day.

ETHICS

Because the RERA engages vulnerable populations and young people on topics of a sensitive nature, it must conform to the highest ethical standards. The short planning timeframe required the RERA Team to create and consult an *ad hoc* ethics review panel to offer expert feedback on the ethical adherence of the RERA methodology and the institutional review board exemption.³ The panel was composed of two preeminent “education in emergencies” scholars and practitioners with strong research ethics credentials.⁴ The RERA Team submitted its design, protocols, and responses to standard ethics questions to the panel and received feedback.

The RERA Team used a two-step verbal informed consent process. During the school community site planning process, the RERA Team explained to school head teachers the process for obtaining informed consent from parents and students. Then, as part of the introduction to each focus group discussion, the RERA Team facilitator discussed informed consent with young participants, and explained the steps taken to ensure that the process was voluntary and anonymous. The RERA Team also identified an independent school psychologist to advise on situations where a discussion or interview surfaced cases of violence or abuse.

LIMITATIONS

As a “good enough” rapid situation analysis, the RERA methodology makes deliberate trade-offs between speed and rigor. Due to its rapid nature, the RERA methodology does not allow for generalizable, representative findings, but instead provides stakeholders with a targeted snapshot of the interaction between the education sector and contextual risks. This analysis is sufficiently systematic to inform preliminary decisions about education programming, particularly in volatile and complex contexts.

The RERA uses a purposive,⁵ limited primary data sample to provide in-depth information on a targeted group. This means that the RERA Team’s selection of locations and informants was vulnerable to bias. The sample was limited to 32 school communities across six upazilas, and was therefore small enough that the data cannot be considered representative of the wider population beyond the sampled group—for instance, of an entire upazila or the entire Cox’s Bazar district.

As a qualitative exercise, the RERA’s findings cannot determine causal relationships—such as a causal relationship between the challenges and risks in the area and the learning outcomes of students.

During the primary data collection, the RERA used field-based coding for open-ended focus group discussion questions, and data collectors coded the responses in real time. However, inconsistencies and/or inaccuracies appeared across data collection teams. To mitigate this issue, the RERA Team analyzed notes for each interview and discussion, basing the final analysis on the prevalence of a type of

response during an entire interview or discussion, not only during one question. Possibly due to a translation issue, the participation of parents in focus group discussions was also more limited than anticipated.⁶

Responses to questions may have been subject to social desirability or “halo bias”—the tendency among respondents to under-report socially undesirable answers and alter their responses to approximate what they perceive as the social norm. Nearly all focus group discussions were held at schools. The extent to which student respondents shared their true opinions may have varied for questions that called on them to assess the attitudes and perceptions of their peers, teachers, or head teachers—people on whom they depend for their academic performance reviews and the provision of their education. The RERA Team also needed to exercise particular care when discussing the influx of Rohingya, as this often appeared to be a delicate topic. To mitigate these limitations, the RERA Team provided appropriate confidentiality and anonymity assurances to all respondents through an informed consent process, sought privacy where possible, and coached facilitators on data protection protocols and how to facilitate discussions on sensitive topics.

Operational access constraints due to a tropical storm prevented the RERA Team from accessing a second school community site in Maheshkhali. The RERA Team took this as an opportunity to re-deploy data collectors to a school community site in the neighboring upazila of Pekua. Across all sites, traffic and safety issues required the RERA Team to stop school community site fieldwork by 15:00.

The use of local translation during and after primary data collection may have impacted the depth and quality of the data. Primary data collection was conducted in local languages (Bangla and/or Chittagonian), recorded in Bangla, and then translated into English for entry into the RERA database.

Training for local data collectors was limited to one day. One more day would have allowed focus group simulations, testing and further refining of data collection tools, and more reflection and internalization of learning from the pilot focus group discussions. This would have surfaced further training needs among the data collection teams and allowed local teams to carry out a conflict sensitivity self-assessment.

CONTEXT: NATIONAL LEVEL

COUNTRY SNAPSHOT

Bangladesh is a unique development success story, though it also has persisting challenges. The country emerged from its war of independence in 1971 as the second-poorest country in the world, achieving lower-middle-income status in 2015. This achievement in poverty reduction is paralleled by notable gains in life expectancy, access to education, and per capita food production.^{7,8} At the same time, inequality is rising, and nearly one in three people still live in poverty, with limited access to basic social services.

These development challenges are compounded by the country's vulnerability to natural hazards. The country sits at the intersection of three major river basins, with flat deltaic topography and low elevation. These features make Bangladesh one of the highest disaster-risk countries globally.

Bangladesh is also at an important crossroads in its democratic evolution. An increase in targeted extremist attacks and government response is having negative impact on the population's ability to engage in open, democratic dialogue and political competition. The influx of over 720,000 Rohingya people from Myanmar since August 2017 has had a major impact on Cox's Bazar, one of the country's poorest, most diverse, and least resilient districts.

MAIN CONTEXTUAL RISKS IN BANGLADESH

NATURAL HAZARDS

Bangladesh's flat, low-lying topography and climatic features, combined with high population density and widespread poverty, make it highly susceptible to natural hazards, including floods, drought, salinity, cyclones, landslides, and earthquakes. While small-scale flooding in Bangladesh has been historically beneficial to agriculture, more severe flooding has displaced millions.⁹ Two-thirds of the country is less than 5 meters above sea level, and floods increasingly inundate homes, destroy farm production, close businesses, and shut down public infrastructure. Erosion leads to an annual loss of about 10,000 hectares of land and weakens natural coastal defenses and aquatic ecosystems.¹⁰ Environmental degradation has also increased the country's disaster risk.¹¹

TABLE 3: BANGLADESH MULTI-HAZARD RISK RANKING

EARTHQUAKE	FLOOD	TSUNAMI	CYCLONE	DROUGHT	HUMAN
8.7*	10	8.5	7	5.1	6.5

* 1 = low risk, 10 = high risk
Source: INFORM Index 2017.

Disasters can have devastating effects on the nation's agriculture, water supply, food resources, health, and ability to provide shelter.¹² According to the World Bank, more than 80% of the population is potentially exposed to floods, earthquakes, and drought, and more than 70% are exposed to cyclones. Cyclones and associated storm surges and floods have led to almost all the nearly 520,000 disaster

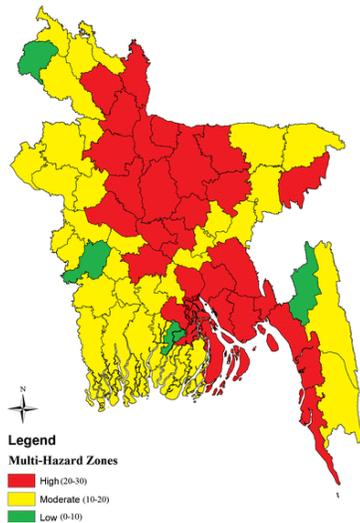
deaths recorded over the past 40 years. On average, the country experiences severe tropical cyclones every three years. Severe flooding occurs every four to five years and covers 60% of the land mass.¹³

Bangladesh is also located in a seismically active and high-risk region, positioned at the juncture of several active tectonic plate boundaries.¹⁴ High population density, compounded by rapid and unplanned urbanization, increases its vulnerability to seismic events.¹⁵ Recent research found that Bangladesh is sitting atop a previously hidden megathrust fault that could create an earthquake of a magnitude up to 9.0.¹⁶

CLIMATE CHANGE

Bangladesh ranks within the top 10 countries in the world that are most vulnerable to climate change.¹⁸ High tides in Bangladesh are increasing 10 times more rapidly than the global average. Sea surface temperatures in the shallow Bay of Bengal have significantly increased, causing the fastest recorded sea

FIGURE 2: BANGLADESH MULTI-HAZARD ZONES¹⁷



level rises on record in the world. Storms have become fiercer and more frequent, pushing water up the delta's rivers from the sea. Melting glaciers and snowpack in the Himalayas swells the rivers flowing into Bangladesh. The intruding sea has contaminated groundwater, which supplies drinking water for coastal regions, also critically degrading farmland and forests. Riverbank erosion displaces between 50,000 and 200,000 people annually, with over 4 million island "char dwellers" at immediate risk.¹⁹

Climate change is beginning to drive massive social change, as millions of people migrate from affected areas. This displacement and migration will further

overstretch inadequate infrastructure, services, and governance systems. In the future, Bangladesh may grapple with the displacement of as much as 20% of the population due to rising sea levels.²⁰ Such scenarios increase the risk of a collapse in living standards, fissures in social cohesion, and increases in social disorder.²¹

ARSENIC CONTAMINATION

Arsenic contamination is a naturally occurring endemic hazard in Bangladesh. Soils contain high levels of arsenic, and the use of groundwater for irrigation and drinking puts large numbers of the population at serious risk of chronic illness.²² Arsenic is found in water from hand-pumped, mostly shallow, tube wells throughout rural Bangladesh.²³

INFECTIOUS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Bangladesh experiences repeated spread of communicable diseases, including cholera, malaria, and dengue fever. The prevalence of disease is intensified by recurrent flooding, which enhances the

likelihood of disease transmission. Infectious and communicable diseases peak during flood incidents. The sanitation infrastructure is inadequate for the population; nearly 45% of Bangladeshis do not have access to safe drinking water, thus enhancing the risk of disease transmission.²⁴

CRIME

Bangladesh's geography makes it a prime location for international trafficking in arms, humans, and other goods, including drugs.²⁵ There is evidence of low levels of weapons proliferation in the country, with links to transnational flows of illicit trade.²⁶ Human trafficking is a serious problem, particularly for border areas, where men, women, and children are lured into high-risk migrant labor opportunities with few protections.²⁷ Several types of drugs are commonly used in Bangladesh, including phensedyl, heroin, marijuana, and "yaba" (a mixture of methamphetamine and caffeine, originating principally from Myanmar).²⁸

POLITICAL SPACE

Bangladesh is at a crossroads in its democratic evolution. The 2014 and 2018 elections represented significant watersheds for the country's political future.²⁹ Beginning in the 1990s, political power alternated between the two major political parties: the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). While relations within and between these political parties have always been tense, through 2009 the system resulted in a peaceful turnover of power that included competitive local elections.^{30,31}

The 2014 elections marked a significant change in two-party rule. When the Awami League government and the BNP disagreed over the process for holding free and fair elections, the BNP and other opposition parties staged blockades and demonstrations, but the Awami League ultimately won uncontested.³² Since then, there has been an upsurge of violent displays of opposition, triggering a firm government crackdown.³³ The December 2018 elections won by the Awami League were marked by reports of attacks on the political opposition and their supporters.^{34,35} These events may be changing the political space for multi-party competition, as well as the informal processes by which elites have traditionally made deals across the political divide to support social progress. Any loss of informal deal-making among political elites threatens a key source of political stability for the country, which can undermine efforts to build and maintain sources of social cohesion and resilience to the multiple contextual risks the country faces.

Bangladesh has a solid foundation for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in its religious and secular traditions.³⁶ The form of Islam practiced historically by the majority of Muslims is influenced by Sufism, which emphasizes tolerance, moderation, and pluralism.³⁷ However, extremist attacks have captured international media attention and raised concerns about a potential rise in extremism in Bangladesh, which could put this foundation at risk.³⁸

KEY CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER

Bangladesh is internationally recognized for its progress on a number of gender indicators, including parity in education access and a decline in maternal mortality.³⁹ These gains are linked to a strong legal and policy framework guaranteeing women's rights and to the constitution, which recognizes equal

rights for women and men in the public sphere.⁴⁰ Bangladesh also has a significant history of women’s movements organizing to claim their rights.⁴¹ Beginning in 2014, the government actively began to link its efforts to prevent violent extremism to initiatives that address women’s empowerment and the root causes of poverty. Research suggests that these efforts—which included a focus on education for girls—have had success.⁴²

Yet, despite this clear progress, gender discrimination is an ongoing reality that presents many obstacles for women and girls in Bangladesh.⁴³ Girls are commonly considered to be financial burdens on their families, and consequently, from the time they are born, families invest less in girls’ health and education. Early marriage is another challenge that threatens girls’ education, mobility, health, and safety.⁴⁴ While early marriage has decreased over the last 30 years, Bangladesh continues to have one of the highest rates of marriage worldwide for girls under 15 (22%), and 59% of girls are married before the age of 18.⁴⁵

Women are also vulnerable to dowry-related violence, domestic violence, rape, human trafficking, and sexual harassment (commonly called “eve teasing”). Most domestic violence is dowry-related. Two out of three married women in Bangladesh have experienced some form of partner violence in their lifetime, and more than half within the last 12 months.⁴⁶ Social taboos mean that most women suffer dowry-related violence in silence.⁴⁷

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

A full understanding of the situation of people living with disabilities is limited, due to unavailable or variable statistics. The 2011 national census shows that 1.4% of the population had a disability. This varies significantly from a 2010 household income and expenditure survey and the World Health Survey, which found that 9% and 16%, respectively, of the population had a disability.⁴⁸ The 2012 Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific put Bangladesh among the 10 countries (of 48) with the highest disability rates.⁴⁹ Much of this statistical variance may be due to people’s reluctance to use the term “disabled” to describe themselves or a family member, coupled with a lack of understanding of exactly what constitutes a “disability.”

NATIONAL EFFORTS IN DISASTER-RISK REDUCTION⁵⁰

Bangladesh has made significant efforts to reduce its vulnerability to disasters and climate change. Following the devastating storms of 1970 and 1991,⁵¹ the government established dedicated national efforts to enhance disaster preparedness and reduce disaster vulnerability, ultimately reducing deaths from super-cyclones by more than 99%.⁵² Within the past 20 years, new technology and mitigation measures have reduced cyclone-related deaths by improving early warning systems, implementing shelters and evacuation plans, constructing coastal embankments, sustaining and improving coastal forest cover, and increasing public education on disaster-preparedness. These remarkable achievements were accomplished by a national-level commitment to a comprehensive approach to disaster-risk reduction.⁵³

Bangladesh has been a signatory to the Hyogo Framework for Action and the successor Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. At the highest level, the country’s legal framework, institutional arrangements, and disaster-management strategy are outlined in the Standing Orders on Disasters, the Disaster Risk Management Act, and the five-year National Disaster Management Plan.⁵⁴ The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief functions as the government’s focal point for disaster management and

disaster response (including risk reduction, food security, and community resilience). Disaster coordination at the district, upazila, and union levels is carried out by District Management Committees.⁵⁵

The mobilization of civilians and the military is another central component of the government's disaster-management capacity. The Standing Orders set forth major roles and responsibilities for the Bangladesh Armed Forces in the event of disasters.⁵⁶ The government invests in training and expanding a pool of more than 16 million people who volunteer each year in areas such as education, health, environmental protection, and disaster response.⁵⁷

CONTEXT: COX'S BAZAR DISTRICT

BORDERLAND GEOGRAPHY

Cox's Bazar is a long, narrow coastal district in the southeastern corner of the country. It is bordered by the Bay of Bengal to the west and by the Naf River for much of its southeastern boundary, forming the border to Myanmar, to the east. The district includes several islands, including the two large inhabited islands of Maheshkhali and Kutubdia. The area is characterized by difficult terrain, bad roads, and insufficient infrastructure. Much of the district is lowlands crisscrossed by a network of streams that flow into the Bay of Bengal. Its coastline features the longest stretch of sandy beach in the world.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Cox's Bazar is one of the smallest and most densely populated districts in Bangladesh. As of 2016, 2.7 million people lived in the district.⁵⁸ The Rohingya influx of 720,000 refugees that began in August 2017 increased the total population by more than 25%.⁵⁹ The majority of the Bangladeshi population is Muslim (93%), but because it borders the Chittagong Hill Tracts, other religions are also represented: Buddhists (4%), Hindus (1%), and Christians (.06%).⁶⁰ Religious institutions have a strong presence throughout the district, with 3,331 mosques, 300 temples, 116 monasteries, and 6 churches.⁶¹

Ethnicity and language are other sources of diversity in Cox's Bazar. The Chakma and Marma tribes live mostly in hilly areas near the Chittagong Hill Tracts. While they share the common designation of indigenous or tribal people, and both are predominately Buddhist, the Chakma and Marma people are culturally distinct and have their own languages. The Marma language is closest to that of the Rakhine people of Myanmar. The Chakma language is closely related in structure to Chittagonian Bangla, but it is also distinct.⁶² Chittagonian is the local dialect spoken throughout Cox's Bazar. The Chittagonian dialect of Bangla widely spoken in Cox's Bazar is similar enough to Rohingya language to allow some degree of mutual understanding, but not without difficulties.

POVERTY

Against the backdrop of national progress in poverty reduction, Cox's Bazar is among the 20 districts the government defines as "lagging."⁶³ National statistics from 2016 indicate that the poverty rate stood at 35% for the entire district, against the national average of 24%; extreme poverty was at 25%, whereas the national rate was 13%.⁶⁴ Throughout the district of Cox's Bazar, the population perceives poverty—through unemployment and/or marginalization—to be both a source of insecurity and a key driver of crime and human trafficking.⁶⁵

Within this overall district context for the district, the upazilas of Teknaf and Ukhiya are the poorest, ranking among the 50 most socially deprived upazilas (out of 509).⁶⁶ Here, the district's topographical and infrastructural challenges are especially felt. Lack of arable land and consequent dependence on markets for food in Teknaf and Ukhiya drive high levels of food insecurity and vulnerability to price fluctuations and food availability. Access to drinking water is limited, particularly in remote rural areas, and only one-third of people have a drinking-water source in their dwelling.

Due to the Rohingya influx, poverty is increasing. A recent assessment by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on the socioeconomic impact of the Rohingya influx found that influx has increased poverty in both Ukhiya and Teknaf.⁶⁷ The study also found that while average wages of all laborers in Ukhiya and Teknaf declined following the influx, they increased across the rest of Cox's Bazar.

FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION

Food insecurity and malnutrition are a source of vulnerability for much of the population in Cox's Bazar. Fifty-seven percent of the population is classified as struggling with chronic food insecurity,⁶⁸ and this is particularly true for female-headed households.⁶⁹ Between 35% and 38% of children under the age of 5 are underweight.⁷⁰ The prevalence of stunting in Cox's Bazar is 46% or higher.⁷¹ Overall, the population suffers from a lack of dietary diversity and quality. Some 72% of children do not consume a diverse diet—and for women this figure is worse, with 63% of women eating fewer than five foods.⁷²

The current situation in Ukhiya and Teknaf is more acute; 33% of households in Teknaf and 30% in Ukhiya struggle with chronic food insecurity, and 59% of households in Teknaf and 55% of households in Ukhiya experience “borderline” food insecurity. Recent disruptions to income sources exacerbate this problem.⁷³

In recognition of the food insecurity in Cox's Bazar, five of the eight upazilas in the district receive school feeding. The Government of Bangladesh and the World Food Program provide high-energy biscuits to primary school children in Teknaf, Pekua, and Maheshkhali. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, implemented by the World Food Programme, provides high-energy biscuits at government primary schools in Ukhiya and Kutubdia.

