

HARP-F MULTI-YEAR WASH FUNDING

REVIEW

An independent review
commissioned by the HARP
Facility

Authored by The Operations Partnership
December, 2021



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS HARP-F?

The Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme Facility (HARP-F) is a UK Government Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) initiative launched in 2016. HARP-F is the grant-funding mechanism, and the largest component of the wider Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme. It is managed by Crown Agents. It has so far committed £74.7 million, reaching 1.69 million conflict-affected people via 76 grants, across 8 sectors and in collaboration with 55 partners.

WHY REVIEW HARP-F MULTI-YEAR WASH FUNDING?

Since 2016, HARP-F has been the largest funding mechanism for humanitarian water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) support in Myanmar. Over the last 6 years HARP-F WASH programming has supported 315,000 conflict-affected people in Kachin, Northern Shan, Rakhine and Chin States, with grants totalling £22.4 million.

The case for multi-year humanitarian funding was established as part of the Grand Bargain in 2016. Since then, **HARP-F has been the main provider of multi-year humanitarian WASH funding in Myanmar**, providing 95% of all humanitarian WASH multi-year funding in Myanmar between 2017 and 2021.

This strategic review outlines what has been learned about WASH multi-year funding and identifies where, and how, this learning could be applied in the future. 71 specialists, representing 22 organisations, were consulted via key informant interviews (KII) and focus groups. This included staff from HARP-F, FCDO, the WASH cluster and from the majority of key WASH actors working in Myanmar.

7 KEY LESSONS LEARNED FROM HARP-F MULTI-YEAR WASH PROGRAMMING

1. **Provision of “Long term” multi-year funding** (>24 months) was a key factor in supporting substantial advances in **community ownership and management of WASH services** in a challenging operating environment (central Rakhine IDP camps)
2. **“Medium term” multi-year funding** (12-24 months) was effective in supporting a **structured process of local NGO capacity development** (mostly evidenced in Kachin/NSS). It was crucial to maintain coordination with other capacity building providers for this funding to be effective. 96% of WASH actors consulted in this review agreed that HARP-F funding has been effective in empowering local and national actors.
3. **Multi-year funding of any duration** (12 months or more) helped implementing agencies build **programme quality and led to administrative and operational cost savings** in comparison to typical short term humanitarian funding. This is consistent with previous research on multi-year funding. 93% of WASH actors consulted in this review agreed that multi-year funding substantially increased programmatic impact. Those consulted reported that more time was spent on creating value with targeted communities rather than meeting the increased administrative requirements that back-to-back short-term funding involves.
4. **A contextualised strategy framework for WASH programming** was helpful in guiding HARP-F support to partners, HARP-F funding decisions and HARP-F partner planning. It outlined relevant approaches to sustainability and resilience for the key operating contexts in Rakhine and Kachin States.

5. **HARP-F recognised the difficulty that a funding gap would present for local NGOs** and tried to mitigate the risk of this happening. Local NGOs do not typically benefit from the funding reserves that many INGOs have. Given the effort invested by HARP-F and partners in LNGO capacity development it was crucial that HARP-F found ways to ensure sustained funding for local NGOs working in a protracted crisis.
6. **The M&E approach needed to be better at capturing outcomes and learning.** There would be increased benefit from multi-year funding, and stronger evidence for the future, if M&E approaches were designed to understand emerging long-term outcomes and learning. A results/outputs focused humanitarian M&E approach is not sufficient.
7. **Multi-year thinking and planning was encouraged alongside multi-year funding.** The HARP-F experience shows that multi-year funding is not the only tool that can support programme quality, efficiency and longer-term WASH outcomes. In a protracted crisis multi-year planning approaches should be encouraged at all levels. There were examples of this happening in Myanmar at both the WASH cluster and implementing organisation levels.

APPLYING THIS LEARNING

There was a significant scale-up of the humanitarian response during 2021 to respond to new needs following the military takeover in February. Unfortunately, the situation continues to be unstable and unpredictable. Humanitarian access remains a significant challenge. Humanitarian organisations have set an ambitious target of assisting 6.2 million people in 2022. The financial ask identified in the Humanitarian Response Plan is three-times that of 2021.

HARP-F will end its programming in March 2022. Since HARP-F currently supports 95% of multi-year WASH projects, it is critical for other funding organisations to consider financing multi-year WASH projects. Continued funding from new sources is important for the sustainability of capacity investments made in communities and local NGOs via HARP-F.

There is a risk that the current level of uncertainty in Myanmar could dissuade donors from making multi-year funding commitments. However, short-term funding will yield only short-term results. It seems highly likely that humanitarian access will continue to be a critical problem. **Well supported and capacitated community organisations and local NGOs may be the only lifeline** available to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to the most vulnerable in many locations.

Continuing and deepening support to communities and local NGOs is a critical strategy for the overall response. Multi-year funding is the most effective way to accomplish this in WASH, and in many other sectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Humanitarian actors and donors in Myanmar should

- Advocate for multi-year WASH funding, especially where long term outcomes are envisioned, or access constraints are likely to be sustained. Multi-year grants with a duration of 2 years or more (in keeping with the OECD definition) are preferred because of the increased efficiency and programme impact gains that can be achieved over such a period.
- Where multi-year funding is not possible, adopt multi-year plans at the agency, donor and cluster levels. Meanwhile, the situation at community level should be closely monitored to help identify when the situation is sufficiently stable for multi-year funding.
- Consider adopting multi-year funding and planning modalities for emergency response programming, employing an adaptive management approach. This can also provide a framework that will enable local NGO response capacities to be further strengthened.

Humanitarian, development and peace actors in Myanmar should

- Continue to build linkages between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding mechanisms in order to maximise coherence and shared impact. This coordination becomes increasingly important the more that humanitarian multi-year funding is supported.

The Global WASH cluster should

- Examine how the cluster funding matrix could better capture data relevant to multi-year funding. Original project duration and project extension information is important, as is disaggregated data on primary grants and subgrants (duration and financial value). If this information is collected, it can more readily be used to track progress against Grand Bargain commitments towards “Quality funding” and “More support and funding for local and national responders”.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The strategic review was conducted during a challenging period in which the work of WASH actors in Myanmar continues to be difficult and full of uncertainty due to ongoing crisis across the country. All of the people that the review team talked with willingly gave their time, engaging with the review questions enthusiastically and thoughtfully.

The review team would like to thank the local and international WASH actors in Myanmar who contributed to this strategic review via key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The review team would also like to thank the teams in HARP-F and FCDO Myanmar for their continuous engagement with, and support to, the review process.

The Operations Partnership is a consultancy organisation with a mission to drive transformational change in development and humanitarian operations. Further information is at <http://www.theoperationspartnership.com/>. The review team from The Operations Partnership comprised Nicholas Finney, Han Min Htet and Hannah Wilson.

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ACRONYMS

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DfID	UK Department for International Development (now FCDO)
FCDO	UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FTS	UN-OCHA Financial Tracking Service
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HARP-F	Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme Facility
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter Agency Standing Committee
ICCG	Inter Cluster Coordination Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
LIFT	Livelihoods and Food Security Fund
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organisation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
NFI	Non-Food Relief Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRS	Northern Rakhine State
NSS	Northern Shan State
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
PIN	People In Need
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
TWG	Technical Working Group
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

THE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND RESILIENCE PROGRAMME FACILITY (HARP-F), 2016-2022

The Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme Facility (HARP-F) is a UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) initiative launched in 2016 and managed by Crown Agents. HARP-F is the grant-funding mechanism, and the largest component of the wider Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme. It has so far committed £74.7 million, reaching 1.69 million conflict-affected people via 76 grants, across 8 sectors and in collaboration with 55 partners.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE HARP-F WASH PROGRAMME?

Over the last 6 years HARP-F WASH programming has supported 315,000 conflict-affected people in Kachin, Northern Shan, Rakhine, and Chin States, with grants totalling £22.4 million¹. Implementing partners, with HARP-F support, have aimed to maintain essential WASH activities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and military coup by focusing on localised programme design and shifting to remote programming.

The case for multi-year humanitarian funding was established as part of the Grand Bargain in 2016. The HARP-F team has committed multi-year funding in the WASH sector where possible. HARP-F has become the main provider of multi-year humanitarian WASH funding in Myanmar, providing 95% of all humanitarian WASH multi-year funding in Myanmar during the 2017-2021 period². HARP-F has also embraced other Grand Bargain commitments in its WASH programme, especially those focused on more support for local and national responders, and the participation revolution.

WHY CONDUCT THIS REVIEW?

HARP-F will end its programming by March 2022. It is important to understand the specific outcomes that can be achieved with multi-year funding, and any practices or approaches that can help maximise its effectiveness in future programmes of a similar nature.

This strategic review explores how the multi-year funding modality has added value to the overall WASH programme outcomes in Rakhine and Kachin / Northern Shan State (NSS). Rakhine and Kachin/NSS are the focus because this is where HARP-F has directed the majority of the WASH funding available. The review aims to draw out comparisons where possible and identify lessons that can be applied by others in the future.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGIC REVIEW

1. To document what has been learned from multi-year WASH programming in Rakhine and Kachin/NSS with a specific focus on understanding the benefits and strengths of this approach in comparison to short-term funding approaches.
2. To identify where and how this learning could be applied in future WASH programming in Myanmar; and to identify opportunities to transfer learning to other sectors in Myanmar, and other country contexts globally.

¹ <https://www.harfacility.com/resources/harp-facility-water-hygiene-and-sanitation-support/>

² This is based on an analysis of the WASH cluster funding matrix. Multi-year funding is defined as having an initial grant period of 24 months or more (as per the OECD definition)

METHODOLOGY

REVIEW DESIGN

The approach employed a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative data collection, with emphasis on drawing out lessons and making comparisons. The review design was agreed with HARP-F and FCDO via an inception report and analytical framework (annexes 1 and 2). Interview and FGD guides were then developed in English and Myanmar language.

The main research themes explored through the analytical framework were:

1. Provide an overview of the landscape of multi-year funding in the WASH sector, identifying trends and key messages related to the duration of funding grants
2. Quantify and describe the benefits and challenges of multi-year funding for WASH actors in Myanmar; Document how challenges have been overcome
3. Identify any learning that could be transferable to other sectors or applied in other protracted crises
4. Identify any opportunity costs involved in a return to short-term WASH funding in Myanmar
5. Identify key questions that should be explored in subsequent HARP-F evaluations

It was agreed that it would be useful to make comparisons where possible to understand the unique characteristics of HARP-F WASH funding. These comparisons informed the selection of primary and secondary data sources and are outlined in the following table:

Comparing outputs, outcomes and learning from...	
Short-term WASH funding	v Multi-year WASH funding
WASH funding in Rakhine	v WASH funding in Kachin/NSS
HARP-F WASH funding in Rakhine	v Pre-HARP-F WASH funding in Rakhine ³
HARP-F WASH funding	v WASH funding from other donors

The final key component of the review design was the development of working hypotheses that could be tested throughout the review. These hypotheses outlined assumptions about what could be achieved in the Myanmar context in general, and Rakhine / Kachin in particular:

³ DfID (now FCDO) funded a large multi-sector response through an INGO consortium in Rakhine state from 2012 to 2016. Many of the WASH activities and services delivered during that period were then picked up and further developed by HARP-F from 2016 to 2021.

Context	Hypothesis
<p>At a national level the general socio-economic and political situation was broadly stable until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, followed by the military coup in February 2021</p>	<p>→ Since the onset of COVID-19, due to public health regulations and other access challenges, WASH partners have faced an increasingly challenging operating environment. This has placed increased pressure and expectation on local capacities. This period can be viewed as a “stress test” of the capacities built up by HARP-F in local NGOs and communities in Rakhine and Kachin/NSS.</p>
<p>WASH Programming locations in central Rakhine camps have remained relatively stable throughout the 2016-21 period⁴.</p>	<p>v It should be possible to see multi-year funding contribute towards sustainability, better programme quality, community ownership/ engagement and increasing efficiencies.</p>
<p>The situation in Kachin and Northern Shan has been volatile and unstable throughout 2016-21 with outbreaks of fighting resulting in new displacement and re-displacement.</p>	<p>v It is not as realistic to expect multi-year funding to contribute towards sustainability and community ownership. However, it should be possible to see gains in terms of capacity of local implementing organisations and therefore programme quality and operational effectiveness.</p>

DATA COLLECTION

Primary Data Collection

- 58 people participated in key informant interviews (KIIs) across 22 organisations. This included WASH cluster, HARP-F and FCDO staff. Interviews were conducted in English or Myanmar language according to the preference of the interviewee. KIIs with WASH actors included a ranking exercise which was numerically scored. KIIs with WASH actors focused on HARP-F partners but also included WASH actors receiving funds from other sources as a basis for comparison.
- 13 staff from WASH actors participated in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) across 12 organisations. There was one English and one Myanmar language FGD.
- Due to the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic all research was conducted remotely. In general, KIIs and FGDs were conducted on Zoom. KIIs and FGDs were recorded to increase the accuracy of note taking and the recordings then erased.
- One member of the consultancy team was based in Myanmar to help the review team conduct interviews with key informants who preferred to use Myanmar language. They were also important to ensure the review team understand the context and to translate any key information in Myanmar language.

⁴ It is noted that the wider situation in Rakhine has been turbulent due to the violence in 2019 and conflict between Myanmar Armed Forces and Arakan Army.

