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# WOMEN'S SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE PROJECT: PHASE 1 FINAL REPORT



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OXFAM ROHINGYA RESPONSE

Cox's Bazaar, September 2018

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This paper was written by Michelle Farrington. Oxfam acknowledges the assistance of UNICEF and UNHCR in the development of this project and this report.



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# ACRONYMS

WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
RRRC	Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May and June 2018, Oxfam undertook research with Rohingya women and adolescent girls living in Cox Bazar refugee camps, focused on the barriers and enablers of using WASH facilities in the camps. The research brought two female architects to work with women and girls to adapt the design of existing facilities, and to design new facilities to meet their needs.

From discussions with women and girls, the main issues relating to WASH infrastructure were related to feelings of safety, privacy and dignity, with the number of facilities and the need to share with neighbours also being raised that things that made using the facilities difficult.

The architects were given a creative brief to look for innovative designs and approaches to meet women's needs and worked to factor in the suggestions they developed with women into their designs. The first drafts of their designs can be found within this document. Validation meetings within women continue to determine how well their views have been represented in the designs.

Furthermore, the project looked to examine the enabling environment of the camps, their geography and of the WASH sector itself and the barriers and enablers that NGOs also found when trying to incorporate the views of women and girls into their project planning.

A joint workshop between WASH, Protection and Gender representatives from the humanitarian community in Cox Bazaar will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> August. The aim of the workshop is to develop joint sectoral recommendations in response to the research, and realistic action plans for implementing these.

## BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Violence in south-west Myanmar, which began August 25th, 2017, caused many of the Rohingya population of Northern Rakhine State to flee across the border to Bangladesh. Within a short space of time, an estimated 680,000 new arrivals joined the existing 312,518 people who had fled during previous conflicts. Most Rohingya are now living in refugee camps, makeshift camps and spontaneous settlements in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upzilas in Cox Bazar. The rapid nature of the influx, along with difficult terrain, shortage of space and accompanying high population density, has presented numerous challenges to the humanitarian and host communities, and the Government of Bangladesh. Nearly one year on, and there are still basic needs unmet and unanimous concerns over protection issues. In terms of providing essential WASH facilities, there has been limited space for latrines, water points, bathing units and space for women to interact. Furthermore, attributed to the rapid scale up of humanitarian assistance, many of these facilities were set up without consulting the crisis affected community and are irregularly distributed across the different camps.

Feedback gathered from women and girls by Oxfam on the design of and access to these facilities highlighted significant challenges around safety, privacy and dignity, including management of personal hygiene and menstruation.<sup>1</sup> It also highlighted a broad diversity of preferences for specific activities such as menstrual hygiene management. These differences are influenced by shifting social and cultural norms, restricted mobility in a new social environment, privacy and overall safety conditions. Consultation and ongoing public health promotion work also highlighted another constraint for women and girls: space to gather together and exchange information is limited to small and cramped shelters. Other response actors have set up women friendly spaces but these may not be accessible for every woman due to socio-cultural norms resulting into restricted movement across the camp.<sup>2</sup>

Within the humanitarian community itself, site planning and WASH infrastructure planning/design processes have mainly been dominated by male architects and engineers, often with gendered assumptions about the user. In general, latrine provision in the initial stages of the response was largely determined through an engineering lens or from the perspective of quantitatively reaching minimum standards, and did not always incorporate women and girls' needs, gender disparities and socio-cultural constructs.

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<sup>1</sup> Toma et al, *Rohingya Refugee Response Gender Analysis: Recognizing and responding to gender inequalities*, Oxfam Policy and Practice, p. 22 onwards

<sup>1</sup> Ibid p.32

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Acknowledging these challenges, Oxfam implemented a project to work with architects – particularly female architects with a background or interest in social or feminist design and architecture<sup>3</sup> – to add a different perspective into the design and siting of WASH facilities. Whilst there has been research on urban planning with feminist architecture, there is relatively little research that applies this to emergency settlements and camps in conflict, disaster or rapid population movement contexts.

The project began in May 2018 with a series of key informant interviews with WASH actors working in the Rohingya response. In June, formative research was conducted with groups of women and adolescent girls to understand the barriers and coping mechanisms for maintaining their hygiene in the camp with the current facilities (specifically looking at latrines, bathing cubicles and laundry spaces). Later in the same month, the same groups of women and girls met with two female architects and participated in interactive design workshops, drawing and modelling different designs and adaptations to existing facilities.

## METHODOLOGY

**Project team:** The project was developed jointly between Oxfam’s Public Health Promotion, Public Health Engineering, Protection and Gender teams. Individuals from each specialism gave their input into the design of the project, the design of the data collection tools and the analysis. Four female architects, two Bangladeshi and two British, were engaged in the design of the tools for the project, with the two British architects then joining for data collection and design workshops in Cox Bazar.

**Selection of locations:** The locations for the study were limited to those where Oxfam has operational presence. Three locations were chosen: Unchiprang (camp 22) in Teknaf, camp 12 in Balukhali and Camp 4 in Kutupalong. These camps were chosen as it was felt they posed a range of different issues in their geography and density.

**Selection of participants:** The study worked with women and adolescent girls who had already been engaged with Oxfam through previous discussion groups such as Listening Groups and Protection Committees. The reason for this was to ensure trust between facilitators and participants for discussing sensitive topics.

**Initial discussions:** discussions with women and girls followed a session guide (which can be found in Annex 1). Due to time constraints, this guide was not followed in its entirety, however, initial discussions, ranking exercises and problem mapping were conducted with all groups prior to them meeting with the architects. Sessions were facilitated by female members of Oxfam’s

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<sup>3</sup> Social design looks at the designer’s role and the use of the design process to bring about social change. Social architecture looks at how structures ‘organise people in space’ and therefore contribute to or prevent social cohesion. Feminist architecture takes social architecture a step further to look at how the built environment organises women in space, and therefore contributes to ‘women’s place’ in society’. It is also interested in gender relations, and the importance and variety of individual experience within a specific space (Boys, J. ‘Is there a feminist analysis of architecture?’, in *Built Environment*, 1984).

Protection and Public Health Promotion teams who are trained in facilitating participatory discussions.

**Transect walk:** A transect walk was conducted by the architects upon first arriving at each camp, and prior to meeting with women. This was to help them better understand the constraints of space in each camp and the designs of existing facilities. It was initially planned that these transect walks would be done jointly with women and girls, however, due to time constraints this was not possible.

**Design workshops:** The architects reviewed the findings from discussions with Oxfam staff, and then with the groups of women and girls. Together, they sketched and modelled different designs for new facilities and for adapting the existing facilities. The findings from these workshops, plus discussions on technical limitations with Oxfam's Public Health Engineering team, were used to create the final concepts.

**Limitations:**

- Time: The timeline for the project was severely condensed due to complications with visa applications and availability of the architects to join the project.
- Language: to ensure that as much information as possible was captured in the discussions with women, interpreters were hired to work with the architects for the duration of their stay, however, there is the possibility that there were mistranslations and misinterpretations.

## FINDINGS

### 1. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Eight key informant interviews were conducted with male and female representatives from the WASH and protection sectors. It was hoped that key informant interviews would also take place with representatives from the gender sectors, however time did not allow for these. The discussion guide for key informants can be found in Annex 1; findings from these interviews are grouped by the themes below:

**Size and scale:** When asked about challenges faced by the response in meeting the WASH needs of women and girls, all key informants noted the size, scale and rapidity of the response as impacting on their ability to meet these. One informant noted that the influx was very fast, with many areas being self-settled, so having adequate space for appropriate WASH facilities was difficult to control. Extreme congestion, scale and urgency was thought to have compromised quality, which in turn led to a problematic environment for females. Whilst many informants felt that this was outside of the WASH sector's control, others noted that simple steps to improve the experience for women and girls might have been missed.

One informant noted the tension between quality and quantity, explaining that to date, the focus has been on numbers, rather than on a quality response. The same informant noted that it was not always possible to have a focus on quality in such a rapid scale up, but the opportunities to bring people together to work through the complexities that such a response posed, and develop innovative ideas that worked for the context and may have improved quality, were missed. Two informants cited the results of an early REACH survey that showed 60% of women not regularly using latrines; further commenting on the focus on numbers, they noted that even though quantitatively the WASH sector may be reaching standards, the reality is that the Sector is not if 60% of female users cannot or will not use the facilities built. One went onto say this mismatch between quantitative achievement, and qualitative experience for the user needs to be acknowledged as a failing and recognised as a more systemic issue that exists within WASH.