ECONOMY

The three major sectors of the economy in Cox's Bazar are services, agriculture, and industry.⁷⁴ Economic activity is concentrated in the central and northeastern sections of the district. Cox's Bazar is a major domestic tourist destination, and as a result the service industry comprises 47% of the district's gross domestic product.⁷⁵

Dependence on agriculture is higher in Teknaf and Ukhiya, which accounts for the high concentration of poverty in these districts. A 2017 Labor Force Survey shows that 42% of workers are engaged in the agriculture sector (crops, livestock, fisheries, and forestry).⁷⁶ The low level of productivity in agriculture means that a majority of the workforce in the district is engaged in a low-value and potentially low-income sector of the market.⁷⁷

Female representation in employment is reported as particularly low, though it is unclear if this is due to problems with the data or to a real lack of participation of females in formal labor in non-agricultural sectors.⁷⁸

The Rohingya influx has put increased economic pressure on Bangladeshi communities, most of which are not benefiting from increased employment opportunities with the humanitarian response. A household self-reliance assessment from February 2018 found that while 60% of respondents in host

communities said that their income situation had not changed since the influx, more than a third reported that their income decreased after the influx. Factors behind the decreased income include price hikes, less work opportunity, reduced wages, and damage to agricultural farms and small businesses due to the Rohingya settlements. Only 5% of respondents in host communities and 1.38% from the control/comparison group reported that their income *increased* due to the Rohingya influx. The assessment also found that after the influx, host community expenditures increased by 23%.⁷⁹

NATURAL HAZARDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Cox’s Bazar is the most disaster-affected of the country’s 17 coastal districts, and one of the least resilient. The district is regularly impacted by the shock of cyclones from the Bay of Bengal, and it has recorded a continual increase in rainfall since 1991.⁸⁰ Research into multi-hazard risks and adaptations identified Cox’s Bazar as at the highest risk of all coastal districts.⁸¹ A 2016 resilience assessment for USAID found that Cox’s Bazar demonstrated the lowest levels of household resilience capacity to withstand shocks and stresses.⁸² The World Food Programme’s 2018 Resilience Composite Score Exercise found that Cox’s Bazar had a very low resilience score (4, which was the lowest).⁸³ Gender-based inequalities can further drive disaster vulnerability, adding to the challenges for this culturally conservative district.⁸⁴

TABLE 4: UPAZILA RISK PROFILES

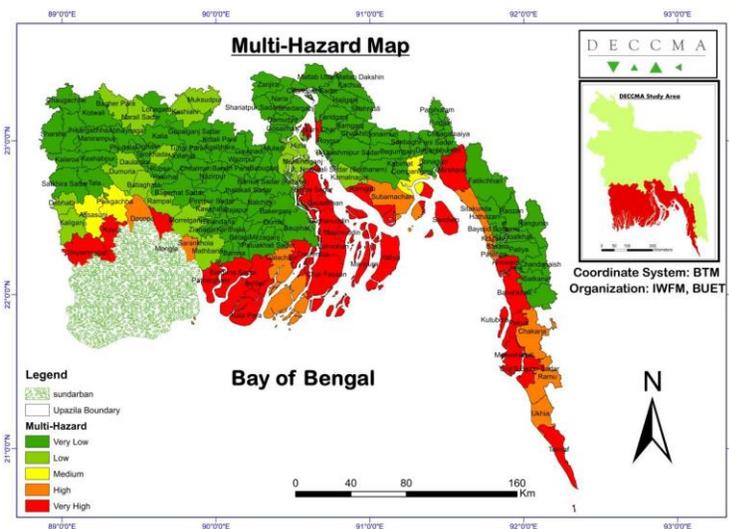
UPAZILA	RISK CATEGORY
Chakaria	Cyclone, flash flood, earthquake, storm surge, water logging, canal erosion, salinity
Cox’s Bazar Sadar	Cyclone, flash flood, earthquake, tsunami, storm surge, water logging, insecurity, crime
Kutubdia	Cyclone, flash flood, earthquake, tsunami, storm surge, salinity, environmental pollution, insecurity, crime
Maheshkhali	Cyclone, flash flood, earthquake, tsunami, storm surge, salinity, environmental pollution, insecurity, crime
Pekua	Cyclone, flash flood, earthquake, storm surge, water logging, canal erosion, salinity
Ramu	Cyclone, earthquake, insecurity, crime
Teknaf	Cyclone, flash flood, earthquake, tsunami, storm surge, salinity, insecurity, crime, conflict, cholera
Ukhiya	Cyclone, flash flood, earthquake, storm surge, water logging, cholera, insecurity, crime, conflict

As an island, Maheshkhali is uniquely exposed to risks of extensive flooding that can threaten livelihoods and food security.⁸⁵ Seawater moving upland causes flooding, which increases soil salinity, which impacts drinking-water supplies, irrigation, and crops.⁸⁶ Maheshkhali is also becoming home to two new coal power-generation plants, which, despite an environmental management plan and other mitigation measures adopted by the government, could have a wide-ranging impact on the environment. In

particular, the plants are expected to negatively impact marine habitats, which could result in serious risks to coastal fishing.⁸⁷

Basic service delivery of water, sanitation, and hygiene are more difficult in a fragile ecological environment such as Cox’s Bazar. The area is low on freshwater resources. Populations are largely dependent on tube wells as the only potable water source, and even this water often has elevated arsenic and salinity levels. Salinity is worse in winter, as saline water moves upward. It is worth noting that salinity has been reported as the most lagging area of the country’s disaster risk-reduction commitment.⁸⁹

FIGURE 3: MAP OF COASTAL AREA HAZARDS⁸⁸



As with the rest of Bangladesh, Cox’s Bazar is particularly exposed to seismic risk. The district’s growing population, rapid urbanization, and unplanned construction that does not adhere to existing building codes all put the district’s structures and people at greater risk in any seismic event. Buildings are often located in close proximity to one another and use heavy overhangs and soft story construction, both of which elevate the risk of collapse in the event of a strong earthquake. As a coastal area, Cox’s Bazar has high levels of sand and sediment in the soil. The shaking during an earthquake will cause the sandy ground to move like a liquid (a

process known as *liquefaction*), which makes the earthquake even more devastating to buildings.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

As the most disaster-prone district in Bangladesh, Cox’s Bazar is especially vulnerable to infectious diseases. The upazilas of Ukhiya, Teknaf, Maheshkhali, and Cox’s Bazar Sadar have limited access to drinking water and low access to improved sanitation facilities, which increases the risk of infectious disease.⁹⁰ Regular flooding and storm surges exacerbate chronic shortages of potable water and sanitary facilities, further increasing the population’s vulnerability to disease.⁹¹

There is also a risk of disease spreading from the overcrowded and unhygienic settlements and camps to Bangladeshi communities. The Rohingya received practically no immunizations while living in Myanmar’s Rakhine State and are therefore vulnerable to disease.⁹² In November 2017, aid workers responded quickly to a diphtheria outbreak among the Rohingya that was at risk of spreading to host communities.⁹³ The situation was brought under control, and the World Health Organization has created a digital Early Warning, Alert, and Response System to detect outbreaks and drive public health action.⁹⁴

CRIME AND TRAFFICKING

Cox's Bazar is a well-known hub and transit area for trafficking, organized crime, and armed groups. The remote district is situated in close proximity to the borders of Myanmar and India, with an active seaport and open coastline. This combination of geographic features has enabled networks of illicit trade to develop over the past several decades in narcotics, small arms and light weapons, and human trafficking, as well as armed robbery against ships.⁹⁵ Unemployment and poverty are known drivers for local participation in crime and trafficking, and transnational criminal networks make use of vulnerable groups to carry out their economic activities.⁹⁶ One anomaly for the district is that, unlike elsewhere in the country, men and women are almost equally fearful that they or a family member will become a victim of a crime.⁹⁷ The influx has meant increased amounts of cross-border movement and increased economic vulnerabilities, which, combined, could contribute to a rise in crime.⁹⁸

Human trafficking is prevalent in Cox's Bazar. Bangladesh is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking.⁹⁹ There are known transit points for human smuggling in Teknaf, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar Sadar, and Maheshkhali.¹⁰⁰ People in this area are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, given their desire to migrate from the area for work. There is ample evidence that the Rohingya camps are a target for human smugglers, which may generate a spillover effect for host communities.¹⁰¹ As of January 2018, a significant number of people report that people unknown to the community have offered to take their children away by promising jobs and care.¹⁰²

There are well-established drug trafficking routes along the border of Myanmar, dating from the 1980s. The people of Cox's Bazar see drug trafficking as an important safety and security concern for their communities.¹⁰³ Drug trafficking is reportedly on the rise in the region, with some Rohingya refugees allegedly turning to the yaba trade for income.¹⁰⁴ For refugee and local communities struggling with poverty, drug trafficking can be a tempting risk.¹⁰⁵

CHILD LABOR

Cox's Bazar has been cited as one of six districts (of 64) with the highest incidence of child labor in the country. In 2011, 9.4% of district children ages 10–14 were engaged in child labor, compared to the national average of 6%. In Ukhiya, the proportion was among the highest (more than 9%); in Teknaf, it was between 7 and 9%. In January 2018, 85% of children in host communities were engaging in paid and unpaid work.¹⁰⁶

VOLATILITY AND INSECURITY

The remote location of Cox's Bazar along an international border exposes it to safety and security concerns. The sense of insecurity in the area is heightened by the presence of arms, drugs, trafficking, armed robbery, and transnational crime activities. These stresses and risks, combined with the vulnerabilities of poverty, contribute a sense of volatility and uncertainty to the overall atmosphere.¹⁰⁷

There is a risk of religious extremism and politically motivated violence in Cox's Bazar. Prior to a crackdown in 2005, Jihadist groups were actively recruiting from madrasahs and mosques in Cox's Bazar.¹⁰⁸ Police monitoring reportedly kept these activities at bay as of 2011, but no current data could be found as to whether this is still the case.¹⁰⁹

There are concerns that the Rohingya influx will strengthen extremist sentiment. Hefazat-e-Islam has an active presence in Cox’s Bazar and is reportedly gaining ground as a radical political movement.¹¹⁰ Both Hefazat-e-Islam and Jamaat-e-Islami actively operate in refugee camps, even prior to the latest influx.¹¹¹ However, while refugees are generally vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups, one UN official (during a key informant interview) noted that global jihadist ideologies do not appear to be resonating with the Rohingya refugee population.

EARLY MARRIAGE

Early marriage is a known coping strategy for poor households that increases after disasters and other shocks. Despite government commitments to curb the practice, Bangladesh continues to have one of the highest rates of child marriage.¹¹² In Cox’s Bazar, there is evidence that this practice is currently on the rise: As of January 2018, 23% of host communities reported a recent increase in child marriages.¹¹³ There are concerns among some aid workers that this rise in early marriage is a direct result of the strain on resources caused by the Rohingya influx.¹¹⁴

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The 2011 census offers data on the number and type of disabilities in the district. These statistics should be treated as conservative.¹¹⁵

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF COX’S BAZAR AND NATIONAL POPULATION WITH A DISABILITY, BY TYPE OF DISABILITY

	OVERALL DISABILITY	SPEECH	VISION	HEARING	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	AUTISM	TOTAL SAMPLE
Cox’s Bazar	1.46%	0.20%	0.3%	0.14%	0.54%	0.17%	0.11%	114,264
National	1.41%	0.19%	0.27%	0.13%	0.55%	0.18%	0.09%	7,204,699

Educational statistics on children with special needs at the district level are not well-documented. People with a disability are especially vulnerable to the impact of natural hazards.¹¹⁶

DISTRICT EFFORTS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Disaster-management coordination at the district level is conducted by four Disaster Management Committees at the district, upazila, union, and pourashava (municipality) levels. The Disaster Management Committees in Cox’s Bazar Sadar, Ramu, and Ukhiya have developed their own upazila-level disaster-management plans.

Cyclone-preparedness infrastructure in Cox’s Bazar includes multi-purpose cyclone shelters and the infrastructure for early warning dissemination. At present, 538 shelters are located in the district, most of which were built after 1993 with international financial assistance. Many schools in the district also serve as multi-purpose cyclone shelters.

In the aftermath of Cyclone Roanu in May 2016, which impacted Maheshkhali and Banshkhali to the north, the UNDP noted that a “lack of risk-informed development, inadequate recovery from previous disasters, and households’ lack of risk assessment capacity combined to produce a high level of vulnerability.”¹¹⁷

ROHINGYA INFLUX

PREVIOUS ROHINGYA INFLUXES

Multiple waves of Rohingya people have entered Cox’s Bazar from neighboring Myanmar since the 1970s:¹¹⁸

- In 1977–1978, more than 200,000 Rohingya fled from Rakhine State to Cox’s Bazar, settling in 13 refugee camps on the border.¹¹⁹
- In 1991–1992, another 250,000 Rohingya people fled Myanmar and entered Cox’s Bazar, settling in 19 camps.
- In 1997, Rohingya people settled in local villages in Bangladesh rather than in camps, making it difficult to count their numbers, but estimates range in the thousands.¹²⁰
- From 2016 to August 2017, more than 87,000 Rohingya people crossed into Bangladesh and settled in Ukhiya, forming the Balukhali makeshift settlement.¹²¹

The vast majority of the first three waves of Rohingya people were repatriated.¹²² In mid-1992, the Government of Bangladesh ceased registering new arrivals as refugees. In 1997, the repatriation process provoked unrest and violence on the part of the refugees, who feared that they would be forced to return to Myanmar.¹²³

One key difference between these waves is whether the Rohingya people were officially registered by Bangladeshi authorities. As of December 2016, 31,958 registered refugees were living in two official camps: Kutupalong in Ukhiya, and Nayapara in Teknaf.¹²⁴ They are heavily reliant on food aid for survival, and live in poor conditions with many restrictions. Some have found ways to pursue livelihood activities outside of the settlements.

It is estimated that prior to the August 2017 influx, there were 200,000 to 500,000 Rohingya people living in Bangladesh with no legal status. The unregistered Rohingya lived in makeshift settlements bordering villages, and others lived alongside Bangladeshi citizens and integrated into Bangladeshi society. Integration between the two communities also occurred. By one account, as many as half of all unregistered Rohingya are married to local Bangladeshis.¹²⁵ The delineation between the makeshift settlements and host communities is not always clear, and, for their own safety and security, many Rohingya people have chosen to keep their identities concealed.^{126,127}

Unregistered refugees are considered illegal residents of Bangladesh. As such, they have no access to assistance and do not have the right to work. This created incentives for the Rohingya people to offer themselves as cheap daily labor—or even to engage in illegal activities—simply to survive. Smuggling and human trafficking networks have also exploited the Rohingya people’s vulnerability.

The Bangladeshi people generally have a positive attitude toward the Rohingya. There are many cultural similarities among the two groups, along with a shared religion. During previous waves, the Rohingya were initially welcomed and assisted. However, there are signs of increasing tensions between the two groups.¹²⁸ The Rohingya people have been associated with increased rates of drug and human trafficking, petty theft, and robbery. Some perceive the Rohingya people as a threat to the local labor market. Inter-marriage between Rohingya and Bangladeshis is also seen by some as disruptive to traditional community structures. In 2010, a Rohingya community news outlet reported that a Rohingya Resistance Committee had formed in Ukhiya and Teknaf near the refugee camps and settlements.¹²⁹ Yet in late 2016, many social and religious groups continued to express support and solidarity for the Rohingya.¹³⁰

CURRENT ROHINGYA INFLUX

The plight of the current wave of Rohingya people into Cox's Bazar is well-documented, but some essential points deserve mention here. Over 600,000 Rohingya women, men, and children arrived in Cox's Bazar in a three-month span from late August to mid-December 2017. This created by far the largest influx Bangladesh has seen, and as of September 2018 the total influx was 720,000 people. The vast majority are women and children, and more than 40% are under the age of 12.¹³¹

There are three general categories of Rohingya people from the recent influx in Cox's Bazar: those registered in camps, those living in makeshift settlements, and those living in host communities. Nearly all who arrived during the influx sought shelter in and around the government-run refugee camps of Kutupalong in Ukhiya and Nayapara in Teknaf. Makeshift settlements sprang up adjacent to these official camps. The Kutupalong camp grew to merge with other surrounding settlements, forming the mega camp that is called the Kutupalong-Balukhali expansion site.¹³² This site has become host to about 600,000 Rohingya people, becoming the largest refugee settlement of its kind in the world.¹³³ Teknaf has the second-largest concentration of people in settlements, though the distribution of people in settlements and host communities is more balanced. Rohingya refugees from this latest influx can also be found living among host communities in Cox's Bazar Sadar and Ramu.¹³⁴

The Rohingya people suffered enormous hardship and trauma prior to their arrival, and most are now living in acutely vulnerable conditions. Many shelters are stacked on steep slopes of unstable earth that was cleared of forest to build the camps.¹³⁵ A total of 200,000 Rohingya are at risk from flooding and landslides, and 24,000 are considered to be at high risk.¹³⁶ Overcrowding and other unfavorable conditions in the camps and settlements pose additional serious health and disaster risks.

The delineation of *host communities* and *makeshift settlements* is often blurred. According to a UNDP Peace and Development Advisor, settlements now exist in fields where host community people once farmed and where children used to play. This results in host communities mixing daily with Rohingya people under difficult conditions, and having to compete for resources. Both communities depend on increasingly scarce sources of firewood for fuel and as an income-generating activity. Water is similarly in short supply, with wells at risk of drying up, particularly in Teknaf. Food and aid distribution is provided near the settlements but is primarily accessed by the Rohingya population, even though living conditions in host communities are not always better than in the camps.

The story of one pre-primary school community in the RERA sample is illustrative. Respondents recalled how baffled and betrayed they felt to discover that more than half the children in their school were

Rohingya, when those children suddenly left to be with their family in the refugee camps and receive benefits. These Rohingya families arrived in the 1991 influx and managed to thoroughly integrate into the community without revealing their identity.

INFLUX AND HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

Approximately 122 organizations (including international and local NGOs and UN agencies) are now working in Cox's Bazar to support the humanitarian response to the Rohingya influx. One District Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Official estimates that together these organizations employ 25,000 to 30,000 staff, of which approximately 2,000 to 2,500 are foreigners. Humanitarian organization staff and contractors currently fill hotels in Cox's Bazar Sadar and elsewhere in the district. There is a notable increase in traffic and wear and tear on the roads as workers, water tanks, construction materials, and supplies are trucked to the settlements and camps. The amount of resources directed to the Rohingya response is similarly massive, impacting the costs of local goods and the labor market, as noted earlier.¹³⁷

CONTEXT: THE EDUCATION SECTOR

OVERVIEW

The education system in Bangladesh is massive. According to official statistics in 2017, over 33 million students were enrolled in recognized institutions: 3.7 million in pre-primary, 17.3 million in primary (grades 1–5), and 13.2 million in secondary (grades 6–12). It is divided into four levels: pre-primary, primary (grade 1–5), secondary (grades 6–12), and higher education.¹³⁸ Service provision includes general education, madrasah education, and technical-vocational education. Non-formal primary and basic education are also provided to a large number of out-of-school children.