Secondary Data Collection

A breadth of secondary data was reviewed and analysed. This included HARP-F project documents, WASH cluster funding data and humanitarian response plans.

DATA ANALYSIS AND VALIDATION

Data was cleaned and coded based on the analytical framework criteria. It was then discussed by the review team and sorted into key themes. Given the complexity of the data, a comparative approach to analysis was utilised where possible (outlined above). A workshop was conducted with the HARP-F team to share initial findings, gain additional input, and check for accuracy and fairness.

LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Due to the challenges created by COVID-19 and the coup, this was a remote exercise. Whilst best efforts were made to adopt an approach that would be accessible to a wide range of actors, and a local consultant was part of the review team, it can be assumed that face-to-face interviews and focus groups might have yielded additional insight and data were they feasible. Broadly speaking, the research process went according to plan. Lastly, it is important to note that this was not an evaluation. The strategic review did not apply the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and did not gather primary data from communities.

OVERVIEW OF HARP-F MULTI-YEAR WASH FUNDING

HARP-F WASH PROGRAMMING, 2016-21

The HARP Facility (HARP-F) acts as both a grant funding mechanism and as a knowledge platform for FCDO and the wider humanitarian community. It was designed to contribute towards three outcomes identified by FCDO:

- Increased effectiveness of humanitarian action in protracted crises
- Improved quality and coverage of emergency preparedness and response across Burma
- Assistance addresses the causes of humanitarian needs and builds resilience⁵

Almost all of the HARP-F WASH programming since 2016 has focused on conflict-related humanitarian crises in Rakhine, Kachin and Northern Shan States. However, there have been some small WASH interventions in other locations – Chin State and Yangon⁶.

Multi-year WASH programming has been a core component of HARP-F since it was launched in 2016. The goal of multi-year funding has been to provide WASH actors with stability and to enable longer-term, more strategic thinking and approaches⁷. Nine key principles and values were used to help manage HARP-F WASH funding⁸. For key targeted locations (Rakhine and Kachin States) a contextualised approach was put in place.

NINE KEY PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR HARP-F WASH FUNDING

1 Select grants where HARP-F can add value	2 Use HARP-F's position to contribute to long-term strategic thinking and planning	3 Focus on community engagement and empowerment and improve service sustainability
4 Ensure partners are using best practices and are working in harmony	5 Ensure grants add equal or greater value than money expended	6 A focus on inclusion within WASH programs, for marginalised people and those with disabilities
7 Ensure gender is mainstreamed within WASH programs and explore opportunities to contribute to wider transformation	8 Drive forward strategic partnerships engaging with LIFT, access funds, and government partners where appropriate	9 Add value to local partners by providing capacity support, leaving them stronger than before

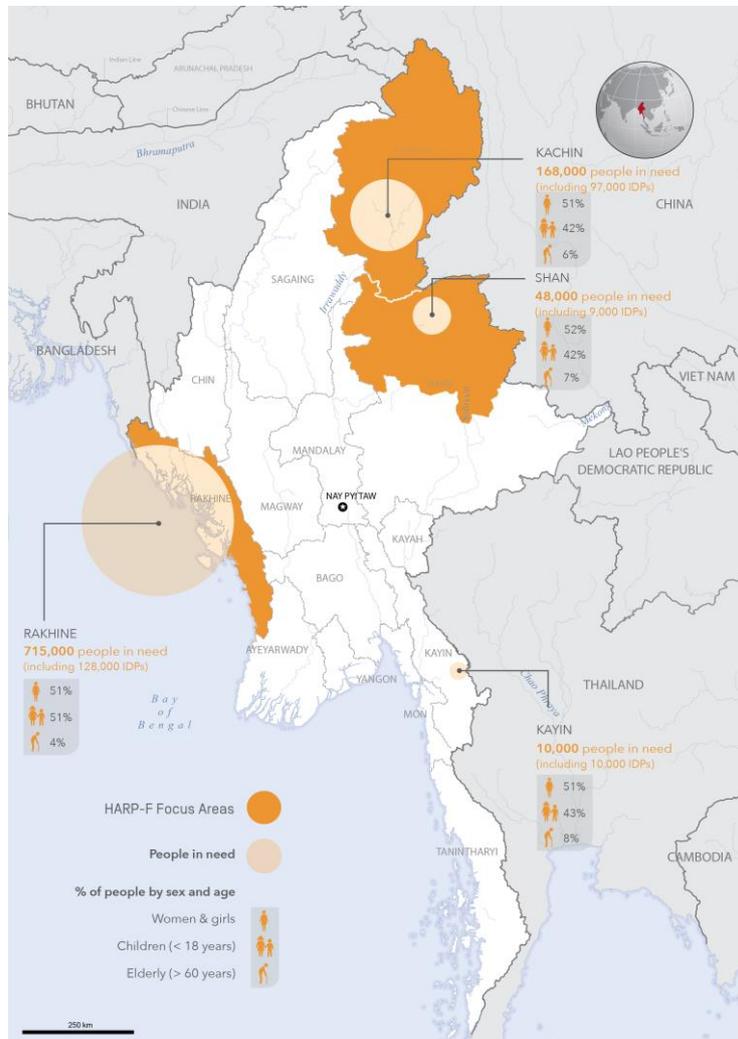
⁵ DFID-Burma (2015) Burma Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme (HARP) Draft Business Case. Redacted Version.

⁶ In the case of Yangon this was part of a small distribution in Quarter 3 of 2020. This was not considered material to this review and was not examined by the review team.

⁷ HARP-F (2020) HARP-F 2021-22 Extension – Technical and Budget Narrative

⁸ HARP-F (2019) Water, Sanitation & Hygiene – HARP-F approaches

HARP-F was extended for the 2021-22 period to support adaptation and response plans for COVID-19. WASH continued to be a core component within this extension. Programmes aim to build on the investments and strong foundations that have been put in place thus far: “The extensive work to build greater community ownership and strengthen systems have paid off and will enable the 2021 grants to focus on sustaining these gains and ensuring continuity of services [not building them]”⁹.



Map showing focus areas for HARP-F WASH programming against People in Need data from 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan

MYANMAR HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT, 2016-21

The 2016-21 period can be broken down into two broad phases:

- 2016-2019.** During this period the majority of humanitarian needs, and funding requested, were related to protracted crises in Rakhine State, Kachin State, Northern Shan State, and South-eastern Myanmar. Other locations in Myanmar received humanitarian funding in response to natural disasters during this period but the volume of funding provided was small in comparison to Rakhine, Kachin and Northern Shan. 2017 also marked a serious escalation in the violence in Rakhine State, triggering a major refugee crisis in neighbouring Bangladesh. In late 2018 conflict broke out in Rakhine State between the Arakan Army and Tatmadaw.

⁹ HARP-F 2021-22 Extension – Technical and Budget Narrative (Internal document, not publicly available)

- **2020-2021.** During this period COVID-19, violence following the February-2021 coup and a related economic crisis increased the range of needs across Myanmar. The 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan is indicative of a substantially changed humanitarian context in comparison to the 2016-19 period. During this period the operating context has become more challenging for all actors, with humanitarian access being particularly difficult. UN and INGO responses have been constrained and the gap between humanitarian funding requested and that received has widened.

HRP	People in need	People targeted	Requirements (US\$)	Funding coverage
2022	14.4 M	6.2 M	826.0 M	
2021	1.0 M	944.5 K	276.5 M	73%
2020	986.0 K	848.0 K	215.0 M	68%
2019	941.0 K	941.0 K	214.4 M	85%
2018	863.0 K	832.0 K	183.4 M	75%
2017	525.0 K	525.0 K	150.3 M	74%
2016	1.0 M	1.0 M	189.5 M	59%

Table: Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 • Source: Financial Tracking Service

Table shows the scope of UN Humanitarian Response Plans in Myanmar from 2016-22

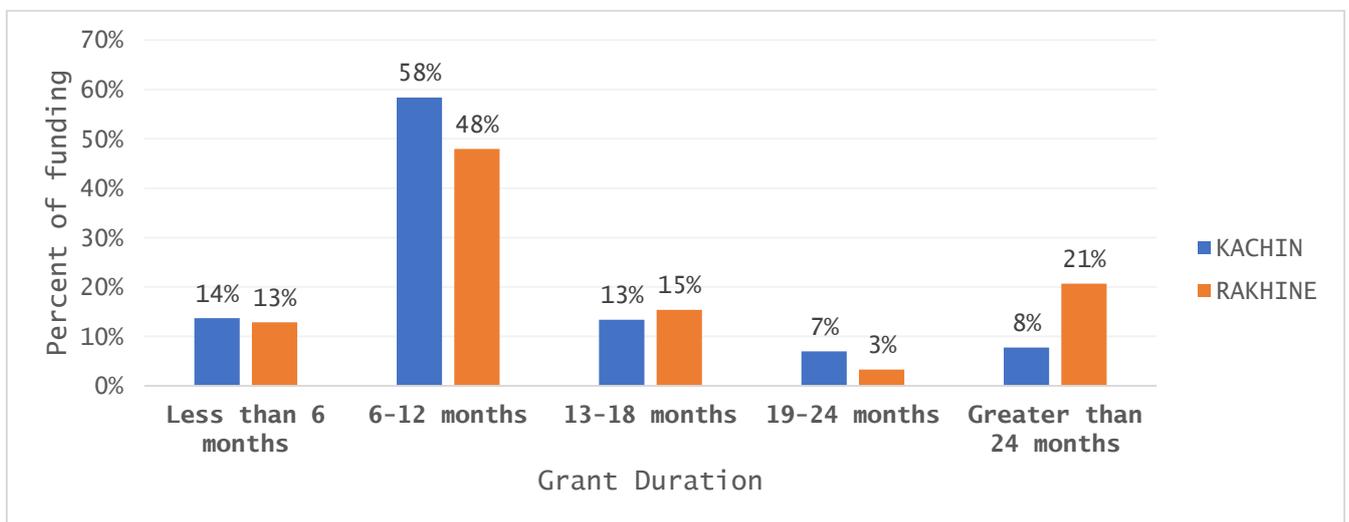
Looking towards 2022, the political, socioeconomic and protection crisis in Myanmar is fuelling growing humanitarian needs. The outlook is dire and humanitarian organisations have set an ambitious target of assisting 6.2 million people in 2022¹⁰.

¹⁰ <https://gho.unocha.org/myanmar>

KEY POINTS ON WASH NEEDS AND FUNDING 2017-21 RELEVANT TO THIS REVIEW¹¹

- WASH accounted for between 6-10% of the total funding received against the Humanitarian Response Plan through the 2016-21 period.
- The amount of funding requested by the WASH sector has been fairly consistent (ranging from \$30M to \$35M per annum between 2018 and 2021). Requests in other sectors have increased during this period (WASH was 14% of the total funding requested in 2016, but only 8% of the total funding requested in 2021).
- WASH has been a significant component of the response in all locations. Through the 2016-21 period, funding requirements in Rakhine State were generally 2-3 times higher than for Kachin/Northern Shan.
- The majority (around 70%) of WASH funding provided over this period has been short-term (≤12 months project duration)¹², with slightly more short-term funding in Kachin, as compared to Rakhine (see chart 1).
- Filtering by donors contributing more than US\$1 million, HARP-F is the only WASH funder that has primarily issued grants of more than 24 months, by \$ value (see chart 2).
- HARP-F has been the largest humanitarian WASH donor (2017-21) providing **36% of all funding**.
- During 2017-21 HARP-F has boosted the level of multi-year (>24 months¹³) humanitarian WASH funding from 2% of the total (pre-2017) to 34% of the total.
- HARP-F has provided **95% of all humanitarian WASH multi-year funding** with an original contract duration of >24 months.
- HARP-F has provided 86% of all humanitarian WASH funding with an original contract duration of >18 months.

