

Building Community Resilience in a Protracted Crisis: A Success Story on Use of Diverse Cash Transfer Interventions in Community Resilience Program - Rakhine, Myanmar.

The protracted nature of the complex crisis in Rakhine State demands an approach with a strong nexus between humanitarian and development aid. The resilience building approach adapted by the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) incorporates interventions ranging from basic needs through to recovery and long-term development. Cash Transfer Programming mechanisms are a complementary modality applicable throughout the project cycle and to activities across a range of sectors.

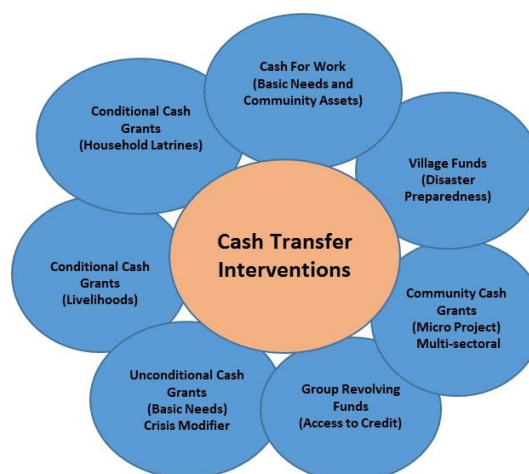
MRCS, with support from IFRC is implementing a multi-sectoral Community Resilience Program (CRP) in Central Rakhine. The program is jointly funded by the British Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross under a multilateral funding mechanism through IFRC.

The program covers 30 villages, in Sittwe and Minbya Townships. with a total of 6,337 HHs (approximately 29,079 individuals). These villages experience the combined effects of recurrent natural disasters alongside the impact of protracted conflict and insecurity. The multi-year (2017-2019) program facilitates community-based action covering five areas critical to immediate livelihoods support as well as longer term resilience, (i) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), (ii) Livelihoods, (iii) WASH, (iv) Health and (v) Village Institutions Strengthening. Community Action Plans (CAPs) are used to determine the most relevant priority actions for each community across different sectors.

Seven different types of cash transfer interventions are available in response to the varying needs of the targeted communities. The cash interventions benefit communities at household, group and community levels at different stages of program implementation. The interventions are implemented through a process of “sequencing and layering”. The sequencing emphasis bridges the immediate gap between humanitarian and development needs. The layering approach integrates activities across different sectors to consolidate combined outcomes and maximize the impact of the program.

Different Cash Transfer Interventions in CRP:

- 1) Livelihoods Cash Grants:** Support households to restore and recover livelihoods asset and support income generation activities.
- 2. Cash for Latrines Construction:** Support construction of household latrines.
- 3. Cash For Work:** Support the most vulnerable with wage employment opportunities to meet basic needs and strengthen community assets.
- 4. Community Cash Grants:** Assist village institutions (Village Committees) with financial support to implement micro-projects for DRR, improve access to water and village development.
- 5. Women Group Revolving Fund:** Financial assistance to women groups to develop savings and lending to enhance to credit.
- 6. Village Emergency Fund:** Strengthen capacities of village resilience committees to respond to emergencies and disasters.
- 7. Unconditional Cash Grants:** Unconditional cash grants to meet basic needs through a Crisis Modifier which can also support early recovery.



The key benefits of integrating different types of cash interventions within a program are as follows:

- **Strong ownership of program by communities:** The approach of CAP and Community Cash Grants along with other interventions has been effective in promoting community ownership. Community engagement occurs at each stage of the activity cycle, incorporating activity identification, beneficiary selection, implementation and monitoring.
- **Efficient and timely delivery of program outcomes:** Due to multi-dimensional cash transfer programming, the implementation of activities is both efficient and timely.
- **Stimulation of local economy:** The local traders have benefited from cash transfer programs, as beneficiaries purchase their materials locally, stimulating the local economy and promoting community cohesion.
- **Transfer of technical skills and knowledge to communities:** All Cash Transfer Interventions incorporate different components of community capacity building like latrines construction design etc., resulting in transfer of skills and knowledge to communities.
- **Reduction in dependency on humanitarian aid among targeted communities:** The cash transfer interventions have improved the base income levels of targeted households, building the foundations for self-reliance.
- **Promoting women empowerment and greater freedom of choice:** The women group revolving funds contributed towards the economic and social empowerment of women by providing them with improved access to credits as well greater freedom of choice and economic self-reliance.

Cash has proved to be a flexible programming tool in a restrictive environment. The successful application of these diverse cash interventions within one program represents a pioneering step by MRCS to mainstream cash into regular programming. These program initiatives will support further institutionalization of cash and cash preparedness at an organizational level, increasing both the scale and timeliness of MRCS's community reach.



Livelihoods Conditional Cash Grants



Community Cash Grant – Village Water System



Cash for Latrines Construction

Women Group Revolving Fund



Cash for Work (CFW)

Since the start of the Community Resilience Program in January 2017, MRCS has made cash payments of MMK 718,989,850 (CHF 463,864 Approx.) to beneficiaries through different Cash Transfer Interventions.

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