Education remains a national priority in Bangladesh, and recent public polls have confirmed its importance in the eyes of the community.¹³⁹ Yet during the past decade, annual public education expenditures have remained at about 2% of the GDP, and public education generally receives only 14–16% of the total national budget. These figures are particularly low when compared to other developing countries.¹⁴⁰

Despite its size and limited budget, Bangladesh’s education system has made important strides in achieving close to universal initial primary school enrollment, and gender equality in enrollment at the primary and secondary levels.¹⁴¹ However, challenges in access, learning outcomes, and quality remain (which are described in more detail below).

The education sector is highly centralized, with administrative and financial powers largely concentrated in Dhaka. The centralized nature of the education system can, however, hamper local responsibility and accountability.¹⁴² The World Bank noted that the sector’s centralization can “stifle” local initiative; contributes to weak management, transparency, and accountability; and limits the capacity of School Management Committees.¹⁴³

PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

The government’s strategic vision for universal basic education is enshrined in its 2010 National Education Policy, which proposes measures such as requiring one year of pre-primary education, improving teacher qualifications, strengthening teacher recruitment, increasing the proportion of female teachers, creating child-friendly environments in schools, promoting interactive teaching, and strengthening community participation in school management.¹⁴⁴

A five-year primary education cycle is free and compulsory in Bangladesh. After one year of free, non-compulsory pre-primary education intended for 5-year-olds, the primary cycle starts at age 6, with first grade. Pre-primary and primary education are provided by the government, private providers, madrasahs, and NGOs through formal and non-formal schools throughout the country. About 59% of primary schools are managed and financed by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, and three-quarters of students are enrolled in these schools. The remaining schools are under the responsibility of other ministries and NGOs.¹⁴⁵

Bangladesh has made important gains in access to pre-primary and primary education. From 2010 to 2017, preschool enrollment increased threefold, reaching 3.6 million students in 2017. The percentage

of grade I entrants who had completed pre-primary education increased from 42% in 2010 to 96% in 2016.¹⁴⁶

Overall primary school enrollment levels in Bangladesh are high. The net enrollment rate for grades 1–5 is 98%. The primary survival rate has increased from 67% in 2010 to 81% in 2015.¹⁴⁷ Equitable access by income groups has also improved—the gap in the primary school net attendance rate between the lowest and highest quintiles, for example, decreased from 11% in 2010 to 8% in 2014.

The government, with support from development partners, has implemented a number of large-scale projects and programs over the past three decades to improve primary education access and quality. In July 2018, Bangladesh launched the Fourth Primary Education Development Program, which aims to achieve two topline quality and access outcomes: (i) apply high-quality teaching and learning practices in all schools to enable children to acquire the essential grade-level competencies stipulated in the curriculum, and (ii) provide all communities with learning environments that support the participation of all children, ensure continuity of education, and enable the provision of efficient, inclusive, and equitable quality education.

EDUCATION QUALITY

Yet, despite these advances in school access, learning outcomes of Bangladeshi students are low. An endline study conducted for the USAID-supported Reading Enhancement for Advancing Development (READ) project found that only 37% of students in grades 2 and 3 in government primary schools could read a grade-level text in Bangla with comprehension.¹⁴⁸ These findings are consistent with the draft 2017 National Student Assessment, which found that more than half of grade 3 and grade 5 students performed “below the desired level” in math and Bangla.¹⁴⁹

Poor-quality pre-primary education results in poor student readiness for first grade. A number of school-related factors have a negative influence on student learning, for example:

- **Overcrowded pre-primary classrooms.** Too few resources (materials, space, and time) must be spread over increasingly large numbers of students. In 2015, only 33% of schools had an average student-classroom ratio of 40:1 or less.
- **Insufficient teaching and learning materials.** Although all students receive a textbook, classrooms lack supplementary reading materials to support student learning.
- **Poor quality of instruction.** Nearly half of all primary teachers do not have a bachelor’s degree, and teachers reportedly rely heavily on lecturing and repetition, with little room for interactive learning, independent work, and problem solving.
- **Insufficient time-on-task.** More than three-quarters of pre-primary schools operate on double shifts, which results in fewer contact hours. There is high teacher absenteeism, partly due to training, other official duties, and lateness. Student attendance is similarly irregular; in 2015, average attendance was 87%.
- **Shortage of key infrastructure.** In 2015, 47% of schools did not have a separate functioning toilet for girls, and 27% did not have a safe water source.¹⁵⁰

MARGINALIZED GROUPS

Another challenge to universal basic education in Bangladesh is the 2.5 million out-of-school children ages 8–14. Children from urban slums and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which neighbor Cox’s Bazar, and those who have disabilities are the most likely to be out of school.¹⁵¹ Key factors influencing enrollment include geographic location, disability status, parental education, and household wealth.¹⁵²

Despite the high levels of achievement in Bangladesh’s education sector, many challenges remain for achieving inclusive and equitable quality education for children with disabilities. According to the 2017 Annual Primary School Census, 75,021 children enrolled in pre-primary through grade 5 identified as having mild disabilities. (Note: While this number may seem large, these children constitute less than 0.4% of the primary school population.)¹⁵³ The concept and practice of inclusive education is at a nascent stage of development in Bangladesh; awareness and understanding are limited, and school systems are not well-equipped to meet the varied needs of children with disabilities.¹⁵⁴ Quality education for all learners with disabilities will require systems to become more accommodating to these students’ educational needs.¹⁵⁵

Minority groups also confront challenges in accessing education due to the language of instruction.¹⁵⁶ In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, tribes were granted the right of primary education in their mother tongue under the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord. The government has undertaken initiatives to ensure that these children receive primary education, including a measure in 2017 to nationalize 210 primary schools in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education also produced preschool textbooks in five minority languages; however, teachers have not been sufficiently trained to use these textbooks.^{157,158}

SECONDARY EDUCATION

The secondary school education cycle covers seven years: three years of junior secondary (grades 6–8), two years of secondary (grades 9–10), and two years of higher secondary (grades 11–12). NGOs, such as BRAC, also run 9,000 after-school programs for adolescent girls (called Kishori Clubs) in the rural areas.¹⁵⁹

Nearly half of the secondary school-age cohort is out of school. The net enrollment rate for grades 6–8 is 68%,¹⁶⁰ and 6–10 is 55% (49% for boys and 61% for girls).¹⁶¹ The secondary completion rate is about 63% overall: 64% for boys and 62% for girls.¹⁶² Other factors behind these low enrollment and completion rates may include a shortage of secondary schools and high-quality teachers, distance from home to school, a lack of a child-friendly environment, protection issues (especially for girls), cost, and perceived relevance.

A pressing issue in secondary education is the low and unequal learning levels of students. The 2015 Learning Assessment of Secondary Institutions found that 43% of grade 8 students had acquired at most only basic content knowledge and cognitive skills, and only 6% could reason using mathematical ideas and apply these ideas in an unfamiliar context. There were large differences in achievement among sub-populations, with urban areas doing better than rural ones, and poorer districts showing lower results than other districts. Gender differences were found in mathematics (marginally favoring boys), but not in Bangla or English. The largest gaps in learning achievement were seen when comparing socioeconomic groups. In 2013, while 67% of grade 8 students from the richest decile demonstrated grade 8-level

competency in Bangla, only 45% of students in the lowest decile achieved adequate competency standards.¹⁶³

Poor achievement is due to a number of interrelated factors. The current secondary school curriculum is not sufficiently competency-based, and it is not benchmarked against national learning goals. There is a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in English, mathematics, and science. The public examinations at the end of grades 8, 10, and 12 encourage rote learning and do not build students' cognitive competencies, such as problem solving and critical thinking.¹⁶⁴

However, over the past three decades, the government has undertaken a number of efforts to address low learning and enrollment levels, including cash transfers, free textbooks, and fee waivers. These efforts are widely credited as helping to achieve gender parity at the secondary school level. The government has recently introduced a sector-wide initiative called the Secondary Education Development Program, to be implemented over five years in more than 20,300 general schools, 9,400 madrasahs, and 1,190 school-based vocational-technical institutions across the country.

MADRASAH EDUCATION

Madrasah education provides Islamic faith-based education. In Bangladesh, there are two types of madrasahs: Qawmi madrasahs and Alia madrasahs. Qawmi madrasahs provide a fully religious education based on the Quran, Hadith, and Fiqwah. Alia madrasahs combine the national curriculum and Islamic faith-based education; students learn the Quran, Hadith, and Fiqwah in addition to languages, mathematics, science, and other general subjects. Alia madrasahs comprise five levels, equivalent to general primary school, secondary school, higher secondary school, a bachelor's degree, and a master's degree.

Approximately 5.8 million students are enrolled in Alia and Qawmi madrasahs in Bangladesh. Overall madrasah enrollment declined from 2001 to 2017. The enrollment rate for boys and girls is almost equal at the primary level. However, girls' enrollment rate is higher than boys' at the secondary school level, with 60% enrolled in the Dakhil level and 56% enrolled in the Alim level.¹⁶⁵

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system constitutes a relatively small part of the overall educational system. TVET lacks prestige and is undersubscribed. The gross enrollment rate for secondary and higher secondary-level vocational education is only 4% and 5%, respectively.¹⁶⁶ Although the Ministry of Education oversees public TVET education, it is mostly offered through private service providers.

SCHOOL FINANCING

Public school financing differs substantially by level of education and type of education provider. Government primary schools (in which three-quarters of students are enrolled)¹⁶⁷ receive teacher salaries, textbooks, contingency costs for educational materials, School Level Improvement Plan grants of up to 50,000 taka (\$600) annually, and repair and maintenance costs directly from the government. In addition, the government encourages contributions from community members and parents.¹⁶⁸ Private

schools, NGO schools, community schools, and some madrasahs finance themselves without government funding.¹⁶⁹

Secondary schools in Bangladesh are divided into three funding categories: government (fully government funded), non-government (partial government funding for teacher salaries), and fully private. About 98% of secondary schools that receive government funding are privately operated.¹⁷⁰¹⁷¹ The secondary education subsector is dominated by non-government schools, which constitute more than 95% of secondary and higher secondary enrollment. The government also provides stipends and tuition for disadvantaged students, particularly female students in rural schools. The government provides most secondary schools (including non-government secondary schools) with partial support for staff salaries. However, in the larger schools, this government support does not cover all teachers. Schools try to cover the salary gaps by charging an assortment of student fees, such as for admission, tuition, and examinations.

Madrasah financing is similarly diversified. The Alia madrasah, recognized as a parallel formal education system under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Education, has a financing system similar to the secondary schools: these schools receive 16% from student fees, 2% from property income, 5% from public donations, and 78% from government salary support. In contrast, Qawmi madrasahs, which developed outside the government regulatory framework, are private institutions that generate revenue through donations from individuals and local and international Islamic organizations. Some have their own trusts, foundations, and other income-generating resources, and some are dependent on student fees and community donations.¹⁷²

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

In Bangladesh, School Management Committees have general responsibility for school-level management. According to the Directorate of Primary Education, each School Management Committee should have 11 members, with representation from parents, teachers, community leaders concerned with education, and the donor of the land for the school. The committee manages the school's financial and academic activities,¹⁷³ including overseeing the School Level Improvement Plan grants.

The form and function of the School Management Committee at the secondary school level differs slightly from the primary school-level model. Its 11 members include teachers, parents, a founder, a donor, an education stakeholder, a chairman (in the past, this has been the executive administrative head of the local government or a prominent citizen, although current practice is a person nominated by a local member of parliament), and a head teacher, who serves as member secretary.¹⁷⁴ At the secondary level, the committee enjoys a greater degree of autonomy in all areas of management, including finance, teacher management, infrastructure development, and general administration.¹⁷⁵

DISASTER-RISK REDUCTION

The education sector has made significant efforts to prepare for and reduce the impact of natural hazards. Disaster preparedness has been incorporated into primary and secondary schools since 2004. The 2010 National Education Policy identifies disaster preparedness as a core topic to be integrated into the curriculum in order to build students' capabilities related to climate change and disasters; it also recommends that schools conduct earthquake awareness and preparedness drills.¹⁷⁶ Disaster risk-

reduction issues have been incorporated into textbooks for grades 3 to 7 through the National Curriculum and Textbook Board.

The National Plan for Disaster Management (2016–2020), issued by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, mandates that all government and non-government institutions take key measures regarding disaster-risk management: (i) Education ministries must revise their curricula to include and/or expand on disaster-risk reduction and management in all streams and levels of education, (ii) the sector should prepare continuity of education plans for schools in disaster-prone areas to ensure continuity of education during a disaster,¹⁷⁷ and (iii) NGOs must deliver training programs on disaster management.¹⁷⁸

Many schools double as multi-purpose cyclone shelters in nine coastal districts. These shelters are multi-storied, reinforced concrete buildings that can on average accommodate 1,600 people. The shelters generally have an open ground-floor structure to avoid flooding and to accommodate livestock during storm surges, while higher floors are designed to accommodate people during and after the disasters.

The 2015 Bangladesh Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies establish important actions for disaster-risk reduction and management at the school level. One important dimension relates to community participation. The standards stipulate that each School Management Committee should form a diverse Representatives Group that should be consulted regularly “to ensure that the community is adequately represented in all phases of the development and implementation of education in emergencies activities.”¹⁷⁹ In particular, the standards recommend that the School Management Committee consult the Representatives Group to conduct a community disaster-risk assessment that should inform the design of a school-based disaster risk-reduction action plan. The standards also highlight the important role of teachers in disaster-risk reduction, as they can educate students on how to reduce their risk of disaster at school and at home.¹⁸⁰

EDUCATION SECTOR: COX’S BAZAR DISTRICT

Cox’s Bazar is one of the worst-performing districts in Bangladesh, according to almost all education indicators. School access and retention are low. The district has the lowest percentage of children of primary school age enrolling in first grade (71%), and it has the second-highest dropout rate (31%) in the country.¹⁸¹ Key interventions to decrease access barriers to schooling include school feeding in five upazilas of Cox’s Bazar and government stipends for more than 7.9 million primary school children, including poor children and children with disabilities.¹⁸²

The quality of education in Cox’s Bazar is also poor, and too many students fail to master foundational skills. Out of 64 districts, Cox’s Bazar ranks second to last in reading and math achievement in the primary level draft National Student Assessment.¹⁸³ Similarly, the endline assessment of USAID’s Reading Enhancement for Advancing Development intervention found that in government primary schools that did not receive the intervention, only 32% of third-grade students could read in Bangla with fluency and comprehension. Learning outcomes are also weak at the secondary level.¹⁸⁴ The 2015 Learning Assessment of Secondary Institutions found that 33% of sixth-graders in the Chittagong division perform at the lowest achievement level in math (meaning they can perform basic arithmetic operations but cannot perform multiple-step problem solving). An additional 35% of students perform at the lowest

level in English, meaning that they can retrieve explicitly stated information from a text, but they cannot interpret it or draw inferences.¹⁸⁵

It is unclear to what extent lower district learning outcomes are linked to the presence of indigenous groups with distinct mother-tongue languages. However, in a region where many people speak the Chittagonian dialect, one possible contributing factor to poor learning outcomes is the language barrier of learning in Bangla. The endline of the USAID-funded Innovation for Improving Early Grade Reading Activity found that in Cox's Bazar district, 31% of children in non-intervention schools finish first grade unable to read their first word in Bangla. Among these non-readers, children could only answer an average of 32% of listening comprehension questions in Bangla, which could indicate that they lack sufficient understanding of the Bangla language to be able to learn to read.¹⁸⁶

A post-influx joint assessment of the self-reliance situation of host communities in Cox's Bazar captured the effects of a long history of under-enrollment and lack of persistence in education in the district. In the host communities, approximately 60% of the household heads surveyed do not have any kind of education; 24% of household heads have only a primary education (grades 1–8), 9% have a secondary education, and only 2% of the population received university education. The survey further revealed that 43% of people 15 years or older have *no* education.¹⁸⁷ In a 2018 survey of 800 households in Teknaf and Ukhiya, 33% of households reported that their children were not in school.¹⁸⁸

SCHOOL DISASTER-RISK REDUCTION

Within the local Disaster Management Committee framework, the Upazila Primary Education Plan at the sub-district level focuses on disaster management and risk reduction efforts in pre-primary and primary schools. Similarly, local education officials, such as the Upazila Primary Education Office and Upazila Secondary Education Office, advocate to ensure that needs related to the school or education program are also prioritized in the Local Disaster Risk Reduction Action Planning process.

Disaster risk reduction is currently integrated into the School Level Improvement Planning process. For example, each primary school is told to cover both pre-disaster and post-disaster disaster risk-reduction measures to ensure continuity of education in emergencies.

RERA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the findings from and analysis of the qualitative fieldwork conducted in school communities with students, teachers, head teachers, parents, and community members. The team conducted 141 focus group discussions, each involving approximately five to seven participants: students, teachers, community members, and parents. Key informant interviews were conducted with 33 respondents, including head teachers, education officials and experts, disaster-management officials and experts, conflict experts, and a range of other experts.

As explained under RERA METHODOLOGY, throughout the open-ended transcripts, responses were coded to reflect the type of response given and the prevalence of response types. The data were then analyzed across and within groups (for example, disaggregating by respondent type, community, and gender), and, where relevant, those numerical data are presented in table form. These percentages are not representative of the communities or people in the areas being analyzed, but are a helpful way to view the range of opinions and ideas of those who were purposefully selected to participate in the RERA. Similarly, the statistics reported below are based on coding of open-ended data, not quantitative data (such as from close-ended surveys).

Note: Unless otherwise specified, the percentages depicted in the tables in this section represent whether a particular response type was provided by *anyone* within that interview. For example, 11% does not indicate that 11% of respondents said “X,” but that 11% of the interviews conducted (with one or more people) had one or more respondents who said “X.”

The findings are organized around the RERA’s main research questions, which are organized into four broad categories, as shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6: RERA MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS	
CATEGORY	RERA RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Contextual risks	What are the main contextual risks in Cox’s Bazar?
Education and contextual risk interaction (including the Rohingya influx)	<p>What is the status of education access, the learning environment, teaching and learning, teachers and other education personnel, education policy, and sector coordination in Cox’s Bazar?</p> <p>What is the interaction between the contextual risks and the education sector?</p> <p>What is the impact of the Rohingya influx on government and non-government schooling for Bangladeshi students in Cox’s Bazar at the pre-primary, primary, secondary, and technical-vocational levels?</p>
Key cross-cutting issues	What is the context for key cross-cutting issues, including gender, inclusive education for children with disabilities, and student well-being (including social-emotional learning)?
School community resilience	What resilience factors are in place that influence access to and safety of quality education? How can these factors be strengthened?

