Bibliothèques Sans Frontières
Libraries Without Borders

ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT
ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS

March 2018 - Bangladesh

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1. CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

LIBRARIES WITHOUT BORDERS

Bibliothèques Sans Frontières / Libraries Without Borders (BSF) is an international NGO founded in 2007 which aims at strengthening the autonomy and resilience of vulnerable populations worldwide by providing access to information, education and promoting cultural diversity. BSF has been working in humanitarian contexts since 2013 to assist refugee and host communities affected by crisis. In the Middle East, Eastern and Central Africa or Colombia, BSF works alongside several NGOs and government agencies to set up safe spaces and services for education, vocational training, psychological support and community cohesion for vulnerable populations.

CONTEXT OF THE ASSESSMENT

For more than 30 years, Bangladesh has been the second theatre of the Rohingya crisis. The Muslim minority has faced decades of repression and discrimination in its home country, Myanmar/Burma, precisely in the north of Rakhine State, resulting in many of its members seeking refuge in neighboring Bangladesh, in the southern region of Cox's Bazar. **Since the events of the 25th of August 2017, over 671.000 Rohingyas have crossed the border from Myanmar to Bangladesh**, making this the world's fastest developing refugee emergency. As of March 2018, there were **more than 880.0002 cumulative refugees in the country**, including over 200.000 Rohingyas who were already in Bangladesh following previous displacement waves. The sudden surge in the number of Rohingyas arrivals has stretched the capacities of humanitarian organizations/ agencies operating in Bangladesh. This new arriving population has been hosted in camps for registered refugees, but also in overcrowded makeshift settlements such as schools, community centers religious buildings and local families' homes. New clusters of settlements have also been set up and continue to expand. The Rohingya crisis is creating immediate needs for cross-sectorial assistance.

Libraries Without Borders has worked with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Première Urgence Internationale (PUI) in different multisectoral protection/PSS/Education programs in other contexts. Based on these experiences, DRC and PUI's expertises in CCCM and Community based Protection and BSF's integrated programs for access to information in humanitarian response, discussions were initiated at the end of 2017 to explore the possibility of a joint response during this emergency, at the CCCM level. Initial discussions underlined the key challenges that such a partnership could address: access to information for the Rohingya population, access to safe spaces for mainstream protection and PSS programs, and creating shared spaces for iNGOs and local organisations to implement their sector programs.

Libraries Without Borders and its partners decided to carry out an assessment to explore and define the relevance and feasibility of a program aimed **at strengthening access to information, learning and cultural spaces in response to the Royingha crisis.** Translators Without Borders has also been involved from the very beginning as languages and culture are central and sensitive topics in this context.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

This assessment aimed to deliver a multi-level analysis on:

- Rohingya refugees' and host communities' needs regarding access to information, education and cultural resources (in a complementary approach to other assessments that have already been conducted)

- How BSF's tools and methods could help improve the current humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar with a particular focus on community participation and social cohesion

- The feasibility of a BSF response in Cox's Bazar, and in which shape and form, to ensure complementarity with existing responses

METHODOLOGY

Given that many and regular quantitative needs assessments have been conducted on the field, and that time and budget were limited, Libraries Without Borders opted for a more qualitative assessment to complement existing data.

The assessment included a comprehensive review of existing data and previous assessments, observation on site of the current response, Focus group discussions and design session with affected populations (refugee and host community) and key informant interviews with different stakeholders. Focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with 86 refugees with the support of DRC and PUI in three different camps of Kutupalong (camps 17, 6 and 8E) and with 26 people within the Host communities in Thelikhali in Palongkhali Union. For this last FGD, BSF and its partners decided to target adolescents and young adults, as many assessments and key informants had underlined a lack of activities for these groups that are particularly at risk. The report "Childhood interrupted, children's voices from the Rohingya Refugee crisis" published by World Vision, Save the Children and PLAN international[1] already provides a very interesting overview of children's needs and points of view.

Needs assessments and meetings with partners have given BSF the opportunity to shape first possible responses that will be described in the second part of this report.

Focus group discussion and drawing session within the host communities in Thelikhali

2. KEY FINDINGS

The assessment shows that **affected populations face a huge need for information and education and lack community spaces and cultural resources** to recreate a sense of normality.

A TREMENDOUS NEED FOR ACCESS TO QUALITY INFORMATION

With no right to purchase a local simcard, a very limited access to internet, TV and radio, an extremely low literacy rate (less than 30% of the population)[2] and no written contents available for those who are able to read and write, **refugees living in the Cox's Bazar area have a very limited access to information whether it be camp information, information about the situation in Burma or information on what is happening in the world.** This situation makes them extremely vulnerable and can lead them to adopt negative coping mechanisms. According to the information needs assessment conducted in October 2017 by Internews and ETS[3] in the Cox's Bazar region, **more than three quarters (77%) of the affected population feel that they do not have enough information to make good decisions** and almost two-thirds (62%) of the affected population report that they are unable to communicate with aid providers.

Almost six months after the report, the situation hasn't changed much unfortunately. This, despite the efforts of aid workers who have set up Information hubs[4] and developed feedbacks mechanisms to improve communication with communities. **Participants of** the Focus Group Discussions that BSF conducted declared that their main source of Information are **Mahjis** (for refugees) **or the village headman**(for host communities)[5].

Refugees declare that their main source of information are Mahjis

Community volunteers come after as a source of information for refugees but the Communications With Communities Working Group (CwC WG) only listed 1100 of them in March 2018. As mentioned in the Internews Information Need Assessment, "the refugee population is clearly a very tight one, where communication means and habits are strictly community-based, with great emphasis on personal connection and community leaders".