**Geography:** Five key informants noted the lack of space as one of the biggest barriers for being able to give user groups what they wanted in terms of WASH facilities. One key informant noted that even in consultation phase, some men and women specifically said they would not use some of the proposed facilities because of distance, despite the allocated sites being the only technically viable spaces to build. One key informant noted that men and women didn't want their latrines close to each other, saying 'sometimes when we go to the latrine, we cross' (meaning we see each other using the latrine) which was attributed to feeling uncomfortable, and women reporting feeling exposed when leaving the latrine.

**Consultation and feedback on facilities:** All key informants were asked about the level of consultation with women and girls regarding WASH facility design and siting. Nearly all key informants mentioned some level of consultation; most were regarding siting but there were very few on design. Two key informants noted that they missed opportunities to consult on designs when moving from emergency latrines to more durable structures. One key informant noted that in initial consultations, the biggest drivers for women and men wanting latrines were privacy and dignity, rather than health considerations. It was noted that there was not much feedback about laundry facilities, other than the observation that many people are installing bathing spaces inside their house, indicating that communal facilities are not offering the right levels of privacy. One informant noted that in discussion groups held with women, they explained they had made showers inside their houses because they felt unable to move around the camp without access to adequate clothing (burkha) to be able to move more freely around the camp. Some women noted that they were not able even to use the toilet without these, and were waiting until night to use showers and latrines.

One key informant noted that modifications to enhance privacy could have been – and still are – very simple, such as screens in front of latrines, however the lack of space and the need to adhere strictly to the WASH Sector and RRRC design approved designs, prevented them from pursuing



this further.<sup>4</sup> Another key informant noted that more broadly, the perceived ability to change the design was limited; if there had been more options, or the possibility for more choice in the approved designs, this might have helped engineers think of different options. However, two other informants disagreed with this, noting that the process to move from a proliferation of designs to something more standardised brought benefits of higher quality standards, however, one of these informants went on to note that they had ‘heard many times that these designs are not meeting women and girls’ needs.’ This informant noted that whilst designs are not being changed on paper, some NGOs are making changes, for example changing the height of doors, or making small modifications.

One key informant noted that standardised designs were mostly driven by technical considerations, noting, ‘the focus has been on what goes on below [the latrine substructure], not what’s happening above [the superstructure and the part the user interacts with]’. They noted that in working groups to discuss design, there were requests for field level consultation, but that these did not seem to have been taken up. Two informants noted the difficulty of engaging contractors for building WASH infrastructure in relation to consultation and feedback; one noted that it was challenging to change when, ‘the designs were approved four months ago, materials purchased... it then becomes very difficult to change the design, other than minimal changes.’ On a positive note, many informants were open to adapting designs based on consultation, noting that with good evidence and good reasoning the WASH sector could lobby with RRR and DPHE for adaptations that better meet user needs.

A link was made between the level of consultation and the capacity for hygiene promotion within the response. One informant noted that there was little understanding that ‘consultations either make or break facilities, in terms of use, O&M, etc.’ The same informant noted that speed and scale should not be a barrier to this, ‘regardless of how fast you want to do something, take a few minutes, consult and document’. This was seconded by another informant who noted, ‘If you are a WASH agency, you should know how to do consultation’, adding that this was a basic requirement for humanitarian staff, and neglecting the responsibility to do this should not be labelled as ‘lack of capacity’. However, it was also noted that there was not always capacity to do in-depth discussions on all topics; one informant said, ‘People are scared of consultation; they’re scared that people will suggest/ask for things that they think are wrong, or not technically possible.’

Lastly, one informant noted the role that consultation plays in understanding and responding better to culture, saying, ‘As a sector we don’t yet understand the cultural dynamics, because we don’t have enough time’. Going on from this, they noted that consultation was vital to ensure the approach used is appropriate to the context and the culture of the populations we work with.

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<sup>4</sup> The informant went on to note the strict process of submitting designs, costs and then the requirement to go through an audit under the Government of Bangladesh’s Foreign Donation (FD) system as a limiting factor in being able to make adaptations to user feedback



**Accountability:** Several key informants noted that accountability, and especially accountability to women and girls, has been very weak. One informant thought that this was due to the scale of the response; they noted that even now, NGOs are struggling to get enough staff, and new staff are usually not briefed in the importance of core humanitarian standards. Another informant noted that there was always something in the response pushing accountability down the priorities list; first getting to scale, then replacing emergency facilities, then preparing for the monsoon.

In terms of complaints and feedback, mechanisms mentioned by informants included information points, camp level mechanisms, outreach workers and community groups. One informant noted that there were lots of complaints about WASH facilities in the beginning, and teams were going back to the same groups to close the feedback loop, but there was so much happening that to do this effectively was difficult. They noted, 'It was hard to communicate back to populations the constraints the WASH agencies were facing'. Very few agencies were felt to be giving space to women and girls to give input, or bringing evidence and the voices of women and girls up to coordination levels, and this was seen as a missed opportunity. On a positive note, one key informant noted that stronger consultation was now happening regarding longer term planning, for example, water network and sustainable sanitation planning, and that opportunities for communities to give feedback are increasing over time.

Again, capacity was flagged as an issue for strengthening accountability to women and girls. One informant noted that capacity building needed to be done to reinforce the importance of consultation and accountability with affected populations, but that the scale and complexity of the response had prevented this from happening.

When discussing accountability, the role of the WASH SAG was raised by several key informants, with one noting that it 'has not been used for its proper function of strategic decision making, and [this forum] was missed in terms of raising and determining issues related to quality programming'.

**Considerations of gender:** Nearly all informants noted that the understanding of different gendered needs within the WASH sector response required improvement. A major issue flagged by several informants was the sex-segregation of latrines. It was noted by two key informants that there were discrepancies in requests from the community, with some groups preferring sex segregation, and others requesting facilities shared amongst households. One informant noted that even in cases where WASH facilities had been sex segregated and clearly labelled, women said they did not have control over who used the facilities, noting that 'men decide everything'. It appears that shared facilities without segregation were acceptable on a small scale because women found the use of these easier to control<sup>5</sup>, but when the number of users increased, sex segregation was more commonly requested, but often not provided, or not labelled clearly.

One key informant expressed frustration at waiting for approvals to build bathing cubicles with covered soak-aways to allow for more private washing of menstrual hygiene materials; within their comments, they noted that all officials in the approval process were male, and perhaps there was

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<sup>5</sup> Feedback from FGDs held by one key informant

a need for greater support for local leadership to understand the gendered dimensions of humanitarian response.

Capacity within the WASH sector was highlighted in discussions of gender. One informant noted 'many agencies see this an additional thing, rather than a cross cutting issue'. MHM was noted as a gap, but again, capacity within WASH sector agencies was flagged as a reason for this gap, 'many partners feel that if they cannot adequately do Hygiene Promotion, they cannot adequately do MHM.'

It was noted that additional capacity was being brought in to focus on WASH and gender specifically within the Sector, which supported requests from several key informants who noted that advocacy is required from the WASH sector to take gender considerations – and not only technical considerations – into designs approved by the sector and RRRC. One informant noted that there was a need for guiding principles – citing examples already in existence such as two pagers of latrine ratios – that was available from day one. Sector informants noted that the Joint Response Plan is quite weak in terms of supporting gender in the response, noting that only the gender maker is requested for. Finally, the role of the WASH SAG was raised again as having a key role in pushing a stronger understanding and action on gender within the sector.

**Culture within the WASH and Humanitarian Sectors:** Most interviews ended with a discussion of the role that the culture within the humanitarian and WASH sectors has played in the engagement of women and girls and their role in shaping the WASH response. Discussions ranged from the role of donors, the sector and individual agencies.

At the field level, one key informant spoke about difficulties in ensuring women's representation in structures such as WASH committees. He noted that when presenting the idea of mixed WASH committees, initial reactions from Bangladeshi engineers was that it was impossible. This was attributed to the idea of a 'shared norm' between Bangladeshi and Rohingya communities that women do not make decisions.