CONTEXTUAL RISKS

PERCEPTIONS OF CONTEXTUAL RISKS

Based on interviews with respondents in the school communities visited, the most frequently mentioned contextual risks were natural hazards (62% of interviews), in particular those related to water (49% of interviews), traffic (62% of interviews), and nonviolent crime and/or drugs (55% of interviews). General tension or conflict in the community was mentioned in just over a quarter of the interviews (27%), and violence, including school-related gender-based violence, was mentioned in 18% of the interviews. Extremism was reported in only 4 of 176 interviews (or 2%).

Mention of natural hazards was less frequent in Ukhiya, Teknaf, and Cox’s Bazar Sadar as compared to the other upazilas. Upazilas were similar as to the rates in which traffic and nonviolent crime or drugs were said to be problematic. Quarrels, tension, and violence, including gender-based violence, were reported less often in Cox’s Bazar Sadar, Pekua, and Teknaf.

Risks related to the local economy—including price increases (in commodities, transportation, and cost of living), wages, and jobs—were cited across the district. This category was mentioned most frequently in Ukhiya (66%), but was a notable concern in Cox’s Bazar Sadar (58%) and further north in Pekua (53%) as well. This suggests that the economic impact of the influx, as well as the influence of the humanitarian response to the influx, has had consequences far beyond the host communities in the south.

Table 6 illustrates the prevalence of interviews (of all interviews) where specific contextual risks in the school community were mentioned, based on coding of all open-ended responses to all questions in a single interview. Responses are organized by sub-district.

TABLE 7: PREVALENCE OF INTERVIEWS MENTIONING SPECIFIC CONTEXTUAL RISKS IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

PERCENTAGE OF INTERVIEWS INDICATING RISK							
CONTEXTUAL RISK	COX'S BAZAR SADAR (n = 45)	MAHESHKHALI (n = 17)	PEKUA (n = 17)	RAMU (n = 21)	TEKNAF (n = 38)	UKHIYA (n = 38)	TOTAL (n = 176)
Traffic, road safety, and/or transportation	69%	69%	53%	76%	55%	71%	66%
Natural hazards: Any	56%	88%	100%	76%	55%	42%	62%
• Water (floods)	51%	81%	88%	71%	34%	16%	49%
• Wind (cyclones)	9%	50%	29%	19%	29%	16%	22%
• Earth (earthquakes)	0%	6%	0%	10%	0%	3%	2%
Nonviolent crime and/or drugs	60%	44%	47%	62%	47%	61%	55%

Local economy (prices of commodities and transportation, wages, jobs)	58%	38%	53%	48%	42%	66%	53%
Quarrels, conflict, and/or tension	20%	31%	18%	33%	21%	42%	27%
Violence, including gender-based violence	16%	31%	6%	29%	11%	24%	18%
Changing social norms and values	4%	6%	6%	5%	8%	13%	7%
Disease; poor health	7%	0%	0%	10%	5%	8%	6%

Note: More than one response per group is possible.

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE ROHINGYA INFLUX ON CONTEXTUAL RISKS

It is difficult to determine the actual impact of the Rohingya influx on contextual risks, such as crime, security, the economy, and job opportunities. Perceptions that the Rohingya were taking jobs, working illegally, and involved with crime have been noted for at least a decade, making it challenging to discern the extent to which these concerns are actually linked to the recent influx, or represent continuing observations about longer-term, pre-existing risks.¹⁸⁹ Nonetheless, the findings offer important insights into how host and impacted communities perceive the impact of the Rohingya influx.

In most sites in the sample, respondents listed a host of problems they associate with the Rohingya. In general, communities conveyed a growing frustration with—and in some cases fear of—the continued presence of the Rohingya. Specifically, they believe that the Rohingya people are responsible for degrading law and order, values, and the environment; usurping livelihood opportunities; unfairly gaining access to education and services (while, in some instances, constraining Bangladeshi access to those same services); using and selling drugs; taking over land, including playing fields; and harassing children and youth, particularly girls. Respondents claimed that the Rohingya received more attention in hospitals, gained citizenship with the help of local representatives (which, some argued, occurred through bribes), and used fake identification to access schools. A limited number of respondents were critical of the fact that birth registration had been halted by the government (apparently so that the Rohingya could not obtain citizenship), while several respondents in Ukhiya and Teknaf complained about the restrictions on fishing rights on the Naf River.

In total, 53% of all times a risk was mentioned, it involved a specific attribution to the Rohingya people. Risks were more often attributed to the Rohingya in Teknaf (64%), Ukhiya (61%), and Cox’s Bazar Sadar (56%). The proximity and nature of the contact between communities and the Rohingya people in these upazilas may be a factor in the geographic variation in community perceptions. The risks most frequently attributed to the Rohingya influx were nonviolent crime (33%) and problems in the local economy (27%).

Table 8 shows the frequency with which respondents attributed the contextual risks listed in Table 7 explicitly to the Rohingya influx, broken down by upazila.

TABLE 8: PROPORTION OF INTERVIEWS ATTRIBUTING RISK TO THE ROHINGYA							
	COX'S BAZAR SADAR (n = 45)	MAHESHKHALI (n = 17)	PEKUA (n = 17)	RAMU (n = 21)	TEKNAF (n = 38)	UKHIYA (n = 38)	TOTAL (n = 176)
Nonviolent crime	47%	25%	18%	14%	32%	39%	33%
Local economy	29%	6%	24%	19%	32%	37%	27%
Natural hazards	11%	6%	0%	14%	16%	26%	14%
Traffic	20%	0%	0%	0%	8%	32%	14%
Quarrels and tension	9%	13%	0%	5%	11%	16%	10%
Changing norms	4%	6%	6%	5%	8%	13%	7%
Violence, including gender-based violence	4%	6%	6%	5%	8%	5%	6%
Disease and health	7%	0%	0%	10%	5%	8%	6%

Note: Respondents were not prompted to speak about the Rohingya population. These responses were spontaneous answers to broad, open-ended questions, such as “What are the main challenges in your community?”

NONVIOLENT CRIME AND DRUGS

Respondents consistently reported concerns over nonviolent crime, including theft, robbery, and drug trafficking and use. Nonviolent crime was perceived the most by respondents in Ukhiya (61% of interviews) and Cox’s Bazar Sadar (60% of interviews); it is worth noting that the latter is a more urbanized area. This risk was blamed substantially more on the Rohingya influx in Ukhiya (72%), Teknaf (72%), and Cox’s Bazar Sadar (81%). The majority of responses citing crime were similar to that of a male secondary teacher, who noted, “After the entrance of Rohingya, thefts and robberies are increasing.”

These cross-border challenges with nonviolent crime and drugs precede the influx. The porous border area that separates Myanmar from Bangladesh has historically been known for human trafficking and other forms of illicit cross-border trade. Given that these are historic problems, it is difficult to discern to what degree these issues can be directly linked to the recent influx of Rohingya people; in fact, many respondents indicated that their communities were prone to crime, regardless of the presence of Rohingya people. As one member from a community and parents group said, “Stealing and robbery happened almost every day. This area is surrounded by borders, so drug trafficking happens here.”

A limited number of respondents also linked drug trafficking to “administrative people” who had a role in facilitating the circulation of drugs. However, the perception in the sample that these problems are being exacerbated by the influx, and the resulting sense of insecurity and fear, are significant for social cohesion and inter-group relations.

LOCAL ECONOMY: PRICES AND WAGES

Respondents lamented rising prices and lower wages. These issues arose in more than half the interviews, but more often in Cox’s Bazar Sadar and Ukhiya. In line with the findings from the UNDP assessment on the socioeconomic impact of the influx, respondent perceptions from the sample confirm that Ukhiya and Teknaf are witnessing the greatest wage reductions (24% and 21%, respectively). Accordingly, the Rohingya were blamed substantially more for the poor local economy in Ukhiya (37%) and Teknaf (32%) than in other upazilas. Still, every upazila considered the poor local economy to be problematic, which they relatively often blamed on the Rohingya.

The broader impact of the influx on the economy in Cox’s Bazar may well be both positive and negative—but overall, respondents are finding it harder to get by. Many respondents feel the biggest impact in the rising costs for transportation, housing, and household staples. The cost of living has also been impacted by the emergence of black markets selling surplus assistance items, such as rice and vegetable oil. One secondary teacher said, “As a result of the Rohingya influx, the population has increased the prices of goods, and housing rent has also increased.” A madrasah teacher in Cox’s Bazar Sadar said:

“They [NGOs] bring lots of money here; therefore, the prices increased for everything here. Houses rented for 3,000 taka [US \$36] before, and now they rent for 20,000 taka [US \$239]—but our salary was not increased, so we face financial problems.”

The changing economy has presented both opportunities and challenges. For the owners of rickshaws, restaurants, and hotels, the impact has been largely positive, due to the presence of foreign workers. Some Bangladeshis are benefiting from the greater demand for workers—such as drivers, translators, or day laborers—even at stagnant or fallen wages.¹⁹⁰ Others have found gainful employment with the humanitarian organizations responding to the influx. At the same time, there are numerous reports of NGOs pulling people out of their normal line of work and/or schooling by offering much more money than Bangladeshis could have earned before the influx. As a madrasah teacher said:

“Teachers left school, as they are getting a better salary from NGOs, so students are deprived of skilled teachers. But teachers are leaving only because their original salary was very poor.”

In addition, some local business owners complained that road congestion from aid vehicles keeps customers away, forcing them to close. One TVET teacher said, “After the Rohingya influx, job opportunities have increased, but so has traffic.”

Some residents have had to adjust their livelihood strategies. For locals whose source of income came mainly from the forest, the clearing of forested land has deprived them of their original livelihood. Employment with humanitarian organizations in the camps has replaced traditional modes of work in

Ukhiya for some. However, the lure of work with these organizations has also meant that some local businesses must close, and that Bangladeshis must compete with Rohingya who are willing to work for a lower wage. One member of a community and parent group noted, “After the entrance of the Rohingya, poverty is increasing. Rohingya people are working for a low salary, and so local people are not getting work for a daily living.”

NATURAL HAZARDS AND DISASTERS

Respondents throughout the sample are aware of natural hazards and disaster risks. Across nearly two-thirds of the interviews, respondents demonstrated clear awareness of the natural hazards and disasters that have long plagued the district. Most often cited were water-related disasters, such as flooding. Respondents noted the impact from the coal plant in Maheshkhali, where closure of a sluice gate has produced flooding. Cyclones also came up regularly. One community member said, “Cyclones, typhoons, and floods are part of our daily life.” A male secondary student in Ramu said, “There are four big rivers in this area, so flooding is a common phenomenon. People have so much trouble traveling from one place to another.”

Respondents regularly noted how the environmental impact of the Rohingya influx was increasing the risk of disasters. In particular, respondents in Ukhiya (69%) blamed the Rohingya for deforestation. Others pointed to a reduction in the water table, allegedly due to wells being dug by the Rohingya.

TRAFFIC AND ROAD INSECURITY

Respondents expressed concerns about increased traffic and road insecurity. As one NGO project manager put it, “The Rohingya influx causes huge traffic problems.” Two-thirds of all interviews in sample communities reported traffic congestion and related transportation challenges. Respondents linked traffic congestion to a rise in transportation costs, logistical delays, and an overall increase in road (and roadside) insecurity. Respondents noted that increases in both vehicle traffic and the number of strangers (mostly men) on the roads presented safety issues, particularly for women. Nonetheless, it is difficult to discern the actual impact of the influx on road security. While the data show that all upazilas indicate traffic to be an issue, those closest to the influx area report it more often. For example, 53% of interviews in Pekua, an area distant from the Rohingya camps, mentioned traffic, whereas 76% of interviews in Ramu, closer to the camps, mentioned traffic.

Respondents attributed the increase in traffic to the Rohingya people more than to the humanitarian organizations. Especially in Ukhiya (59%), respondents blamed traffic risks substantially more on the Rohingya. In only 2% of the 176 interviews did respondents link traffic to the humanitarian community, as opposed to the 14% of interviews that attributed traffic to the Rohingya. In reality, these humanitarian organizations may be most responsible for the increase. Respondents may not have understood how frequently the humanitarian organizations use the roads to deliver aid and manage operations, and thus generally did not differentiate between the Rohingya population and the humanitarian organizations. This is consistent with the dilemma historically faced by humanitarian interventions, in which unintended harm done by an intervention (in this case, humanitarian assistance) exacerbates tension between identity groups, and does not necessarily foster grievance against the intervention itself or the actors responsible (in this case, the humanitarian organizations).

TENSION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Most respondents conveyed empathy for the plight of the Rohingya people. Respondents expressed their strong sense of humanitarian commitment and solidarity with the Rohingya people, particularly during and immediately after the influx. They recalled how their communities provided lands, fields, and shelter to the incoming refugees. As one madrasah head teacher said, “As human beings and as Muslims, we were sympathetic to them.” A male teacher at a madrasah added, “The Myanmar government tortured them, so the people of Cox’s Bazar sheltered them.”

However, the present circumstances are testing the positive sentiment of Bangladeshi communities. Respondents were concerned that the risk of conflict—specifically due to theft and competition over resources and land, but also to a general feeling of insecurity and volatility—would increase if the Rohingya remained in Bangladesh. One respondent said, “Risk is rising day by day.” A madrasah teacher added, “Social tension has increased due to stealing and robbery by the refugees.” And one community member stated, “If the Rohingya stay, they will spread out in other upazilas and integrate. As a result, crime will increase and conflict will occur between local people and the Rohingya.”

Nearly a third of all interviews mentioned that tension and quarrels were problematic in their areas. In a small number of interviews (10%), tension was attributed specifically to the relationship between the Bangladeshis and the Rohingya people. Respondents attributed tension to the influx substantially more in Teknaf (72%), perhaps due to greater proximity to the refugees, but not at all in Pekua, and rarely in other upazilas.

The risk of tension was most pronounced when communities encountered Rohingya people in their areas. Respondents reported firewood collection as one activity where impacted school communities and the Rohingya come into regular, direct contact. Respondents described how Rohingya people collected firewood in groups of up to 100, which may have increased the sense of fear experienced by members of host communities. There were also reports of specific clashes over firewood between the two groups. Recently, however, several international organizations began distributing liquid petroleum gas and compressed rice husks to Rohingya for cooking, which will reduce the competition for firewood.¹⁹¹

VIOLENCE

Just under 20% of the interviews mentioned risks associated with violence. While these risks were blamed almost exclusively on the Rohingya people in Teknaf and Pekua (100%), violence was rarely mentioned in the other locations. References to violence tended to be general, rather than citing specific examples. For instance, one female student said, “Many Rohingya are robbing and stealing and killing many members of police and Border Guards Bangladesh.” Another student said, “After the Rohingya influx the population is increasing, and as a result conflicts and violence among the community are increasing.” A community member remarked, “Due to the Rohingya influx, robbery, murder, drugs, and the supply of illegal arms have increased.” Another added, “The situation in our area is very bad. Most of the people are yaba addicts. Murder and robbery occur frequently. These problems increased only in the last two or three years.”

Host and impacted communities’ perceptions about killing and murder may originate from several murders inside the camps that received extensive coverage in the media. Media reports identify these

incidents as connected to an internal power struggle among Rohingya leaders; they are not the norm of life inside the camps. From respondent statements, however, it appears that this distinction is lost, and the incidents only add to the negative perceptions of the Rohingya people.^{192,193,194}

SPREAD OF DISEASE

In 6% of the interviews, respondents cited the spread of disease as a risk. In every case where disease was mentioned, communities perceived that the Rohingya were spreading diseases. For example, one madrasah head teacher said, “Rohingya people came with many incurable diseases, like AIDS, and they are now spreading it through their relatives to us.”

CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS

In 7% of the interviews, respondents said that social norms were changing specifically as a result of the Rohingya influx; no other causal factor was noted by respondents. One head teacher said, “Because of the Rohingya influx, some problems are being created, because our cultures are different.” A secondary teacher added, “Students are getting involved with drugs; they are degrading their character by associating with Rohingya people.”

THE IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Respondents in host and impacted communities perceive that humanitarian organizations are leaving them behind. Respondents conveyed frustration over their perception that the Rohingya received substantial humanitarian aid and access to public services they did not deserve, while the Bangladeshis received less aid and were missing out on public services they were once able to access. Respondents clearly perceived that the humanitarian assistance was focused on the Rohingya and the camps, not on them. As a student in an NGO-run center said, “NGOs give the priority to solving the problems faced by the Rohingya.” One respondent poignantly remarked that if donors could allocate half of their assistance to the Rohingya and half to Bangladeshis, it would “keep the peace.”

The perception that one had to be a Rohingya to gain assistance was sometimes so strong that respondents reported instances of Bangladeshis pretending to be Rohingya with false IDs. As another NGO-run center student said, “Many are marrying Rohingya to gain assistance from NGOs.”

One major criticism pointed to the camps and settlements themselves, as they overtook Bangladeshi lands entirely. Several schools reported that Bangladeshi classrooms were still being used by humanitarian organizations for meetings and to hold interviews with potential employees to work on the Rohingya response.

Higher-paying employment with humanitarian organizations offers a significant income opportunity, but it also drains skilled workers and students from the education sector. As described under LOCAL ECONOMY: PRICES AND WAGES, respondents noted that being employed with humanitarian organizations represented an important income opportunity—in terms of both more available jobs and potentially higher salaries. At the same time, employment with humanitarian organizations pulled skilled workers away from local industries and services. Many respondents were critical of the fact that students and teachers left school to obtain employment with humanitarian organizations, where they had the potential to earn more money than they could otherwise. Thus, while employment with

humanitarian organizations is helping some households adapt to rising costs, it also drains the human capacity in the education sector and harms students' educational outcomes.

