

## PROGRAMME SUMMARY 2019

# Delivering Humanitarian Assistance in Rakhine through Cash-based Interventions

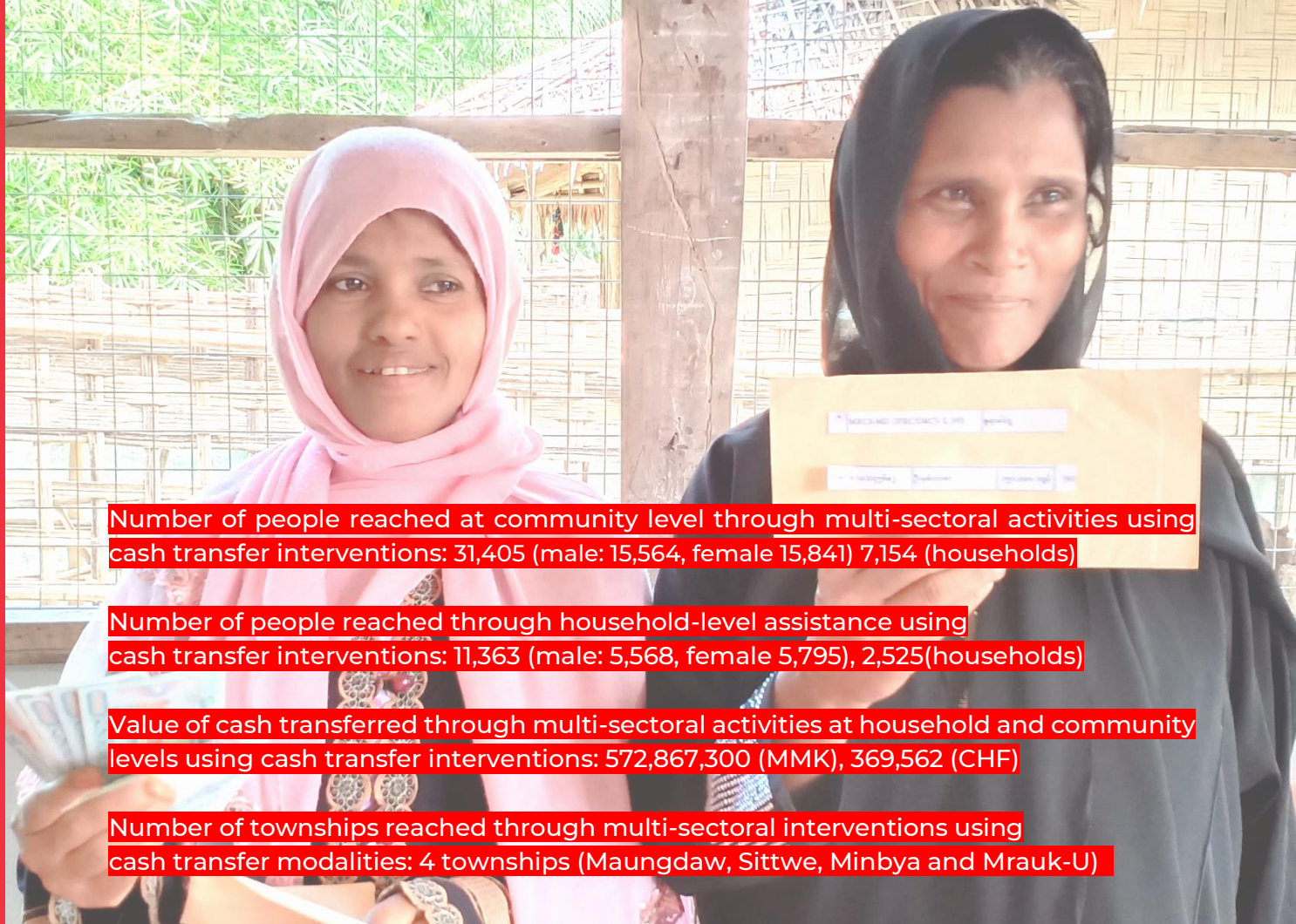
Myanmar Red Cross Society's cash transfer programmes in Rakhine supported by IFRC



Photo courtesy of MRCS Maungdaw Branch

*This document, finalized in January 2020, is specific to the cash-based interventions (CBI) of Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) based on multi-lateral funding through International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in the Rakhine state of Myanmar during fiscal year of 2019. It provides a summarized overview of diversified use of cash transfers as a successful modality to deliver humanitarian assistance to vulnerable population in a protracted crisis in the context of Rakhine.*





**Number of people reached at community level through multi-sectoral activities using cash transfer interventions: 31,405 (male: 15,564, female 15,841) 7,154 (households)**

