



# Synthesis of Rohingya Response Evaluations of IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR

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# 1 Introduction

The Rohingya people of Myanmar have faced decades of systematic discrimination and targeted violence.<sup>1</sup> The latest of these episodes, in late August 2017, caused almost one million people to flee to Bangladesh, creating a large-scale humanitarian crisis. The response to this crisis, which saw the involvement of a wide range of formal and informal aid actors, prevented the loss of many lives, and helped to stabilize the situation. This is a significant achievement given the formidable challenges that confronted the humanitarian community, which included the sheer size of the affected population, extreme congestion in camps, the lack of infrastructure, the risk of large-scale epidemics, and a possible second disaster in the form of floods or cyclones during the annual monsoon season.

Two years into the response to the Rohingya refugee crisis, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) determined that it would be a valuable exercise to synthesize the evidence and findings of three important evaluations, and to consolidate the lessons learned. With this in mind, three agencies with a prominent role in the response, namely, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), tasked a team of two consultants with developing a synthesis evaluation report.

The evaluation synthesis compiles evidence and findings from evaluations commissioned by the three agencies in 2018.<sup>2</sup> While these evaluations primarily look at individual agency performance, there are elements in all of them that consider the overall response. The synthesis also takes into account a number of other evaluations and reviews to triangulate and, where necessary, to complement the evidence base (see Annex 3).

This report is *not* an assessment of collective performance. There are elements in all three evaluation reports that touch on collective action, and comparing these reports give a wider and deeper look at the response. This is especially true when one considers the range of services the three agencies collectively provide, the leadership responsibilities of all three and the unique legal mandate of UNHCR. However, this is not the same as an evaluation specifically designed to focus on collective performance.

The purpose of this evaluation synthesis, then, is to provide a consolidated picture of the response of the three United Nations actors and to draw lessons learned, which should inform future efforts both for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and for other refugee and humanitarian responses worldwide. The synthesis report summarizes the inter-agency emergency response to date, identifies commonalities and differences, and consolidates conclusions and recommendations.

The primary audience for this evaluation is the UNCT in Bangladesh and its constituent agencies, as well as the staff and management of UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF. Partners involved in the Rohingya Response in Bangladesh – including government, humanitarian and development actors – are a secondary audience.

## 2 Methodology

The analytical approach utilized compared key themes from the three evaluations (as outlined by the terms of reference and updated in the inception report) to see whether findings concurred or diverged. Where divergence was observed, further analysis was conducted in order to determine the

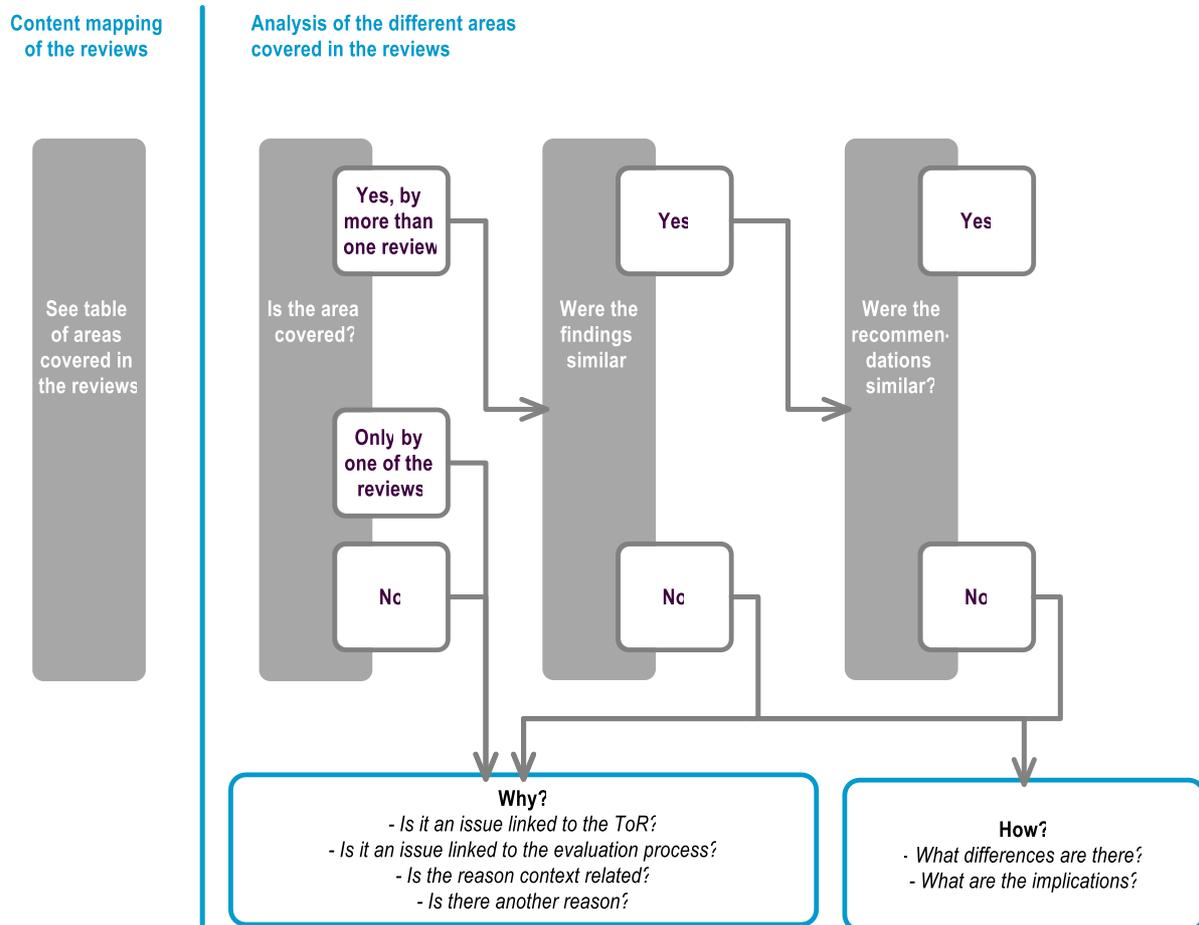
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<sup>1</sup> The Independent Fact Finding Mission of the United Nations Human Rights Commission found in September 2018 that there had been widespread and systematic attacks directed at civilian populations in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan States and that in the case of the Rohingya these fell within the definition of genocide under international law.

<sup>2</sup> Van Brabant, K. and Patel, S., *Real-Time Evaluation of IOM’s Response to the Rohingya Crisis*, IOM, Geneva, 2018; Sida, Lewis et al., *Independent Evaluation of UNHCR’s Emergency Response to the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh, August 2017-September 2018*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2018; United Nations Children’s Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF’s Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Bangladesh*, UNICEF, New York, 2018.

reasons behind it. The same process was applied to the recommendations. Figure 1 illustrates how this process worked.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1: Overview of the analytical approach



The findings were also compared to relevant normative frameworks such as those found in refugee law, inter-agency protocols and standard-setting protocols such as Sphere.

To ensure the mapping and comparison was accurate and objective, the synthesis used qualitative coding software (MaxQDA). This allowed for the issues to be systematically identified, extracted and then compared. A coding tree was developed based on the key themes as well as the mapping. Table 1 (below) shows the distribution of issues across the three evaluations, and annex 4 shows how they overlapped and intersected.

In addition to the three main agency evaluations, a number of other supporting evaluations and studies were considered for triangulation of evidence.<sup>4</sup> The synthesis used a simple set of criteria to guide inclusion of these studies, as follows:

- Evaluations and reviews published after 2016 with a primary focus on the response in the city of Cox’s Bazar and which include issues relevant to the collective response;

<sup>3</sup> See the inception report of this synthesis for further method detail.

<sup>4</sup> See Annex 4.

- Policy and advocacy material related to the Rohingya refugee response from international NGOs and others active in the response;

The synthesis was also supplemented by a small set of key informant interviews to understand how the evaluations had been received and whether issues highlighted were still relevant. This included the Country Representatives for each of the three agencies, as well as the Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh.

### 2.1 Validation workshops

Following the document coding and review process, the evaluation synthesis team conducted two validation workshops, in Cox's Bazar and Dhaka. These drew together the key operational leaders and staff in Cox's Bazar and the key strategic leaders in Dhaka, including donors. The validation workshops were well attended, and discussions revealed progress in some areas of the response.<sup>5</sup>

The team also used the workshops to create a reflective space for key staff engaged in the Rohingya operation. The evaluations and the key findings of the synthesis provided a good evidence base for framing the discussion, which allowed people to work across agencies and institutions to think about solutions.

The substance of the discussions is briefly summarized in Section 5 below, and the workshop notes are annexed to this report.

### 2.2 Key themes

The terms of reference (ToR) of the synthesis evaluation identified a number of key themes emerging from the three evaluations. These were: humanitarian space; site planning and camp management; use of data; delivery of services; coordination; protection; specific protection concerns; engagement with affected populations; host community services; partnerships; and medium/ longer-term strategies.

These themes have been grouped in the findings section, leaving seven key subject areas, namely:

- Overall achievements;
- Humanitarian space and partnerships;
- Protection and specific protection issues, including gender;
- Engaging with affected populations;
- Inter-agency coordination;
- Camp management, service delivery and use of data; and
- Medium and long-term strategies and host communities.

These are not ranked or organized by weight of importance. The workshops in Cox's Bazar and Dhaka largely confirmed the relevance of the key subject areas.

## 3 Overview of the evaluations

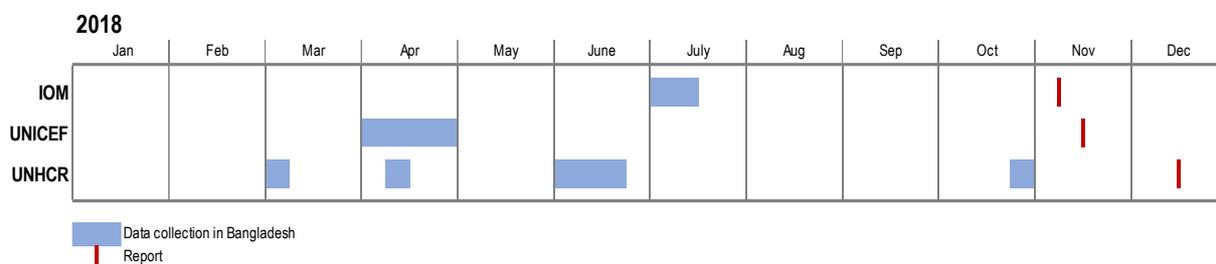
All three evaluations are lengthy, comprehensive and complex pieces of work. They were carried out at different times and employ different methods, meaning that while comparable, there are also differences. In addition, at the time of writing this report, all three evaluations were close to a year

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that while there is certainly progress in some areas of the response, this finding does not carry the same weight as findings from the three evaluations being synthesized. Primary evidence has not been gathered or triangulated as it was in the substantive evaluations; rather, this is self-reported by agencies.

old; inevitably, the situation has changed since then. Figure 2 shows when the field work for each of the three evaluations was carried out.

Figure 2: Timing of the field work for each of three evaluations



While all three evaluations are rooted in the evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC),<sup>6</sup> they each follow a format determined by their respective ToRs, and their particular areas of focus are determined by the specific mandate and expertise of the agency. This means that even though the evaluations broadly cover the same topics, the nature of the analysis, and its particular emphasis, differs (see Annex 5 for more on this). For example, the UNHCR evaluation takes an in-depth look at the agency’s protection work, while the UNICEF evaluation covers the various sectors it is responsible for, such as education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). The IOM evaluation focused on data, coordination, protection and accountability to affected populations. All three evaluations consider key collective issues such as coordination and protection in some depth.

The three evaluations also used slightly different approaches to field work. The UNICEF evaluation had a large team comprised of sector experts for each of their delivery areas, with field work carried out in depth over a period of a month. It followed an innovative ‘real-time plus’ approach, in which the standard evaluation stages are compressed, a UNICEF evaluation office staff member is embedded in the team, and a more participatory approach is taken. The UNHCR evaluation was ‘prospective’, returning four times over the course of eight months to collect data, as well as using local researchers for refugee interviews. The IOM real-time evaluation was conducted by a smaller team, with focused field work taking place during a period of two weeks in June/July 2018. It follows, therefore, that the extent of data collection efforts, the volume of evidence provided, and the depth of the respective analyses are significantly different.

The UNICEF and UNHCR evaluations cover the entirety of the respective agencies’ work in the first year, while the IOM evaluation looks at a select number of issues suggested by the evaluators and accepted by IOM. Table 1 compares the main areas covered by the three evaluations.

<sup>6</sup> Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, coherence.

Table 1: Comparison of the main areas covered by the three evaluations

	IOM	UNHCR	UNICEF
<b>Context</b>			
Timeline of influx			
Extreme congestion			
Overview protection environment			
Agency services/activities in response			
Evolution / Outline of coordination structure			
<b>Timeliness / overall effectiveness</b>			
Overall effectiveness/impact of response			
Programme effectiveness			
Preparation and scale-up			
Monsoon preparedness			
Funding /support to the programmatic response			
Coverage			
Strategic decisions of agency			
Overall strategy			
Programme strategies			
<b>Cross-cutting issues</b>			
Gender mainstreaming			
Inter-sectorality			
<b>Advocacy</b>			
Advocacy for improved inter-sector coordination			
Advocacy for protection			
Advocacy for decongestion			
<b>Data monitoring / The quality and use of information</b>			
Multiple monitoring systems			
Needs and population monitoring (NPM)			
Methodological concerns linked to quality			
Data use			
Data-sharing			
Multiple registration datasets			
<b>Protection</b>			
Link between protection and service delivery			
Lighting			
Locks and gender-segregated latrines			
Lack of fuel			
GBV			
PSEA focus			

<p>Collaboration protection/site management                  Question of whose responsibility protection is                  Registration                  Agency's advocacy regarding refugee rights                  Protection service delivery                  Protection mainstreaming</p>	
<p><b>Communication w communities/AAP</b>                  Challenge: size, languages, government restrictions                  Collective failure: complaint boxes and hotlines                  Link communication/quality for AAP                  Communication regarding relocation to island                  Communication regarding registration and the smart card                  Participation deficit (Majhis, elected committees...)</p>	
<p><b>Coordination</b>                  Description of views on "model"                  Impartiality/quality of sector leads                  Connecting sectoral and geographical coordination                  Inclusiveness of coordination (local NGOs/affected populations)                  Authority of the ISCG coordination/functioning with SEG                  Coherence with Government of Bangladesh                  Camp-level coordination                  Protection coordination                  Agency's sector leadership/coordination</p>	
<p><b>Working with operational partners</b>                  Agency partner profiles and resulting challenges                  Quality of partnerships</p>	
<p><b>Looking forward / Durable solutions</b>                  Various possible scenarios                  Place of host community                  Stabilization, transition, recovery, nexus                  Prospects for safe economic inclusion                  Negative coping strategies, environmental impact, and community tensions                  Strengthening of durable solutions / respect for refugee rights</p>	

## 4 Findings

This chapter provides an overview of the main achievements and challenges identified in the reports.

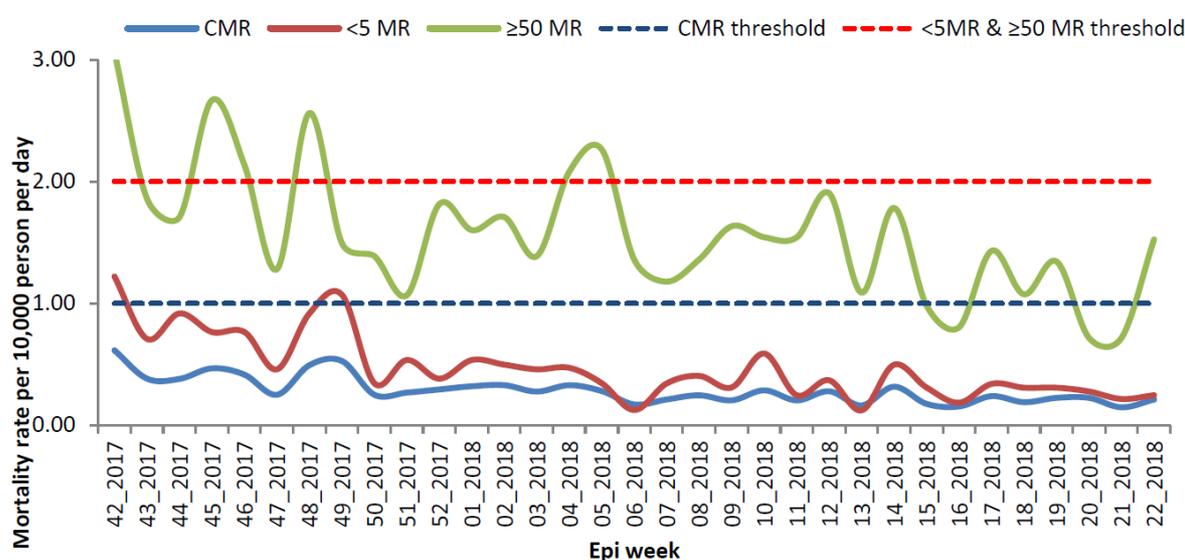
### 4.1 Overall achievements

The three evaluations agree that the response saved lives and succeeded in stabilizing the situation under exceptionally trying circumstances.

Furthermore, all three evaluations are clear that this was a collective effort, that no single agency or actor could have handled a response of this magnitude, and that the United Nations (UN) was a key part of this collective response.