CHART 1: TOTAL WASH FUNDING (2017-21) IN KACHIN AND RAKHINE BY GRANT DURATION¹⁴



¹¹ Further supporting data can be found in Annex 4

¹² Based on an analysis of the WASH cluster funding matrix

¹³ The OECD defines multi-year funding as “funding with a duration of 24 months or more based on the start and end dates of the original formal funding agreement” This definition has been adopted by the IASC Grand Bargain Enhanced Quality Funding workstream (15 April 2020) Definition Guidance Summary: Narrative <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-04/Multi-year%20and%20flexible%20funding%20-%20Definitions%20Guidance%20Summary%20-%20Narrative%20Section%20January%202020.pdf>

¹⁴ Data used in charts 1, 2 & 3 is derived from WASH cluster funding matrix

CHART 2: ORIGINAL CONTRACT DURATION OF WASH GRANTS [BY \$ VALUE] FOR ALL DONORS CONTRIBUTING >US\$1 MILLION DURING 2017-21 PERIOD

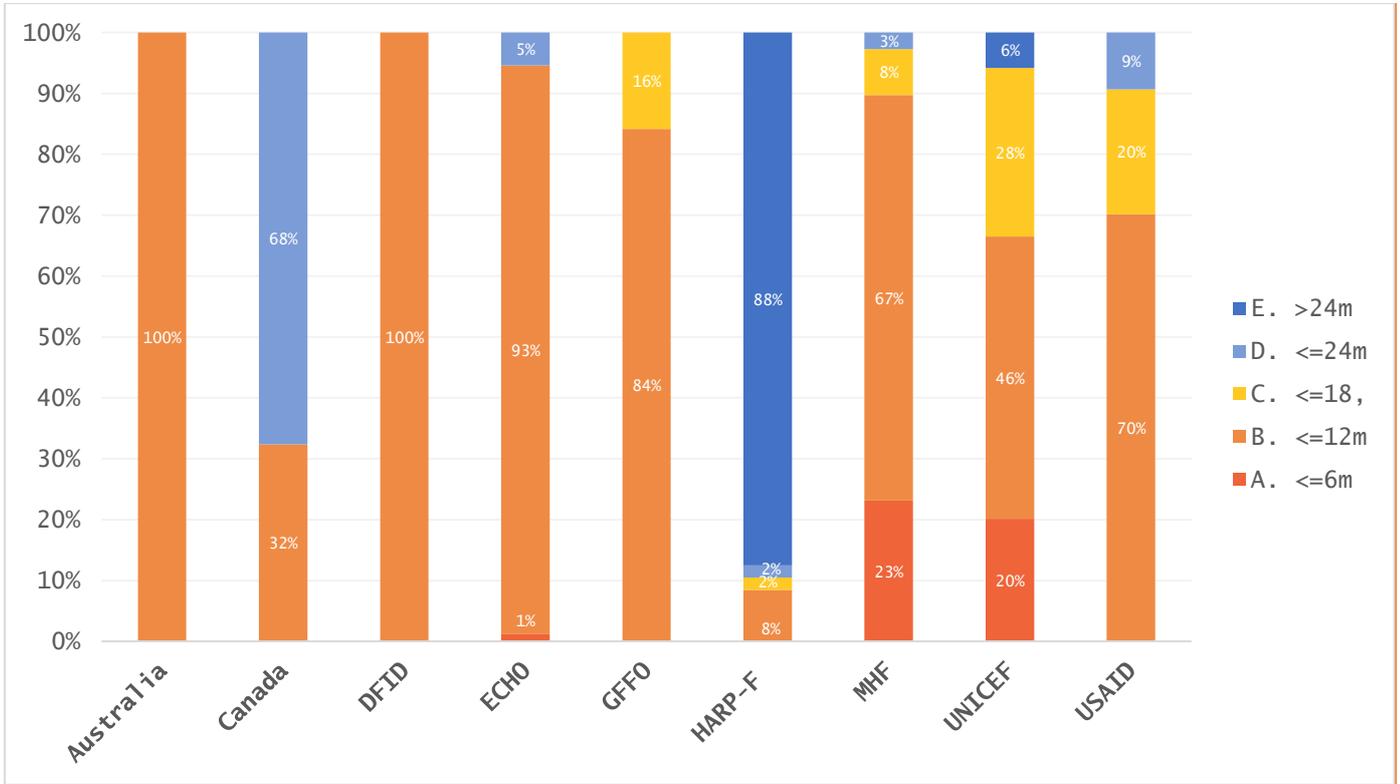
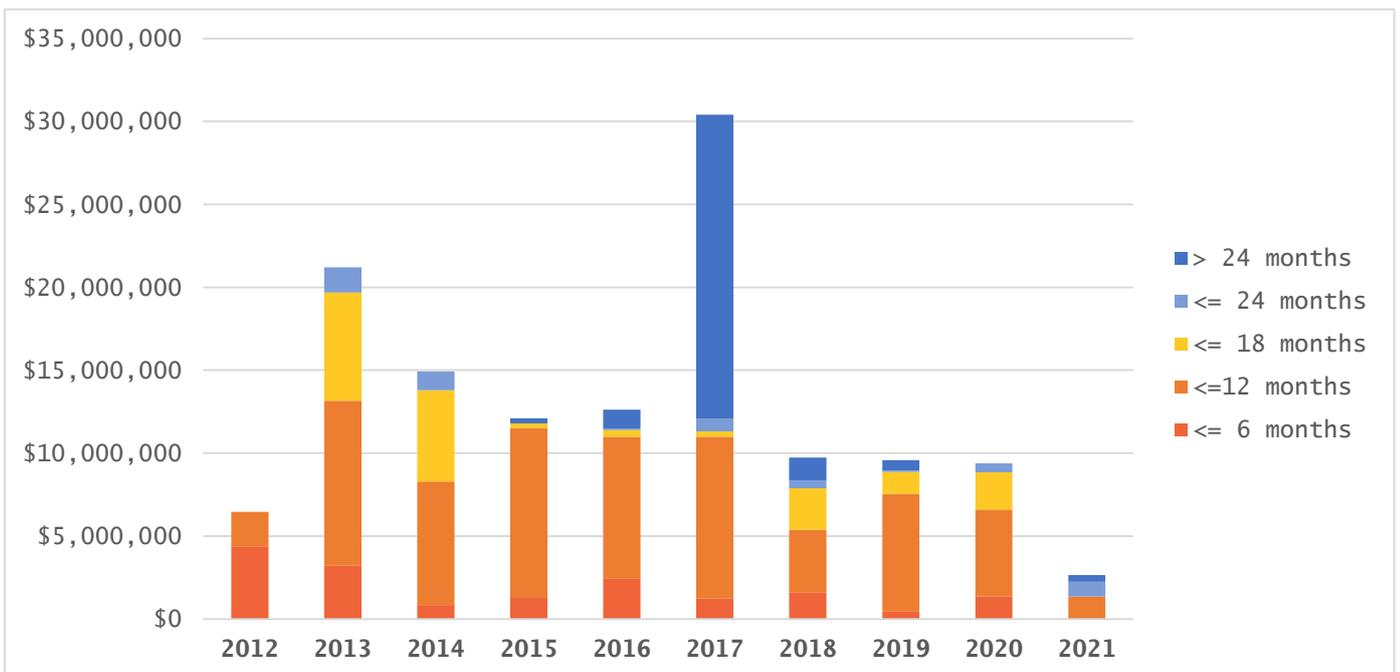


CHART 3: TOTAL HUMANITARIAN WASH FUNDING, 2012-21, WITH GRANT DURATION SHOWN FOR EACH YEAR



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REVIEW FINDINGS 1: LEARNING FROM MULTI-YEAR WASH

Review Objective 1:

What has been learned from multi-year WASH programming in Rakhine and Kachin/NSS with a specific focus on understanding the benefits and strengths of this approach in comparison to short-term funding approaches?

RAKHINE STATE

REVIEW HYPOTHESIS

It should be possible in this context to see multi-year funding contribute towards sustainability, better programme quality, community ownership/engagement and increasing efficiencies.

HARP-F WASH APPROACH IN RAKHINE STATE¹⁵

“We acknowledge that [regardless of camp closures] a lack of livelihoods, due primarily to the restricted movements and freedoms, means that external support will continue to be required for ensuring safe WASH services in camps. The challenging environment and cramped camps means that WASH cannot move to household infrastructure and sharing will need to continue indefinitely. Within this environment HARP-F wants to ensure the following principles:

- A focus on community ownership and self-reliance, this includes;
- Decentralising approaches as much as possible, with community self-managed services and systems
- A focus on effective accountability and information sharing
- Exploring options for including government. This could include the water quality laboratory, operation of the sludge treatment site, provision of handpump spare parts to camps etc [...]
- Support bridging the gap between humanitarian and development partners in Rakhine[...]

SUSTAINABILITY

Since WASH programming has been implemented in diverse operating environments within Rakhine State and neighbouring Chin State¹⁶, the context and project modalities [resources/timescale] define what might be possible in terms of sustainability. HARP-F did not adopt any specific definition of sustainability but did contextualise its overall WASH principles to the context. Partners consulted agreed that this contextualised approach to sustainability was realistic and gave them sufficient flexibility to shape interventions to the context.

The review has found that HARP-F and partners have progressed well in maximising the application of the first three principles above [community ownership, decentralising approach, and accountability]. This is most notable in the WASH partnership in Central Rakhine [Sittwe IDP camps] which was the flagship HARP-F WASH programming in terms of volume and duration of funding. The WASH partnership in Central Rakhine also explored improved approaches to environmental management and use of renewable energy in camps. The conditions limiting wider sustainability [restriction to movements and freedoms] still prevail and there continue to be limited income generation opportunities for camp populations.

¹⁵ Excerpt from HARP-F (2019) Water, Sanitation & Hygiene – HARP-F approaches

¹⁶ Support to persons from Rakhine State displaced into Chin State due to conflict between Tatmadaw and Arakan Army



Severity of Humanitarian Access Constraints in Rakhine State; early 2020 (taken from HNO, 2021)

In contrast, the HARP-F project launched in 2019 in Northern Rakhine State (a multi-sector project which included provision of WASH NFIs¹⁷) was delivered in such a constrained environment (in terms of access and regulations) that there was limited opportunity to enact the programming principles, or attempt any other form of sustainability outcome. However, the partner reported other benefits which are mentioned later. Similarly, the support to IDPs in Chin State has been very challenging in terms of access, movement restrictions caused by COVID-19, poor infrastructure, and local capacities. The project is focused on delivering basic humanitarian assistance and has not set out to deliver sustainability-related outcomes. It is important to note that neither of these two projects were supported via genuine multi-year funding, rather a series of extended projects over an 18-month period.

The review finds less evidence that HARP-F has made significant progress on involvement of government and bridging the gap between humanitarian and development partners. This is mostly due to the disruption caused by COVID and the coup. A number of plans were curtailed by the difficulties of working during the pandemic and then by the coup, after which it was not possible or desirable to engage the military government.

A WASH project in Sittwe and Buthidaung went the furthest in terms of involvement of government and bridging the gap between humanitarian and development actors. This project was originally designed to support direct delivery of WASH activities by the HARP-F partner. Following the onset of COVID-

19 and resultant access challenges, the project was able to pivot to a different approach. This approach incorporated several sustainability components including close work with Rural Development Committees in 10 target villages, engagement of 2 local NGOs to support delivery, collaboration with the State Health Department, risk communication component and a community led monitoring approach¹⁸. It is important to note that this work was also not supported with genuine multi-year funding (rather a series of extensions).

BETTER PROGRAMME QUALITY

HARP-F's WASH partners consistently stated that the longer funding to them was sustained, the more they were able to develop local programme quality capacities. This is especially important in locations where a response is just starting – local staff must be recruited, trained and supervised over a sustained period to reach the required programme quality standards.

Many examples were shared with the review team of start-up periods that were reliant on expatriate or out-of-state staff who knew the organisation and its systems, but who were challenging to retain over the long term. This is especially the case in many locations in Rakhine where the conflict dynamics make finding suitable local staff difficult. This often caused discontinuities and related problems in terms of organisational learning. However, when only short-term funding was available this was a necessary trade-off for many humanitarian actors.

The WASH partnership in Sittwe camps is operating in a context where humanitarian programmes have been running since 2012 (when IDP camps were first established). One of the goals for HARP-F was to try and make more progress

¹⁷ NFIs are Non-Food Items. In Myanmar WASH NFIs typically include soap and sanitary pads

¹⁸ "Strengthening COVID-19 Prevention and control through community WASH services and Risk communication message in Rakhine State", Learning report produced by HARP-F partner (internal document)

in terms of programme quality and community resilience. The HARP-F request for proposals in 2017 asked applicants to, “Describe a long-term vision for context-specific resilience amongst target populations and explain how this three-year programme will contribute to realising that vision in the long term”. This deliberate approach to long-term planning from HARP-F was agreed by the partners and the WASH cluster to be a key component in achieving long-term outcomes in programme quality - especially community ownership and management, accountability to affected populations, and gender sensitivity. Being able to recruit, develop and retain staff was agreed to be a key factor leading to programme quality, as was continuous improvement of MEAL processes through the project period. Additionally, there was scope within the funded project to extensively document the process¹⁹.

In Northern Rakhine State, the HARP-F partner noted a different benefit from HARP- funding. The series of back-to-back 6-12-month grants resulted in more sustained funding than the partner usually received. This enhanced their ability to reach more remote locations with higher needs with humanitarian assistance. It would not have been possible to reach these locations within the framework of a short-term [<6 months] grant because of access challenges (poor infrastructure, supply chains and requirement for permissions that can take a long time to be granted).

“The more remote your context is, the more difficult it is to recruit and retain competent staff - this will completely determine the quality of your programme”

- FGD participant

One key dimension of WASH programme quality is continuity of service. From this perspective, there was very positive feedback on the HARP-F approach following the onset of COVID-19 in 2020 and the coup in 2021. During this turbulent period most HARP-F-funded projects needed adjustment or amendment to take account of emerging access and operational constraints. Additionally, COVID-19 and the coup created new needs for the populations that HARP-F and partners were already serving. This was explored during interviews and the conclusion was that multi-year funding was an enabling factor that helped HARP-F and partners maintain critical services through this period. However, the broader HARP-F approach to contract amendment and decision making was also a critical factor that support rapid adaptation.

A key question is, could such service continuity also be maintained within a framework of back-to-back short-term grants? Based on WASH feedback from partners the answer is yes – there were examples of where donor and partners worked together to navigate administrative requirements and donor decision-making processes to avoid a funding gap. But equally there are just as many examples given of where these efforts failed, sometimes resulting in suspension of critical services.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP/ENGAGEMENT

Multi-year funding has significantly contributed to community ownership and management in the Central Rakhine WASH partnership which had a 3-year grant, later extended by one further year (to cover 2021-22). For example, in 2017 one of the WASH partners had camp-based volunteers but all activities were driven and managed by senior staff based in Sittwe Town. In 2021 the same organization has leadership positions and structured offices in camps. This is an impressive achievement.

