

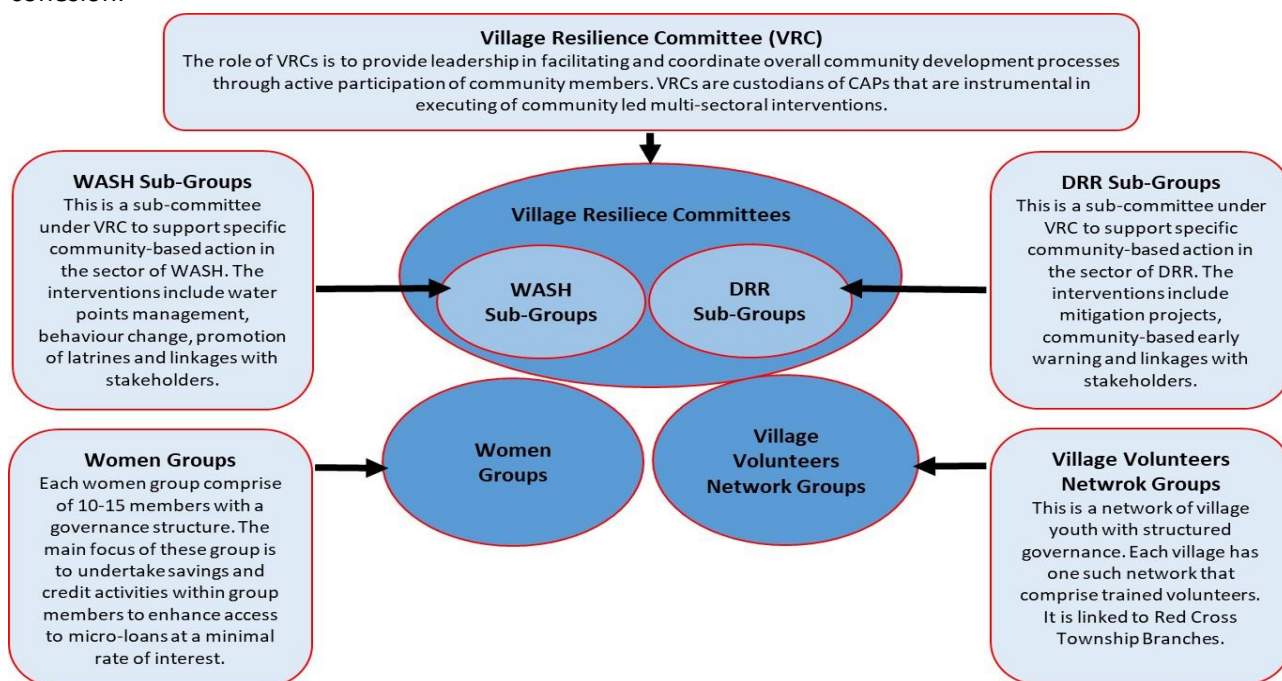
## Strengthening Community Institutions: An integrated approach to build social capital to achieve community resilience

The protracted nature of crisis in Rakhine State requires combined interventions in relief, rehabilitation and development to facilitate community resilience. The communities that are directly or in-directly affected by ongoing conflicts and recurring natural disasters in Rakhine State have immediate relief and recovery needs. Developmental assistance remains as a critical area of investment to help communities achieve a level of resilience within this volatile context. Along with external assistance, these communities cope through both individual and collective mechanisms. The power of social capital is a critical dimension for communities in strengthening localised approaches to manage their changing circumstances.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's (RCRCM) approach to social capital prioritises local decision-making and ownership, recognising inherent local potential within communities to cope, adapt and respond to changing contexts<sup>1</sup>. These are impacted by both protracted instability and the debilitating effects of both chronic and sudden onset natural disasters. Within the RCRCM, the presence of Branches, facilitates both dynamic community engagement and capacity for incremental engagement with village institutions.

Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) with support from IFRC is implementing a long-term multi-sectoral Community Resilience Program (CRP) in Central Rakhine.<sup>2</sup> The program facilitates community-based action covering five key areas of focus to institutionalize community level resilience building processes; (i) Community Institutions Strengthening (ii) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), (iii) Livelihoods, (iv) WASH and (v) Health.

Cash Transfer Interventions are a key modality, applicable across a range of sectors. The resilience building approach adapted by MRCS, in line with nexus programming approaches, accommodates flexible interventions in relief, recovery and longer-term development. Village Resilience Committees (VRC) and their sub-groups, Women Groups and Village Volunteers Network are key building blocks. Investment in these village institutions, in combination with flexible modalities and the common goal of increasing community resilience supports this responsive approach while maintaining accountability, transparency and community cohesion.



<sup>1</sup> The Red Cross Red Crescent approach to sustainable development Position paper. (2011).

<sup>2</sup> CRP is a multi-year (2017 – 2019) program jointly funded by British Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross.

The comprehensive efforts to strengthen these community institutions through formation processes, regular capacity building, provision of materials, cash assistance, linkages establishment and sectoral interventions have resulted in building foundations of social capital and cohesion within targeted communities. MRCS's approach to integrate strengthening of local institutions is significantly contributing to program sustainability.

### Key achievements towards strengthening community institutions:

- Formed VRCs (275 members – male 168, female 107) with sub-groups in all targeted 30 villages (6,337 HHs – 29,079 people). VRCs are trained programming and leadership.
- Developed Community Action Plans (CAPs), VRCs leadership determine priorities across sectors and mobilize resources through stakeholder linkages.
- VRCs supported with Community Cash Grants for small scale infrastructure and DRR mitigation.
- 62 women groups established (715 members) and supported with technical guidance and cash provisions for savings and credit activities.
- Village level volunteer network groups initiated in 30 villages - 644 members (54% Male; 46% Female), groups provide voluntary services to community members like health awareness, first aid and other activities.

### Next Steps:

- Address remaining capacity needs of village institutions to support relief and recovery and build resilience through internal and external resources and networks.
- Consolidate linkages with and between Red Cross Township Branches.
- Extend linkages with line departments and other stakeholders.



VRC member presenting CAP to community members



A women group during meeting for savings activity



Village level volunteers network group

### *For further details, please contact:*

Daw Aye Aye Nyein  
Director  
Rakhine Operations Management Unit  
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar  
E-mail: [ayeayenyein@redcross.org.mm](mailto:ayeayenyein@redcross.org.mm)

Gurudatta Shirodkar  
Livelihoods Delegate  
IFRC Sub-Office Rakhine  
Sittwe, Rakhine, Myanmar  
E-mail: [gurudatta.shirodkar@ifrc.org](mailto:gurudatta.shirodkar@ifrc.org)