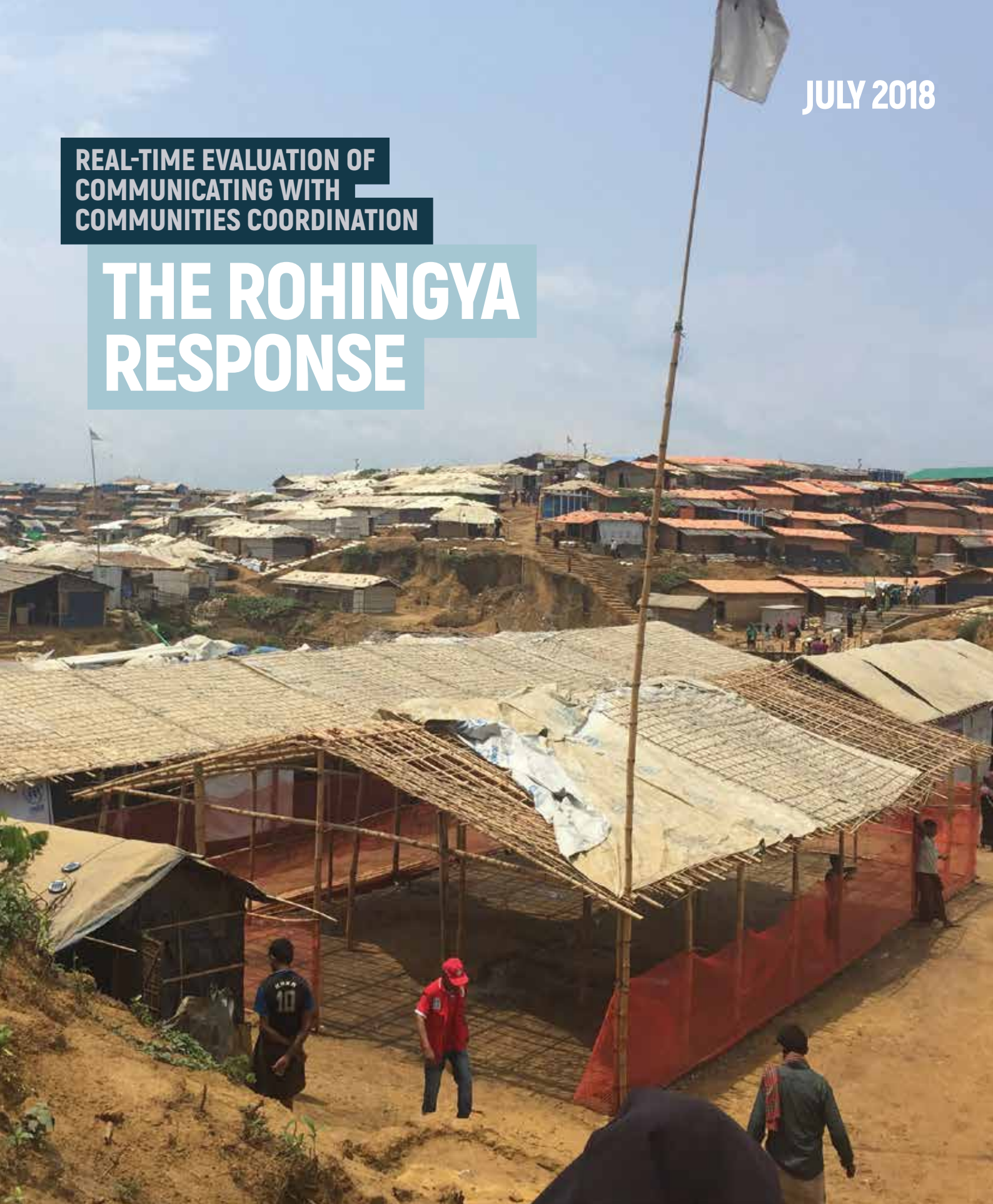


JULY 2018

REAL-TIME EVALUATION OF
COMMUNICATING WITH
COMMUNITIES COORDINATION

THE ROHINGYA RESPONSE



This evaluation was commissioned by UNICEF on behalf of the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative (CCEI) and undertaken by independent consultants Margie Buchanan-Smith and Shahidul Islam. The CCEI is convened by the CDAC Network.



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Photo: Margie Buchanan-Smith

Executive Summary

Introduction

This is a Real Time Evaluation (RTE) of the coordination of Communicating with Communities (CwC) in the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh since August 2017, focusing on the role and contribution of the CwC Working Group. Fieldwork for the RTE was carried out in April 2018 and included key informant interviews with agency staff as well as consultation with the Rohingya refugees in four camps and with the host community. The RTE adopted a learning approach, carrying out a rapid participatory exercise to gather feedback from CwC Working Group members, and inviting them to make recommendations based on the evaluation's preliminary findings.

Context

The influx of more than 671,000 Rohingya people, fleeing violence and human rights abuses in Myanmar, triggered one of the fastest-growing and largest refugee crises in the world. It was declared an L3 emergency by UNHCR. The Government of Bangladesh has led the response, supported by well over 100 international and national organisations. IOM was designated lead UN agency and established a sector-based coordination structure. Cross-cutting issues like CwC are coordinated through a series of Working Groups.

The Rohingya refugees are a disempowered and disenfranchised group with low levels of literacy and no standardised nor internationally recognised written script for their language. This is a challenging context for CwC: most communication must be face-to-face and oral. It must also be low tech as the refugees have limited access to radios and are officially banned from owning SIM cards for Bangladeshi mobile phone networks.

An overview of CwC in the Rohingya response

Earlier work on CwC at the national level in Bangladesh, with the creation of the Shongjog platform in 2015, and at the Cox's Bazar level in February 2017, set the foundation for CwC to be a key component of the scaled-up response from August 2017. The CwC coordination structure was established in early September. Much CwC work has focused on information messaging, particularly for WASH, health and protection. Although many agencies are collecting community feedback, there are few mechanisms for sharing this and the feedback loop back to the community is often absent. The accountability dimension of CwC has been weak. Complaints boxes are still widely used despite evidence that this is an ineffective feedback mechanism. Two of the main information and feedback mechanisms used in the camps are information hubs and volunteer networks. Agency capacity on CwC has struggled to meet the demand for CwC in the response.

Different agencies emphasise different aspects of CwC. Some focus on information as aid, others emphasise accountability and some are reluctant to label it at all as they see it as integral to how they work. At best this range of approaches complements each other. At worst it causes agencies to compete for positioning and institutional turf wars.

The approach to CwC coordination in the Rohingya response

The CwC Working Group is in service of those affected by the crisis. It can only achieve its purpose if it works integrally with other sectors and Working Groups; it is therefore appropriate that it is a cross-cutting Working Group. It has had a higher profile than many other Working Groups, with a dedicated section and budget line in the JRP. IOM leads CwC coordination and UNICEF plays a supporting role. Lack of clarity about this institutional arrangement early in the response and an uneasy relationship between these two UN agencies has impacted negatively on CwC coordination in Cox's Bazar. In practice it has been up to the coordinating staff on

the ground to make the relationship work. The CwC coordination staff have been ‘double-hatting’, also supporting CwC within their respective operational agency, each of which has large numbers of international and national NGO partners. This has compromised the perception of CwC coordination as neutral. The appropriateness of two UN agencies involved in CwC coordination is questionable as NGOs usually have the closest working relationship with affected people and are often at the cutting edge of CwC efforts and innovations.

Considering the scale of this L3 response CwC coordination has been poorly resourced. At a maximum there have been only 2 staff members engaged in CwC coordination, neither full-time, working on three-month contracts. The consortium implementing the CSCEA, of Internews, BBC Media Action and TWB, plays a central role in collective CwC operations.

Between 25 and 30 agencies participate in CwC Working Group meetings. Involvement of Bangladeshi civil society organisations has been poor and means that a wealth of local knowledge, experience and relationships are missing from Working Group discussions. Language and culturally different communication styles are constraining issues. The government’s engagement with the Working Group has also been weak: they do not have the capacity to attend so many weekly coordination meetings.

The CwC Working Group has four sub-groups: (1) Info Hubs; (2) Accountability; (3) Radio (4) Content. While they have done valuable work, the proliferation of sub-groups is logistically challenging, especially for smaller agencies which may now have to cover as many as five CwC meetings per week. Some agencies appreciate the in-depth discussions that are possible in the sub-groups. Others have raised concerns, for example that some sub-groups are overly driven by particular agency interests, and that the work of different sub-groups has become disconnected. It is important that they are time-bound task forces, set up to complete and fulfil particular assignments. Accountability of CwC coordination to its membership has been unclear and has not worked well.

Links with the Shongjog platform and with CwC at the national level have been important in promoting CwC at the Cox’s Bazar level and in the provision of some materials for messaging that could be adapted to the context and language of the Rohingya. But the full benefits of the Shongjog platform for the Rohingya response have not been realised, partly because Shongjog was developed for natural disasters in a more stable context. Greater use could have been made of some of its audio-visual materials and its mainstreaming toolkit.

Coordination of CwC in practice, according to the Working Group’s TOR

Coordination of CwC started early and built momentum through the latter months of 2017. But some of the fundamental CwC coordination functions, such as the mapping of 4Ws¹, did not happen due to under-resourcing and under-staffing. Establishing common services through the CSCEA project has been badly delayed due to funding issues.

CwC coordination did not work so well in the first quarter of 2018. There was tension between the CwC Working Group coordination and the consortium agencies, and some NGOs that play a key role in CwC stopped attending Working Group meetings. This set back some critical elements of CwC in the response. The JRP sets out a strategy for CwC, largely based on the common services to be provided by the CSCEA project. There is scope for sharpening the vision for a more proactive approach to CwC, making a clearer strategic connection to protection and to empowerment of the Rohingya refugees.

^{1/} This was finally completed in June 2018 by the CSCEA project which stepped in to support some of the delayed coordination tasks, despite this being outside their mandate.



Photo: Margie Buchanan-Smith



Earlier work on CwC at the national level in Bangladesh and at the Cox's Bazar level set the foundation for CwC to be a key component of the scaled-up response

With a few exceptions there has been limited sociological and behavioural research commissioned to inform the response. A dropbox set up by the CwC Coordinators early in the response ensured that relevant documents are available to all Working Group members although most are in English.



Although accountability to affected people has been a weak part of the overall CwC effort (with some individual agency exceptions), this has been boosted by the

work of the accountability sub-group which drafted an 'Accountability Manifesto' in late February 2018. Most feedback is collected by individual agencies with little shared analysis. The CSCEA project is belatedly establishing a mechanism for collective feedback.

To support the mainstreaming of community engagement the CwC coordinators have worked closely with particular sectors such as site management, and periodically with the health sector. Engagement with the protection sector, which is fundamental to this response, could be strengthened.

Key aspects of CwC in the Rohingya response

The *mahjees* dominate the current power structure and governance system within the camps, acting as gatekeepers on CwC and other issues. Religious leaders are also influential. Both Rohingya refugees and members of the CwC Working Group expressed concerns about this. The CwC Working Group can and should play a key and collaborative role with the site management and protection sectors to capture, analyse and communicate some of the consequences for accountability and empowerment of the Rohingya refugees.

Info Hubs are a central component of CwC in the camps and offer a face-to-face service to refugees. Set up on an unprecedented scale in this response, there are a number of different models of how they operate in terms of referrals, recording, follow-up procedures with refugees and with service providers, and signage. While this facilitated a trialing of different approaches, eight months into the response it is time to take stock, to learn from what works best, and to standardise accordingly. Info Hubs are a valuable source of information on refugee issues and concerns, but the data are not being collated nor collectively analysed. This is a missed opportunity, and a useful contribution that the CwC Working Group could make. A multi-agency anthropological study on how the Info Hubs are perceived and used by the Rohingya

refugees could throw light on a number of issues raised by this RTE, for example on refugees' awareness of the Info Hubs, and how they use them.

Many humanitarian agencies work through networks of volunteers recruited from the Rohingya community for a wide range of purposes, including CwC. It is unclear how the networks of volunteers interact and if there is overlap between them. There is a need to map the many different volunteer networks within each camp and the different terms on which they are recruited.

The influx of Rohingya refugees has had a major impact on the greatly outnumbered host population. Although occasionally discussed by the CwC Working Group, this should become a much greater priority for the CwC Working Group in the immediate to medium term, reflecting the prioritisation of this issue by government and national organisations, and ensuring the voices of the host community are heard and inform the overall response

Refugee relocation, repatriation and the possibility of forced return are some of the toughest issues for CwC, and ones that the Working Group must grapple with, in close consultation with, and guided by UNHCR.

Some outcomes of CwC coordination

Despite the emphasis on coordinated information messaging since the early days of the response there have been few rapid assessments of the impact of these campaigns, although one assessment of the diphtheria campaign is helpful and shows its relative success. It is much less clear how coordination of CwC has enabled feedback from refugees to inform and influence the humanitarian response.

Monsoon and cyclone preparedness was first addressed for the October-November cyclone season in 2017 when messages for key sectors were endorsed by all sectors and by the ISCG. Although there was more time to prepare for the April/ May cyclone season, there was little agreed coordinated messaging when the fieldwork for this RTE was carried out. In some camps messaging had not yet started. Although there have been many challenges, including getting messaging agreed with and by government, dysfunctional CwC coordination in the first quarter of the year directly contributed to the lack of progress in cyclone preparedness and delayed the progress in EW messaging with serious consequences for the safety and well-being of the Rohingya refugees.

Links between CwC coordination in the Rohingya response and global initiatives & networks

These have been weak despite this being a high profile L3 response. Little support has been sought by IOM from global and regional initiatives and networks even though IOM was unable to provide backup and support from its own headquarters. CCEI and CDAC have both had limited capacity, raising a question about whether responsibility and oversight for CwC has become too fragmented at the global level, and whether supporting coordination in Cox's Bazar has fallen between the cracks. CwC capacity that was available and on offer from the regional level was not drawn upon. This has had negative consequences for the resourcing of CwC coordination and for the fulfilment of fundamental coordination functions. Most contact between Cox's Bazar and the global level has been in the recruitment of CwC coordination staff, but this has not worked well with few suitable candidates emerging from the NORCAP roster and therefore slow recruitment and deployment of coordination staff.