A mortality survey conducted by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) early in the response (approximately eight weeks after the first refugees crossed) showed the crude mortality rate (CMR) below emergency thresholds for most of the first year. This is all the more significant given previous mortality in Rohingya mass movements (in 1978 some 10,000 people died in squalid conditions in the camps) and in similar mass displacement incidents elsewhere in the world.

**Figure 3: MSF mortality survey showing death rates below emergency thresholds in the first year**



The following quotes from the summaries of the three evaluations make this clear:

- **The response to the Rohingya refugee crisis saved lives and reduced suffering.** Mortality was kept under emergency thresholds for most of the first year, and morbidity has declined significantly, as has malnutrition. **This was a collective effort** in which UNHCR played a large role. **UNHCR**
- The scale and speed of the refugee influx was overwhelming. The physical and mental condition they were in was poor. **That major morbidity and mortality were avoided is a huge, collective success.** IOM has been one of the pillars and major contributors to this success. **IOM**

- Overall, the evaluation team found that, despite the enormous challenges posed by this crisis, UNICEF rose to the challenge. **The organization’s services reached many Rohingya children and their families, which, undoubtedly, addressed their plight. UNICEF**

## 4.2 Humanitarian space and partnerships

All three evaluations refer to the extreme generosity of the Government of Bangladesh in hosting and providing refuge to the Rohingya. As further explained in the partnerships section, all three agencies worked constructively with the Bangladeshi authorities as their primary partner in the response. In spite of the Government’s generosity and these good relations, however, the evaluations also describe a number of challenges related to the Government’s decision that all facilities and services should be temporary.<sup>7</sup> These included restrictions in terms of the availability of land; the quality and durability of (initial) materials; the type of services provided; and the number and size of the organizations involved. These restrictions severely curtailed the space to protect and assist the refugees and thereby challenged the relationship of the agencies with several of the authorities.

All three agencies were active in advocating with the Government to release more land, and to ease restrictions on the temporary nature of facilities, especially in light of the impending monsoon season. This was partly successful, with the release of new tracts of land and more robust infrastructure being permitted.

The evaluations differ in the way they review the respective agencies’ efforts to create more humanitarian space. “Humanitarian space” is largely understood as the ability of humanitarian organizations to reach people in need in accordance with humanitarian principles (i.e. humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence) with services that meet internationally recognised quality standards such as the Sphere standards.<sup>8</sup> In Bangladesh, many of the organizations involved in the response were relatively unfamiliar with the concept. It became relevant in the Rohingya response, however, as they were faced with significant constraints.

The institutional set-up, history and mandate of each agency dictated how its advocacy efforts on behalf of refugees were carried out. However, all three evaluations found the agencies struggled with balancing advocacy and operations. UNHCR found itself initially constrained by its history with ‘registered camps’, UNICEF’s messages could have been stronger, and IOM lacks the institutional architecture for advocacy/ lobbying work.

The evaluations also agree that collective advocacy efforts were not as strong as they might have been. As one evaluation points out, more could have been done to gather evidence on the negative impact of land scarcity on the quality of service delivery (see also section 4.6). With a collective evidence base, agencies could have jointly made a stronger case that meeting minimum quality standards was impossible in view of the restrictions in place.

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<sup>7</sup> The Government of Bangladesh holds the view that any activities that create a medium or longer-term perspective for the Rohingya to stay in Bangladesh would relieve the pressure on Myanmar to take the Rohingya back.

<sup>8</sup> The report of the Real-Time Response Review commissioned by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) released in March 2018 devoted a section to humanitarian space. See: HERE-Geneva, *Real-Time Response Review of the Disasters Emergency Committee Emergency Appeal for People fleeing Myanmar*, HERE-Geneva, 2018, p. 30.

## Partnerships

The Government of Bangladesh is the first partner of choice for all three agencies, and through their longstanding presence in Bangladesh they have established good relations with government authorities at various levels.

The nature of government relations differs by agency, and once again is influenced strongly by history and mandate. All three evaluations examine these relationships and how they enabled the agencies to scale up and respond. UNICEF has strong relationships with technical line ministries that formed the basis of its work in health and WASH; UNHCR had a strong relationship with the Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (RRRC) in Cox's Bazar, and IOM was asked by the Government to be the lead coordinating agency when it established the National Task Force on "Undocumented Myanmar Nationals and Refugees" in 2013. Inevitably, these relationships changed over the course of the response, particularly for UNHCR, which strengthened its relationship with the government as a result of its key role in potential repatriation as well as its increased ability to deliver on the ground.

While the evaluations describe how relations with various government authorities benefited each agency individually, it was not clear to what degree their respective relations contributed to the collective good. The Dhaka synthesis workshop concluded that more could be done in the area of collective advocacy, focusing on a small number of key themes.

International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were a key part of the Rohingya response, and all three evaluations examine their role in relation to the agencies evaluated. International NGOs had major issues in obtaining work permits in a timely fashion and for a period longer than three months, and two of the three evaluations note the negative impact this had on the ability of some UN agencies to deliver services. The UNICEF evaluation noted differing opinions around the degree to which the UN lobbied to ease these restrictions: While UN actors felt they had conducted extensive lobbying on behalf of NGOs, the latter criticized the UN for not being strong enough on the issue, at least in public. The Dhaka synthesis workshop, meanwhile, noted that a number of donors have lobbied strongly for greater international NGO presence.

The implications of limited international NGO presence have been particularly visible with regard to protection efforts. All three evaluations agree that (refugee) protection is not the comparative advantage of national and local NGOs. Whereas Bangladeshi NGOs have extensive capacities in response to natural disasters, they are much less experienced in refugee response. The evaluations note that these NGOs are accustomed to working closely with their government, while protection may require a certain level of 'distance'. An additional obstacle noted in the UNHCR evaluation was the agency's variable relations with its international NGO partners, with the registration exercise in particular being a source of controversy. The evaluation suggests that building stronger alliances with NGOs should be a priority for the agency.

All three evaluations agree that agencies should have done more from the outset to strengthen the capacities of their NGO partners.

The IOM evaluation devotes much attention to the relevance of local civil society, especially as the crisis is very likely to continue. It picks up on an issue seen in many other instances: local NGOs have a difficult time participating in inter-agency coordination due to language and other barriers. While the call from the World Humanitarian Summit and Grand Bargain to strengthen the role and involvement of local NGOs has been echoed in the Rohingya response, more thought needs to go into the complementarity and specific advantages local NGOs offer.

### 4.3 Protection

All three evaluations note with concern the (initial) gaps in the protection response and the challenges involved in ensuring that protection was central to the response. By 2018, notable improvements had been observed, particularly in terms of the Government's commitment to respecting the principle of voluntary return, agreement on refugee registration, and the registration of new-borns in the camps. These are significant achievements given the formidable challenges in place.

While context specific, protection in any refugee crisis usually starts with registration, recognition of refugee rights, and creating protection space for these rights to be implemented. The delivery on these overarching aspects of protection falls squarely within UNHCR's mandate, while, in turn, the agency was initially blocked from responding to the hundreds of thousands new arrivals. Partly as a result of this limitation, partly due to the lack of refugee protection expertise and experiences among other responders, and partly because of government policies, the initial response lacked a protection framework as its main lens.

Even after UNHCR became fully operational, the protection response was slow to gear up. It was not until the March 2018 Joint Response Plan (JRP) that protection became a cornerstone of the overall response strategy and plans. The UNHCR evaluation singles out the co-leadership arrangement, in as one reason for this delay.

The UNICEF evaluation, meanwhile, finds that UNICEF did not do enough to compensate for initial gaps the protection response, even though it knew that the protection regime for refugees in Bangladesh was far from optimal. For example, both the UNICEF and UNHCR evaluations highlight a specific advocacy gap related to terminology: It took the UN a number of weeks to abandon the Government-invented term "Undocumented Myanmar Nationals" (UMN) and agree to use the appropriate label of "refugees".

A number of operational gaps are even more difficult to defend, such as the failure to meet well-established minimum standards regarding lights, locks and gender-segregated latrines until several months into 2018. Noting that "there can be no convincing justification for this being neglected for so long,"<sup>9</sup> the IOM evaluation points to the lack of a protection framework guiding the delivery of services. The UNICEF evaluation adds that the result was a response that focused on coverage and not on quality and which "ignored critical and important aspects of humanitarian action, most notably protection, gender and gender-based violence, which distinguish humanitarian work from other service delivery."

While many of these issues have subsequently been addressed, other protection issues and rights, such as the freedom of movement, work and education, remain unfulfilled, and the potential relocation of 100,000 refugees to a silt island known as Bhasan Char in the Bay of Bengal raises additional protection concerns, as noted in all three evaluations.

The uneven and fragmented delivery of protection services may result from different conceptual understandings of protection in humanitarian response. This issue, highlighted in a recent evaluation reviewing the protection work of German-funded NGOs in the crisis,<sup>10</sup> was raised by a senior representative at the Dhaka synthesis validation workshop. While some agencies recognize the overarching and strategic character of protection, others understand the centrality of protection mainly in terms of mainstreaming protection aspects in the delivery of services. As noted in the section

<sup>9</sup> IOM, *Real-Time Evaluation of IOM's Response*, p 22.

<sup>10</sup> HERE-Geneva, *Independent Evaluation of the Aktion Deutschland Hilft e. V. (ADH) Joint Appeal to "Rohingya Myanmar Bangladesh"*, HERE-Geneva, 2019.

on partnerships, the late and limited arrival of some of the traditional international refugee NGOs may have been a compounding factor. Some of the international NGOs active in Cox's Bazar have extensive experience within the overall framework of the cluster approach for internally-displaced persons (IDPs), but less experience with the specific protection actions related to refugee status. Differing views around how UNHCR and NGOs should collaborate around protection created (unnecessary) tension between UNHCR and these NGOs.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, as noted above, the expertise of Bangladeshi NGOs and civil society is in prevention and response to natural disasters, with limited experience in refugee protection. This is undoubtedly a challenge, but if properly trained and provided with support from international partners, local NGOs and Bangladeshi civil society are well placed to engage with refugees and local communities on rights issues.<sup>12</sup> Although the IOM evaluation notes that there remains ambiguity about the remit (and capacities) of the Bangladesh judicial system to support cases involving Myanmar refugees, the Aktion Deutschland Hilft (ADH) evaluation found an excellent example of how an international NGO is working with the Bangladesh National Women's Lawyers Association in advancing the rights of refugee women.

### Specific Protection Concerns

Perhaps the most significant specific protection concern was the lack of attention to gender issues. A proper protection needs assessment in the early months of the response would have identified major gaps in this regard, yet this was not done in a timely manner. The UNICEF evaluation notes that such omissions represent a serious failure of leadership and accountability on the part of those responsible for overseeing the entire response as well as those with specific responsibilities for addressing gender.

Other significant protection gaps highlighted in the evaluations included insufficient measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and the risk of trafficking. The intimidation of female refugee volunteers has also become a major concern.<sup>13</sup>

The IOM evaluation devotes specific attention to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).<sup>14</sup> It argues that the risk of abuse and exploitation in the Rohingya camps is high as a result of extreme destitution and poverty and the fact that many Bangladeshi staff are inexperienced in working in camp settings. The ADH evaluation, for example, noted a worrying tendency among NGO staff to consider PSEA as synonymous with protection, despite its being only one (albeit important) piece of the protection agenda.

## 4.4 Engaging with affected populations

While there have been sustained efforts to provide information to the refugees throughout the first year of the response, there has been less two-way engagement. This, the evaluations conclude, is because of an early concentration on physical infrastructure and establishment of key services, emphasizing hardware rather than software. Much less was done on accountability, and participation of affected populations – especially in decision-making – was not systematically incorporated into the response.

<sup>11</sup> This issue is further explained in the ADH evaluation, p 32.

<sup>12</sup> ADH evaluation.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF undertook a separate, specific evaluation on its global work in prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in 2018, in which Bangladesh was a case study.

The IOM evaluation has the most extensive section on this issue. It finds that the Communication with (affected) Communities (CwC) working group made a valuable contribution but struggled to put this agenda at the heart of the response. The evaluation suggests this may have been due to the strong emphasis on site planning, and the challenge of evolving from a “life-saving supply-oriented response to a people-centred and participatory one”.<sup>15</sup> The IOM evaluation also discusses a potential confusion between communicating with communities and accountability to affected populations (AAP). As noted in the IOM evaluation, AAP should include a feedback loop that sees agencies taking action based on the feedback provided. It concludes that there was an initial failure in accountability measures, with a “complaints boxes first” approach that was inappropriate in view of the low literacy rates among the Rohingya. In their engagement with refugees and host communities, agencies should go beyond issues that concern the delivery of (their) services. Refugees will want to know about their future, including the question of return to Myanmar. This finding is strongly echoed by the ADH protection evaluation, which noted that information-sharing with refugees did not include issues related to refugee status and rights.

The UNICEF and UNHCR evaluations deal with community engagement in relation to protection, finding that the use of NGOs for community-based protection had been effective. UNHCR concluded that investment in community outreach members (COMs) was a successful contribution to protection efforts and helped mobilize volunteers for monsoon preparedness. Community based development approaches are generally rooted in a participatory approach. The community engagement that UNHCR and UNICEF evaluations examine was narrower, mostly focused on accessing protection services. Protection mainstreaming principles include accountability to affected populations, which both evaluations note was an area where more could have been done, using this community outreach to engage in a more participatory way.

Registration is another area where engagement with the refugee population could have been smoother. Both the UNHCR and IOM evaluations conclude that the formal UNHCR-Government registration (verification) exercise was fraught in the early days. Uptake was initially slower than planned; refugees were suspicious of the process, and the words “Rohingya” or “refugee” do not appear on the cards, which is what the refugees and UNHCR respectively had expected.<sup>16</sup> These challenges stemmed from insufficient consultation and communication with refugees, and also with local NGOs, many of which shared these concerns. While the evaluations differ in their explanations for these shortcomings, both ultimately conclude that stronger consultation with refugee and humanitarian communities would have improved the registration process.

Finally, all three evaluations discuss governance in the camps as one of the main avenues by which refugees can potentially engage with decisions affecting their situation. UNHCR and IOM note that the current system of army-appointed representatives (“mahjis”) is far from ideal, but they diverge in terms of the solution. The UNHCR evaluation strongly advocates for the rolling out of the elected camp committee system currently implemented in the Nayapara camp (and based on the historical system that pertained in the ‘registered’ camps). The IOM evaluation is more equivocal, instead noting a “nuanced” position with regard to elections.

#### 4.5 Inter-agency coordination

All three evaluations cover inter-agency coordination arrangements in some detail. One explanation for this attention is the unprecedented nature of the arrangement, which finds its origins in a pre-existing agreement between the Government of Bangladesh and IOM that conferred upon the latter

<sup>15</sup> IOM, Real-Time Evaluation of IOM's Response, p 22.

<sup>16</sup> The Rohingya people are extremely keen on having their ethnic origin recognized. UNHCR has insisted that the appropriate legal term of the Rohingya in Bangladesh is refugees.

a coordinating role that it would not typically play in such situations. In 2016, in response to criticism from other agencies regarding its coordination role, IOM headquarters designed a new structure referred to as the “inter-sectoral coordination group (ISCG)”. The ISCG structure greatly resembles the cluster approach, which was developed at the global level in 2005 for non-refugee settings.

Despite a dramatic change of circumstances in August 2017, it was several months before changes were made to the reporting lines of the ISCG. The UNHCR and UNICEF evaluations take the position that this process was a waste of time, noting that an agreed model already exists for inter-agency coordination of refugee situations, with UNHCR leading the response. The IOM evaluation, meanwhile, provides insight into the evolution of ISCG arrangements, explaining that IOM took a coordination role at the request of the Government.

In any event, it was decided in late 2017 to formalize the ISCG and add a senior executive group (SEG) based in Dhaka. In describing this development, the UNICEF evaluation notes that the body formally accountable for such decisions, the inter-agency standing committee (IASC), never actually discussed the issue (raising the question of why UNICEF itself did not request that it do so, given the agency’s concerns). All three evaluations note that the triple reporting lines of the ISCG Coordinator arising from the 2017 decision confused, rather than clarified, accountability for the response.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps not surprisingly, given its resemblance to the cluster approach, the ISCG architecture suffered from many of the same shortcomings, notably a tendency for sectors to operate in a fragmented, ‘siloed’ manner. In an effort to clarify (and simplify) the coordination structure and reporting lines, four stakeholders (the International Council of Voluntary Associations [ICVA], IOM, UNHCR, and the United Nations Development Fund [UNDP]) undertook a coordination review in October 2018. The review suggested a consolidation of various sectors and working groups into four “results groups”, with the aim of rationalising the many cluster-like coordination meetings and reporting lines and promoting greater synergies between sectors.

Consultations on the outcome and recommendations of the review were still underway in Dhaka at the time of developing the synthesis. Thus far, signs indicate little consensus on the way forward, but this synthesis evaluation notes three relevant issues that should be taken into account.

First, whatever adjustments are made, accountability is the key issue. Existing accountability mechanisms remain geared toward individual agency results rather than collective results, with agency representatives being evaluated primarily (if not solely) on the performance of their individual agency. Accountability for collective results is not sufficiently captured in the performance evaluation mechanisms of individual agencies, and this is a systemic issue that goes far beyond the Rohingya response.

