

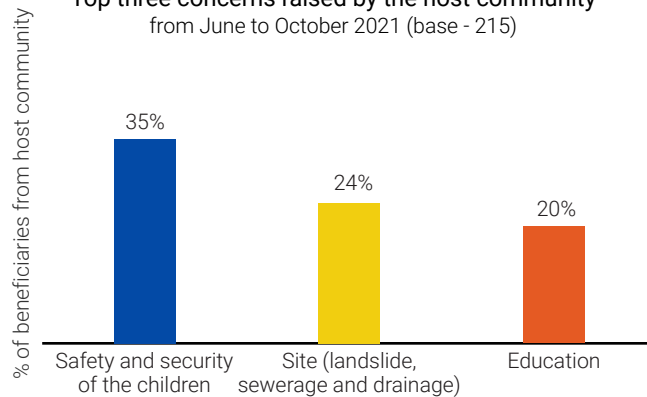
# Host community parents are worried about the safety and security of their children

## WHAT MATTERS?

Humanitarian Feedback Bulletin  
on Rohingya Response

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Top three concerns raised by the host community  
from June to October 2021 (base - 215)



### Children's safety commuting to school/college

Participants in both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions expressed concern for their children's safety while traveling between locations, particularly from home to school, due to congested roads and an abundance of modes of transport such as buses, and trucks. Following the influx of Rohingya refugees, the roadways have become extremely congested and unsafe at the

same time. Consequently, the number of vehicles used by non-governmental organisations and other humanitarian organisations has expanded dramatically. As a result, traffic accidents have increased in frequency. Thus, parents no longer feel secure sending their children to school alone. Now, a chaperone is assigned to escort children to ensure their safety on their way to and from school. **This has**

*Source:* Since January 2018, BBC Media Action has been collating community feedback collected by different agencies<sup>1</sup> through their community feedback and response mechanisms (CFRM) and listening group discussions from different camps and the host community. This issue is based on data collected between June and October 2021 from 215 respondents based in the host community around the Rohingya camps. To better understand concerns raised, BBC Media Action conducted six in-depth interviews (six men and six women, age 23-66) and six focus group discussions (15 women and 14 men, age 18-30) based in Ratnapalong, Rajapalong and Palongkhali Union in Ukhia Upozila from 7-9 December of 2021.

The three top concerns highlighted by the host community during this period were children's safety and security, the site, and education. These concerns were expressed by 99 men and 116 women. This issue focuses exclusively on host community concerns about their children's safety as it was their top concern.

Another reason for more in-depth research on concerns regarding children's safety is the fact that CFRM data does not reveal specifics about safety and security concerns expressed by respondents (due to data protection policies and to protect the respondents). Thus, concerns regarding the safety of children are only 'visible' when respondents are asked specifically about child protection issues.

BBC Media Action chose to focus on the host community as child protection concerns raised by the Rohingya community have been assessed<sup>2</sup>, whereas the host community's concerns have not.

Of the 21622 records of community feedback from both Rohingya and host communities (collected between June and October) only 1% were collected from the host community. This may be because most humanitarian organisations work with Rohingya communities, however individuals living in host communities are providing less input as compared to the same time last year, and fewer believe aid agencies are listening to their concerns<sup>3</sup>.

1 Agencies include the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and Concern Worldwide.

2 [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/findings\\_from\\_the\\_child\\_protection\\_assessment\\_in\\_rohingya\\_refugee\\_camps\\_in\\_coxs\\_bazar\\_october\\_2021.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/findings_from_the_child_protection_assessment_in_rohingya_refugee_camps_in_coxs_bazar_october_2021.pdf)

3 <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/research-report-common-service-4-june-2021.pdf>

increased the expense of education for parents, many of whom were already struggling financially.

“ We have no schools and colleges near our homes. Our girls and boys must travel to other areas to attend schools and colleges for which we are spending more on our children’s education.”

– Female, 45, Palongkhali, Ukhia

“ After the arrival of the Rohingya people, the condition of the roads has deteriorated greatly. There are more NGO vehicles now. Road accidents have become a common occurrence as a result.”

– Female, 35, Palongkhali, Ukhia

“ The number of vehicles has increased after the arrival of the Rohingya people. As a result, we are concerned about the safety of our children when they go near the roads.”