In that context, **BBC Media Action, Internews and Translators without Borders started a project at the end of 2017 to set up services to improve Communications With Communities** by collecting and collating feedbacks from the community affected by the Rohingya crisis, supporting local radios, training community correspondents to produce "narrow casts" and organize listening groups or tracking rumors. If those great initiatives contribute to improving the humanitarian information system, information spreading activities are still being done at a small scale and can't reach the whole affected population.

In March 2017, **CwC WG counted 178 Infos Hubs**, ran by different agencies and NGOs (with sometimes different approaches), which aimed to spread information and

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[1] "Childhood interrupted, Children's voices from the Rohingya refugee Crisis", PLAN International, Save the Children, WorldVision, February 2018
[2] According to Internews "Information Needs Assessment" (November 2017), more than 70% of the population in both communities is illiterate, in any language and almost 70% of the population in both communities has not received any level of education.
[3] "Information Needs Assessment - Cox's Bazar Bangladesh", Internews in collaboration with ETS, November 2017
[4] This term will be used here as it is the one used by the CwC WG even if the term of information desk, point or center can also be used by different agencies.
[5] This confirms Internews report, according to which : " Overall 93% of the population interviewed states that they receive information from their local Mahji or community leader".

collect community feedbacks but **the majority of participants of the FGD declared they had never heard about Information Hubs.** The ETS and Info Hubs joint project for the coming months would offer an internet access to the humanitarian staff in 40 Info Hubs but communities won't directly benefit from this action from the start. To improve information sharing, it could be relevant to support "Info Hubs" to become more community centered places, where people would feel comfortable and come for different purposes such as information access. Furthermore, as Internews and ETS recommended in their Information Needs Assessment[6], information must be disseminated and collected using a range of different channels, tools and methodologies and audios and videos are key communication channels to counteract the low literacy rate.

Additionally, if affected communities are lacking access to information, this finding is even stronger for women. For instance, 42% of refugee participants of the FGD declared owning a phone, with a huge disparity between men and women with **74% of men and only 20% of women owning a phone.** This difference is also very visible when asking people if they can read and write. Amongst the refugees, **25% of participants declared they could read and write but this was the case for only 11% of women and 9% of adolescent girls.**

25% of refugees declare they could read and write but only 11% of women and 9% of adolescent girls.

That is why it seems **crucial to develop specific programs targeting women who are particularly deprived of any access to information and to use contents and channels adapted to each gender and age.**

An Information point run by Radio Naf in camp 2

[6] Information Needs Assessment, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, Internews in collaboration with ETS, November 2017

A HIGH DEMAND FOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The issue of access to information is also closely linked to the education issue as education level and literacy rates are very low both within the refugees and the host communities. **Education is a very sensitive question in this crisis** with Rohingya refugees who have been denied a proper access to education in Burma and the Government of Bangladesh that is also reluctant to offer them an access to formal education in Bangladesh and to any kind of certification, especially in Bangla language. An informal learning framework in English, Burmese, and using the oral Rohingya language, has nonetheless been recently adopted by the Education Sector in agreement with the Government of Bangladesh.

Children in camp 8E

According to the Joint Response Plan (JRP)[7], **an estimated 625,000 children and youth (ages 3–24) amongst affected populations lack access to learning opportunities**. Limited space in the makeshift settlements and a lack of trained teacher are important factors, but other barriers to education are numerous and the drop-out rate in the Cox's Bazar district is one of the highest in the country.

An estimated 625,000 children and youth from affected populations lack access to learning opportunities.

20% of the total refugee and host community populations are youths between the ages of 15 and 24 who are particularly exposed to risks such as trafficking, drug abuse, early marriage, as well as hazardous or exploitative work. **Those groups have presently almost no access to any kind of learning facilities**. As underlined in the JRP, education services in emergencies also need to focus on increasing the resilience and self-reliance of refugee youth - not just children.

All adolescents and young adults refugee participants of the Focus Group Discussions underlined their strong will to benefit from learning resources and to take part in educational activities, especially literacy, languages classes, computer classes and vocational trainings.

For the refugees who were nonliterate, the majority declared they would like to learn how to read and write in Burmese, Bangla or English. **Their first choice would be Burmese if they were able to go back to Burma and to Bangla if they had to stay in Bangladesh**. A majority of participants were also very interested in learning English. In its language assessment[8], Translators Without Borders underlines that aside from discussions on Burmese, English, Bengali and Arabic instruction, there is also a desire amongst the Rohingya population to be taught a Rohingya script. Many respondents of TWB's assessment were unaware of the existence of a written Rohingya script due to teaching restrictions in Myanmar but children who learnt written Rohingya experienced an enhanced sense of cultural belonging and identity. A conclusion of the TWB's assessment was to pursue multilingual education efforts.

The lack of spaces and teachers require education partners to be innovative and to imagine ways to share spaces, to implement home-based learning activities, to increase refugee and host community participation and engagement in children's education and to find appropriate methodologies and resources to support and train teachers. According to the JRP[9], both teachers in host communities and learning facilitators in the refugee camps reported their urgent need for further training in pedagogy, as regards to particular academic subjects as well as general life skills. In this particular context, the use of **technologies could offer a possibility to support those approaches in order to leverage their impact and improve the quality of education services.**

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[7] Humanitarian Response Plan - Rohingya Refugee Crisis - March 2018 - December 2018
[8] "Rohingya Zuban - A rapid assessment of language barriers in the Cox's Bazar refugee response", Translators Without Borders, November 2017
[9] Humanitarian Response Plan - Rohingya Refugee Crisis - March 2018 - December 2018

A LACK OF COMMUNITY SPACES AND A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TO FOSTER