**Number of people reached through household-level assistance using cash transfer interventions: 11,363 (male: 5,568, female 5,795), 2,525(households)**

**Value of cash transferred through multi-sectoral activities at household and community levels using cash transfer interventions: 572,867,300 (MMK), 369,562 (CHF)**

**Number of townships reached through multi-sectoral interventions using cash transfer modalities: 4 townships (Maungdaw, Sittwe, Minbya and Mrauk-U)**

## Contextual overview

Rakhine state's economy has been steadily declining over the last thirty years. Rakhine is now among the poorest states in Myanmar, with a poverty rate of 78 percent – twice the national average of 37.5 percent.<sup>1</sup> The eruption of violence and resulting displacement, restriction of access and movement has further undermined communities' possibilities to meet basic needs and continue with their livelihoods.

The outbreak of violence in Rakhine state in August 2017 resulted in one of the largest humanitarian crises in recent history, with more than 728,000 people fleeing to Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and thousands more displaced internally within Rakhine state. Muslim communities who remain in townships in the northern areas of Rakhine, along with ethnic Rakhine communities, continue to be significantly impacted. Over two years after the outbreak of violence, communities lack access to basic services and many households are still reliant on monthly food distributions.

For Rakhine, Muslim and other communities living in central Rakhine, the limitations on sustainable livelihood opportunities has led to widescale migration out of Rakhine state to other parts of Myanmar and abroad.<sup>2</sup> Since March 2012, an estimated 131,000 people, predominantly Muslim, reside in IDPs camps in central Rakhine. Maternal and child health services are limited, and where available, current services are not consistent with the required standards. Sanitation and hygiene practices are low with high rates of open defecation and inconsistent hand washing.

The humanitarian situation has been compounded by the emergence of conflict between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar Military in late 2018. People across northern and central areas of Rakhine are temporarily displaced as a result of the continuing violence.

<sup>1</sup> Kofi Annan Advisory Commission on Rakhine Report, August 2017, page 20

<sup>2</sup> FAO - Central and Northern Rakhine State Case Study: Revisiting emergency response and recovery projects in disaster and conflict affected communities- July 2017

## Programme overview

Communities in Rakhine require integrated programme responses which meet immediate needs linked to displacement, as well as building community resilience to the combined impacts of protracted conflict, high rates of poverty and exposure to natural hazards.

In the year 2019, MRCS implemented the following three programmes through multi-lateral funding from IFRC.



**Programme:** Community-based Health and Resilience – Health in Emergencies (CBHR-HiE)

**Donor:** Swedish Red Cross

**Components:** Health, WASH, Disaster Risk Reduction and Branch Development

**Coverage:** 28 villages (4,480 households and 23,744 people)

**Townships:** Mrauk-U and Minbya



**Programme:** Community Resilience Programme (CRP)

**Donors:** British Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, American Red Cross

**Components:** Livelihoods, Health, WASH, Disaster Risk Reduction and Branch Development

**Coverage:** 30 villages (6,334 households and 29,080 people)

**Townships:** Sittwe and Minbya



**Programme:** Humanitarian Assistance Project

**Donor:** Danish Red Cross

**Components:** Livelihoods and Branch Development

**Coverage:** 5 villages (765 households and 4,069 people)

**Townships:** Maungdaw

## Cash-based intervention approaches

The resilience building approach adapted by MRCS incorporates interventions ranging from addressing basic needs through to recovery and long-term development. Cash Transfer Programming mechanisms are considered as a complementary modality throughout the project cycle and to activities across a range of sectors. Different types of cash-based interventions were implemented during 2019 to respond to the varying needs of the targeted communities as per the following:



**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) Revolving funds:** Financial assistance to women groups and village volunteers network groups to develop savings and lending to enhance access to credit.

**6) Village emergency funds:** Strengthen capacities of village resilience committees to respond to emergencies and disasters.

**7) Cash for seeds:** Support farmers to access seeds for vegetable crops during winter season cropping.



The cash interventions benefit communities at household, group and community levels at different stages of programme 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 programme.

The **key benefits of integrating different types of cash-based interventions** within programmes in Rakhine were:



***Strong ownership of programme by communities:*** The approach of community action plans and community cash grants along with other interventions has been effective in promoting community ownership. Community engagement occurred at each stage of the activity cycle, incorporating activity identification, beneficiary selection, implementation and monitoring.



***Effective and timely delivery of programme outcomes:*** Due to multi-dimensional cash transfer programming, the implementation of activities was both effective and timely.



***Stimulation of local economy:*** The local traders have benefited from cash transfer programmes in Rakhine, as beneficiaries purchase their materials locally, stimulating the local economy and promoting community cohesion.