The RTE makes two sets of recommendations: at the Cox's Bazar level to strengthen coordination and to address priority issues; and at the global level to ensure the learning from the Rohingya response informs CwC coordination in this and future humanitarian responses.

1 Introduction

The purpose of this Real Time Evaluation (RTE) is to take stock of the work done through the Communicating with Communities (CwC) Working Group in the Rohingya response since August 2017, to identify key lessons and recommendations to strengthen coordination, and for future collective approaches in other countries. The full Terms of Reference (TOR) are in Annex 1. The RTE was commissioned by the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative (CCEI)², with a clear learning objective. The primary audience for the RTE's findings are the CwC Working Group and coordination in Cox's Bazar. The secondary audience are the global initiatives associated with CwC, community engagement and accountability to affected people (AAP).

The proposal for an RTE was first discussed in the CwC Working Group in Cox's Bazar in November 2017. It took five months to get off the ground due to a combination of procedural requirements for recruitment and deployment, and a delay in the international consultant being issued a visa for Bangladesh.

The RTE was carried out by a two-person team comprising an international consultant and a national consultant, over a two-week period in Bangladesh between 14 and 27 April 2018. The consultants each spent eight days in the district of Cox's Bazar. The evaluation team leader continued to carry out interviews and follow up on some CwC coordination issues after leaving Bangladesh until the draft report had been completed by mid-June. The RTE used the following methods:

1. Documentation review, before, during and after travelling to Bangladesh. The team had access to the CwC Working Group dropbox.
2. Key informant interviews, in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, in the camps and by Skype at global level, with national and international aid workers covering more than 30 agencies, and with officials from the Government of Bangladesh. Approximately 70 people were interviewed.
3. Consultation with Rohingya refugees in four camps through more than 12 separate Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with men, women and girls; and through 10 key informant interviews with community leaders such as mahjees and imams and with Rohingya volunteers. (In the fieldwork for the RTE we worked closely with the national consultant for the UNICEF RTE so that we were able to consult separately with both men and women in the camps)³.
4. Consultation with the host community through one FGD.
5. A rapid participatory exercise with CwC Working Group members to identify 'what has worked well', the 'challenges', and what should be 'done differently' to strengthen the Working Group and CwC coordination.

See Annex 2 for the camps visited and the list of agency and government key informant interviews.

The RTE's preliminary findings were shared with the CwC Working Group members in Cox's Bazar before the RTE team left. This was an opportunity to disseminate the findings

2/ This is a partnership between UNICEF, OCHA, the IFRC, CDAC Network and other partners.

3/ TWB supported the RTE by recommending TWB-trained interpreters for the fieldwork.

promptly, and for feedback. In a facilitated exercise Working Group members were invited to make recommendations – immediate and for the medium to longer term. The preliminary findings were also shared with Shongjog member agencies in Dhaka and with UNICEF senior management in Dhaka. Immediate priorities identified by the RTE and by CwC Working Group members were drafted and disseminated back to the Working Group immediately after the fieldwork was completed at the end of April 2018.

After the initial delays in launching the RTE and further delays in recruiting the national consultant, the main constraint the team faced was limited time, especially in Cox’s Bazar, to cover a large and complex topic. The focus of the RTE is therefore more strategic and forward-looking, exploring the strategic but also the practical implications of what has worked well and the challenges in CwC coordination. This is different from a comprehensive in-depth evaluation of all aspects of CwC in the Rohingya response which would have required a different approach and much greater investment of resources.

As ‘CwC’ is the acronym used by the Working Group, this report also uses this acronym although in the widest sense, referring to community engagement and AAP as well as communication, noting that there are many different acronyms used globally and no agreement on which is the most appropriate.

This report starts with a short description of the Rohingya refugee crisis and the response, highlighting the implications for CwC (Section 2). Section 3 provides a brief overview of CwC in the response before diving into the approach and structures for CwC coordination in Section 4. Section 5 evaluates CwC coordination in practice, against the TORs for the Working Group. Section 6 considers key aspects of CwC in the Rohingya response and presents some of the findings from the fieldwork carried out for this RTE. Section 7 considers two particular outcomes of CwC coordination. Section 8 looks at the links between CwC coordination in Cox’s Bazar and the global level. Section 9 presents the RTE’s conclusions and two sets of recommendations: for strengthening CwC coordination in Cox’s Bazar, and for the global level.

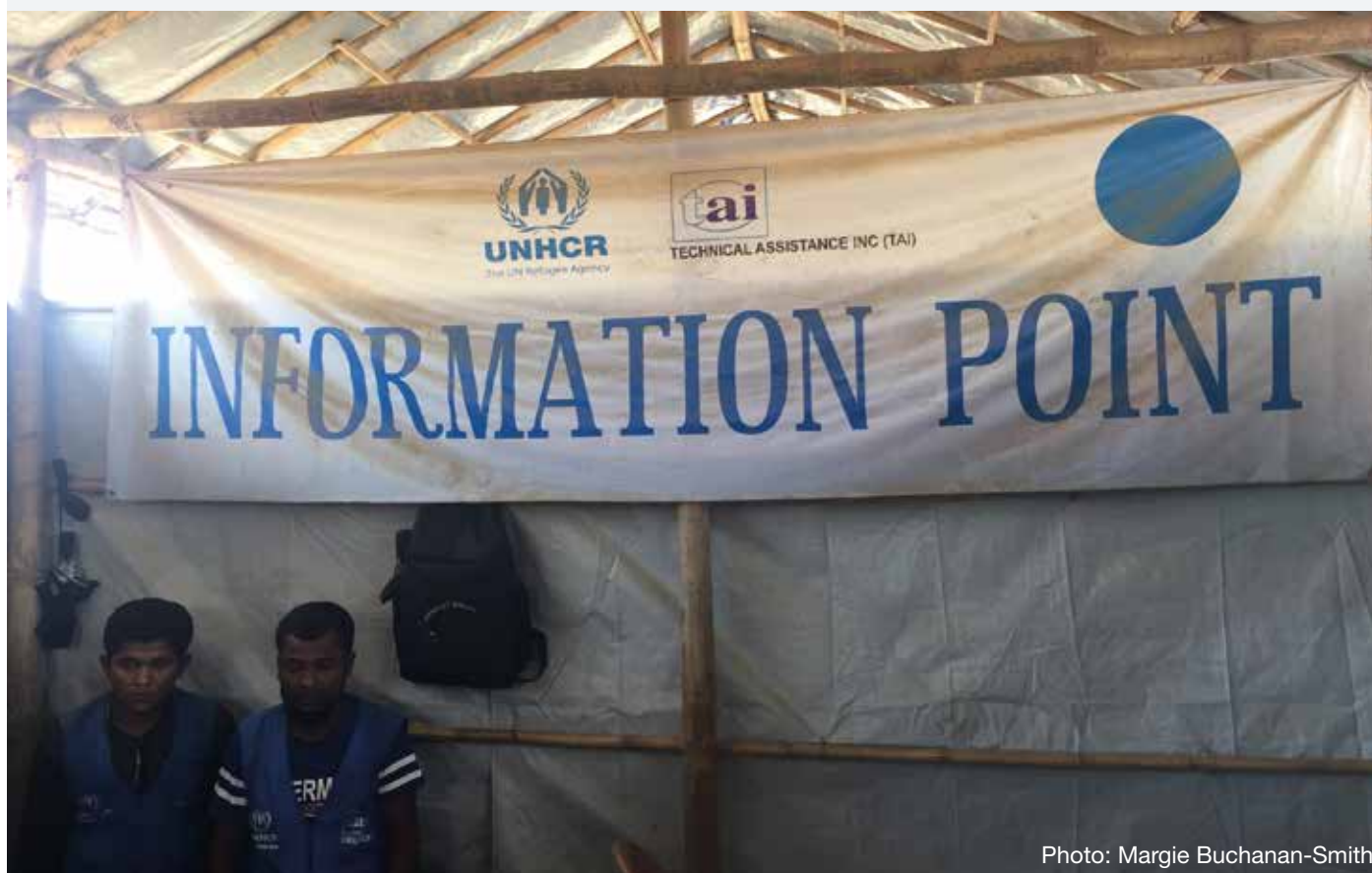


Photo: Margie Buchanan-Smith

2 Context

2.1 The refugee crisis

Since 25th August 2017 more than 671,000 people, mostly Rohingya, have fled targeted violence and human rights abuses in Myanmar (SEG, 2018). They arrived in one of the most impoverished districts in Bangladesh: Cox's Bazar, joining an estimated 300,000 Rohingya refugees who had fled earlier periods of violence in Myanmar. This rapidly became one of the fastest-growing and largest concentrations of refugees in the world. There are now ten camps and settlements in Cox's Bazar, ranging in size from around 10,000 to more than 600,000 refugees.

The Rohingya refugees are a highly disempowered and disenfranchised population. They are effectively stateless having been denied legal nationality in Myanmar for decades, and also denied access to basic rights such as education and health care. Education levels are therefore very low and illiteracy rates high. After what they had endured in the violence in Myanmar and when they fled many were deeply traumatised on arrival in Cox's Bazar.

2.2 The response

In August 2017 there were five UN agencies, five INGOs and a network of national NGOs working in Cox's Bazar. When the refugee influx began the humanitarian aid community rapidly scaled up its response, but the speed and scale of the influx was overwhelming. The Government of Bangladesh has led, and remained in control of the response, but much of the national humanitarian capacity and expertise in Bangladesh was geared to natural disasters. By early 2018 there were over 120 international and national NGOs, 12 UN agencies and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement responding to the crisis (SEG, 2018). UNHCR declared it an L3 emergency.

The Rohingya refugees that arrived in the 2017 influx were termed 'Undocumented Myanmar Nationals' by the Government of Bangladesh although they have since ended up referring to both the new and old caseloads of Rohingya as 'refugees'. Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and the relationship between the Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has not been an easy one over time. This has not been treated like most humanitarian refugee responses. Instead the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has been designated the lead UN agency, and has established a coordination structure based on different sectors, similar to the coordination system that would be put in place for crises of internal displacement. The DEC real-time review contrasts this with the usual integrated refugee coordination model, describing the coordination arrangement as: 'a hybrid UN-led structure that mixes the different coordination models and which works in parallel to the government coordination structure, giving rise to significant confusion'



Disenfranchised for so long, the Rohingya refugees are even more reluctant than many other populations affected by humanitarian crises to share grievances and to make complaints





(DEC, 2018:28). Complementing the different ‘sectors’ in this response, the coordination of cross-cutting issues is organised through a series of Working Groups, including CwC, gender, and ‘Preventing Sexual Abuse and Exploitation’ (PSEA). The coordination structure is overseen by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG).

Without official refugee status the future of the Rohingya is precarious. The agreement signed between the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar on repatriation in November 2017 raised concern about the prospect of forced repatriation, and created confusion and anxiety amongst the Rohingya (DEC, 2018). A more recent agreement was signed between UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh in April 2018 establishing a framework for cooperation for the voluntary return of Rohingya refugees⁴.

2.3 A challenging context for CwC and community engagement

All of this has profound implications for how humanitarian agencies are able to engage with the refugees. High levels of illiteracy (73% according to the Internews and ETS assessment, 2017) and the fact there is no standardised and internationally recognised written script for the Rohingya language means that communication must be face-to-face and oral. According to a language assessment by Translators without Borders (TWB) there is approximately a 70% likeness between Chittagong, the primary Bangla dialect spoken around Cox’s Bazar and Rohingya, meaning that as many as three words out of ten could be misunderstood⁵. Yet full comprehension is key to ensuring effective two-way communication. It is technically illegal for the Rohingya refugees to have SIM cards for Bangladeshi mobile phone networks although over half of the refugees do. Very few have access to radio both because of a lack of radio sets and also because of poor broadcast coverage in the camps (Internews and ETS, 2017). This means that communication must be low-tech.

Disenfranchised for so long, the Rohingya refugees are even more reluctant than many other populations affected by humanitarian crises to share grievances and to make complaints, fearing that humanitarian support will end (Christian Aid and GUK, 2018). This is compounded by language barriers and cultural norms that restrict access to women. In this context rumours and myths proliferate. The host community speaks a different language and also suffers from high levels of illiteracy, but they do rely on their mobile phones as a channel for information.

An international aid worker experienced in community engagement described it as the most challenging environment for communication that he had encountered.

4/ See <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2018/4/5ad061d54/bangladesh-unhcr-agree-voluntary-returns-framework-refugees-decide-conditions.html>

5/ See <https://translatorswithoutborders.org/rohingya-zubari/>

3 An overview of CwC in the Rohingya refugee response

3.1 Establishing CwC early in the response

It is striking how quickly the concept and coordination structures associated with CwC were established in the response soon after the refugee influx began in late August 2017. The reasons for this are in large part because of the earlier work on CwC in Bangladesh at national level and at the Cox's Bazar level. At national level a Working Group for Communication with Communities in Emergencies (CwCiE) had been established in 2013, chaired by the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and convened by UNICEF and BBC Media Action. In 2015 a multi-stakeholder platform – the Shongjog⁶ platform – was created by DDM and international and national actors 'to improve effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to disaster affected communities in Bangladesh, through predictable, coordinated and resourced two-way communication'⁷. A Secretariat for Shongjog was formed, led by BBC Media Action and funded by DfID through the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP), until early 2018 when the grant ended. Meanwhile in Cox's Bazar in February 2017 UNICEF proposed a CwC coordination group for the response to the older Rohingya refugee caseload in the Registered Camps which ended up being led by IOM. These two initiatives had established CwC in the lexicon of the humanitarian response in Bangladesh; it set the foundation for CwC being recognised as a key component of the scaled-up response from August 2017. The first CwC coordinator was deployed by IOM in the first half of September, and the CwC Working Group met for the first time on 19th September 2017, less than a month after the influx had started.

Staff involved in CwC coordination soon after the August influx have talked about high demand for CwC early in the response with many aid workers referring to the CwC collective approaches in Nepal after the earthquakes in 2015. For example, ECHO specifically asked its partners to engage with the CwC Working Group and use its content from the beginning of the response. This high level of demand is unusual, and may indicate that CwC is now more valued and expected as part of large humanitarian responses in the region. Interviews carried out for the RTE in April 2018 showed that support for CwC is still high amongst agencies and in the ISCG leadership. The latter described CwC as critical for the emergency, and stressed the strategic contribution that CwC can make in helping to empower this disenfranchised population. CwC has a high profile in this response.