The majority of refugee participants of the Focus Group Discussions, especially adolescents and women, underlined **a lack of community spaces and places to gather**. In the camps, **men meet at the market, in tea shops, at the mosque, at their neighbour's house and women meet at their neighbour's house**. Most of the women declared not knowing about women friendly spaces. Adolescent girls are very restricted in their movements and usually can't go alone further than their block. The "Children's voice" report[10] shows that children are currently unable or limited in their ability to play freely due to the very limited space to do so in the camps. Interviews of stakeholders and observations on the ground highlight a sectorized response with different type of spaces dedicated to different groups of population, in a context where space is lacking. This is most probably due to the massive and rapid influx of refugees which made the coordination and management of spaces very difficult at the start of the response. It now seems possible to **promote shared and more inclusive spaces.**

Moreover, tensions are growing between refugees and host communities and, as underlined in the JRP, there is an urgent need to promote social cohesion between those groups in project design and implementation, including participation in the same activities, and access to and use of the same services. The FGD conducted in the host communities highlighted a lack of community spaces and showed indeed a high level of fear of refugees: all participants declared, for instance, that they would not agree to share a community center with refugees as they consider them dangerous.

Focus group discussion and drawing session within the host communities in Thelikhali

Participants underline a lack of community spaces to gather.

Site management actors are currently facing so many challenges around site improvement that community engagement is hardly a priority. In some new camps, community participation mechanisms are just starting with the setting up of participatory governance structures and mobilizing community volunteers to facilitate communication with communities in a community-based protection approach. It seems really important that community participation go beyond collecting complaints and feedbacks and that refugees participate in the design and implementation of activities in the camps to foster resilience and promote social cohesion. Drawing sessions that BSF conducted during the FGD, asking people to draw the plan of their ideal community center, were a good example of group activities that made people exchange and build the life of the community.

It is clear that needs in the host communities in terms of access to information and education are also huge and that projects have to be implemented targeting those population. Quick impacts projects planned under site management and protection sectors could help addressing those issues.

There is an urgent need to promote social cohesion between refugees and host communities.

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[10] " Childhood interrupted, Children's voices from the Rohingya refugee Crisis", PLAN International, Save the Children, WorldVision, February 2018

A NEED FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES AND EXPRESSION

Social cohesion issues can also be linked with boredom and loss of cultural reference points in a context of displacement. Focus group discussions with refugees highlighted their boredom and lack of recreational activities. **When asked what they usually do in their spare time in the camps, men refugees answered that they talk in tea shops, watch TV and pray. Women talk, pray and sleep.** They have no available equipments to do in the camp what they used to do in Burma (play board games or sports, do handicrafts, watch TV....) and **they are bored**. Except in tea shops where only men are allowed to go and through their phones, which allow them to share videos or music, refugees mostly do not have access to cultural and entertainment resources or activities.

In their spare time, men refugees talk in tea shops, watch TV and pray. Women talk, pray and sleep. They are bored.

Protection stakeholders agree to say there is an immense and urgent need to provide mental health and psychosocial support for refugees of all ages; **creativity activities can help people express their fears, reconnect with each other and overcome the trauma they've experienced.**

Focus Group Discussions with refugees and host communities, Key Informants Interviews and secondary data review highlight the huge needs of affected populations in term of access to information, education and cultural resources in that crisis. Implementation of inclusive multi-purpose community centers offering broad range of activities, tools and resources both in camps and in the host communities could help recreate a sense of normality, improve information sharing, offer learning opportunities and foster community based-protection.

There is **a high demand for handicrafts** (stitching, embroidery, sewing, knitting...), amongst both men and women refugees, and for **board games** such as Carrom game, Ludo or Taskhela (cards). **Women would be interested in cooking competitions** and would like to have community cooking spaces. **Men and adolescents would like to practice sports** especially football, badminton and cane ball (or chinlon) and some of them would like **to play music instruments**. The report of FGD conducted with refugees and host communities, available in annex, lists activities and contents that people asked for in a community center. This list shows **a will both to preserve and enhance local culture and to open to the world.**

A shop in camp 6 where refugees come to download music or videos to their phone.

3. AREAS
OF INTERVENTION

RELEVANCE OF BSF'S APPROACH AND TOOLS

The needs assessment conducted by Libraries Without Borders (BSF) underlined the huge needs of affected population in terms of information, education and protection. Stakeholders met on the field were enthusiastic about BSF's approaches and about a possible deployment of the organization in the area. For over 7 years, BSF has indeed developed **tools, services and approaches to address information, education and cultural expression needs in a humanitarian crisis** which could be helpful and relevant in this context at different levels.

- ### Tools

Two tools seem particularly appropriate to address the different issues mentioned above: the KoomBook and the Ideas Box.

Ideas Box experimentation

KOOMBOOK

The KoomBook is an autonomous and ultra-portable digital library. Derived from the Swahili term Kumbuka which means to remember, this compact and lightweight device provides **wireless access to thousands of digital resources** of any form of media: video, audio, website. These contents come from existing sources (youtube, materials created by NGOs, podcasts). The KoomBook creates **a WiFi hotspot** that users can connect to with a laptop, tablet or smartphone. Even with no internet connection, up to **20 simultaneous users can download or upload content** that will automatically update when the KoomBook has access to the internet.

The KoomBook emits a close range wi-fi signal.

Users can connect to the wi-fi via their telephone, tablet or computer.

Users easily navigate the server through any existing web browser.

Users can browse content as well as downloaded and upload their own content to be shared.

When the KoomBook is connected to the internet, it updates all locally created content to the cloud.

Comes with up to 5 hours of battery life!