– Female, 35, Palongkhali, Ukhia

## Use of schools as distribution centres for refugees

Parents are also concerned about their children's education since humanitarian organisations use their children's schools to provide cards and other items to Rohingya people. In-depth interviews revealed that children can no longer play on playgrounds as they once did since humanitarian groups now use playgrounds as distribution centres for Rohingya communities.

“ Before, our boys were able to play in the playground. After the arrival of the Rohingya people, the number of playgrounds has decreased. Due to this, our boys cannot play outside. They have to remain at home.”

– Female, 23, Palongkhali, Ukhia.

## Financial issues

Due to Covid-19 restrictions on movement, many host community families have been financially unable to educate their children. Participants said **young males who were in school or college before the pandemic dropped out owing to the pandemic and are now working to support their families.**

Since some children have started working due to family financial challenges, they're not finishing their studies, and parents are concerned about their future. They said that if their children don't go back to school, they won't be able to get government jobs.

Participants also reported the loss of their land to Rohingya refugees. **Because Rohingyas work, host communities report facing job shortages.** Thus, whereas they used to be able to afford their children's education, they can no longer do so.

“ We have less work due to the arrival of the Rohingya people. Our incomes have shrunk. As a result, we are facing difficulties in providing for our children, as well as bearing the cost of their education. Some of us had to send our children to work in various jobs. Some amongst us were also compelled to stop sending their daughters to school.”

– Female, 45, Palongkhali, Ukhia

Additionally, employment possibilities for young people in the host community have declined because of businesses hiring members of the Rohingya community at a reduced wage.

“ Before, our boys used to work in stores, workshops, many used to work as day labourers. Now, the Rohingya people are getting more of these jobs. Therefore, our boys are not getting these jobs.”

– Male, 45, Palongkhali, Ukhia



## Negative perceptions and social cohesion

Social cohesion between the host and Rohingya communities has deteriorated. Adults and children from host communities occasionally find themselves pitted against the Rohingya. As previously stated by the host community and reported in earlier issues and reiterated by participants and reported in this issue, this has led to participants becoming concerned about their children's safety.<sup>1</sup>

**Host community respondents said members of the Rohingya community take part in antisocial and unlawful behaviour and risk the safety of their children.** One female interviewee said girls no longer feel as comfortable walking to school alone as they did previously. And, as they are teased on their journey to and from schools/colleges, they lose interest in returning to school or college.

The Rohingya people, according to individuals from the host community, are hostile and frequently engage in quarrels and fights, even over small problems. Additionally, they said Rohingya people clash amongst themselves, which has resulted in murders.

Respondents from the host community said **they are afraid of members of the Rohingya community, which is why they do not communicate or report complaints about them to authorities.**

“Rohingya people are very bad people. They frequently engage in quarrelling and fighting. They even knife people to death because of silly issues.”

– Male (from focus group discussions),  
55, Rajapalong, Ukhia

## Under-age marriage, drugs, and child trafficking

Participants said during focus group discussions that child marriage has increased in their area since the pandemic began. As schools have been closed since the pandemic began, parents are concerned girls may flee home and marry without their consent. As a result, parents have opted to marry off their under-age daughters to avoid embarrassment for their families. Several participants said some parents marry their teenage daughters to someone living overseas to improve their financial status.

Since the pandemic began, the host community has been concerned about the safety of adolescent boys due to an increase in drug use and other criminal activities. **Security has become a major issue for host community residents.** They said numerous Rohingya people are involved in drug trafficking and sales. They report that local boys who associate with the Rohingya community are also becoming involved in drug trafficking and that some have become addicted to drugs and engage in other criminal behaviour.

“Illegal drug business as well as other criminal activities have increased in our area. Many have become drug addicts and drug dealers.”

– Male, 55, Rajapalong, Ukhia

Participants noted that since the pandemic began, events such as hijacking and child trafficking have escalated in the area. They said that since many local residents are struggling financially, they are readily swayed (by people in the Rohingya community) to engage in criminal activity in order to make money.

“The incidents of children going missing have increased in our area. We hear such announcements on loudspeakers often.”

