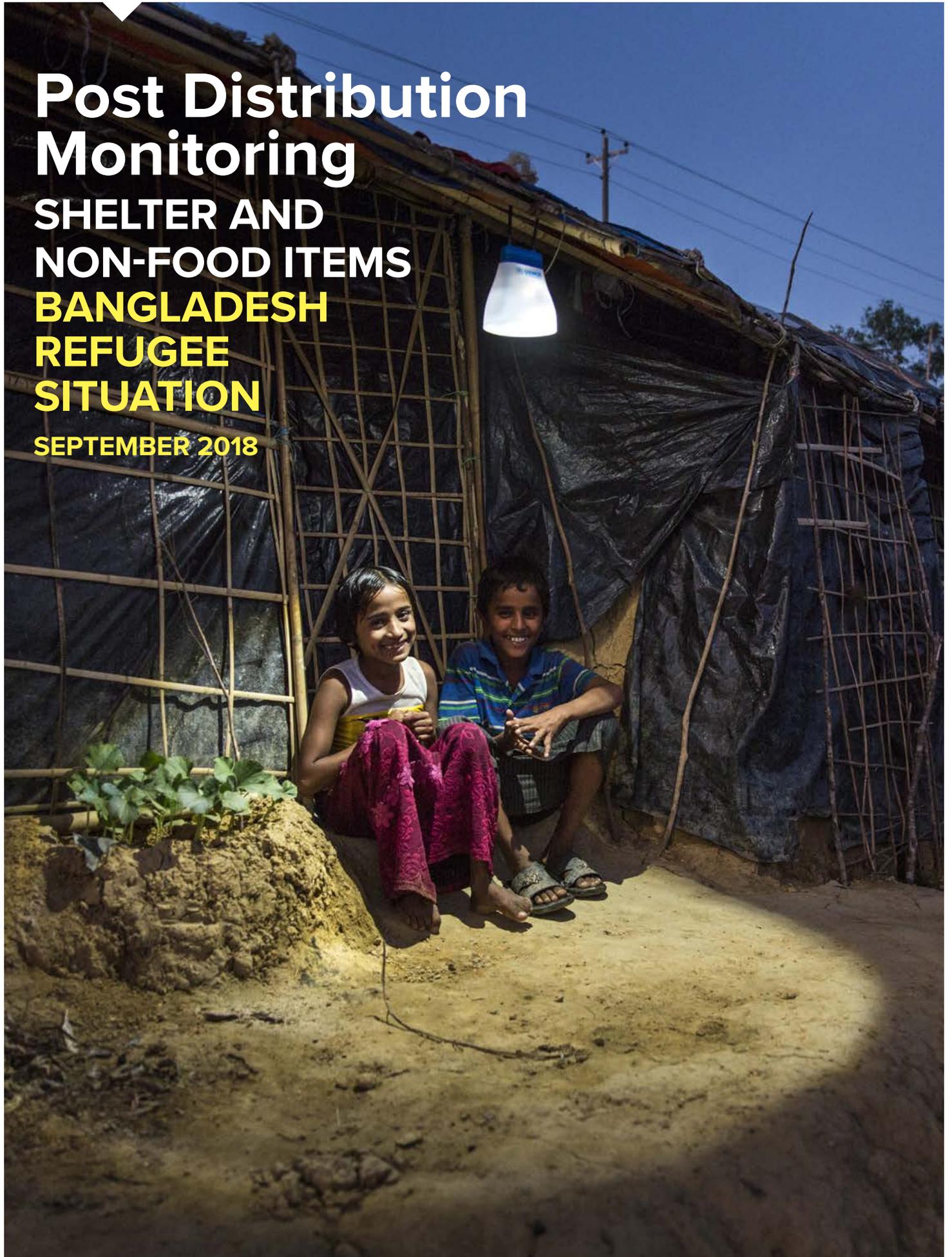


Post Distribution Monitoring

**SHELTER AND
NON-FOOD ITEMS**

**BANGLADESH
REFUGEE
SITUATION**

SEPTEMBER 2018



Acknowledgements

The second Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was initiated by UNHCR sub-office in Cox's Bazar in August 2018 to monitor various aspects of Non-Food Item (NFI) distribution through feedback from refugees, including on the quality, usefulness and sufficiency of items. The first PDM on NFI was conducted in March 2018. UNHCR would like to thank its staff members and the Multi-Functional Team who provided support and guidance from planning to finalizing this exercise, and the members of refugee families who participated by providing their valuable feedback.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

Rohingya children sitting beneath of a solar lamp at Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

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Kutupalong refugee camp @UNHCR/Philipp Hubner

Introduction

Background

Since 25 August 2017, human rights violations and targeted violence¹ against the Rohingya community in Rakhine State, Myanmar, have forced over 728,000² of them to seek sanctuary in Bangladesh. Half of the refugees (55%) are children. Within two months of the first arrivals, the number of refugee population in Cox's Bazar district quadrupled, which made it the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world. The refugees continued to arrive by foot and boat in subsequent months. Most of them came with few belongings or cash.

UNHCR was among the first humanitarian organisations to respond to the refugee influx with life-saving assistance. Packages of blankets, plastic sheets, sleeping mats, family tents, plastic rolls, kitchen sets, jerry cans and buckets were distributed initially to 250,000 refugees within weeks after their arrival.

By end of August 2018, UNHCR distributed 93,803 Core Relief Item (CRI) packages to newly arrived refugee families, each containing tarpaulins, kitchen set, blanket, jerry can, bucket, sleeping mat and solar lamp. At the same time, 90,524 families received Upgrade Shelter Kit (USK) consisting of *mulli* and *borak* bamboos³, rope, plastic tarpaulins, sandbags and toolkits, to reinforce their shelters for the monsoon season. UNHCR, in close collaboration with partner agencies and other humanitarian actors, continues to support the Government of Bangladesh in responding to the refugee crisis by ensuring relief items are prepositioned and delivered to the most vulnerable refugees and host communities in a timely manner.

1. See Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Mission report of OHCHR rapid response mission to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 13-24 September 2017*.

2. UNHCR Population factsheet as of 31 September 2018. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar_refugees

3. *Mulli* (*Melocanna baccifera*) and *borak* (*Bambusa balcooa*) bamboos are essential parts of the Upgrade Shelter Kit (USK) to create and strengthen shelter framework. The USK provides 60 *mulli* bamboos of various length with a minimum of 20 feet (about 6 meters) long and measuring about 2-3 inches in circumference. It also includes four pieces of *borak* bamboos of various length (minimum 25 feet or 7.6 meters long) and at least eight inch perimeter measurement at 1/3 length from the toe of each bamboo.