Shongjog and the CwC coordination group established CwC in the lexicon of the humanitarian response in Bangladesh; it set the foundation for CwC being recognised as a key component of the scaled-up response from August 2017

6/ Translated as connection or linkage
7/ See Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Shongjog Multi-Sector Platform



Photo: BBC Media Action

3.2 A brief overview of CwC in the response

There has been a strong emphasis on information messaging over the last eight months. This started early, with WASH, health and protection identified as priorities, with nutrition subsequently added to this list. Much of this has been related to behavioural issues (for example on hygiene promotion) and the provision of information, for example on vaccination campaigns. Occasionally this has been an urgent ‘one-off’ case, for example when an anti-psychotic drug was distributed as part of a ‘Non Food Item’ (NFI) package and rapid reactive messaging was launched to warn people about the drug and to recall it. Most of this has been one-way communication, available in both Chittagong and Rohingya and launched with the help of the CwC Working Group.

Feedback mechanisms have been discussed in the WG from October 2017. An Internews report published in June 2018 shows that 93% of humanitarian agencies were collecting community feedback seven months into the response, mostly through face-to-face contact between agency field staff and refugees (Fluck et al, 2018). This can be a rich source of qualitative information, but is notoriously difficult to capture and analyse. It is unclear what happens to this feedback, and at the time of the RTE there were very limited mechanisms for it to be shared. The feedback loop back to the community in terms of how their concerns and issues have been dealt with/ responded to, is weakest of all in the response.

Some conventional feedback mechanisms were put in place early, for example information points and help desks during distributions⁸. Complaints boxes also appear to have been widely implemented despite the fact that there is growing evidence that this is a highly ineffective feedback mechanism⁹ and entirely inappropriate for a population with high levels of illiteracy. The Christian Aid and GUK's Accountability Assessment in Jamtoli Camp in 2018 concluded that: 'Complaint boxes are a clear failure, yet continue to be relied upon and even installed five months into the response. Each (empty) box is a reminder that humanitarian actors need to adapt accountability mechanisms to the context' (Christian Aid and GUK, 2018:21). There have been some innovations in the CwC response, for example voice recorders for women to use anonymously in cooking spaces and in child/ women friendly spaces (Christian Aid and GUK, 2018).

Two of the main information and feedback mechanisms, now widely used across the camps are:

1. Information hubs (referred to as 'information centres' by UNICEF, as 'information points' by UNHCR, and as 'Mobile Information and Feedback Centres' by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement). These are run by the national partners of UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM, and by some INGOs, Radio NAF ACLAB, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. See Section 6.2 below.

2. Volunteer networks: there are numerous volunteer networks set up and run by different agencies and entities. Many of the volunteers have been specifically recruited and tasked

^{8/} The minutes of the CwC WG meeting of 11/10/17 show the Food Security Sector coordinator asking for CwC materials for their distribution points.

^{9/} See, for example, Buchanan-Smith et al (2015)



Photo: BBC Media Action

with playing a key role in messaging, collecting information and feedback from, and consulting with refugee communities. See Section 6.3 below.

Overall the communications aspect – information as aid – has dominated and the accountability dimension has been weak, in terms of real listening and representation of the concerns of affected people. This is compounded by the challenges of language described above.

Agency capacity on CwC has struggled to meet the demand for CwC in the response with a few notable exceptions. In the first few months especially CwC technical expertise was low. This has picked up to some extent as the specialist CwC agencies (Internews, BBC Media Action and TWB) established their programmes and joined forces, as described below. But the high turnover



Overall the communications aspect – information as aid – has dominated and the accountability dimension has been weak



of CwC staff within agencies has continued to be a constraint. It is worth noting, however, that many CwC-related activities are taking place as part of the standard practices of some agencies and sectors. As described below, not all of it is labelled ‘CwC’.

3.3 The range of agency approaches to CwC

Different agencies, as well as different types of agency, have different approaches to CwC, in terms of what they do and how they do it. Some, such as UNICEF, approach it more from the behavioural dimension and providing

information about life-saving practices as well as services available. They have emphasised messaging, mobilisation, engagement and influencing through their ‘Communications 4 Development’ work, C4D. Others, including NGOs such as Christian Aid, place more emphasis on the accountability dimension.

For the three agencies in the consortium providing a ‘Common Service for Community Engagement and Accountability’ (CSCEA, see below): BBC Media Action, TWB and Internews, CwC is their raison d’être. For example, Internews is carrying out rumour-tracking and a ‘narrowcast’ broadcasting service; with initial support from UNICEF, BBC Media Action is working with national and local radio, setting up listener groups; TWB is providing a comprehensive language service ranging from written and audio translations to field worker language training.

Some agencies – for example UNHCR, CARE, Oxfam, and some national NGOs – see CwC as integral to how they work and engage with the refugees. They are therefore reluctant to label it as an ‘approach’ or as a particular set of activities. Some, but not all of these agencies have been active participants in the CwC WG.

What ‘CwC’ actually means in its broadest sense (ie with reference to AAP and community engagement as well) and what should be emphasised and prioritised has long been a source of confusion and contention amongst agencies and aid workers¹⁰. This appears to continue as agencies hold different views and as different initiatives emerge from the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). At worst this breaks down into agencies competing for positioning and institutional turf wars. There is also a danger that focusing on ‘CwC’ and using that terminology emphasises the provision of information and one-way communication over deeper community engagement and the importance of two-way communication.

10/ See Routley (2018), CDAC and JdS (2018)

4 The approach to CwC coordination in the Rohingya response

4.1 Introduction

This section reviews how CwC coordination was set up and run in the Rohingya response, and who participated. Establishing the Working Group early was key to ensuring CwC was a visible and engaged part of the response from the beginning. See Annex 3 for a timeline of key events in relation to CwC coordination.

4.2 Role and position of Working Group, and role of the consortium

In interviews for this RTE staff from different agencies expressed a range of perspectives on where CwC should be located in the coordination infrastructure for the Rohingya response. Some felt it should be part of the protection sector, arguing that this is fundamentally a protection crisis. Others have argued it should be more closely linked to site management as the operational hub of the response. The majority view appeared to support the status quo, that there should be a free-standing CwC Working Group because of its cross-sectoral mandate, a view shared by this RTE. The purpose of CwC is: 'putting people at the center of humanitarian response', as stated in the Working Group TOR. In this sense it is clearly in service of those affected by the crisis, and can only achieve its purpose if it is working integrally with other sectors and Working Groups. It should not therefore be a 'sector' in its own right.

In practice the CwC Working Group appears to have had a higher profile than other Working Groups. For example CwC has its own reporting section in the ISCG's weekly Situation Reports, and its own section in the Joint Response Plan (JRP). CwC coordination has two places at the table in the weekly ISCG meeting. This is further evidence of the central role that CwC has been given in the response, and its potential influence.

The consortium implementing the CSCEA, of Internews, BBC Media Action and TwB, has also become central to collective CwC operations. UNICEF played a role in supporting BBC Media Action and TwB to set up in Cox's Bazar, providing initial funding to BBC Media Action. The CSCEA project was funded by IOM from December 2017, and subsequently by DFID funds channeled through IOM from February 2018. This aims to provide a common service for engagement and accountability, for example providing collective feedback analysis, rumour tracking and fact-checking, and providing language support for information messaging. Initially presented to the Working Group in October 2017, in practice it has taken some months to get off the ground and to deliver (see section 5.2 below), for financial and contractual reasons. The relationship between the consortium agencies and the CwC Working Group and coordinators is key to ensure that it does not create a separate coordination hub but is in service of the overall CwC effort.

11/ At times coordination capacity has dropped to one staff member, for example during May 2018 when IOM deployed an acting coordinator who is also supporting IOM's own CwC activities, and the UNICEF supporting officer took a one-month break. For a short period in June there was no CwC coordination staff present in Cox's Bazar at all, and a staff member from BBC Media Action was asked to step in to chair the Working Group.

4.3 Coordination structure for CwC

From the early days of the Rohingya influx in 2017 both IOM and UNICEF were engaged in CwC coordination, but there was a lack of clarity on the ground about the coordination arrangements between these two UN agencies. Eventually it was agreed that IOM would lead with UNICEF playing a support role. In the first few months there was a struggle between the two agencies about the approach to CwC. The CwC coordinators on the ground felt under pressure to resolve this, but rightly pushed back for resolution at a higher level. According to one of the former CwC coordinators this took two months to resolve. The turf battle between these two large UN agencies impacted negatively on CwC coordination in Cox's Bazar. It was a distracting backdrop for the coordination staff when the focus should have been the response. Ultimately it has been up to the coordinating staff on the ground to make this uneasy institutional arrangement work, and has been heavily dependent on their personal relationships to achieve this.

It is unusual to have two operational UN agencies involved in CwC coordination, in the absence of OCHA. This has not been conducive to the coordinators playing a neutral and brokering role, exacerbated by the coordination staff 'double-hatting' for the respective agency that hired them. For example the IOM-appointed coordinator is also IOM's CwC officer. This further compromises the ability to be perceived as, and to remain neutral. The first UNICEF-appointed CwC coordination support person was also 'double-hatting' to an extent, providing technical support to UNICEF's C4D work as well as playing a coordination role. In the words of one UNICEF staff member, the UNICEF coordination support person participates in every Working Group meeting 'on behalf of UNICEF'. The fact that both UNICEF and IOM are working with large numbers of international and national NGO partners, some of whom are members of the CwC Working Group, also compromises the perception that CwC coordination is neutral.

NGOs usually have the closest working relationship with affected people and are often at the cutting edge of CwC efforts and innovations. This raises questions about the appropriateness of two UN agencies involved in CwC coordination, with one leading. For a short time, towards the end of 2017, there was a national NGO co-lead to the CwC Working Group – one of the chairs of the Cox's Bazar national civil society forum. This was an excellent initiative, encouraged by commitments made in the Grand Bargain, but was not sustained into 2018, partly due to lack of funding to support this role.

4.4 Resources for coordination, and turnover of staff

CwC coordination has been very poorly resourced¹¹ considering the scale of the response, that it was declared an L3 emergency by both IOM and UNICEF in the second half of September

Box 1: Timeline for deployment of CwC coordinators between August 2017 and May 2018

Early-September	IOM Dhaka project staff member deployed to Cox's Bazar to set up CwC Working Group. Returns to Dhaka after two weeks
Mid-September	CwC coordination support person appointed by UNICEF on 6-week contract, leaves in early November
Mid-September	First IOM CwC coordinator arrives, leaves in December
Late October	Second CwC coordination support person appointed by UNICEF arrives, leaves end April
January	Second CwC coordinator appointed by IOM arrives, leaves in March
End March	First IOM coordinator re-appointed as Acting CwC coordinator
May	IOM recruiting for replacement CwC coordinator
May/June	Periods when no CwC coordination staff (from IOM or UNICEF) are present in Cox's Bazar

2017, and that the CwC Working Group has had a high profile throughout. At a maximum there have been only 2 staff members engaged in CwC coordination, but not full-time where they have been required to ‘double-hat’ for IOM and UNICEF respectively. Recruitment of an Information Manager was requested in 2017, but was not advertised until April 2018. The position was filled in May 2018 and the appointee started work in June.

This chronic under-resourcing partly explains why some coordination functions have not been fulfilled or are badly behind schedule – see Section 5. Draft ToR for the Working Group were shared with DFID soon after the crisis escalated in August 2017, based on the ToR for the Dhaka-based national CwC Working Group. This was poorly thought through and CwC was poorly articulated¹². Although DFID have been long-term supporters of community engagement, their staff were not convinced by the proposed approach to CwC which seemed to emphasise communication over accountability and engagement. No funding was forthcoming. Since then the capacity to raise funds for CwC coordination has been weak at both national and global levels.

The two coordination staff employed by IOM and UNICEF respectively have been working on short-term contracts. This has contributed to high turnover. See Box 1. While this is not unique to CwC coordination and many other sectors have experienced even higher turnover

of coordinators, members of the Working Group interviewed for the RTE expressed their concern about the consequences: that activities and discussions were repeated in the Working Group when the new coordinator arrived and there was a sense of ‘starting from scratch’ again with a lack of forward movement. This has been exacerbated where there was no proper handover from one staff member to the next¹³, especially between the coordinating staff employed by the two different agencies. The two different coordinators have also had different styles of leadership which has been disruptive over short periods of time.

While the set-up for the CwC Working Group did not convince donors, the proposal for the CSCEA project to be run by the consortium of Internews, BBC Media Action and TWB was successful in mobilising DFID funding. This complements funding from IOM.

4.5 Working Group membership and participation

Nine agencies were present at the first CwC Working Group meeting on 19th September, including two national organisations, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and BRAC. The number of agencies participating increased to around 25 by mid- October and remained at this level into early November. Thereafter the names of agencies attending Working Group meetings were no longer recorded in the minutes. Some regular participants of the Working Group reported that attendance peaked at around 30 agencies and is now back to 20 to 25 at the time of the RTE. Some agencies, including UN agencies, some INGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have been regular and active participants. But the high turnover of international CwC staff within many agencies has slowed the progress of the Working Group, for example where documents have to be circulated many times to get feedback and buy-in.



In practice the CwC Working Group appears to have had a higher profile than other Working Groups



12/ The subsequent ToR for the CwC Working Group were drafted later, were widely consulted upon in Cox’s Bazar and were endorsed in November 2017.

13/ This has been inconsistent – sometimes handover notes have been prepared. Sometimes the coordination staff member has left without the coordination staff member from the other agency knowing that their departure was imminent.