IDEAS BOX

Created in 2013 by BSF as a humanitarian response device for access to information, education and culture, **Ideas Box is a portable media centre** that unfolds on 100 square meters. It can accommodate an average of 70 people at a time, with an average of 500 people per day. It includes:
- a digital lab, with server with preloaded Open Education Resources, tablets, computers;
- a library with paper and electronic books;
- a creativity kit, with cameras and microphone, a stage, puppets;
- a cinema.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

e-ADMINISTRATION

MULTIMEDIA CENTER

JOB CENTER

CULTURAL CENTER

SUPPORTING FARMING

HEALTH AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

LEGAL LITERACY / LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- ## Contents curation

All the contents, electronic and otherwise, and animations **are customized for user language, culture and specific learning objectives** before the KoomBook or Ideas Box are packaged up. To do this, a dedicated team is established and work with affected population (through design-thinking and participatory workshops) to make sure the materials and approaches are adapted. In the context of the Rohingya refugee crisis and regarding the very low literacy rates and languages issues, **visual, audio and video contents will be prioritized as well as tools promoting creativity and self–expression for beneficiaries to produce contents.**

- ## A partnership model

Since its creation in 2007, **partnerships have always been at the heart of Libraries Without Borders' actions.** BSF's mission is to promote access to information and knowledge as key factors for social and economic development and the empowerment of individuals and local communities. By definition, this mission could not be implemented without close and sustained collaboration with a wide range of partners: associations and non-profit organizations, private operators, public agencies, governments and international institutions.
Within these partnerships, BSF can endorse three distinct roles depending on the context:

- **a facilitator** for the emergence and reinforcement of local partners;
- **an initiator** and catalyst for the launching of new, highly innovative devices by partners;
- **an implementing partner** and provider of expertise and competences within initiatives led by other operators.

BSF's priority goes to providing local beneficiaries and partners with the means of conducting, expanding and perpetuating the undertaken action in complete autonomy. Defining a clear exit strategy is therefore always one of the most important elements in its partnerships.
In the context of the Rohingya refugee crisis, many organizations are already working on the field to improve living conditions and alleviate suffering of affected population. **BSF wants to provide its expertise to complement ongoing programs and help leverage their impact.** To achieve the objectives mentioned hereafter, BSF will partner with international, local NGOs or public institutions, especially those working in the field of access to information, site management, protection and education. Each project will be co-developed by BSF and its partners. BSF will focus on **providing expertise for the curation of contents, training of facilitators, tools**

to share best practices and contents, communities of practices and technical support. Activities will be implemented by each partner's team with the constant support of BSF team.
A public libraries network, which includes libraries at the district and sometimes sub-district level, exists in Bangladesh under the authority of the Ministry of Culture. BSF would like to develop partnerships with such institutions especially in the Cox's Bazar area to reinforce their capacities and their role in information dissemination.

TARGET GROUPS

The needs assessment showed important needs in the host communities as well as refugee communities. **BSF will, if possible, implement projects that will serve both refugee and host communities.**
Although the projects and spaces created could be open to the entire community, two groups seem particularly relevant to target in this context:

- **Children who don't have access to education and adolescents:** Adolescents are a particular group to focus on in this context, in order to reduce negative coping mechanisms. BSF will implement projects to offer them learning and entertainment opportunities and to help them construct their future.

- **Girls and women:** women and girls are the group most at risk; many have been exposed to widespread and severe forms of sexual violence in Myanmar before and during their flight to Bangladesh. Also, within both refugee and host communities, girls face additional socio-cultural barriers to education and women's literacy rate is particularly low. Specific outdoor sensitization activities will be developed to reach women and girls taking into account cultural specificities and their movement constraints.

DESIGN OF POSSIBLE PROJECTS AND IMPACTS

Libraries Without Borders could implement **projects using the tools and contents mentioned above with three main objectives in partnership with different types of organizations.** Those approaches could be tested separately or mixed in a common pilot project.

OBJECTIVE 1
IMPROVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND FOSTER COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

BSF is ready to implement **a pilot project in partnership with site management support agencies to improve information dissemination** by leveraging impact of sectorial partners outreach activities and Information Hubs **and fostering community participation**. This pilot project should allow the tailoring of the contents and services according to local needs and languages as well as testing and learning on the field in order to prepare a possible scale-up.

The first step will be to gather contents that already exist at the sector level with the help of each sector information or Communication For Development (C4D) team and the CWC contents sub-group. Then contents will be curated and organized to **create a pilot library of camp information**. If needed, some contents could be transcribed into another format to make the information more easily accessible (visual, audio, video...).

At the pilot phase, BSF would like to **deploy 2 to 5 Ideas Box and outreach Koombook components at the site management level**. Ideas Box could be deployed in an existing information Hub, in a community center or in a dedicated space depending on available spaces. The aim will be **to create a shared Information space accessible to the entire population with tools and resources available and usable by all sectorial partners,** to respond to congestion and land availability problems and to leverage impact of existing spaces. In addition, **the portable digital library KoomBook** will be used with a kit of tablets and audio system to organize outreach activities outside of the Information spaces, especially for women and girls who are restricted in their movements. A team of facilitators placed under the Site management's umbrella will be in charge of animations and of developing collaborations and partnerships with all sectorial partners in the camp. In addition, a team of mobile volunteers will conduct outdoor activities.

In the context of the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative (CCEI) after Grand Bargain, the project will also **reinforce community engagement by supporting participatory governance structures** (committees, community groups...) with trainings, tools and resources and **by involving populations in the co-creation of contents and services** provided by the Ideas Box. The space will also become a place of meeting and exchange for the community, and foster social cohesion.

