

Johan, a 35-year-old humanitarian worker, was forced to flee his home in Loikaw, South-East of Myanmar when conflict disrupted his life. He and his fellows endured a dangerous journey in the middle of aerial attacks and artillery shelling before arriving at an unplanned site near hosting communities in Demoso.

Conflict started in May 2021 in Kayah State. Loikaw, the Capital Town of Kayah State was the main hub where humanitarian actors were based. Agencies were supporting IDPs from Loikaw. Loikaw is about 18 km away from Demoso – location where conflict started. Normally, it took 30 minutes' drive to arrive the major location and 1 hour to arrive to some other villages scattered outside of Town. However, traveling to the displaced communities took longer (2-3 hours instead of 1 hour) after conflict started because the usual routes were blocked.

**"We tried to reach out to different leaders, just to make sure it was safe to travel and bring aid to the villages. At first, we managed, but after some months, carrying medicine and tarpaulins became too dangerous. Then, in November 2023, everything got worse—artillery shells started falling in Loikaw. We saw drones, fighter jets, and big weapons flying over our heads. The IDP sites in town were hit, and suddenly, everyone was running.**

**That's when I really started to panic. Should I stay? Should I leave? I just didn't know what to do. We never knew when a shell would land next, or if we'd survive the night. Every morning, around 4 AM, people were leaving—one after another. You'd see long lines of people trying to get out before the fighting**

**started around 8 AM. It was heartbreaking, seeing our town empty out like that. At the same time, we were all just scrambling, trying to figure out what to do next.**

**I didn't have a plan. I had nowhere to go. But in the end, we had no choice. We had to move—me, my family, my office. We just had to save our lives.", said Johan.**



Some people got killed by the airstrikes and artilleries along the way. It took about 9 hours to arrive to the destination. Fear from being targeted by airstrikes or not being able to continue their journey due to the traffic was leading Johan and others in despair. Family members were scattered and uncertainty to see them again was an overwhelming feeling. Johan shared the feeling when he saw many people were also worried for sustaining their lives away from home with little resources and items that they can carry with themselves.

Upon arrival at the host community, conditions were harsh - thousands of people displacing in congested environment with no proper shelter, no clean water nor food items. There were some aids through affiliated connections



but lack of system in coordination and aid distribution made survival uncertain. He is in a site which looks like a big cluster of sites comprised of many other sites in the surrounding. Frequently, IDP sites are targeted to bombardment killing several people including children studying. Travelling to town requires passing through several checkpoints controlled by different armed actors. Johan continues his humanitarian work despite being displaced himself within the IDP communities.



**“In the first two years after we fled, everything was just a mess. Total chaos. When we arrived at the site, people just settled wherever they could. There was no proper system, no site committee, no leadership—nothing. Everyone just tried to survive on their own.**

**The ones who had better connections got more aid. They took what they could, and there wasn’t any proper plan for sharing. Some families got a lot, while others got nothing. We just had to make do. And the worst part? There were so many problems—fights, arguments, even worse things**

**happening—but there was no one to stop it, no one to help.**

**Every site was the same. No order, no fairness, just people struggling to survive however they could. It was a really hard time.”**, said Johan.

“At the beginning, we started working on CCCM capacity in both the sites and host communities. Honestly, it wasn’t easy at first. The village leaders found it hard to adapt and follow the site management system. They were used to doing things their own way, and suddenly, we were asking them to follow a structure. It took time.

We started small, just 30 sites. We formed camp committees, trained them on basic CCCM skills, and helped them set up tools to register people properly. We made sure there was a system to track the aid coming in and where it was going. We even kept records of contact persons to make coordination easier. Before this, everything was unorganized—aid came, but no one knew who got what.

Now, things have changed. We’ve expanded to over 100 sites. There’s better coordination, and aid is being distributed more fairly. It’s not perfect, but compared to the early days, it’s a huge improvement.”, Johan continued.





When the CCCM Cluster intervened, the situation began to change. Site management teams established Site Management Committee, coordination mechanism, service monitoring and referral system where Johan and other displaced families could learn about available services. To improve living conditions, CCCM coordinated with relevant clusters such as Food Security, WASH, Protection, Health and Education to install community centers, latrines, water points and enhance security through protection initiatives, e.g., installing complaint and feedback mechanism, children and women-friendly spaces as well as organizing MHPSS activities.



Beyond emergency response, CCCM promoted community governance by forming site management committees, youth and women committee, empowering displaced people to voice their concerns and participate in decision-making. Johan said, **“Now, the community leadership is getting stronger. People are more involved, and we can see real progress. The leadership now includes both host and displaced communities, and**



**we’re also seeing more women take part, which wasn’t common before. It’s not perfect yet, but at least it’s improving.**

**We also work on protection issues together with local CSOs, NGOs, and even some authorities. A year ago, we barely received any reports, but now, the number of cases we handle has doubled. People trust us more and feel safer speaking up.**

**Through community projects, we’ve also done small but important things together. Like the gravel road—we didn’t just decide on it ourselves; we consulted with the community, and everyone was involved. In the end, it was the community leaders who led the process. It’s not just about aid anymore; it’s about rebuilding our lives together.”**

Besides, through CCCM’s livelihood referral programs, Johan led community-led quick impact projects such as small construction, small business and livelihood support.

Today, Johan and community leaders are no longer just victims of displacement—they are a leader within their community. **“Our camp committees in different locations become stronger in advocating for improved services.**



**Our role as community volunteers and humanitarian workers is to accompany them, support in their advocacy and provide services available. In the fourth year of displacement when return is still not foreseen soon, community leaders are taking ownership to lead, manage and advocate on for what the affected people need.” , said Johan.**

Their story demonstrates how CCCM transforms displacement sites from chaotic, insecure spaces into well-coordinated environments where people can rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

