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Humanitarian Outcomes

Evaluation report: Evaluation of DEC-funded earthquake response in Myanmar

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Summary

This evaluation assesses the DEC-funded earthquake response in Myanmar implemented by Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and its local partner, Chan Myae Mitta Development Association (CMMDA), following the March 2025 earthquake that affected Mandalay and Sagaing regions. Concern Worldwide as a member of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), worked with its partner Welthungerhilfe (WHH) to implement a response as Concern does not have a presence in Myanmar. The project provided multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to earthquake-affected communities in a highly complex operating environment characterised by ongoing conflict, political instability, and severe access constraints.

The earthquake caused significant death, suffering and displacement. Following the earthquake, the Sagaing region has been severely affected by armed clashes which have caused further displacement and left many people stranded in insecure areas.

In October 2025, the evaluation team carried out a review of documents, and 54 interviews and focus group discussions with people affected by the earthquake, recipients of cash assistance and staff involved in the response, followed by a discussion on emerging findings in a validation workshop with CDDMA and WHH staff.

The project successfully delivered a one-off cash payment of 360,000 MMK to 5,552 households between August and September 2025. The amount was equivalent to approximately 86 USD at the time of transfer, representing approximately six months of support at the Cash and Market Working Group recommended monthly transfer value. 2,506 households were supported through direct implementation by WHH (1,411 in Mandalay and 1,095 in Sagaing). WHH's local partner CMMDA reached 3,046 households (1,095 in Mandalay and 1,951 in Sagaing).

The intervention was evaluated against the OECD DAC extended criteria of relevance, coherence, coverage, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and connectedness using an agreed framework of analysis.

Impact: Cash was useful and appreciated and used mostly for food, healthcare and, to some extent, to pay rent and for paying off debts (though with limitations on the scale of debt repayment) - communities are incurring significant health expenditures especially in camps. "For health, the community has to spend 10,000 MMK for each visit to the health professional ". For some pregnant women, the cash provided helped to cover the cost of delivery and prenatal care.

Relevance – The cash response was appropriate and made a valuable contribution to processes of recovery for those that received it. Greater timeliness would have enabled it to contribute to more immediate emergency needs in the first three months following the earthquake. However, even after several months, cash

remained highly relevant as affected communities continued to face significant needs for food, healthcare, shelter repairs and other necessities.

Coherence: WHH did take part in formal coordination structures but there was very limited sharing of information between response agencies, raising issues with duplication and exclusion. These challenges are understandable in a context where conflict and political sensitivities make sharing any information, particularly about work in non-SAC¹ controlled areas, very sensitive and organisations are working in deliberately low profile ways to avoid attention from authorities and to navigate issues related to registration. The evaluation recognises the extremely challenging operating environment that constrained coordination. However, more efforts are needed to find ways to safely and confidentially share information about programming with other key international stakeholders and CDDMA as a partner organisation could have been more involved in coordination.

Coverage: Targeting was based on WHH's post-earthquake vulnerability criteria, ensuring that at-risk groups were prioritised. This included displaced families, women- and child-headed households, older persons, people with disabilities, and ethnic and religious minority groups. In practice, however, there was a confusing mix of blanket coverage in some locations and targeting by vulnerability and/or through existing mother's groups in others. The project lacked systematic gender, age, and disability analysis to inform targeting and registration. Inclusion of these groups often happened opportunistically during implementation rather than through structured needs and capacity assessments.

Efficiency: WHH and CMMDA showed commendable adaptive flexibility in a highly challenging environment where it was necessary to make frequent adjustments to enable the successful delivery of the cash. Both organisations demonstrated remarkable problem-solving and adaptation in extremely difficult circumstances.

Effectiveness: WHH and CMMDA distributed the planned cash with sensible adaptations and reached communities in hard to access areas. The project achieved its quantitative targets as planned and navigated security and access constraints and engaged with communities effectively building on strong local networks and presence.

There is scope for greater expertise and training on cash programming and risk management for WHH and CMMDA. More technical training before the implementation and closer technical oversight would support greater quality in programming. Stronger contingency planning and disaster preparedness could be put in place to enable more timely responses to future shocks.

¹ **State Administration Council**, the military junta that seized power in Myanmar in February 2021. The SAC was recently replaced by the [State Security and Peace Commission \(SSPC\)](#).

Connectedness: Myanmar presents severe challenges for connecting emergency response to longer-term programming due to political and security constraints. Given these realities, the project remained "largely a one-off emergency intervention" with limited systematic linkages to recovery or development programming. There is scope to explore how to strengthen the disaster response capacities and cash response expertise of CMMDA and WHH in order to create more of a legacy and build lasting capacity.

Conclusion: The DEC-funded earthquake response in Myanmar demonstrated remarkable dedication and adaptive capacity by both WHH and CMMDA in one of the world's most challenging humanitarian operating environments. Successfully delivering multipurpose cash assistance to 5,552 earthquake-affected households across Mandalay and Sagaing regions, in areas controlled by different armed groups, while navigating severe security risks, cash liquidity constraints, and political restrictions represents a significant achievement. Recommendations are made about how to strengthen issues related to coordination, connectedness and technical expertise through investments in preparedness and contingency planning that could improve future responses.

The evaluation makes the following priority recommendations for future responses:

1. Strengthen coordination and information sharing: by strengthening local partner participation and finding ways to establish confidential bilateral coordination.
2. Invest in technical capacity and preparedness: by providing more cash training and developing stronger preparedness and contingency plans.
3. Improve targeting and registration processes: by developing clearer and better communicated criteria, investing more in verification and reducing over-reliance on community level volunteers.
4. Enhance assessment and design: by having more structured and better documented assessment and conflict sensitivity analysis and stronger participatory co-design with partners.
5. Strengthen communication and accountability: by developing context-appropriate communication strategies that balance security with transparency
6. Build connectedness and sustainability: by exploring ways to link emergency cash to longer-term programming and investing in organisational capacity strengthening.