The cross-sectorial space that will be created and all of the mobile activities that will be implemented could also offer a very good channel to **collect feedbacks from the community** for instance with the help of the applications that have been developed by the ETS sector.

SECTOR:
Site management, Communication With Communities

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:
» Improve dissemination of information and leverage sectorial partners outreach activities
» Support community engagement and participation
» Facilitate collection of community feedbacks

TARGET GROUPS:
Refugees and host communities

TOOLS AND METHODS:
Ideas Box and Kit KoomBook, mobile volunteers team

PARTNERS:
Site management support agencies, CwC actors

OBJECTIVE 2
PROTECT VULNERABLE GROUPS THROUGH SERVICES PROMOTING THEIR PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING AND RESILIENCE

In a situation of crisis, creativity, learning, socialization and community building activities help children and adults cope with serious vulnerabilities and trauma (isolation from the communities of origin or from the family, loneliness, trauma associated with violence and abuse...). Therefore empowering them to take part in the reconstruction of their reality. Tools and approaches developed by BSF for humanitarian contexts have shown a great impact in **improving outreach, quality and range of protection activities** .

The Ideas Box creates a focal point where people can meet and share information, which supports psychologists and community facilitators with tools and resources in their daily work (games, videos, project-based activities) and which eases the dialogue between diverse and sometimes conflicting communities. KoomBook facilitates the organisation of activities outside of traditional meeting centers especially for women and girls.

SECTOR:
Protection, Community Based Protection

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:
» Strengthen, engage and empower families and communities in contributing to their own protection solutions
» Support existing protection systems in meeting the needs of vulnerable groups

TARGET GROUPS:
Adolescents and young adults, Women

TOOLS AND METHODS:
 Ideas Box and Kit KoomBook, mobile volunteer teams

PARTNERS:
Protection actors, CBOs

At a community based protection level, BSF would be interested in **deploying a project to improve psychosocial support and protection of vulnerable groups affected by a crisis through services promoting psychosocial well-being and resilience.** In partnership with protection stakeholders, BSF could deploy the Ideas Box to serve as a media center **with direct access to curated contents and materials for social protection activities, psychosocial support, legal assistance** and implement a range of activities to make people express themselves, tell their story and the camp story and develop self-confidence. Participatory contents creation activities (photography, video, participatory journalism....) can help promote inter- and intrasocial cohesion and to build resilience within refugee and host communities. For example, during the deployment of an Ideas Box in Burundi,, a group of young adults created films addressing the violence suffered by child soldiers, which are now used with other users for conversations around reconciliation.

OBJECTIVE 3
PROVIDE TOOLS AND SERVICES TO SUPPORT INNOVATIVE EDUCATION APPROACHES

At the education level, Libraries Without Borders (BSF) is ready to develop partnerships to **support informal education projects implemented by international and local NGOs.** BSF will curate and spread contents adapted to informal education (books, ebooks, digital education and informational resources such as Coursera, Khan Academy, Wikipedia, etc...). **The Ideas Box can be deployed in existing learning facilities or in community centers following a shared-space approach. It can also offer a good learning environment** to support on-going education activities or to welcome children, adolescents or young adults who do not have access to education services.

For instance, an Ideas Box in a refugee camp in Burundi hosted a higher education study group of 30 congolese students that chose a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) in their domain of study on Coursera. The selected MOOCs were uploaded on the Ideas Box server, so that they could watch the videos without any constraint related to the limited Internet bandwidth. After one year, most of them successfully passed the examinations and obtained their certificate on Coursera, thanks to a partnership between BSF and Coursera on their Coursera for Refugees program.

The Ideas Box creates a welcoming, high quality safe space open to all, that can be used to host activities requested by the community and sometimes run by community members themselves. Deployments of the KoomBook with tablets could also **help leverage impact of home-based learning activities** that are currently developed in the camps, by providing contents tailored to the needs of both teachers and students. Implementing **projects that target teachers and outreach tutors,** who lack the training and resources necessary for the preparation of lessons, would be particularly relevant in this context.

SECTOR: Education

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

» Supporting access to informal education for all

» Improve the quality of learning environment

TARGET GROUPS:
Adolescents and young adults, Teachers

TOOLS AND METHODS:
Ideas Box and Kit KoomBook

PARTNERS:
Education actors

CHALLENGES AND RISKS

- **THE SENSITIVE ISSUE OF CONTENTS**

A particular attention should be paid to consulting different stakeholders (local authorities and humanitarian actors) and communities (refugees and host communities) about contents in order to take into account legal barriers, cultural issues (as underlined in the FGD report, women's access to some contents is restricted for religious reasons) and promote a good appropriation of projects and tools.

- **SECURITY**

Many stakeholders met on the field expressed reserves about security issues to deploy Ideas Box in this context. Although this issue has often been raised in different zones where Libraries Without Borders has implemented projects, the Ideas Box and others tools have usually become very well appropriated by the communities; they have become an integral part of their daily lives and the communities have taken extensive care of the equipment. However, a clear security process will be defined to protect people and material.

- **LOGISTICS**

Logistical challenges will be numerous from the importation of the Ideas Box to its deployment on the field. Criteria have been established to use or construct an appropriate space to deploy the Ideas Box. As there is no electricity access in the camps, generators and batteries will be necessary ; solar panels would be a good option for charging the KoomBook and tablets especially.

- **TIMEFRAME**

Aware that the coming months will be a difficult period to set up such projects, due to the rain season essentially, and that the work around contents curation will require some time, Libraries without Borders plans the first Ideas Box deployments in the fourth trimester of 2018.