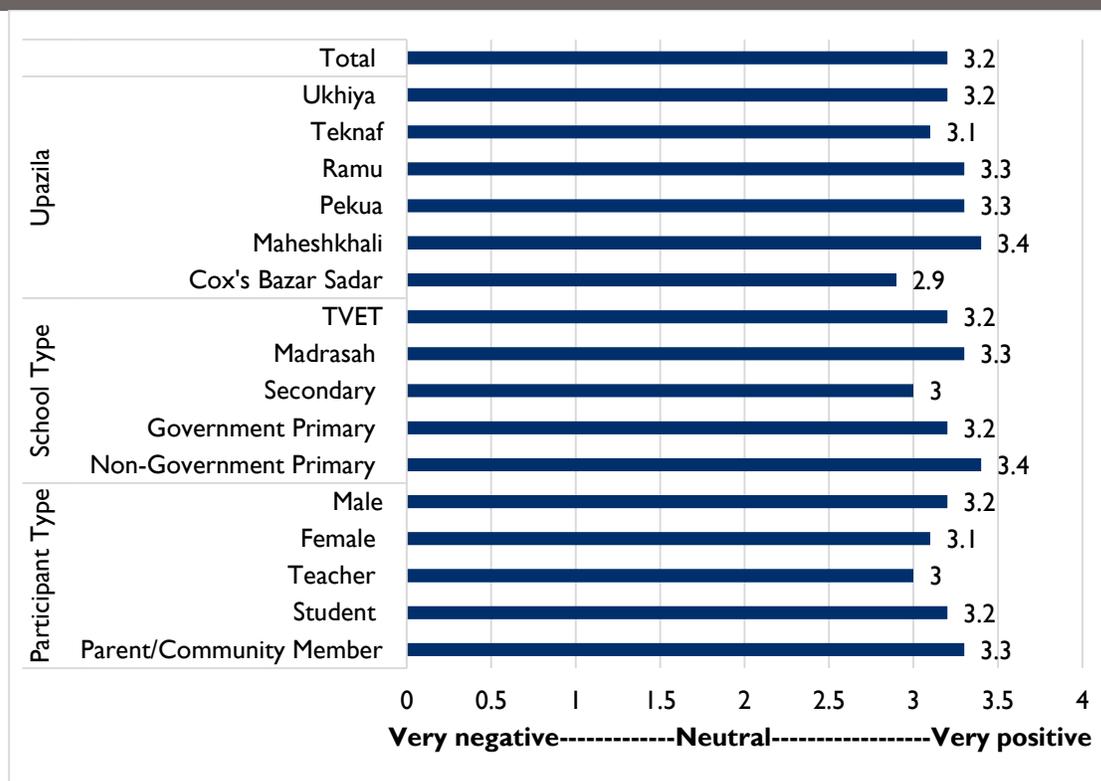
EDUCATION AND CONTEXTUAL RISK INTERACTION

This section explores how contextual risks and school communities influence one another, including the resilience factors present in school communities.

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL

The majority of participants had somewhat or strongly positive feelings about their schools. While these responses may be subject to bias, only a very small number of respondents had very negative feelings about their schools. Opinions did not vary significantly based on gender, but parents and community members felt slightly more positive about the school than teachers did. Perceptions were less positive among those in secondary schools, and more positive among those in non-government primary schools and madrasahs. Perceptions were less positive in Cox's Bazar Sadar and more positive in Maheshkhali.

FIGURE 9: PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL SCORES



The scores are based on responses to a question posed to participants in focus group discussions and key informant interviews: "On a scale of zero to four, where zero is very negative and four is very positive, how do you feel about your school?" (0 = very negative, 1 = somewhat negative, 2 = neutral, 3 = somewhat positive, 4 = very positive)

Respondents viewed their education as important, particularly in terms of preparation for future jobs. One community member explained:

“The school is very good for the locality. Once there was a huge number of jobless young people, but now the young people are getting the opportunity to be educated, and after the completion of their study, they are now getting jobs. So, the school helps to mitigate the unemployment problem of this area.”

Respondents pointed to the importance of education in maintaining and building social cohesion.

Schools at all levels were described as places where students can join their friends, play, learn, and become prepared for employment. Students reported feeling “united” by the school and their teachers. As one male secondary student said, “Though the community is very poor, people are very cordial and cooperative regarding children’s education.” Another respondent stated, “Schools play an important role in keeping the community together.”

Respondents in madrasahs felt safe, respected, and cared for. Many respondents commented that their teachers are “good men” who have “friendly behavior” and that “the teacher and student relationship is good.” One teacher noted the value of an Islamic education:

“I have been teaching here for a long time. It feels good. The values that come from Islam—we teach with these values and feel proud. Our madrasah is very good. Students are good at Bangla, English, mathematics, and everything. Islam will increase the quality of education here. Our Islamic education is very beneficial to our country and to the world. Islam teaches the students to be calm in any situation. Our madrasah was included for the Kamil honors course,¹⁹⁵ and we are hopeful that our students will take part in developing our society. I am proud of my work here.”

Despite their overwhelmingly positive perceptions of schools, respondents were also very clear about the problems schools are facing. Table 10 summarizes the issues raised during the interviews, based on coding of all open-ended responses to all questions in a single interview.

TABLE 10: EDUCATION CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS							
% OF INTERVIEWS INDICATING CHALLENGE							
CHALLENGES FOR STUDENTS, BASED ON RESPONSES FROM ALL GROUPS							
	COX'S BAZAR SADAR (n = 45)	MAHESHKHALI (n = 17)	PEKUA (n = 17)	RAMU (n = 21)	TEKNAF (n = 38)	UKHIYA (n = 38)	TOTAL (n = 176)
Access to school and attendance	53%	63%	41%	52%	45%	47%	50%
Social-emotional problems	56%	69%	59%	29%	61%	26%	49%
Retention and dropout	36%	50%	47%	43%	45%	37%	41%
Poor infrastructure and equipment (e.g., walls, desks, latrines)	16%	25%	47%	24%	26%	13%	22%
Poor-quality instruction and pedagogical materials	18%	6%	6%	33%	26%	21%	20%

(e.g., books, laboratory)							
Not enough teachers	11%	6%	29%	10%	13%	18%	14%
School related gender-based violence, including violence around school	9%	25%	6%	10%	24%	11%	14%
Nutrition and hunger	0%	0%	6%	14%	8%	3%	5%
CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS, BASED ON RESPONSES FROM TEACHERS							
	COX'S BAZAR SADAR (n = 45)	MAHESHKHALI (n = 17)	PEKUA (n = 17)	RAMU (n = 21)	TEKNAF (n = 38)	UKHIYA (n = 38)	TOTAL (n = 176)
Student's access to school and attendance	76%	100%	44%	45%	43%	81%	65%
Student retention and dropout	57%	29%	44%	27%	43%	38%	42%
Students' social-emotional problems	38%	57%	44%	9%	29%	19%	31%
Poor-quality instruction and pedagogical materials (e.g., books, laboratory)	48%	29%	22%	27%	14%	6%	26%
School-related gender-based violence, including violence around school	24%	14%	11%	9%	43%	25%	23%
Poor infrastructure and equipment (e.g., walls, desks, latrines)	14%	43%	22%	18%	29%	6%	19%
Not enough teachers	24%	0%	11%	18%	21%	13%	17%

Note: More than one challenge may be noted per group.

ACCESS AND ATTENDANCE

Across all upazilas, difficulty with access to school and attendance was the most frequently mentioned issue. Half of all interviews cited this as a problem for students, and nearly two-thirds of all teachers noted it as a challenge. Most often, this problem was attributed to natural hazards or transportation issues.

Among sample respondents, the challenge of school access was cited most frequently in the interviews conducted in disaster-prone Maheshkhali, but it was mentioned at least once in all upazilas. Respondents frequently described situations in which students and teachers were physically unable to reach a school, or in which a school was unusable as a result of natural hazards. For example:

“Due to cyclones, the attendance rate of students decreases, which hampers their study.” (Primary teacher)

“Students cannot attend school during floods, which occur every year.” (Primary student)

“We can’t go to school due to floods—around 40% of us can’t get to school.” (Primary school head teacher)

“Madrasah buildings and students’ household materials are affected by disasters; as a result, students’ studies are hampered.” (Madrasah head teacher)

Respondents explained that after the influx, many schools sheltered the Rohingya and were closed for up to three months. The army and police continue to occupy parts of some of these schools.

Transportation challenges—including availability, cost, and time—are barriers to accessing school.

As one secondary teacher said, “Decreased daily attendance and also late attendance of students are challenges. Because of increasing transportation cost and availability of seats and even standing space in the bus, they have been late or absent in the school.” A community member in Ukhiya said, “Traffic jams cause terrible suffering for both the students and teachers. Sometimes it takes much more time to reach the madrasah.” One secondary teacher in Ukhiya said that it can take two to three hours for both teachers and students to reach their schools. The situation become so serious that the Upazila Executive Officer of Ukhiya issued a Special Notice requesting the public to travel on main access roads outside of peak morning commute hours on school examination days so that students could reach the exam center.¹⁹⁶

A secondary school teacher in Ukhiya explained how the transportation problems impacted not just attendance but also what could be taught in the necessarily shortened day:

“Daily school hours have been reduced by two hours because students come from far-away areas. Because of the transportation crisis and increased transportation costs, at the end of the school day at 4:00 pm, they can’t reach home until 7:00 or 7:30 pm, which is very risky. So, the current school day runs from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm. Teachers cannot cover all the subjects well, which hampers the quality of education.”

In many cases, these transportation-related access challenges were said to be a newer concern and were attributed to the Rohingya influx.

Access appears to be a particular challenge for students with disabilities. Parents were reportedly reluctant to send their children with disabilities (including autism) to school, either because the children felt uncomfortable at school, or because parents were not interested in making the effort to educate these children. In other discussions, a limited number of respondents observed that students with disabilities were too afraid to come to school.

Perceptions of low education quality play a role in reduced enrollment. There are indications that some parents are unimpressed with the quality of schools (detailed further below), which can deter them from making the effort to enroll their children. As one community member said:

“During the time of admission, we go door to door to convince parents to admit their children to our school. If we had a better building, classroom, and equipment, they

might show more eagerness to admit their children to the school. But right now they feel insecure.”

RETENTION AND DROPOUT

School dropout was a prominent issue encountered across nearly half of all interviews. Several motivating factors for dropout were mentioned. Students and teachers pointed to household finances and livelihoods as the prime reason for dropping out; as one TVET head teacher said, “Students are dropping out for employment in the Rohingya camp at a very high salary.” This included situations where students’ fathers lost their jobs, older students needed to work, and they took the opportunity to work for higher pay in the refugee camps. Several respondents explained that parents saw more value in their children contributing to household income than in their education. Several respondents contended that students dropped out to sell drugs for income or, in a few cases, due to drug use.

In nearly 20% of the interviews, early marriage was cited as a key reason that girls drop out early. A few respondents perceived that the influx had increased the incidence of early marriage, explaining that Bangladeshi families wanted their daughters to get married first before accepting any jobs in the camps. Preventing early marriage was also seen as a challenge. One female secondary school teacher said, “It is difficult to stop early marriage and encourage girls to continue with their education.” Many respondents attributed the rise in early marriage to parents’ failure to value their daughters’ education, particularly as girls reach secondary school. Early marriage was also linked to boys’ ability to achieve financial solvency, which precipitates both early marriage and school dropout.

Out-of-school children and youth dropped out mainly due to livelihood or household income considerations. Two focus group discussions with out-of-school children and youth provided insights into the factors behind their decision to drop out and their views on education. Most respondents dropped out when they could no longer afford school fees after the death or unemployment of their fathers. Many respondents came from other coastal areas in Cox’s Bazar, including Maheshkhali, and their families had lost their homes and/or lands due to disasters. However, respondents complained that there were few job opportunities for dropouts. Nearly all respondents valued their school and recalled their school-going days as very happy ones. They added that they preferred studying over working.

EDUCATION QUALITY

In total, over half of all interviews indicated problems with the quality of education. The problems noted most frequently were (i) poor quality of instruction and inadequate materials (20% of all interviews and 26% of teacher interviews), (ii) poor school infrastructure (22% of all interviews and 19% of teacher interviews), and (iii) too few teachers for the number of students (14% of all interviews and 19% of teacher interviews). Other concerns noted were the uneven access to services and resources for students with disabilities, and deficiencies in schools’ infrastructural conditions. Each challenge is described in more detail below.

TEACHERS

Teachers were broadly viewed as good at their work and as trusted guardians to whom students turn for assistance and problem solving. Respondents noted how teachers would try to motivate the parents of dropouts, how they tell students to stick together, and how they care for students and help with

students' problems. Respondents noted that teachers were passionate about their work. However, the myriad challenges faced by teachers were noted by many.

Schools do not have enough teachers. Government schools do not receive their full allocation of government-salaried teachers. One respondent explained that the 71 primary schools in the upazila had only 307 of the 392 approved government teachers. Key informants reported that the reasons behind teacher shortages are various: there are limited posts allocated for each school; there are extended teacher absences (due, for instance, to long-term training, maternity leave, transfers to other schools, and retirement) that are never filled; there is a lack of teachers in schools in border areas, as teachers often stay only for short periods and seek transfer due to the upazila's remoteness from the city; there is a lack of accommodations; and extremists sometimes cause insecurity among the teachers. Communities have filled this gap by funding and hiring para-teachers, but these positions lack job security and a pension, and thus are less attractive than a government teaching post.

The impact of the Rohingya influx has exacerbated the teacher shortage, and respondents called for this need to be addressed. Respondents were consistent in reporting that many teachers, particularly community or para-teachers, have left schools to take up higher-paying jobs in the refugee camps, thereby increasing the teacher shortage. Respondents complained that teachers—both government and community or para-teachers—were not being paid regularly, or enough. At one private secondary school, teachers reported that they had not been paid during 4 of the previous 10 months, as parents have less disposable income for school fees due to price increases. In addition to low pay, the price increases and transportation challenges in Cox's Bazar make the posting less desirable and reduce the cost-benefit calculation.

A recent socioeconomic assessment by the UNDP found that in some schools or colleges in Teknaf and Ukhiya, up to 70% of teachers had left their jobs for more lucrative employment with humanitarian organizations.¹⁹⁷ As one head teacher said, "Teachers are taking jobs with higher salaries in NGOs, and that's why retaining teachers is hard." The teacher shortage was largely attributed to the influx. As a female teacher in Ukhiya explained, "For 1,250 students, only 10 teachers are working. Temporary or guest teachers left the school due to higher-paid jobs with NGOs working for the Rohingya, so classes are negatively affected."

Teachers are struggling to deliver a quality education. In nearly all cases in which poor school quality was mentioned, respondents cited the challenges faced by teachers: Teachers are not adequately trained, they are tense from the traffic situation, they are discouraged by low salaries, and they lack expertise in their subjects. For these reasons (and possibly more), teachers do not teach well, they do not use teaching aids, their own attendance is irregular, and the overall quality of teaching is low. Even skilled and trained teachers struggle with the increase in student-teacher ratios in all schools.

Teachers face increased transportation costs and prices, which affects school quality. Like their students, teachers need to travel for more time to reach schools; they are often late to school, which reduces class time. Even before the influx, teachers were often unable to come to school during times of disaster or had other difficulties with physically accessing the school—much like the problems students encounter, as noted in ACCESS AND ATTENDANCE.

The price increases in the community have also caused more stress for teachers than usual. Respondents explained that some teachers are taking out loans to offset the additional costs of commodities and transportation. One secondary teacher said, “As a result of the arrival of the Rohingya, various NGOs rent homes as their offices, so rent is increasing. But due to their low salaries, teachers are unable to rent these houses.”

TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

Respondents identified insufficient teaching and learning materials as a barrier to education quality. The most frequently cited reasons for poor school quality were poor or inadequate teaching materials and inadequate pedagogical materials, such as books or computer labs. This issue was raised significantly less often across all interviews in Maheshkhali and Pekua, and most often in Ramu; it was also raised frequently by teachers, particularly in Cox’s Bazar Sadar.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Access to services and resources for students with disabilities was uneven across the district. For example, respondents in one school had no special class or services for their autistic students, whereas respondents in another school said that students with disabilities are given extra time to complete exams and do their work in class. Another respondent recalled how a teacher worked very well with students with disabilities in the school, despite having no formal training for this role, while some respondents noted that teachers were unable to give students with disabilities the extra attention they need. A number of issues also surfaced about infrastructure accessibility for students with disabilities. For instance, multi-purpose cyclone shelters and many schools have no ramps and therefore are not accessible to many people with disabilities.

SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

In 22% of the interviews, respondents cited a range of deficiencies in the infrastructural conditions of their schools, particularly in terms of basic physical needs: electrification, windows, fans, desks and chairs, latrines, and undamaged walls and roofs. Many noted that the classroom space is inadequate and that their schools don’t have enough (or any) playing fields or canteens (cafeterias). Infrastructural concerns were mentioned most often in Pekua (47% of interviews), and least often in Cox’s Bazar Sadar (16% of interviews) and Ukhiya (13% of interviews). Several respondents said they have considered converting their school into a government school in order to improve school conditions and access resources for improved infrastructure and teacher training.

Problems with inadequate building facilities impact the quality of education. For example, many secondary schools have no laboratory facilities for science education. Poor conditions in the buildings were mentioned as well, including the limited access to power, which restricts teachers’ ability to use digital content and laboratory facilities.

Students regularly reported that their schools are exposed and structurally vulnerable to natural hazards. They also pointed to the exposure of their schools on the coast and riverways, and complained about the inadequate structural integrity and resilience of their school construction. Respondents widely noted that their schools are regularly flooded, either by storm surge at the coast, rainfall, or river flooding, and that this interrupts schooling. “The road is too low and narrow, and during floods it is difficult to reach school,” one primary teacher said. Students at one school must commute from across a

river, and cannot come to school when the water level has risen. Respondents in a madrasah saw water levels rise 6 to 12 feet, inundating the entire community.

Many students and teachers in the sample expressed fear about the structural integrity of older schools, fearing that they will collapse in a storm or earthquake. One student said, “The school building is so old that it can collapse any time.” A secondary teacher added, “One side of the school building is already broken, so it is possible that the whole building may collapse at any time.” Key informants indicated that more shelters are needed as well, and some of the current shelters need repairs. Some noted that the Upazila Executive Officers were doing the necessary repairs from their own funds.

Insufficient school infrastructure is exacerbating already large class sizes. Insufficient available classrooms coupled with a teacher shortage has caused most classrooms to be very congested, with five to six students sitting on one bench. Respondents frequently referred to the crowded conditions and how they make it difficult for students to learn. One student at a NGO-run education center said:

“Many classrooms have been taken over, due to the Rohingya influx. Classes for two different grades take place in the same room. School assemblies are no longer held in the open field, since the field areas have been taken by the Rohingya.”

Another student agreed with this assessment, saying, “Classrooms have no partition to divide into two classes, so there is huge sound pollution, and one class interrupts another.”

Students also noted that classrooms are uncomfortable, particularly in the hotter months. One student said, “Students cannot pay attention in class due to tin shed classrooms and high temperatures during summer.”

Students frequently commented on the inadequate sanitary facilities in schools, including washrooms and clean water. For girls, inadequate sanitation creates additional challenges, particularly during menstruation, and introduces potential safety issues, when they must change their clothes or use a washroom that is not designated for girls. One teacher in Ukhiya summarized her school’s situation:

“We have inadequate classrooms for 1,250 students, inadequate toilet and washroom facilities, and no separate facilities for boys, girls, and staff. There is no personal hygiene maintenance facility for girls.”

SAFETY

Students in the sample generally felt safer in school than when travelling to and from school. The spike in traffic and activity on the roadways has introduced new hazards for students. Respondents consistently reported that students feel unsafe on the roads, especially if they must travel longer distances to school.