Involvement of Bangladeshi civil society organisations has been poor. Bangladeshi INGOs like BRAC have been regular attenders, as well as some national NGOs like CODEC and Mukti. But overall few national NGOs are participating in the Working Group, even when the co-chair was from the Cox's Bazar civil society forum. Language is a major barrier as meetings are held in English, and handouts and presentation materials are also in English. If the CwC Working Group was better-resourced, this could be addressed. Culturally different communication styles are also an issue. A number of interviewees commented on the tendency for more experienced international staff to dominate the meetings and for the staff of national NGOs to hold their discussions separately, after the official Working Group meeting, or in the Cox's Bazar civil society forum. This phenomenon is not unique to the Rohingya response and happened after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Some national NGOs see their UN partners regularly attending the CwC Working Group so rely on them to pass on relevant information. Engagement of national NGOs may have been stronger in the smaller sub-groups (see below) in Cox's Bazar. But this is a major challenge as it means that much local knowledge, experience and relationships are missing from the Working Group discussions.

Government's engagement in the Working Group has also been very weak. Government officers now rarely, if ever, attend meetings. The natural partners on CwC would be the Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC), and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, for example on cyclone preparedness and response issues. There have been some efforts to engage them (as well as some officials from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Information). The RRRC apparently did attend some Working Group meetings earlier in the crisis. Generally, however, these efforts have not been successful. Again, this is not unusual, and the CwC Working Groups in Nepal after the earthquakes and in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan faced the same challenge. In a coordination-heavy response like this one, government simply does not have the capacity to attend so many weekly meetings. RRRC, for example, prioritises the site management sector meeting and the ISCG meeting, as well as the Camp in Charge (CIC) meetings at camp level. The approach to engage government in CwC

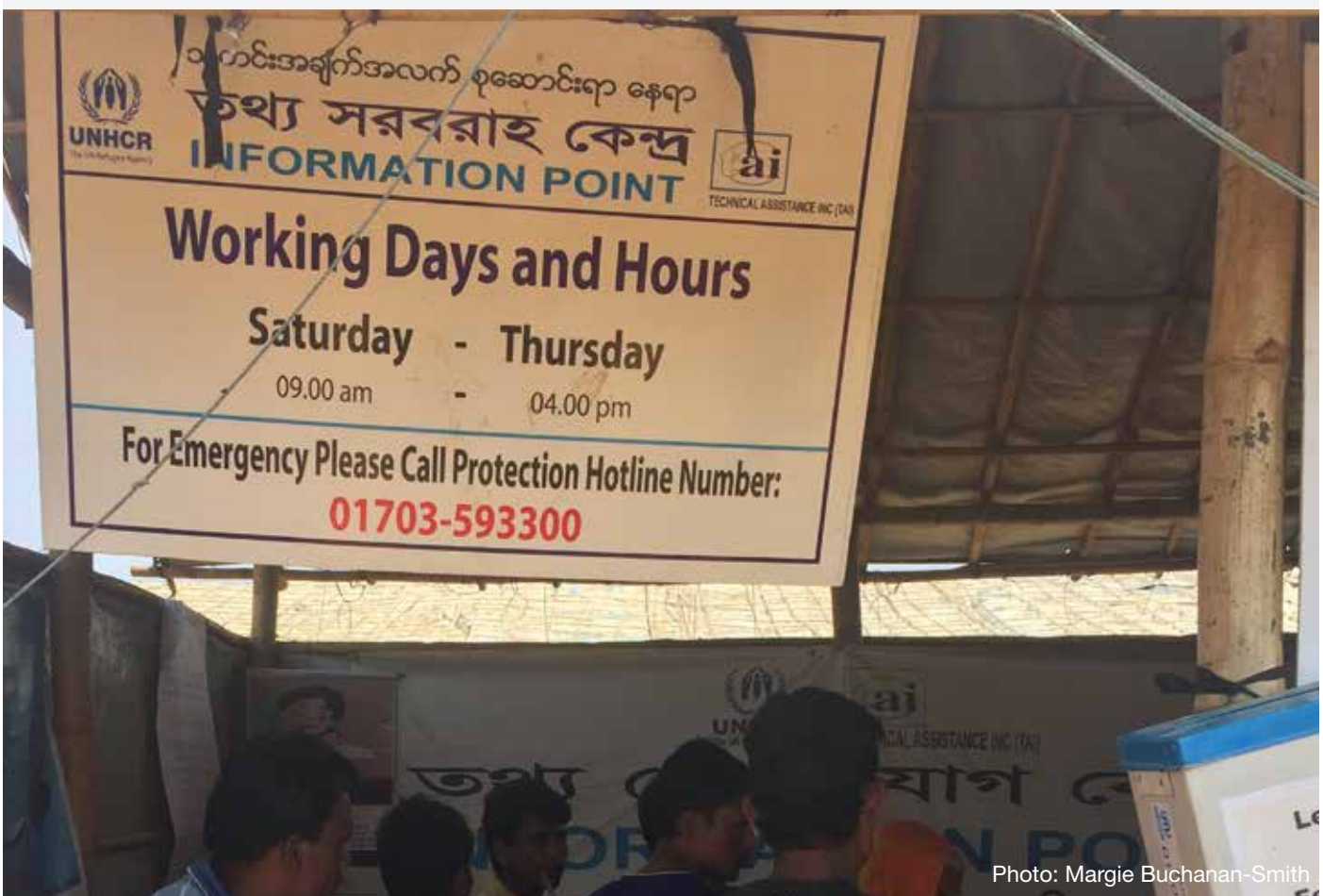


Photo: Margie Buchanan-Smith



must therefore be modified, actively seeking their engagement on a case-by-case and issue-by-issue basis as has happened around health issues where the Civil Surgeon's Office set up a Working Group on communication for behavioural change, and ensuring that key government officers are regularly briefed on CwC.

4.6 Sub-groups within the CwC Working Group

The suggestion that there should be a number of sub-groups was first mooted in a Working Group meeting at the end of September 2017. The topics originally proposed were: messaging, M&E and assessment, field operations, training and development. There was no immediate follow-up apart from setting up the Radio Sub-Group in November 2017. The issue of sub-groups was raised again in January 2018, at which point four sub-groups were set up, as the 'best place of debates and further discussion on major issues' according to the Working Group Meeting Minutes of January 17th 2018. The topics had changed to:

1. Info Hubs
2. Accountability
3. Radio
4. Content

On the one hand these sub-groups have helped reduce the dominance of the two UN agencies: three out of the four are chaired by other agencies, particularly by the three agencies that are part of the consortium delivering the CSCEA. And some valuable work has been done by the sub-groups as described in Section 5 below. But on the other hand the proliferation of sub-groups is practically very challenging, particularly for smaller agencies with few staff, or where there is only one designated CwC official. They might now have to cover as many as five CwC meetings per week, or more if they participate in the emergency task force on preparedness, and cyclone preparedness and response group. Not surprisingly some sub-groups have suffered from low attendance.

Agency feedback on the sub-groups has been mixed. Some have appreciated the opportunity for more in-depth discussion on a particular topic. Others have questioned why there is a sub-group on an issue like accountability which should be the *raison d'être* of the CwC Working Group, and feel that some sub-groups are driven too much by particular agency interests. Concerns have been raised about the disconnect between the work of the different sub-groups, for example, until recently, between the Info Hubs and Accountability sub-groups. In the rapid participatory exercise that the RTE team carried out with the Working Group at the end of April 2018, some members expressed their unease that the sub-groups are in danger of being institutionalised. Instead, they should be set up as time-bound task forces, to complete and fulfil a particular assignment. This is now written into the ToR for the sub-groups, and should be monitored.

4.7 Accountability of CwC coordination

In most humanitarian crises where the cluster system is in place coordination of the clusters and Working Groups are accountable to the HC or RC. Thus, if cluster members have particular

concerns about coordination that they want to raise at a higher level, they would raise them with the RC/ HC. Some clusters, for example the Food Security Cluster, have carried out occasional feedback surveys of their members in-country, and globally. In the unique coordination structure for the Rohingya response, the lines of accountability are unclear. The IOM CwC coordinator reports to the Emergency Coordinator of IOM, who is managing a massive operational programme. In practice this has not worked well in terms of accountability of CwC coordination back to its membership. When Working Group members had concerns about CwC coordination in the first months of 2018, as described in section 5.2 below, they did not know how or where to raise and discuss these concerns. Nor do there appear to be clear channels of accountability of CwC coordination at the global level.

4.8 Links with national level and preparedness

As described above, the earlier work on CwC at national level and the Shongjog platform set a



There do not appear to be clear channels of accountability of CwC coordination at the global level



strong foundation for CwC in the Rohingya response, in the words of one stakeholder, ‘a new normal for what we should do’. The case had already been made at national level and a number of NGOs that were active members of Shongjog supported the centrality of CwC in the Rohingya response. National staff who had participated in Shongjog training and activities were keen that community engagement and accountability were included in their programming (Tanner et al, 2018).

Use has been made of some of the Shongjog materials, for instance for health messaging, adapting them to the context and language of the Rohingya. But the potential of the Shongjog platform has not been realised and much greater use could have been made of some of its audio-visual materials and its mainstreaming toolkit. Reasons why this does not seem to have happened include:

1. Shongjog CwC materials were developed for very different humanitarian crises: natural disasters affecting the Bangladeshi population in a more stable context, rather than a highly politicised and rapid refugee influx which is first and foremost a protection crisis. Many of the information and communication needs are different
2. Shongjog is associated with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, yet the RRRC is the lead government institution in the Rohingya response
3. The Shongjog online library is not particularly user-friendly and has not been actively promoted at the Cox’s Bazar level
4. International staff deployed to respond to the Rohingya refugee crisis were new to Bangladesh and were not familiar with national level CwC activities nor with Shongjog
5. Funding for the Shongjog Secretariat ended in February 2018

It would have required a much more concerted effort for the Shongjog materials and experience to inform CwC in the Rohingya response. In practice the links between the national and Cox’s Bazar levels were weak on CwC.

The findings of the recent DEPP evaluation that covers Shongjog are salutary, noting there are only two national NGO members of Shongjog. This partly reflects different perceptions and prioritisation between international and national agencies, and is also due to the concentration of meetings in Dhaka and the power dynamics between national and international organisations (Tanner et al, 2018). The experience of the CwC Working Group in Cox’s Bazar is similar, with the dominance of international agencies.

5 Coordination of CwC in practice

5.1 Introduction

This section reviews how CwC coordination has worked in practice during the eight to nine months of the response to the Rohingya crisis that this RTE covers. It is structured according to the CwC coordination functions set out in the ToR for the Working Group. See Annex 4 for the full description of these functions in the ToR. Two functions that the Working Group should be providing appear to be missing in its ToR: first, developing a collective vision for CwC in the Rohingya response, and second on knowledge management and the sharing of good practice.

5.2 Function 1: 'Coordinate efforts by WG members to engage the affected community'

Coordination of CwC started early and, despite some of the setbacks described above, was building momentum through the latter months of 2017. Experienced CwC coordination staff provided leadership and were respected for their technical expertise at a time when overall CwC capacity was weak across the response. However, some of the fundamental CwC coordination functions that should have happened during these first few months did not, in particular the mapping of 'Who is doing What, Where and When' (4Ws). This was raised in the first Working Group meeting of 19 September 2017, but had still not been completed when the fieldwork for this RTE was carried out in April 2018, seven months later. To a large extent this is a consequence of the under-resourcing and under-staffing of CwC coordination. It is finally being done by the CSCEA project when the three consortium agencies stepped in to carry out some of the coordination tasks that had fallen behind although this was outside their mandate. By March over 40 agencies had responded to their survey requesting information on their CwC activities¹⁴. This has been a major gap, may have resulted in duplication of agency efforts, and was raised by many agency staff in interviews for this RTE. Similarly, establishing common services through the CSCEA project has been badly delayed due to funding issues.

In the first few months of 2018 CwC coordination was not working well and the momentum from 2017 was lost. Members of the Working Group describe meetings being used for information exchange instead of strategically progressing the CwC agenda, and issues coming to meetings repeatedly and not being resolved, for example messaging for cyclone preparedness. Some agency staff said they used the meetings to connect with other agencies, but then coordinated bilaterally outside the Working Group meeting. Tensions developed between the CwC Working Group coordination and the consortium, and some NGOs that play a key role in CwC stopped attending altogether. This appears to have been a highly dysfunctional period of fragmentation and acrimony that set back some critical elements of CwC in the response (see Section 7.2 below) and damaged the credibility of the Working Group. For example, ECHO decided to pursue a strategy of operationalising CwC by contracting BBC Media Action, TwB and InterNews to provide CwC products and technical support to its partners instead of supporting CwC coordination. By mid-April CwC coordination had started to recover but was still severely understaffed.

The JRP document sets out a strategy for CwC, largely based on the common services to be

14/ Results became available in the second half of June 2018.



provided by the CSCEA project. But there is scope for sharpening the vision for CwC in the Rohingya response, making a clearer strategic connection to protection and to empowerment of the Rohingya refugees, and articulating a proactive approach that goes beyond specific actions and the common/collective services of CSCEA project.

A challenge for the Working Group is to ensure that coordination in Cox's Bazar filters through to, and is supported by coordination at camp level. When the coordination resources are strengthened at Cox's Bazar level, this deserves further investigation and attention.

5.3 Function 2: 'Use appropriately focused sociological and behavioural research'

UNICEF took the initiative early in the crisis to commission a review of research and secondary sources on 'Social and cultural factors shaping health and nutrition, wellbeing and protection of the Rohingya within a humanitarian context' (Ripoll and contributors, 2017). Focusing mainly on health, nutrition, water sanitation, education and protection, this provides some useful cultural and historical context, and was made available to CwC Working Group members. TWB has carried out socio-linguistic research. The CwC Coordinators set up a Dropbox early in the response so that relevant documents such as these could be accessible to all Working Group members. The Dropbox was actively updated and promoted in 2017 and again from March 2018 but fell into abeyance during the first months of 2018.

On a rapid scan, however, there appears to have been rather little 'sociological and behavioural research' commissioned as part of the response, and a need and scope for promoting more, as recommended by this RTE in relation to the Rohingyas' use of InfoHubs.