Objectives of Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM)

UNHCR uses Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) as a mechanism to collect refugee's feedback on the quality, sufficiency, utilisation and effectiveness of assistance received. It is conducted after the distribution of relief items is completed. The first PDM on Non-Food Item (NFI) was done in March 2018 covering the period since the beginning of the refugee influx in August 2017. The outcome of the PDM exercise was used to inform the procurement efforts as well as subsequent NFI distribution which was monitored through the second exercise conducted in August 2018, or a year after the influx. A total of 2,298 households who received NFIs from UNHCR took part in this PDM exercise.



Rohingya refugees carrying home packages of Core Relief Items at the Kutupalong extension site @UNHCR/Keane Shum

The second PDM exercise includes distribution of six types of NFI packages by UNHCR and partners to Rohingya refugees from April to August 2018. These are Compressed Rice Husk (CRH)⁴, Core Relief Item (CRI)⁵, USK⁶, Tie-Down Kit (TDK)^{7,8}, WASH Hygiene Kit⁹ and Female Hygiene Kit¹⁰. It does not include, but coincides with, the pilot distribution of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and cooking sets to refugees in August 2018 as a joint effort with other humanitarian organisations to stop deforestation.

UNHCR has been distributing CRH briquettes since November 2017 as a cleaner cooking alternative to reduce the needs for firewood. Eligible refugee families receive 19 kg of briquettes a month. However, the amounts supplied only meet 30% of the daily needs of 80,000 families. This is due to limited production capacity of all local CRH suppliers which can only cover the said percentage of needs of the refugee settlements. Since May 2018, UNHCR started to procure larger quantities of CRH briquettes (38 kg) to families of seven members and above¹¹. A report reviewing clean cooking options for refugees in Cox's Bazar stated that the CRH producers had not been able to deliver the quantities they claimed due to further restrictions caused by the seasonality of biomass¹².

4. Compressed Rice Husks (CRH) used to contain one bag of 19 kg, irrespective of the family size up until April 2018. Since May 2018, UNHCR has increase the quantity to two bags of 19 kg for families with sizes of 7 and above. 705,782 bags of CRH was distributed from January to August 2018, while in by December 2017, 271,935 bags of CRH was also distributed in all camps where UNHCR was directly distributing non-food items.

5. Core Relief Items (CRI) - a kit contains sleeping mats (5 pieces); blanket (5 pieces); jerry can (1 piece); solar lamp (1 piece); bucket (1 piece); plastic sheet (1 piece); kitchen set (1 pack). 47,053 families received CRI during August – December 2017 whereas 46,750 families received CRI during January – August 2018.

6. Upgraded Shelter Kit (USK) contains rope (30m); tarpaulin 4 x 5m (2 sheets); borak bamboo (4 pieces); mulli bamboo (60 pieces); sandbag (20 bags); tool kit (1 kit / 5 families); wire (wire is part of Pre-Monsoon Kit not included in the USK). From August to December 2017, 27,709 USK were distributed whereas 62,815 USK were distributed during January to August 2018.

7. Tie-Down Kit (TDK) comprises iron pegs (6 pieces); 60m of rope (1 piece) and wire (1 kg). As of August 2018, UNHCR has distributed 80,737 TDK. It is also called Pre-Monsoon Kit.

8. The Post-Disaster Kit (PDK) is distributed to a refugee family who is directly affected by the monsoon rains. The kit is distributed separately from other NFIs. This PDM survey does not cover the PDK in details, as it will be included as part of a PDM survey for monsoon season. A kit contains Synthetic sleeping mats (2); tarpaulin 4 x 5 m (1); plastic bucket (1); rope (60m) wire (1kg) and aqua tabs (130). As of August 2018, UNHCR has distributed 9,560 Post-Monsoon Kits.

9. WASH Hygiene Kit contains drinking water pot (jerry can) 10 liters (4 pieces); jug with lid- plastic (toxin free) (1 piece); mug- made of plastic (5 pieces); potty for safe children excrete disposal (1 piece); bodna, large (1 piece); brush for latrine cleaning (1 piece); sandal for latrine use for children (1 piece); sandal for latrine use for adults (1 piece); disposable nappies (1 piece); detergent powder (2 packs); bath soap (5 bars); laundry soap (10 bars); non-disposable sanitary cloth (6 pieces); gamcha (local towel) (2 pieces); nail cutter (1 piece); heavy duty plastic bucket w/Lid – 15-litre capacity (1 piece). As of August 2018, UNHCR has distributed 47,127 WASH Hygiene Kits.

10. A Female Hygiene Kit consists of reusable sanitary napkins (3 packs x 6 pieces); female underwear (3 pieces); 125ml antiseptic liquid (4 bottles); 100mg bath soap (8 bars); 130mg laundry soap (8 bars) and 5-lt plastic bucket (1 piece) for female refugees aged 12 to 59 years old every six month. As of August 2018, UNHCR has distributed 32,991 Female Hygiene Kits.

11. UNHCR Bangladesh Standard Operating Procedures for Non-Food Item distributions (Regular & Seasonal). Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 2018

12. UNHCR. Review of Clean Cooking Options for Refugee Settings, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. December 2017



Compressed Rice Husks are distributed to Rohingya refugees living in Kutupalong camp © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

In comparison, the LPG is a cheaper, more sustainable and cleaner form of fuel for cooking, which will eventually replace CRH as alternative cooking fuel in the refugee settlements.

The March PDM only focussed on five types of NFI packages – CRH, CRI Kit, Shelter Kit, WASH Hygiene Kit and Clothing¹³. Some items, such as clothing and two items (safety pins, toothbrush) as part of a WASH Hygiene Kit, were no longer distributed after April 2018.

Methodology

For this PDM exercise, sampled households were selected with 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. In order to assure that a minimum target number of respondents was met for the desired level of precision, a 10% buffer was added, bringing the total randomly selected households to approximately 143 per settlement. A total of 2,298 households were interviewed by 60 trained independent enumerators from 29 August to 6 September 2018. The survey was conducted in 16 refugee settlements (see map 1) where UNHCR and partners are directly distributing non-food items. Data was collected using Kobo online data collection system.

A qualitative survey was incorporated into the second PDM exercise on NFI, following a review on the methodology used in the first PDM by UNHCR's Multi-Functional Team. A total of 29 Focus Group Discussions (FGD), including 15 with female and 14 with male groups, were held from 12 to 13 September 2018 in the 16 settlements with a team of six UNHCR protection staff and 16 trained independent facilitators.