Girls in particular (more than twice as many girls’ interviews than boys’) complained about being harassed by strangers on the road or within their school. Boys also frequently mentioned seeing this behavior (“eve teasing”) happening to girls. One female TVET student linked the “eve teasing” to local politics:

“Some local political boys tease the girls on the way to school. The girls cannot say anything to these stalkers, because the girls are afraid of them. Students are being forced to take part in many political events. If they do not want to take part, they get harassed by the political leaders.”

Students said that they often reported cases of violence and/or harassment to family members, parents, grandparents, teachers and head teachers, and even the Upazila Executive Officer, District Education Officer, or School Management Committee—but, according to respondents, the response taken varied. In some cases, no initiative was taken by the schools or Upazila Executive Officer; in other cases, the School Management Committee “resolved” the matter. Some respondents noted that if a case were serious, reporting it to the teacher did not help.

Reports of sexual abuse or exploitation were rare. Across all focus groups with students, only two instances of sexual “exploitation” in school were mentioned. Though most agreed that the environment outside the school had become more dangerous, students and teachers rarely reported violence occurring within the school. Nonetheless, fear is present. As one female TVET student said, “Because of safety issues, female students cannot attend school regularly. They are very afraid of being raped.”

Students and teachers reported feeling less safe due to a perceived increase in drug availability and use in the school. Respondents noted that this can contribute to both students’ reluctance to go to school and families’ reluctance to send their children to school. In one school, the head teacher estimated that two-thirds of the students were using yaba.

Female students cited the need for a school boundary wall for increased safety. Two students reported “strangers” entering the school building, and several respondents said that Rohingya people entered school grounds and disturbed class. A madrasah student said, “Rohingya people are disturbing the classroom environment, because they come around school during the day.” Another madrasah student said, “There is no boundary wall around the school, so outsiders come often and hamper the school environment. If there were a gate in front of our school, it would be better for us.”

Respondents also named their fears of conflict and increasing instability as reasons to avoid school. In Ukhiya, respondents said they feared conflict between the Rohingya and Bangladeshis, and in some instances this kept them from coming to school. One key informant claimed that students from ethnic minority groups in Ukhiya were too afraid to come to school.¹⁹⁸

Respondents also cited insecurity and fear of being hurt in a disaster while at the school building, particularly if they perceived the school building to be unsafe and especially exposed, such as near a river or coastline (as described in SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE, above). A parent of a madrasah student said, “Some of the academic buildings are located beside cyclone shelter buildings, which are old, and students feel like those buildings might collapse at any time.”

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ISSUES

Students feel anxiety and stress. Community members and parents noted that both teachers and students “face a tense situation.” Teachers and students reported feeling “anxious” or “tense” about their future. One head teacher observed, “Students and teachers are anxious about the Rohingya people, as they think the Rohingya are going to stay forever.”

The highest incidence of social-emotional issues among students was found in the discussions held in Maheshkhali (69%), followed by Teknaf (61%), Cox's Bazar Sadar (56%), and Pekua (59%). This issue came up less in Ramu (29%) and Ukhiya (26%). One male student mentioned that he felt "anxiety about the Rohingya," while a female student said, "Students become mentally upset, and they exhibit abnormal behavior in the classroom and on the way to school." A head teacher stated, "Students feel social-emotional stress." One male student said:

"Robbery is increasing the mental pressure on students, because they need to guard the locality to ensure people's safety. This is why students sometimes are unable to give full attention to their studies."

Teachers also confront anxiety and stress. Social-emotional issues for teachers were cited most in discussions in Maheshkhali (57%), Pekua (44%), and Cox's Bazar Sadar (38%). One head teacher said that "fear and insecurity have increased." Interestingly, discussions in the most directly impacted upazilas of Teknaf (29%), Ukhiya (19%), and Ramu (9%) mentioned social-emotional concerns less frequently.

Social-emotional strain was linked to a variety of issues. A female teacher said, "Female teachers, as well as students, face 'eve teasing' and bullying." Other teachers are afraid of the "lawlessness" of the Rohingya people, they feel "tense about the future," and they generally describe the impact of the influx as a "tense situation." One male teacher said, "There is emotional stress for teachers after returning home, as they also feel the pressure of increased prices."

NUTRITION AND FOOD INSECURITY

Respondents reported that students are often hungry. This was most notable in Ramu, where 14% of interviews mentioned this issue and where, notably, there is no government school feeding program for primary students. Student hunger appeared to be linked to household dietary restrictions and increased travel time to school, which required students to leave home earlier and often go without breakfast. Respondents stated that many students are malnourished, some students faint because they are hungry (although fainting can occur from a number of causes), and some have a hard time concentrating on homework due to hunger. There were also reports of small children turning to crime to get or pay for food. These findings are consistent with recent food security and nutrition assessments, which indicate a likely overall increase in food insecurity in the district due to the influx.

Respondents suggested putting canteens in schools so that students have an opportunity to eat, instead of having to leave school grounds to find food or go hungry. As one secondary school teacher stated:

"Students come to school from far away, but there is no canteen—so students have to go without any food. If anyone goes home to eat during a break, he won't come back."

SCHOOL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

A number of resilience-enhancing factors within school communities emerged from the data collection.

RELATIONSHIPS

The capacity of parents to support their children's education appears limited by financial constraints and their own low educational attainment. Focus group discussions revealed varying views about the

role of parents, their support for their children’s education, and their interactions with the school. Respondents explained that some parents were facing more financial hardships and could not pay school fees, and that some had to relocate to find new jobs. Some respondents said that illiterate parents did not understand the benefits of education and therefore did not send their children to school. Respondents also explained that some parents prefer their children to work rather than go to school, particularly at the secondary level.

The level of collaboration between schools and parents is mixed. Many respondents indicated that parents participated in school activities, talked to teachers, and cared about how their children were doing in school. At some locations, respondents claimed that parent-teacher meetings were sufficient in terms of frequency; in other locations, respondents found them insufficient. Respondents from one school reported holding meetings with parents only every three years, and another respondent stated that parents would not come to the school at all.

For emotional support, students rely on parents and other trusted adults. For example, 71% of students said that they would look to their mother in case they were afraid or needed help, 56% would look to their father, and 52% to a teacher. By comparison, 17% said they would reach out to the police, and 29%—significantly more females (41%) than males (14%)—would reach out to a friend.

POLICE

Many respondents saw the police as beneficial. There were some reports of police helping people during emergencies—in particular, helping them get to cyclone shelters. A male student said, “Police are helpful. When we call the police, they respond and solve the problem.” A female TVET student explained, “To combat disasters, law enforcement plays an important role.”

However, nearly half the mentions of police were negative. Many respondents reported that the police wouldn’t respond to requests for help without bribes. Others described the police as slow, late, and sedentary. Some respondents indicated that children and youth were afraid of the police, who sometimes stopped and searched them indiscriminately and harassed younger girls. One female student in secondary school said, “People are scared of the roaming police.”

In schools in the communities nearer to the camps (the southern sub-districts), police contingents took over classrooms or wings of schools as barracks from which to operate. At one school, 40 police took over a wing of a school. At this location, the RERA Team observed policemen bathing, using the same bathroom(s) as the students, and walking around half-dressed in front of female students. A male primary student stated, “People hate the police here. They never go to the police. The police are corrupt—they arrest innocent people and demand money.”

Respondents’ views about the police in their communities are mixed. Across all focus groups, positive responses about the police occurred only 15 out of 51 times (less than one-third), while negative responses accounted for 22 mentions, and mixed reviews tallied 14. Notably, negative responses occurred in the two most affected upazilas—Ukhiya and Teknaf (6 each). Table 11 illustrates the perceptions of the police shared in all interviews, based on coding of all open-ended responses to all questions in a single interview that mentioned police at all.

TABLE 11: PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE, BY UPAZILA

PERCENTAGE OF INTERVIEWS INDICATING A PERCEPTION OF THE POLICE							
	COXS BAZAR SADAR (n = 14)	MAHESHKHALI (n = 4)	PEKUA (n = 2)	RAMU (n = 7)	TEKNAF (n = 10)	UKHIYA (n = 14)	TOTAL (n = 51)
Negative perception only	36%	25%	50%	43%	60%	43%	43%
Sometimes bad, sometimes good	21%	75%	0%	29%	20%	29%	27%
Positive perception only	43%	0%	50%	29%	20%	29%	29%

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

The effectiveness and inclusion of School Management Committees received mixed reviews from sample respondents. Across all schools, respondents offered a mixed picture of how the committees functioned. Many respondents confirmed support for committees, crediting them for working well with parents and NGOs, including on disasters, infrastructural issues, and the influx. The committee chairman was often referred to as having played an important role in helping out in disaster situations, particularly for the poorest families.

But other respondents were less positive about the way their committee worked. They noted that the committees are often politically oriented, only use top-down management, and need to do more to enhance and diversify community participation. One key informant observed that committee chairs are appointed by the Union Council chairman, and this dynamic can prioritize local politics over education. In one case, respondents said that the president of the committee used the school grounds as a storehouse for salts. The head teacher attempted to put an end to this, but was intimidated by the committee into stopping. Other respondents simply wanted the committee to work more efficiently.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND COLLABORATION

Communities in the sample collaborate on several key domains, including religion, local identity and culture, and humanitarian assistance. When asked about the issues that bring their communities together, 36% of focus groups cited education and school. In contrast, only 6% of focus groups reported that children alone bring the community together. As an area of collaboration, religion was a mixed bag; in 65% of the interviews in Pekua and 55% in Ukhiya, religion was said to bring communities together, but this was the case in only 33% of the interviews in Ramu and 39% in Teknaf.

A number of respondents explained how community leaders, such as the Union Council Chairman, and other community members distribute food and water to the poorer families. One respondent said that everyone “helps the poorer families, as they all come from the same religion.” Several respondents across different sites noted that wealthier residents would help out poorer, more vulnerable residents. Others explained how local representatives and School Management Committee members help to bring people to a safe location during and after a disaster.

Table 12 outlines responses to the question, “What brings the school communities together?” across all interviews, organized by sub-district.

TABLE 12: WHAT BRINGS THE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES TOGETHER?							
PERCENTAGE OF INTERVIEWS GIVING THIS RESPONSE							
RESPONSE	COX'S BAZAR SADAR (n = 45)	MAHESHKHALI (n = 16)	PEKUA (n = 17)	RAMU (n = 21)	TEKNAF (n = 38)	UKHIYA (n = 38)	TOTAL (n = 176)
Local identity	47%	63%	47%	48%	42%	50%	48%
Religion	44%	50%	65%	33%	39%	55%	47%
Humanitarian assistance	47%	50%	47%	29%	50%	37%	43%
Education	31%	44%	59%	33%	42%	24%	36%
Culture	33%	38%	47%	33%	32%	29%	34%
Sports	27%	19%	29%	24%	29%	16%	24%
Children	4%	0%	6%	0%	3%	16%	6%
Nothing	9%	0%	0%	0%	3%	11%	5%

Note: More than one response per group is possible.

Respondents across the sample believed that local identity, culture, and religion help bond their communities. Sources of unity included peoples’ long-term relationship to the land and community, families’ and relatives’ support in a crisis, and how, as one madrasah teacher said, “people feel attached to each other and cooperate with each other, as they live in the same area.” To many respondents, being from the same culture and same religion keeps them “united and together.” Another respondent said that the community’s emotional attachment leads them to help one another. Religious festivals and events were recognized as activities that promote cohesion and social capital. Respondents reported that cultural programs also bring the community together, such as Rag Day (celebrating the last day of school), orientation programs, and the Bengali New Year (Pohela Boishakh). One respondent said that there was no religious discrimination in their community.

Many respondents (36%) believed that education brings their communities together. This perception was highest in discussions held in Pekua (56%), Maheshkhali (44%), and Teknaf (42%). This reinforces the finding (noted in Table 12) on the positive role of education in enhancing social cohesion. Responses revealed additional insights. A female secondary student said, “Those who are educated understand the value of being united.” According to a female primary school student, “Teachers tell us to stay together, and parents tell us to stay together. So, we stay together.” A male secondary student explained, “School keeps people in the community united by discussing matters.”

In crisis, some respondents reported how teachers and students in their community worked jointly and that teachers help inspire parental involvement in their communities. After-school activities were seen as important for community cohesion, including Scouts and Girl Guides activities. However, they also noted that the number of after-school programs is insufficient.

Humanitarian assistance was seen by respondents as a way to build ties within and between communities. In the words of a primary school student, “Humanitarian assistance strengthens ties in society.” Many respondents across the district recalled their humanitarian commitment to the Rohingya, particularly during the early days and months of the crisis. Cyclone preparedness, response, and recovery programs often translate into activities—such as practice drills and volunteer training—that engage a cross-section of community members. These are forms of community engagement that build connections and bonds within and between communities, affirming members’ shared identity and a sense of social cohesion.

COMMUNITY ADAPTATION

Respondents described various ways in which their school communities adapt to disasters. Nearly two-thirds of all focus groups mentioned coping with disasters through active cooperation and sharing within the community. Less frequently, but more often in Maheshkhali, families spend their own savings to cope with a crisis. In a minority of interviews, respondents mentioned that they would respond to adversity, such as a disaster or rising prices, by seeking new employment with the humanitarian NGOs supporting the Rohingya influx response. Other adaptations that respondents mentioned were relocating for shelter (with some taking shelter in the refugee camp, or even marrying a Rohingya), moving to a city for employment, keeping extra dry-food stocks in higher locations in the house, and using boats to get around during flooding.

Table 13 presents responses to the question, “When there is a disaster, how do you cope?” across all interviews, organized by upazila.

TABLE 13: WHEN THERE IS A DISASTER, HOW DO YOU COPE?							
PERCENTAGE OF INTERVIEWS GIVING THIS RESPONSE							
RESPONSE	COX'S BAZAR SADAR (n = 45)	MAHESHKHALI (n = 16)	PEKUA (n = 17)	RAMU (n = 21)	TEKNAF (n = 38)	UKHIYA (n = 38)	TOTAL (n = 176)
Cooperate and share with community	56%	69%	65%	62%	55%	61%	59%
Rely on outside help	40%	56%	47%	29%	45%	32%	40%
Use family savings or assets	20%	56%	29%	29%	26%	24%	27%

Call on local administration or government	18%	0%	18%	14%	26%	24%	19%
Change work or other income source	22%	13%	12%	19%	16%	8%	15%
Rely on religious community	18%	6%	18%	10%	13%	18%	15%
Move or relocate	18%	6%	12%	24%	11%	11%	14%
Call on civil defense, army, or police	9%	0%	0%	10%	5%	5%	6%
We don't cope	2%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Note: More than one response per group is possible.

Reports on the self-reliance of respondents' school communities were mixed. In 40% of the interviews, respondents mentioned the need for outside help in times of crisis. They reported relying less on local administration and government to cope with shocks; in fact, they frequently reported that they do not wait for the government to help in a crisis or disaster. (In Maheshkhali, literally no one mentioned turning to the local government.) Instead, they said, they help themselves and one another. In contrast, some respondents stated that they do rely on the government, the police, the army, and NGOs for help.

SCHOOL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Evidence suggests that schools are lacking in their efforts to prepare for and reduce disaster risk. Respondents revealed a general awareness of the main disaster risks in their school community, such as cyclones, flooding, and, to a more limited extent, earthquakes. Many respondents were aware of the cyclone-preparedness and early warning protocols. Nonetheless, responses across all locations indicated that school-level action to prepare for or reduce the risk of natural hazards was limited. Many respondents reported that there was no preparedness plan or steps taken, nor any drills. Only a few respondents recalled preparedness training, evacuation drills, and awareness-raising support from the Red Crescent Society, BRAC, and fire brigades.

The performance of union and school Disaster Management Committees received mixed reviews in the sample. Respondents noted that some union and school Disaster Management Committees functioned well, while many others reported that they were not functional at all. Several respondents called for schools to teach more about disasters. The district- and upazila-level Disaster Management Committees were both reported to be active and functional, but at the Union Council level, many respondents remarked that most Disaster Management Committees were not working. In the absence of fully operational preparedness and response plans and systems, school communities are unnecessarily vulnerable to known, recurring natural hazards.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall conclusion: The latest Rohingya influx has deepened the plight of already struggling school communities throughout Cox's Bazar district.

EDUCATION

School communities have demonstrated abundant humanitarian goodwill toward the arriving Rohingya refugees.

- **Bangladeshis empathized with the Rohingya.** Communities still express empathy for and solidarity with the Rohingya people, drawing on their shared religious and cultural foundations.
- **Schools provided substantial space as temporary refugee shelters.** Many schools, particularly in Teknaf and Ukhiya, offered substantial use of their space as shelters for Rohingya refugees.
- **Communities extended land to refugees.** Residents in communities willingly gave up land for temporary shelters, including playing fields and forests.

The quality of education is declining.

- **Education quality was weak before and has been further weakened by the refugee influx.** Consequences of the population increase include greater student-teacher ratios, reduced teaching time, and reduced perceptions of education quality.
- **School infrastructure was already inadequate and has been further strained by the influx.** Before the influx, schools struggled with insufficient, outdated, or damaged infrastructure, and the use of schools as shelters during the initial influx period further compromised the facilities.

There is a teacher shortage.

- **Schools are losing teachers to new employment opportunities with humanitarian organizations assisting the Rohingya influx.** Teachers (particularly para-teachers and teachers at madrasah and NGO schools) are lured by the financial gains promised by employment with humanitarian actors responding to the influx, thus eroding the capacity of schools to deliver high-quality education.
- **The ratio of students to teachers is higher.** Higher ratios have implications for student learning, safety, and overall well-being

The influx has impacted access to education, especially for female students.

- **Road quality and traffic negatively impact access to school.** Respondents across the district shared frustration over the increase in traffic, travel time, and the cost of travel to go to and from school.

- **Increased road traffic is especially intimidating to girls.** Increased traffic caused by humanitarian organizations servicing the camps was reported consistently by teachers and female students. Particularly in the southernmost upazilas, threats to women and girls on the route to school, including harassment and intimidation, have risen.
- **Early marriage may be increasing.** Prior to the influx, the percentage of early marriage had somewhat decreased. But there are indications that it is on the rise again as parents are less able to send their daughters to secondary school due to increases in poverty. Consequently, for both economic and safety reasons, girls are dropping out and being married at an earlier age.
- **The risk of sexual harassment is increasing.** There is an increased risk of sexual harassment and/or assault for girls, particularly as the population of the area is now four to five times greater than it had been. Especially outside of school, this results in girls being surrounded by unfamiliar men and boys much more often than would have been the case prior to the refugees' arrival.
- **An increased security presence can compromise females' sense of safety in impacted schools.** Although schools are attempting to enact at least a minimum level of security for students, the presence of police in and around schools was cited as a mixed blessing for student safety.

Recent gains in school retention are now being reversed.

- **Dropout rates are up.** Respondents widely reported increased numbers of school dropouts, due to logistical challenges, financial barriers, opportunities for employment with humanitarian organizations, and general insecurity. The increasing opportunity cost of education provides little incentive for older students who are presented with the opportunity of employment in the camps to prioritize staying in school over the potential for immediate gains.
- **Primary and secondary school enrollment rates are slipping.** Persistence levels in primary school had begun to rise prior to the arrival of the refugees, but these numbers are now decreasing. Both male and female working age students are leaving schools for higher-paying jobs with humanitarian organizations or related business opportunities.