***Transfer of technical skills and knowledge to communities:*** All cash-based interventions incorporated different components of community capacity building, such as latrines construction designs, agriculture trainings, construction quality of micro-projects.



***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. This resulted in transfer of skills and knowledge to communities.



***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 as greater freedom of choice for economic decision making.

## Coverage and achievements

During the annual operations period of January 2019 till December 2019, MRCS transferred MMK 572,867,300 (369,592 CHF) directly to the beneficiaries at household, group and community levels through a variety of cash-based interventions, **following a need-based and balanced approach to programming**. The main sectors covered were livelihoods, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and WASH.

All four targeted townships received one or other type of cash-based interventions. The modality used to deliver cash was 'cash in envelopes' in all locations. **The livelihoods sector had a share of 59 percent of total cash transferred, followed by 25 percent in WASH sector and lastly, 16 percent in DRR sector.** In addition, a total of 36 villages benefited through multi-dimensional cash-based interventions. The ethnic groups reached include Rakhine, Muslim and Chin. Overall, 31,405 people (male 15,564, female 15,841) benefited through cash-based interventions at households, groups and community levels.

Our coverage at a glance

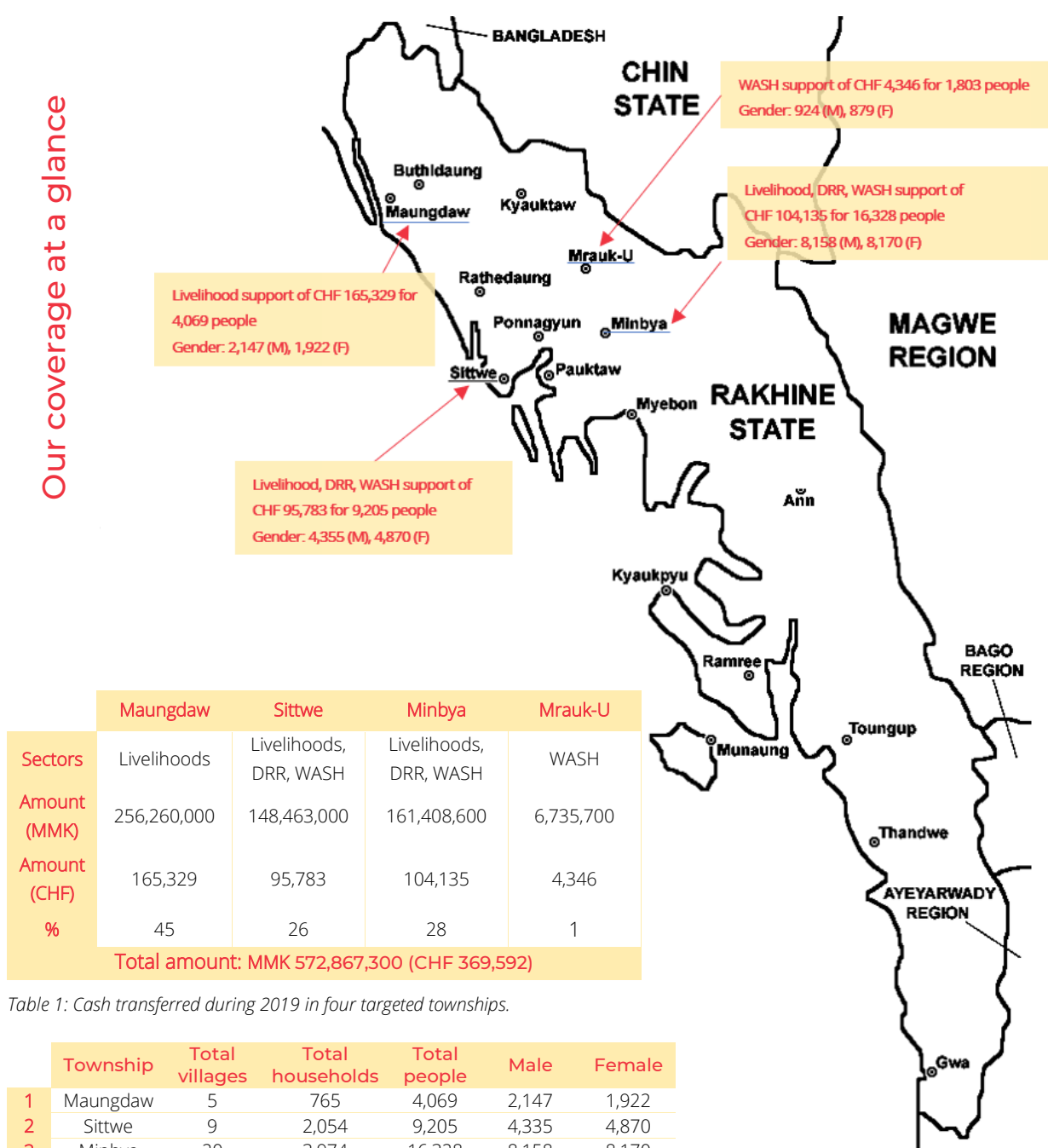


Table 1: Cash transferred during 2019 in four targeted townships.