Second, the IOM and UNHCR evaluations point to the need for stronger linkages between sector coordination and camp-level coordination. At the camp level, IOM and UNHCR assumed responsibility for different camps, a decision that did nothing to improve the coordination between the agencies. Indeed, it led to a ‘balkanization’ of the camps, with different systems for collecting data and different quality of services provided (see also below).<sup>18</sup>

The idea of integrating several sectors and harmonizing camp management structures is a sensible one for many reasons and may also contribute to stronger alignment between Government efforts

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<sup>17</sup> The reporting lines have been rationalized since this synthesis evaluation.

<sup>18</sup> “Balkanization” is the word used in the UNHCR evaluation. It signifies a partitioning of the area along agency lines, keeping this strict demarcation in service delivery. Indeed, another evaluation reports continued signs of uneven service delivery as recently as early 2019 (see ADH evaluation.)

and inter-agency coordination mechanisms. Another issue encountered during the evaluation synthesis was an apparent disconnect in this regard, with government-led priorities and plans at the camp level not being reflected in inter-agency processes. Rationalization of inter-agency structures could help bridge this gap.

Finally, evidence from the evaluations strongly suggests that the decision to combine elements of the cluster approach with UNHCR's refugee coordination model was a poor one. There is considerable virtue in adhering to standard (and therefore predictable) humanitarian coordination arrangements (i.e. the cluster approach, led by a Humanitarian Coordinator, or a lead-agency model such as RCM). That being said, for coordination to be effective, it must also be tailored to local circumstances; agencies in Dhaka, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, can and should be creative in adjusting the current structure. However, any workable arrangement must include a clear accountability framework and ensure an integrated approach underpinned by protection and human rights.

#### 4.6 Camp management, service delivery and use of data<sup>19</sup>

Agencies faced a range of inter-related challenges in terms of camp management, service delivery, and the use of data – some of which were of their own making.

First, most of the sites began as spontaneous settlements rather than planned camps, and restrictions from the Government in terms of land use for refugees led to extreme congestion. When additional land was made available by the Government in 2018, planning for these extension sites did occur, but it was largely approached as a technical exercise rather than a strategic one (see below). IOM and UNHCR applied different criteria and approaches in the planning of 'their' camps and utilized different quality standards in service delivery. Some of these differences were addressed in the course of preparing for the 2018 monsoon season, and while this harmonization might have come late, the UNICEF evaluation notes that it led to much-needed improvements.

With regard to service delivery, the initial emphasis on coverage was appropriate for the first several weeks. However, the focus should have shifted more quickly to the quality of the response. The problem was made particularly acute as a result of Government restrictions on goods and services, which hampered service delivery. As noted above, agencies could have done more to advocate with the Government in this regard, providing evidence on how its restrictions limited the response. In practice, while the response succeeded in mitigating further loss of life and preventing epidemics and malnutrition, it did not reach appropriate levels of quality in 2018.

Third, as noted above, linkages between many sectors were weak. For example, the IOM evaluation pointed out that site management, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and protection were insufficiently linked. Similarly, the UNICEF evaluation signals that child protection and education were insufficiently connected. If such fragmentation is observed within organizations, the problem is likely even more acute at the inter-agency level.

There were also challenges with regard to prioritization. The question of what facility is put where in a camp is not merely technical; rather, it is a strategic issue, particularly where physical space is a constraint. This requires agencies and sector specialists to move beyond a siloed approach and deliver genuinely integrated services. In UNICEF language, this 'inter-sectorality' could be a practical way of freeing up space in very congested camps, either by combining services, or by working together to

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<sup>19</sup> Despite the challenges discussed in this section, mortality figures were available for much of the first year of the response.

prioritize. Some steps were taken in this regard in 2018, but inter-agency competition may have limited the success of these efforts.

A final set of challenges revolves around data collection and information sharing. All three evaluations note issues around data quality. Individually, all three agencies invested in systems to collect data and ensure they informed decision-making, but these systems were developed in parallel, utilizing different mechanisms and indicators, and the resulting data were not shared between agencies. Different yet partially overlapping data collection models contributed to tensions between IOM and UNHCR. The respective evaluations describe several of these differences in detail, highlighting the advantages and, to some degree, the shortcomings of each system.

the UNICEF evaluation, meanwhile, highlights data collection serves the purpose of targeting service delivery. In reviewing whether UNICEF used the data well in making operational decisions, the evaluation does not come to a clear conclusion. Instead, it sees a disconnect between data and data systems used by UNICEF in its capacity as sector lead, and data used by the agency's programme sections. All three evaluations note that despite the volume of data collected, gaps in the response remained prevalent.

### 4.7 Medium- and long-term strategies and engagement with host communities

The medium and longer term, including the plight of the host communities, is covered by all three evaluation reports, albeit in different ways. All three evaluations note with extreme concern the possible relocation of refugees to Bhasan Char, an island in the Bay of Bengal. They also agree that while discussions around the longer term are politically sensitive, they are much needed.

There are three 'top-line' scenarios in terms of the future of the refugee situation: repatriation, resettlement and protracted stay. Within the latter scenario, which is the most likely, there are a range of options depending on the Government's approach to what the evaluations refer to as "decongestion". These range from little or no decongestion, combined with very tight restrictions on movement, to a range of decongestion options whereby people are allowed greater freedom of movement.

All three evaluations deem the latter option to be the most desirable, especially if combined with significant investment in services and employment opportunities. Without freedom of movement or the right to work, the future will be difficult for the Rohingya. The evaluations urge strong, evidence-based advocacy efforts in this regard, and the synthesis validation workshops looked at some of these advocacy options in detail, noting that collaborative action would have the greatest chance of success.

Agencies took a long-term perspective from early on in the response. The UNHCR evaluation, for example, found that the organization had been thinking about durable solutions from the outset, as seen in its promotion of the right to return and its early engagement of development actors like the World Bank. It also made early investments in durable camp infrastructure (such as the "army road"), and together with IOM and others continued to push the boundaries of what could be constructed. Over time, all three agencies have made concerted efforts to upgrade infrastructure and housing. For example, UNICEF is pursuing innovative solutions for camp-wide water and sanitation.

The differing approaches of the three agencies can be summarized as:

- Durable camp infrastructure and systems-strengthening (UNICEF).
- Building local capacities (IOM), and
- Refugee rights and strategic prioritization of solutions (UNHCR).

These approaches are highly complementary, and it can be argued that all three need to be pursued simultaneously in order to reach the best possible solution to the refugee crisis. While return is viewed as the most desirable option, it is Bangladesh that will shoulder the burden in the meantime, and therefore investments in local capacities and systems will be critical. In order to achieve this, close collaboration with development agencies and civil society is necessary. And there is a need for continued advocacy with the Government and strategic intelligence within the UN.

## 4.8 Evaluation recommendations

The recommendations contained in the three evaluations are broadly consistent and cover many of the same themes and messages, though areas of emphasis are understandably different. In keeping with the overall findings, there is greater emphasis in the IOM evaluation around accountability to affected populations. Recommendations in the UNHCR evaluation focus more on protection, while UNICEF devotes significant attention to integrated programming, as well as advocacy, rights, gender and innovation. Taken together, the recommendations appear highly complementary and comprehensive. For a detailed overview of the recommendations on the following six topics, see Table 2 in Annex 6.

Perhaps the strongest area of divergence is regarding coordination. The UNHCR evaluation suggests that it should lead the response going forward. UNICEF recommends greater clarity on accountability, while IOM recommends pragmatism. It should be noted, however, that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive.

The main areas covered in all three evaluations include:

1. **Preparedness:** Both the UNICEF and UNHCR evaluations note the failure of agencies to use information from Myanmar to predict and prepare for a mass displacement. Both recommend overhauling or strengthening current arrangements in terms of intelligence and analysis sharing within their agencies.
2. **Data collection and information-sharing:** The IOM and UNICEF evaluations contain recommendations on improving data sharing and coherence. The UNHCR evaluation recommends replicating the robust survey techniques used in the Rohingya crisis, but also notes that systems for sharing quickly are needed.
3. **Protection:** The IOM report contains a number of recommendations around strengthening the agency's internal protection capacity. The UNICEF evaluation calls for stronger and coordinated inter-agency advocacy and better gender mainstreaming. UNHCR calls for better operational response (through the use of early audits), implementing community-based protection early in big crises and better measurement of outcomes. UNHCR also makes recommendations on advocacy.
4. **Leadership and coordination:** All three evaluations recommend improvements but differ in the pathway chosen. The UNICEF and UNHCR reports call for stronger and more clearly defined accountability mechanisms. IOM takes a pragmatic line, noting that coordination arrangements do not automatically generate behaviour change. The UNHCR evaluation also suggests that the organization needs to get better at 'sharing spaces' and building alliances with partners.
5. **Capacity-building of local NGOs:** Both IOM and UNICEF recommend investments in strengthening the capacities of local NGOs. IOM also recommends developing community-based organizations among the Rohingya.

**6. Strategy and context analysis:** The UNICEF and UNHCR evaluations contain similar recommendations regarding strategy and context analysis, while the IOM report makes a set of recommendations about transition strategies.<sup>20</sup> UNICEF emphasizes gender, rights, protection and integrated programming for 2019 and beyond, and UNHCR makes a global recommendation about responding early.

Issues dealt with in a more standalone fashion include accountability to affected populations (IOM), stronger integrated programming (UNICEF), and strengthening representation in Dhaka (UNHCR). The latter also contains recommendations around ensuring staff continuity after the emergency phase.

## 5 Synthesis workshops

The evaluation synthesis team facilitated two workshops in Bangladesh at the end of the data analysis process, as outlined above. These took place in Dhaka and in Cox's Bazar and looked at developments since the evaluations. The workshops served primarily as a space for reflection, using the evaluations as a starting point. A full report of the workshops is contained in Annex 2.

While the findings of a workshop cannot substitute for patient evidence-gathering and analysis, it is clear that progress has been made since the time of the respective evaluations. The situation has largely stabilized, the response has matured, and many of the issues around service quality have been addressed, including lights and locks on latrines.

Less progress has been observed in some of the more challenging areas related to longer-term issues, such as freedom of movement, the right to work and the right to education.

While the Dhaka workshop focused primarily on the strategic level, the Cox's Bazar workshop was more operational. Participants in the latter found that good progress had been made since the evaluations. As noted above, they reported that basic protection gaps had largely been filled and that the quality of services had improved. Registration has also increased, reversing some of the earlier set-backs. In addition, participants reported progress in bridging the divide between IOM and UNHCR areas of responsibility.

However, a number of challenges noted in the evaluations remain prevalent. Congestion of settlement sites remains a serious concern, with no significant solutions on the horizon. While basic protection coverage has improved, there is still much to do with regard to gender mainstreaming and understanding the impact of protection work. Government limitations on the use of cash assistance is a major impediment to an effective response. Although the response is moving towards a 'one camp' approach, there is still work to do, including formalizing this. The workshop also noted the deterioration in relations with the host community and the need to increase assistance in this regard.

Many of these same issues were noted in the Dhaka workshop. In addition, the Dhaka workshop recognized the need to for a more coordinated and strategic approach to advocacy, noting that the individual efforts of agencies and donors has not translated into a strong joint advocacy platform. There was widespread acknowledgement of the difficult choices faced by Government and the need for constructive support from international partners. In relation to planning, a suggestion was made for the SEG to conduct a scenario-based planning exercise focused on the medium to long term.

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<sup>20</sup> See the IOM evaluation for a fuller discussion of transition strategies. In brief, the recommendations focus on working informally with Government, working with local capacities, strengthening community-based organizations and reinforcing the IOM transition office.

The evaluators noted a significant shift in the collaborative spirit of the main actors in both workshops, despite the obvious challenges that remain. There was a visible appetite for further collaboration, and a future workshop based on evaluation findings was suggested for the sector leads in Cox's Bazar.

## 6 Conclusions and lessons learned

Overall, the three evaluations that form the basis of this synthesis report raise a number of similar issues. They highlight significant achievements in stabilizing the situation and assisting and protecting Rohingya refugees and host communities. They also point to many of the same shortcomings, suggesting a strong evidence base for the evaluations' more critical findings. While many of the issues raised in these evaluations have since been addressed, the validation workshops also confirmed that much remains to be done.

This synthesis report offers some lessons that should inform the future response in Bangladesh, as well as other humanitarian crises elsewhere.

1. The rapid scale up by all three agencies and the provision of essential services and assistance undoubtedly saved lives. While there were significant gaps and quality issues, the fact that mortality largely remained under control was a major achievement.
2. The three agencies could have made better use of partnerships with the Government and NGOs to strengthen protection efforts and preserve humanitarian space. Challenges to humanitarian space should have been anticipated and agencies prepared to respond, yet this was largely not the case.
3. The most significant gaps were in the area of protection mainstreaming. These gaps stem from an initial failure to situate protection as the central framework of the response and unnecessary delays in mainstreaming protection in service delivery. Areas such as gender were woefully neglected. While the IASC commitment to the centrality of protection dates back to 2013, there remains an obvious gap between policy and practice.
4. With regard to accountability to affected populations (AAP), engagement with refugees and host communities was largely focused on sharing messages and did not include the sort of feedback loop required to rise to the level of AAP. Coordination among various initiatives was also an issue. The need to better link protection priorities, especially for women and girls, with AAP efforts was also identified.
5. Inter-agency coordination has been one of the most contested issues in the response – hardly surprising given that the standard coordination model for refugee responses was not put in place. The debate had largely stabilized by 2019 following in-depth discussions. Ensuring stronger coherence among sectors and with government-led systems should remain a priority.
6. The lack of physical and protection space impacted heavily on the quality of service delivery, and the focus on coverage, rather than quality, of the response persisted for far too long. Inter-agency competition created also huge inefficiencies and stood in the way of data sharing.
7. Planning for medium- and longer-term scenarios is extremely sensitive, but it must be done, and in a coordinated manner. Further investments in national and local capacities and systems will be most critical in developing a sustainable way forward.

In addition, both validation workshops raised the idea of an inter-agency evaluation of the response. While there would undoubtedly have been value in a real-time evaluation in 2018, it is not clear what benefit such an exercise would bring at this late stage.<sup>21</sup>

The three agencies shared their evaluation reports, as is standard practice, which strengthens transparency and accountability. However, the evaluations focus on individual agency achievements, even though many of the issues faced are collective challenges. While it is necessary for agencies to evaluate their individual performance, they should also examine how their efforts contribute to collective results, in accordance with their Grand Bargain commitments. This should include an analysis of the extent to which their internal performance management systems incentivize collaboration and accountability for collective results.

The final conclusion concerns the future of the response. A strategy of care and maintenance will not suffice in the medium to long term. The circumstances on the ground – including deteriorating relations with host communities, the absence of opportunities for refugees, dwindling funds, and Government plans to relocate refugees to Bhasan Char – demand a greater sense of urgency and a clearer vision in planning for the long term. Collectively, agencies have a duty to advocate with the Government to confront this, and to support them to develop solutions for critical challenges such as education, livelihoods, and freedom of movement. Finally, the UN needs to commit firmly and visibly to a policy of voluntary return under the right conditions.

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<sup>21</sup> Each system-wide L3 response requires a collective operational review at some stage. However, as the Rohingya response never became a formal agenda item of the IASC or the Emergency Directors in 2017 and 2018, such a review was not triggered. In addition, while some informal exchanges on the idea of a collective RTE took place in the autumn of 2017, the dominant view at that time was that such an exercise would not be feasible due to the sensitive relations among agencies. As a result, an inter-agency review of the Rohingya response looking at collective performance never took place and this synthesis does not fill that gap.

## Annex 1: Terms of reference

### 1. Introduction

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The impetus for an evaluation synthesis arose as a result of requests from the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Bangladesh to consolidate lessons learned from the various evaluations, reviews and other similar exercises conducted in Bangladesh by United Nations (UN) agencies and others with regard to the international response to the Rohingya influx in 2017. The evaluation synthesis will seek to compile evidence and findings from the three UN agency-specific evaluations, namely evaluations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as other relevant documents.<sup>22</sup>

These terms of reference (ToR) lay out the purpose and scope of the evaluation synthesis. They will serve to guide the evaluation team and inform key stakeholders about the process, objectives, and intended results. The evaluation synthesis is expected to produce a written report that should be useful for the UNCT in Bangladesh in their operational and strategic decision-making for the response to the Rohingya refugee crisis in the coming years.

### 2. Background

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The massive influx of Rohingya refugees that started on 25 August 2017 created a large-scale humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh. A range of formal and informal aid actors, national and international, responded. They were confronted by a number of formidable challenges, including the sheer numbers of refugees and affected host populations, extreme congestion in camps that lacked any infrastructure, the risk of large-scale outbreaks of epidemics and a possible second disaster in the form of floods or cyclone during the annual monsoon season. At the outset, the response also lacked a refugee protection framework and the Government of Bangladesh was confronted with coordination and political challenges that saw a coordination architecture being put in place to respond to the most urgent needs. As a consequence, gaps in the services delivered and the quality of the services have been matters of constant concern. Despite these challenges, and a major outbreak of diphtheria killing 43 people, mortality rates have not passed emergency thresholds, a major achievement under the circumstances.

### 3. Purpose

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As part of their emergency response protocols, a number of international agencies and international NGOs have undertaken reviews and evaluations of their efforts. Among UN agencies, evaluations have been completed of the responses of UNHCR, IOM, and UNICEF. While these evaluations primarily look at individual agency performance, there are elements in all that consider the overall response. Taken together and updated to reflect recent developments, these reports can provide a consolidated picture of the response of three UN actors and draw lessons learned, which should inform future efforts both for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and for other refugee and humanitarian responses worldwide. In addition to these three agency evaluations, several reviews and evaluative studies have been undertaken and will also be included in the analysis whenever relevant.