The influx disproportionately impacts the poor and the most marginalized.

- **Rising costs of commodities and transportation impacted the affordability of education.** Rising costs have led to increasing numbers of dropouts, as students and teachers are leaving to work in the camps.
- **More students are coming to school hungry.** Respondents and informants indicated that families are cutting back on food budgets and reducing their overall caloric intake. In addition, increased travel time to school means more children arrive hungry.
- **Students with disabilities may have more difficulty in school.** Some respondents noted reduced teacher attention to students with disabilities.

CONTEXTUAL RISKS

The influx is exacerbating the district's pre-existing contextual risks.

- **Cox's Bazar is the country's district least resilient to disasters.** There are indications that the school cyclone shelters already needed repairs, and these buildings must bear the brunt of any disasters.
- **Respondents perceive rising crime and trafficking.** In all sample sites, respondents reported that crime and drug use are increasing and that women are frequent targets of human trafficking. The porous border area that separates Myanmar from Bangladesh has historically been known for human trafficking and other forms of illicit cross-border trade. The influx, which involved a large increase in the number of people moving across the border area, has been perceived to be accompanied by an increase in criminal activities.
- **The influx has accelerated environmental degradation.** Respondents everywhere reported concern over the negative implications of deforestation. To clear land for the camps, deforestation has occurred at a rapid rate. Communities have expressed concern over the environmental impact, including the increased exposure to mudslides and erosion.

The influx means heightened risk in the event of a major disaster.

- **The influx compounds the district's vulnerability to natural hazards.** The rising tension and added pressures of the massive refugee population, who are overcrowded in camps and settlements with poor hygienic and environmental conditions, threaten the community's resilience.
- **If there were a disaster, communities appear under-prepared to meet their own needs plus the needs of the Rohingya community.** Schools typically also function as cyclone shelters, which can result in school being interrupted during a disaster. These buildings are already too few and lack adequate facilities to meet the needs of host communities, in terms of overall number, quality, and accessibility. The school infrastructure must also endure the additional wear and tear of serving as a shelter facility. Bangladeshi and refugee communities may be forced to compete for safety and protection in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and during protracted recovery.

School communities express growing frustration over the impact of the Rohingya influx.

- **The goodwill and generosity of the communities are being tested.** Bangladeshi communities express enormous humanitarian goodwill and empathy for the plight of the Rohingya people, but their generosity is repeatedly tested as they see their communities experience ongoing degradation to their quality of life.
- **Communities perceive that they bear the costs of the influx without the benefits of aid.** School communities in the sample conveyed frustration over the impact of the Rohingya influx. They also perceive the humanitarian focus on the Rohingya as unfairly overlooking them and the costs of the influx they must bear.

Competition over scarce resources is stirring tension.

- **Firewood collection is a flashpoint for clashes.** Respondents reported that firewood collection is one activity where communities and the Rohingya have regular, direct contact, and sometimes even clashes. Communities also report feeling intimidated by the Rohingya, who tend to search for firewood in large groups of up to 100 people. Humanitarian organizations are beginning to address the situation through the provision of liquid petroleum gas and compressed rice husks for cooking. But if this situation is not sufficiently addressed, it could contribute to hostility between communities and the Rohingya, and create safety concerns for school communities.
- **Rohingya land purchasing is worrying to communities.** During the 1991 influx, there were accounts of Rohingya people buying land, allegedly through illicit channels and means. This is worrying to the local population, who already feel outnumbered due to the influx and vulnerable to the potential trajectory of changes that could alter the future demographics of their communities.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

School communities are not sufficiently resilient to the range of increasing risks.

- **Schools will absorb the brunt of disasters.** Schools double as cyclone shelters, which can result in school being interrupted during a disaster. There is also additional wear and tear on school infrastructure.
- **School preparedness and disaster risk-reduction efforts are insufficient and outdated.** School preparedness and disaster risk-reduction plans were developed for the pre-influx reality. While schools in the sample appeared aware of their disaster risk, none reported having a preparedness plan, none seemed to conduct risk analysis or reduction activities, and only a few carried out regular drills.
- **School-community collaboration is uneven.** Respondents shared that there is mixed collaboration between the schools, parents, School Management Committees, and Disaster Management Committees.
- **Community social capital and exist but are vulnerable under continued strain.** Intra- and inter-community cohesion and goodwill are assets to build on, but insights from the sample show that they are at risk of breaking down if not deliberately bolstered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered for the consideration of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Welfare, development and humanitarian partners, and USAID/Bangladesh.

STUDENT ACCESS AND LEARNING

- Ensure that the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) is fully implemented in Cox's Bazar, particularly as it relates to school quality and education during emergencies.
- Target programming to improve access to and quality of education, especially for girls, the poor, children with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.
- Support school feeding programs to counteract the increased food insecurity in the district.
- Expand cash stipend programs for economically vulnerable primary and secondary students and students with disabilities, to offset the economic incentives to drop out of school and help their families financially. This may also reduce negative coping strategies, such as selling assets.
- Improve schools' infrastructure, including washroom facilities and classrooms. (See the recommendations under SCHOOL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE below.)
- Work with out-of-school and at-risk populations to prevent dropout and provide alternate pathways to certified learning.
- Partner with local organizations and schools to develop public awareness campaigns to reduce harassment and intimidation of girls, and establish safe routes to and from school.
- Support governmental partners in enhancing local police officers' use of community-based approaches, to improve confidence and trust between police and school communities.
- Support the development of community-based early childhood development centers, employing girls with secondary education to improve the school readiness of pre-primary children in their communities. Provide school feeding at these centers, including food for the adolescent facilitators.

TEACHERS

- Advocate for teacher placements in government schools, and consider measures to create incentives for teachers to live and work in remote or more challenging schools.
- Provide cash assistance and food bonuses for economically vulnerable para-teachers, and supplement assistance programs for government teachers, as necessary, based on attendance and monitored by communities.

- Supplement teacher recruitment in primary and secondary schools, particularly for early-grade para-teachers who speak Chittagonian.
- Train Chittagonian-speaking early-grade para-teachers to support children’s learning, reading, and vocabulary-building in Bangla, and provide opportunities outside of school for struggling students to practice early-grade reading and math.
- Provide teacher training on the delivery of basic skills instruction, social-emotional learning, social cohesion, and student-led disaster risk-reduction activities.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- Carry out further primary data collection at the primary schools and create resilience to multi-hazard profiles of school communities across Cox’s Bazar, including indicators to measure school community resilience, preparedness, and early warning systems. The profiles should focus on schools and surrounding communities as a system.
- Conduct assessments with school communities to identify back-up learning environments and shelters during crises.
- Support the rehabilitation and/or construction of schools serving as cyclone shelters in the highest-risk communities, including measures to ensure that facilities are available and accessible for persons with disabilities and girls and women.
- Carry out a review of school-based participatory disaster risk-reduction guidance and methodologies to be used by school communities.
- Conduct a political economy assessment of school community and village systems in order to gauge barriers and opportunities for change.
- Provide small grants for community-based and local organizations to enhance bottom-up school community collaboration and planning within an overall framework of school community resilience, including ways to improve the functioning of School Management Committees.
- Support the development of a youth center network, with a priority focus on host communities, that offers non-formal education and programming on leadership, disaster-risk reduction, social cohesion, voluntarism, and youth leadership.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

- To minimize the risk of exacerbating tension and grievances in Cox’s Bazar district, development and humanitarian partners should carry out conflict sensitivity self-assessments and impact assessments to gauge the extent to which staff understand conflict sensitivity, the conflict sensitivity of their interventions, and to identify options for corrective action.
- Government, donors, and humanitarian and development organizations operating in Cox’s Bazar should ensure that their staff are sufficiently prepared in the area of conflict sensitivity.

ANNEX

SCHOOL COMMUNITY SITE LOCATION AND SELECTION FACTORS

UPAZILA	UNION (SELECTION FACTORS)	COMMUNITY	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL TYPE
Ukhiya	Rajapalong Union • Close to camps • Higher dropout rate	Balukhali	Balukhali Government Primary School	Primary
		Dhamon Khali	Dhamon Khali Pre-Primary School	Pre-Primary (NGO)
		Kutupalong	Kutupalong High School	Secondary
		Raja Palong	Raja Palong Baitushaja Girls Dakhil Madrasa	Secondary
		Raja Palong	Nurul Islam Chowdhury BM Technical School and College	Secondary/TVET
	Jaliapalong Union • Coastal area, prone to disasters • Low literacy rate • Camp area	Sonarpara	Sonarpara Govt. Primary School	Primary
		Jaliapalong	Jaliapalong High School	Secondary
		Sonarpara	Sonarpara Dakhil Madrasa	Secondary
		Jumer Chara	Jumer Chara Adolescent Club	NGO Adolescent Club
	Teknaf	Baharchara Union • Prone to disasters • Refugee movement area	South Borodail	South Borodail Govt. Primary School
Shamlapur			Shamlapur High School	Secondary
Baharchara			Baharchara Tahfimum Quran Dakhil Madrasha	Secondary
Sabrang Union • Prone to disasters • Transit point for refugees		Sabrang	Sabrang Govt. Primary School	Primary
		Sabrang Bazar	Sabrang Bazar Para Non-Government Primary School	Primary (Community)
		Shahparirdwip	Shahparirdwip Hazi Bashir Ahmed High School	Secondary
		Mundardail	Mundardail Al Husaini Ibtedayee Madrasah	Primary
		Hnila	Ali Akbar Para Adolescent Club	NGO Adolescent Club

SCHOOL COMMUNITY SITE LOCATION AND SELECTION FACTORS

UPAZILA	UNION (SELECTION FACTORS)	COMMUNITY	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL TYPE
Cox's Bazar Sadar	Jhilwanja Union • Crime • Outside municipality • Crossroad with Ramu and Teknaf	Mukterkul	Mukterkul Government Primary School	Primary
		Bangla Bazar	Banglabazar Balika (Girls') High School	Secondary
		Khurulia	Khurulia Talimul Quran Dkhil Madrasah	Secondary/Higher
		Cox's Bazar	Cox's Bazar Polytechnic Institute	TVET/Secondary
	Cox's Bazar Pourashava • Large coastal area • Prone to disaster • Impacted by refugees	Kolatoli	Kolatoli Govt. Primary School	Primary
		Kolatoli	Kolatoli Pre-Primary School	Pre-Primary
		Cox's Bazar Town	Cox's Bazar Govt. Boys' High School	Secondary
		Rumaliar Chara	Cox's Bazar Hashemia Kamil Madrasah	Secondary/Higher
		Rumaliar Chara	Cox's Bazar Technical School and College	TVET/Secondary
Maheshkhali	Matarbari Union • Very high disaster risk • Near center of sub-district • Low literacy	Matarbari	Matarbari Government Primary School	Primary
		Matarbari	Matarbari High School	Secondary
		Rajghat	Rajghat Rashidia Hasmotia Dhakhil Madrasha	Secondary
Pekua	Bara Bakia Union • Prone to disasters • Indirect influx impact (comparator)	Bara Bakia	Bara Bakia Government Primary School	Primary
		Bara Bakia	Bara Bakia Adarsha Ucca Bidalay	Secondary
		Fashiakhali	Fashiakhali Islamia Fazil Madrasa	Secondary
Ramu	Kachhapia Union • Near refugee camp	Ramu Khijari	Ramu Khijari Burmese Govt. Primary School	Primary
		Kachhapia	Kachhapia High School	Secondary
		Garjania	Garjania Foyjul Ulum Fazil Madrasa	Secondary
		Ramu	Textile Vocational Institute	TVET/Secondary

ENDNOTES

¹ According to the *Situation Report Rohingya Refugee Crisis*, “This higher number, compared to previous reports, does not reflect an increase in arrivals but rather a different methodology. Previous reports compared NPM [Needs and Population Monitoring] estimates over time to approximate this figure, whereas this updated figure reflects an actual counting of refugees who reported their arrival during this time period” (p. 2). (Inter Sector Coordination Group. [2018, September 27]. *Situation Report Rohingya Refugee Crisis*. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iscg_situation_report_27_sept_2018.pdf)

² A RERA is a “good enough” situation analysis of the education sector, learners, and their communities as a dynamic system of relationships involving assets and multiple contextual risks. A RERA integrates key methodological elements of a rapid education needs assessment and contextual risk analyses, such as conflict analysis, disaster-risk assessment, and resilience analysis. In particular, a RERA investigates how risks impact the school community, how education influences risks, and how contextual risks influence one another. Similarly, a RERA illuminates cross-sectoral dependencies and opportunities to support school community resilience. The USAID RERA Toolkit can be accessed at <<https://eccnetwork.net/resources/rapid-education-risk-analysis/>>.

³ An institutional review board (IRB) in the United States typically requires more time, a relevant IRB was not identified in Bangladesh, and private IRB services are very costly.

⁴ The two panel members were Ash Hartwell and James Williams, who performed their roles in their capacity as independent researchers.

⁵ *Purposive sampling*, also known as *judgmental*, *selective*, or *subjective sampling*, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment and expert input when choosing members of the population to participate in their study. This method focuses on the depth of information sought. Informants are selected specifically, rather than randomly, based on certain characteristics and availability. For more on purposive sampling, see:

- USAID. (n.d.) *Comparing Probability, Purposive and Mixed Method Sampling Strategies*. Retrieved from https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/mod16_comparing_probability_purposive_and_mixed_method_sampling_strategies.pdf
- USAID. (2014). *USAID Rapid Needs Assessment Guide for Education in Countries Affected by Crisis and Conflict*. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/education/educating-children-and-youth-crisis-and-conflict-situations/Rapid-Needs-Assessment-Guide-Education>

⁶ Initially, many schools invited School Management Committee members to constitute the community and parent focus group discussions, misinterpreting “committee” for “community.” Therefore, the number of parents in these focus groups and the diversity of community members was limited. This was not corrected until approximately midway through data collection.

⁷ World Bank. (2017, October 24). *Bangladesh Continues to Reduce Poverty But at Slower Pace*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/10/24/bangladesh-continues-to-reduce-poverty-but-at-slower-pace>

⁸ World Bank. (n.d.). *The World Bank in Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview>

⁹ START Fund & ACAPS. (2018, May 20). *Bangladesh Flooding Disaster Summary Sheet*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/bangladesh-flooding-disaster-summary-sheet-20-may-2018>

¹⁰ World Bank. (2016, October 9). *Bangladesh: Building Resilience to Climate Change*. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2016/10/07/bangladesh-building-resilience-to-climate-change>

¹¹ The zone along the Bay of Bengal contains the vast wetlands of the Sundarbans, the primary buffer against cyclones, storms, and surges for the millions of people living along this vulnerable coastal zone. Yet, for more than three decades, these forests have been declining by a rate of 2.1% annually—close to half the forest cover—due to deforestation, illegal logging and harvesting, slash-and-burn agriculture, and conversion into non-forestland for settlement, farming, recreation, and industry.

¹² Bangladesh Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (2017). *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/disaster-management-reference-handbook-2017-bangladesh>

¹³ World Bank. (2018, July 25). *Bangladesh Disaster Risk and Climate Resilience Program*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/brief/bangladesh-disaster-risk-climate-change-program>

¹⁴ Bangladesh is one of the most tectonically active regions in the world. It sits where three tectonic plates meet: the Indian Plate, the Eurasian Plate, and the Burmese Plate.

¹⁵ According to the World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), Dhaka, a fast-growing urban center, is one of the 20 cities in the world most vulnerable to earthquakes. (GDRR. [2017]. *Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <https://www.gfdr.org/bangladesh>)

¹⁶ Steckler, M. S., Mondal, D. R., Akhter, S. H., Seeber, L., Feng, L., Gale, J., . . . Howe, M. (2016, July 11). Locked and loading megathrust linked to active subduction beneath the Indo-Burman Ranges. *Nature Geoscience*, 9, 615–618. Retrieved from <https://www.nature.com/articles/ngeo2760>

¹⁷ U. Barua, M. S. Ahkter, and M. A. Ansary. (July 2016). “District-wise Multi-Hazard Zoning of Bangladesh” *Natural Hazards*, 82(3), p. 1914.