	Township	Total villages	Total households	Total people	Male	Female
1	Maungdaw	5	765	4,069	2,147	1,922
2	Sittwe	9	2,054	9,205	4,335	4,870
3	Minbya	20	3,974	16,328	8,158	8,170
4	Mrauk-U	2	361	1,803	924	879
	<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>7,154</b>	<b>31,405</b>	<b>15,564</b>	<b>15,841</b>

Table 2: Total population reached through cash-based interventions at household, group and community levels.

## Sectoral achievements in 2019

Sector	Township	Type	Approach	Unit	Total unit	Amount MMK	Amount CHF	Percentage
Livelihoods	Maungdaw, Minbya and Sittwe	Cash for Work - wages	Community Cash Grants	Individuals	513	56,040,000	36,155	17
		Cash for Work - Materials cost	Community Cash Grants	Villages	8	8,554,000	5,519	2
		Livelihoods Cash Grants	Conditional Cash Grants	Household	662	239,300,000	154,387	71
		Cash for Seeds	Conditional Cash Grants	Household	200	3,000,000	1,935	1
		Women Group Revolving Fund	Group Grants	Group	51	30,600,000	19,742	9
Total						337,494,000	217,738	100
DRR	Minbya and Sittwe	DRR mitigation projects	Community Cash Grants	Projects	41	70,794,000	45,674	77
		Village display boards	Community Cash Grants	Villages	30	7,500,000	4,839	8
		Village emergency funds	Group Grants	Villages	9	9,000,000	5,806	10
		Village volunteers network groups funds	Group Grants	Group	9	4,500,000	2,903	5
Total						91,794,000	59,222	100
WASH	Minbya, Sittwe and Mrauk U	Cash for latrines	Conditional Cash Grants	Household	1,513	105,910,000	68,329	74
		Demonstr ation latrines	Community Cash Grants	Projects	11	2,200,000	1,419	2
		Water points renovation	Community Cash Grants	Projects	13	32,269,300	20,819	22
		School latrines	Community Cash Grants	Projects	1	3,200,000	2,065	2
Total						143,579,300	92,632	100
Grand Total						572,867,300	369,592	

Table 3: Sectoral interventions using CBI approaches during 2019.

## Donors contributions in 2019

Donors	Townships	Sectors	Amount MMK	Amount CHF	Percentage
Danish Red Cross	Maungdaw	Livelihoods	256,260,000	165,329	45
British Red Cross	Sittwe and Minbya	Livelihoods, DRR, WASH	153,084,500	98,764	27
Norwegian Red Cross	Minbya	Livelihoods, DRR, WASH	102,153,100	65,905	18
American Red Cross	Sittwe and Minbya	Livelihoods, DRR	54,634,000	35,248	10
Swedish Red Cross	Mrauk U	WASH	6,735,700	4,346	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>572,867,300</b>	<b>369,592</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4: Donors contributions to cash transferred directly to beneficiaries in 2019.