A number of key informants noted that there needed to be a culture change within organisations in the Cox Bazaar response, noting that often, decision makers are male, particularly within national NGOs, and that the gender make-up of the response team might have also contributed to women and girls' needs being further down the agenda. Other informants also noted that the scale of the emergency and rapid recruitments meant that cross cutting issues were not being well understood by individuals new to the sector. One informant noted that gender imbalance is 'endemic in WASH'. When asked why this was, the response was that the sector needs more engineers who can consider and understand social issues, not only technical issues, and that this is an issue that needs to be championed on a higher level. Another informant also noted that there needed to be a change in the capacity of engineers to think about the different needs of women and girls, and that the sector has a role to play in ensuring that these issues are considered in technical discussions. Here informants noted that there needed to be stronger engagement between WASH, protection and gender to change understanding and perceptions as a sector. Perhaps somewhat pessimistically one informant noted that this response might be a watershed moment for the wider WASH sector in terms of recognising the importance of incorporating the

‘non-engineering’ elements into WASH, noting, that ‘if an element of a response is going to fail, the Rohingya camps will test this to destruction.’

Linked to this, one informant discussed the issue of our own ‘technical filters’ getting in the way of understanding the real issues faced by women and girls in the camps, noting that, ‘Everything is filtered through our own experience of what we think women will have problem with’ and that recommendations and decisions for response often get filtered through lenses of engineering issues and solutions. What is needed is a more reflexive response, to respect women’s decision making in how the response is shaped, resisting the temptation to add our own biases into this.

Moving higher up the layers, one informant noted that that the overall global policy framework for WASH needs improving to bring more agencies to the same approach when it comes to community engagement and consultation to bring more predictable quality assurance.

## 2. FORMATIVE RESEARCH WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS

The second phase of the project involved iterative discussions with women and girls living in camps 4, 19 and 22 (Unchiprang). A total of 38 women participated in these small group sessions. The discussion guides used for these meetings can be found in Annex 1, however these were adapted by each facilitator in response to feedback given from the group and the time available. A summary of these discussions is presented below.

The initial question asked to all groups was regarding their practices and access to WASH facilities in Myanmar, compared to their practices and access now in the camps. A summary of responses can be found in table 1:

Facility/ Practice	Access and Practice in Myanmar	Access and Practice in Cox Bazaar
Bathing	<p>Some had one bathing facility per family, which was outside but next to the house, next to house</p> <p>Some had a bathing space inside their house (similar to constructions seen in Cox Bazaar with bamboo and tarpaulin)</p> <p>One group reported if a man had more than one wife, there was a separated bathing space for each, within their home boundaries.</p> <p>No more than 5 to 8 people used to use one bathing space.</p>	<p>In Cox Bazaar, all groups said they are using one bathing space for 15 households.</p> <p>There is no separated bathing space for men and women</p>
Laundry	<p>Participants reported wooden or cement slabs, near to bathing cubicles</p> <p>Water points were also available here, and they used the platforms to wash clothes</p> <p>During menstruation, participants used to wash the cloth inside the bathing cubicle or on the slab and dried them inside the bathing</p>	<p>In the camps, they use the bathing cubicles for cloth washing but they don’t have enough space for bathing room.</p> <p>They are using one bathing space between 15 households.</p> <p>Bathing spaces are not sex segregated. Both male and female are using the same space</p>

	<p>cubicles, where these were separate from men. If the house had no separated bathing facilities, they <b>dried</b> it on the back side of the house, hung on a string so that men can't see it.</p> <p>Drying clothes was done in their yards. There was enough space in each household to dry cloths.</p>	<p>Participants noted standing in queues and women especially noted they never get enough time for washing all necessary cloths.</p>
Latrine	<p>Participants reported one latrine for one household – used by both male and female</p> <p>Not more than 5 to 8 people used to use one latrine.</p>	<p>Now in the camps, they are using one latrine for 15 households</p> <p>There is no separated latrine for men and women</p> <p>Latrines are far from their houses</p>

Table 1: practices and facilities in Myanmar, compared to practices and facilities in the camps.

Women and girls were asked what major issues (barriers) they faced in being able to use the current WASH facilities, or that they felt were caused by the current facilities:

Facility	Issues Raised	Where raised?
Bathing Spaces	<p>Increase social pressures and unhappy relationship with neighbours, because every morning they stand in a queue to use latrines and some have huge pressure but other may have important work to do, thus create pressure among them</p> <p>Health issues (they are using their bathing space for shower, wash cloths and sometimes use as latrine)</p> <p>Time consuming (need to stand in queue &amp; it occupies their time of cooking, collecting water and doing other household chores)</p> <p>Increase domestic violence</p> <p>No sex segregated bathing facilities and small number makes it difficult for women to access freely during the day time</p> <p>Not enough lighting – most bulbs stopped working – and women do not feel safe to go to the bathing facility at night</p> <p>Bathing spaces are far from the water point; there are difficulties collecting water and then taking it to the space for showers and washing clothes</p> <p>Using the bathing facilities is time consuming as they need to stand in a queue and it occupies their time for cooking, collecting water and doing other household chores</p>	Camp 22 (Unchiprang)
	<p>The distance from shelters to bathing spaces</p> <p>Participants noted that many people are using same bathing cubicle and water point, and so they – particularly adolescent girls – feel uncomfortable to use in front of others</p>	Camp 19

	<p>Water points where people bathe are open, and there is not enough privacy to bathe there</p>	
	<p>There are families who have no bathing cubicles; when this is the case, those families have a small space inside their house. Participants noted that because of space issues, they are compelled to wash inside even if they don't like it</p> <p>There is no concrete floor, when they shower their clothes are getting dirty (mud floor), the facilities have a lack of good drainage systems, and stagnant water around</p> <p>Some of the bathing spaces set up have no roof and are in hilly areas; people on the top of the hills can see others further down taking a shower in the bathing cubicles, and participants said they do not feel protected inside</p> <p>Sometimes they use the bathing cubicles as a latrine, which they didn't like because it's not hygienic</p> <p>The infrastructure of current bathing facilities is not solid enough and participants felt that if there is a cyclone everything will just be destroyed</p> <p>Participants noted that they don't have a large bucket to carry water inside the bathing facility, and as such they do not enough water to wash themselves properly</p> <p>There is a lack of fencing around the bathing cubicles, which makes them feel like others can easily see them taking a shower.</p> <p>People who do have access to bathing cubicles share this with other households, roughly 10 people per family. Many of these do not have a proper drainage system; people who are further down on the hill are affected by the water running down</p>	Camp 4
Laundry Spaces	<p>Women wash their cloths in bathing spaces; because there are not enough, most of the time they can't wash their daily wears.</p> <p>They find it very difficult to wash their menstrual cloths in bathing spaces. As one bathing space is shared by both men and women, they feel afraid and shame if any man will see them washing.</p> <p>Not enough water to wash cloths and no nearby water points</p> <p>Because there is not enough space in the camp, they don't get space to dry their clothes. Most of the time they use their roofs and fences to dry, which often leads to cases of stealing.</p> <p>They find it difficult to dry their menstrual cloths and mostly dry at inside home in dark which they said is not hygienic</p>	22 (Unchiprang)
	<p>Laundry is done inside the bathing cubicles, because there are no other areas.</p> <p>For people who have a shower space inside their house, they do laundry there.</p> <p>Some people made spaces themselves from tarpaulin and bamboo using shower kits distributed by Oxfam (bamboo, plastic sheeting, wire)</p> <p>Women and girls need to go to tube wells for laundry and there are a lot of men around; they don't feel comfortable to wash their clothes there. Some mentioned washing their clothes (underwear and menstrual</p>	Camp 4

	<p>clothes) inside the shower space in their shelters but there are drainage issues which make the surroundings very dirty</p> <p>Participants did not feel that it was a good practice to wash menstrual cloths inside their house, leading to bad smells and stagnant water.</p> <p>Drying menstrual cloth is a challenge because they can't put them under the sun which would be good for hygienic aspects; they are difficult to dry in the rain</p>	
Latrines	<p>Women reported not eating enough food at night and giving less food to their children to avoid going latrine at night</p> <p>Most of the latrines are full and very smelly. This is one of the major reasons they are avoiding using latrines.</p> <p>Latrines are far from home and there is not enough lighting in communal latrine spaces. Women find it very difficult to go alone and always ask other people to go with them.</p> <p>They suffer an increase in domestic violence<sup>6</sup></p> <p>Because the latrines are far from houses, during their menstrual period, they avoid using latrines at night for fear of social stigma and keep the same cloth for the whole night.</p>	22 (Unchiprang)
	<p>Participants noted that they don't have latrine cleaning kits and a lot of the latrines are not clean.</p> <p>Participants noted that latrines have maintenance issues that are not resolved quickly.</p> <p>There are not enough latrines, and latrines are not sex segregated, one adolescent girl said: "If I'm in the latrine and I realise that there is a man waiting outside I don't feel getting out and I just stay inside the latrine until the man goes away"</p>	Camp 4
Water Points	<p>Participants noted they were happy with latrines, tube wells and bathing cubicles, however, the distance to the water point poses a significant issue in terms of Ozu, since they feel they cannot travel back home without being seen by a man.<sup>7</sup></p>	Camp 19

Table 2: Major barriers encountered in using facilities in the camps.