The two current partners report that this would have been much harder to achieve with three back-to-back 1-year projects because joint planning with communities would have been less ambitious. It makes a big difference to sit with community leaders and ask what could be achieved in a 3-year period compared with a 1-year period. Even if

¹⁹ Oxfam / Solidarités International (2021) WASH Handbook for Protracted Emergencies: The OXSI Experience in Myanmar
<https://www.harpfacility.com/resources/WASH-handbook-protracted-emergencies-oxfamsi-exper/>

there is a possibility of extension of funding after a year, the planning process will be more piecemeal and communities less confident to move towards full ownership than they would if long term support is assured.

Since COVID the WASH programming outside of IDP camps in Sittwe and Buthidaung shifted approach towards community-led and managed approaches, although the project cycles were shorter and did not enable long-term planning to the same extent as the Central Rakhine WASH partnership.

INCREASING EFFICIENCIES

All agencies reported efficiencies from longer-term funding. Examples included less staff time being spent on proposals, reporting, procurement and staff recruitment. Where a single-year project is extended without a gap, similar benefits are possible too, although less assured.

Hard evidence of improved efficiency from financial data or timesheets is difficult to acquire due to the lack of a control group. It is also hard to compare efficiencies between different locations and agencies because of the diversity of operating contexts and agency approaches (including approach to gathering relevant data on budgets and time allocation).

The pre-HARP-F support to the Central Rakhine WASH partnership by the UK government was also examined (looking at average monthly costs during each funded project). However, this comparison is also problematic because the original partnership (supported from 2012-16) comprised four INGOs, covered numerous sectors in addition to WASH, and changed from year to year.

Sequence and Duration of Central Rakhine DfID/HARP-F/FCDO WASH funding

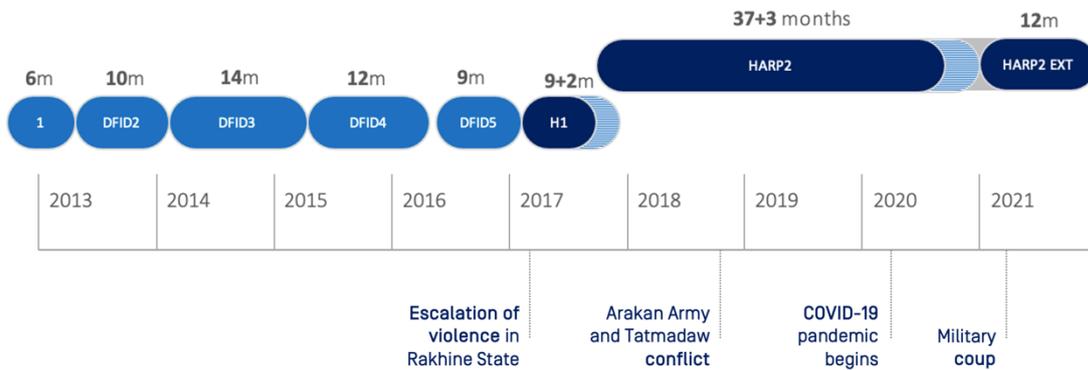


Diagram shows sequence UK-government funding to INGO consortium [2013-17] and WASH Partnership [2017-21] in Central Rakhine (solid shapes show original project duration; hashed shapes show project extensions)²⁰

WHAT NEXT FOR THE WASH PARTNERSHIP IN CENTRAL RAKHINE IDP CAMPS?

The current uncertainties in the operating environment create many challenges for humanitarian actors and donors in terms of planning and risk-taking. The review team looked at the Central Rakhine partnership as an example and

²⁰ Data from HARP-F staff

tried to understand what would be lost if it was not possible to sustain multi-year funding to this work going forward. Partners expect the following problems if they are not able to plan on a long-term basis:

Localisation: A localisation strategy has been developed by the WASH partnership²¹ that foresees the current INGO partners phasing out of direct implementation of WASH services by 2025. It will be highly challenging, although not impossible, to implement this plan with communities if funding for the 2022-25 period cannot be assured. They would understandably be anxious to commit to such a long-term plan if the resources necessary were not secured.

Programme quality: Initiatives to further improve programme quality would be impaired or unrealistic. For example, there are currently plans in place to improve WASH services for persons living with disabilities. The experience with previous programme quality improvements is that they need a reasonable period to launch and embed, usually more than 18 months (for example the Action from Community Engagement tool, the gender inclusion process, the tablet-based accountability system). Additionally, if funding windows are shortened, staff retention would again be an increasing challenge, with knock-on effects on program quality and efficiency.

²¹ 2022 Draft Proposal to FCDO

KACHIN & NORTHERN SHAN STATES

REVIEW HYPOTHESIS

It is unrealistic to expect multi-year funding to contribute towards sustainability and community ownership. However, it should be possible to see gains in terms of capacity of local implementing organisations and therefore programme quality and operational effectiveness.

HARP-F WASH APPROACH IN KACHIN STATE²²

“Within non-government controlled areas the Durable Peace Programme endline²³ [2018] showed that incomes are falling and people are becoming more vulnerable. The lack of livelihood opportunities and movement challenges mean that external financial support for WASH services will continue to be required indefinitely. In government-controlled areas, the situation varies greatly between locations. In some urban areas, where more livelihoods options exist, the need for external support is much less. Within this environment HARP-F wants to ensure the following principles:

- Ensure that local partners are meeting the minimum standards for WASH.
- Support local partners to develop long-term strategies for both (i) if the protracted camps remain in place and (ii) how to support in cases of resettlement. This review of long-term strategies needs to include:
- A critical review on the role of the WASH NGO in the protracted context. This includes reflection on when to stop hygiene promotion and how to move to more community led decentralised systems [...].
- Maximise community ownership and ability to self-manage WASH services.
- A review of the need for MHM and soap NFI's and an updated WASH cluster strategy (complete) and provide support for the new strategy. Support ensuring that all IDP's receive support, not just if supported by HARP.
- Support ensuring inclusion in WASH in Kachin and N.Shan. Aim to have wider impact than only HARP partners.”

Through the 2016-2021 period the context in Kachin and Northern Shan States has been complex. It comprises both stable situations of protracted displacement, in well-established camps, and unstable situations where newly displaced people take shelter in improvised and temporary camps. It has therefore been necessary for HARP-F to adopt a highly flexible and contextualised approach to programming in these locations.

SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Based on interviews with partners, there are several examples of community ownership being developed. This has been actively encouraged by HARP-F. However, in contrast to the central Rakhine WASH partnership there has been a less concentrated transition to community ownership. Funding cycles have been shorter, usually 12-24 months. HARP-F has worked with a wider range of partners working across a diverse range of local contexts. For example, one HARP-F partner has employed community ownership and management approaches for the last five years, whereas another has only begun to do this since the onset of COVID-19. The main reason for this difference based on interviews is the pre-existing partner capacity and approach. An additional reason that applies in some locations is that the context has been unstable (with frequent displacement/re-displacement).

Based on discussions with HARP-F partners and the WASH cluster, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a catalyst for change towards increased community ownership. Since COVID-19 began, local NGOs in Kachin have faced a range of access challenges due to public health regulations and insecurity. The WASH cluster in Kachin now strongly encourages community focused approaches and the PHAST (Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation²⁴) approach in particular²⁵. Cash grants to WASH committees have proven useful as a tool to support this transition.

²² Excerpt from HARP-F (2019) Water, Sanitation & Hygiene – HARP-F approaches

²³ The Durable Peace Programme is a consortium comprising seven national and international organisations working in Kachin and northern Shan. It is funded by the European Union. <https://durablepeaceprogramme.com>

²⁴ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-EOS-98.3>

²⁵ One of the HARP-F WASH partners in Rakhine has developed a tool called Action for Community Empowerment (ACE) which is a further development of PHAST. The learning from ACE is now being transferred to projects in Kachin State.

HARP-F has also supported an important pilot - the Survivor and Community Led Response (SCLR) approach. This was trialled in Northern Shan State and initial reports suggest that this is a model that could be employed more widely. SCLR is not a WASH-specific method. It puts decision making in the hands of communities and CBOs and employs a small-grant mechanism. It has been shown to be effective in contributing towards protection outcomes in other contexts globally²⁶. In Northern Shan the SCLR project was partially focused on WASH, along with shelter, food security and protection, based on community prioritisation. The implementing partner reports that it was a fast and nimble approach with which to meet the needs of newly displaced communities in comparison to other approaches. HARP-F was one of the sole supporters of this approach in Myanmar and should be commended for this. The project is being supported by FCDO going forward.

WASH actors consulted highlighted HARP-F's flexible and systematic approach allowed for quick mobilization of humanitarian assistance to IDPs. They also noted that multi-year funding enabled programmes to be adaptive in the face of sudden changes, which have occurred frequently in both Kachin and Northern Shan States. Another benefit reported was that multi-year funding helped provide the capacity building support to CBOs that was better tailored to their specific requirements.

Prior to the coup, a durable solutions approach to supporting displaced communities was prioritised by several HARP-F partners. This was also a priority for FCDO. Based on interviews with WASH actors in Kachin/NSS, lessons learned on durable solutions included:

- The need for more funding mechanisms that can support rapid programme adaptation when safe return becomes possible. A tailored funding mechanism can help ensure that immediate needs are met during and immediately after return occurs. Cash-based support is particularly appropriate in many parts of Kachin/NSS.
- The importance of supporting host communities when IDPs return or relocate. This is important as a support to social cohesion and to help enable community based-approaches to be effective.

The general feedback on the post-coup context is that although patterns of conflict and displacement are increasingly unpredictable, there will still be opportunities for safe return, and that the durable solutions concept should continue to be prioritised.

CAPACITY OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

A patchwork of successive enabling and delivery grants²⁷ in Kachin / NSS have significantly helped improve operational and technical capacities in local organisations in Kachin / NSS. WASH actors interviewed as part of this review stated that HARP-F has been a key supporter of structured organisational capacity development for local NGOs and has helped them develop some of the capacities that are key for management of international-donor supported humanitarian projects.

One notable achievement was the work done to transition one of the largest Kachin delivery grants. The initial arrangement, in which an INGO implementing partner sub-granted to a LNGO was successfully transitioned, with the LNGO becoming the lead implementing partner (and thus direct recipient of the delivery grant) and the INGO continuing to provide key technical support. A recent review found that key transformations in partnerships, capacities, and access to direct funding for the LNGO have been successful²⁸. KIIs as part of this strategic review confirmed this. Going forward, the sustainability of this capacity development is to some extent reliant on the LNGO finding ways to secure new sources of funding in order to retain some of their trained staff. Alongside this, there have been a range of other capacity development investments focused on technical WASH capacities and organisational development (for example, development of organisational vision, structure and governance of LNGOs).

²⁶ <https://www.local2global.info/sclr/training/>

²⁷ HARP-F has a variety of grant types including delivery grants, which are focused on delivery of humanitarian and resilience assistance and enabling grants, which are focused on provided capacity development support (while also delivering humanitarian or resilience assistance)

²⁸ Humanitarian Advisory Group (2021) Localisation through partnership: Shifting Towards Locally Led Programming in Myanmar. Phase 3: Outcomes of the Transition https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/HAG-Trocaire-KMSS_Localisation-through-Partnership_FINAL_electronic_Phase-3.pdf

Based on the interviews with WASH actors in Kachin, long-term multi-year funding (>24 months) significantly improves LNGO capacity development. However, so long as there is a clear coordination and planning process, long term organisational capacity development can also be resourced from a combination of different medium term (12-24 month) grants. However, without coordination across donors and other organisations providing capacity development support, the process will be chaotic and results impaired.

EXAMPLE – ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL NGOS

In 2019, HARP-F conducted an Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) evaluating the organisational and programmatic capacity of 17 partners who had received enabling grants in Kachin and Rakhine²⁹. The OCA found that the capacity training programming and support were effective. **All 9 Kachin organizations** scored themselves an average 1 point above their baseline self-assessment in: Governance, Financial Management, Admin and Procurement, Human Resource Management, Programs Management, Performance Management and Organizational Management.

The OCA revealed additional positive experiences. 5 organisations adopted a new policy or revised an existing policy to meet a general requirement. 3 organizations gained experience working with an external consultant for the first time. All organisations reported being able to handle basic data management requirements and perform baseline and end-line surveys.

PROGRAMME QUALITY & OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Interviews with both local and international NGOs working in Kachin confirmed that the longer that funding was sustained, the better they were able to develop programme quality. Organisations noted that with stable funding they were better able to retain staff, thereby improving organisational learning and advancing team performance. Even though the funding HARP-F provided in Kachin was not multi-year as defined by the Grand Bargain definition of 24 months or more, it was longer and more sustained than many other available funding sources³⁰. Critically, HARP-F tried to ensure that local NGOs did not face funding gaps (i.e. a delay in extending a project) because of the financial impact this can have on a small organisation with limited financial reserves or liquidity.