13. The Post-Distribution Monitoring in March 2018 report can be accessed through: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64564>

Map 1: Proportion of sample size by refugee camps where PDM was conducted



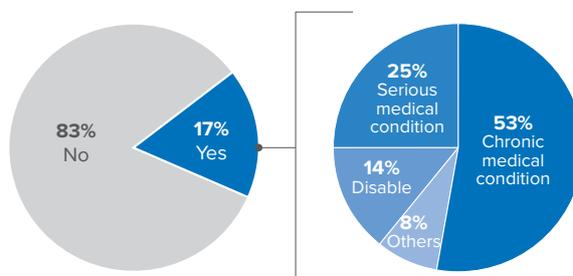
Findings and comparative analysis

Respondent's profile

About 42% female and 58% male refugees provided feedback on various items distributed in different settlements. The majority of the refugees taking part in the PDM exercise (63%) were between 26 and 59 years old while 26% were between 18 and 25 years old and only 2% were below 18 years of age. About 9% of refugees were older than 60 years. More than 90% of the surveyed refugees were heads of household including 38% female and 62% male.

Seventeen percent (*Chart 1*) of the surveyed refugees reported having specific needs. Out of the 17% who reported having a specific need, 53% stated having chronic medical conditions, 25% reported having serious medical conditions while 14% had a disability. The average family size was four, with 79% of the surveyed refugee households had less than seven members, 20% lived with seven to ten family members, and 1% had more than 10 family members.

Chart 1: % of respondents with specific needs



Key findings

The PDM survey confirmed that NFI packages distributed by UNHCR and partners, including CRI, USK and TDK, CRH, WASH Hygiene Kit and Female Hygiene Kit, met the household needs and minimum quality standard for NFI as agreed by the Shelter/NFI Sector in Cox's Bazar. The overall satisfaction score has improved from the previous survey in March. The refugees reported high satisfaction for the items received, and rated above 4.1 on a 5-point Likert scale for the items' quality and usefulness. They also reported general satisfaction with the organisation of NFI distribution, with an average score of 4.0 on the Likert scale. The finding shows that UNHCR and partners are fulfilling their commitment to provide relief items that meet the specific needs of refugees, and which were distributed in a timely and efficient manner.

Some highlights of the findings:

- About half of surveyed refugees (56%) stated they preferred a combination of in-kind and cash assistance, an increase from the 39% reported in the March PDM exercise.
- About 59% of surveyed refugees reported receiving sufficient quantities of items as compared to 51% surveyed in March. This finding

indicates an improved distribution planning and implementation that meet the immediate needs of targeted beneficiaries. The rest of the refugees stated that the quantity of NFIs received did not last until the next distribution¹⁴. The most frequent reasons cited in the FGDs were large family size and bigger shelters, which required more kits.

- **Almost 98% of surveyed respondents reported using the kits received.** Approximately 2% stated they stored the items. CRH scored the highest (4.31) in usefulness by almost 100% of surveyed refugees, followed by TDK (4.29) and USK (4.28).
- The second PDM exercise further confirms the clean cooking options report that **CRH briquette is not sustainable due to supply shortage.** Another safer and cleaner cooking fuel is therefore required to stop firewood collection and mitigate other risks. **About 99% of refugees reported using the CRH received,** however more than half (61%) stated that the CRH lasted for a short period 1-2 weeks. Many refugees interviewed in the FGDs mentioned that they cooked for a large family which quickly used the CRH up. The shortage prompted the refugees to resort to collecting firewood in the forest to meet their cooking needs. Nearly 1% of refugees reported selling their CRIs (in particular jerry can, kitchen set, solar lamp and blanket) for cash to buy food to diversify their diet. This was consistent with the findings from the March PDM, except that in this PDM, respondents mentioned payment for healthcare and clothing as other reasons why they sell CRIs. **Many refugees attending the FGDs requested gas as another alternative cooking fuel.** Refugee households who had received LPG and cooking set from UNHCR and partners when the PDM exercise was conducted stated the items were useful.
- Shelter TDK, which was distributed prior to monsoon season to reinforce shelters, **received the highest score (4.22) on quality among all six NFI packages under review.** The USK scored next with 4.15 followed by WASH Hygiene Kit with 4.09. The refugees stated that all items in the TDK were of good quality, with iron pegs scoring the highest for quality (4.29). All refugees (100%) reported using the TDK they received, with more than 97% stating that the TDK proved useful during the monsoon season.
- Refugees reported better organisation of NFI distribution than was previously surveyed in March. **Almost 99% of refugees attending the PDM exercise rated their satisfaction as above average** with a score of more than 3.0 points on a Likert scale. An average score of 4.0 points were given by refugees who were satisfied with the distribution of USK, WASH Hygiene Kit and TDK.
- An average of 1% of the surveyed refugees who scored the distribution organisation low reported problems during and after distribution. **Most of them expressed concerns over long waiting time; limited number of distribution points and, for the existing ones, the distance to and from distribution points.** This has particularly affected women and persons with specific needs such as the elderly. About one-third of the surveyed refugees reported walking for 15-30 minutes to reach the distribution points, most often through hilly terrain under unfavourable weather conditions. Due to their shelter's distance from distribution points, some 27% of refugees reported paying others to collect and transport relief items to and from the sites. Payments range from Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) 5 to 1,000 (1 BDT=USD 0.012).
- About 53% of refugees stated they received information on distribution and their entitlements prior to the NFI distribution, as compared to 38% in the March PDM. Many reported getting the information from majhis (community leader appointed by the Army) using various means, such as the mosque loudspeaker. Information on entitlement was received by over 50% of surveyed refugees prior to distribution, except for WASH Hygiene Kit, with 30% reported obtaining the information prior to and during the distribution.

14. All NFI packages but CRH, WASH and Female Hygiene Top-up Kits, are distributed only once to newly arrived refugee families. CRH is distributed monthly while the WASH/Female Hygiene Top-up Kits were provided once every six months by various organisations. The Pre-Monsoon /Tie-Down Kit was distributed to all refugee families in 16 settlements under review prior to the monsoon seasons to strengthen their shelters, while refugee households affected by the monsoon received Post-Disaster Kit.