The synthesis report will summarize the emergency response to date, identify common issues and differences, and consolidate the conclusions and recommendations in relation to the most prominent issues. In addition, the synthesis will also identify knowledge gaps in the response.

The primary audience for this evaluation are the staff of the three agencies in Bangladesh and the UNCT. Partners involved in the Rohingya Response in Bangladesh, including government and humanitarian and development actors, will serve as a secondary audience.

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<sup>22</sup> Van Brabant, K. and Patel, S., *Real-Time Evaluation of IOM's Response to the Rohingya Crisis*, IOM, Geneva, 2018; Sida, Lewis et al., *Independent Evaluation of UNHCR's Emergency Response to the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh, August 2017-September 2018*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2018; United Nations Children's Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF's Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Bangladesh*, UNICEF, New York, 2018.

## 4. Evaluation Approach

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### 4.1 Scope

The evaluation scope – relating to population, timeframe and location – is as follows:

- **Timeframe** to be covered for the synthesis: The three evaluations cover the first year (or slightly less) of the response. As such, the existing evidence base is therefore not fully reflective of the current situation. Although additional primary data collection is not envisioned, lessons learned will need to be updated with in-country stakeholders (through interviews, workshops and document review) to ensure that these are still timely and relevant to the current context.
- **Population:** The synthesis will focus on the emergency response to approximately 1 million Rohingya refugees and host communities in the district of Cox's Bazar.

### 4.2 Key Areas of Inquiry for the Evaluation

The various evaluation reports may cover a number of common subjects as they are relevant to the overall response. These issues include:

- Overall coordination of the response in terms of the architecture and leadership (government, UN and civil society levels), noting that coordination has changed since the conduct of the three evaluations; sector coordination; and reporting lines (accountability);
- Use of data to orient the response; quality of performance monitoring;
- Site planning and camp management, including preparation to natural disasters;
- The delivery of services in the camps and quality of these services;
- Refugee protection space and advocacy;
- Specific protection challenges, including refugee registration; sexual and gender-based violence; trafficking; and gender-mainstreaming;
- Engagement with affected populations (refugees and host communities);
- Partnerships with the government and selection of non-governmental organization (NGO) partners.

### 4.3 Synthesis Evaluation Questions

1. What are the common findings on the issues noted above among the reports of the three main agencies (IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF) and other relevant reports? Are there issues that are not common that may be worth highlighting in the synthesis? Are there issues that may be missing from evaluations that should be highlighted for future focus?
2. What are the main lessons identified across the evaluations and other relevant reports, 1) for Bangladesh and 2) for the system more widely?
3. What recommendations are relevant to overall performance and should be highlighted for the future of the Rohingya response and/or other responses? What are the main areas for improvement in the current response, and how can the overall leadership of the response address these issues?

### 4.4 Methodology

The synthesis evaluation will primarily be a desk-based document review exercise, with stakeholder workshops. The Steering Group (see below) will finalize a dissemination strategy, as developed during the workshop, including potential response or action plan from in-country leadership.

The evaluation methodology is expected to:

- a) *Reflect an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) perspective in any data collection/analysis activities carried out as part of the evaluation – particularly with refugees.*
- b) *Employ a mixed-method approach incorporating qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis tools including the analysis of monitoring data – as available.*

- c) *Refer to and make use of relevant internationally agreed evaluation criteria such as those proposed by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) and adapted by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) for use in humanitarian evaluations.<sup>23</sup>*
- d) *Refer to and make use of relevant sectoral standards and analytical frameworks.*
- e) *Be based on an analysis of (i) the strategy and operational guidelines of the programme being evaluated, and (ii) the main actors and stakeholders.*
- f) *Gather and make use of a wide range of data sources (e.g. monitoring data, mission reports, coordination group meetings, strategy narrative, budget and indicator reports) in order to demonstrate impartiality of the analysis, minimize bias, and ensure the credibility of findings and conclusions.*
- g) *Be explicitly designed to address the key evaluation questions – taking into account evaluability, budget and timing constraints*

#### 4.5 Evaluation Quality Assurance

The evaluation consultants are required to sign the UNHCR Code of Conduct, complete UNHCR's introductory protection training module, and respect UNHCR's confidentiality requirements.

In line with established standards for evaluation in the UN system, and the UN Ethical Guidelines for evaluations, evaluation in UNHCR is founded on the inter-connected principles of independence, impartiality, credibility and utility, which in practice call for: protecting sources and data; systematically seeking informed consent; respecting dignity and diversity; minimizing risk, harm and burden upon those who are the subject of, or participating in, the evaluation, while at the same time not compromising the integrity of the exercise.

The evaluation is also expected to adhere to evaluation quality assurance (EQA) guidance, which clarifies the quality requirements expected for UNHCR evaluation processes and products.

The Evaluation Manager will share and provide an orientation on the EQA at the start of the evaluation. Adherence to the EQA will be overseen by the Evaluation Manager with support from the UNHCR Evaluation Service as needed.

## 5. Organization and Management of the Desk Review

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This exercise will be undertaken by two evaluation consultants acting as co-leads with equal responsibility for the deliverables. A Steering Group consisting of the Evaluation Heads of UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM will provide guidance and oversight for the evaluation. The Steering Group will review all interim deliverables and final reports to ensure accuracy and quality. Individual contracts will be issued to the selected consultants by UNICEF and UNHCR, with their confirmed contributions toward the deliverables. The UNHCR Evaluation Service will: **(i)** support with the day-to-day aspects of the review process; **(ii)** act as the main interlocutor with the team conducting the review, including with the Steering Group; **(iii)** provide the review team with required data – with the support of focal points in the concerned internal teams; **(iv)** facilitate communication with stakeholders.

<sup>23</sup> See for example Cosgrave and Buchanan-Smith, [Guide de l'Évaluation de l'Action Humanitaire](#), ALNAP, London, 2017 and Beck, T., [Evaluating Humanitarian Action using the OECD-DAC Criteria](#), ALNAP, London, 2006.

## Expected Deliverables and Timeline

### Key tasks for the consultants are to:

- a) Develop criteria for inclusion of evaluative and research material in the evidence base and review relevant material (including rapid literature review).
- b) Develop a simple framework (in close collaboration with the steering group) to analyse existing reports, documents and literature, and assess the robustness of evidence.
- c) Review evaluation reports from the three agencies, including underlying evidence where available (in close collaboration with the steering group). Review additional material included in the synthesis in order to obtain a more current picture of the response.
- d) Identify common and well-evidenced issues, and prepare a consolidated analysis, with lessons learned and conclusions.
- e) Facilitate workshops with key stakeholders, including UNCT and partners, to validate and examine draft synthesis report conclusions.

### Deliverables include:

- An inception report/methods paper including a final set of review questions and an analytical framework for the synthesis;
- A power-point presentation summarizing key findings and broad recommendations for validation and discussion at stakeholder workshops;
- Up to two stakeholder workshops designed and facilitated in Dhaka and/or Cox's Bazar;
- A draft report reflecting the analysis and the discussions at the stakeholder workshops; and,
- A maximum 40-page final report that responds to the final review questions (excluding annexes), with a maximum 10-page standalone Executive Summary.

### An indicative timeline is set out below:

Activity	Deliverables and payment schedule	Indicative Dates
Synthesis ToR finalized and consultants contracted	ToR and contracting	March 10, 2019
<b>Inception phase</b> including: - Initial desk review and key informant interviews. - EQA review on the draft inception report - Circulation for comments and finalization	Briefings with Steering Group and UNCT Bangladesh completed  Final inception report – including methodology, refined evaluation questions (as needed) and analytical framework.  <b>PAYMENT 20%</b>	March 10- April 15 2019
<b>Data analysis and presentation of preliminary findings at country workshops</b> including: - Stakeholder feedback on preliminary findings and conclusions	Data analysed, power point presentation prepared and stakeholder workshops designed and facilitated  <b>PAYMENT 30%</b>	Week of June 3, 2019
<b>Report writing phase</b> including: - Drafting report	Draft report and recommendations (for circulation and comments)  <b>PAYMENT 20%</b>	July 5, 2019
<b>EQA review of draft report, circulation for comments</b> - Stakeholder feedback on findings, conclusions and proposed recommendations	Consolidated comments submitted to consultants	July 31, 2019
<b>Finalization</b> of country-level evaluation reports and synthesis report	Final synthesis report (including recommendations and executive summary)  <b>PAYMENT 20%</b>	August 31, 2019

## Annex 2: Workshop report

### Synthesis of UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM Evaluations of Responses to the Rohingya Crisis

#### Workshop Summary

Cox's Bazar and Dhaka, July 9 and 11, 2019

#### *Introduction*

In 2018, IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF each undertook an evaluation of their agencies' response to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh. In 2019, they jointly commissioned a synthesis of these evaluations to provide a consolidated picture of the response. The synthesis sought to draw lessons to inform future efforts both in Bangladesh and elsewhere by identifying common and diverging findings and by consolidating the conclusions and recommendations.

As part of the synthesis exercise, the evaluation synthesis team facilitated two workshops in Bangladesh at which the preliminary findings could be presented and discussed. The purpose of these workshops was to validate the early findings, identify new issues and, essentially, to reflect on the collective response. The workshops, one in Dhaka and one in Cox's Bazar, were attended by participants from UN agencies, NGOs and donors. The workshops served primarily as a space for reflection, using the draft synthesis findings as a starting point.

Three specific questions guided the workshop discussions:

- What are the policy issues that have been addressed?
- What are the main policy issues that still need to be addressed?
- What new policy issues have emerged?

Understandably, the workshop in Cox's Bazar had an operational focus while the event in Dhaka looked at the issues from a strategic and policy perspective. That said, there was a remarkable convergence in the discussions of the two workshops in terms of issues and priorities that need further attention. This (DRAFT) note summarizes these issues as a contribution to ongoing response planning. It is not an officially endorsed product of the three agencies, merely a short note of discussions.

#### *Main Issues Discussed*

First, while it was clear the response had matured, many issues covered in the three evaluations remain relevant. The evaluations were based on data collection that took place in 2018 and as a result could easily be out of date; however, workshop discussions revealed that many of the issues identified in the synthesis are still a challenge today. The situation has improved since 2018 but there is still much work to be done.

A second theme was the need for coordinated advocacy. Views were expressed that more could have been done in terms of developing a specific advocacy strategy, for example to express concern on the constraints (e.g. limitations put on education and livelihoods, space and quality issues because of the congestion, etc.). Coordination of advocacy does not necessarily entail one message on behalf of all or identical messages; it was recognized that different actors have different mandates and different advocacy space, but that generally, more coordination among donors, UN agencies and NGOs might be more effective. It was noted that there is still a need for a clear, comprehensive and collective strategy to advocate for major policy shifts in relation to sustainable service delivery and longer-term sustainable approaches that deliver socio-economic benefits.

Thirdly, in terms of protection, while basic gaps have largely been filled and the quality of services has improved, there is still much work to do on gender mainstreaming and on understanding the concept of the centrality of protection work. It was noted at the Dhaka workshop that the precise definition of this concept is understood differently. It was also emphasized that good practices such as lights, locks, and gender-segregated latrines have taken much too long to implement fully.

Another (fourth) issue that got much attention in the workshops is the engagement with affected communities, refugees and host communities. The need to better communicate and engage with communities was widely supported and echoed. This includes not only better messaging about issues that have to do with service delivery, but also more meaningful exchanges about the issues that concern people's safety and security and dignity. The government should also be more brought into the conversation on engaging with affected communities.

Lastly, in terms of future scenarios, the suggestion was made at the Dhaka event to get into in-depth discussions on these scenarios, i.e. not to develop them, because they are well-known, but to discuss the implications and to focus on the actions that should be taken in light of the scenarios. For example, a more urban approach might be necessary, while also pursuing more sustainable education, livelihoods, and inclusion activities. Part of the scenario thinking is also the dilemma between maximising the use of available space (both conceptually in terms of programming as well as physically in terms of land) and contributing to the longer-term entrenchment of an ultimately unsustainable and harmful encampment model.

### *Two particular issues for follow up*

It was recognized that a synthesis of three evaluations cannot be a substitute for an inter-agency evaluation. There was an appetite for such an exercise that would assess the collective effort and include the contributions of all actors. A number of participants in both workshops felt that an inter-agency response-wide evaluation would provide a meaningful, broader perspective on the response as it stands now, one that is qualitatively different than that offered by the agency-specific evaluations.

Finally, the evaluators also noted a significant shift in the collaborative spirit of the main response actors in both workshops. There was a clear and evident improvement in relations, despite the fact there are still many challenging issues to resolve. There was also an appetite for opportunities where active collaboration could take place; a further workshop based on evaluation findings was suggested for the sector leads in Cox's Bazar who had not been present in the original meeting.

## Outcome of Break-out Group Discussions

### 1. **Accountability to Affected Populations** (AAP)

The evaluations found mixed results on engaging the affected population. While there were some successes (on messaging, investments in translation, training of community outreach volunteers, focus group discussions) the investment in complaint boxes and hotlines was a collective failure, there was a lack of communication about relocation and registration, and there was too much focus on messaging at the expense of meaningful participation.

What has changed?

The findings in the synthesis generally resonated with participants, although there was some anecdotal evidence that things have improved. The information centres are functioning better, there is more use of the material they produce (examples include changes made to girls' education and the switch from radio to alternative communication methods), more outreach to host communities, more diverse communication material. However, there was a clear recognition that more needs to be done.

Future Priorities

- Engage populations around more issues – Currently AAP is mostly broadcasting about service delivery by sector. This needs to shift to include issues that are a priority for the community and which can only be identified by listening. Additionally, AAP should move from solely focusing on (dis-)satisfaction with services/identification of needs to include information that can inform programme design. This has been done elsewhere (IOM in South Sudan) so there are examples to learn from.
- Related, change the manner of engagement – AAP should put beneficiaries at the centre of the response in a meaningful way. This means using a rights approach that recognizes the dignity and agency of those engaged.
- Much more attention needs to be paid to the cultural, linguistic and religious dynamics of the population. Rohingya-to-Rohingya engagement is stronger. AAP should tap into existing conversations going on at the community level.
- A 'participation revolution' is needed if indeed people are to be at the centre of the response. This revolution will require a system-level revamping of the AAP architecture. It could begin with putting in place a system of representation, for example.
- The new architecture needs to have a clear vision, strategy, objectives, indicators and a plan to measure progress.
- Government needs to be brought into the AAP work.
- Complete the feedback loop – Data collected need to be better analysed, shared more widely, and acted upon. Refugees/communities need to be updated on the actions.
- Expand the community engaged – More beneficiaries should be consulted (although some noted some communities had been overly consulted). More careful attention needs to be paid to which groups are consulted so as to include the most vulnerable, be it by gender, age, host community/refugee status, etc.
- In Cox's Bazar, it was noted that no Rohingya person was present at the workshop and the plans to engage the community in the joint response plan (JRP) are weak.
- The initiative and revamping of AAP is generally a collective effort but the responsibility for the implementation of these plans lies with individual agencies.

## 2. Protection

The synthesis found that for all agencies the centrality of protection and gender mainstreaming were not prioritized at all levels at the beginning of the response. The UNICEF and UNHCR evaluations concluded that refugee rights should be key advocacy concerns. The UNHCR and IOM evaluations describe the implementation of the registration system as flawed, especially regarding communication and partnership building.

All three evaluations reported that specific protection risks such as abuse, exploitation and trafficking were not sufficiently addressed. The UNICEF and UNHCR evaluations recounted how response to gender-based violence (GBV) was critically delayed, in part because of lack of NGO capacity and government restrictions. IOM's work in GBV, on the other hand, was reported to be of high quality, although inadequate in terms of coverage.

What has changed?

- Centrality of protection has improved. For example, it is now in the JRP.
- GBV is better covered.
- Birth registration policy in place (though not yet fully implemented).
- Education – There is progress around an organized structure (LCFA) but certification is still elusive and system still in parallel.
- Registration and communication around registration have improved.
- Data – While there have been some efforts to improve disaggregation, this needs to be streamlined. The use of data has improved with new tools for analysis and trends to inform programming. The Protection Monitoring Framework will help.
- Communication about repatriation/Bhasan Char has improved, but often what is discussed in Dhaka does not reach communities.
- Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) is now taken more seriously, but there is still much to be done.
- There is more work on capacity-building around protection with partners, but this needs to be improved further, as does sensitizing refugees on rights.
- Governance of the camps is improving.
- Security and camp dynamics have changed with efforts such as the community policy force, but this remains a big challenge.
- Trafficking is now more of a focus but still remains a priority area.
- The quality of services has improved although slowly; there is more cross-sector discussion but to do this properly, more resources are needed.

Future Priorities

- Security dynamics, access to justice.
- Gender, GBV and protection mainstreaming.
- Improve links between field/Cox's Bazar/Dhaka and among sectors.
- A more collective approach to advocacy to address government constraints.
- There is a need to assess the impact of services, beyond just counting outputs.
- Better use of data to assist with protection mainstreaming, more resources for disaggregated data.
- Better communication with refugees about relocation and repatriation.

### 3. **Host communities and partnerships**

The synthesis found that good work to show solidarity with host communities had been done, but more is required, particularly around water and employment, which are significant areas of tension. Additionally, the evaluations indicated that host communities need to participate in their design of projects related to them.