Women were asked which of the facilities and its associated issues were most important to tackle, and which issue, if it was fixed would make the biggest difference in their lives, with 1 being the most important. The results per area are summarised below:

<sup>6</sup> For both references to this, the point was not pushed further within the meeting, however, Oxfam's protection team organised follow up meetings with these groups to understand the issues better

<sup>7</sup> According to Muslim religion Ozu is a way of cleaning before going for prayer each time. After Ozu women are not allowed to be seen by men. If any men do see her, she is required to do Ozu again before prayer

Ranking/ Area	22 (Unchiprang)	4	19	
Group	Women & Girls	Women & Girls	Women	Girls
1	Latrines	Latrines	Tube Wells	Latrines
2	Laundry Space	Bathing Spaces	Latrines	Tube Wells
3	Bathing and Drying Spaces	Laundry Spaces	Bathing Spaces	Bathing Spaces

Table 3: Ranking exercises on which issues are the most important to tackle.

Problem tree exercises were conducted with each group based on the rankings per area above, to determine what women and girls felt were the root causes and consequences of specific problems relating to WASH infrastructure. The results are shown below:

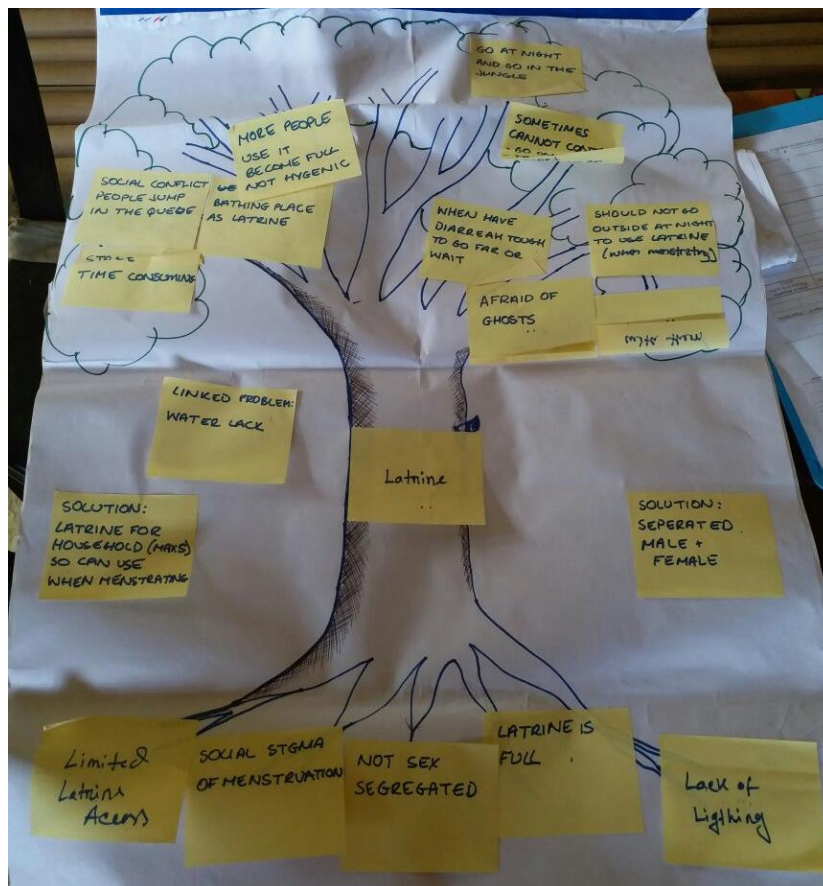
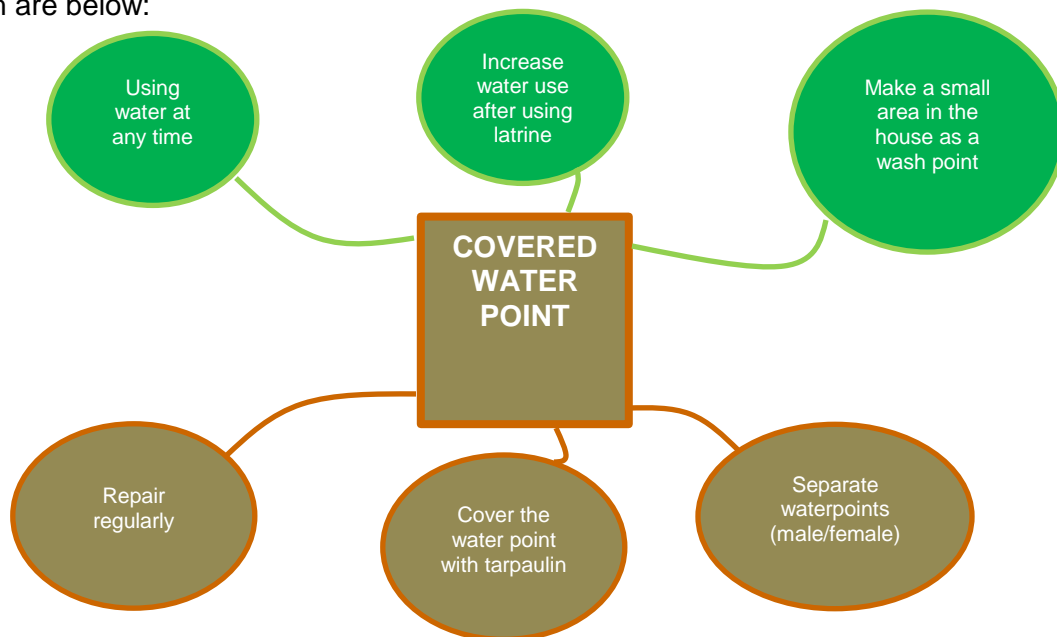


Figure 1: Problem Tree made with women in Unchiprang





In camp 19, there was sufficient time to also do solution tree mapping with women, the results of which are below:



For areas in which there was not sufficient time to undertake solution tree mapping, women and girls were asked what solutions they could think of to help overcome some of the more immediate problems:

Facility	Possible Solutions	Whose Responsibility?
Bathing Cubicles	Need for more solid infrastructure with roof	WASH Agencies
	Permanent platform (concrete needed)	WASH Agencies
	Bigger bucket (to keep inside the BC)	WASH Agencies
	Good drainage system	WASH Agencies
	Fence around that no one seems them entering and existing	WASH Agencies to provide material, and women can build themselves
	Improvements like hooks and shelves	WASH Agencies to provide material, and women can do themselves
Laundry Spaces	Shall be near the bathing cubicles	WASH Agencies
	Separate platform	WASH Agencies
	Fencing around the laundry space	WASH Agencies to provide material, and women can do themselves
	More sanitary cloths especially in the rainy season to support using a dry cloth	WASH Agencies
	Proper drainage with cement and bricks	WASH Agencies
Latrines	Need for decommissioning and desludging	WASH Agencies
	More latrines and sex segregated latrines are needed	WASH Agencies
	To clean latrines more regularly	WASH Agencies to provide material, and women can do themselves
	Ensure enough lighting at night	WASH Agencies
	Make one latrine for 3 households maximum	WASH Agencies

Table 4: Possible solutions for issues posed by current facilities.

The results of these discussions were used as a basis for briefing with the architects, and were built upon during their discussions and design workshops.