Quality of items

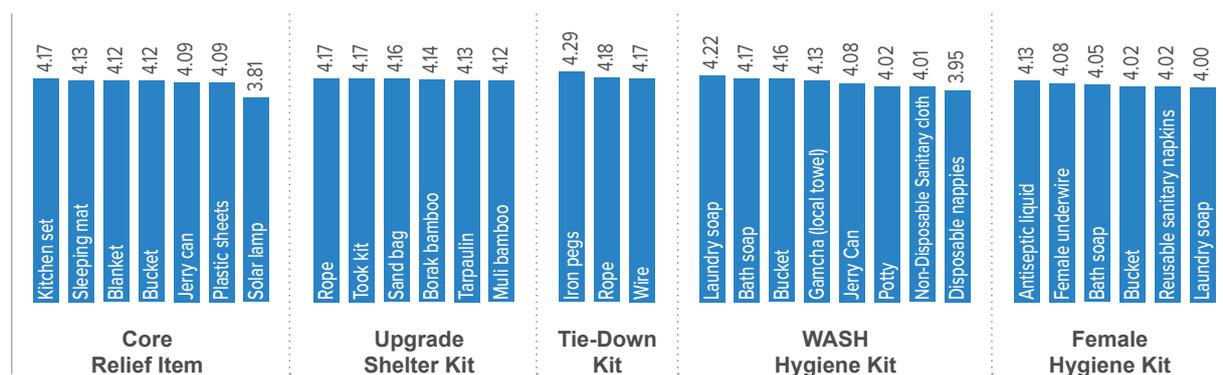
Overall, the quality of items received was rated 4.1¹⁵ on a 5-point scale, a 0.2 point increase from the PDM conducted in March 2018. UNHCR reads this as a reflection of its efforts to get better value for money with local suppliers. Almost all surveyed refugees (99%) who received all six NFI packages rated the quality of items as high, scoring above 4.0 point.

The TDK scored the highest among all six NFI packages with 4.22 (Chart 2), while iron pegs were rated as the highest in quality with 4.29 (Chart 3). Disposable nappies, which are part of WASH Hygiene Kit, were rated above average (3.95).

Chart 2: Score on quality of items



Chart 3: Score on quality of items



The recent PDM exercise also delved further into the refugees’ perception, particularly those who scored below average for an item’s quality. Two refugees reported that the quality of CRH was low without elaborating. Seven refugees mentioned the solar lights had less charging and poor lighting power, and were non-functional after being used for a short time. A refugee reported that the blanket was very thin. No reasons provided by refugees who indicated that the quality of CRI was below average. The FGDs in some refugee camps also commented on the quality of bamboo, solar light and tarpaulin – for example, the bamboo was not mature enough, the tarpaulin was damaged within months, and solar lamp did not last long.

Seven refugees said the quality of tarpaulin was not good as it was leaking during the rain. UNHCR had responded by inviting the plastic sheeting suppliers to investigate the quality complaints on site. Preliminary report suggests the cause of the problem was related to incorrect application. A refugee reported that *borak* bamboo was not of good quality without giving further detail. UNHCR is making every effort to treat bamboo for better durability. Poor *mulli* bamboo quality was reported by three refugees, but no details provided. Three refugees mentioned that the rope was damaged after used for a few days. There were no reasons provided for low quality rating for WASH and Female Hygiene Kits.

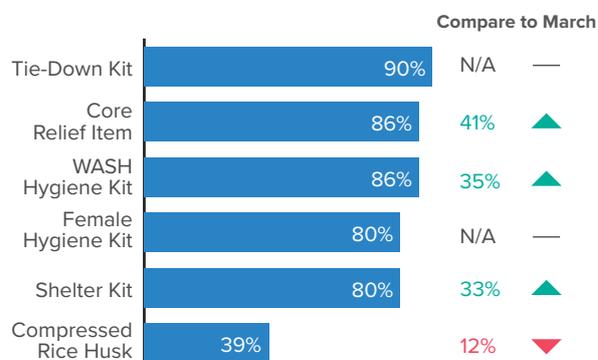
15. On a scale of 1 – Very Poor; 2 – Poor; 3 – Average; 4 – Good and 5 – Very Good

Sufficiency of items

Fifty-nine percent of the surveyed refugees reported receiving sufficient quantities of items. The figure was an increase from 51% in the March PDM.

Some 39% of respondents (*Chart 4*) reported the quantity of CRH received was enough. Those who disagreed stated that the quantities lasted only for about two weeks due to their large family sizes. The FGDs confirmed the shortage of CRH had forced the refugees to collect firewood in the forest. Some refugees also reported selling relief items to meet the household needs.

Chart 4: % of respondents reporting items received is sufficient



Following are some key outcomes of the household survey and FGDs to help understand the challenges and various coping mechanism when relief items were not sufficient to meet the refugees' needs.

- About 23% of the surveyed refugees who stated they received WASH Hygiene Kits also received WASH Top-up Kits¹⁶ in the last four months prior to the PDM exercise from different service providers.
- About 61% of refugees mentioned the CRH received was not sufficient. In the subsequent FGDs, refugees reported the CRH only lasted for 7-15 days. In order to cover the shortfall, they collected firewood in the forest or sold items to purchase cooking fuel in the market. This finding provides a rationale for UNHCR to prioritise distribution of LPG and cooking sets to refugee and destitute host community households, which began in August 2018.
- Refugees requested more of the following CRIs: jerry can (62 responses out of 498), plastic sheets (51), bucket (30), kitchen sets (39), blanket (30), and sleeping mat (15). The refugees also reported losing their kitchen sets, plastic sheets and sleeping mats during the monsoon rains.
- Most refugees reported that the following USK items were not enough for their big shelters: rope (95 responses), *borak* bamboo (81), tarpaulins (77), and *mulli* bamboo (38).
- In a similar manner, refugees also reported the following TDK items were not sufficient to fix a bigger shelter: wire (84 responses), iron pegs (40) and rope (100). In addition, a few refugees mentioned the iron pegs were too short and some reported they did not receive what they were entitled to. Some refugees reported buying additional rope from the market during the monsoon rains.
- On WASH Hygiene Kit, 155 refugees requested more laundry soap due to large family size, while 14 asked for more jerry cans, eight asked for more disposable nappies and four for potty. A few refugees reported their buckets were damaged.
- Forty-seven refugees requested more 130-mg laundry soap, which is part of the Female Hygiene Kit. Forty-three asked for more bath soap, 41 for bucket, 10 for antiseptic liquid, 17 for female underwear and 7 for reusable sanitary napkins because the current quantity did not meet the needs of a large family.

16. The composition of the WASH Hygiene Kit is agreed by the WASH Sector. A kit covers a family's hygiene needs for three months. A WASH Top-up Kit, containing consumable items such as soaps are distributed by other humanitarian actors, according to UNHCR- Bangladesh SOP for NFI distribution(2018)

WASH Top-up Kit was distributed by Shelter and WASH Sectors partners with IOM funding.

Usefulness of items

Almost 100% of surveyed refugees rated the items they received as useful, with an overall score of 4.3 on a 5-point scale¹⁷ as compared to the PDM exercise in March (4.2).

CRH was rated as the most useful form of assistance out of the six NFI packages distributed, scoring 4.31 (Chart 5), followed by TDK (4.29) and USK (4.28).