As per the WASH programming principles for Kachin, there was a significant focus on inclusion (this covered both Rakhine and Kachin/NSS). This was implemented by a specialist INGO and comprised training on disability inclusion, establishment of a network of inclusion focal points within HARP-F partners and a program of follow-up and supervision.

In general, the investment in local NGOs in Kachin / NSS appears to have improved the effectiveness of interventions (in terms of speed of delivery and relevant to community needs). However, evidence is largely anecdotal, and most examples given were pre-date the COVID-19 pandemic. Following COVID-19, local NGOs that had previously been able to gain access to affected populations were themselves hampered by public health restrictions because several of their staff were based in larger towns, rather than living within affected communities.

²⁹ HARP-F (2020) Organizational Capacity Assessment End-line Report

³⁰ Longest delivery grant was 15 months, which was later extended by another 12 months

COMPARING RAKHINE AND KACHIN/NSS

The following table draws out some comparisons between the HARP-F WASH partnership in Central Rakhine and support to a range of LNGOs in Kachin/NSS:

	Central Rakhine Camps	Kachin / NSS
Approach	WASH support adopted a multi-year approach . The Central Rakhine WASH partnership was the flagship WASH programme for HARP-F in terms of level of investment and expected level of innovation. A long-term vision was put in place. Central Rakhine approach evolved towards supporting local partners WASH frequently supported as a single-sector intervention	Funding cycles of over 12 months were used where possible (but mostly less than 2 years) due to Kachin/NSS being a more volatile and unpredictable context (as compared to Central Rakhine camps) WASH programming supported through enabling grants in recognition of partner capacity development needs. WASH often funded as part of multi-sector assistance packages
Goals	Community ownership & management of WASH facilities in camps	Build capacity of LNGOs to be primary grant recipient (including development of capacity to facilitate community ownership and management)
Pre-HARP model	Multi-sector consortium of 4 or 5 INGOs working in different ways in different places	INGOs sub-contracting to LNGOs
HARP-F model	Single-sector partnership with harmonised approach in all locations. 2 core INGO partners and 1 specialist technical partner.	LNGOs lead delivery with capacity development support where relevant from INGOs

CRITICISMS OF MULTI-YEAR FUNDING

Very few interviewees had any criticism of the multi-year funding model adopted by HARP-F for WASH programming. However, one important question raised is whether multi-year funding incentivises the same results-focus that short-term funding cycles tend to. It was suggested that “with short-term humanitarian funding staff fear for their jobs and know they have to perform to a high standard in order for their organisation to receive sustained funding”. In the opinion of the review team the problems of such an approach in terms of staff retention, organisational culture and continuous learning outweigh any benefits.

However, there is an important point to highlight. Multi-year funding will only generate better outcomes than short-term funding if staff are supported and managed accordingly. Many humanitarian organisations have a culture and systems focused on urgency, and measurement of concrete results and outputs. To capitalise on the potential benefits multi-year funding offers, implementing partners should have an organisational culture that also promotes continuous learning, community accountability, and planning and measurement approaches focused on long-term outcomes (such as outcome mapping and outcome harvesting). Partnerships with development-focused organisations that already have these capacities could also be considered. HARP-F did offer some support in these areas but this was relatively narrow and focused on MEAL technical support to partners and ensuring that lessons learned were documented in partner reports³¹.

ADAPTATION FOLLOWING COUP/COVID-19

REVIEW HYPOTHESIS

Since the onset of COVID-19, due to public health regulations and other access challenges, WASH partners have faced an increasingly challenging operating environment. This has placed increased pressure and expectation on

³¹ The HARP-F support for Enabling Grant partners was focused on MEAL and covered baseline/endline surveys, data analysis support and technical assistance. For Delivery Grant partners the support offered was less systematic and varied, being based on requests from partners. In all quarterly reports information on lessons learned was requested.

local capacities. This period can be viewed as a “stress test” of the capacities built up by HARP-F in local NGOs and communities in Rakhine and Kachin/NSS.

OVERALL FINDINGS

HARP-F and partners have continued to deliver through COVID and the coup. All organisations have faced significant challenges. Due to COVID-19 they have had to navigate public health regulations and manage staff health. Remote management and monitoring have been employed to support continued delivery. There have been significant supply chain and money transfer problems which have worsened considerably since the February 2021 coup. Many INGOs have evacuated expatriate staff. Since the coup it has been increasingly difficult to get new visas for international staff members.

“Flexibility in programming is a major point - HARP-F has granted this through the years and this is why long term programming works in the response in Rakhine”

– FGD participant

Without the prior investment in community approaches and local organisation capacity it would have been much harder to sustain programming through this period. For example, the Central Rakhine WASH partnership was able to continue delivering critical services via the community structures that were in place. In Kachin State many local NGOs responded to access problems further employing community-based approaches (in some cases building on the Rakhine WASH partnership experience). One critical challenge in this process is the question of how best to sustain high quality WASH technical support when programmes are being

delivered remotely.

HARP-F's approach through this period was very much appreciated by WASH actors who stated that:

- HARP-F was responsive to requests to adjust and adapt programming
- HARP-F was faster than other donors to take decisions and approve plans
- HARP-F understood the situation well in Myanmar because most of the team live / have lived in the country³²

Aside from providing continuity of WASH services, it is also impressive to see how HARP-F-supported programmes have been able to adapt where necessary - WASH has been a key sector in the overall HARP-F COVID-19 response. HARP-F frequently worked through partners that were already contracted via multi-year funding to establish its WASH response following COVID-19. This strategy was appreciated by existing partners and was also quite efficient in terms of administration (both HARP-F and partner were able to take advantage of the multi-year framework). The downside of such an approach is that responses generally took place in locations where existing projects were being delivered. There were no criticisms of the approach from those interviewed.

A good example of adaptation is the WASH project focused on central Rakhine villages where two local partners were brought on board in order to deliver a COVID-19 response that was well connected with communities.

This review reconfirms one of the conclusions of the recent HARP-F review of Remote Partnerships: “The most localised responses, whether led by national or international partners, have been best placed to sustain delivery through the pandemic and coup”³³.

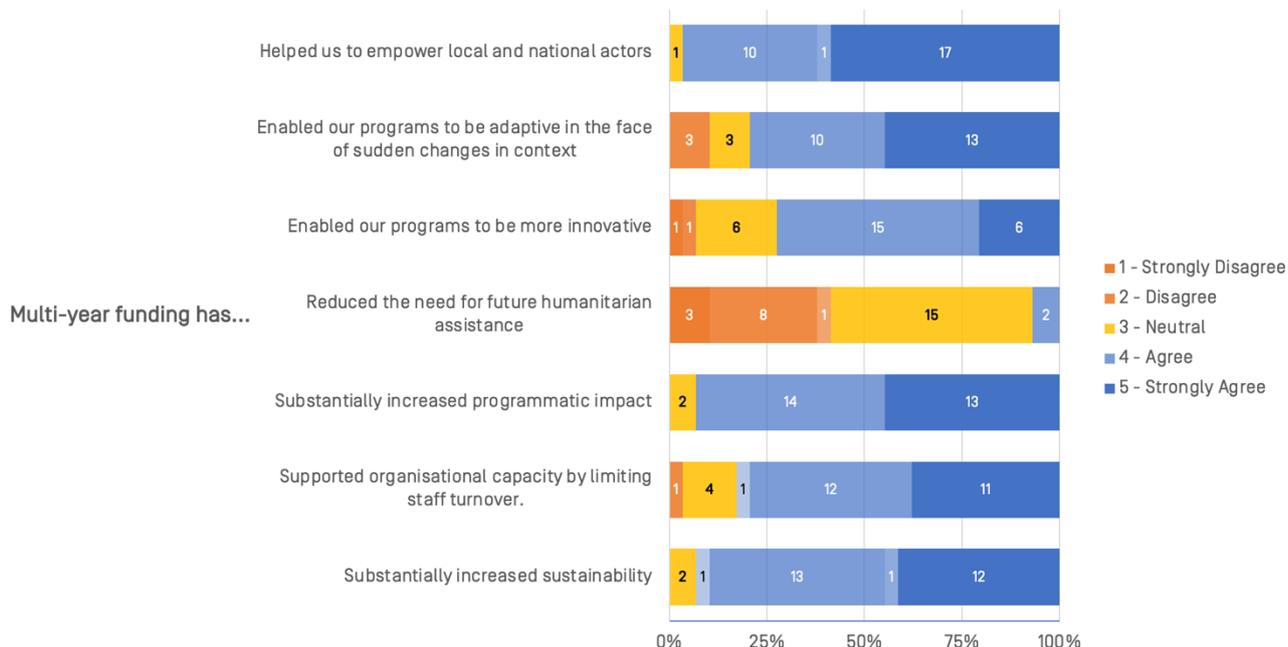
BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF MULTI-YEAR FUNDING

WASH actors receiving HARP-F funding were asked about the extent to which they agreed with seven statements related to Multi-year Funding:

³² KIIs indicated that this experience was in contrast with many other donors, many of whom support elements of project delivery from donor capitals.

³³ Medway, Gonzalez, Win, Kyaw, Russo (2011) HARP-F Approach to Remote Partnership in Myanmar – Final Evaluation Report <https://www.harppfacility.com/resources/harp-f-approach-remote-partnership-myanmar-evaluat/>

WASH Actors' Scoring of Multi-year Funding Benefits



Benefits of Multi-year Funding – Mean scores given by WASH actors in KIs (n = 29)

The highest ranked statements related to empowering local and national actors, increased programmatic impact and increased sustainability. The lowest ranked was the statement about reducing the need for future humanitarian assistance. The reason for this low score was discussed and most respondents stated that it was not possible to see reduced needs for future humanitarian assistance during a period when overall needs have been increasing. They also mentioned that this might be possible to see in a stable situation where humanitarian caseload is constant, and funding is sustained. There was no discernible pattern or trend in the responses that was specific to Rakhine or Kachin / NSS.

“The purpose of short-term funding is dealing with the immediate - you get in, you provide for basic needs, you get out - you help people survive. But in a multi-year program there is a crucial tweak - you are improving the life of people beyond their basic needs” - FGD participant

The various benefits and challenges were further explored in KIs and the most consistently highlighted points are summarised in the table below:

Benefits and Challenges highlighted by ranking exercise <i>(R = Observed in Rakhine, K = Observed in Kachin/NSS)</i>		
	Benefits	Challenges
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long term vision and 3-year plan enabled transition to community managed approach (R) - Multi-year adaptive approach can support transition to development / durable solutions (K) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding local organisations strengthened their capacities but didn't lead to significant increases in community ownership (K)

Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistency of staffing and community relationship leading to improved efficiency and better planning (R) - Funding local organisations (as opposed to UN/INGO) means more funding going to beneficiaries (K) 	
Adaptiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding can be shifted to adapt programmes based on learning or changing need (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In many cases HARP-F was co-financing projects which removed some flexibility (K)³⁴

OBSERVATIONS ON MULTI-YEAR FUNDING DATA

Various challenges were faced in this review in terms of data on WASH funding gathered by the WASH cluster. These challenges were navigated with the support of the HARP-F WASH adviser who was able to compile an accurate picture of multi-year WASH funding in Myanmar. Challenges included:

- The WASH cluster funding matrix and UN-OCHA financial tracking service do not capture instances where funds are “passed through” from one agency to another.
- UN agencies will usually be listed as a donor without noting, where relevant, which institutional donor provided the funds.
- In the case of partnerships between INGOs and LNGOs it is usually the primary grant that is reported in the funding matrix (for example a 12 month project delivered by INGO x, funded by donor y). The problem with this is that any subgrant from INGO to LNGO is not recorded in the matrix. The sub-grant will almost always be of a shorter duration than the primary grant. The LNGO will be listed as an implementing partner only. This means that the funding for LNGOs is often of a shorter-duration than that recorded in the data.
- Implementing agencies often change the end date in the cluster funding matrix when projects are extended. So a grant that was originally 6 months can appear as a 24 month grant if it was extended on several occasions. Following the OECD definition, this is not multi-year funding. So the way funding data is captured does not record fundamental aspects of the funding modality.
- For the purpose of our analysis, working with the HARP-F team, disaggregated original and revised end dates were noted where relevant. The original project duration is the most important information as this is what generally shaped the original program design

In summary, whilst the WASH cluster has an efficient system for tracking project information, the above points highlight some of the difficulties involved in tracking progress against the Grand Bargain commitments on increasing multi-year investment in capacities of local and national responders (commitment 2.1) and increasing multi-year, collaborative and flexible planning (commitment 7.1). The matrix could be adjusted in some simple ways to ensure that critical data is captured via an agreed methodology.

³⁴ This was due to the administration required to align budgets and plans in order to meet the co-financing regulations of the other donor. Nevertheless, co-financing did bring some advantages in terms of sustaining delivery of WASH services.