CONCLUSION

The needs assessment conducted by Libraries Without Borders in March 2018 underlined the tremendous needs of affected population in terms of access to information, education and cultural resources despite all the work already undertaken by authorities, agencies and humanitarian workers. BSF has developed **tools, services and approaches to address those needs in a humanitarian crisis** that could be relevant in this context and is willing to deploy pilot projects with different partners especially at the site management, community-based protection and education levels and in a complementary approach to existing programs.

Camp 6

ANNEX 1 - FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS REPORT

The objective of these Focus Group Discussions conducted with Rohingya refugees and Bangla host communities was to **collect information on participants' needs and points of view regarding access to information, education and cultural resources** and make them talk about and design their ideal community center.

1.   METHODOLOGY

9 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted between the 19th and the 27th of March with 86 refugees with the support of DRC and PUI in 3 different camps of Kutupalong (camps 17, 6 and 8E) and with **26 people within the host communities** in Thelikhali in Palongkhali Union. For this FGD, given that more data was already available concerning younger children and that key informants underlined a lack of activities for adolescents, which is a group particularly at risk, BSF and its partners decided to target adolescents and young adults.

FGD Refugees:

7 FGD were conducted in camps 17, 6 and 8E in partnership with DRC and PUI.
Groups :

- 2 groups of girls aged 13 to 18
- 2 groups of women aged 18 to 30
- 2 groups of boys aged 13 to 20
- 1 group of men aged 18 to 30

In some FGD, a few participants were older than the targeted age group.
Total of participants: 86
Duration: between 1.30 to 2 hours
Team: BSF Moderator, Interpreter, Note taker

FGD Host Communities:

2 FGD were conducted in Thelikhali, village where DRC is planning to implement a project in Protection and WaSH. As it was very complicated to have a proper division of participants by age groups, they were divided into each session by gender.
Groups:

- 1 group of 17 to 30 years-old women
- 1 group of 14 to 30 years-old men

In each FGD, a few participants were older than the targeted age group.
Total of participants: 26
Duration: between 1.30 to 2 hours
Team: BSF Moderator, Interpreter, Note taker

Discussion Frame:

Questionnaires for each age/sex/population group were defined within the same frame but some questions were slightly different depending on the participants. Discussions were divided into 5 parts: an introduction for participants and animators to present themselves, a part about community spaces, one about their information needs and uses, one about activities and contents they are interested in and the last part dedicated to a drawing time in small groups to design their ideal community center.

2.   KEY FINDINGS

Languages and literacy

Amongst the refugees, 98% of participants speak Rohingya and 24% of participants speak Burmese. **25% of participants declare they can read and write**, with a rate even lower for some groups: only **20% of adolescents can read and write**, **11% of women and 9% of adolescent girls.** Amongst those overall 25% that can read and write, 95% declare they can read and write in Burmese and 13% in Bangla. **A majority of adolescents haven't been to school in Burma** (either never been to school or not for the past years[1]).
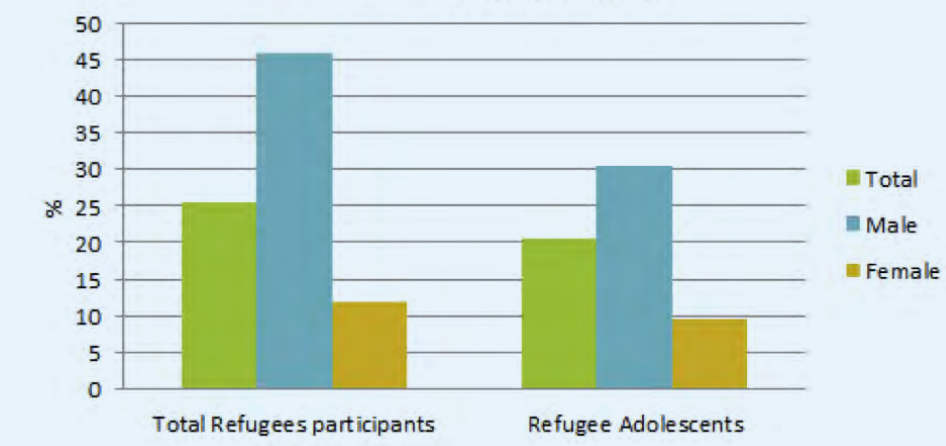
% of refugee participants who declare knowing how to read and write

- Literate participants
- Illiterate participants
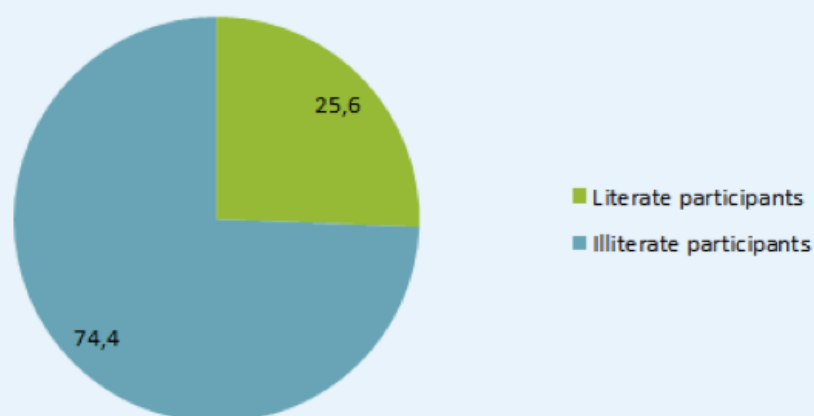
For those who are not literate, the majority declare they would like to learn how to read and write in Burmese, Bangla or English. **Their first choice would go to Burmese if they are able to come back to Burma and to Bangla if they have to stay here.** A majority of participants would like to learn English.