In the CRI package, solar lamp scored the highest (4.31) for their usefulness while bucket was the lowest with 4.10 (Chart 6). Among the USK, tarpaulin was rated as the most useful (4.32) while tool kit was the least useful (4.20). One tool kit is distributed to five families each. Iron peg was the most useful item as part of the TDK, scoring the highest (4.34), while rope was the least useful (4.25). The third item, wire, received a score of 4.28.

Chart 5: Score on usefulness of items

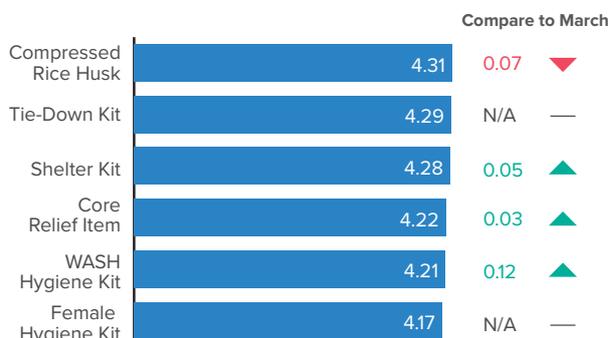
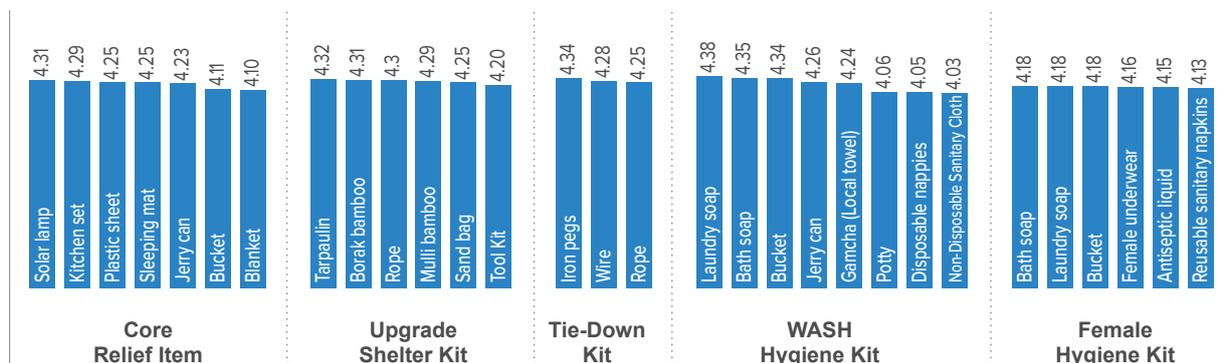


Chart 6: Score on usefulness of items

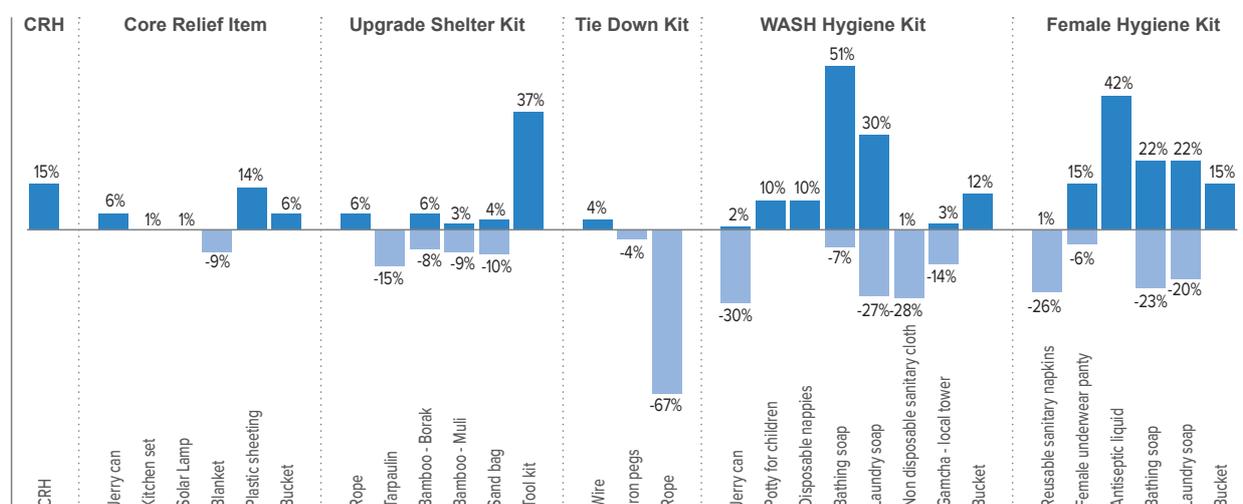


Among the items distributed as part of a WASH Hygiene Kit, laundry soap was rated the most useful (4.38) and non-disposable sanitary cloth as the least (4.03). For the Female Hygiene Kit, bath soap, laundry soap and bucket were the most useful items (4.18) and reusable sanitary napkins was the least useful (4.13).

Quantity of items received versus entitlement

The refugees were asked whether they received the quantity of NFIs as entitled. Chart 7 shows their responses are divided between those who received the correct amount of items according to UNHCR standard operating procedure for NFIs, and refugees who received more and less than their entitlements.

17. On a scale of 1 – Very Poor; 2 – Poor; 3 – Average; 4 – Good and 5 – Very Good

Chart 7: Quantity of items received versus entitlement

In general, 77% of the refugees reported receiving the same quantity as per their entitlement. About 13% of refugees stated they received more items than they were entitled for, and 10% reported receiving less items, particularly for 16 out of 30 relief items provided in all standard NFI packages. The number is almost consistent with the first PDM exercise in March, in which refugees reported they received less quantity for 12 out of 27 relief items distributed.

Chart 7 also shows that a majority of the surveyed refugees (67%) reported receiving less rope than they are entitled to (60m rope/household) as part of the shelter TDK. Shelter TDK kits were distributed starting from April as part of emergency preparedness to help secure refugee shelters and prevent them from being blown away by high winds, thus was not included in the March PDM. It was revealed during the FGDs that most of those who complained about the insufficiency of ropes in the TDKs had made extensions to their shelters by themselves which made them bigger than the standard. These households resorted to purchasing additional ropes from the market to make up for the shortfalls.

The standard entitlement of rope in the USK is 30m/household. Unlike in the March PDM where as many as 90% of households reported receiving less than their entitlements, all respondents this time around mentioned having received at least their entitlements, with 6% reporting that they received more than the standard. This significant shift can be attributed to the fact that following the findings of the March PDM, it was found out that most households did not know how to properly use the contents of the USK, and this prompted UNHCR to provide technical support and further training on the use of ropes in the Shelter Kit and in some cases distributing more as needed. Refugees reported receiving kitchen sets and solar lamps according to their entitlement or more (1% of the respondents). During the PDM in March, solar lamps were also found to be distributed in correct quantity.