5.4 Function 3: 'Promote accountability to all affected people... Support the establishment of a common service feedback mechanism'

As noted above, this has been a weak part of the overall CwC effort (with some individual agency exceptions) although given a boost by the accountability sub-group. Despite the high percentage of agencies that say they are collecting feedback, this is mostly being done on an individual agency-basis and there is little shared analysis, not even for the data and information collected from the InfoHubs. (A CwC Joint Community Feedback System Protocol had been drafted by the Info Hubs sub-group in collaboration with the Accountability sub-group and site management sector in March 2018, but was not referred to, nor was it yet being widely used during fieldwork for the RTE). In addition, the ETS app used by some

agencies for collecting and collating data is so far a closed system, although it has potential to promote sharing of feedback data between agencies. Eight months after the influx there was still no collective analysis of the feedback information from different agencies, although the CSCEA project implemented through the consortium is now working to establish this.

The work of the sub-group on accountability, which first met in mid-February 2018, led by Internews, has helped to shine the spotlight on accountability. An 'Accountability Manifesto' was drafted in late February 2018, recognising that the Rohingya response in Bangladesh was failing to achieve mandated accountability standards. The manifesto is continuously updated, identifying priority needs and lead organisations, and providing some practical guidance. Although the challenges of promoting accountability, and especially establishing the feedback loop, are immense, this has been an important and positive collective initiative. The arrival of Ground Truth Solutions and its role in providing an independent feedback mechanism will also strengthen this aspect of CwC across the response, and may help to close the feedback loop.

5.5 Functions 4 & 5: 'Provide technical advice and support and coordinate capacity-building initiatives'

These functions were particularly important in the first few months of the response when agency expertise on CwC was weak, especially expertise on community engagement and accountability beyond information and behavioural messaging. At this period of the response it was important that the coordination staff had strong technical knowledge and experience as agencies looked to them to do

more than just coordination, for example spending some time in the field to conduct FGDs. Many technical guidelines and background documents were uploaded into the Dropbox early on. But most are in English, so there was a language barrier for some national staff and national NGOs in accessing and using those materials, highlighting the need for translation into Bangla. Gradually CwC expertise and capacity has grown across the response. This seems to be more to do with recruitment of more experienced staff than capacity-building in situ.

It is less clear how the Working Group has coordinated CwC capacity-building initiatives. Most appear to be carried out by the consortium agencies as part of the CSCEA project, or to have been driven by UN agencies which have large numbers of partners and have sometimes opened their trainings to a wider audience, for example UNICEF's training on inter-personal communication run by John Hopkins University.

5.6 Function 6: Support the mainstreaming of community engagement

As the CwC Working Group is in service to the overall humanitarian response, its relationship with the different sectors is key, to support and enable stronger community engagement. With the sector leads under pressure to deliver, it has been up to the CwC coordinators to promote and advocate for community engagement, taking into account the challenges and complexities of communication with the Rohingya community. The CwC coordinators have worked closely with particular sectors, for example site management. Both the CwC coordinator and chair of the accountability sub-group regularly attend their sector meetings, and site management and the CwC Working Group are carrying out joint mapping of InfoHubs. Engagement with some other sectors has been periodically strong, for example with the health sector when a particular messaging campaign, like the diphtheria campaign, has been required. While



Eight months after the influx there was still no collective analysis of the feedback information from different agencies



many sector leads appreciated the engagement of the CwC coordinators, a number felt it could be strengthened, particularly with the protection sector which is fundamental to this response. Engagement with key sectors has been hampered by the limited resources of CwC coordination. While that persists, more creative methods for mainstreaming CwC may need to be sought. The proliferation of sub-groups within the CwC Working Group has made it harder for time-pressed coordinators from other sectors to engage with CwC discussions.

The CwC Working Group lost some credibility with other sectors during the period of dysfunctionality, and has had to rebuild trust and legitimacy since. Interviewees from other sectors talked about the inconsistent approach to CwC coordination, associated with the different leadership styles and views of different coordinators.

5.7 CwC and the JRP

CwC was included on the same footing as the sectors in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for September 2017 to February 2018, and in the JRP for March to December 2018, with its own budget line. This is unusual in a humanitarian response. In the JRP the budget line for CwC is almost \$6 million. One of the CwC coordinators in 2017 was credited with achieving this.

For the JRP a process was put in place for selecting CwC proposals, as required by the ISCG. A peer review committee representing the different stakeholders in the CwC Working Group was formed, comprising one national NGO staff member, one UN agency staff member, one international NGO staff member and the CwC coordinator. When this committee rejected a UNICEF proposal for C4D, the decision was subsequently overturned at the ISCG level. It was beyond the scope of this RTE to review the JRP proposals, but this action triggered a formal complaint by one of the committee members and contributed to the sense that coordination of the Working Group was not neutral but instead was dominated by the UN agencies leading coordination.



6 Key aspects of CwC in the Rohingya response

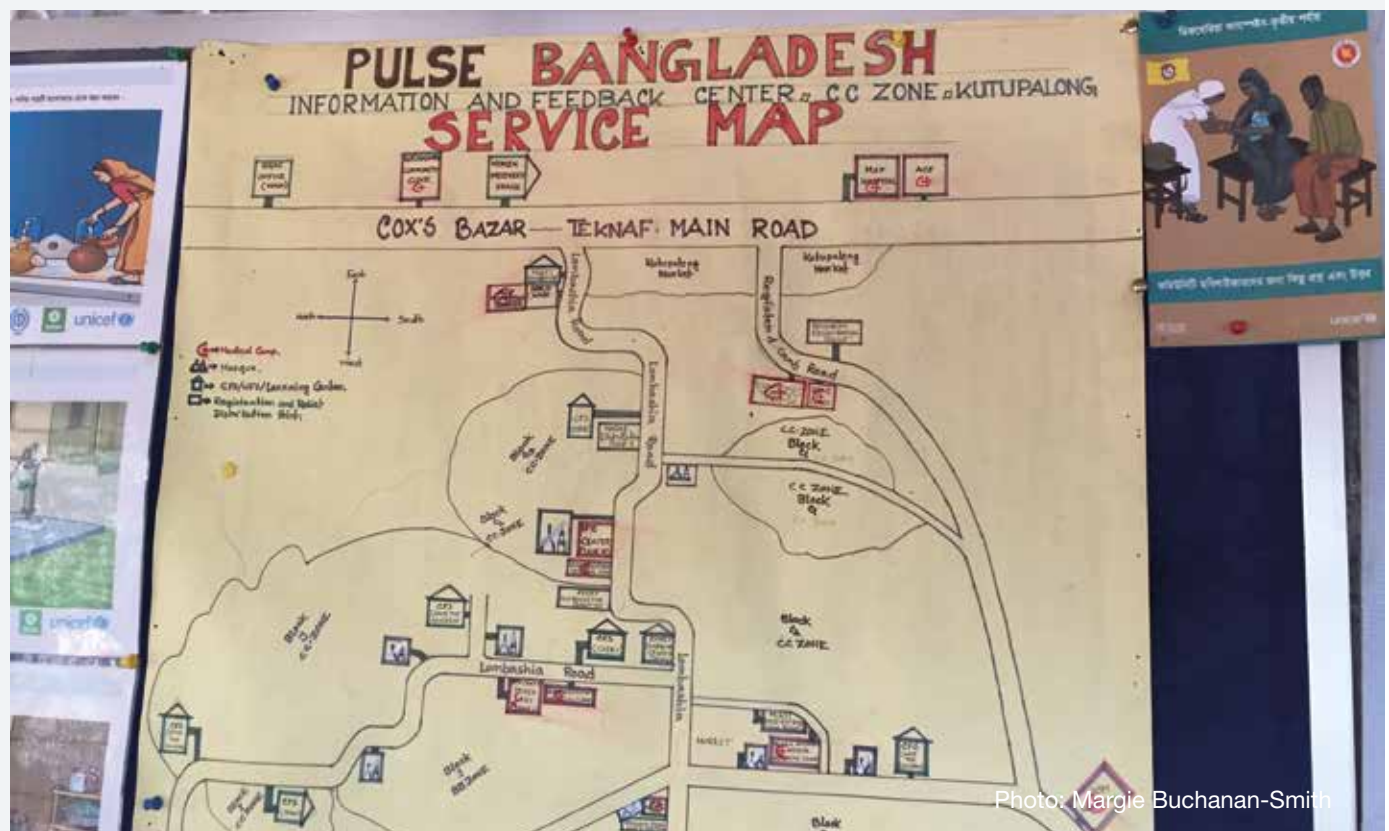
6.1 Community structures and governance within the camps

One of the main gatekeepers to the Rohingya refugee community is the *mahjee*¹⁵, the unelected male local leaders in the camps. This has major implications for CwC. A number of staff working on CwC issues raised concerns about the power of the *mahjee*. In fieldwork for this RTE, a number of Rohingya expressed their dissatisfaction about the role of the *mahjee*, especially where they had lost confidence in their particular *mahjee*. Many of those interviewed, both men and women, were highly dependent on the *mahjee* to represent their interests and concerns, and often to take them, or their issue, to the Info Hubs and to the agencies in the camps. This is not a new issue. A UNHCR report from 2007 made the point that:

Present camp administration and Mahjee refugee representation structures are corrupt and abusive, creating an atmosphere of insecurity and impunity in the camps
Restrictions on the rights of refugees compounded by the lack of accountability of appointed officials and refugee leaders create an environment of abuse of power and great insecurity for the refugees. (UNHCR, 2007:10)

At the same time, the workload of some *mahjees* became apparent in fieldwork carried out for the RTE. Some are meeting with the Bangladesh army on a daily basis, with the 'Camp in Charge' (CICs) and with agencies carrying out distributions on a regular basis, and are the main point of contact for households and individuals within the block they represent. Religious leaders are also important and influential within the Rohingya refugee community.

15/ There is a hierarchy of *mahjees* and *sub-mahjees*



It is not only members of the CwC Working Group that have concerns about the current power structure and governance system within the camps. This is also a key concern for the site management and protection sectors. This is an example of an issue where the CwC Working Group can play a key role in capturing, analysing and communicating some of the consequences of the current governance system for accountability and empowerment of the



The number and network of Info Hubs in the Rohingya camps is unprecedented and a number of agencies plan to establish more



example in Lebanon and Jordan, the number and network of Info Hubs in the Rohingya camps is unprecedented and a number of agencies plan to establish more. Many Info Hubs were set up soon after the influx, in September and early October 2017, when the need for information about services and relief assistance was at its peak. Most Info Hubs are operated by a combination of local staff of national (and occasionally international) NGOs and Rohingya volunteers. Most appear to offer a face-to-face service providing advice and information, making referrals to service providers, and recording complaints.

UNICEF's data shows that 70 to 75% of the users of its IFCs are women, and that health issues dominate. The majority are using the IFCs for health referrals. It was beyond the scope of this RTE to compare the datasets from UNICEF's, UNHCR's and IOM's Info Hubs. But it was striking that the data from the three agencies responsible for the majority of Info Hubs are not being shared on an ongoing basis, nor with national partners. The Info Hubs are a valuable source of information on refugee issues and concerns, but the data are not being collated or collectively analysed. This should be relatively quick and easy to do, and would be a particularly useful contribution that the CwC Working Group could make to realise this untapped potential.

Although the broad aim of the Info Hubs run by different agencies may be the same, there are a number of different models of how they are operating, in terms of referrals, recording, follow-up procedures with refugees and with service providers, and signage. For example, for some Info Hubs when a health referral is made a volunteer accompanies the person concerned to the health centre. For others they may be given a token to take to the health centre which ensures their case is prioritised. Some Info Hubs have complaints boxes, although in most complaints and concerns are written into a ledger. For some, this information is uploaded onto a tablet so that the data are sent directly to the respective agency's office in Cox's Bazar. Confidentiality issues may arise, for example if the user of the Info Hub is accompanied by the *mahjee*, or in instances of domestic and gender-based violence when the person's name and concern are written into a book. So far there is no standardisation across the response of any of these operating procedures nor of safeguards (although individual agencies may have their SOPs and safeguards). In the early months of the response this diversity of approaches may not matter much as different models of Info Hubs are being rolled out and trialed by different agencies. But eight months into the response it is time to take stock, to learn from the different models and approaches, and to standardise according to what is found to work best, especially as key informants described some Info Hubs as very poorly used.

Rohingya refugees, working collaboratively with other sectors to explore how best to reach other groups in the community and open the channels of communication.

6.2 Information hubs

Info Hubs are a central component of CwC in the Rohingya response: 22 of the 41 agencies that responded to Internews' survey about feedback mechanisms said they were running multi-sectoral Info Hubs (Fluck et al, 2018). Although they have been important in other refugee responses, for

Although mapping of the Information Centres started in November 2017, through the Info Hubs Sub-Group in collaboration with site management, there is still no comprehensive map of the total number or location of the Info Hubs. Although mapping is ongoing, this is a gap that should urgently be filled. Some key informants reported that more remote camps are poorly served. At the time of writing (end of May) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were being drafted by the Info Hubs sub-group for what they should do in an emergency, especially related to the monsoon and cyclone season. As described below, in section 7.2, this is very late.

Fieldwork carried out for this RTE produced some interesting findings about how the Info Hubs are perceived and used by the Rohingya refugees. Although these findings are indicative rather than conclusive, they do raise important issues that deserve further investigation. See Box 2. At this point in the response it is time to carry out a multi-agency study on the Info Hubs, particularly how they are perceived and used by the Rohingya refugees, but also how the different models are set up and run, to identify good and poor practice and to build on the former with a more standardised approach. A strong anthropological and qualitative element is essential for such a study.

Box 2: How the Info Hubs are currently being used: issues identified in the field work for the RTE

- ◇ FGDs with both Rohingya women and men revealed low awareness of the Info Hubs. Very few FGD participants (and no female participants, including in one camp where women were interviewed inside the Info Hub) recognised it as an information centre, and had no translation into Rohingya to describe it as such, although they did have words to describe the other centres that related to the purpose of the centre¹⁶. They often called the Info Hub by the name of the agency that was responsible for it eg UNHCR/ IOM block office; or by the colour if the Info Hub had a distinctive colour; or in one case it was called 'Mizan's office': Mizan was the local person from the area who sat in the information office.
- ◇ Info Hubs that were more closely related to service provision, for example positioned beside a distribution point or beside a health centre, appeared to be used more. The success of the Info Hub in linking refugees to service providers depended upon the relationship of the agency running the Info Hub and those service providers at camp level.
- ◇ Our findings were consistent with UNICEF's data from its IFCs: the majority of users of the Info Hubs are going for health issues, often for a referral to the health centre. The reasons why they are not going straight to the health centre are not entirely clear and deserve further investigation. A possible reason is preferential treatment at the health centre if accompanied by a volunteer from the Info Hub, or if in possession of a referral token from the Info Hub.
- ◇ For some blocks the *mahjee* played a key role in bringing community members to the Info Hub, including for health issues. This may raise issues of confidentiality.
- ◇ Some members of the Rohingya community expressed their reluctance to raise concerns and complaints through the Info Hubs. Aware of their lack of rights in Bangladesh, they were fearful that assistance might be stopped if they raised their voice. This is a common concern amongst those affected by humanitarian crises (and arose, for example, in Nepal after the earthquakes), but may be exacerbated amongst the Rohingya who have been severely disenfranchised and disempowered for decades.