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- ¹⁸ According to the *Global Climate Risk Index 2019*, Bangladesh ranks seventh in the Long-Term Climate Risk Index and ninth in the Global Climate Risk Index 2019. (Eckstein, D., Hufnagel, M.-L., & Wüger, M. [2018, December]. *Global Climate Risk Index 2019*. Retrieved from www.germanwatch.org/en/crisis)
- ¹⁹ Bangladesh Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (2017). *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/disaster-management-reference-handbook-2017-bangladesh>
- ²⁰ Bangladesh Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (2017). *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/disaster-management-reference-handbook-2017-bangladesh>
- ²¹ Saferworld. (2008). *Human Security in Bangladesh*. Retrieved from https://www.nipsa.in/uploads/country_resources_file/1021_Human_security_in_Bangladesh_May_2008.pdf
- ²² According to one study, as many as 43,000 people are estimated to die each year from arsenic-related illness, with millions of children at risk of illness or death in coming years. For more on this, see:
- Human Rights Watch. (2016, April 6). *Bangladesh: 20 Million Drink Arsenic-Laced Water*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/06/bangladesh-20-million-drink-arsenic-laced-water>
 - Bangladesh Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (2017). *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/disaster-management-reference-handbook-2017-bangladesh>
- ²³ Flanagan, S., Johnston, R., & Zheng, Y. (2012). Arsenic in tube well water in Bangladesh: Health and economic impacts and implications for arsenic mitigation. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 90(11), 839–846.
- ²⁴ Bangladesh Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (2017). *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/disaster-management-reference-handbook-2017-bangladesh>
- ²⁵ Van Schendel, W. (2006, September). Guns and Gas in Southeast Asia: Transnational Flows in the Burma-Bangladesh Borderland. *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, 7. Retrieved from <https://kyotoreview.org/issue-7/guns-and-gas-in-southeast-asia-transnational-flows-in-the-burma-bangladesh-borderland/>
- ²⁶ Van Schendel, W. (2006, September). Guns and Gas in Southeast Asia: Transnational Flows in the Burma-Bangladesh Borderland. *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, 7. Retrieved from <https://kyotoreview.org/issue-7/guns-and-gas-in-southeast-asia-transnational-flows-in-the-burma-bangladesh-borderland/>
- ²⁷ U.S. State Department. (2017). *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271142.htm>
- ²⁸ Local consumer markets of drugs users have existed since the 1980s, particularly in the illicit trade routes along the border regions in the South East districts. (See Van Schendel, W. [2006, September]. Guns and Gas in Southeast Asia: Transnational Flows in the Burma-Bangladesh Borderland. *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, 7. Retrieved from <https://kyotoreview.org/issue-7/guns-and-gas-in-southeast-asia-transnational-flows-in-the-burma-bangladesh-borderland/>)
- ²⁹ Ayres, A. (2018, June 4). *Bangladesh's Democratic Erosion: How Democracy Assistance Can Help*. [Council on Foreign Relations blog post.] Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/blog/bangladeshs-democratic-erosion-how-democracy-assistance-can-help>
- ³⁰ Effective States and Inclusive Development. (2017, February). *The Bangladesh Paradox: Why Has Politics Worked So Well for Development in Bangladesh?* ESID Briefing No. 27. Retrieved from <http://www.effective-states.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ESID-Briefing-Paper-27-Bangladesh-Paradox.pdf>
- ³¹ Joehnk, T. (2017, October 6). How the Rohingya Crisis is Changing Bangladesh. *New York Times: Opinion*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/06/opinion/rohingya-bangladesh-myanmar.html>
- ³² The BNP's chief demand was the reinstatement of the neutral caretaker government system to oversee elections, which the Awami League had previously supported but then abolished after taking power in 2011.
- ³³ International Crisis Group. (2018, February 28). *Countering Jihadist Militancy in Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/bangladesh/295-countering-jihadist-militancy-bangladesh>
- ³⁴ The Economist. (2018, December 31). *Bangladesh's prime minister wins a fourth term, in ruthless fashion*. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/asia/2018/12/31/bangladeshs-prime-minister-wins-a-fourth-term-in-ruthless-fashion>
- ³⁵ bdnews24.com. (2019, January 25). *Trump congratulates Hasina on her re-election*. Retrieved from <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2019/01/25/trump-congratulates-hasina-on-her-re-election>
- ³⁶ The Bengali identity pre-dates Partition in 1947 and includes many Hindu and Sufi influences, along with non-indigenous groups that speak any dialect of Bangla/Bengali. Furthermore, Bangladesh has a valuable history of collective expression and mobilization, based on national identity, language, and poetry. For instance, the emergence of a sovereign Bangladesh is deeply entwined in the Bengali language movement. For a fuller treatment of these themes, see, for instance, Nazneen Ahmed, N. (2014). The poetics of nationalism: Cultural resistance and poetry in East Pakistan/Bangladesh, 1952–71. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 50(3), 256–268. doi:10.1080/17449855.2012.695745

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- ³⁷ See for instance: Adams, N. (2016, October). *Islam and Development in Bangladesh: A Grassroots Perspective*. Washington, DC: The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University, World Faiths Development Dialogue; and Islam, M. N., & Islam, M. S. (2018). Islam, Politics and Secularism in Bangladesh: Contesting the Dominant Narratives. *Social Sciences*, 7, 37.
- ³⁸ The July 2016 attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in the heart of the diplomatic zone in Dhaka was the culmination of a series of lethal attacks by radicals against foreigners, LGBTQI activists, secular bloggers, and religious minorities across the country. (International Crisis Group. [2018, February 28]. *Countering Jihadist Militancy in Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/bangladesh/295-countering-jihadist-militancy-bangladesh>)
- ³⁹ UN Women Bangladesh [Webpage]. *UN Women: Asia and the Pacific*. Retrieved from <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/bangladesh>
- ⁴⁰ Bangladesh acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1984, although the government continues to maintain reservations to Articles 2 and 18(c). The National Women's Development Policy 2011 and its National Action Plan both further enable government action to promote gender equality, backed by gender-responsive budgeting that is institutionalized across 43 ministries. See: UN Women Bangladesh [Webpage]. *UN Women: Asia and the Pacific*. Retrieved from <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/bangladesh>
- ⁴¹ Women's groups have mobilized on a range of issues, including violence against women, equality, reproductive rights, and family law reforms. See: UN Women Bangladesh [Webpage]. *UN Women: Asia and the Pacific*. Retrieved from <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/bangladesh>
- ⁴² For a detailed case study on this policy trend, see: Couture, K. L. (2014, July 30). *A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned from Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Applied Successfully in Bangladesh and Morocco*. The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/a-gendered-approach-to-countering-violent-extremism-lessons-learned-from-women-in-peacebuilding-and-conflict-prevention-applied-successfully-in-bangladesh-and-morocco/>
- ⁴³ Bangladesh ranks highest in South Asia: 47th of 144 countries in the world. For more details, see: World Economic Forum. (n.d.). *Gender Gap Report 2017*. Retrieved from <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2017/dataexplorer>
- ⁴⁴ Bangladesh Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (2017). *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/disaster-management-reference-handbook-2017-bangladesh>
- ⁴⁵ Girls Not Brides. (n.d.). *Child marriage around the world: Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/bangladesh/>
- ⁴⁶ UN Women Bangladesh [Webpage]. *UN Women: Asia and the Pacific*. Retrieved from <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/bangladesh#>
- ⁴⁷ Saferworld. (2008). *Human Security in Bangladesh*. Retrieved from https://www.nipsa.in/uploads/country_resources_file/1021_Human_security_in_Bangladesh_May_2008.pdf
- ⁴⁸ Fremlin, P. (n.d.). How many persons with disabilities are there in Bangladesh? *Desibility* [Website]. Retrieved from <http://desibility.org/statistics/>
- ⁴⁹ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (2012, September). *Disability at a Glance 2012: Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific*. Retrieved from http://www.unescapssd.org/files/documents/PUB_Disability-Glance-2012.pdf
- ⁵⁰ Much of this section was adapted from Bangladesh Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (2017). *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/disaster-management-reference-handbook-2017-bangladesh>
- ⁵¹ In November 1970, the Bhola Cyclone hit Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) and killed over half a million people. In April 1991, a cyclone hit the densely populated Chittagong region, killing over 140,000 people and making as many as 10 million homeless. See: The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Bangladesh Cyclone of 1991*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/event/Bangladesh-cyclone-of-1991>
- ⁵² Effective States and Inclusive Development. (2017, February). *The Bangladesh Paradox: Why Has Politics Worked So Well for Development in Bangladesh?* ESID Briefing No. 27. Retrieved from <http://www.effective-states.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ESID-Briefing-Paper-27-Bangladesh-Paradox.pdf>
- ⁵³ Disaster management underwent a shift from rehabilitation to risk reduction, since the change in government administration.
- ⁵⁴ The current National Disaster Management Plan runs from 2010 to 2015; a new plan for 2016–2020 is still under draft.
- ⁵⁵ The District Disaster Management Committee (DMC) is headed by the Deputy Commissioner; the Upazila District DMC is headed by the Upazila Nirbahi Officer; the Union DMC is headed by the Chairman of the Union Parishad; and the Pourshava DMC is headed by the Chairman of Pourshava (municipality). At the local level, the role of the District DMC includes establishing emergency operations centers, liaising with higher authorities, coordinating with the armed forces, disseminating warnings, supervising search and rescue missions, coordinating relief efforts, and feeding recommendations to the DMCs.
- ⁵⁶ Their role is to aid civil authorities in disaster management and overall relief operations. This includes the Border Guard Bangladesh, a paramilitary force that is entrusted with the protection of the Bangladesh border, anti-smuggling and anti-narcotics operations, prevention of trafficking of women and children, prevention of all trans-border crimes, and internal security duties. (Bangladesh Center

for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. [2017]. *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/disaster-management-reference-handbook-2017-bangladesh>

⁵⁷ For example, when Cyclone Mora struck the southwest coastline in 2017, the International Federation of the Red Crescent Societies mobilized around 55,000 volunteers to assist with early warnings and relief efforts.

⁵⁸ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2013, December). *District Statistics 2011: Cox's Bazar*. Retrieved from <http://203.112.218.65:8008/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/District%20Statistics/Cox%60s%20Bazar.pdf>

⁵⁹ Inter-Sector Coordination Group. (2018, November 29). *Situation Report: Rohingya Refugee Crisis*. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iscg_situation_report_29_nov.pdf

⁶⁰ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2013, December). *District Statistics 2011: Cox's Bazar*. Retrieved from <http://203.112.218.65:8008/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/District%20Statistics/Cox%60s%20Bazar.pdf>

⁶¹ District Disaster Management Committee, Cox's Bazar. (2014, August). *Cox's Bazar District Disaster Management Plan* (pp. 16–17). Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/document/261609456/DM-Plan-Cox-s-Bazar-District-English-Version-2014>

⁶² The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Marma People*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Marma>

⁶³ General Economics Division, Planning Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. (2015). *Seventh Five-Year Plan (FY2016–FY2020)*. Retrieved from http://www.lged.gov.bd/UploadedDocument/UnitPublication/1/361/7th_FYP_18_02_2016.pdf

⁶⁴ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Bangladesh Statistics 2017*. Retrieved from http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/a1d32f13_8553_44f1_92e6_8ff80a4ff82e/Bangladesh%20%20Statistics-2017.pdf

⁶⁵ Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, Mitra and Associates, & Saferworld. (2013, February). *Safety and Security in the South-East Border Area of Bangladesh: A Public Perceptions Survey*. Retrieved from <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Safety--security-in-the-SE-border-area-of-Bangladesh.pdf>

⁶⁶ Asian Development Bank. (2018). *Summary Poverty Reduction and Social Strategy*. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/52174-001-sprss.pdf>

⁶⁷ The study found that “combined effects of changes in wages and prices should provide the net impact of refugees on the host community’s poverty incidence. The estimated net effects show that headcount poverty has increased by 2.73 percent in Teknaf and by 2.63 percent in Ukhiya... Falling wages lead to rising poverty gaps by 1.93 and 0.93 percent in Teknaf and Ukhiya respectively. On the other hand, depressed prices help reduce poverty gaps by 0.47 and 0.46 percent for the two upazilas in the same order. Therefore, the net changes in the poverty gap ratio are estimated to be 1.47 percent Teknaf and 0.52 percentage point for Ukhiya, respectively.” (UN Development Programme. [2018]. *Socio-Economic Impact of the Rohingya Crisis on Host Communities* [p. 11].)

⁶⁸ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Platform. (2018). *IPC Chronic Food Insecurity Situation in 10 Districts of Bangladesh—December 2015–2018/20*. Retrieved from http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Bangladesh_ChronicFI_Situation_20152020_2round-10%20districts.pdf

⁶⁹ Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, Mitra and Associates, & Saferworld. (2013, February). *Safety and Security in the South-East Border Area of Bangladesh: A Public Perceptions Survey*. Retrieved from <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Safety--security-in-the-SE-border-area-of-Bangladesh.pdf>

⁷⁰ This is according to 2012 figures, as more recent numbers could not be found. (World Food Programme. [2014]. *Undernutrition Maps of Bangladesh 2012*. Retrieved from http://203.112.218.65:8008/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/LatestReports/Undernutrition_Maps_Bangladesh%20_12.pdf)

⁷¹ World Food Programme. (2018). *Resilience Composite Score Exercise by Union Level*. Retrieved from https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/resilience_composite_score_exercise_2018_v1.pdf

⁷² United Nations. *Humanitarian Response Plan: Rohingya Refugee Crisis* (draft). (October 2017). Retrieved at: http://www.searo.who.int/about/administration_structure/hse/20171003_hrp_bangladesh.pdf?ua=1 One World Food Programme study differentiates host communities from earlier waves of refugees when assessing poor and borderline food consumption. According to this research, host communities respectively fall into the categories of borderline (27%) and poor (3%) food consumption. For refugees from earlier phases, these numbers are as high as 40% and 9%, respectively. (World Food Programme. [2017, December]. *Refugee influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVE)—Summary Report. Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000050429/download/>)

⁷³ Due to a lack of previous data for comparison, it is difficult to assess how much the population’s food security in these upazilas has been impacted by the Rohingya influx. Nonetheless, households falling within the categories of poor and borderline food security are at an increased risk of malnutrition. (Save the Children, BRAC, World Food Programme, UNHCR, & World Vision. [2018]. *Self-Reliance Situation of Host Communities in Cox's Bazar*. Retrieved from https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/self_reliance_assessment_report-final.pdf)

⁷⁴ Lemma, A. F., Quattri, M., Hagen-Zanker, J., Wake, C., Raihan, S., & Eusuf, A. (2018, September). *Bangladesh Economic Dialogue on Inclusive Growth*. EDIG Research Reports No. 4. Retrieved from <https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/EDIG-No.4-Strategies-for-inclusive-growth-in-Coxs-Bazar.pdf>

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- ⁷⁵ District Disaster Management Committee, Cox's Bazar. (2014, August). *Cox's Bazar District Disaster Management Plan* (pp. 16–17). Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/document/261609456/DM-Plan-Cox-s-Bazar-District-English-Version-2014>
- ⁷⁶ The Economic Census of 2013 of Cox's Bazar carried out by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics provides data on employment by working status in non-agricultural sectors. These data show that most workers in the region are male (91%), and nearly two-thirds (60.6%) are classified as full-time workers. Females are divided nearly equally between working proprietors (i.e., they own their own establishment) and full-time workers. See: Lemma, A. F., Quattri, M., Hagen-Zanker, J., Wake, C., Raihan, S., & Eusuf, A. (2018, September). *Bangladesh Economic Dialogue on Inclusive Growth*. EDIG Research Reports No. 4. Retrieved from <https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/EDIG-No.4-Strategies-for-inclusive-growth-in-Coxs-Bazar.pdf>
- ⁷⁷ Lemma, A. F., Quattri, M., Hagen-Zanker, J., Wake, C., Raihan, S., & Eusuf, A. (2018, September). *Bangladesh Economic Dialogue on Inclusive Growth*. EDIG Research Reports No. 4. Retrieved from <https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/EDIG-No.4-Strategies-for-inclusive-growth-in-Coxs-Bazar.pdf>
- ⁷⁸ Lemma, A. F., Quattri, M., Hagen-Zanker, J., Wake, C., Raihan, S., & Eusuf, A. (2018, September). *Bangladesh Economic Dialogue on Inclusive Growth*. EDIG Research Reports No. 4. Retrieved from <https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/EDIG-No.4-Strategies-for-inclusive-growth-in-Coxs-Bazar.pdf>
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- ⁸¹ Jahan, M., & Kabir, R. (n.d.). *Hazard or Risk—What Should We Consider in Adaptation Planning?* Retrieved from https://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/deccma/wp-content/uploads/sites/181/2017/08/DECCMA_BD_Poster-Momtaz-Jahan-Rubaiya-Kabir.pdf
- ⁸² USAID. (2016). *USAID/Bangladesh Comprehensive Risk and Resilience Report*. Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/BNG_resilience_assessment_report_4Apr2017_final.pdf
- ⁸³ World Food Programme. (2018). *Resilience Composite Score Exercise by Union Level*. Retrieved from https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/resilience_composite_score_exercise_2018_v1.pdf
- ⁸⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization. (2016). *A gender-responsive approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR) planning in the agriculture sector*. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6531e.pdf>. For more information on the relationship between gender and disaster resilience, see UNESCO. *Gender Equality and Disaster Risk Reduction*. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/gender-and-science/cross-cutting-issues/gender-equality-and-disaster-risk-reduction/>
- ⁸⁵ Bangladesh Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (2017). *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/disaster-management-reference-handbook-2017-bangladesh>
- ⁸⁶ World Bank. (2015, February 17). *Salinity Intrusion in a Changing Climate Scenario Will Hit Coastal Bangladesh Hard*. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/02/17/salinity-intrusion-in-changing-climate-scenario-will-hit-coastal-bangladesh-hard>
- ⁸⁷ The Coal Power Generation Company of Bangladesh Limited (CPGCBL) and Japan's Sumitomo Corporation have started a 1,200 MW power plant in Matarbari in Maheshkhali. The state-owned CPGCBL is also engaged in a joint venture to construct a 700MW coal-based Kohelia Power Plant in Matarbari. (Chowdhury, A. R., [2018, June 8]. Coast or construction? *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/environment/coast-or-construction-1587958>)
- ⁸⁸ From “Deltas, Vulnerability and Climate Change: Migration and Adaptation (DECCMA)” [PowerPoint presentation], by K. A. Addo (n.d.), p. 13. Retrieved from www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/Events/PDF/Slides/MigrationConf-slides-Appearing-Addo.pdf
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- ⁹² Alsaafin, L. (2018, August 24). *Rohingya camps: Vaccination campaigns fight epidemics*. Al Jazeera Media Network. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/08/rohingya-camps-vaccination-campaigns-fight-epidemics-180818144309731.html>
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⁹⁶ Complex trade networks bring goods from all over the world through Cox's Bazar. The region is a hub for small-arms trade and is linked to a network of local arms bazars along the borderland region of the district, as well a to arms arriving by sea. Illicit trade is deeply entwined in the local economy, with many locals dependent on its benefits. Trade operators are often bigger traders living in cities, and some are linked to institutions that formally prohibit this trading. High-level bureaucrats and politicians are some of the major organizers, financiers, and facilitators of illegal trade. (See Van Schendel, W. [2006, September]. Guns and Gas in Southeast Asia: Transnational Flows in the Burma-Bangladesh Borderland. *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, 7. Retrieved from <https://kyotoreview.org/issue-7/guns-and-gas-in-southeast-asia-transnational-flows-in-the-burma-bangladesh-borderland/>)

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- ¹¹⁹ One camp was in Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- ¹²⁰ Estimates of their numbers vary widely, from 2,000 to 20,000. (See Amnesty International. [1997, September]. *Myanmar/Bangladesh: Rohingyas—The Search for Safety*. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/160000/asa130071997en.pdf>)
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¹⁵⁹ Kishori Clubs offer a place where adolescent girls can read and use the library, socialize, play games, take part in cultural activities, and have open discussions on personal and social issues with their peers. Each club includes 25–35 girls ages 10–19. At present, there are around 9,000 adolescent clubs all over Bangladesh. (BRAC. [2016, January 16]. *Adolescent development programme*. Retrieved from <http://www.brac.net/education-programme/item/782-adolescent-development-programme>)

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¹⁶⁸ Small contributions are collected locally from community members or from parents at the primary level. In addition, schools collect a small amount in exam fees during annual exams, and an admission fee for grade 1. Contributions from parents may cover additional staff and other costs not provided by the government.

¹⁶⁹ Over 2 million children (10% of the cohort) are enrolled in schools operated by the private sector. NGOs and philanthropic organizations run primary schools, either without fees or with minimal fees. According to the Annual Primary School Census 2017, more than 100 community schools are financed entirely by community contributions.

¹⁷⁰ International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs. (n.d.). *Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <https://www.iwgia.org/en/bangladesh>

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¹⁷³ The school’s head teacher disburses funds, keeps records, and keeps the committee informed. The head teacher generally has the task of keeping records, preparing statements, securing the committee’s approval, and sending reports to the Upazila Education Office for the relatively small amounts over which the school has control. At the secondary level, the School Management Committee has greater authority for mobilizing resources and planning and managing school resources. (See Das, H. K., Sabur, Z. U., & Shafiq, S. [2015]. State of School Finance in Bangladesh. *Bangladesh Education Journal*, 14[2], 7–25.)

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