Fifty-one percent of refugees stated they received more soap than the standard quantity of five bars per family, as part of a WASH Hygiene Kit. This could be a result of respondents' confusion with the WASH Top-up Kit, which also includes bathing soap bars. About 42% of the surveyed refugees stated they received more 125-ml antiseptic liquid than the entitled four bottles per household.

Use of items

About 98% of the surveyed refugees reported using all NFI items received while only 2% stored the items, 0.2% sold them and the rest was stolen or exchanged. The overall utility rate is similar to the PDM result in March.

The refugees reported storing most of the items for future use except for reusable sanitary napkins and female underwear. Items stored were blanket, sleeping mat, jerry can, potty for children, disposable nappies, non-disposable sanitary cloths and antiseptic liquid as reported by 6-7% of the surveyed refugees. About 5% of refugees stated they stored their WASH Hygiene Kits (*Table 1*) and 3% stored the Core Relief Items.

Table 1: % of respondents reporting on actual use of items received

Item Type	Used	Kept/Stored	Sold	Gifted	Stolen	Exchanged
Compressed Rice Husk	99.68%	0.09%	0.18%	0.00%	0.05%	0.00%
Core Relief Item	95.95%	2.98%	0.86%	0.06%	0.06%	0.09%
Shelter Kit	98.91%	1.29%	0.03%	0.09%	0.16%	0.00%
WASH Hygiene Kit	94.69%	5.19%	0.12%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Tie-Down Kit	98.95%	0.91%	0.03%	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%
Female Hygiene Kit	97.62%	2.23%	0.00%	0.07%	0.07%	0.00%

The most sold items were jerry cans, kitchen sets, solar lamps and blankets. They were reportedly sold to earn money to buy food. Refugees also reported selling the NFIs at a price that varied among and within items. A jerry can was sold between BDT25-250; a kitchen set between BDT400-3,000; a solar lamp between BDT42-700; a blanket between BDT200-1,000; and a plastic sheet was sold between BDT100-650. The sale prices are far below the purchase prices, which further confirms the necessities for cash-based intervention for selected relief assistance.

The refugees stated they sold items to buy food to diversify their diets, such as cereals, meat, milk, vegetable and oil. The refugees did not report sale of NFIs to pay for healthcare services, which was reported by 21% of refugees in the PDM exercise in March. The sale of NFIs was also reported in March to buy food and clothing.

UNHCR commissioned a multi-sectoral needs assessment later this year which should provide a better understanding of the refugee's expenditure pattern. UNHCR has also started a market assessment to look into the impact of relief items being sold to the market.

As part of the technical guidance,¹⁸ UNHCR also provides technical support to USK recipients. About 12% of the surveyed refugees reported request for support, with over 90% of the refugees receiving support to build their shelters.

18. Shelter/NFI Sector Upgrade Shelter Kit (USK) Technical Guidance Version 2.0. 16 December 2017. <https://bit.ly/2IXTxH8>

Only 17% of the surveyed refugees received Post-Disaster Kit (PDK) which is provided to a refugee family affected by the monsoon rains. Among the respondents who received PDKs, about 23% reported using the kit to repair their shelters which were damaged during the heavy rains, 57% received the kit when they relocated from their original location and 20% mentioned other reasons without elaborating. More than 97% of refugees who received PDK stated that the kits were very useful particularly during the monsoon season.

Distribution method

UNHCR's NFI distribution process relies on registration of eligible refugees and their families through their Family Counting Number (FCN) card, which was given after attending the family counting exercise. Once registered, each refugee family obtains a Ration Card. UNHCR produces master beneficiary lists based on the family counting data as the NFI distribution uses a blanket approach for all items. Prior to the distribution day, partner agencies provide refugees in the targeted area with appointment slips/tokens. On distribution day, the refugees hand over the token to the distribution desk and their eligibility is checked against the master beneficiary list. Households or individuals who cannot be verified will be directed to the help desk for information and advice. Persons with specific needs are prioritised. The field distribution staff from UNHCR and partner agencies use Kobo Toolbox application to ensure the correct family receive their entitlements as well as to identify gaps and avoid duplication which enable partners to deliver relief assistance efficiently.

In this PDM exercise, the refugees gave a better score (an average of 4.0 points) for the organisation of distribution as compared to the March PDM where they scored it 3.8 points. The distribution of WASH Hygiene Kit, TDK and USK is rated better than other items (*Chart 8*). CRH distribution is rated the least satisfactory, with a score of 3.88 on a 5-point scale. Besides covering only 30% of the need, the less satisfaction on CRH could also be partly explained by the amount of feedback from refugees during the monthly distribution, as compared to other relief items which have been distributed one time, except for WASH Top-up Kit (every six month).

Chart 8: Score on satisfaction of items

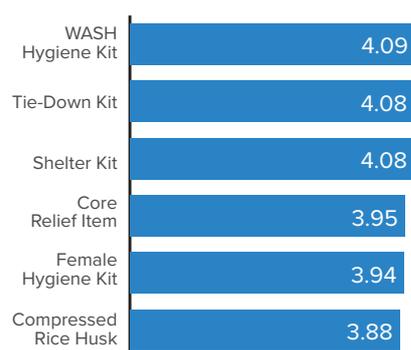
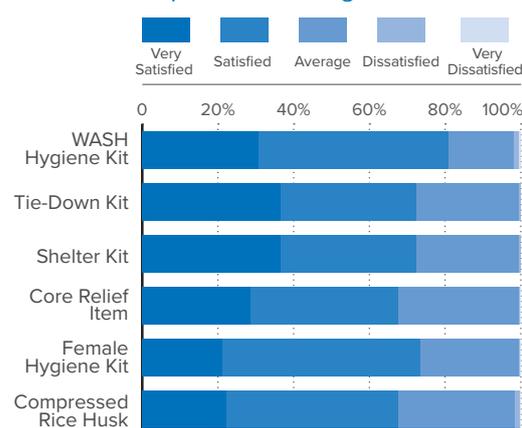


Chart 9: % of respondents rating on satisfaction



Almost 99% (*Chart 9*) of the surveyed refugees rated the distribution process as average or above average. This finding has improved significantly from the first PDM, which may be attributed to three new distribution centres¹⁹ upgraded by UNHCR and its partners as well as considerable efforts made in each round of distribution to improve modalities from information to logistics to litigation arrangements. Those who were not satisfied cited long waiting time, travel distance and limited distribution points where they could collect their entitlements.