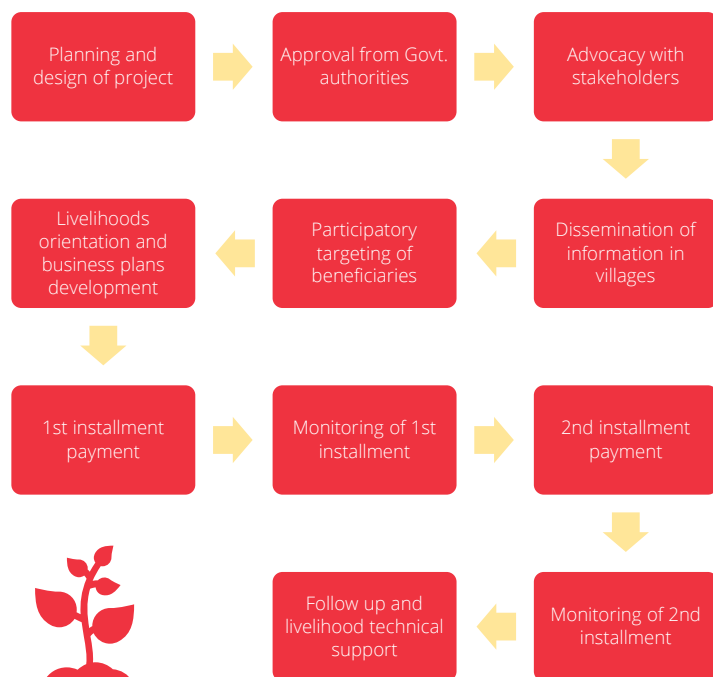


## Steps and processes of cash-based interventions

All cash transfer interventions in the sectors of livelihoods, DRR and WASH emphasized community engagement, therefore accountability and community participation were ensured throughout the programme cycle. Community consultations to plan and design activities, participatory targeting of beneficiaries, beneficiary level trainings, active engagement of village resilience committees in execution of mitigation projects, village level transparency, feedback mechanism and participatory monitoring were all incorporated into programme delivery.

The detailed steps and processes followed during the cash-based interventions are as below, with the example of livelihood cash grants and cash for latrines:

### Livelihood cash grants

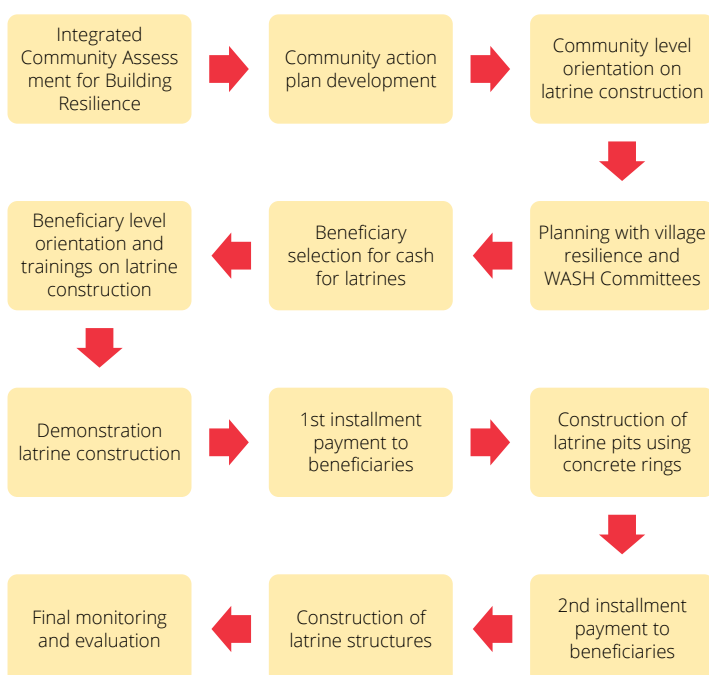


*Pond renovation through community cash grants*

### Cash for latrines



*Concrete rings made by community for latrine pits*



## Overview of key impacts

- Through cash for latrines assistance, practice of open defecation reduced from 90 percent to 50 percent in targeted villages in central Rakhine.
- Over 600 members of women groups now have sustainable access to micro-credit at a minimal rate of interest through group revolving funds to meet emergency and livelihoods needs.
- 36 targeted villages in four townships have improved community infrastructure like village roads, water points, drainage and culverts, retention walls and embankments, and jetties supporting disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts.
- Livelihoods cash grants beneficiary households in northern Rakhine improved average monthly income from MMK 84,339 (USD 60) to MMK 145,000 (USD 103).
- Livelihoods cash grants beneficiary households in central Rakhine improved average monthly income from MMK 137,561 (USD 97) to MMK 184,000 (USD 130).
- 5 villages in Maungdaw township improved access to fresh vegetables as a result of cash for seeds support to 200 households.
- 1,170 households of 5,850 people have improved access to drinking water through improvised 13 water points infrastructure.
- 31 village resilience committees enhanced leadership and functional capacities as a result of community cash grants they received to execute DRR mitigation and infrastructure projects.

## Way Forward

- Strengthen cash-based intervention programming approaches and qualities, based on the recommendations from a recent internal cash learning study in Rakhine.
- Undertake impact assessments for different sectoral interventions implemented using cash transfer modalities.
- Scale-up cash-based intervention beneficiary reach by targeting new villages in the selected townships in Rakhine.
- Further enhance capacity of MRCS branches, Red Cross volunteers and staff to maximize cash-based intervention approaches in the context of Rakhine.
- Disseminate and share evidence-based results and learning through cash-based interventions among stakeholders and relevant authorities.
- Support institutionalization of multi-sectoral cash transfer programming in resilience programmes at MRCS level.

## Key contacts

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