6.3 Community outreach

As mentioned above, many humanitarian agencies are working through networks of volunteers recruited from among the Rohingya community. There are a number of different volunteer networks with different purposes, recruited and trained by different bodies. These include:

- Generalists, often recruited by national NGOs eg BRAC, who may perform a range of different roles, including messaging on many different topics across different sectors, and

engaged in data collection at household level

- Sectoral volunteers, for example recruited specifically to work on health issues by a health agency
- Security volunteers recruited by the army, for example working on rotas as night watchmen

While many agencies are keen to have equal numbers of male and female volunteers it has generally been harder to recruit women. UNHCR, for example, report that about 30% of their volunteers are women. Many agency-recruited volunteers are engaged primarily in house-to-house visits, with some information messaging to large groups.

The available evidence points to the important role that the volunteers play. In UNHCR's follow-up monitoring and analysis of diphtheria messaging, refugees ranked the community outreach mobilisers (COMs), UNHCR's volunteer network, as the preferred communication channel, and this was the channel through which the majority had heard about diphtheria (UNHCR et al, 2018). In the Christian Aid/ GUK one-week pilot of different accountability mechanisms, door-to-door interviews by volunteers was judged to be a useful way of hearing and capturing community concerns, although it is not clear how the knowledge gained by volunteers currently feeds back.

It is also unclear how the networks of volunteers interact and if/ how the networks employed by different agencies overlap. There has not yet been a comprehensive mapping of the many different volunteer networks within each camp. At this point in the response this is an important and necessary task, also to map the different terms on which volunteers are recruited. Anecdotally the terms and incentives that volunteers receive appear to vary widely, causing some dissatisfaction amongst community volunteers who do not receive an incentive, for example security volunteers recruited by the army. The recently published Internews report warns of 'feedback fatigue' as more feedback is collected without systematic mechanisms to follow-up (Fluck et al, 2018).

Box 3 captures the findings from fieldwork carried out for this RTE, raising a number of questions. Each of these issues deserves further investigation and follow-up.

Box 3: Volunteer networks in the camps, playing an important role in CwC: issues identified in the field work for the RTE

- ◇ In an accessible camp that appeared to be well-served by agencies, women interviewed through an FGD said they received visits from 2 to 3 volunteers every week, but these were almost always different people. They rarely saw the same volunteer twice. But in other camps FGDs with women revealed they had very few visits from volunteers, for example on health issues. Monitoring and analysing how patchy this coverage is would be a useful contribution of the CwC Working Group.
- ◇ Some of those interviewed described the volunteers as their main form of contact with humanitarian agencies.
- ◇ According to the refugees interviewed, much of the engagement is the one-way provision of information by the volunteers to the community on particular issues, for example health issues, child protection. Some women interviewed said they don't raise concerns with them, although it was not clear why. This also deserves follow-up.
- ◇ A number of the volunteer networks appear to work closely with the *mahjees*. The implications of this in terms of how the volunteers are perceived by different groups of refugees requires further investigation.
- ◇ Most volunteers met and interviewed are young, implying this may be a useful way of engaging young people in the camps, although some described how this can create tensions and jealousies with other young people who have not been recruited.

16/ For example, participants in FGDs told us they call Nutrition Centres Pustikhana/ Sujikhana (Suji is the food supplement given to the children); Health Centres are known as Sasthokhana (Sastho is the translation for health); Psycho-Social Centres are known as Shantikhana (Shanti means peace); and Community Centres are known as Khushikhana (Khushi means happiness).

6.4 Engagement with host communities

The impact of the influx of Rohingya refugees on the host community, who are now heavily outnumbered, was raised as an issue in interviews for this RTE much more frequently by national organisations and by government than by international agencies. Government as well as many national organisations are concerned about the prospects for peaceful co-existence between the two groups. A recent assessment by the national NGO, COAST, captures some of the environmental, agricultural, social, economic and security costs and implications of the refugee influx. Evidence of grievances building amongst the host community became apparent during field work for this RTE, not least as they see the levels of relief assistance provided to the Rohingya refugees while poor households within the host community are not supported. At the end of March 2018 a public dialogue was held in Cox's Bazar: 'Host Community should be Heard During Humanitarian Intervention in FDMN/Rohingya Relief Operation'¹⁷.

The CwC Working Group has occasionally discussed how they should be engaging with the host community, usually encouraged by a national NGO, and a number of member agencies are working with the host community. This needs to be a much greater priority for the CwC Working Group in the immediate to medium term, to ensure the voices of the host community are heard and inform the overall response.

6.5 Refugee relocation, repatriation and forced return

The uncertainty and contentions around refugee relocation, repatriation and the possibility of forced return make this one of the toughest issues for CwC. The JRP in early 2018 notes that refugees often request information on potential return. The June bulletin of 'What Matters', produced by the CSCEA project, describes repatriation as a 'hot topic' within the Rohingya community triggering many questions, concerns and requests for transparency. This topic appears to have been somewhat eclipsed by monsoon and cyclone preparedness in recent weeks. But it is one the CwC community must grapple with, to agree on information they can provide on rights, and when they must admit they don't know. This should be done in close consultation with, and guided by, UNHCR.

17/ <http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Flyer.pdf>



7 Some outcomes of CwC coordination

7.1 Information messaging, and informing the response

Coordinated information messaging started early in the response as the coordinators of the CwC Working Group made contact with other sectors to find out their priorities. Messaging has covered a range of issues from informing the refugees that humanitarian assistance was free of charge (there should be no requests for money nor other favours), to messaging about WASH, health and protection.

The only analysis of the impact of messaging that the RTE team was able to find is the 'Diphtheria Messaging Analysis Report' by UNHCR. Although the survey on which this is based was rapid and small-scale, with some acknowledged biases, it does provide valuable feedback. The findings show high awareness of diphtheria since the refugees had arrived in Bangladesh; that most had heard about diphtheria in house-to-house visits and from the mosque; but many still had a lack of information on the disease, prevention and its health impact; and had fears of being vaccinated (UNHCR, 2018). In interviews for the RTE the relative success of the diphtheria messaging campaign was frequently mentioned. Considering the emphasis on messaging in this response it is striking that there have been few other rapid assessments of the impact of these campaigns.

Much less clear is how coordination of CwC efforts have fed back into and informed the humanitarian response according to feedback from refugees through accountability channels. The findings from the Christian Aid and GUK (2018) Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) survey highlighted the ineffectiveness of accountability systems that were in place: 'six months into the response, the seeming lack of accountability is an indictment on the collective



Photo: BBC Media Action

humanitarian response'. This is where the CwC Working Group could, and should be making a major contribution. The main output that is now widely circulated and read within the humanitarian aid community is CSCEA 'What Matters' bulletins, produced since February 2018 and mainly based on community feedback. This has, for example, highlighted host community concerns, how the refugees' concerns have shifted over time from mother and child health and welfare issues to safety issues, and local concerns about rising crime and robbery. This is an accessible and important output which should eventually draw on a wide range of sources of feedback. When interviews were being carried out for this RTE in Cox's Bazar in April, only two bulletins had been circulated and read (the third came out on 18th April), so it was still too early to assess how influential it has been.

7.2 Monsoon and cyclone preparedness

This was first mentioned in a CwC Working Group meeting on 11 October 2017. According to the minutes of the Working Group meeting on 25 October 2017: 'a systematic approach to information on early warning and post-cyclone needs will be put together', for the October-November cyclone season. By mid-November messages for key sectors relating to the period immediately before a cyclone and immediately after, had been finalised and endorsed by all sectors and the ISCG, although the findings of the Internews (2017) information needs assessment raised questions about the best means of dissemination.



Although the monsoon and cyclone season were beginning there was very little agreed coordinated messaging, and in some camps no messaging had started



There was more time to prepare for the cyclone season beginning in April/ May. An early warning (EW) group was formed, led by UNDP (although they had initially offered to facilitate rather than lead) rather than by the CwC Working Group Coordinator who instead became a member. In early 2018 CwC coordination broke down and the work of the EW group was not being communicated back to the CwC Working Group. As a result, the phased EW messaging that the group had formulated had not fully benefited from the technical expertise of CwC Working Group members. They had not been consulted (although some coordinators of other groups assumed they had been involved), disagreed with some of the messages that were being disseminated, for example that refugees should go to evacuation shelters when none existed, and questioned the legitimacy of the process. The focus was EW, and there was a vacuum of leadership on preparedness for the monsoon and cyclone season in terms of communication about what the refugees could do to prepare. The messaging being discussed was more reactive than proactive. By the time of the RTE in mid-April, leadership of the EW group had been taken back by the CwC coordination. Although the monsoon and cyclone season were beginning there was very little agreed coordinated messaging, and in some camps no messaging had started.

In short, cyclone preparedness was woefully and dangerously inadequate and had barely even started by the time the monsoon season began. FGDs carried out by IFRC and BRAC in March 2018 showed that the refugees were not aware nor prepared for the cyclone season that was about to begin. While the challenges of getting messaging agreed with and by government have been considerable, the breakdown in CwC coordination has directly contributed to the lack of progress in cyclone preparedness and the delayed progress in EW messaging. This has serious consequences for the safety and well-being of the Rohingya refugees. Another emergency is waiting to happen.

There are a number of other practical consequences of this breakdown in CwC coordination:

1. different agencies were carrying out consultations with refugees in camps to assess their knowledge and preparedness for the monsoon and cyclone season without knowing about each other's work
2. in the absence of agreed and coordinated preparedness and EW messaging, agencies have ended up preparing their own without any systematic monitoring of who is doing what. This is likely to have resulted in contradictory and inconsistent messaging within the camps. Some agencies simply don't know what information or messages they should be providing
3. the army has also formed groups of volunteers for cyclone preparedness, with an EW function, but there is little evidence of coordination between the CwC Working Group and the army, although the Working Group did coordinate with RRRC and the CiC.
4. the CwC Working Group lost credibility with other sectors throughout this process, and the breakdown in CwC coordination meant that a lot of staff time was wasted, retrospectively sorting out the cyclone preparedness and EW messaging because of the lack of consultation and legitimacy of the process, and as agencies duplicated their assessments and preparation of their own messaging.



Photo: BBC Media Action

8 Links between CwC coordination in the Rohingya response, and global initiatives and networks

The links between CwC coordination in the Rohingya response and the initiatives and networks at global level have been weak. Feedback from different CwC coordination staff working in Cox's Bazar at different times indicated a lack of support from the global level. Some felt that some issues arising for them were treated with a lack of urgency at global level. Others were unclear about where and how they could get support from the global level. Apart from CCEI's initiative to launch the RTE the global networks do not appear to have been proactive in supporting CwC coordination in Cox's Bazar, nor in ensuring expertise and resources were mobilised quickly and efficiently from the outset. There have been no visits to Cox's Bazar by CCEI or CDAC staff since the refugee influx in August 2017. This is particularly surprising as this was a high-profile crisis triggering an L3 response and coordination has at times run into challenges. Global or regional support could have made a difference.

The reasons for the weak links with the global level appear to be the following:

1. Although IOM was the lead coordinating agency for CwC, it did not appear to have the capacity to provide support from the global level and the link with headquarters has been weak. At national level the IOM mission has been preoccupied with other aspects of the response and CwC does not seem to have been adequately prioritised. IOM has not reached out to other global actors for support where it has been unable to provide that support itself. UNICEF's supporting role in coordination means that its responsibilities are unclear. This is not helped by the uneasy relationship between the two agencies
2. The CCEI initiative was quite new with very limited capacity in Geneva, just one coordinator who has also been double-hatting for UNICEF as well as coordinating CCEI
3. CDAC had been supporting Shongjog, but had little direct contact with CwC coordination in the Rohingya response and also has limited capacity.



CwC coordination in Cox's Bazar has been under-resourced from the start, has struggled to fulfil some fundamental coordination functions, and has at times lacked a full-time coordinator



What is really surprising is that CwC capacity was available at the regional level but was not drawn upon. Despite offers of capacity support, CwC coordination in Cox's Bazar has been under-resourced from the start, has struggled to fulfil some fundamental coordination functions, and has at times lacked a full-time coordinator. The reasons for this are not clear, but have meant that a major opportunity to support and strengthen CwC coordination drawing on the regional community of practice was missed.

Some of the consequences of this lack of support are the following:

1. A sub-standard proposal to support CwC coordination was put to DFID early in the response from Dhaka and was rejected. It placed too much emphasis on 'communication' rather than the accountability and engagement aspects. Support and quality control from the global level could have raised the standard and ensured it reflected current thinking and good practice, which in turn could have ensured that CwC coordination was better-resourced
2. There has been little or no support at the global level for fund-raising for CwC in the Rohingya response despite CwC appearing in the HRP and JRP
3. Some basic coordination functions such as 3W or 4W mapping of CwC activities is still not done, and CwC coordination in Cox's Bazar has not reached out for regional or global support to assist with this, probably because they did not know that such support could be mobilised, and the global level has not proactively offered this kind of support.