7 KEY LESSONS LEARNED FROM HARP-F MULTI-YEAR WASH PROGRAMMING

1. **Provision of “Long term” multi-year funding** (>24 months) was a key factor in supporting substantial advances in **community ownership and management of WASH services** in a challenging operating environment (central Rakhine IDP camps).
2. **“Medium term” multi-year funding** (12–24 months) was effective in supporting a **structured process of local NGO capacity development** (mostly evidenced in Kachin/NSS). It was crucial to maintain coordination with other capacity building providers for this funding to be effective. 96% of WASH actors consulted in this review agreed that HARP-F funding has been effective in empowering local and national actors.
3. **Multi-year funding of any duration** (12 months or more) helped implementing agencies build **programme quality and led to administrative and operational cost savings** in comparison to typical short-term humanitarian funding. This is consistent with previous research on multi-year funding³⁵. 93% of WASH actors consulted in this review agreed that multi-year funding substantially increased programmatic impact (including increased investment in community accountability processes). Those consulted reported that more time was spent on creating value with targeted communities rather than meeting the increased administrative requirements that back-to-back short-term funding involves.
4. **A contextualised strategy framework for WASH programming** was helpful in guiding HARP-F support to partners, HARP-F funding decisions and HARP-F partner planning. It outlined relevant approaches to sustainability and resilience for the key operating contexts in Rakhine and Kachin States.
5. **HARP-F recognised the difficulty that a funding gap would present for local NGOs** and tried to mitigate the risk of this happening. Local NGOs do not typically benefit from the funding reserves and that many INGOs have. Given the effort invested by HARP-F and partners in LINGO capacity development it was crucial that HARP-F found ways to ensure sustained funding for local NGOs working in a protracted crisis.
6. **The M&E approach needed to be better at capturing outcomes and learning.** There would be increased benefit from multi-year funding, and stronger evidence for the future, if M&E approaches were designed to understand emerging long-term outcomes and learning. A results/outputs focused humanitarian M&E approach is not sufficient.
7. **Multi-year thinking and planning was encouraged alongside multi-year funding.** The HARP-F experience shows that multi-year funding is not the only tool that can support programme quality, efficiency and longer-term WASH outcomes. In a protracted crisis multi-year planning approaches should be encouraged at all levels. There were examples of this happening in Myanmar at both the WASH cluster and implementing organisation levels.

³⁵ A 2013 study funded by the UK Government finds that: “the quantitative and qualitative evidence that does exist clearly indicates that substantial value for money gains can be made by shifting to multi-year humanitarian funding”. Evidence was found in three areas: administrative cost savings, operational cost savings, outcome cost savings: Cabot-Venton, C. (2013) Value for Money of Multi-year Approaches to Humanitarian Funding https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/226161/VfM_of_Multi-year_Humanitarian_Funding_Report.pdf

REVIEW FINDINGS 2: APPLICATION OF LEARNING

Review Objective 2:

Where and how could this learning be applied in future WASH programming in Myanmar? Are there opportunities to transfer learning to other sectors in Myanmar, and other country contexts globally?

WHERE AND HOW COULD THIS LEARNING BE APPLIED IN FUTURE WASH PROGRAMMING IN MYANMAR?

Geographic considerations

- 1. Protecting the investments made under HARP-F in Rakhine, Kachin and Northern Shan.** At a minimum, it would be important to continue support to the NGO and community structures that have been the subject of sustained investment under HARP-F. If funding support to these programmes is reduced or stopped, the capacities carefully developed over the last 6 years could atrophy. It would then be hard to quickly recreate the programme quality and efficiencies developed under HARP-F in a new project. The foremost location where sustained WASH investment is required is Rakhine. The conditions in Rakhine continue to be viable for multi-year WASH funding.
- 2. Consider multi-year WASH support for recent displacement situations.** Several IDP communities in SE Myanmar and Chin State are unlikely to be able to return home soon. These are likely to be protracted displacement scenarios and application of multi-year approaches to WASH programming should be explored.
- 3. New displacement.** There are numerous places where displacement has happened recently (such as parts of Sagaing, Chin, Magway, Kachin, Shan (not only NSS), Kayah and Kayin). The majority of the displaced are living in makeshift camps where emergency funding models for WASH programming are generally relevant at this early stage.

Financing multi-year WASH in the future

The United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, via HARP-F, has been the most prominent donor providing multi-year WASH funding in Myanmar since 2017. Given the substantial benefits that multi-year funding offers it would be important, not only to continue FCDO support, but also to encourage a wider range of donors to support multi-year funding.

The data provided in this report derived from the WASH cluster funding matrix clearly shows the current situation and recent trends. It should be shared, along with this report, with other WASH donors. A good starting point would be to focus on donors already funding projects of over 12 months and suggest that they look at extending project timelines further on a case by case basis³⁶.

Building on HARP-F WASH experience

The WASH cluster has been the main channel for sharing learning derived from HARP-F WASH programming. The Central Rakhine WASH partnership has made strong contributions to national and subnational cluster activities. For example:

- Defining standards (hygiene kits strategy in 2017, standard latrine design, COVID-19 hygiene kits distribution strategy)
- Oxfam (partner) has been leading the hygiene promotion TWiG in Rakhine via the subnational WASH cluster

³⁶ For example: German FFO, UNICEF, USAID and MHF are already providing WASH funding with 12-18 month project durations

- Solidarités International (partner) has been leading the sanitation TWiG since 2017

Aside from disseminating information via the WASH cluster, HARP-F and partners have developed some learning products which are relevant to other WASH actors:

1. The WASH handbook for protracted emergencies based on the Oxfam-Solidarités partnership³⁷. This handbook is very helpful in terms of outlining how to accomplish community leadership and WASH service management.
2. The Localisation Through Partnership three-part series which documents the KMSS-Trócaire partnership process³⁸.



A series of webinars has been run in late 2021 to support dissemination of HARP-F learning, including one focused on community participation in WASH which was well attended³⁹.

WOULD THIS LEARNING APPLY TO OTHER SECTORS IN MYANMAR, AND OTHER COUNTRY CONTEXTS GLOBALLY?

The learning from HARP-F multi-year WASH programming is of relevance for any humanitarian interventions which set out to achieve long-term outcomes related to community capacity building and behaviour change. Multi-year funding can also be a powerful tool to develop the organisational capacities of local NGOs. Additionally, those consulted in the review highlighted the relevance of multi-year funding for programming that aims to reduce cross-cutting protection risks and support resilience building.

Multi-year funding is also helpful in supporting integrated multi-sector programming. One key finding is that it is hard to develop strong multi-sector programming with only short-term funding. It is hard to consolidate a range of short-term projects with different regulations and timescales into an impactful and integrated multi-sector intervention.

“It is hard to think of sectors that this learning on multi-year WASH would not apply to.”

- FGD participant

TOPICS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Based on this review, the following topics require further exploration and could be considered in future reviews and evaluations:

- In this review, it has been challenging to find quantitative data on the impacts and benefits if multi-year funding. As such the evidence for administrative and operational efficiencies is qualitative and anecdotal.

³⁷ <https://www.harpfacility.com/resources/wash-handbook-protracted-emergencies-oxfamsi-exper/>

³⁸ <https://www.harpfacility.com/resources/localisation-through-partnership-phase3/>

³⁹ “A participation revolution? Experiences with community participation in WaSH projects as a path to greater resilience”. Attended by 85 participants on Zoom; 400 viewing on Facebook. <https://www.harpfacility.com/resources/webinar-participation-revolution-experiences-imple/>

This should be considered in future studies with a goal of building the body of evidence on multi-year funding. Design of future multi-year funding programmes could also consider this issue so that accurate and comparable data is captured as part of project management processes.

- Consideration of what can be learned from HARP-F M&E systems on how best to track / harvest outcomes and put project learning into practice in real-time.
- Examination of how programming and funding frameworks can provide agile support to durable solutions, especially when the local context changes (for example, when safe and dignified return becomes possible).
- Exploration of how to optimise use of cash-based approaches in volatile and uncertain situations, such as those experienced in Myanmar during 2021.

It should be noted that HARP-F is currently conducting a piece of work to research how different types of WASH activities can incorporate community leadership and participation. This will also include development of a community participation tool for WASH.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The overwhelming majority of WASH actors consulted considered multi-year funding from HARP-F to be much more effective than short-term funding in terms of achieving programme quality and impact. They also reported that multi-year funding increased their efficiency from an administrative and operational perspective. The staff time saved could be reinvested in programme quality improvements.

Additionally, the review has found that community-level investments made possible by multi-year funding strongly supported programme continuity through COVID-19 and the coup. This meant that many WASH services, which may otherwise have been disrupted, were sustained.

In Rakhine and Kachin / Northern Shan, two different approaches to WASH localisation were adopted by HARP-F. In Kachin / Northern Shan there was an investment in local NGO capacity. In Rakhine there was an investment in community capacity. Multi-year funding was an important enabling factor for both localisation approaches, generating learning that can be applied more widely in Myanmar in WASH and other sectors.

MULTI-YEAR FUNDING – CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The review has found that, to capitalise on the potential benefits that multi-year funding offers, there are some critical factors for success that donors and implementing partners delivering such projects need to keep in mind:

- **Organisational culture and management** – a traditional humanitarian culture (fast, focused on outputs and results) is not enough. Achieving longer-term outcomes requires other tools and skills (planning with communities, different approaches to monitoring and measurement). Managers need to recruit, train and supervise staff with this in mind. The same can be said for partner selection and support in circumstances where local organisations are supporting delivery.
- **Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning systems** – project design needs to consider how learning will be monitored, disseminated, and applied, on a rolling basis. M&E systems need to go beyond results and outputs and consider how emerging outcomes can be identified and the project plans adjusted accordingly.
- **Proximity, continuous assessment, adjustment** – multi-year funding will only be more effective in terms of impact and long-term outcomes if the implementing partner is highly connected to what is happening at the community level. A high level of connection can be achieved through recruitment of project staff from communities, community accountability processes, regular feedback and regular structured risks/needs assessment.
- **Adaptive programme management** – there needs to be agreement between donors and implementing partners about how project plans can be adjusted and realigned based on learning and contextual changes. This realignment needs to be done quickly, given the dynamic context, so these mechanisms should be pre-agreed.

THE OUTLOOK FOR 2022

Unfortunately, the situation in Myanmar continues to be unstable and unpredictable. There was a significant scale-up of the humanitarian response during 2021 to respond to new needs following the military takeover in February. Humanitarian access continues to be a significant challenge. Looking towards 2022, humanitarian organisations have set an ambitious target of assisting 6.2 million people⁴⁰. The financial ask is three-times that of 2021.

⁴⁰ <https://gho.unocha.org/myanmar>

Given the increased needs, funding requirements and ongoing uncertainty in Myanmar there is a risk that donors may step back from providing further multi-year funding for the foreseeable future, focusing only on delivering against basic needs via short-term projects. This would be problematic for two reasons:

- 1) Capacity investments made in communities and LNGOs under HARP-F need to be utilised and further developed in order for them to be sustained.
- 2) If there is limited new investment in community-based approaches and LNGO response capacity, resilience to future shocks will be lower. Ongoing shocks are likely given the conflict, economic situation and natural hazard profile. The situation at national and local levels may get worse before it gets better. Access for international actors is likely to remain difficult. **Communities and LNGOs will continue to be the primary lifeline for humanitarian assistance and protection in many locations.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given the ongoing crisis all humanitarian actors in Myanmar should advocate for multi-year funding, especially where long term outcomes are envisioned, or access constraints are likely to be sustained. Multi-year grants with a duration of 2 years or more (in keeping with the OECD definition) are preferred because of the increased efficiency and programme impact gains that can be achieved over such a period.
2. Where multi-year funding is not possible multi-year plans should be adopted at the agency, donor and cluster levels. Meanwhile, the situation at community level should be closely monitored to help identify when the situation is sufficiently stable for multi-year funding.
3. Linkages between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding mechanisms should continue to be built in order to maximise coherence and shared impact. This coordination becomes increasingly important the more that humanitarian multi-year funding is supported.
4. Emergency response programming in a complex setting such as Myanmar can adopt multi-year funding modalities, employing an adaptive management approach. This can provide a framework to enable LNGO response capacities to be strengthened.
5. The global WASH cluster should examine how the cluster funding matrix captures data relevant to multi-year funding. Original project duration and project extension information is critical to capture. This would enable country level clusters to be able to report against the Grand Bargain commitment on Quality Funding more easily. The global WASH cluster should also consider delineating information on primary grants and subgrants, including duration and value of both. This would enable the true picture for local and national actors (who are often subgrantees) to be better understood. This could then be used as a global indicator to track progress against commitments on quality funding and more support and funding for local and national responders. This would also apply to other clusters.