Amongst the participants from host communities, 86% speak Chittagonian, 43% speak Chakma and 46% speak Bangla. **Approximately 50% of the participants declare that they can read and write in Bangla.**

% of refugee participants who declare knowing how to read and write by age group / gender

- Total
- Male
- Female

[1] Since 2012, the Burmese authorities have imposed very strict restrictions on access to education preventing Rohingya children from attending mixed governments schools.

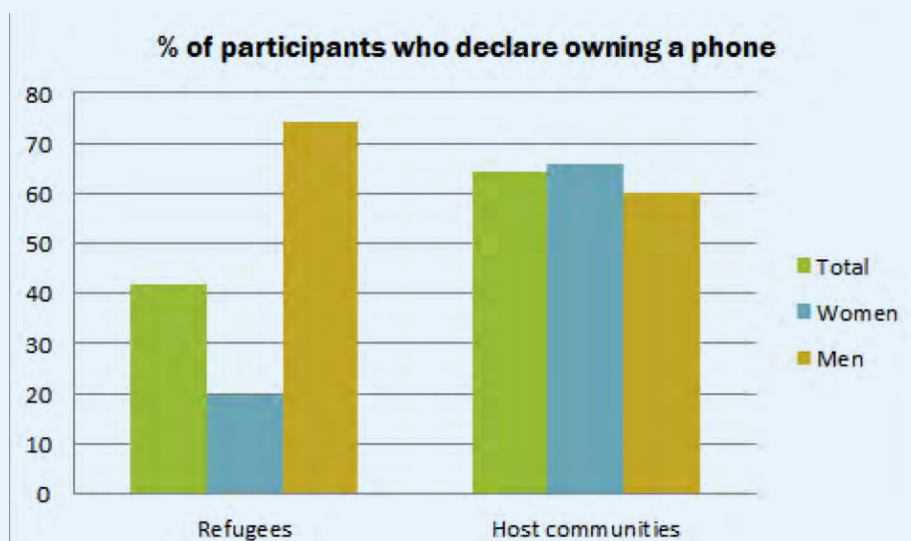## % of host communities participants who declare knowing how to read and write

50,0   50,0

■ Literate participants
■ Illiterate participants
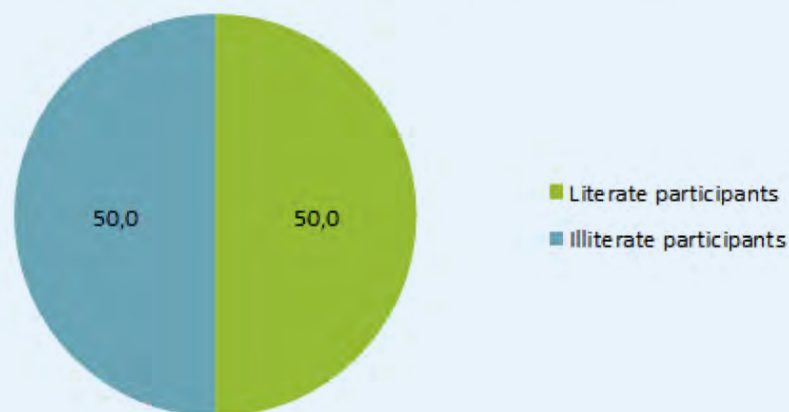
Information sources and uses

A majority of refugee participants declare they are still in contact with relatives in Burma and that they have news of the situation in Burma through mobile phones. However, it appears that there are often network issues and that they can stay more than one month without any news.

A large majority of refugee participants declare that their major source of information concerning the camp are Mahjis (and their husbands, for women). Community volunteers come after. The large majority of participants had never heard about Infos hubs/centers.
Amongst the participants from host communities, the majority declare that they go to the village headman if they need information or use their phone to call relatives.

42% of refugee participants own a phone but there is a huge difference between men and women with 74% of men and only 20% of women owning a phone. They use both Burmese and Bangla sim cards – despite the fact that they are officially forbidden to use Bangla sim cards. Amongst them, 20% declare having access to internet on their phone. **Within the host communities, 64% of the participants declare having a phone.**

% of participants who declare owning a phone

3.5% of the refugee participants (0% of women) and **0% of the participants from the Host Communities declare knowing how to use a computer.**

Amongst refugees and host communities, **a majority of men declare that they often watch TV in the tea shops but muslim women mostly don't watch TV because they are not allowed because of religious restrictions.**

Social / Community spaces

Most of the men refugee participants declare than in Burma, they used to gather in tea shops, at mosque, on the road, sometimes at the football field or at school/madrassa for adolescents. **Women used to gather at their friends' houses or at water points.**

Now that they are **in the camps, men meet at the market, in tea shops, at mosque, at their neighbour's house and women meet at their neighbour's house**. Most of the women had never heard about women friendly spaces. Adolescent girls are very restricted in their movements and usually can't go alone further than their block. The majority of the refugee participants, especially adolescents and women declare **that they lack places and spaces to gather in the camps.**

Within the participants from the host communities, men usually gather at the market and women at home, at the market or when they go to the forest. The children play in home yards and in front of the houses.

When asked about a "community center", participants from the host communities associate it to what they call a **"club" which is a place where people can gather with friends and for meetings/ discussions.** Women are not usually allowed to enter in a club. There is no club in the village where the FGD was conducted.

Activities and contents

When asked what they usually do in their spare time in the camps, men refugees answered that they talk in tea shops, watch TV and pray. Women talk, pray and sleep. They have no available equipments to do in the camp what they used to do in Burma (play board games, do sports and handicrafts, watch TV....) and **they are bored.**

The participants from the host communities declare that in their spare time, **they chill with friends and neighbors. Children play football and cricket** in the fields (more complicated during rainy season but still possible).