### 3. DISCUSSIONS AND DESIGNS WITH ARCHITECTS

Two architects – Imogen McAndrew and Freya Emerson – both students of Architecture at British Universities (University of Edinburgh and University of Newcastle respectively) joined the project after initial discussions with women and girls. They were briefed on the findings above, and

undertook transect walks around each location to understand better the current facilities, geographical and site planning constraints.

The architects held discussion groups with women and girls based on the initial findings to help them clarify issues of design and discuss various options with each group. Their final meetings included sketching and modelling workshops with women and girls to design and draw different options, or potential adaptations to existing facilities.

The sketches made from discussions with women and girls, and excerpts from their final report are shown below:

**Latrines:**

Considerations for latrines took into account both suggestions from women and girls, and solutions to tackle issues of water retention, landslides and erosion and efficient use of space and land.

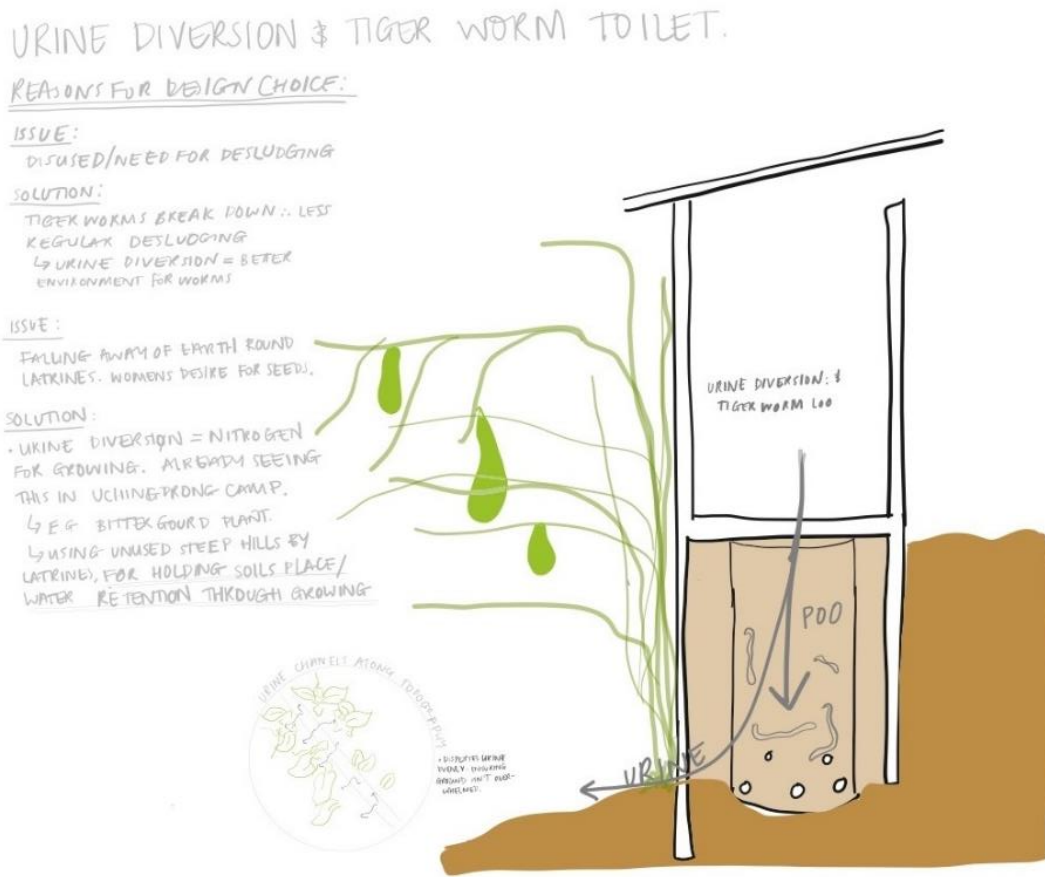


Figure 3: Initial alternative design for latrines

During the transect walks in Unchiprang, the architects noticed families growing vegetation around the latrines. When this was discussed with women and girls, they noted that partially, the plants were being grown to provide privacy around the latrine. Initially a composting latrine was

suggested with a pit directly below the slab to minimise the space needed for off-set pit latrines, and possibly providing space to build segregated male and female units. However, the architects also discussed with Oxfam’s Public Health Engineering team who suggested an adaptation to already existing Biofil latrines of urine diversion to minimise liquid load and provide nitrogen-rich soils for growing plants adapted to this soil type. The use of plants was also suggested to minimise erosion, which women and girls noted made the route to the latrine unstable and harder to get to, particularly in the dark.

To consider the design elements specifically discussed and prioritised by women and girls, the architects also worked with women on different configurations of screens to obscure the entry and exit from the latrines:

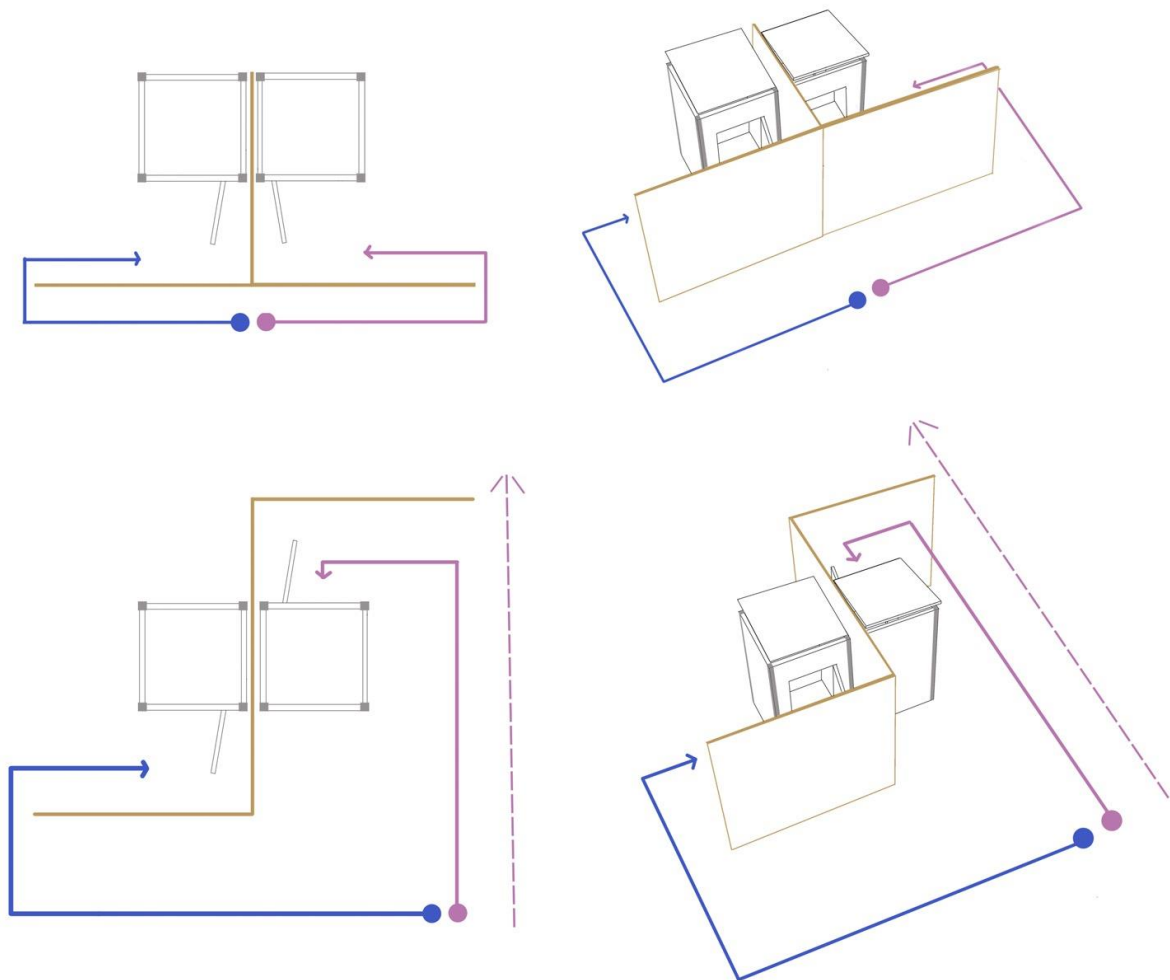


Figure 3: Screen configurations for latrines and bathing spaces

Women requested changes to the roofs, preferring those that allow for natural daylight, but privacy due to the hilly terrain. Two suggestions came from women’s groups; one to pitch the roof which

they thought would make it harder to see in from above, and another to have transparent sheeting with wood laid across (see figure 5) which would allow dappled light in during the day.