LIST OF ANNEXES

ANNEX 2: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

ANNEX 3: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

Key informant interviews

58 people across 22 organisations:

CHAD	Mercy Corps
CSI	Metta
DCA-NCA	Oxfam
FCDO	Pyoe
Grip Hands	Save the Children International
HARP-F	Shalom
Humanity & Inclusion	Solidarites International
KBC	TGH
KMSS	Trocaire
LYB	UNICEF WASH Cluster
MA-UK	WPN

Focus Group Discussions

13 people across 12 organisations

English Language FGD

MA-UK	Save the Children International
Mercy Corps	TGH
Oxfam	Trocaire

Myanmar Language FGD

DCA-NCA	LYB
KBC	Metta
KMSS	WPN

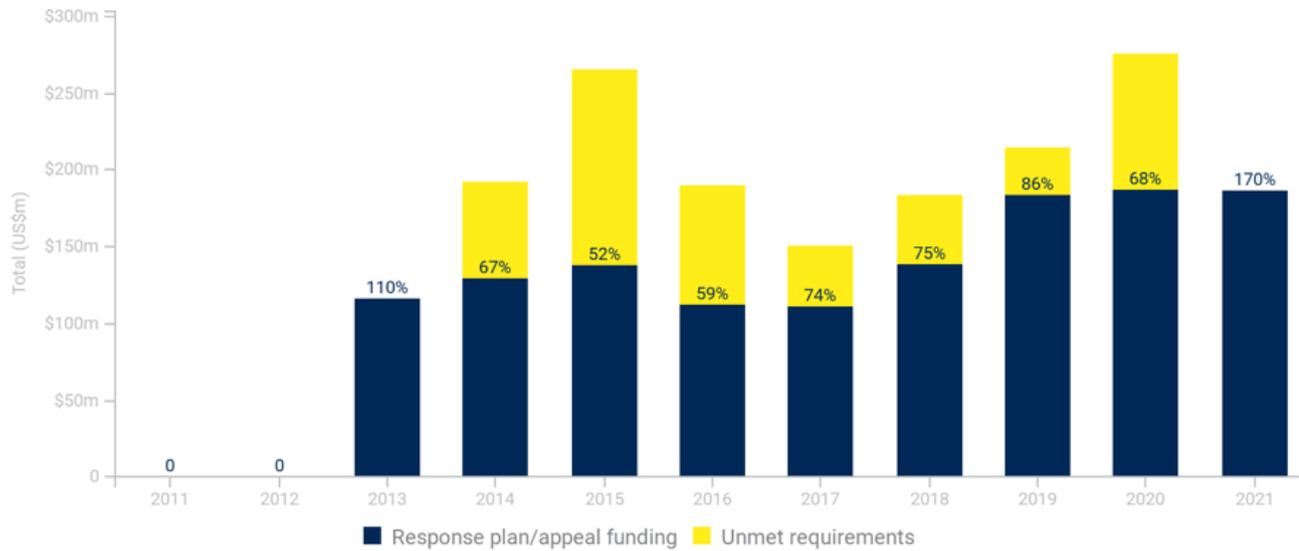
ANNEX 4: SUPPORTING DATA ON HARP-F MULTI-YEAR WASH FUNDING

Myanmar Humanitarian Context and Funding Requirements, 2016-21

People in Need 2016 - 2021						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
People in Need	1 M	.53 M	.86 M	.94 M	.99 M	1 M
% increase in Need	-	-47%	62%	9%	5%	1%

Number of People in Need at National Level, 2016-21 (based on HRP data). 2021 figure was pre-coup

Annual humanitarian funding requirements in Myanmar have been consistently high through the 2016-21 period. In 2019 funding requirements increased to US\$214M following violence and displacement in Rakhine State, followed by a further increase in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Summary of Humanitarian Funding Requirements in Myanmar since 2013⁴¹

⁴¹ Data taken from UN OCHA FTS on 27-OCT-21

HRP	People in need	People targeted	Requirements (US\$)	Funding coverage
2022	14.4 M	6.2 M	826.0 M	
2021	1.0 M	944.5 K	276.5 M	73%
2020	986.0 K	848.0 K	215.0 M	68%
2019	941.0 K	941.0 K	214.4 M	85%
2018	863.0 K	832.0 K	183.4 M	75%
2017	525.0 K	525.0 K	150.3 M	74%
2016	1.0 M	1.0 M	189.5 M	59%

Table: Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 • Source: Financial Tracking Service

Comparing the overall funding requirements between Rakhine and Kachin/NSS it is worth noting that through the 2016-21 period, funding requirements in Rakhine State were generally 2-3 times the level of those for Kachin/NSS.

Humanitarian Funding Required vs. Received 2016 - 2021						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Overall funding requirement	\$189 M	\$150 M	\$183 M	\$214 M	\$275 M	\$276 M
Overall funding received against target	\$112 M	\$111 M	\$138 M	\$183 M	\$187 M	\$158 M
Overall WASH funding requirement	\$18 M	\$17 M	\$31 M	\$30 M	\$33 M	\$35 M
Overall WASH received against target	\$16 M	\$11 M	\$9 M	\$16 M	\$11 M	\$13 M
Amount of WASH funding received as % of total funding received	14%	10%	7%	9%	6%	8%

*All numbers rounded to nearest million. Numbers are reflected in USD.

WASH has been a significant component of the overall response in all locations. The amount of funding requested for the WASH sector reduced slightly over the 2016-21 period from 14% of the total funding received in 2016 to 8% of the total funding received in 2021.

Types of HARP-F Funding

HARP-F provides grants to international, national and local partners. HARP-F grant mechanisms include the following⁴²:

DELIVERY GRANTS

Provide humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected populations, primarily IDPs and refugees, in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan States, and on the border with Thailand. These are the largest portion of the portfolio by grant value and people reached.

ENABLING GRANTS

Enabling grants are divided into two categories, tier one and tier two. Tier one grants have a duration between 6 and 24 months are focused on capacity building. These grants were designed to support national and local organisations to engage in direct humanitarian service delivery in conflict-affected communities, build their organisational capacity and build resilience.

INNOVATION GRANTS

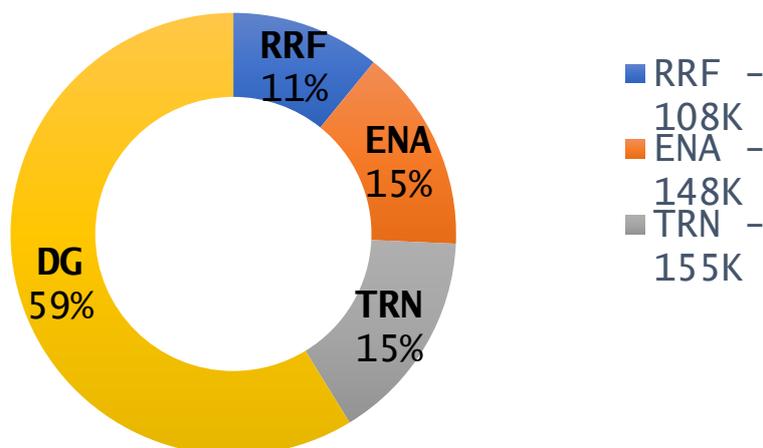
Focus on improving humanitarian practice in Myanmar, through testing and adopting new products, services, processes and partners.

THE RAPID RESPONSE FUND

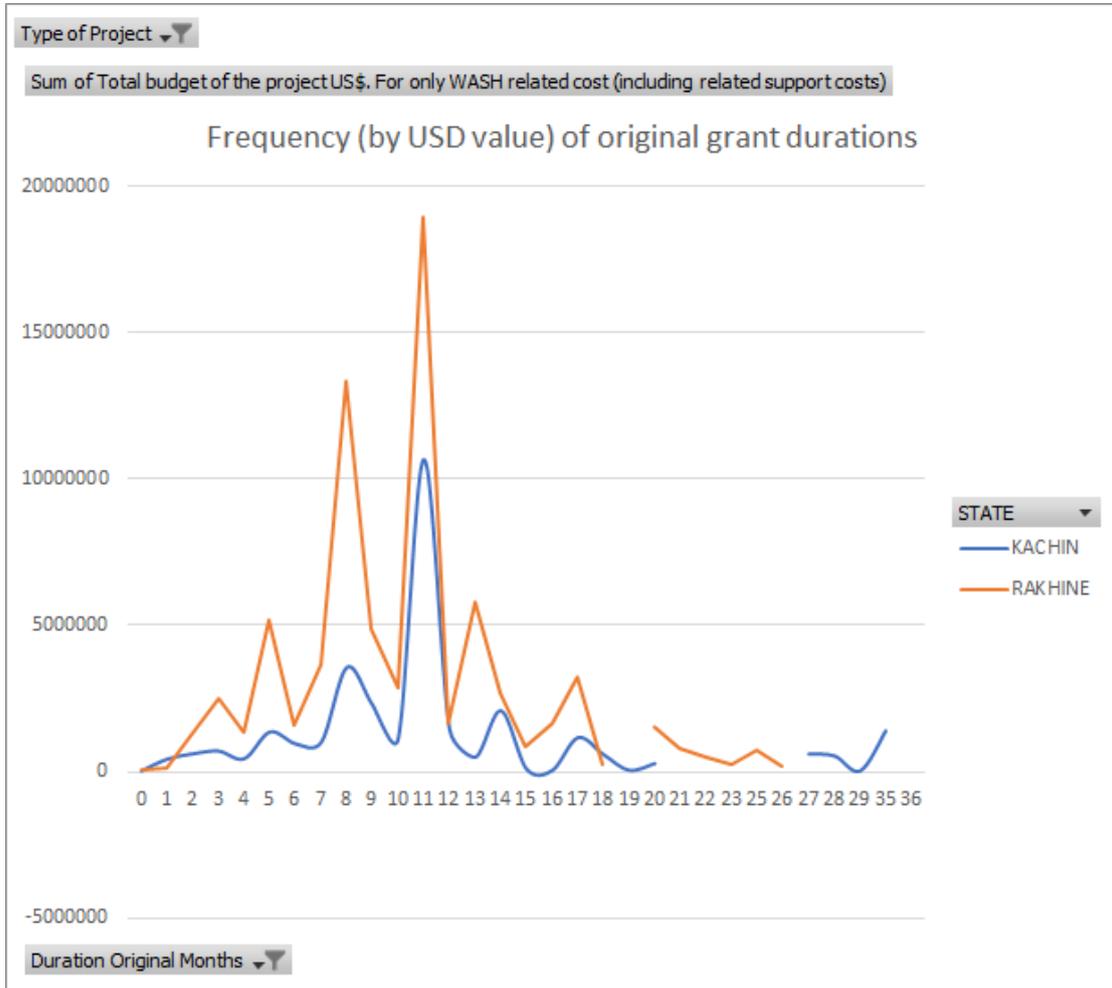
Designed for quick onset emergencies. These have been used for extreme climatic events such as floods and cyclones and conflict induced displacement. Potential partners in hazard-prone and active conflict areas are pre-qualified to ensure quick access to funds.

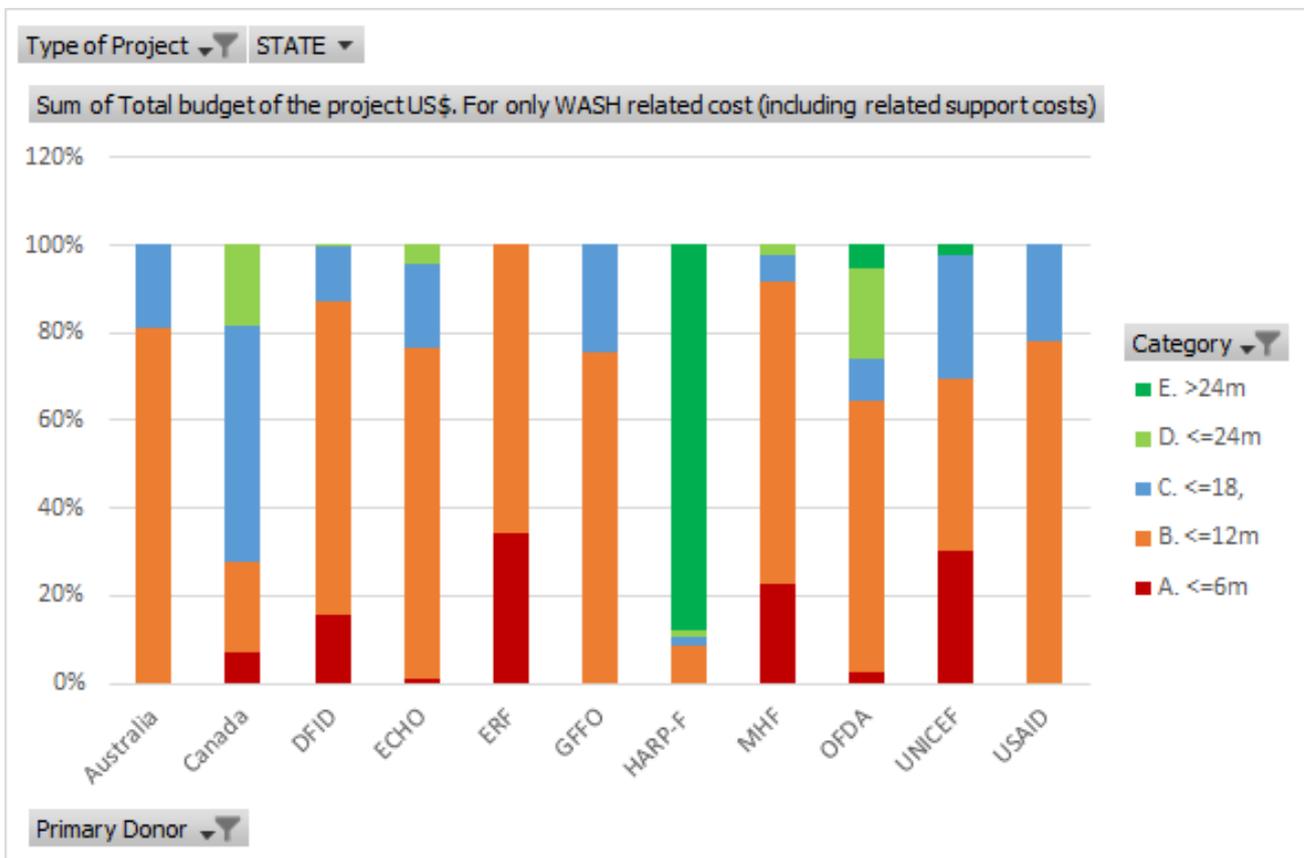
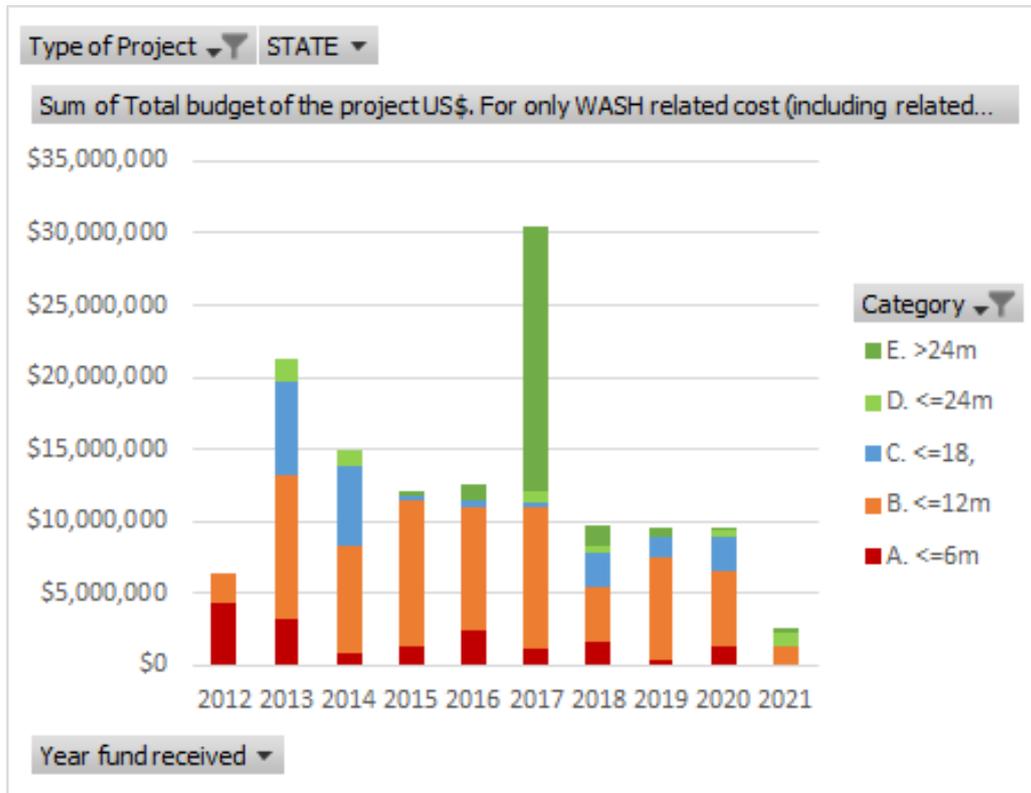
Across all sectors, delivery grants have reached nearly two thirds of all affected HARP-F beneficiaries.