Most contact between CwC coordination in Cox's Bazar and the global level has been the recruitment of the CwC coordination staff through NORCAP (NRC'S deployment capacity stand-by roster). This has not worked well. Indeed, a recent assessment of surge capacity for CCE has identified that there is simply not enough coordination capacity in this field, limited demand for recruitment in CwC/ AAP/ CCE means NORCAP has prioritised recruitment in other areas such as cash transfer programming, and use of the terminology 'CwC' may unhelpfully limit the search to members on the roster who have predominantly communications expertise (CDAC and JdS, 2018). The salary and benefits package available to potential candidates through the standby partners has also been mentioned as inadequate for the working environment and demands of the job in Cox's Bazar¹⁸. The consequences for the Rohingya response have been few candidates emerging from the roster with the required experience and skills, and very slow recruitment and deployment of coordination staff.

18/ Raised in agency comments on the draft RTE report.



Photo: Margie Buchanan-Smith

9 Conclusions and recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

CwC has a central role to play in the Rohingya response, and was well-positioned to fulfil this within weeks of the refugee influx, partly due to years of work on CwC at the national level. There is a huge need for CwC engagement, both with the refugees and the host population, and there is an unusually high level of demand for it from the different sectors and agencies which is a positive indicator of CwC being acknowledged and accepted as an essential part of the humanitarian response. The CwC Working Group has a key role to play in meeting that need/ demand and in ensuring that the full potential of CwC is realised, from an accountability, community engagement and communications perspective. Many agencies have invested significant resources in different aspects of CwC with some innovative approaches. There has been a strong focus on information messaging from the beginning and throughout the response. This is still important now, especially in relation to the monsoon and cyclone season. The CwC contribution needs to be broadened to give much greater emphasis to the accountability and feedback dimensions. Although a lot of feedback data and information may be available, it has not yet been collated and collectively analysed, and is therefore not yet playing the role it should and could in terms of ensuring the voices of the refugees and host population are heard by humanitarian actors and influence the response.



There have been periods when CwC coordination has worked well, for example around some messaging campaigns, in the sharing of materials, and building strong relationships with other sectors while advocating for CwC. And there have also been times when it has been dysfunctional with serious consequences, for example in delaying cyclone preparedness. The fundamental constraint is that CwC coordination has been understaffed, under-resourced, and poorly supported from global and regional levels. This is both surprising and concerning for a major L3 emergency which is one of the largest refugee crises in the world. It raises a question about whether responsibility and oversight for CwC has become too fragmented at the global level, and whether supporting coordination in Cox's Bazar has fallen between the cracks. IOM at headquarters and Bangladesh level has not had the capacity to provide the support needed¹⁹.

The consortium of Internews, BBC Media Action and TWB has stepped into the breach in Cox's Bazar through the CSCEA project with strong technical expertise. It has been slow in getting off the ground and in launching the collective feedback mechanism. It has gone beyond its role to fulfil some basic but essential coordination functions that the coordination of the Working Group had been unable to complete, such as 4W mapping. It has also promoted coherence of approach in some areas, for example in the production of multilingual content in relation to the diphtheria campaign and cyclone preparedness messaging. It has thus positively contributed to the Working Group.

This RTE makes two sets of recommendations: to strengthen coordination and to address priority issues in Cox's Bazar; and at the global level to ensure the learning from the Rohingya response informs CwC coordination in this and future humanitarian responses.

9.2 Recommendations

9.2.1 For the Rohingya response

1. Strengthening the CwC coordination structure in Cox's Bazar

Attention: IOM and UNICEF - Immediate

a. First and foremost this means **adequately resourcing coordination**, whether from IOM or UNICEF in the short-term, and through additional funding in the medium term. In the short-term this should go on staffing. In the medium term it should support translation to reduce the language barrier with national NGOs and to encourage their participation.

b. This also means **urgently recruiting the new Coordinator**, through head-hunting as well as other regular channels, at this stage prioritising proven leadership and coordination experience and expertise over CwC technical skills. This should be a full-time position without 'double-hatting' for either IOM or UNICEF, on a six-month contract to reduce turnover. While recruitment for this position is pending, an interim coordinator must be sought from the regional and global pool of experts. The position must not be left vacant, even for a short period of time, especially with the risk of another major emergency developing during the monsoon season.

c. The **sub-groups of the CwC WG should be transformed into 'Task Forces'** with Terms of Reference centered on a particular task/s, which is/ are time-defined and have a clear set of deliverables. Relevant government officer(s) should be approached to join some of those Task Forces, and national NGO membership encouraged.

^{19/} There were no coordination staff in place in Cox's Bazar for a period in June, in the middle of the monsoon season when the need for surge capacity had been raised over a month previously. A staff member from BBC Media Action was asked to step in for two weeks, but regional resources that were available were not drawn upon.

2. Prioritising delayed coordination activities, and shifting the emphasis

Attention: CSCEA consortium and CwC coordination

- a. Mapping of 3Ws is now completed by the CSCEA project and handed over to CwC coordination. **Mapping of the Info Hubs** should ensure that agencies that are not regular participants in the CwC WG and that may not have responded to the feedback survey are included. **All of this mapping should then be analysed for duplication and gaps which can be acted upon accordingly Immediate**
- b. The **data collected and analysed from the different constellations of InfoHubs (eg UNHCR's, UNICEF's, IOM's, IFRC's), should be collated for collective analysis** by the CSCEA project as part of the collective feedback mechanism, taking account of language and socio-linguistic issues **Immediate**
- c. **Volunteer networks at camp level should be mapped in coordination with ISCG**, in terms of geographic coverage, function and approach, to identify gaps and overlaps in volunteer networks playing an information messaging and accountability role. This could have an immediate benefit in supporting consistent cyclone preparedness messaging. **Medium-term**
- d. **Re-balancing the CwC focus on refugees with greater focus on the host population**, in close consultation with national NGOs, recognising that grievances are building and that the host population has often been overlooked. This requires mapping of CwC activities with the host community. **Medium-term**
- e. **Major information messaging campaigns should be followed up with rapid assessments** to explore the impact, what has worked and what should be done differently in future campaigns **Medium-term**
- f. **Sharpening the strategy for CwC in this crisis**, making a clearer strategic link to protection, to be more proactive and to reflect the shift in emphasis recommended above **Medium-term**

3. Stepping up CwC coordination and capacity during the cyclone season²⁰

Attention: CwC coordination, CCEI and CDAC

- a. There is an urgent need for **coordination of communication for cyclone preparedness**, including flagging and signage **Immediate & urgent**
- b. **Surge capacity for CwC for the monsoon/ cyclone season should be urgently deployed**, drawing as far as possible on in-country resources, also supported from the regional and global levels **Immediate & urgent**

^{20/} At the end of April 2018 the RTE highlighted the need for contingency planning for CwC for the monsoon/cyclone season, based on scenario planning, as an immediate priority. The RTE also recommended that cyclone preparedness and early warning messages developed for the last cyclone season be reviewed and adapted according to the learning and knowledge gained since. The RTE assumes this has been done as the monsoon season was well underway when the draft report was circulated

4. Launching a joint agency study on the role and use of the Info Hubs

Attention: CwC coordination, UNICEF & IOM with the CSCEA consortium

This should be carried out as soon as possible and should have a strong anthropological element and be based on qualitative methods. It should include the following questions:

- How well known are the Info Hubs amongst different groups within the community: men, women, youth and adolescents?
- How are the Info Hubs referred to and understood by different groups within the community: men, women, youth and adolescents?
- How are the different Info Hubs being used by different groups in the community: by whom, for what, with what result?
- What issues does this throw up for other services, e.g. for health centres if the Info Hubs are being used as a form of medical referral system
- What are the links between the Info Hubs and the volunteer networks?
- How are different groups in the community (men, women, youth and adolescents) using different channels for feedback, to seek information, and to raise concerns about humanitarian assistance, e.g. Info Hubs versus volunteers versus direct contact with service providers etc?
- How are the different Info Hubs operating in terms of systems, procedures and dealing with issues of confidentiality? What are good practice examples?
- Based on all of the above, and learning from both good practice and bad practice examples, how can a standardised approach to Info Hubs be developed and promoted?

Immediate

In the **medium-term** the findings of the study should inform the standardisation of Info Hubs

9.2.2 At global level

Attention: all global initiatives

1. Promoting a broad understanding of CwC, aligning terminology, and advocating for CwC

i. There is a need for a conceptual model/ overview paper that makes the case for the wide spectrum of activities and approaches that CwC comprises, and that makes the case for CwC being context-specific to each response to overcome the considerable confusion and controversy about what CwC is, often exacerbated by turf battles between agencies. The forthcoming CDAC 'How to Guide' will help to address this. Agreeing and aligning terminology would help, dropping 'CwC' in favour of a broader description, like 'communications, community engagement and accountability'

Medium-term

2. Agreeing principles for field-level CwC coordination, learning from the Rohingya and other responses

Learning from CwC coordination in the Rohingya response, these principles should include the following:

i. CwC coordinators must be neutral/ honest brokers, and joint coordination between two UN agencies should be avoided. The following options should be considered:

- a. CDAC, CCEI, or OCHA (but not an operational agency) appoints the coordinator
- b. Coordination is carried out jointly between one UN agency and one NGO with strong CwC experience

ii. The vehicle for CwC coordination should be a cross-cutting Working Group rather than a cluster/ sector

iii. CwC coordination should be deployed immediately when the response is launched, to set the tone and ensure CwC earns its position as central to the response:

- a. This means raising resources for CwC coordination in advance, so the coordinator can be deployed within the first week of the response

iv. Generic ToR for a CwC Working Group should be developed, drawing on the CDAC Policy Paper on Collective Models, that can be adapted rapidly to the specific context of a new humanitarian crisis, and also generic ToR for the CwC coordinator

v. The minimum staffing and skills required for CwC coordination should be indicated, including a CwC coordinator and Information Manager. The CwC coordinator should have coordination expertise and strong communication skills as well as community engagement skills

vi. CwC coordination should connect with preparedness measures at national level and with existing CwC structures in-country

vii. To ensure CwC is well-informed anthropologically and sociologically from the outset, one of the global initiatives should be tasked with commissioning a review of secondary sources and relevant research at the beginning of the crisis, including sociolinguistic research.

viii. All of this should be captured in SOPs for CwC for different levels of humanitarian response, including an L3 response

Medium-term

3. Ensuring there is support and back-up from the global level for CwC in-country

i. Clarifying which of the global initiatives (rather than an individual agency) is responsible for this and how it will work are essential, ensuring it is well-resourced and draws on the global community of practice

ii. Whichever global initiative is tasked with this support and back-up role must be prepared to make the case and advocate for CwC in major humanitarian responses, with reference to the experience of previous responses where CwC has featured prominently, e.g. Nepal

iii. The chosen global initiative should make an early support visit to country level to identify what kind of ongoing support and backstopping are required and how this can best be provided

iv. The global level could support mapping of 4Ws in the first months of the response (e.g. if information is provided from the CwC coordination in-country, and it is mapped at global level)

v. The respective global initiative should support and identify surge capacity for CwC when it is needed, and support recruitment of CwC coordination staff (from coordinator to information manager), through head-hunting rather than relying on the rosters alone

vi. Fulfilling the above requires donor support for core funding.

Immediate

4. Strengthening capacity and expertise on CwC

i. Ways of expanding the number of high-level CwC experts must be found with standby partners, so there is a larger pool of potential coordinators to draw upon. One way of achieving this is to identify national-level CwC experts in each response, build their capacity and provide mentoring support so that they can join the pool of international CwC experts

Medium-term

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Acronyms

4Ws	Who is doing What, Where and When
3Ws	Who is doing What, Where
AAP	accountability to affected people
ACF	Action Contre La Faim
BDRCS	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
C4D	Communications for Development
CCEI	Communication and Community Engagement Initiative
CDAC	Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities
CIC	Camp in Charge
COM	community outreach mobilisers
CSCEA	Common Service for Community Engagement and Accountability
CwC	Communicating with Communities
CwCiE	Communication with Communities in Emergencies
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DEPP	Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme
DDM	Department of Disaster Management
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
EW	early warning
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GUK	Gana Unnayan Kendra
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISCG	Inter-Sector Coordination Group
JRP	Joint Response Plan
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice
NFI	non-food item
PSEA	Preventing Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
RRRC	Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission
RTE	Real Time Evaluation
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SEG	Strategic Executive Group
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TOR	Terms of Reference
TWB	Translators without Borders
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit



Photo: Hannah Murphy/CDAC Network

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for RTE

Consultancy - Real-time Evaluation of Communication and community engagement of the Rohingya Refugee Crisis

Background

Violence in Rakhine State, Myanmar, which began on 25 August 2017 has driven an estimated 620,000 Rohingya across the border into Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Reports on the Cox's Bazar information Ecosystem by Internews (October 2017) and Translators without Borders (November 2017) indicate that new arrivals have little knowledge of what services are available and how to access them. Oxfam, in its rapid protection, food security and market assessment (November 2017) cite lack of information as one of the 5 major risks to the population.

To best respond to the affected population's information and communications needs, and to enable effective accountability, the Communication with Communities (CwC) Working Group in Cox's Bazar provides coordination and technical support to sectors and organisations working on communications and community engagement as part of the response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis. It complements, but does not replace individual agencies' commitments to accountability, through coordination of activities and, where appropriate, facilitation of common analysis or support. In line with the Grand Bargain, the Working Group intends to work closely with Bangladeshi NGOs, by proactively reaching out to local actors to attend meetings and collaborate with members; also by identifying a local co-chair for the Working Group.

The key functions of the Working Group are:

- Coordinate efforts by WG members to engage the affected community: through the mapping of partner activities, the development of common tools, strategies and approaches to ensure consistency, relevancy, effectiveness and appropriateness of the information disseminated. Where applicable, support the development of information products on community feedback and perceptions and relevant activities.
- Use appropriately focused sociological and behavioural research to support production of accessible and relevant information, guide sector community engagement, and ensure affected population participation for an effective and efficient humanitarian response.
- Promote accountability to the affected people, and liaison across the humanitarian sectors and working groups in Cox's Bazar to ensure that community concerns and perceptions are shared and addressed and then communicated back with the respective communities in their native language. Support the establishment of a common service feedback mechanism (which draws on the collective efforts of individual agencies, in combination with a response-wide common feedback mechanism, to create a product to inform decision-making) to address the concerns of the affected population, manage their expectations and fill-in information gaps to inform decision-making. Through this process, ensure that common accountability issues are systematically communicated to humanitarian leadership and that course correction is encouraged.
- Provide technical advice and support on the issues of communications and community engagement to the ISCG, sectors and organisations.
- Coordinate capacity building initiatives and identify gaps in staff capacity related to community engagement to strengthen the programme interventions.
- Support the mainstreaming of community engagement within the overall emergency and early recovery response, and provide technical support to policy and strategy development across sectors.