¹⁹ In the timeframe of the September PDM, UNHCR did upgraded Transit centre, Chakmarkul and Nayapara NFI distribution centres.

More than 79% of the surveyed refugees stated that the distribution point was far from their shelters which forced them to travel from 15 minutes to one hour (Table 2). Though about 87% of the surveyed refugees lived within less than one hour of walking distance from distribution points, which is within UNHCR standard of a maximum 4 hours walking distance to distribution points²⁰, their journey is often challenging as they have to carry heavy loads through the hilly topography in refugee settlements, compounded with poor road access, and unfavourable weather conditions.

Table 2: % of respondents reporting approximate time it took to reach the distribution site

Item Type	0 - 15 minutes	15 - 30 minutes	30 minutes - 1 hour	1 - 2 hours	more than 2 hours
Compressed Rice Husk	9%	39%	37%	13%	2%
Core Relief Item	12%	43%	33%	11%	1%
Shelter Kit	11%	42%	33%	12%	2%
WASH Hygiene Kit	11%	42%	33%	12%	2%
Tie-Down Kit	11%	47%	32%	8%	2%
Female Hygiene Kit	20%	66%	0%	13%	1%



Rohingya refugees are receiving Compressed Rice Husks in Kutupalong camp. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

20. UNHCR Emergency Handbook. Commodity distribution (NFIs, food). <https://bit.ly/2NfsjaO>



UNHCR is delivering WASH Hygiene Kits in Kutupalong camp, Bangladesh. © UNHCR/Roger Arnold

As part of the protection measure, UNHCR works with partners to address these concerns, including improving the waiting time and safety of refugees at distribution points. The PDM survey found that the average waiting time has been reduced to 90 minutes (1.5 hours) from 108 minutes (1.8 hours) reported in March PDM. Averaging waiting time is often misleading as initial distributions took place under very difficult circumstances which improved considerably over time.

Less than 1% of refugees reported paying a range of amount from BDT20 to 400 to be on the distribution list. While the majority of refugees did not provide further information during the household surveys, the FGDs in three refugee settlements, however, mentioned payment to *majhi* and staff involved during the distribution.

There were very few refugees (one to two individuals) who reported paying BDT60 during the CRH and WASH Hygiene Kit distribution. No payment was reported during other items distribution. The respondents did not disclose the recipients of their payment during the NFI distribution.

Refugees reported paying between BDT5-1,000 to collect and transport their relief items to and from distribution points. About 27% mentioned they paid for collection and transportation of CRH and 21% for CRI, 20% for USK and 21% for TDK, 19% for WASH Hygiene Kit, and 11% for Female Hygiene Kit.

The surveyed refugees did not respond when asked to whom they paid the money. However, they cited reasons that include distance, including 74% of 601 refugees reported distance as reason for paying to



UNHCR and partners undertaking Upgraded Shelter Kits distribution © UNHCR/Hector Perez

transport CRH, 72% of 129 refugees for CRI, 65% of 159 refugees for USK and 80% of 89 refugees for WASH Hygiene Kit. The other reason was heavy load they had to carry back to their shelters, including 22% reported for Shelter Kit load, 12% for CRI, 8% for CRH and 8% for WASH Hygiene Kits. Other reasons for payment were challenges associated with being single-headed households (average 8% for all items) and mobility issues, as reported by 10% refugees for CRH, 4% for CRI, 7% for USK and 4% for WASH Hygiene Kits. UNHCR continues to improve the NFI distribution services to refugees, including by ensuring that they receive information on distribution and entitlement in timely fashion. More than half (53%) of the surveyed refugees stated they were informed on the entitlements prior to distribution as compared to 38% in March. However, 30% refugees stated they received information on the WASH Hygiene Kit, including their entitlements, before and during distribution.

Less than 23% of refugees reported obtaining information on their entitlements at the same time they received the relief items.

The majority of refugees identified *mahjis* as the main source of information, followed by UN/NGO staff. In the FGDs, refugees mentioned the various communication channels used including the mosque loudspeakers and visits to shelters by volunteers.

Challenges before and after NFI distribution

An average 1% of the surveyed refugees reported challenges during and after distribution. More refugees mentioned challenges they faced during distribution such as long waiting time and the location of distribution points that was too far from their shelters. A few respondents also reported that volunteers at distribution points were unfriendly, the loss of ration cards, and *majhis* asking for money. Challenges after attending distribution included poor road condition, heavy load and long distance to and from distribution points which increase travel time. During the FGDs, refugees also mentioned the lack of gender-segregated waiting lines and volunteers' behaviour. By now, UNHCR has implemented queuing lines for men, women and people with specific needs such as pregnant women and the elderly in all his NFI distribution centres. UNHCR plans to apply similar measure for all shelter distribution centres.

Despite the challenges, only a few refugees filed complaints using the means available to them such as through Information Points set up by UNHCR and partner agencies, directly approaching the helpdesk at distribution points and speaking with UN/NGO staff. About 1% of refugees complained about problems during CRI distribution, another 3% about USK and 3% about CRH distribution.

No response was provided when asked about complaints related to distribution of WASH Hygiene Kit and Female Hygiene Kit. There was no complaint made directly to *majhi*.

Many refugees from various settlements expressed their appreciation to UNHCR and partners and commended the organisation of NFI distribution during the FGDs. The refugees also requested LPG for cooking fuel, in addition to an increase in quantity of various NFIs.

Preferred items

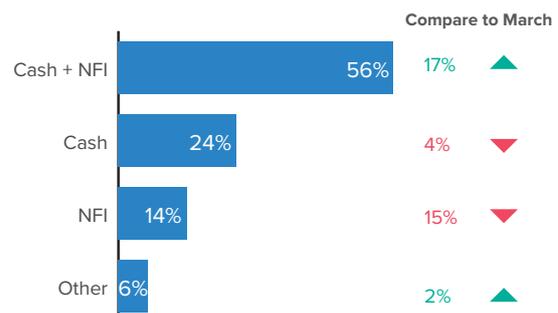
Out of the six NFI packages, the majority of refugees selected Core Relief Items (kitchen set and jerry can) and USK (bamboo and tarpaulin) as their highly preferred items.

The FGDs found that preferred items varied across settlements in line with the needs. Kitchen set including cooking gas, solar light, sleeping mats, cloths, tarpaulin, and bamboo, was among the most preferred items as an addition to the kits distributed to refugees.

About half of the surveyed refugees (56%) stated their preference for a combination of in-kind and cash assistance, regardless the type of items (*Chart 10*). The value has increased from March when 39% refugees reported preference for a mixed in-kind and cash support.