What has changed?

- Relationships with host communities have deteriorated since the evaluations were conducted; there is not enough programming to serve these populations.
- This is compounded by increasing pressure on host communities: inflation, insecurity, more push-back against refugees.
- Partnerships among the humanitarian community are stronger: there is more joint programming and a more stable platform from which to programme.
- Some nascent conflict analysis has been undertaken.

Future priorities

- More emphasis on the humanitarian-development nexus and on area-based programming; refugees integrated into district planning.
- There is a need for a common messages on sustainability/collective vision for host communities; a development plan is needed that can be brought to scale.
- Need for alternative livelihoods programming.
- Communication with host communities and local government.
- Address the funding gaps between humanitarian and development funding.
- Relatedly, the funding that does exist goes through local government, so is less visible to communities.
- Collective future response: advocacy for development and include in national planning.

### 4. **Site management and service delivery**

The evaluations found that congestion was a significant barrier to proper site planning and that the *de facto* 'two-camp' management system put in place resulted in tensions. The UNICEF and UNHCR evaluations reported strong monsoon preparedness efforts.

The synthesis showed that UNICEF and UNHCR both had adequate coverage in terms of the percentage of the population reached, but standards remained unmet in many areas. The initial focus was on 'life-saving' services, but quality was slow to follow quantity.

What has changed?

- A lot has changed, quality has increased.
- Despite congestion, service delivery has seen an increase in quality. It is more standardized and harmonized.
- The sectors are working better together and there is also better cooperation with government (line ministries and the refugee relief and rehabilitation commissioner). However, there is a lack of coordination with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB) in site planning.
- Facility mapping is on-going.

### Future priorities

- Gender mainstreaming, especially in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), needs still attention.
- Lack of space is still the biggest challenge. More collective advocacy is needed with the government. The prioritization of the use of space needs urgent advocacy.
- The main limitations are cash, durable and long-term interventions. Creative solutions need to be found to address these.
- While inter-sector coordination has improved, more work is needed with some development actors (WB and ADB).
- Transition from emergency programming to longer-term activities.
- More community participation and ownership of service delivery.
- A rationalization exercise for all sectors (health is leading in this) that has buy-in from all actors, a standard operation procedure (SOP) for plot allocation.
- Further involvement of line ministries in all relevant sectors, beyond RRRC; encouraging dialogue between RRRC and line ministries.
- Prepare TORs for the officers-in-charge of land allocation and site planning and camp level.

## Annex 3: List of key informants<sup>24</sup>

Name	Position
<b>Mia Seppo</b>	United Nations Resident Coordinator
<b>Steve Corliss</b>	UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh
<b>Edouard Beigbeder/Tomoo Hozumi</b>	UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh
<b>Giorgi Giauri</b>	IOM Representative in Bangladesh
<b>Koenraad van Brabant</b>	Team leader and author of the IOM Evaluation
<b>Smruti Patel</b>	Team member and author of the IOM evaluation
<b>Jean Gough</b>	Regional Director, UNICEF
<b>Dominika Arseniuk</b>	NGO Platform Coordinator, Cox's Bazar

<sup>24</sup> These key informants were interviewed during the inception phase.

## Annex 4: List of evaluations and reviews

Van Brabant, K. and Patel, S., *Real-Time Evaluation of IOM's Response to the Rohingya Crisis*, IOM, Geneva, 2018.

Sida, Lewis et al., *Independent Evaluation of UNHCR's Emergency Response to the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh, August 2017-September 2018*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2018.

United Nations Children's Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF's Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Bangladesh*, UNICEF, New York, 2018.

### Other Reviews and Evaluations

Van Brabant, K. and Patel, S., "IOM's L3 Procedures Through the Lens of the Rohingya Response", IOM, Geneva, 2018.

Buchanan-Smith, M. and Islam, S., *Real-Time Evaluation of Communicating with Communities Coordination: The Rohingya Response*, CDAC Network, 2018.

Disasters Emergency Committee, *Real-Time Response Review of the DEC Emergency Appeal for People Fleeing Myanmar: Responding to the needs of refugees and host communities*, DEC, 2018.

Doyle, B. et al., "Review of the Coordination Structure of the Refugee Response in Bangladesh", 2009.

HERE-Geneva, *Real-Time Response Review of the Disasters Emergency Committee Emergency Appeal for People fleeing Myanmar*, HERE-Geneva, 2018.

HERE-Geneva, *Independent Evaluation of the Aktion Deutschland Hilft e. V. (ADH) Joint Appeal to "Rohingya Myanmar Bangladesh"*, HERE-Geneva, 2019.

Inter-sector Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group, "Review of Gender Mainstreaming in Rohingya Refugee Response in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, March – August 2018", ISCG, Geneva, 2018.

United Nations, *Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis 2018, Mid-Term Review (March-December 2018)*, United Nations, Dhaka, 2018.

### Other Reports and Documents

Heward, C. et al., "SOHS 2018 Case Study, Bangladesh, State of the Humanitarian System Report 2018", ALNAP, 2018.

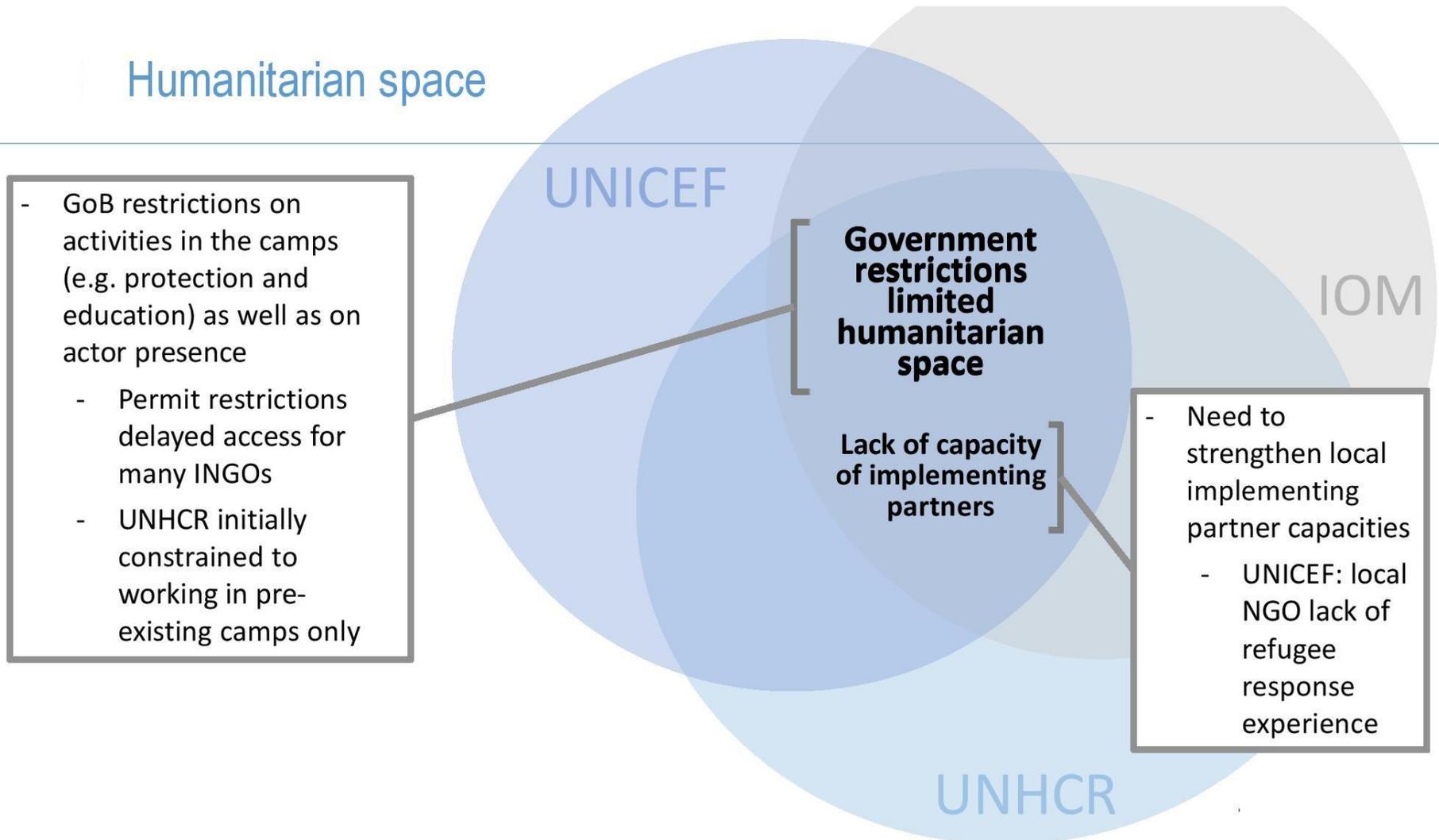
United Nations, *Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis (January-December)*, United Nations, Dhaka, 2019.

Huang, C. and Gough, K., "Toward Medium-Term Solutions for Rohingya Refugees and Hosts in Bangladesh: Mapping potential responsibility-sharing contributions", Center for Global Development, 2019.

International Crisis Group, "Building a Better Future for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh", ICG, Brussels, 2019.

## Annex 5: Venn diagrams of the synthesis themes

### Humanitarian space

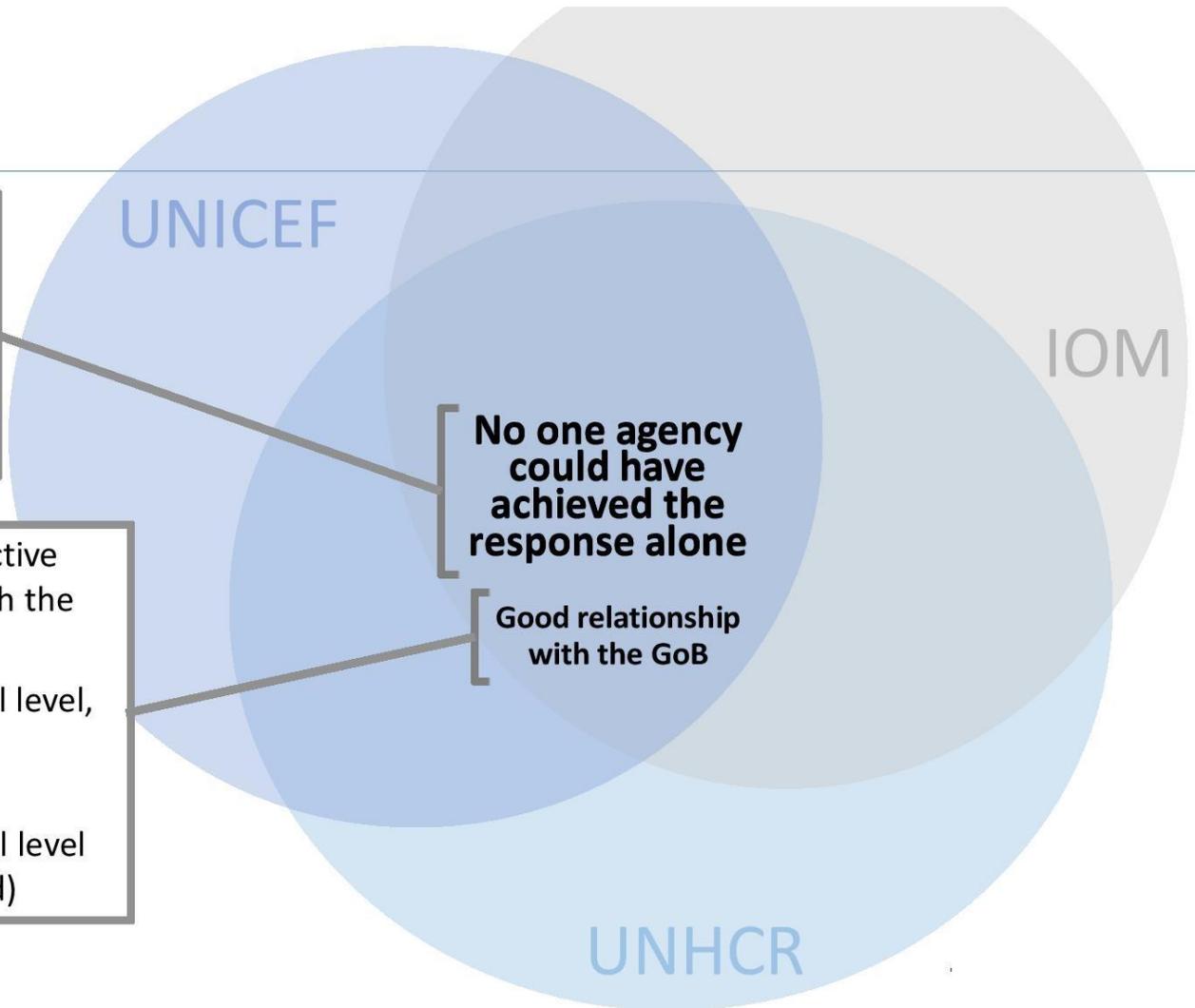


## Partnerships

- Response successful thanks to the local community, the Bangladesh Army and authorities, as well as UN agencies, international and national NGOs, and donors

- All reports highlight the respective agency's good relationship with the government

- UNICEF & IOM: at national level, thanks to long-standing relationship
- UNHCR: with RRRC at local level (national level constrained)



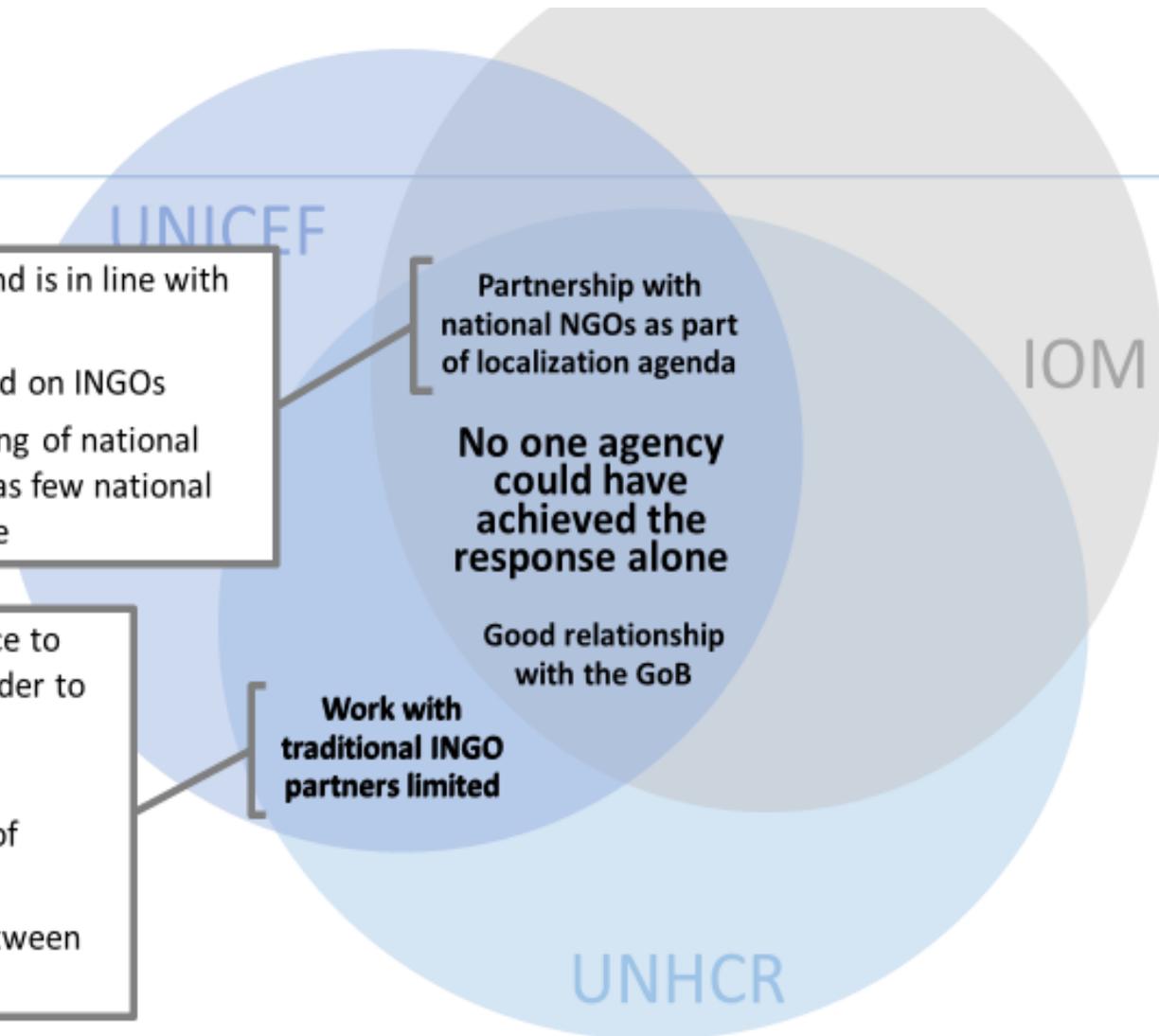
**No one agency could have achieved the response alone**