This real-time evaluation is commissioned through the Communication and Community

Engagement Initiative, a partnership between OCHA, the IFRC, UNICEF, CDAC Network and several other partners. This initiative seeks to establish a timely, systematic and predictable collective service for communication and community engagement with affected communities throughout all phases of the humanitarian program cycle. It is a direct contribution to the Grand Bargain “participation revolution” commitments and represents one of its main deliverables. It will be providing the necessary set of support to country programmes such as the dissemination of the appropriate tools and guidance, the establishment of standby arrangements, the provision of technical support, sharing lessons and good practices across countries, as well as triggering policy and system-level change at global level. This real-time evaluation will contribute to the overall learning conducted through the CCEI, which will ultimately benefit the humanitarian sector for future responses in other contexts.

Purpose of the consultancy

This real-time evaluation will provide an opportunity to take stock of the work done through the CwC Working Group, examining how efficient coordination has been and whether the need for technical support to other sectors have been met. This will enable to identify key lessons and recommendations relevant for the ongoing coordination of communication and community engagement activities through the CwC Working Group in the Rohingya response, as well as for future collective approaches in other countries.

Methodology

The consultant will use multiple methods to triangulate his/her findings, and ensure that these are based on a good understanding of the current context:

- Review of documents: relevant documents produced by the CwC Working Group as well as broader literature on collective approaches
- Key informant interviews: the consultant will conduct interviews with members of the CwC WG, programme staff from sectors, ISCG, government officials involved in the response, interpreters and translators who are supporting the response, and a selected number of heads of programmes/heads of sub offices.
- Observations: the consultant will prioritise field visits to observe the work of partners involved in CwC Working Group directly and will participate as an observer in relevant coordination meetings.
- Refugee and host population participation: the consultant will conduct as much as possible a number of interviews with refugees and members of the host population as part of the direct observation, with support from local interpreters.

Key questions

The following questions will guide the real time evaluation:

- How do agencies define what CEA / CWC is and the role of the working group?
- What is the added-value of a collective approach as conceptualised by the CDAC Policy and the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative, compared to what partners are doing individually? How could this be improved?
- How can such an approach become more predictable and integrated in existing response mechanisms (notably through the sectors)?
- How can this approach be better resourced and integrated earlier in planning and appeal mechanisms?
- What is the level of support from the leadership of operational partners and from emergency coordinators regarding the role and approach promoted by the CwC WG?
- Does the working group have the right skill-set to support these efforts in technical and coordination terms?
- Was there sufficient/any preparedness measure in place for communication and community engagement which helped the CwC Working Group and to what extent did

national-level preparedness measures contribute to the effectiveness of the CwC Working Group?”

- To what degree does the work of the CwC Working Group work contribute to influencing strategic (i.e. HRP process) and operational decision-making? Are there examples of this? Where information reaches key decision makers, what barriers are there to action being taken?
- To what degree has the work of the CwC Working Group contributed to improving the quality and effectiveness of the response and has influenced people’s perception of the humanitarian assistance?
- What are the key functions of the approach promoted by the CwC WG (in terms of participation, communication/information sharing and feedback/complaint mechanisms) and to what extent can they contribute to the effectiveness of the response? (more details on key functions available in CCEI and CDAC materials)
- Have the existing tools, guidance and good practice examples which have been developed in recent years been useful for the work of the CwC WG members and are there any gaps?

Output

A short report with findings and recommendations will be shared and discussed with the stakeholders involved in the RTE, particularly the CwC Working Group and the ISCG. It will also be shared and discuss with members of the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative as well as the CDAC Community of Practice.

Annex 2: Camps visited and key informant interviews carried out for the RTE

Cox’s Bazaar

Name	Organisation	Role
Mohammed Mizanur Rahman	RRRC	Additional Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner
Dr. Mesbah Uddin Ahmed	Upazila local authorities	Health and Family Planning Officer
Sumbul Rizvi	ISCG	Senior Coordinator
Margo Baars	ISCG	Inter-Sector Coordinator
Saikat Biswas	ISCG	Partnership Officer
Paryss Kouta	UNICEF	Senior C4D Specialist, CwC Working Group Coordination Support (2017/18)
Virginia Moncrieff	IOM	CwC Coordinator (2017); Acting CwC Coordinator (2018)
John McCue	IOM	Senior Operations Coordinator
Jean Metenier	UNICEF	Chief Field Office
Noreen	UNICEF	C4D
Mohammed Alamgir	UNICEF	C4D Specialist
Mousumi Tripura	UNICEF	C4D Officer

Anthea Moore	UNICEF	Humanitarian Performance Monitoring Specialist
Adriani Wahjanto	UNHCR	Head of Community-Based Protection
Bernadette Castel-Hollingsworth	UNHCR	Senior Protection Coordinator, and Protection Sector Coordinator
Michelle Sanson	WFP	Protection Advisor
Shelley Thakral	WFP	Communications and External Relations Officer
Cathrine Haarsaker	UNDP	Consultant – DRR and Recovery
Viviane Fluck	Internews	Humanitarian Project Lead
Imogen Wall	Internews	Acting Humanitarian Project Lead – April/ May
Ben Noble	Translators without Borders	Country Director
Irene Scott	Translators without Borders	Program Director
Mazharul Islam	BBC Media Action	Senior Project Manager
Dustin Barter	Oxfam, seconded to Christian Aid for the Rohingya response	CwC consultant
Shahirah Majumdar	Christian Aid	Communication Strategist, Emergency Response Programme
Naosheen Roo Afroz	Christian Aid	Project Coordinator, Emergency Response Programme
Md. Mahbubur Rahman	CARE	Senior Team Leader
James Sport	IFRC	Community Engagement and Accountability Delegate
Ekram Elahi Chowdhury	BDRCS	Project Director
Rashadul Hasan	BRAC	C4D Specialist
Shamim Iftekhhar	BRAC	Lead C4D, Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme
Abu Murshed Chowdury	Programme for Helpless and Lagged Societies	Chairman and CEO (Also former co-chair of CwC WG)
Bimal Chandra Dey Sarker	Mukti	Chief Executive
Md. Rashedul Hasan Rashed	ACLAB	Program Coordinator
Md. Shahinur Islam	Coast	Head-R4FDMN,
Md. Enamul Haque	Coast	Project Manager-EPERA
Mohammad Umra	SHED	Executive Director
Sahadat Hossain	Pulse Bangladesh	Project Coordinator

Maheen Chowdhury	Save the Children	Program Director
Indu Bhushan Ray	Save the Children	Manager-commodity
Hani Chatila	Shelter/ NFI Sector	Coordinator (IOM)
Carolyn Davis	WHO	Risk Communication Officer
Bob Bongomi	WASH sector	Coordinator (UNICEF)
Bernadette Castel-Hollingsworth	Protection sector	Coordinator (UNHCR)
Oriane Bataille	Site Management sector	Coordinator (IOM)
Pastor Lovo	Emergency Telecommunication sector lead	Coordinator

Dhaka

Name	Organisation	Role
Neha Kapil	UNICEF	Chief, C4D
Mamunul Haque	UNICEF	Consultant C4D in emergencies
Yasmin Khan	UNICEF	C4D
Sheema Sen Gupta	UNICEF	Deputy Country Representative
Shairose Mawji	UNICEF	Chief of Field Services
Richard Lace	BBC Media Action	Country Director
Mrityunjoy Das	BRAC	Senior Programme Manager
Farid Khan	Handicap International	Communication & External Relations Manager
Khaled Golam Mortuza	ACF	Advocacy Manager
Tanvir Alahi	Muslim Aid	Programme Manager – Humanitarian Programme

Global Level/Interviewed by Skype

Name	Organisation	Role
Jon Bugge	Formerly UNICEF	CwC Working Group Coordination Support (2017)
Franklin Sese	Formerly IOM	CwC Coordinator (2018)
Eva Niederberger	Oxfam	Public Health Promotion / Community Engagement in WASH, Cox's Bazar
Charles Antoine Hofman	CCEI, UNICEF	Coordinator
Kate Half	SCHR	Executive Secretary

Leonard Doyle	IOM	Director, Media & Communication Division
Marian Casey-Maslen	CDAC Network	Executive Director
Stewart Davies	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Meg Sattler	OCHA	Independent consultant on community engagement, working at global level
Andy Wheatley	DFID	Humanitarian Adviser: Accountability and Results Monitoring
Iesha Singh	Formerly DFID	Lead Adviser for the Humanitarian Team for the Rohingya response
Gema Mali	Formerly DFID	Information Manager, Rohingya response
Michael Sarnitz & Valentina Shafina	Ground Truth Solutions	Senior Programme Manager
Ed Schenkenberg	Independent Evaluator	UNICEF RTE
Laura Olsen	UNICEF	Evaluation Office, UNICEF RTE

Annex 3: Timeline of activities related to CwC coordination

2013

National Working Group for CwCiE established, chaired by DMM

2015

July

Multi-sector Shongjog platform for CwC established at national level

2017

February

CwC coordination group convened for the response to the Rohingya refugees (older caseload)

25 August

Violence in Rakhine State in Myanmar triggers mass displacement

September

IOM CwC WG Coordinator appointed. Later in the month UNICEF Coordination support person appointed

September

TOR for WG and proposal for funding for CwC coordination submitted to DFID, and rejected

19 September

First CwC Working Group meeting convened by IOM coordinator

From 19 September

Rohingya response designated an L3 emergency by UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF

October

Interagency call center set up

Early October

Second IOM CwC WG Coordinator appointed

October

InterNews, BBC Media Action and TWB wrote and shared with the WG a proposal on a common service approach to feedback mechanisms

End October

Second UNICEF Coordination support person appointed as first one departs early November

25 October	Local NGO co-chair appointed for the WG
November	Internews and ETS Information Needs Assessment, of affected refugee and host community
November	Translators without Borders carried out a rapid language assessment
November	Proposal for RTE from CCEI Geneva, first discussed in CwC WG
December	Second IOM CwC Coordinator leaves
December	CSCEA project funded by IOM, implemented through the consortium of InterNews, TWB and BBC Media Action
2018	
January	Third IOM CwC Coordinator appointed. Agencies start to raise concerns about upcoming monsoon (according to DEC report)
February	Christian Aid and Gana Unnayan Kendra publish 'Accountability Assessment' from Jamtoli camp
February	DFID funding available to the CSCEA project through IOM, implemented by the consortium
March	ISCG Secretariat established
mid-March	JRP finalized and launched, covering the period March to December 2018
End March	Third IOM Coordinator leaves
End March/April	Ground Truth Solutions, with IFRC, carry out scoping mission
April	IOM appoints an Acting Coordination coordinator UNICEF coordination support person leaves
April	IOM advertises for position of Information Manager for CwC Working Group
mid-April	RTE of CwC coordination launched
May	IOM appoints Information Manager for CwC Working Group
June	Information Manager for CwC Working Group starts working

Annex 4: Terms of Reference for CwC Working Group, Cox's Bazar

Background

In the context of humanitarian action Communications with Communities refers to activities where the transmission and exchange of information and dialogue is used to save lives, mitigate risk, enable greater accountability and shape a response, as well as support the communication needs of people caught up in conflicts, natural disasters and other crises. Putting people at the center of humanitarian response, through appropriate communication and community engagement has several critical elements that include effective coordination of information dissemination, creation of platforms for sharing and dialogue, and receiving and acting upon feedback to ensure consistency, effectiveness and appropriateness of the humanitarian response

Objectives

The CwC Working Group in Cox's Bazar provides coordination and technical support to sectors and organisations working on communications and community engagement as part of the response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis. It complements, but does not replace individual agencies' commitments to accountability, but through coordination of activities and, where appropriate, facilitation of common analysis or needs base support.

In line with the Grand Bargain, the Working Group will work closely with Bangladeshi civil societies by proactively reaching out to representatives of the host community, to attend meetings and collaborate with members; also by identifying a local co-chair for the Working Group and liaison, by liaising with the host community and local government bodies

Key Functions

- Coordinate efforts by WG members to engage the affected community: through the mapping of partner activities, the development of common tools, strategies and approaches to ensure consistency, relevancy, effectiveness and appropriateness of the information disseminated. Where applicable, support the development of information products on community feedback and perceptions and relevant activities.
- Use appropriately focused sociological and behavioral research to support production of accessible and relevant information, guide sector community engagement, and ensure affected population both host participation for an effective and efficient humanitarian response.
- Promote accountability to all affected people, and liaison across the humanitarian sectors and working groups in Cox's Bazar to ensure that community concerns and perceptions are shared and addressed and then communicated back with the respective communities. Support the establishment of a common service feedback mechanism (which draws on the collective efforts of individual agencies, in combination with a response-wide common feedback mechanism, to create a product to inform decision-making) to address the concerns of the affected population, manage their expectations and fill-in information gaps to inform decision-making. Through this process, ensure that common accountability issues are systematically communicated to humanitarian leadership and that course correction is encouraged.
- Provide technical advice and support on the issues of communications and community engagement to the ISCG, sectors and organisations.
- Coordinate capacity building initiatives and identify gaps in staff capacity related to community engagement to strengthen the program interventions.
- Support the mainstreaming of community engagement within the overall emergency and early recovery response, and provide technical support to policy and strategy development across sectors.

Membership

Any organisation working with the communities affected by the Rohingya Refugee Crisis can participate in the Working Group. There is no formal procedure to participate in this working group as member. However, participants will be expected to actively participate and have sufficient technical knowledge to contribute to discussions.

The group meets every week on Wednesday at 2.30pm, IOM conference room in Cox's Bazar.

Photo: BBC Media Action

Cover photo: Margie Buchanan-Smith

Back cover photo: BBC Media Action



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UNICEF, OCHA, IFRC, and other partners, under the auspices of CDAC Network, established the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative. It aims to organise a collective service to address the need for a more systematic and coordinated approach to communications and community engagement with affected people.



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Find out more about the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative.

