

## Improving Lives and Livelihoods Through Cash Transfers: A Humanitarian Assistance Project in Maungdaw Township, Rakhine - Myanmar

The outbreak of violence in Rakhine State of Myanmar on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2017 resulted in one of the largest humanitarian crises in recent history. An estimated 728,000<sup>1</sup> people fled to Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and thousands more were displaced internally within Rakhine State. Rakhine State is one of the most deprived and underdeveloped states in Myanmar and the eruption of violence and resulting displacement, restriction of access and movement has further deteriorated all communities' possibilities to meet basic needs and continue with their livelihoods.

The Red Cross Movement (RCM), involving Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has been proactively involved in providing food aid and other humanitarian services to the vulnerable people affected by the violence in northern areas of Rakhine.

In an effort to strengthen recovery among the food aid dependent population, MRCS with multi-lateral support from IFRC, designed a livelihoods-focused recovery project. The one-year project, which started in November 2018, is funded by Danish Red Cross. It targets 5 villages with populations affected by violence in Maungdaw Township.

The selected project villages are presently covered under food aid distribution by RCM. Targeting of vulnerable households for cash assistance to support livelihoods is facilitated as a key component of the project.

Beneficiary selection criteria includes; *i)* Food aid dependent, *ii)* Permanent resident, *iii)* Household income level of below 100,000 MMK, *iii)* Women headed household and *iv)* Household with disability members.

A process of participatory community-based beneficiary selection was applied based on the above criteria. Trained village level volunteers' groups have been actively involved in facilitation of community level processes to implement the project. Village notice boards displaying project information and a phone line for feedback and complaints are key accountability and transparency measures.

A total of 512 beneficiaries (Male 76%, Female 24%) benefited through the cash assistance for livelihoods recovery. The targeted beneficiaries have undergone orientation on livelihoods recovery and business plan development process. The livelihoods cash grants supported sector activities as follows: Agriculture– 5%, Livestock<sup>2</sup>– 76%, Small Business– 10% and Fishery– 9%.



*Beneficiary receiving cash in envelope*



*Beneficiaries after receiving cash payments*

### **Beneficiary Profiles – key findings:**

- 100% beneficiary households are dependent on food aid distribution.
- 63% reported having access to land for paddy cultivation before crisis. Only 11% reported cultivation of last paddy harvest (partial) of 2018.
- The average household monthly income is MMK 84,339 (\$60), the main sources of income are agriculture, livestock and daily labour.
- The average household monthly expenditure is MMK 73,883 (\$55), 66% of the monthly income is spent on basic needs (Food, clothing, Health and Non-food items).

<sup>1</sup> ISCG Situation Report Rohingya Refugee Crisis, 11 October 2018, page

<sup>2</sup> Livestock beneficiaries include purchasing of cow for milking and agriculture purposes

The Cash grant size provided to each beneficiary was 400,000 MMK (CHF 250 approx), a total of 204,800,000 MMK (CHF 128,000 approx) has been paid to a total of 512 beneficiary households (2,560 people).

Village	Total Benf.	Livestock	Agriculture	Small Business	Fishery	Total Amount of Cash (MMK)
Aung Minglar	64	20	3	16	25	25,600,000
Hpar Wat Chaung	53	28	0	11	14	21,200,000
Lone Don	129	105	7	14	3	51,600,000
Ngan Chaung	94	93	0	0	1	37,600,000
Paung Zar	172	142	17	12	1	68,800,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>204,800,000</b>

**Overall Objective:**

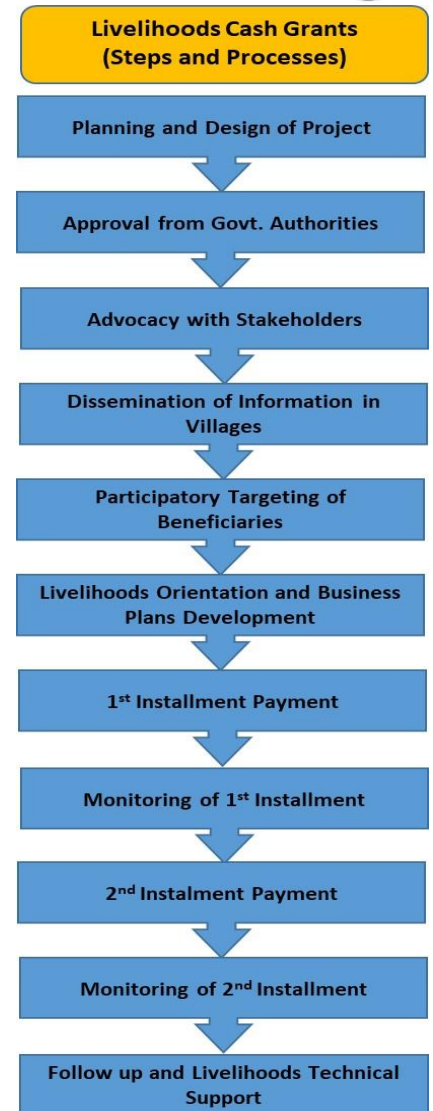
Provide timely, effective and relevant emergency humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people affected by the violence in northern areas of Rakhine State in Myanmar.

**Specific Objectives:**

- Strengthen coping capacity of vulnerable groups through cash assistance to improve livelihoods.
- Support capacity building of MRCS, particularly staff and volunteers for an effective and efficient delivery of humanitarian services.

**Next Steps:**

- Conduct impact monitoring and regular follow ups with beneficiaries.
- Provide technical trainings in livestock and agriculture sector in collaboration with Government Departments.
- Implement other sectoral activities mainly Basic First Aid and Health Awareness session.
- Execute Small Scale Community Projects through Cash For Work.
- Continuous capacity building of staff, community mobilizers and Red Cross Volunteers.



Livestock sector beneficiary household



Small shop business beneficiary

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