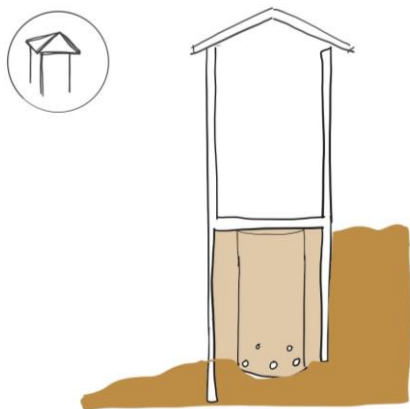


Figure 4: Pitched Latrine Roof



Figure 5: Transparent Roof with Wood

The architects noted that lighting was an issue for all the groups that they spoke to; they considered the use of Pee Power<sup>8</sup> or Algae lighting might be applicable in the camp context. Both these concepts require further thought.

In terms of materials women liked concrete floors and pillars because of their rigidity and security. Metal toilets (CGI sheeting) were mentioned in some discussion groups. The architects suggested wood as a material with good heat reflection, as concrete can absorb heat and potentially make toilets uncomfortable.

Rain water harvesting was suggested as a method to ensure water supply at the latrine and minimise the need to access water points (with the associated problems for these described above) to carry water to latrines, however the architects also noted that these would be non-functional for longer periods during the dry season.

Women suggested a number of smaller adaptations and additions that would make latrines easier to use including shelves, hooks, mirrors (for checking garments and also for feeling feminine) and to ensure locks are functional, and that doors fit flush with the door frames with no cracks or gaps.

### **Bathing and Laundry Facilities**

The architects tried to combine these facilities together due to the fact that both would need to be close to a water point. They noted that women and girls were uncomfortable to wash laundry and themselves at the currently constructed slabs, so there might be a need to relocate water points to areas where there were space for bathing and laundry facilities combined.

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<sup>8</sup> Pee Power refers to a prototype developed between University of West England and Oxfam, which has been successfully used at Glastonbury festival. More information here: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2015-03-05/pee-power-light-camps-disaster-zones>

Key features requested by women included that the space be female only, with separate bathing cubicles for each woman (i.e. multiple women can use at once, but cubicles offer further privacy); that there should be a drying space attached and the facility should be shared by a maximum of 10 families. Screening as per latrines was also requested, and concrete as a building material was preferred. Again, considerations of rain water harvesting were suggested to reduce distance between water collection and the point of use. Additionally, women noted the facility needed to have good ventilation and access to direct sunlight for drying sanitary products. Drainage from the facility should be discrete, and it should not be obvious where the water is coming from.

Women also requested a space to sit, particularly for elderly and pregnant women. The architects suggested a moulded seat with ridged areas that could be used for laundry (see figures 6 and 7). For individual bathing units (either within a larger facility or standalone) women suggested a high shelf that is in contact with the sun for drying sanitary products (see figure 8).

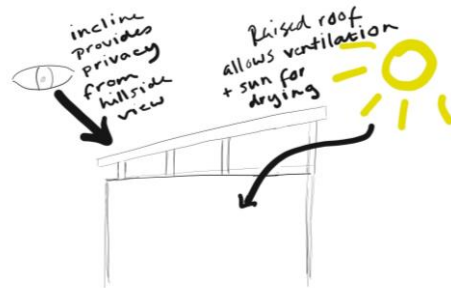


Figure 6: Roof configuration to support drying MHM Materials

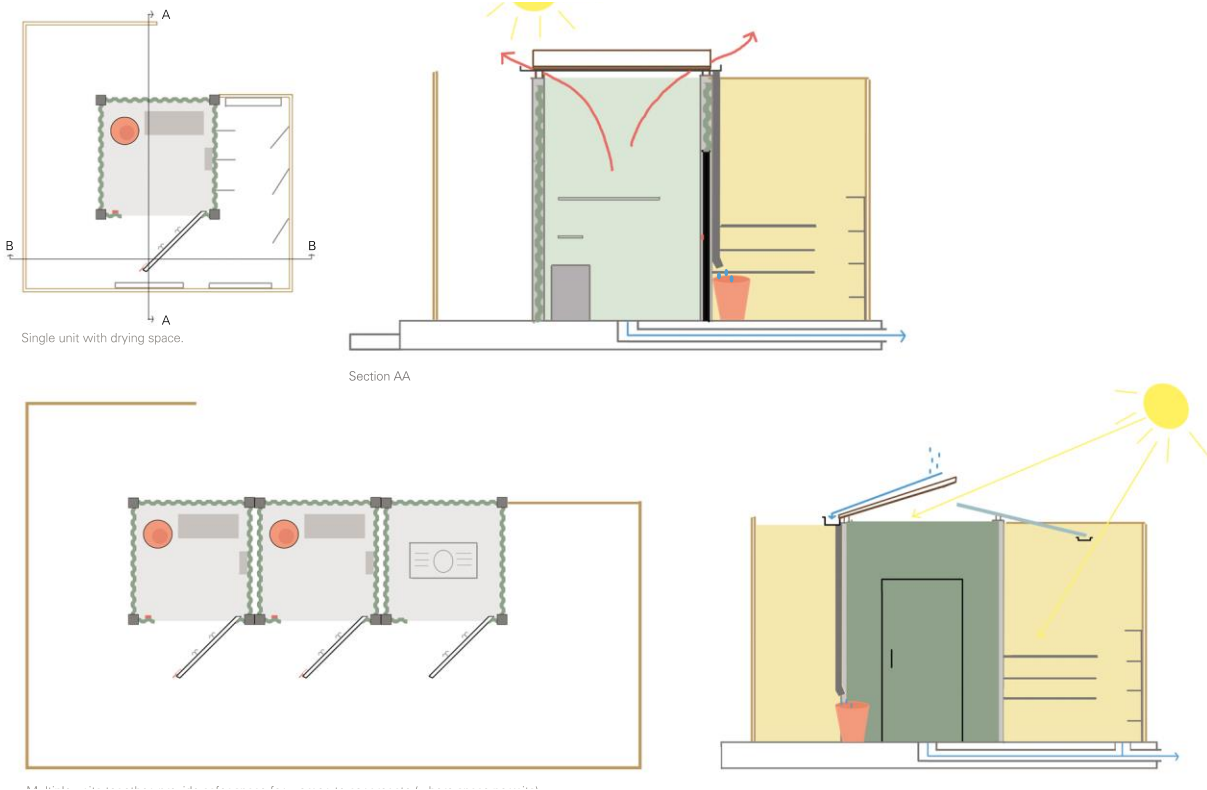
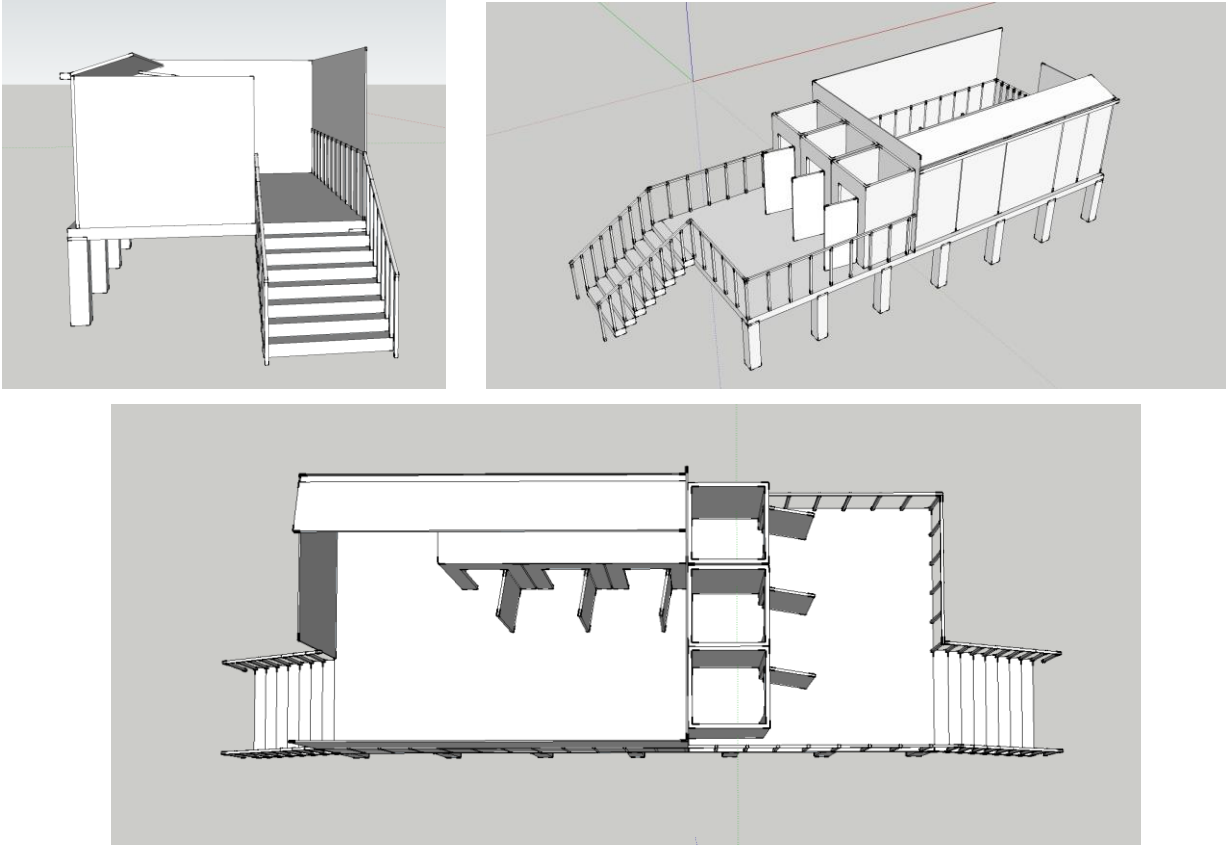