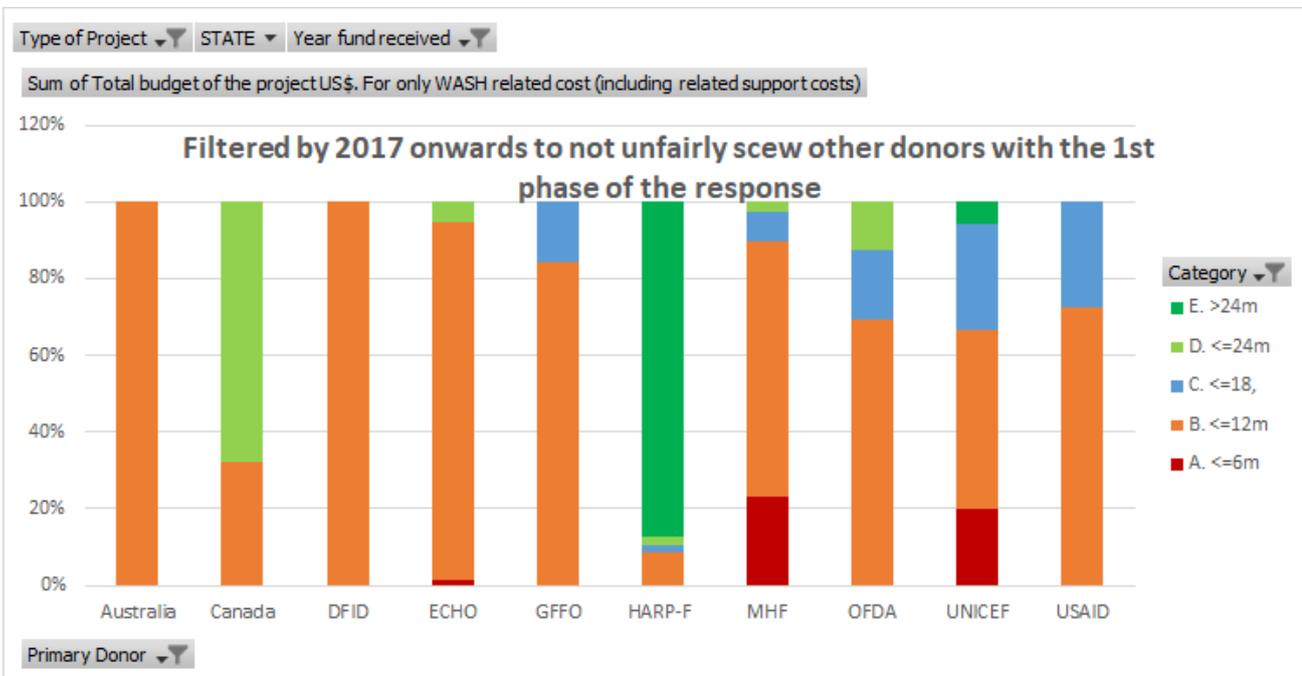
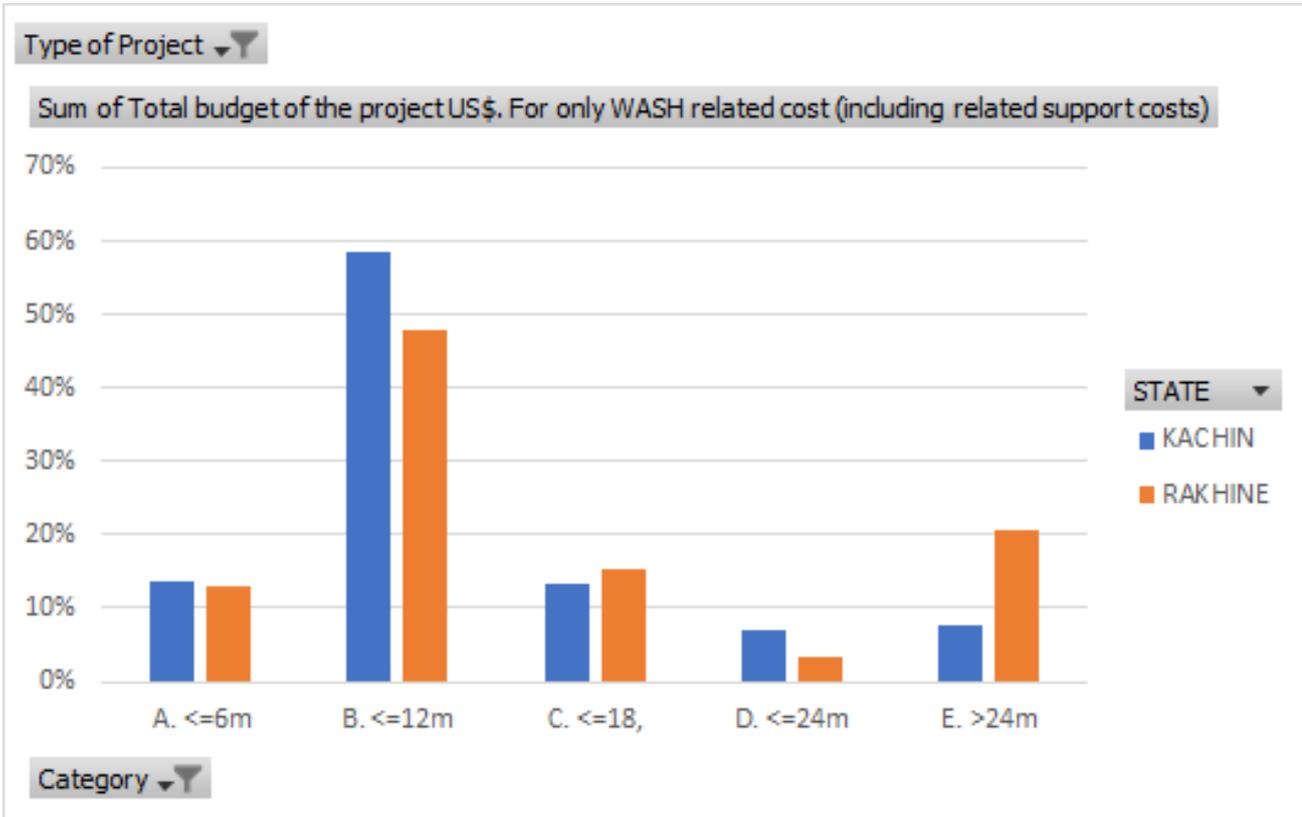
Percentage of Affected People Reached by Grant Type - 2021



⁴² HARP-brochure







HARP-F WASH projects 2016-21

Rakhine

	Agency leading the project	Implementing or consortium partner	Primary Donor	Project start date	Project end date	Project Length - Days	Project Length - Months	Project Length - Years
1	SCI	SI/CDN	DFID	15-Nov-2012	30-Apr-2013	166	6	0.5
2	SCI	ACF/CDN/SI	DFID	1-May-2013	31-Jan-2014	275	9	0.8
3	SCI	ACF/CDN/SI/OXFAM	DFID	1-Feb-2014	31-Mar-2015	423	14	1.2
4	Oxfam	ACF/SI/SC/OXFAM	DFID	2-Jan-2014	30-Apr-2015	483	16	1.3
5	Oxfam	ACF/SI/SC/OXFAM	DFID	4-Jan-2015	31-Mar-2016	452	15	1.3
6	SCI	ACF/SI/OXFAM	DFID	1-Apr-2015	31-Mar-2016	365	12	1.0

	Agency leading the project	Implementing or consortium partner	Primary Donor	Project start date dd/mm/yy	Project end date dd/mm/yy	Project Length - Days	Project Length - Months	Project Length - Years
1	Oxfam	ACF/SI/SC/OXFAM	HARP-F	1-Feb-2017	30-Sep-2017	241	8	0.7
2	Oxfam/Solidarites	Oxfam/SI	HARP-F	1-Nov-2017	9-Apr-2021	1255	42	3.5
3	MA UK Myanmar	TLDA, ABCD	HARP-F	1-Jun-2019	31-Mar-2021	669	22	1.9
4	MA UK Myanmar	TLDA, ABCD	HARP-F	1-Jun-2020	31-Mar-2021	303	10	0.8
5	Mercy Corps	None	HARP-F	1-Sep-2019	30-Dec-2020	486	16	1.4
6	SCI		DFID/HARP	17-Jul-2020	31-Dec-2021	532	18	1.5
7	Oxfam	ACF/SI/SC/OXFAM	DFID	4-Jan-2016	30-Apr-2016	117	4	0.3
8	Oxfam	ACF/SI/SC/OXFAM	DFID	5-Jan-2016	31-Jan-2017	392	13	1.1
9	SCI	ACF/SI/OXFAM	DFID	1-May-2016	31-Jan-2017	275	9	0.8

Kachin

	Agency leading the project	Implementing or consortium partner	Primary Donor	Project start date	Project end date	Project Length - Days	Project Length - Months	Project Length - Years
1	Trocaire	KMSS	DFID	1-Jul-13	31-Mar-14	273	9	0.8
2	Trocaire	KMSS	DFID	1-Jun-15	31-Dec-15	213	7	0.6
3	Trocaire	KMSS	DFID	1-Jun-16	31-Dec-16	213	7	0.6
4	Trocaire	KMSS	DFID	1-Jan-16	31-Dec-17	730	24	2.0
5	HPA		HARP	1-Dec-16	30-Apr-19	880	29	2.4
6	Trocaire	KMSS	DFID	1-Jan-17	31-Dec-17	364	12	1.0
7	Trocaire	KMSS	HARP	1-Jan-17	31-Dec-17	364	12	1.0
8	Trocaire	KMSS	DFID	1-Jan-18	31-Dec-18	364	12	1.0
9	KMSS		HARP	1-Apr-19	31-Dec-19	274	9	0.8
10	Trocaire	KMSS	HARP	1-Jan-18	31-Dec-20	1095	37	3.0
11	Shalom		HARP	1-Aug-18	31-Dec-20	883	29	2.5
12	WPN		HARP	1-Aug-18	31-Jul-20	730	24	2.0
13	HPA		HARP	1-May-19	31-Dec-20	610	20	1.7
14	KMSS		HARP	1-Jan-20	31-Dec-20	365	12	1.0
15	HI		HARP	1-Oct-19	30-Dec-20	456	15	1.3
16	CHAD		HARP	1-Oct-18	30-Sep-20	730	24	2.0
17	KMSS	KMSS	HARP	1-Apr-21	31-Dec-21	274	9	0.8