When asked what activities they would like to have in the camps, refugees always start with learning and training activities before entertainment. There is however a difference between men and women, most of the women say that

they don't feel like entertainments after all they've endured.

Most of the refugees would like to engage in educational activities, especially literacy, languages classes, computer classes and vocational trainings. There is also a **high demand for handicrafts** (stitching, embroidery, sewing, knitting...), amongst both men and women, and for **board games** such as Carrom game, Ludo or Taskhela (cards). **Women would be interested in cooking competitions** and would like to have community cooking spaces. **Men and adolescents would like to practice sports** especially football, badminton and cane ball (or chinlon).

When asked which contents they are interested in, refugees participants who are literate ask for **newspapers, textbooks and religious books.** Concerning music, they like **Rohingya, Burmese and Bangla music** and show a high interest for **religious music** (especially women), some of them used to play traditional music instruments. About videos, they enjoy **Bollywood, Bangla and Burmese movies,** and would like to have educational news and religious videos. Lots of men declare taking pictures with their phone and would be interested in photography activities. **Most women are not allowed to watch movies, to listen to music or to take pictures for religious reasons.**

Within the host communities, participants are also interested in educational activities, handicrafts (women) and board games and men especially would like to have gym classes. They like watching Bangla and Hindi movies, sports and news and listening to Chakma songs (by Chakma people from host communities), traditional songs, Hindi, Bangla and Chinese music. Muslim women are mostly not allowed to watch movies and to listen to music.

Design / drawing sessions

At the end of the FGD, participants were asked to draw in small groups (3 to 6 people) the plan of their ideal community center. After 30 minutes, they presented their drawings to the others groups. They really enjoyed this activity and it was difficult to stop them...!
Here are some examples of their drawings:
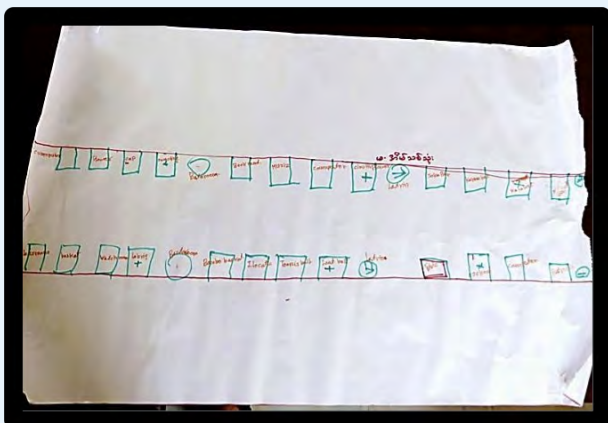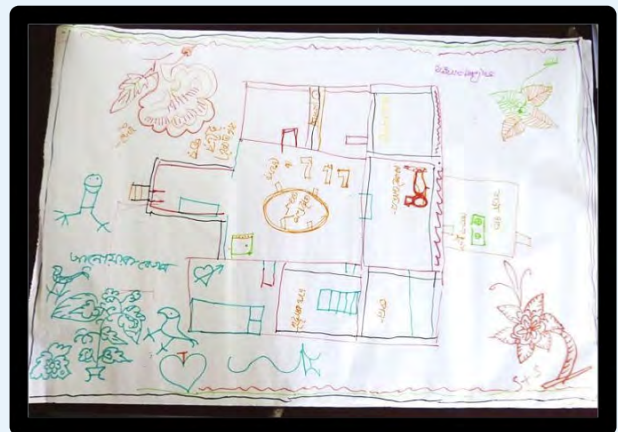
From left to right :
1. Drawing of refugee adolescent boys, camp 8
2. Drawing of women from the Host communities
3. Drawing of refugee young men, camp 8

Even if the shapes of drawings are really different, many common elements can be found in most of them:

- Learning space (with a teacher from their community for refugees) or school
- Computer room
- Board games room : Carrom, Ludo (men)
- TV Rooms (men)
- Handicrafts, tailoring space with sewing machine (women drew a lot of flowers)
- Library / reading corner

- Cooking materials or room (women)
- Badminton and football ground
- Wash rooms (separate for girls and boys) + water access
- Prayer room or Buddhist temple (Buddhists from the host communities)
- Hospital or doctor room (host communities)
- Fans and clocks (women)!

Focus group discussion and drawing session within the host communities

Within the refugees and the host communities, **participants ask for separate rooms or separate schedules for men and women but they agree to share a same place.**

In the camps, the best time to come to a community center for women and adolescent girls is approximately between 10 am and 3pm (between their cooking times). Men and boys generally say they have nothing to do, they are free all the time (except on Fridays). In the host communities, women say they are available from 9am to 11am and from 3pm to 6pm and men after 3pm when they finish work. Children who don't go to school are available all day long ; the timetable of those who do is different depending their age/level.

The participants from the host communities declare that they won't agree to share a community center with refugees as they consider them dangerous and say they are afraid for their kids when refugees come nearby.

3. CONCLUSION

These Focus Group Discussions **highlighted the boredom** refugees face and a **high demand for places to gather and for educational activities and vocational trainings** both within refugees and host communities. Their needs concerning language learning, literacy and information confirm data from Internews' *Information needs assessment*[2] published in November 2017 and from Translators Without Borders' language assessment[3] conducted in November 2017, which both show that **people still lack access to information and point out language barriers.**
The strong participation during the FGD and the involvement during the drawing sessions show that **people appreciate to be consulted** and a have **clear will to participate in the community life.**

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[2] Information Needs Assessment, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, Internews in collaboration with ETS, November 2017
[3] Rohingya Zuban, Translators Without Borders, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, November 2017

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