Figure 7: Various layouts suggested for bathing and laundry facilities

In Unchiprang, the architects were interested in using flood prone areas to provide larger infrastructure tailored to women, suggesting a shared bathing and laundry facility, since the area already received high water loads in the rainy season. An example is shown below:



Figure 8: bathing and laundry facility in flood prone areas; note that the bannisters are solid walls, but have been removed to allow internal visualisation.



Figures 9, 10 and 11: Further views of combined bathing and laundry spaces



Validation meetings took place with 20 women that participated in the initial discussions, and with 30 women as key informants. During these sessions, women were shown the concept designs and asked for their opinions. Relating to drying spaces, women most appreciated the space to dry clothes, that the design allowed for sunlight and privacy, however they noted that despite liking the design, they thought that space would be a problem to construct the design as shown. In terms of the bathing facility designs, additional requests included a platform to sit, with a higher platform for cleaning (eliminating the need to bend). When asked about the urine diversion design latrine, most women liked the idea because of the shade that plants would provide, and bring able to grow fruit. Some women noted that the fruit would lead to less soil erosion and that the plants would be good for the environment. They thought the design would lead to less smell and flies.

Validation meetings were also conducted with Men in two camps (Camp 19 and Unchiprang). The findings from men corroborated many of the findings from women in terms of use and access of facilities. Men particularly liked the urine diversion toilet, for similar reasons to women, however they also noted that they as a community would find space to be able to build the larger facilities, such as the drying spaces.

#### 4. DEBRIEFS AND DISCUSSIONS POST-PHASE 1

Presentations of the initial findings took place at the WASH Sector, the Hygiene Promotion Working Group and the Shelter Sector. Discussions were held after each presentation for initial feedback. The idea of expanding such research or a similar consultative approach for other groups within the camps – such as children or people living with disability – was raised at each presentation, and although this research was focused specifically on the needs of women and girls, such requests highlight the need for higher levels of consultation on design with specific user groups to ensure the changes suggested improved experiences for the widest range of users.

Concerns were raised at the WASH Sector meeting on changes to agreed designs for latrines and bathing spaces, as a recommended design for these facilities already exists. Discussions followed that some changes would involve minor alterations to superstructures – such as additions of hooks or shelves – and therefore do not change the overall design, however, it was raised that this project was also to look at how designs might need to change in the future to incorporate user feedback to improve their overall acceptability and the user experience.

#### 5. OUTCOMES OF THE SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE WORKSHOP

A joint workshop between WASH, Protection and Gender representatives from the humanitarian community was held on 9th August at the Seagull Hotel in Cox Bazaar. The workshop was attended by 54 participants with a mix of representatives from WASH, Gender, Protection, Shelter and Site Management and Architecture, and a mix of field, management and coordination level representatives. The aim of the workshop was to develop joint sectoral recommendations in response to the research, and realistic action plans for implementing these. The full workshop report can be found in Annex 3.

Participants were separated into groups, mixed by specialism, to form joint recommendations for tackling the following issues raised by the research: design, implementation of WASH facilities

(including consultation), accountability, capacity at field level and coordination. The groups were asked to think about 'quick wins' that could improve life in the camps for women and girls in the short term, and longer term improvements. The results of this exercise are presented below:

#### A) DESIGN

- **Ensuring a pilot phase for all facilities and new designs:** Having models, drawings and ideas to share with communities prior to construction to discuss and adapt with the users. Building pilot models of new facilities so that people can see them and try them before constructing en-masse.
- **Design adaptations to existing facilities:** Installing solar lights in all latrines and wash facilities (refer to Protection Sector guidance on this), install locks and bins for MHM, shelves and ropes for hanging clothing, and add ramps for PLWD.
- **Consider other aspects of MHM in design, including washing, drying and hygiene:** Ensure waste water is fully managed for each facility, and water available close to bathing facilities. Install handwashing stations.
- **Make improvements for privacy and dignity:** include screens, develop cleaning mechanisms with communities, and better access routes from households
- **Undertake a design review for WASH facilities** working across sectors to do this (*this was also discussed in the Coordination group*)
- **Undertake advocacy** in coordination with site management on additional land for refugees or redesigning existing settlements to make better use of space
- **Ensure maintenance systems are community-based** to speed up simple repairs that prevent people using facilities
- Where possible, include certain WASH facilities in the **design of water network systems**

#### B) IMPLEMENTATION INCLUDING CONSULTATION

- **Engage key influencers and communities in all stages of the programme cycle:** It was felt that there was currently little community involvement in implementation of WASH programmes, with many actors adopting a 'service provider' mindset. The group also discussed the importance of understanding the community in terms of culture, perceptions and norms to support better approaches to implementation.
- **Create flexible designs which can be adjusted to different contexts:** The idea of a simple design with a menu of add-ons, or adaptations was suggested to be able to allow a broader package of designs to be approved by DPHE and RRRC, who should also be involved in the development process. However, it was also noted that sometimes design processes are too 'expert driven' and need to be widened out more, and that the underlying principles – of ensuring facilities are safe and promote dignity – were more important than perfect designs. Advocacy for new designs to be approved was also discussed (*this was also discussed in the design group*)
- **Planning installation of facilities and hygiene promotion/behaviour change communication together:** Ensure that hygiene promotion and behaviour change programmes are planned in parallel to facility installation; it was noted that the presence of facilities doesn't mean that people will use them immediately and that there needs to be a way to help people adapt to a new context in terms of mindset, comfort levels and confidence. Better links between hardware and software elements of WASH programming supports this.

- **Emphasise community engagement and ownership during implementation:** particularly looking at the ways communities can be involved in constructing and improving their own facilities. A period of piloting different types of designs, discussing project plans in advance of implementation, discussing expectations and sharing the results would also be beneficial (*this was also discussed in the design group*).
- **Work with communities that are most receptive and supportive:** This discussion centred around the 'diffusion of ideas' concept of behaviour change, to identify those who are willing and excited to adopt new approaches and start with these individuals/communities first, allowing these approaches to diffuse wider into communities.
- **Involve communities in monitoring contractors:** Contractors need more careful supervision; involve communities, especially facility users, in monitoring the work of contractors, including training for community members, and developing appropriate feedback mechanisms.
- **Identify and mitigate protection risks in implementation:** it was noted that women can sometimes be punished within households and communities for taking different roles encouraged by NGOs. There needs to be a longer-term goal around also including men to change norms in a way that is safe for women.

