

## Cash for Latrines Construction: An Integrated Initiative for Building Community Resilience

Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) with support from International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is implementing an integrated multi-sectoral Community Resilience Program (CRP) in Central Rakhine townships of Sittwe and Minbya. The program covers 30 villages with a total of 6,337 HHs (29,079 people), these villages are affected by recurrent natural disasters like floods and cyclones. Further, communities face issues pertaining to violence and conflicts. The CRP is jointly funded by British Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and American Red Cross under a multilateral funding mechanism through IFRC.

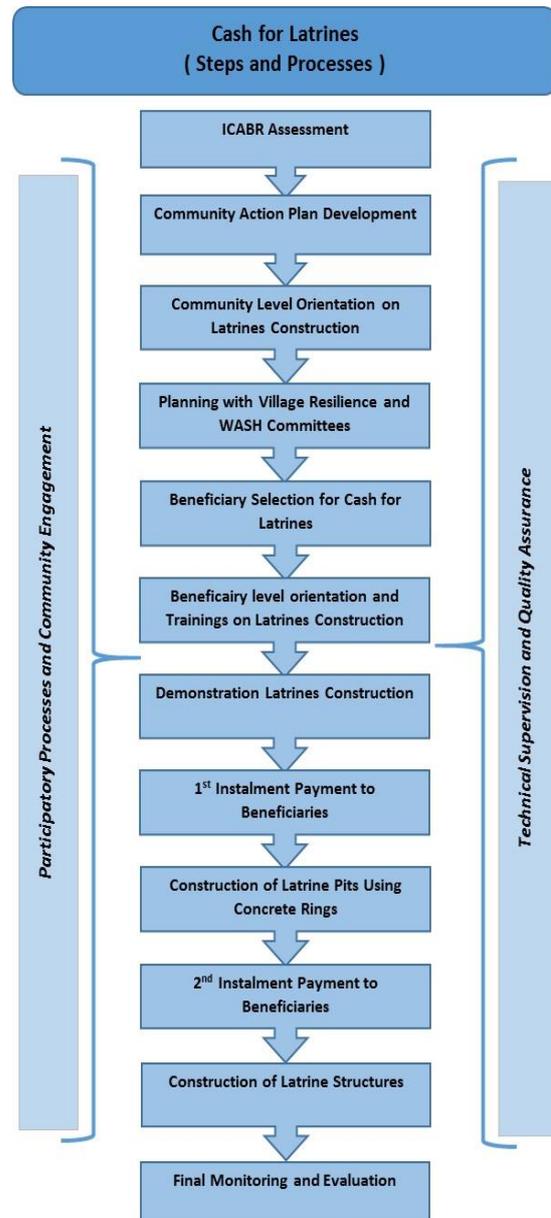
Access to safe water and sanitation services has been identified as one of the most urgent priorities by the communities through their Community Action Plans (CAPs). A baseline study conducted by the program in the targeted areas identified that 79% households do not have access to latrines. 90% of people practice open defecation and 66% of women and girls do not feel comfortable going for defecation during the day time.

The CAP is the guiding instrument to facilitate multi-sectoral resilience building interventions. MRCS, through integrated approach, implements activities in the sectors of DRR, Livelihoods, WASH, Health and Community Institutions Strengthening.

To increase levels of access to sanitation facilities, MRCS with technical support from IFRC introduced “Cash for Latrines Construction” as a pilot intervention. The objective is to reduce health risks associated with open defecation by improving access to sanitation facilities. Cash transfer is used as a modality to achieve this objective.

The cash grants assistance to households is provided in two installments of MMK 40,000 and MMK 30,000 each (Total MMK 70,000 – Approx. 45 CHF). On average 50% of the latrine construction cost is contributed by the program and the remaining amount is mobilized by beneficiaries through self-contribution. The pilot initiative has so far achieved completion of 544 household latrines.

Along with household level latrines construction, MRCS implements activities related to water points strengthening and behavior change communications to maximize the impact of WASH sector interventions. The intervention through cash for latrines construction is under scale-up, by the end of December 2019, the programs intends to support additional 1,500 beneficiary household through cash for latrines assistance.



**Key advantages of cash for latrines are as follows:**

- **Construction of more latrines within a short time:**  
Targeted households showed high level of motivation to construct their latrines within a short time span.
- **Strong ownership by beneficiaries and sustainability:**  
Beneficiaries demonstrated high sense of ownership to construct latrines and showed their commitments to maintain latrines.
- **Increased community contribution:** Household targeted for cash for latrines support contributed approximately 50% of latrines construction cost.
- **Stimulation of local economy:** The local traders benefited from the cash for latrines project, as beneficiaries purchased their materials locally, stimulating the local economy.
- **Transfer technical skills & knowledge to communities:**  
As the project has trained beneficiaries on latrines design and construction methods, this has resulted in transferring technical skills among communities.



**Next Steps:**

- Conduct impact monitoring and regular follow up with beneficiaries through behaviour change communications.
- Up-scale cash for latrines constructions to reach an additional 1,500 households by end of December 2019.
- Continue implementation of other WASH activities in communities.
- Extend learnings gained through this pilot initiatives to other projects implemented by MRCS.



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