– Male, 45, Palongkhali, Ukhia

## No one acts on their concerns

When asked who they confide in regarding their concerns about the safety and security of their children, some participants said they didn't know who to turn to. Furthermore, some said that even when they did express their concerns to others, there has been no resolution to their issues. As a result, they are unwilling to discuss their concerns with anyone.



<sup>1</sup> What Matters? Issue 43 and <https://www.dropbox.com/s/32f6mazzfxasuk4/Understanding%20social%20cohesion%20between%20the%20Rohingya%20and%20host%20communities.pdf?dl=0>

# Imams' experiences and perspectives of sharing information with the Rohingya community

## Imams mainly receive information from official sources but some face challenges understanding information they receive

The imams interviewed mostly receive information from NGO and CiC meetings, as well as from mahjjs. Other stated sources include Rohingya volunteers, police, social media, and radio. They most commonly receive information face-to-face in meetings and through loudspeakers.

All of the imams say they receive information to share with the community in Rohingya while two also receive information in Bangla, English, and Burmese. Two imams say they face language related challenges when accessing written information, saying that the written information shared in the camps is generally in Bangla, Burmese, or English.

“ We don't understand Burmese, English or Bangla. Most of the written information that is being shared in the camps is in these three languages.”

– Imam, Camp 2W

“ We don't understand Bangla, and 95% of the imams don't understand information provided in English and Burmese”

– Imam, Camp 12

## Most Imams said that they recognise information access challenges of women, older people and people with disabilities, and some take initiatives to increase that access

Eight of the imams feel that people with disabilities do not have the same level of access to information compared with people without disabilities, 7 feel that older people do not have the same level of access as younger people, and 9 believe that women do not have the same level of access to information as men. For all three groups, their limited or restricted mobility was considered the key factor in their reduced access to information. Imams who believe that older people and people with disabilities have the same level of access as others say that they receive the information through imams paying home visits or through family and community members.



Source: To understand Imams' experiences of sharing information with the community and their language and information needs, Translators without Borders (TWB) conducted interviews over the phone with 11 imams working in nine camps (1W, 2E, 2W, 10, 12, 13, 18, 26 and Nayapara RC). The interviews took place in mid-November 2021.

“ I do request those people who attend the mosque to share the information with people with disabilities, older people and people with limited mobility. They share the information accordingly. No challenge.”

– Imam, Camp 26

For women, 2 imams say that women receive information from female NGO volunteers and from male family members who are asked to pass on information to them. Four imams report having taken specific measures to reach more women, including using partitions to allow a private space for women to listen to religious teachings at the mosque on Fridays, enlisting the help of female family members of imams to share information with women and sharing information at homes where women can listen from a separate room.





### Imams want to receive more information to share with the community and want to receive this in Rohingya face-to-face or in audio and video formats

“Imams should be invited to daily meetings with CiCs and NGOs to share information. Communicating information to the community is not a big deal for us, but what can we communicate to them if we don't receive information from NGOs and the authorities.”

– Imam, Camp 12

Ten imams expressed their interest in receiving more information to share with the community, including information about repatriation and the situation in Myanmar, security and environmental issues, WASH, disease prevention, combating domestic violence, safe births, caring for older people, and disasters and emergencies.

As found in previous TWB research<sup>1</sup> with imams and community members, the imams interviewed prefer to receive information from NGOs and Bangladeshi government officers (CiCs), both trusted sources of information due to their long-standing support for and relationship with the community. All imams interviewed prefer to receive information in Rohingya either verbally or in audio and video formats.

Imams are trusted sharers of information in the camps who, as respected religious leaders, play an integral role in the community engagement activities. In order for them to meet the information needs of their communities and make best use of their role in the community, it is essential that imams have access to the information they need in the languages and formats they prefer and understand.

<sup>1</sup> [https://translatorswithoutborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Imams-Share-Information-in-the-Rohingya-Refugee-Camps\\_EN.pdf](https://translatorswithoutborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Imams-Share-Information-in-the-Rohingya-Refugee-Camps_EN.pdf)  
<https://translatorswithoutborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Community-health-workers-The-main-source-of-health-information-for-Rohingya-women-research.pdf>

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

This work is currently being delivered in partnership with the International Rescue Committee with funding from the United States Government. And in partnership with ACF with funding from EU humanitarian aid.

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