### C) ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Consultations with women and girls at all times:** To better understand the 'harmful' effects of some of the facilities we are installing or plan to install. Sensitisation for WASH staff on what these harmful effects might be and how to mitigate them.
- **Listening to and acting on feedback:** closing the feedback loop with women and girls so that they are able to see that raising their concerns is valid and makes a difference
- **Ensuring safety from harm:** quick wins being locks, screening and the orientation of latrines (*this was also discussed in the design group*) and the provision of keys for households sharing facilities to better manage them.
- **Better gender balances in WASH activities and staffing:** empowering and motivating communities – including men and boys – to maintain facilities. Gender balance in WASH teams can support in identifying issues for women and men.
- **Joint monitoring, assessments and capacity building:** for WASH, gender and protection staff. Build the capacity of WASH staff to identify protection and gender issues. Conduct joint monitoring visits, both internally at organisational level and also at Sector level. Use checklists developed by protection, gender and WASH sector to support this.
- **Increase the capacity of Community Based Volunteers to identify protection and gender issues:** support stronger monitoring and reporting, focusing on the needs of women and girls.
- **Improve accountability to women and girls by providing space in governance structures:** including joint research on how to do this safely for women. Ensure that men are allies in this.
- **Work with donors to push for stronger accountability mechanisms:** honest reporting to donors, and push for donors to demand accountability from NGOs, and for NGOs to demand accountability mechanisms are funded by donors.

## D) CAPACITY AT FIELD LEVEL

- **Expand the ToR of the Core Facilitator Team to look also at facility adaptations suggested by communities:** Get more actors involved in the CFT and build that team's capacity for analysing facilities and activities in terms of gender and protection, and undertaking spot checks with communities on their preferences for adaptations.
- **Promote cultural adaptability:** ensure that our work is building trust with communities, through respect for culture, active listening, through acting on feedback and closing the feedback loop.
- **Quality control for constructed facilities:** strengthen feedback mechanisms to also look at this, and involve WASH committees and women's groups in these discussions. Support women to engage in the design, construction and supervision of WASH facilities.
- **Analyse the power structure:** CIC, WASH focal agencies, Imams, Mahjis are all male. Learning needs to be drawn from the process of including female Mahjis in camp 19 and the effect this has on female representation.
- **Internal communication:** All agencies should be encouraging gender, protection, WASH and shelter etc. to talk to each other more in the field, to discourage the perception that they are different entities. Do organisations have sufficient gender and protection capacity? If not, there should be further support from the sector.
- **Learn and share learning:** learn about issues through conducting gender separated feedback and consultation groups. Orient – particularly male – staff on gender and protection considerations. Share more learning between men and women at camp level too to determine whether the issues are the same between both sexes and how each group can support each other.
- **The capacity of the Government and Military:** the group was unsure how to influence with these two stakeholders, however, suggestions included making use of the checklists and guidance, providing advice on optional extras for WASH facilities (hooks, shelves, mirrors etc) and to provide support in quality control. Undertaking advocacy at higher levels to ensure that making relevant adaptations that meet the needs of women is not seen as a 'block' to constructing quickly or utilising approved designs.
- **Undertaking peer reviews and community reviews:** Working between agencies to share examples of good practice, for example joint field visits, and working with communities to rate their satisfaction and participation in the implementation of WASH facilities.

## E) COORDINATION

- **No more sub-working groups:** It was felt that creating another group would not necessarily move the agenda forward between WASH, gender and protection. Rather, existing relationships and groups should be used for further engagement i.e. women's centres.
- **Strategic advocacy across sectors:** to WASH agencies, which would also include people that influence standards e.g. the Government, to put pressure on organisations to align with minimum standards. Name and shame those that don't comply.
- **Adapt the unified approved design:** Create adaptive designs that work in different contexts. Create a one-off task force to collate findings about WASH facilities to date and

include protection, gender, GBV, DPHE and WASH in determining new designs. This group should be action oriented and include decision makers.

- **Upgrade existing facilities and enforce consultation as an integral part of all levels of implementation**
- **Ensure coordination meetings are action oriented** and include more inter-sector and intra-sector discussions between different technical working groups.
- **Conduct joint research into the needs of women and girls:** across actors and across sectors that has bigger reach and bigger impact
- **Monitor upcoming changes in governance structures and how women can be more engaged**

Following these discussions, groups selected one of the recommendations that they felt was important to implement and were asked to create an action plan for this. Full action plans can be found in the workshop report; however, a summary of planned actions can be found below:

- **Action Plan 1:** Protection Sector to lead on documenting lessons learnt from recruiting female Mahjis in camp 19 and share the results across WASH, Gender and Site Management. Joint team at camp level (WASH, Gender, Protection focal points) to work together on community mapping to identify other groups in which women's participation could be promoted. This group to undertake risk assessment for increasing women's role in various groups and monitor.
- **Action Plan 3 & 5:** WASH SAG – including DPHE - to meet to discuss further, inviting members of Protection and Gender SAG/Sectors. To determine what research has been conducted already, set 2-3 agencies in charge of developing a design menu, and a time frame for review. If required, formulate an advocacy plan for promoting this approach to DPHE and RRRC.
- **Action Plan 4:** Sanitation working group to collaborate with Hygiene Promotion working group on the set up of a Core Facilitation Team for WASH facilities, taking lessons learnt from the Hygiene Promotion CFT formation. Agencies to provide Sanitation focused staff (engineers) to join the CFT to promote good practice in design and implementation of facilities including gender and protection considerations. Initial training to be developed jointly by WASH, Gender and Protection and attended by Sanitation and HP CFTs.
- **Action Plan 6:** Oxfam to pilot this in a minimum of two working areas and to support at least one other agency to undertake this work in one of their working areas. The process and results will be monitored and documented to determine the impact of implementing quick wins.
- **Action Plan 7:** Hygiene Promotion Working Group to review sector level monitoring to ensure that more qualitative parameters on satisfaction are included. To produce guidance on including qualitative monitoring looking at gender and protection issues for WASH & MEAL teams. WASH Sector to promote the use of the latrine and bathing facility check lists for all partners.
- **Action Plan 8 & 9:** Oxfam to work with BRAC University to develop a network of student architects for involvement in similar projects. Oxfam to support one block within Rohingya camps on a community led re-design of space to support better quality of life, including shelter designs, WASH designs, use of space etc. To create a working group of agencies for that block, secure support from site management and CIC. Once site plans and designs are created, create a community action plan for making changes towards the finalised site design.

- **Action Plan 10:** Oxfam to share guidance and lessons learned from its listening group project which is very similar to Action Plan 10. Oxfam to support a minimum of one other agency in piloting the approach in their working area.

## F) NEXT STEPS

Phase two of the social architecture project consists of three key activities:

**Build of pilot facilities:** Utilising the findings and concept designs generated in Phase 1, and drawing on the principles of social and feminist architecture, Oxfam will work with groups of women and girls in Unchiprang and Camp 4 to develop detailed designs and plans for two pilot structures.

**Implement recommendations from the multi sector workshop:** Oxfam will support work in with the WASH sector to support the implementation of recommendations developed in the Social Architecture Workshop.

**Development of a network of architects to support similar projects in other sectors:** Working in partnership with Brac and BUET universities, Oxfam will develop a network of student architects for involvement in similar projects, including a possible project to engage communities, architects and agencies across different sectors to evaluate use of space in one block, and create plans for re-designing the space to support better quality of life, incorporating designs for shelter, WASH and communal spaces.

The findings from Phase 2 will be documented throughout, actively involving the participants and with the aim to develop a case studies and clear guidance on project development to facilitate learning within the national and global WASH sector.

# ANNEXES

Discussion Guide for Social Architecture Project	<a href="https://oxfam.box.com/s/bsuilfozo3budhmbec46zwuhlzh0pb06"><u>https://oxfam.box.com/s/bsuilfozo3budhmbec46zwuhlzh0pb06</u></a>
ToR for Social Architecture Project and Architects	<a href="https://oxfam.box.com/s/sk6rj6x7xtffv69uso6tth4pzs2lyln"><u>https://oxfam.box.com/s/sk6rj6x7xtffv69uso6tth4pzs2lyln</u></a>
Workshop Report	<a href="https://oxfam.box.com/s/gbxh55irp2t2eg6ru3yzmudf6iinztcp"><u>https://oxfam.box.com/s/gbxh55irp2t2eg6ru3yzmudf6iinztcp</u></a>