



IOM International Organization for Migration
ရွှေပြားသွားလာ နေထိုင်ခြင်းဆိုင်ရာ နိုင်ငံတကာအဖွဲ့အစည်း

FIELD ASSESSMENT REPORT – MAGWAY DIVISION



School in Sidoktaya township, Magway Division

Highlights

- Impact in Sidoktaya and Pwithbyu townships seems to be more severe than in other townships due to their proximity with the Mon, and where the mud left after the flood caused significant damage on farmland, leaving many farmers without means to restore their livelihoods quickly.
- Across all townships visited, communities are returning to their place of origin but a few families remain displaced, unable to return due to stagnating water or presence of mud in their village.
- It is expected these vulnerable families need of support for their basic needs in the coming months, including food, water, shelter, NFIs. Other priority needs identified include livelihoods, cleanup of villages and WASH.

Overview

An IOM assessment team visited Magway region on 11-18 August 2015 and undertook assessments in the affected areas in Sidoktaya Pwithbyu, Salin and Yenangyaung townships. The team met with the Relief and Resettlement Department, General Administrative Department and village authorities in affected townships, and with Save the Children, the Myanmar Red Cross Society and World Vision.

Findings

Based on information collected from key stakeholders, floods have been caused by heavy rains, triggering riverine floods and affecting communities located on riverbanks. Impact in Sidoktaya and Pwithbyu seems to be more severe than in other townships due to their proximity with the Mon. Although the damage on houses appeared to be overall limited, a detailed damaged assessment would help clarifying the extent of damage in affected townships. The level of damage appears under reported and increased communication with communities required as some are unaware of the need to report damages to local authorities, and be potentially eligible to compensation.

In Sidoktaya and Pwithbyu, the mud left after the water receded caused significant damage on farmland, leaving many farmers without means to restore their livelihoods quickly and clean up their lands without external support. Many expressed uncertainties over the possibility to cultivate land in the near future again, and few doubted being able to re-establish in the same location as a couple of villages have been partially submerged by mud in Sidoktaya. Most affected communities depend almost exclusively on agriculture sector as the main source of livelihoods and fear to remain in a dire situation if not supported to quickly rehabilitate land and villages.



Village in Salin District, Magway

Most houses have a very light structure and seem to have resisted the floods, however few villages suffered extensive damage, with sometimes entire areas of a village being washed away. Few villages are located in areas highly vulnerable to flooding with riverbanks located

in the immediate surroundings of a dam, electrical plants and near bridges suffering the highest rate of damage. Those villages have been facing a sudden and major water level increase with sometimes violent streams affecting villages. Relocation might be required to guarantee the safety of inhabitants in most dangerous areas. However, access to land and livelihoods might create obstacles to such relocations. Further, technical assessments are needed to establish the possible impact of prolonged submersion of houses into water and mud and to measure the possible medium/long term effect on structures, as most houses have been built with material such as wood and bamboo.

In all townships visited, communities reported displacement for 1-2 weeks, many reaching in safer areas such as religious buildings, public buildings or villages located on higher grounds. Most of the affected population have returned to, or close to their village but a few families remain displaced, unable to return to their place of origin due to stagnating water or presence of mud in their villages. Many now depend on donations provided by charities and authorities, but fear to be lacking all basic necessities if attention decreases. Some sites are in dire need for additional support, facing overcrowding and limited access to basic services. It has been also reported that in villages where homes were destroyed, affected families are living with relatives or neighbours.



Banana plantation in Sidoktaya township, Magway

Considering that livelihoods have been affected as well, most vulnerable families might have limited capacities to rebuild their houses quickly without external support. During visits, concerned families expressed the need to be provided with cash, building material, and help to clean up their villages. Some are aware of the need to move, being aware of that their village is located in dangerous areas, but fear they won't be able to access land. Few families also reported losing household items - kitchen items, clothes, tools - and expressed the need for support.

It is expected that most vulnerable families will be in need of support to care for their basic needs in the coming months - food, water, shelter, NFIs etc. - to enable them to rebuild their lives. Priority needs identified by authorities, humanitarian agencies and affected communities are livelihoods, cleanup of villages and WASH (rebuilding of latrines,

decontamination of water sources). In addition, in villages where houses were damaged or destroyed, shelter support has been identified as a priority need (emergency shelter, cash, building material for reconstruction), as affected families might struggle accessing adequate resources to rebuild their homes. NFIs, education, health support have also been mentioned as being mentioned as a need to recover from the disaster.

In the absence of quick livelihoods recovery, affected communities might have to rely on temporary migration. Significant efforts would be required to ensure their safe labour and mitigate risks of being exposed to trafficking networks.

IOM proposes to work through partners already present in the Magway region due to logistical constraints such as the availability of warehouse space and road access issues, as a few areas remain out of reach or accessible only by boat particularly in Sidoktaya and Pwithbyu.

Recommendations

1. Figures on affected population, displacement and damage should be considered provisional, and caution exerted over their use to define needs for assistance – considering the speed of recovery, it is likely that only most affected/vulnerable families would be in need of support.
2. Localized distributions of emergency shelter and NFIs, particularly for families facing prolonged displacement /unable to access their villages; agencies present in Magway are in the best position to identify specific needs.
3. Advocacy for increased communication with communities to ensure reporting of actual damages suffered during floods, and enable their access to assistance/compensation schemes offered by authorities/humanitarian stakeholders.
4. Displacement/return tracking, including for families located in evacuation sites/remaining displaced near their village or with host families, and identification of their needs.
5. Recovery shelter support (cash, building material) for most vulnerable households who lost their houses, combined with technical guidance to help communities who lost houses and mitigate future floods impact.
6. Clean up support, including cash for work, clean-up kits and heavy machinery.
7. Identification of risk areas/areas where return is not possible and discussions over relocation of villages in high risk areas, including by granting access to land and definition of no building zones.
8. Development of comprehensive DRR plans at the township, regional and national level.
9. Technical assessment to measure impact of flooding on houses, according to their typology.
10. Close monitoring of the weather conditions, as the monsoon season is not over and people remain at risk of more flooding.