

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

UNHCR and its three WASH partners - Oxfam, NGO Forum, and BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) - have been quickly scaling up their work to address both the immediate needs of refugees, as well as working to put infrastructure in place that is more durable and will not require as much re-investment over time. Through its engagement with other WASH actors, UNHCR has pushed for improved designs as well as more ambitious and forward-looking standards for WASH partners.

UNHCR has acted as a WASH coordination focal point for the Kutupalong settlement as it expanded. Weekly coordination meetings allow the agencies to share updates, coordinate actions, identify and respond to technical challenges, detect gaps, and avoid duplications. Beyond the general WASH coordination, UNHCR chairs the Water/Hydrogeological Technical Working Group (TWG) and co-chairs the Sanitation/Fecal Sludge Management TWG. Hydrogeological surveys were conducted by UNHCR in both Teknaf and Kutupalong which have guided other WASH agencies in deciding where to drill for water and in mapping the underground water resources.

UNHCR has led various technical workshops for partners carrying out WASH activities to build their capacity.

## PRE-MONSOON PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS

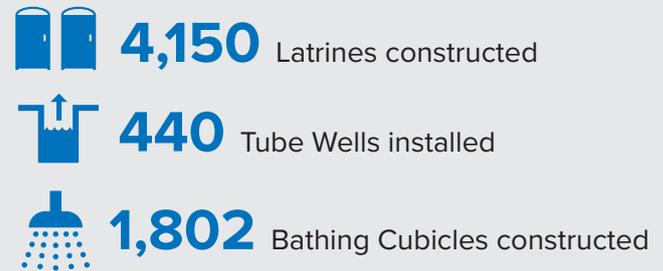
UNHCR is working with partners to prepare for emergencies within the monsoon period. At present UNHCR is leading Emergency WASH Simulation Exercises for each of its areas of responsibility. These exercises give WASH staff first-hand practice, building on their capacity to respond more effectively during an emergency. Eight out of 10 areas in the settlements have already been covered up to 10 May. UNHCR is also prepositioning lifesaving WASH stocks that can be used after an emergency.

In anticipation of challenges during the heavy rains, UNHCR has worked to install higher capacity pit latrines to ensure they remain functional during the whole monsoon season and with the absence of desludging interventions. This increased storage capacity enables actors to reduce the frequency of desludging and in turn, the maintenance cost.

In order to ensure the continuity of water supply, UNHCR has worked on rehabilitating poorly-designed tube wells to better protect them against physical damage and to ensure their functionality over the monsoon season

Water, sanitation and hygiene continues to be among the top concerns for humanitarian agencies and the refugee population. Since 25 August 2017, UNHCR through its partners has constructed 4,150 latrines, 440 tube wells, and 1,802 bathing cubicles, constituting approximately 14% of the total functional latrines and tube wells currently installed for the overall response. It is estimated that 3,200 latrines in

### Key figures



A newly installed female latrine ©UNCHR/Abdul Mazed



A girl pumping from a newly installed tube well ©UNCHR/Abdul Mazed

different areas of the refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar need to be decommissioned due to being located in landslide and/or flood risk areas. The decommissioning needs to be completed ahead of the monsoon to reduce the level of contamination that can potentially affect water sources, in particular in the large Kutupalong-Balukhali settlement. Progress has been made so far on decommissioning 32% of these identified latrines (over 1,000). UNHCR is also working with its partners and other WASH actors on supporting hygiene promotion teams who are working to spread messages about good practices to reduce disease transmission.

## WAY FORWARD

UNHCR foresees several major gaps that can and will have significant impacts on the lives, living conditions and health of refugees in the coming months, especially during the intense rainy season. However, plans have been put in place to mitigate as many risks as possible, including the following activities:

- The water-stressed Teknaf settlements have faced acute water shortage in late March and April before the rains arrive and water trucking has been necessary as an interim response to the water shortage situation before rainfall refills the reservoirs. The non-availability of groundwater in the area and brackish water in the Naf River has been a challenge even before refugees arrived in larger numbers in late 2017 to the area. Currently the water shortage results in only about 10 litres being provided per person per day in Nayapara

refugee settlement area. Water trucking began on 29 April 2018 and UNHCR's partners RRRC (Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission) and NGO Forum are assisting in this lifesaving activity which is delivering 486,000 litres of water to the Nayapara settlement per day. At the same time, UNHCR's partner Oxfam is delivering around 170,000 litres per day through its emergency pipeline and treatment. A cash-for-work digging programme has also helped increase the water capacity of a new reservoir in the settlement. Over 3,800 m<sup>2</sup> was excavated and used to create temporary earthen dams.

- The low level of water quality at both source and house-hold level has been of concern for some time. UNHCR and its partners are scaling up the installation of new protected water points, improvements to existing water points, and most significantly, hygiene promotion activities to ensure that refugees are aware of risky practices and means by which to protect themselves and their families.
- While basic standards, in terms of the numbers of latrines, have been met, there is still an overall lack of sufficient quality toilets which provide privacy and storage volume for waste. Since October 2017, UNHCR and its partners have been constructing latrines with more secure structures (walls, doors, roofs) and significantly increased storage volumes.
- Given the large population, there is a critical shortage of sufficient fecal sludge treatment facilities. UNHCR and its partners have created small and medium-sized fecal sludge units, while a large-scale unit is being developed.



A new UNHCR-constructed tube well seen next to bathing cubicles. ©UNHCR/Abdul Mazed

## Working in partnership

In Bangladesh, UNHCR works in close collaboration with the government and humanitarian actors to coordinate the response. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) and the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) are UNHCR's main government counterparts, in addition to Camp-in-Charge officials (CiCs) overseeing refugee settlements in the Cox's Bazar District.

UNHCR coordinates its interventions with humanitarian actors under the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), of which UNHCR co-chairs the Strategic Executive Group (SEG) with the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM. UNHCR leads on the protection response for all refugees, and heads the Protection Working Group of the ISCG, together with the RRRRC.

To implement its response, UNHCR works closely with a 26 partners, both international and national actors:

**ACF** (Action Contre la Faim) | **ACTED** (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development) | **ADRA** (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) | **BDRCS** (Bangladesh Red Crescent Society) | **BNWLA** (Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association) | **BRAC** (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) | **CARITAS BANGLADESH** | **CODEC** (Community Development Centre) | **DRC** (Danish Refugee Council) | **FH** (Food For the Hungry) | **GK** (Gonoshasthaya Kendra) | **HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation** | **HI** (Handicap International) | **IUCN** (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) | **MDMR** (Ministry of Disaster Management) | **NGOF** (Ngo Forum) | **OXFAM** | **PUI** (Première Urgence Internationale) | **REACH** | **RI** (Relief International) | **RTMI** (Research Training and Management International) | **SCI** (Save the Children) | **SI** (Solidarités International) | **TAI** (Technical Assistance Incorporated) | **TDH** (Terre Des Hommes Foundation) | **WFP** (World Food Programme)

Local sourcing of goods and services is a priority for UNHCR.

## Supporting the response

The response of the Government and people of Bangladesh is extraordinarily generous, and continuous support from the international community is critical to assist Bangladesh in the humanitarian response to the refugee situation. UNHCR has called for support for refugees and host communities, as well as sustained political efforts to work towards a solution for the situation. A Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis was launched in March 2018 calling for USD 951 million for humanitarian actors to continue delivering lifesaving assistance until the end of the year. UNHCR is appealing for USD 238.8 million as part of its Supplementary Appeal for 2018 to enable the organization to respond to the needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees as they prepare to face a harsh monsoon and cyclone season.

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