**Good relationship with the GoB**

## 9. Partnerships

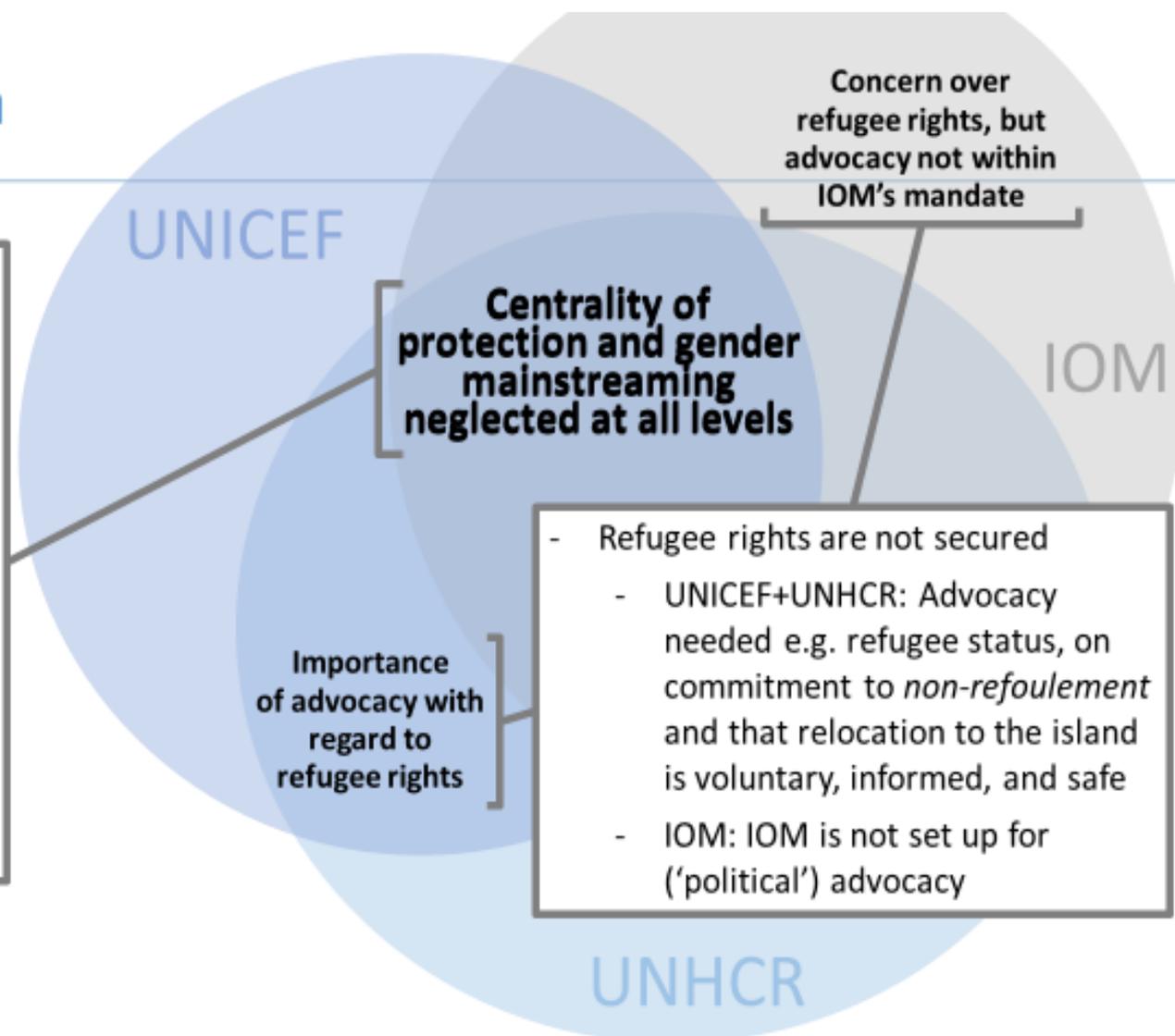
- Fits with WHS commitment and is in line with government preference
- Also linked to limitations posed on INGOs
- Need for capacity-strengthening of national partners; protection concern as few national NGOs have refugee experience

- GoB restrictions and reluctance to recognize refugee status a hinder to working with traditional INGO partners
- Atmosphere of distrust; Lack of communication
- INGOs caught in the 'feud' between IOM and UNHCR



## 6. Overall protection

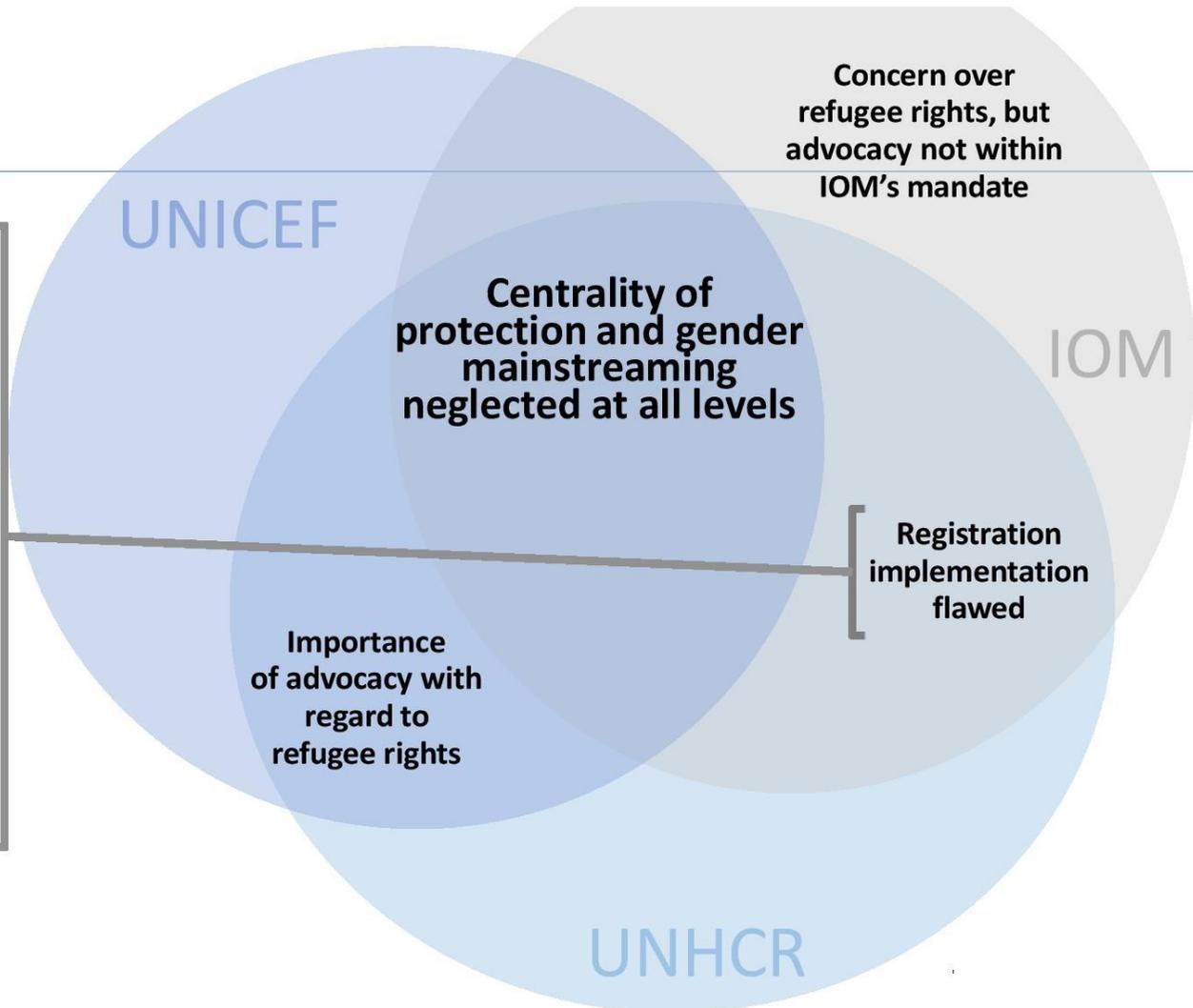
- Service delivery-oriented response has ignored critical aspects of humanitarian action, most notably protection and gender
  - Protection service delivery fragmented, and protection services not integrated with other service delivery
  - Protection distinguishes humanitarian work from other service delivery



- Refugee rights are not secured
  - UNICEF+UNHCR: Advocacy needed e.g. refugee status, on commitment to *non-refoulement* and that relocation to the island is voluntary, informed, and safe
  - IOM: IOM is not set up for ('political') advocacy

## Overall protection

- Registration central for protection
- Complex process to secure registration: flawed implementation with regard to communication and partnership building
  - The use of the term “undocumented Myanmar nationals” is troubling, as it suggests a lesser status than “refugees”



## Specific protection concerns

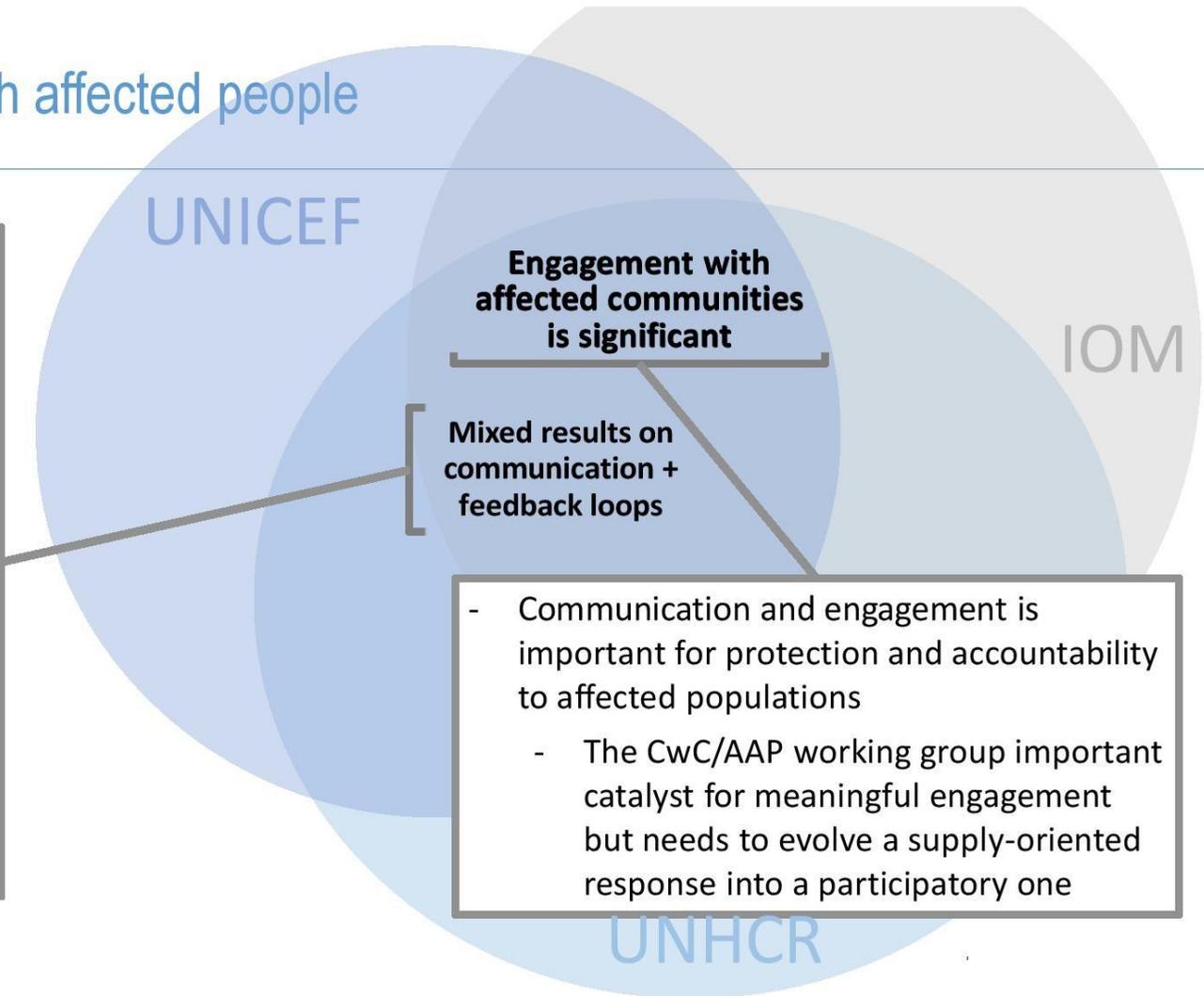
- Specific protection risks like abuse and exploitation, trafficking and GBV were not sufficiently addressed
  - UNHCR+UNICEF: Addressing GBV was critically delayed, for several reasons, incl. lack of NGO capacity and GoB restrictions
  - IOM: work re GBV has been of high relevance and quality, but “the coverage of IOM’s and the collective protection services remains insufficient to deal with the protection threats and needs.”

**Concerns regarding trafficking and GBV...**  
**...as well as lights, locks, and cooking fuel**

- Agencies could have done better to provide critical protection-related infrastructure
- Indicative of the lack of quality in the response, as well as the insufficient gender and protection mainstreaming

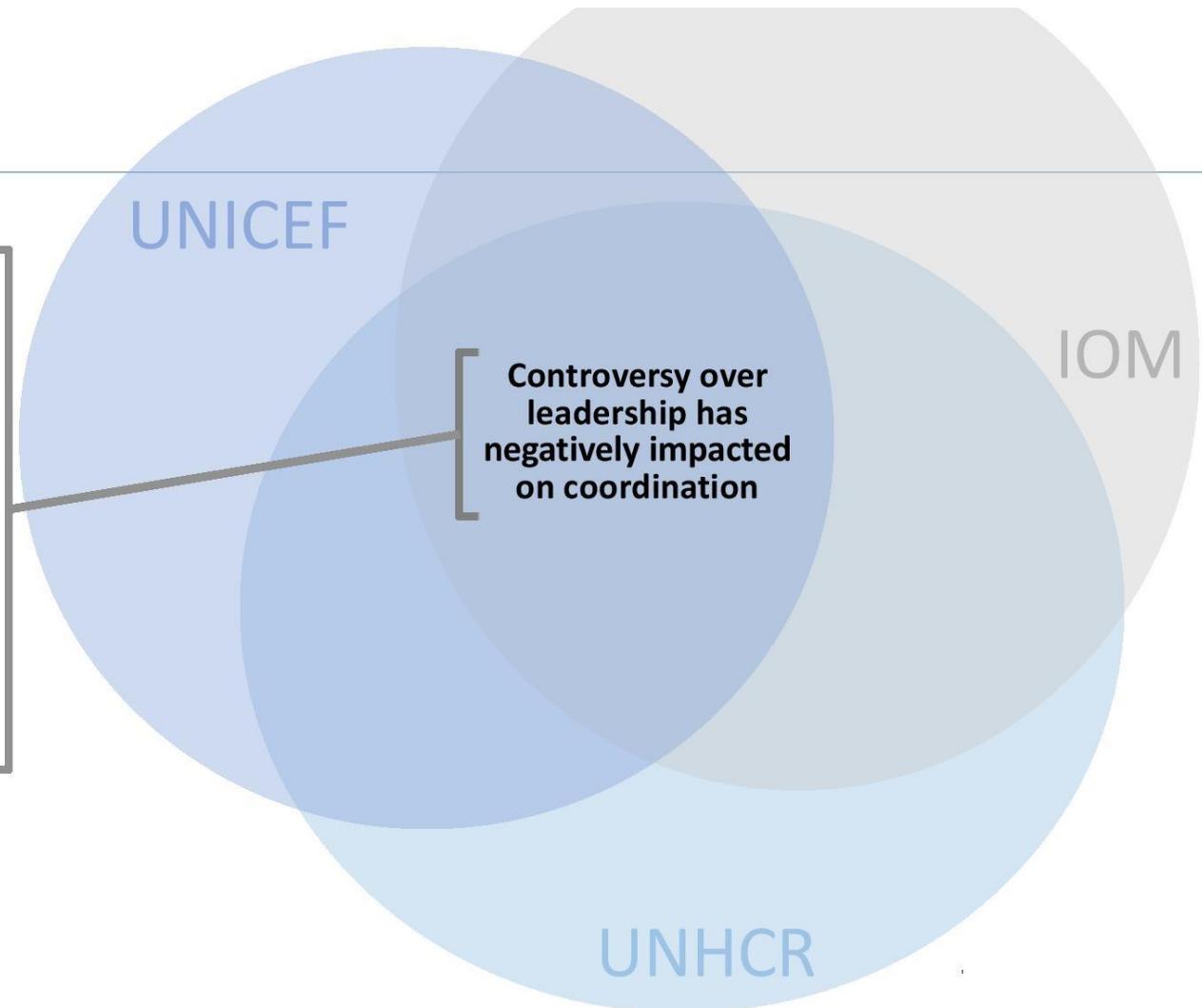
## Engagement with affected people

- Some positive results: messaging, investments in translation, training of community outreach volunteers, FGDs
- Investment in complaints boxes and hotlines collective failure
- Lack of communication is a protection concern
  - Information-sharing needed e.g. on relocation and registration



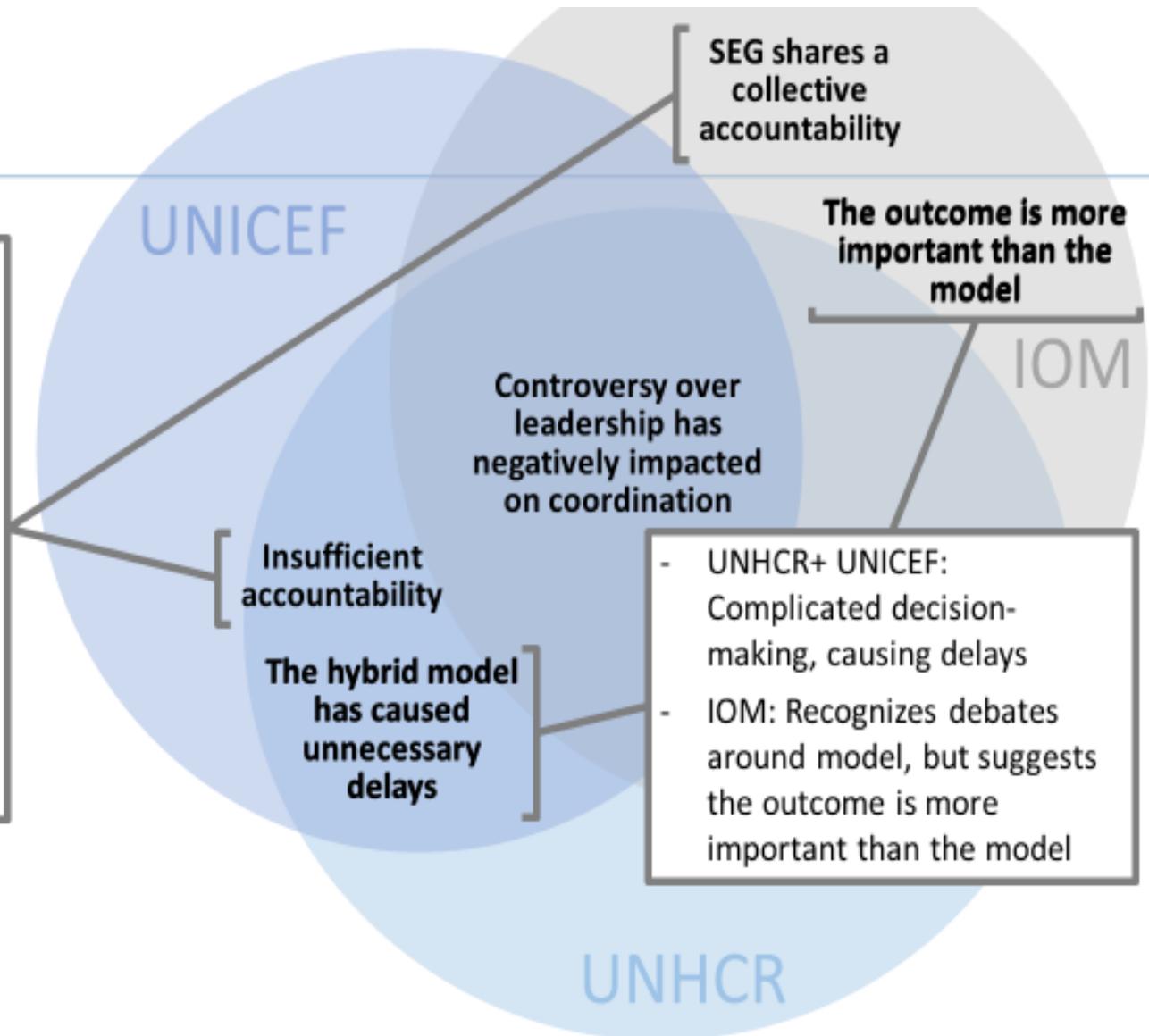
## Coordination

- Competition took time and energy away from operations on the ground, leading to gaps and delays
  - Monsoon preparedness collaboration and UNHCR being brought more into the coordination have helped dissipate growing antagonism



## 5. Coordination

- UNHCR+UNICEF: No clear authority and reporting lines means there is no clear accountability. UNHCR should be in the lead in view of refugee mandate
- IOM: SEG shares a collective accountability for the response, which is acceptable when acknowledged and acted upon



## Site planning and camp management

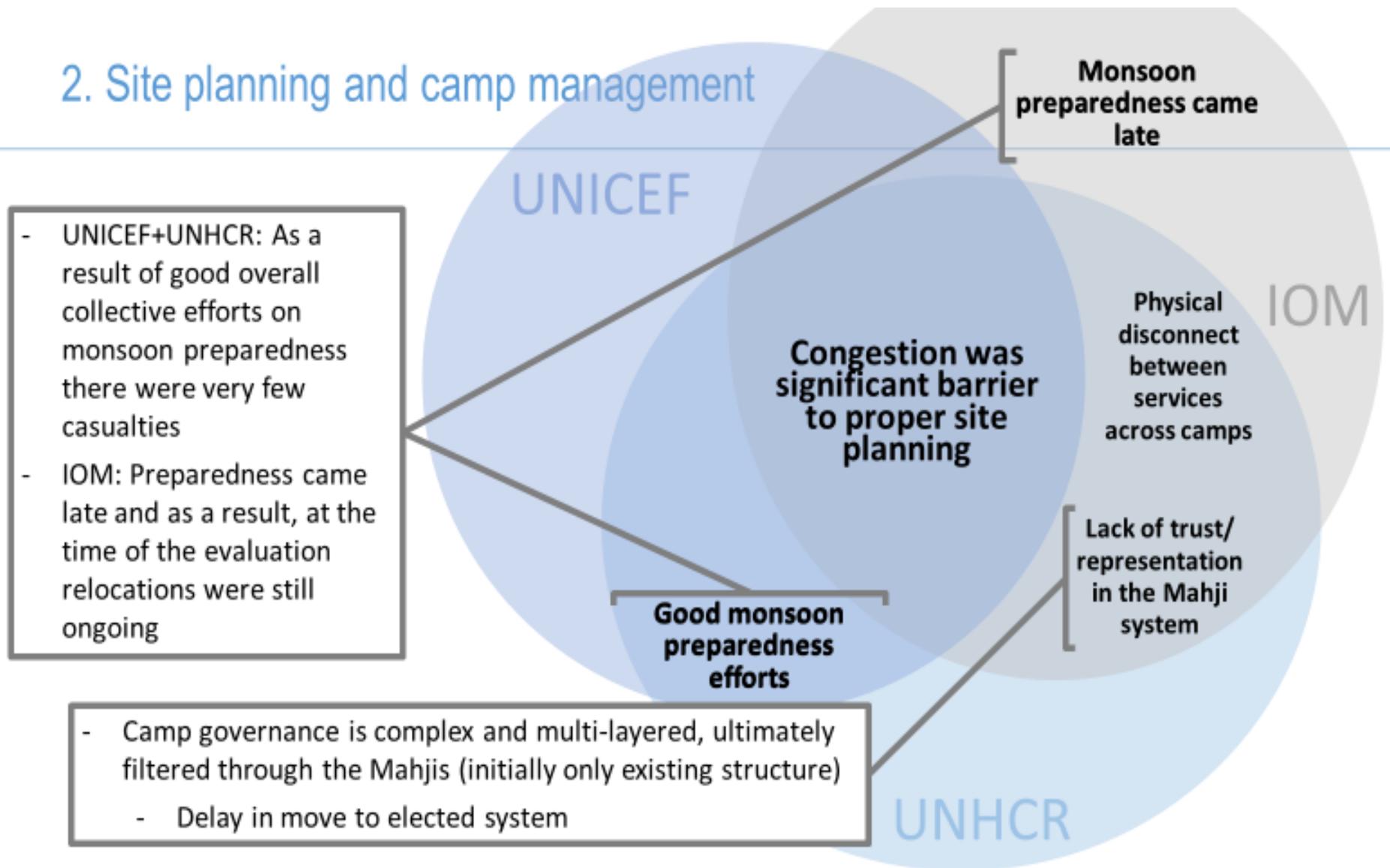
- Lack of proper site planning because of the initial haphazard settlement
  - UNICEF: This has stood in the way of inter-sectorality and raises advocacy responsibility

**Congestion was significant barrier to proper site planning**

**Physical disconnect between services across camps**

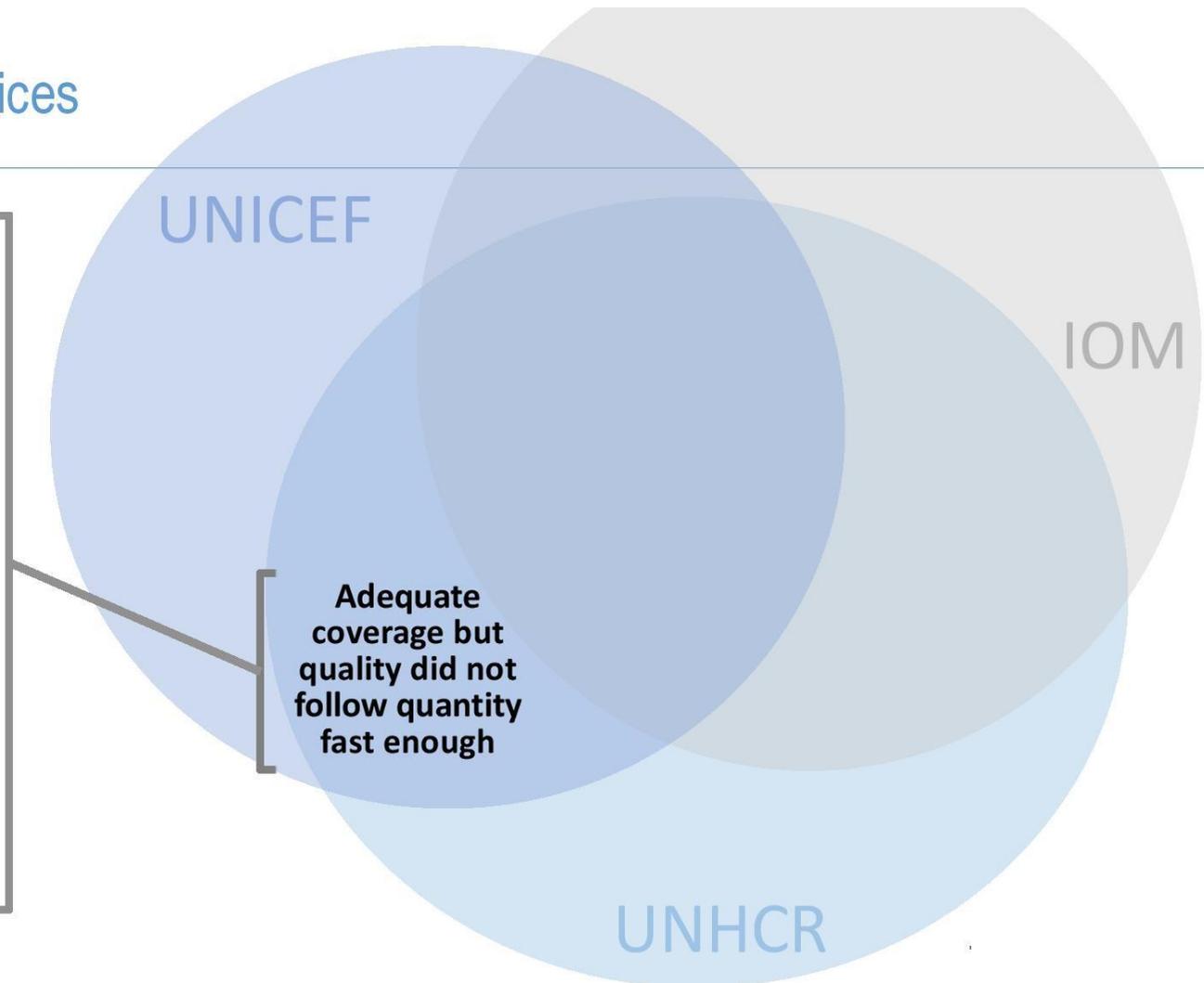
- A de facto 'two camp' management system in place
  - Tensions resulting from the different systems, and approaches used by UNHCR and IOM with geographic responsibilities in terms of coverage and delivery
  - Stronger referral systems would have eased the physical disconnect between services

## 2. Site planning and camp management



## Delivery of services

- Adequate coverage in terms of the percentage of the population reached, but standards unmet in many areas
  - Initial focus on 'life-saving' services focusing on high coverage, but quality was slow to follow quantity
  - UNICEF: overall weakness also insufficient degree of inter-sectorality



## Delivery of services

- Reflects the positive results achieved particularly in health and WASH
  - Coverage is by and large adequate, although also quite variable

UNICEF

**No major epidemic outbreaks**

**Adequate coverage but quality did not follow quantity fast enough**

- Overcrowding has constrained ability to achieve standards, most notably relating to adequate shelter
  - Lights, locks, gender-disaggregated toilets, and cooking fuel are also huge concerns

**Standards for shelter/NFI yet to be achieved**

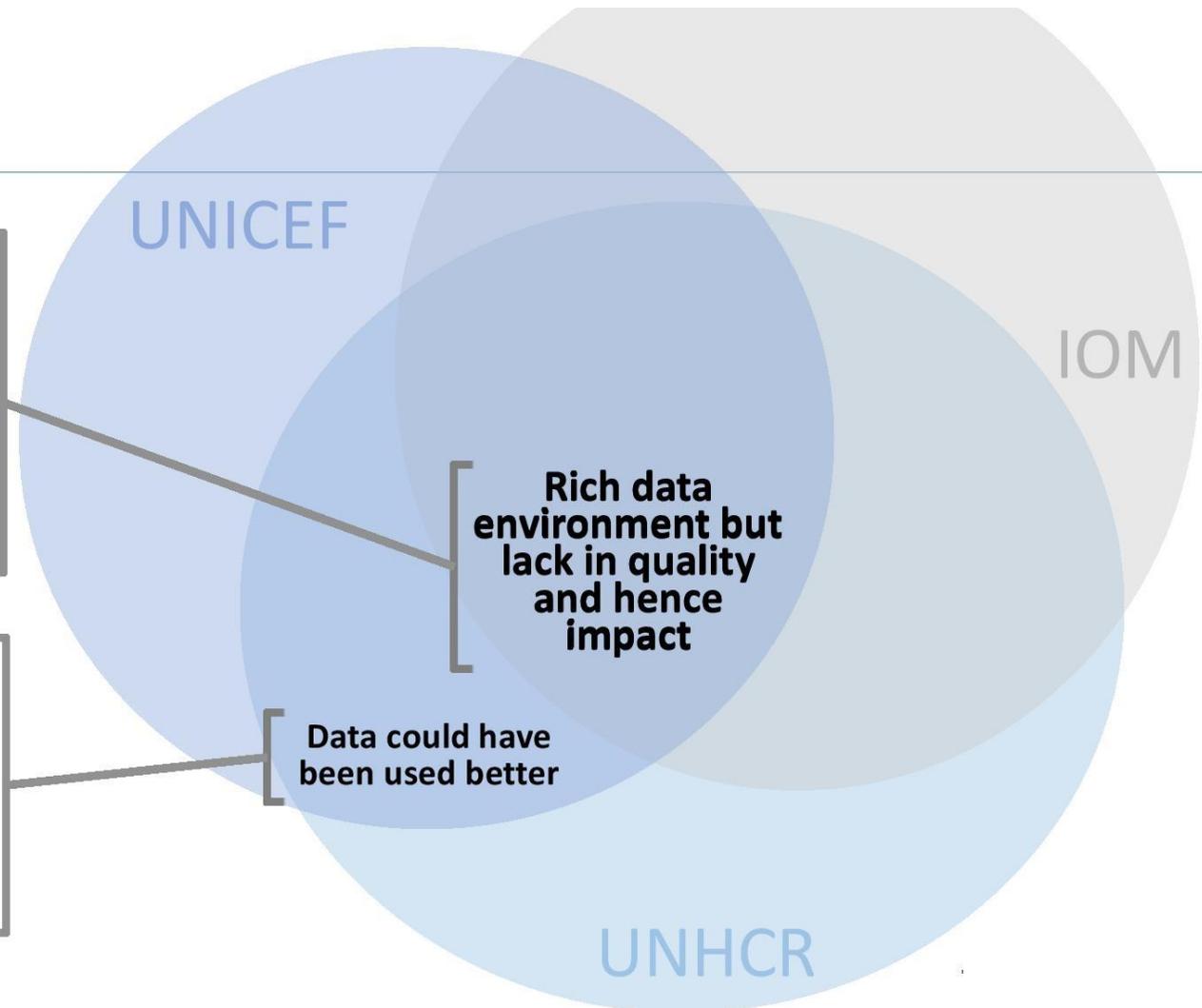
UNHCR

IOM

## Use of data

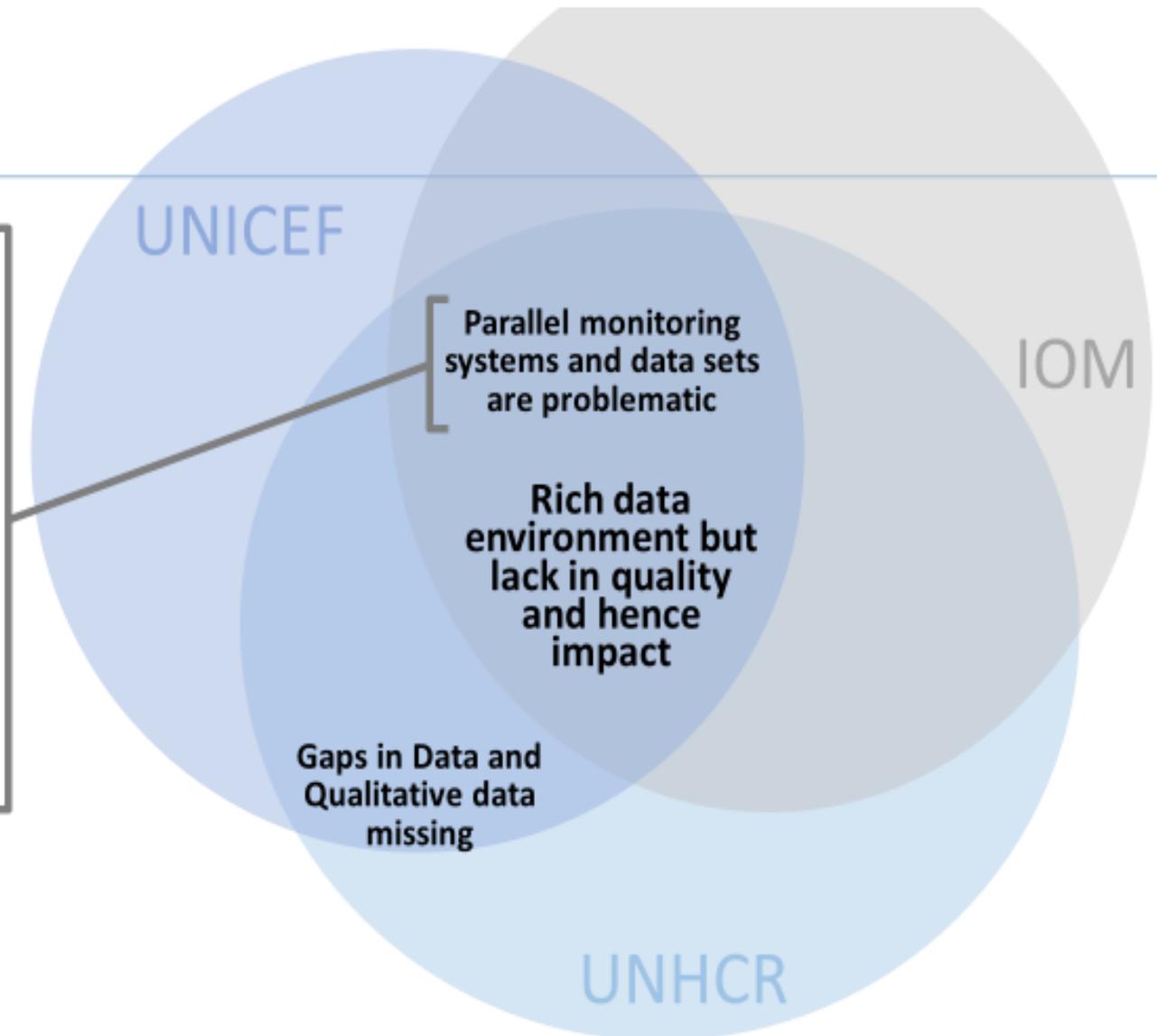
- Lack of feedback from affected community engagement in data monitoring
- Data collection too focused on coverage, lacking quality and gap analysis

- UNHCR: for policy-makers to understand risks and orient responses
- UNICEF: to ensure adequate coordination and underpin programmes



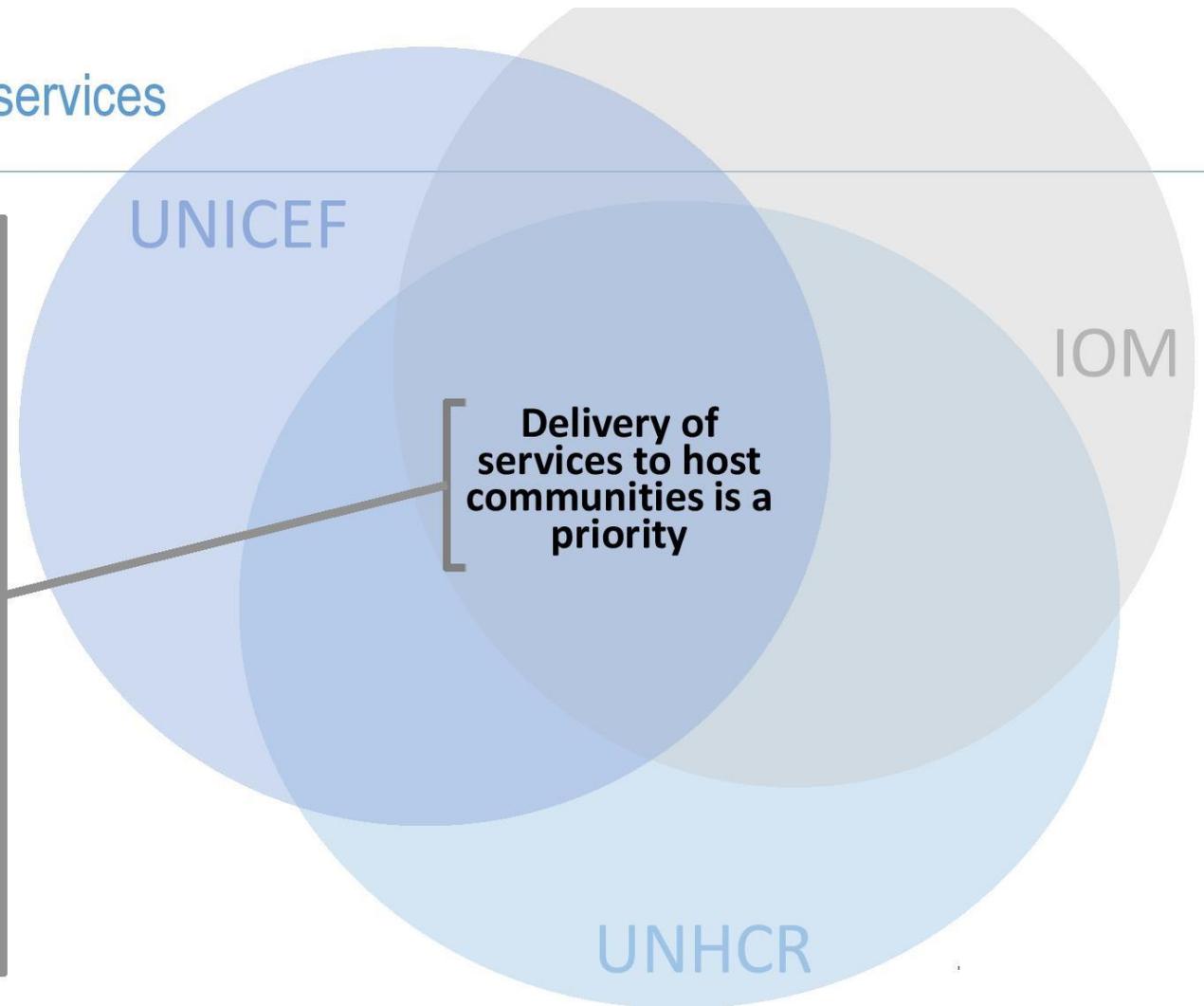
### 3. Use of data

- Data systems based on different indicators do not align easily, raising questions about efficiency and effectiveness
- Different sectors look at different factors for determining access data, which reproduces problematic separation of protection from other services, like WASH



## Host community services

- Good work to show solidarity with host communities has been done, but more is required
  - Water and employment significant areas of tension
  - Host communities need to receive information on project carried out on their behalf, and participate in their design



## 10. Medium/long-term strategies

- Medium term: the camps need to become more durable
- Long term: Systems-strengthening and technical assistance to government is a sensible transition strategy toward the medium to long term

**Durable camps and systems-strengthening**

- Building the capability of local government and local stakeholders is the most sustainable solution in the long term

**Building local capacities**

- Medium term: right to work, access to justice, freedom of movement + education are critical
- Long-term: commitment to *non-refoulement* + strategic prioritization of solutions

**Refugee rights and strategic prioritisation of solutions**

**UNHCR**

**UNICEF**

**IOM**

## Annex 6: Table 2 - Overview of common evaluation recommendations

### Preparedness

IOM	UNICEF	UNHCR
	<p>The evaluation recommends that UNICEF invest in collecting better political, social and economic intelligence for forecasting to inform its preparedness actions. The intelligence should be cross-border (and, where necessary, cross-regional), include local context and, where possible, be shared with other agencies. The intelligence should be translated into risk analysis and preparedness plans.</p>	<p>Strengthened Country Office: The Dhaka office should be reinforced with skilled policy and protection staff to collaborate with the Government of Bangladesh and senior UN leadership to chart options and consider and determine decisions in the coming years for the longer-term wellbeing of Rohingya people.</p> <p>Integrating a historical perspective in future planning: A review/synthesis should be commissioned to condense the key lessons learned from previous Rohingya responses, develop possible scenarios for the years ahead and make them relevant and accessible to front-line and HQ staff in ways they can actively improve the operation.</p> <p>Humanitarian imperative to respond: The strategic decision made by the senior-most leadership of UNHCR was to send a clear message to all staff to focus on delivery in Bangladesh. In future responses, UNHCR should be prepared to respond as it did in Bangladesh even when the mandate and coordination arrangements are not clear. This means a 'front foot forward' posture, or 'no regrets' policy.</p> <p>There is a need to rethink early warning systems in complex political environments. After the 2016 influx the organization arguably should have been on higher alert. UNHCR's early warning system should be internally reviewed to see whether it can be improved based on the experience of Myanmar, or whether additional measures are needed.</p>

## Data collection and information-sharing

IOM	UNICEF	UNHCR
<p>Urgently achieve the evolution to a mixed method and a more inclusive approach to key informants, ensuring that women and children are heard directly and consistently.</p> <p>Be systematic in conveying the methodological base and caveats of the report, and upfront explicit about who the KI are.</p> <p>If obstacles to interagency data sharing persist, take the issue to the highest level (SEG. Agency HQ, donors), as a matter affecting the coordination abilities of the overall response.</p>	<p>UNICEF should further invest in knowledge management. This could include developing a standard format for reports made by visiting advisers and setting up a system for monitoring the implementation of their recommendations or adapting the Emergency Management Team’s Action Tracker system.</p> <p>UNICEF should review the commonalities and differences of the information and data needed at the programme level and the sector level and ensure that these datasets are compatible from the onset of data collection.</p>	<p>Use of statistically representative sampling and household surveys to monitor protection: The use of such surveys and data collection systems was exemplary in Bangladesh and should be standard practice from the outset in any new L3 response. Systems for collecting, analysing and sharing such data quickly and transparently should be developed, taking into account protection and privacy concerns.</p> <p>Impact/outcome indicators for protection: Impact and outcome indicators for protection programming could be developed at a global and regional level, and systems to gather, use and share this data should be developed for ease of roll-out early in any emergency. The protection sector should be able to demonstrate its reach and effectiveness beyond numbers of consultations, or numbers of facilities. This may have to be done in collaboration with UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women as key actors in global protection implementation.</p>

## Protection

IOM	UNICEF	UNHCR
<p>Highlight more, to donors and the GoB, the continuation of unmet protection needs, advocating for more funding and acceptance of more protection specialists.</p> <p>Deploy additional staff with solid protection, PSEA and counter-trafficking experience to support the awareness raising and training of IOM staff, partners where needed and other agencies.</p>	<p>Review UNICEF’s guidance on advocacy in emergencies. Promoting the rights of children must involve robust advocacy messages, which should not only be transmitted publicly in UNICEF communications, but also in private in dialogue with governments and humanitarian decisionmakers. The review should consider UNICEF’s comparative advantage as an advocate for children in crisis contexts, how to maximize the relationship between</p>	<p>UNHCR must continue to advocate with all parties to respect obligations under international law, including upholding the principle of non-refoulement.</p> <p>UNHCR should, as in the case of Bangladesh, undertake protection audits to ensure that the basics of physical protection – i.e. lights, locks, and gender-safe and segregated toilets – are covered. This</p>

<p>Ensure that protection (and AAP) are more strongly integrated in site management and technical sectors from the outset, formally via terms of references for sectors and working groups and their coordinators, and in practice via briefings to new recruits and ongoing monitoring of staff behaviours and operational outcomes.</p> <p>Integrate protection into the L3 procedures and expand the institutional capacity to rapidly deploy very experienced protection staff to multiple complex crises simultaneously, over time establishing IOM as an active player in protection.</p>	<p>operational response and advocacy, and UNICEF’s advocacy position in relation to other actors.</p> <p>Strengthen efforts to address protection risks, including gender-based violence. In so doing, the relevant offices should strengthen and deepen inter-sectoral work among all programme sections and ensure attention to psychosocial support, children with disabilities and similar other risks and vulnerabilities.</p> <p>The relocation of Rohingya children to Bhasan Char island or their return to Myanmar inherently and fundamentally involves protection questions and rights issues. UNICEF should develop a position on these issues from a normative perspective and ensure that this position is framed in a set of advocacy messages in coordination with other United Nations agencies.</p>	<p>should become standard practice in the first six months in every L3 response.</p> <p>Emergencies of a certain size and complexity should assume that community-based protection needs to be established early on, including examining the availability and capacity of local service providers from the outset. Bangladesh should be studied for good practices that can be replicated.</p>
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### Leadership and coordination recommendations

IOM	UNICEF	UN
<p>Continue to influence the main coordination review exercise to ensure that it is inclusive, and results in more (time and cost) efficient, effective and accountable inter-agency coordination, that links shorter-term relief with medium-term transition and recovery perspectives, and actively draws on input from the different affected populations. Effectiveness at outcome level is more important than models and agency leadership.</p> <p>Ensure that IOM-deployed sector and working group coordinators have the experience and personal and professional competencies to foster</p>	<p>While the ISCG remains a temporary mechanism, there is an opportunity to make improvements and strengthen accountability. UNICEF should raise the findings of this evaluation and recent review exercises with the Senior Executive Group and the ISCG. Linked to other initiatives to strengthen coordination, it should work with the resident coordinator and the head of the ISCG to clarify lines of accountability and relationships, including the roles of sector leads with their home agencies and with the inter-agency coordination structures.</p> <p>Share the relevant findings and lessons learnt about coordination with the IASC and promote the inclusion</p>	<p>UNHCR, as the internationally mandated agency for refugee protection, should advocate to become the single lead agency for the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh (Regional Bureau for Asia Pacific).</p> <p>The success of the Global Compact for Refugees will largely depend on UNHCR’s ability to share space, build partnerships, and encourage other, better placed agencies to contribute to a comprehensive response. UNHCR should actively incentivize a culture of collaboration and partnerships. This will involve defining areas where active collaboration can and should be sought, and ensuring these areas are communicated throughout. In particular, deeper</p>

<p>collaborative practices among diverse actors with different views.</p>	<p>of the future of the refugee coordination model on the IASC agenda. In this process, review accountability issues in this model and make use of the cluster approach experiences.</p>	<p>complementarities with UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women for responses in the future would benefit UNHCR.</p> <p>UNHCR would benefit from cultivating a broad alliance and network of partners (operational and more broadly) for refugee operations that have a durable understanding of how best to achieve protection outcomes, and is based on an appreciation for different roles, perspectives, and sources of leverage of various actors.</p> <p>UNHCR should therefore re-examine the Refugee Coordination Model to ensure its applicability in complex new circumstances, with a focus on how to balance UNHCR's mandated accountabilities with the contributions of others</p>
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### Capacity-building of local NGOs

IOM	UNICEF	UNHCR
<p>Encourage the maturing of Rohingya community-based organisation, and open up space for their substantive participation, together with but also, beyond 'elected committees'.</p>	<p>UNICEF should experiment with innovative ways of building the capacities of its partners, for example, by seconding staff members for financial management, peering and mentoring rather than training. This should include capacity building on protection and rights issues.</p>	

### Strategy and context analysis

IOM	UNICEF	UNHCR
<p>Use informal channels of communication with GoB officials to discuss the approaching investment dilemma, the implications of likely decline in relief aid and the opportunities created by the promised development funding.</p>	<p>The evaluation recommends that UNICEF document the specific ways in which the congestion has impacted its ability to deliver and has ultimately denied Rohingya children and their families their rights. This work should inform UNICEF's future</p>	<p>UNHCR Bangladesh should consider drawing on lessons learned from other operations where it was successful with temporary or time-bound economic inclusion opportunities. While the long-term vision for the Rohingya should continue to be their safe and</p>

Start shaping IOM's transition, recovery and development strategy, with active attention to projects and investments with economic multiplier effect, not just basic service delivery and disaster risk mitigation projects. Include the reinforcement of local capacities to the point where they can take over as a strategic objective

strategies to respond to this crisis, both overall and in regard to specific programmes that were found to lack a thorough reflection on the context in which UNICEF operates. It should also be used to support UNICEF's continued advocacy in this area, by providing a stronger position grounded in evidence.

Review UNICEF's strategy for 2019 and beyond. Ensure it includes an analysis of the context identifies existing and potential issues and obstacles and explains how the strategy will address these. Be explicit about prioritizing and sequencing activities. It is recommended that this strategy includes a greater emphasis on inter-sectorality and gender, be underpinned by a rights-based approach and emphasize the centrality of protection in all aspects of UNICEF's work.

voluntary return to Myanmar, and citizenship rights; in the short term, creative options to enable temporary livelihoods, even in selected occupations, will go a long way in reducing harm and protecting refugees.

UNHCR can better draw on its long history and understanding of complex refugee crises to help the Rohingya response in the years ahead. A review/synthesis should be commissioned to condense the important points from previous responses, develop possible scenarios for the years ahead and make them relevant and accessible to front-line and HQ staff in ways they can actively improve the operation.