This was followed by cash assistance, preferred by 24% of respondents, and in-kind support only, preferred by 14%. Their preference values were also relatively lower than those reported in March PDM, in which 29% of refugees preferred in-kind while 28% preferred cash assistance.

Chart 10: % of respondents reporting on preferred items



Recommendation and way forward

The second PDM exercise found that the NFI packages distributed by UNHCR and partners met the household needs and minimum quality standard for NFIs as approved by the Shelter/NFI Sector in Cox's Bazar. The overall satisfaction score has also improved from the previous PDM survey in March.

Over a span of 12 months after the start of the refugee influx, UNHCR and its humanitarian partners have made significant improvement in NFI distribution. These include reducing the average waiting time at distribution points from 108 minutes (1.8 hours) as recorded in March PDM to 90 minutes (1.5 hours) in August; ensuring that refugees receive sufficient information on distribution and entitlement through strengthened camp governance system; setting up separate queuing lines at distribution points according to gender and vulnerability criteria; offering free porter service at distribution points; and ensuring that complaint and feedback mechanism is in place and functional. UNHCR also works to obtain better quality material for sleeping mats and other items and increases the quantity of CRH per family size.



Recommendations

- Improve beneficiary registration and distribution list validation further in order to capture family size more accurately, and subsequently adjust the quantity of NFIs based on this information and the needs of individual family members particularly persons with specific needs. A significant effort is ongoing through the joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR's family verification exercise to produce secure identity documentation for refugees using technology that will eliminate duplications in the existing dataset and enable all humanitarian actors to capture refugee needs more precisely. Each individual refugee above the age of 12 will be issued an ID card that allows them to access services and assistance in accordance with their specific needs.
- Improve access to distribution points. This includes a faster processing at distribution points and disseminating comprehensive information on a range of available services such as free porter and no payment or commission for an intermediary including *majhi* and volunteers. Explore feasibility, given terrain challenges, for better location of distribution points that can lessen travel time and distances for refugees. At the time of publishing this report, UNHCR has set up five distribution points with access to communal facilities, with the sixth site is underway at the new refugee settlement in Kutupalong, in addition to the three distributions point upgraded after March PDM.
- Organisation of distribution arrangements should ensure dignity and safety of the most vulnerable refugees.
- Scale-up the distribution of LPG as an eco-friendly alternative cooking fuel and cooking sets to refugees, which also support the local economy in the long run. Trainings should also be provided on the safe and correct use of the gas and cooking equipment.
- Pursue the provision of a mixed cash and in-kind assistance when possible, which allows the refugees flexibility to choose food and non-food items according to their family size and needs, and discourage them from selling relief items to local market.
- Humanitarian organisations should improve direct communication with refugees, especially in communicating all aspects of aid distribution and services provided to them, and closely examine complaints and feedback related to information provision.

Working in partnership

UNHCR co-chairs a Strategic Executive Group (SEG) in Bangladesh with the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM. The Refugee Agency leads on the protection response for all refugees, and heads a Protection Working Group in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR welcomes its valuable partnerships with a number of UN agencies and coordinates the delivery of its assistance with humanitarian partners through a number of working groups under the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). UNHCR's main government counterpart is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and its Cox's Bazar-based Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC). UNHCR staff work closely with the Camp-in-Charge officials in different refugee settlements, as well as a range of international and national actors. UNHCR also has a strong network of 28 partners, including:

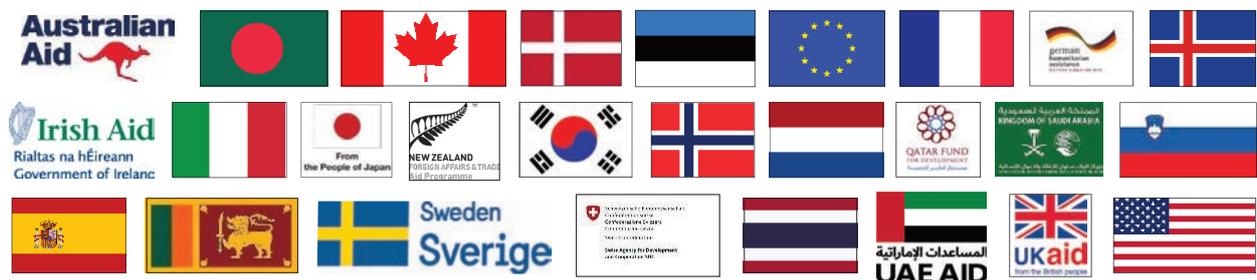
ACF (Action Contre la Faim) | **ACTED** (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development) | **ADRA** (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) | **BDRCS** (Bangladesh Red Crescent Society) | **BNWLA** (Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association) | **BRAC** (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) | **CARITAS BANGLADESH** | **CODEC** (Community Development Centre) | **CSI** (Center for Social Integrity) | **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) | **IRC** (International Rescue Committee) | **MTI** (Medical Teams International) | **NGOF** (NGO Forum) | **OXFAM** | **PIN** (People in Need) | **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)

UNHCR would also like to acknowledge the crucial role played by the refugees in the response; with **over 6,500 volunteers from the refugee community** who are **often the first responders on the ground**. UNHCR and the partners have trained and worked with **safety unit volunteers (SUVs)** who support the emergency response, **community outreach members** who support raising awareness on important issues and in addressing protection risks, **community health workers** who assist with outreach for health and nutrition, and others who provide further critical support to the emergency response.

Donor support

The Government and the people of Bangladesh have shown extraordinary generosity in responding to the crisis. However, more support and solidarity is required from the international community to assist the ongoing humanitarian response. Continued political efforts to work towards a solution to the situation remains vital. UNHCR is appealing for USD 238.8m (as part of its Supplementary Appeal for 2018) in order to respond to the needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

UNHCR Bangladesh is grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have provided unrestricted and broadly earmarked funds, as well as to donors who have contributed directly to the Operation in 2017 and 2018:



With thanks to the many private donations from individuals, foundations, and companies such as the Arab Gulf Fund, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, International Islamic Relief Organization, Kuwait Finance House, OPEC Fund for International Development, Prosolidar-Onlus Foundation, Qatar Charity, Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation, The Big Heart Foundation, The Church of Latter-Day Saints, and UPS Corporate. Special thanks also to CERF.

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LINKS: [UNHCR data portal](#) – [UNHCR operation page](#) – [Facebook](#) – [Twitter](#) – [Latest stories](#) – [Instagram](#)

Post Distribution Monitoring

SHELTER AND
NON-FOOD ITEMS

BANGLADESH
REFUGEE
SITUATION

SEPTEMBER 2018



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHCR, Sub-Office Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh