

Annual Report 2014

Myanmar Program



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The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

Accountability and Accreditation: The Department for World Service is LWF's internationally recognized humanitarian and development arm. The Department for World Service's Accountability Framework ensures transparency in program administration, governance and implementation. The Department for World Service is a signatory of the Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and Non Government Organizations in Disaster Relief. The Department for World Service's humanitarian response follows the Principles of Partnership endorsed by the Global Partnership Program. The Department for World Service is a member of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and has achieved certification to the 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management.



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LWF Myanmar is a Member of the Asia Zone Emergency and Environment Cooperation Network (AZEECON) of the 7 LWF Country Programs and Associate Programs in South and South East Asia. This is learning and sharing network for field practitioners that engages in customized training.



LWF Myanmar has been very active and successful in strengthening coordination with government departments and ministries. LWF is cooperating with Relief and Resettlement Department, Department of Social Welfare, Progress of Border Areas and National Races Department, State Education Department, General Administration Department, Myanmar Agriculture Services, Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Myanmar Red Cross Society, Myanmar Police Force, Fire Services Department, Department of Meteorology and Hydrology and Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association at State/Region and Township level.



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A woman smokes from a traditional pipe in Wung Kung Village, Mindat Township, Chin State

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FOREWORD

I am pleased to share with you LWF Myanmar's Annual Report for 2014. This report documents our progress over the past year. It brings to life our relatively new 6-year Country Strategy, launched in 2013 and its operational plans for 2013-2015 through stories. It highlights the outcomes of our activities and shows how we have created a positive impact on the lives of the people we work with, in particular, those whose voices have been ignored.

The facilitation of people centered, community based, integrated, rights based empowerment forms the foundation of our work. Thus the accomplishments of 2014 are mainly due to the person to person development style of LWF. We work with all levels of stakeholders – both duty bearers and rights holders. We also work closely with our donor partners to which we owe a great deal of gratitude. Without their generous support we would not have the resources or technical support that enables our work (a comprehensive list of all our donor partners is found later in the report). Capitalizing on our mutuality and partnership we have together seen evidence of change in the four key areas of our strategic objectives: 1) Community Empowerment, 2) Sustainable Livelihoods, 3) Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Management, and 4) Organizational Development.

138 Communities representing a population of 52,564 (52.6% female) in 10,384 households, are being empowered. Community-Based Organizations

like Village Development Committees or IDP Camp Management Committees have started to lead the development processes on their own - through participatory planning, implementation and monitoring. Empowered women and youth have increased access and control over households, group and VDC decision-making processes.

The number of Partner households, improving their livelihoods through both agriculture and non-agriculture activities, including vocational training, have increased to 650. Households have benefited from group-managed savings and credit schemes. Access to quality education is increasing. Access to potable water, and sanitation/hygiene practices have improved in partner villages. Basic infrastructure needs of the villagers have been both built and strengthened

Concerning Emergency Response and Disaster Management, villages now have functional Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) committees and sub-committees.

With regards to our Organizational Development, we have updated our organizational structures, systems, policies, guidelines and program strategies. We are cooperating and building relationships with government departments at all levels, and are participating actively in regional & international alliances – all to strengthen LWF Myanmar to be effective, efficient, accountable, transparent and relevant to the context.

In 2013, the Actual Income & Expenditure was EUR 1,711,917. In 2014, we have an *Estimated Income & Expenditure of EUR 3,021,101 – a 76% increase due to major new grants from UNHCR, UNICEF, ECHO/FCA, FCA and Czech Diaconia (ECCB) over the previous year. Thanks again to all of our donor partners for the continued support!

In 2013, we had a staff comprised of 85 national staff, and 7 expatriates. In 2014, that number grew to 119 national staff and 8 expatriates. We have also volunteered to pilot the new LWF global planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting system, and the global initiative for Country Program participation in the Universal Periodic Review project.

It has been a team effort for which I am extremely proud.

Together we can do more to uphold the rights of the poor and oppressed!



David H. Mueller

David H. Mueller
Regional Representative

About LWF Myanmar

The Lutheran World Federation is a global communion of Lutheran churches, with 144 member churches in 79 countries. It was founded in 1947 in Lund, Sweden, after the end of the Second World War. LWF set up its Department of World Service as its relief and development arm to serve all people irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religion, race or political conviction.

LWF began working in Myanmar in 2008 as part of an ACT Appeal to respond to the devastation of Cyclone Nargis, which claimed tens of thousands of lives in the country's Ayeyarwaddy Delta.

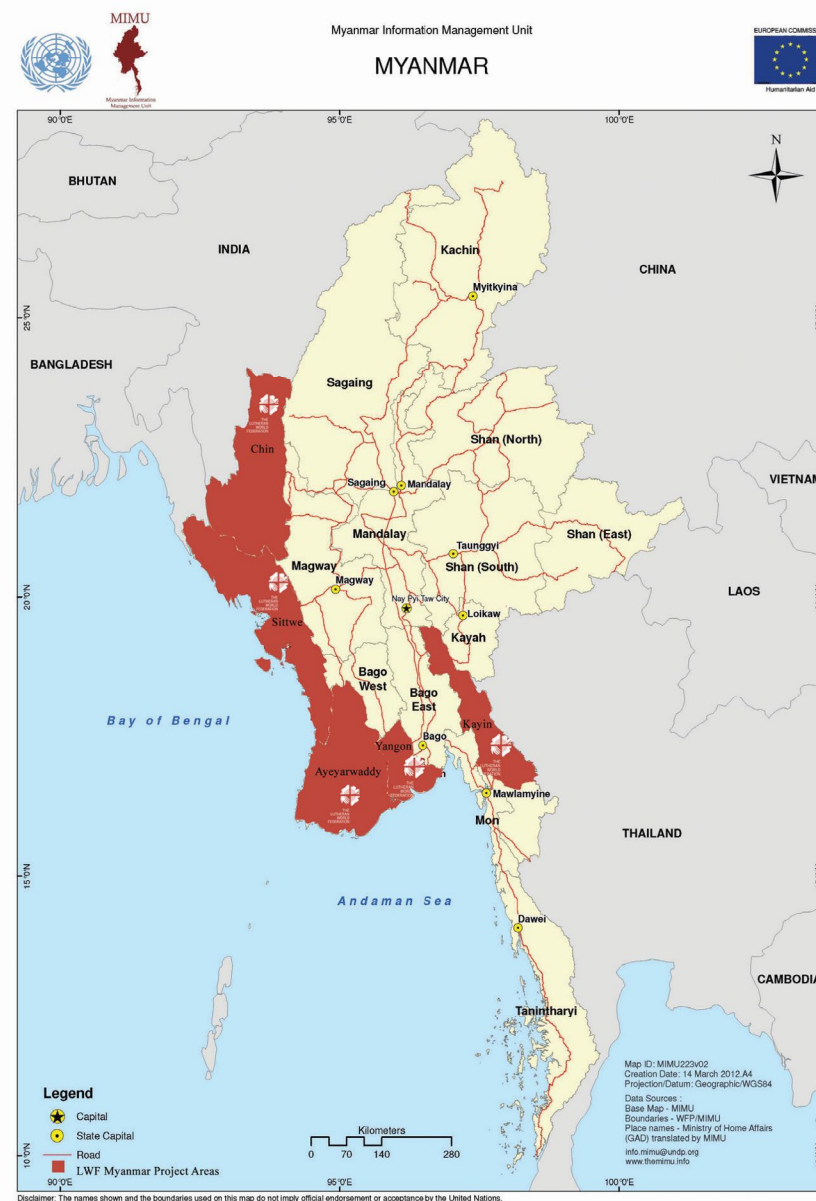
Intervention - Delta Region

LWF has been working with cyclone affected people in 50 villages in the Irrawaddy delta area since 2008. Initially, LWF channeled its emergency response efforts through its member church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Myanmar in 6 villages in Dedaye, 16 in Pyapon, 18 in Bogalay and 10 in Twantay. This was followed by a one-year food security project in 18 villages of Bogalay Township and the launch of a three-year 'Integrated Rural Development Project' (IRDP) for all 50 villages. The first phase of IRDP ended in December 2012 and a new three-year IRDP (now changed to 'Rights Based Empowerment Project' or RBEP) started in January 2013.

The 26-month 'Child and Youth Development Project' (CYDP), targeting 50 villages ended in December 2013. The project promoted child, youth and women's rights, and impacted children's education, parents' and teachers' attitudes, and benefitted women and youth. 50 Child Clubs under the guidance of Youth Groups remained active.

In April 2014, LWF initiated a new project named 'Project for Improving Women's Livelihoods (PIWL), to strengthen empowerment and leadership of women in the Delta region. LWF is working on implementing this project in 6 villages that are also implementing the RBEP in Dedaye Township.

In 2015, LWF will continue implementing the RBEP in the same villages and will expand the PIWL project into the 16 RBEP villages in Pyapon. By the end of 2015 the PIWL will be running in a total of 22 villages. The primary facilitators of the empowerment process





A Chin lady carries her baby in Baung Village, Mindat Township, Chin State

are LWF Myanmar staff, (known as Community Empowerment Facilitators), who live in the project villages, facilitating change and the growth of capacities.

Our partner communities and civil society organizations are slowly but surely taking more control of and managing their development processes. As a result we are gradually reducing our staff presence to give them space to grow on their own. This is a tribute to the good empowerment facilitation skills of our Community Empowerment Facilitators. We expect to phase out of these villages in the next year or so as they graduate towards self-management.

Chin State

Building on our successful methods in the delta, we entered the mountainous state of Chin in 2013. Chin State, is Myanmar's poorest state, and is known for cyclical food shortages. A three-year sustainable livelihoods project 'Establishing Food Resilient Communities' (EFRC) was therefore started in Mindat to enhance the livelihoods of the rural population. In 2014, we were able to expand the RBEP from 14 to 30 villages in Mindat Township. We have entered a further 21 villages in the township of Matupi and will start work in 2015. A sub office will be set up in the new township. By the end of 2015, LWF will have projects in a total of 57 villages throughout Chin State. This growth reflects the good relations established with the local communities and the local authorities in this until recently isolated and off limits area of the country. This is a real credit to our local leaders and the dedicated local staffs who are from Chin State and who after intensive training from LWF are able to facilitate relationships and an effective empowerment processes..

Kayin State

LWF Myanmar established a project office in Hpa-An, Kayin State in 2013 in order to assess the needs and develop the relationship needed to negotiate the requisite memorandum of understanding for operations in this marginalized, post-conflict affected state with 130,000 refugees in camps across the border in Thailand and internally displaced and resettled people. Nearly two years of careful negotiations with government and non-state actors have allowed us access to areas under their respective control. These areas remain unstable due to the conflict, which despite a cease fire agreement, flared up again this year causing LWF to evacuate village based staff on several



Cleaning Campaign in Set Yone Su Camp, Sittwe Township, Rakhine State



Law Sheing Mang, an LWF Livelihoods Officer interviewing Partner Household member, Ling Htone in Baung Village, Mindat Township, Chin State



Primary School students in Baung Village, Mindat Township, Chin State

occasions. Despite the complex context and the challenges faced, in 2014, LWF Myanmar has been able to start work in 19 out of the 32 targeted villages.

Rakhine State

In 2013 LWF began supporting Internally Displaced People (IDPs) affected by inter-communal violence in Sittwe Township, through an ACT appeal (MTR131). Our dedicated and committed team deal with daily stresses emanating from the deep seated and historical ethnic, religious and political mistrust between the two majority communities in Rakhine State.

In 2014 we added the EU Children of Peace Initiative that focused on education in emergencies. We also continued to support camp coordination and camp management under a UNHCR grant which extended the work to Pauktaw Township. Education in emergency interventions for IPDs and host communities were extended to Sittwe, Pauktaw and Mrauk U townships under a UNICEF partnership. We

are now assisting a population of 117,608 IDPs (over 80% of the displaced population in Rakhine State), and are working with Buddhists, Muslims, and the communities hosting, surrounding/nearby villages of the IDP camps.

In 2015, LWF will branch out into Ann Township, and start implementing Education Development activities, as part of our conflict sensitivity program. The children in non-conflict areas have been neglected and are also in need of education. Coordinating closely with government, activities will include school construction and renovation, building WASH facilities, the formation and mobilization of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) & Child Clubs, support children in personal hygiene, safety and equip them through life skill training and the distribution of student and teacher kits. LWF has received assistance from the EU to start education development in the new targeted townships of Ann, Mrauk U and Pauktaw and continue support in Sittwe Township.

Vision

People of Myanmar living in a just society, in peace and dignity, united in diversity, and empowered to achieve their universal rights to meet basic needs and achieve quality of life.

Mission

The LWF Myanmar program responds to and challenges the causes and consequences of human suffering and poverty by facilitating people's empowerment to achieve their rights.

Overall Goal

To help alleviate poverty in Myanmar through rights-based empowerment for sustainable development.

Core Values

- Dignity and justice
- Inclusion and participation
- Compassion and commitment
- Accountability and Transparency
- Respect for Diversity

What We Do

Drawing on a firm commitment to uphold the rights of the poor and oppressed, we work together with local and international partners to alleviate suffering, combat injustice and poverty, and lay the foundation for a life with dignity for all. We focus on people in poverty whose voices are ignored.

We commit to an empowering, rights-based and integrated approach that also works with government duty bearers and enables communities to find their own solutions to the problems they are facing, and informs all involved of their rights and responsibilities. LWF also strives to link different focuses such as emergency response, disaster preparedness, rehabilitation and sustainable development.

Emergency Response: LWF Myanmar responds to the affected communities with emergency assistance following natural and man-made disasters. We use a participatory process to address the basic needs of vulnerable communities and provide practical support. We also help affected people rebuild their livelihoods.

Livelihoods and Food Security: We assist the communities to learn new skills and advocate for improved social and economic services and livelihoods. LWF Myanmar's project focuses on improved capacity and competence of local people in the area of livelihoods, leading to sustainable development. We facilitate integrated development through participatory right-based empowerment processes.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Access to clean water is a right. We help communities build and maintain clean safe water systems and educate people about good hygiene practice to reduce the risk of illness.

Disaster Risk Reduction: We facilitate communities to organize their own disaster risk reduction management initiatives through trained teams, awareness-raising, and prevention and mitigation interventions. The program facilitates communities to rebuild water points, schools, bridges, multi-purpose halls that can serve as evacuation centers, and other community infrastructure.

Human Rights: We believe that the sustainability of our intervention lies in the acceptance of the government line departments and the communities' ownership. LWF Myanmar promotes all members of a community to become aware of their rights and responsibilities. Our approach is to strengthen the bottom up demand side of Human Rights. We implement village identified projects and use them as a strategic entry point for rights based empowerment processes. We also work with like-minded organizations through national level networks to advocate for pro-poor and rights based policy change.

Rights Based Empowerment: Empowerment is a process that draws out and builds people's capacity and confidence, both as individuals and members of families, groups and communities, to achieve results for themselves. Rights-based empowerment means

building up awareness on all levels, both among the rights holders and the duty bearers, to respect, protect and fulfill the rights defined by the country's constitution, laws, policies and international instruments which are ratified by the government.

Strategic Objectives

Community Empowerment: To strengthen local leadership and improve governance for equitable and sustainable development.

Sustainable Livelihoods: To empower communities to obtain improved and sustainable socio-economic livelihoods.

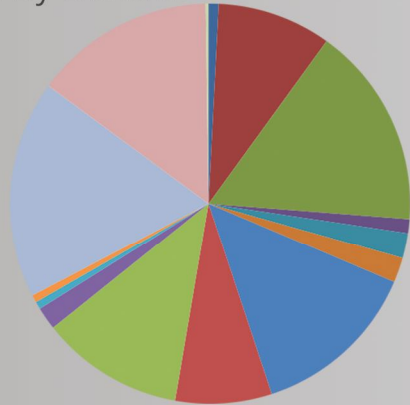
Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Management: To enable communities to manage and mitigate disaster risks, and prepare for and respond effectively to disasters and emergencies.

Organizational Development: To strengthen LWF Myanmar to be effective, efficient and relevant to the context.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2014

We are grateful for the ongoing moral, technical and financial support of our donors who sustain our work to assist people in Myanmar.

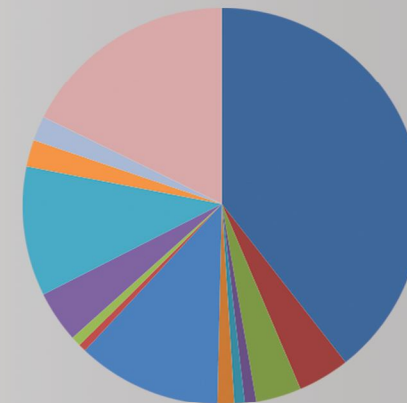
Income By Donors



Australian Lutheran World Service	24,253	0.81%
Bread for the World	273,705	9.19%
Church of Sweden	483,183	16.23%
Community Contribution	33,536	1.13%
DanChurchAid	60,000	2.01%
Diakonia CCE	59,939	2.01%
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	402,588	13.52%
FinnChurchAid	231,261	7.77%
FinnChurchAid/EU	344,982	11.59%
GNC-HA Deutscher Hauptausschuss	55,000	1.85%
Hong Kong Christian Council	18,124	0.61%
Lutheran World Relief	18,138	0.61%
United Nations Children's Fund	529,153	17.77%
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	437,138	14.68%
Other Donors	6,770	0.23%
Total Income	2,977,771	100.00%

Income By Projects

Myanmar Rights Based Empowerment Project	1,175,075	39.46%
ACT Appeal MYR131 - Assistance to IDPs in Rakhine State	123,685	4.15%
ELCA: Establishing Food Resilient Communities Project	108,526	3.64%
ELCA: Diaconal Project Support with Churches	27,235	0.91%
BftW: Qualification of Programs and Strengthening of Partner Institutions	24,925	0.84%
AZEECON	39,917	1.34%
FCA/EU: Children of Peace Initiative	344,982	11.59%
FCA: Children of Peace Staff Costs	18,347	0.62%
FCA: Metta Staff Cost	23,847	0.80%
UNHCR: Rakhine IDP Support Project - USD	123,749	4.16%
UNHCR: Rakhine IDP Support Project - MMK	313,389	10.52%
FCA: Project for Improving Women's Livelihood	65,000	2.18%
Diakonia ECC: Assistance to IDPs in Rakhine State	59,939	2.01%
Unicef: Quality Basic Education and Non Formal Education	529,153	17.77%
Total Income	2,977,771	100.00%



All figures are unaudited for the financial year 2014.



KAYIN STATE

Partner Household member, U Sein Win Tin, making bamboo baskets as his livelihood in Kamawt Kachu Village, Hlinebwe Township

As LWF Myanmar has just started establishing its presence in Kayin State, our projects are still in the introductory stage. The Kayin State General Administration Office and the Department of Border Areas and National Races recently gave the green light for LWF to implement its projects in August 2014. In Kayin, LWF plans to focus on the improved capacity and competency of local people in livelihoods, leading to sustainable development. Currently, its integrated approach to rural development through a participatory and rights-based empowerment process includes upgrading village infrastructure, the formation of Village Development Committees (VDCs) and selection of village Partner Households (PHs). LWF Myanmar is to support rural communities in 3 townships; Hlainebwe, Kyar Inn Seik Kyi and Phar Pon, in Kayin State, in planning and managing their villages and their people's development.

The most vulnerable households in the targeted villages are chosen as LWF Partner Households. A Partner Household Self-Assessment (PHSA), a Partner Household Development Plan (PHDP), a Village Self-Assessment (VSA) and a Village Development Plan (VDP) follow after the selection of Partner Households in this particular order. After village development plans are drafted, LWF's intervention provides capacity building towards sustainable livelihoods.

Taking the First Step in Kayin

Taung Che Yin village, has 80 households and is situated near Kamawt Kachu village in Hlainebwe township. The name of the village literally means "bottom of mountain". As there is currently no school in their village, school children have to study in the nearby villages. (There is a primary school at Kawt Win village – 2.4km away, a middle school at Kamawt Kachu village – 4.8km

away, and there are high schools in Hlainebwe town – 8km away) A majority of these students make the journey to their schools on foot.

Regarding the livelihoods of the villagers, a few of them tend to their rubber plantations and vegetable gardens. There are 3 home grocery shops where villagers sell vegetables and bamboo shoots picked from the mountains. Some own and cultivate



Participatory Learning Appraisal practice in Kayin State

rice paddies while others are involved in raising livestock and poultry.

Family members of almost all households work in Thailand as migrant workers, and they send money back to their families in the village. Accordingly, most households rely on these remittances sent from their family members working abroad, just to be able to get by.

The Village Development Committee was formed in September 2014 through the facilitation of the LWF Hpa-An office. The village elected **U Htoo Say** as their VDC chairman. He works as a carpenter, a mason and a casual laborer. The VDC chairman talks about the VDC and his village's development, saying, "By now we have held 3 meetings to discuss supporting the village, the VDC's sustainability, its consolidation, improvement of village infrastructure, and livestock management." In addition to a VDC, there is an existing 'Community-Based Organization' or CBO – a Youth Group, and its members of young men and women actively take part in social activities.

Apart from another INGO that built a well in Taung Che Yin village in 2014, LWF Myanmar is the only other external organization to provide assistance and facilitation for the development of the village. VDC members expressed their motivation and hope, saying, "We are already glad due to the entry of LWF to the village." The VDC chairman is planning



Disaster Risk and Reduction field session was conducted at Kamawkachu Village in Hlaing Bwe Township, Kayin State

to renovate the damaged public house (social hall), with the assistance of LWF. (Villages in Hlainbwe township traditionally have a public house, used for various purposes such as holding village meetings, giving donations and arranging funerals.) He says, "Although the public house is not good, we still use it. We cook here and feed (people), but because it is in poor condition we face difficulties during the rainy season." A VDC member named **Ma Tin Aye Hlaing** expressed the need for home repairs for some partner households who belong to the lowest-income families in her village.

Regarding the construction of village infrastructure such as roads and a school, the VDC is to coordinate with **U Nyunt Hlaing**, the Village Development Support Committee (VDSC) (a govern-

ment organized association) chairman, responsible for submitting requests for permission to implement projects, to the General Administrative Office of Hlinebwe Township. He has also asked for a library building from the General Administrative Office to be constructed on the reserved land in the village. The VDC chairman agrees by saying "It would be good to have a library in the village, so that the youth will progress." He continues, "Although the aged cannot read or write, there will be more and more young villagers, who read (the books) if there is a library in the village." Moreover, he mentioned that, "it is good to have a clinic". Another need of the villages is to construct a well. Villagers have to go to the nearby villages to fetch water for drinking and other uses. Despite the presence of a well - constructed and donated by an external organization, it is still not enough for the whole village. "The construction of a new well would be a big help to our village," says the chairman. ■

CHIN STATE

To attain its goal: “To contribute to the alleviation of poverty in Myanmar through rights based empowerment for sustainable development, “LWF has been implementing the Rights Based Empowerment Project (RBEP) to contribute to the alleviation of poverty in Chin. Currently LWF is operating in a total of 30 villages in the township of Mindat. LWF staff has been facilitating the formation and mobilization of community-based organizations (CBOs) such as Village Development Committees (VDCs), has guided in the drafting of village development plans (VDPs), has organized trainings to aid in building up capacities, and has provided assistance for infrastructure improvements in the targeted villages of Mindat Township in Chin State.

Newly constructed Primary School in Baung Village, Mindat Township, Chin State

Wung Kung Villagers: On the Road to Self-Reliance

Wung Khung is one of LWF's target villages in Mindat. Situated on a slope amongst the mountain ranges of Chin State, the village can only be reached by motorbike, or on foot. It takes about an hour and fifteen minutes to drive from Mindat to the village. The road from Mindat to Wung Khung is paved halfway, and then becomes a dirt road, still being built by earth movers and excavators. During the rainy season, these dirt roads turn into slippery, thick, chocolate muck, and become almost impossible to navigate.

Wung Khung has 50 households, and is home to a population of 300. Villagers mainly rely on shifting cultivation as a form of livelihood. They grow crops such as millet, maize, rice, and an assortment of vegetables to sustain their families. Villagers also raise domesticated animals. About 20 households are involved in the commercial raising of mythuns (black buffaloes). Wung Khung has a Church as well as a primary school, where 67 students from Grade 1 to Grade 5 are schooling. Classes are typically taught simultaneously, in a wooden, one-roomed, longhouse.

LWF facilitated the formation of Wung Khung's VDC in 2013. The VDC works closely with LWF to implement the village's development activities. VDC

members have attended capacity development trainings, provided by LWF. Wung Khung's VDC chairman, **U Ngine Maung**, 39, has attended one of the leadership trainings, and on the subject of organizing and leading the community, he mentioned that, "Only if there is a good leader, will there be good followers."

A Brighter Future for Young Learners

Their village only had one primary school, holding 5 classrooms in a 4m x 12m school building, which held 70 students (one third of the government standard 9m x 24m). The Village Tract Administrator and members of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) had been requesting for the government Education Department to construct a new primary school building in their village for 8 years, but with no progress.

During the Village Self-Assessment process facilitated by LWF, villagers identified "a safe learning environment" as a first priority. Their ageing, wooden primary school was built over 20 years ago. It could not provide the students with an adequate learning environment anymore, as the number of students had been increasing. When it rained, water

would seep in through the school's rusty, and partially damaged corrugated galvanized iron roof. This deteriorating environment certainly was not conducive to learning.

Therefore, the construction



tion of a new primary school was included in the Village Development Plan (VDP). The school construction sub-committee was organized by the Village Development Committee (VDC). They then submitted their project proposal to LWF. For the construction, LWF assisted financially, shouldering 80% of the total expenses, equaling to around 10,000USD. The other 20% came

from contributions given by the villagers.

The whole procurement process; record keeping, reporting progress, budget control, and addressing problems was managed by the VDC with the facilitation of LWF's Community Empowerment Facilitator (CEF).

In June of 2014, the construction of the village's new primary school was completed.

"The previous school building was very narrow and uncomfortable for all students. Now, there is enough space for students to learn comfort-

ably," expressed the school's Headmaster **U Aung Laing Gay**, smiling.

U Sheing Laing, chairperson of the PTA remarked that "It took 3 months to finish the building and for sustainability, we have separated a school fund for maintenance."

"We successfully received approval from the government recently (to put up the school). Finally, our dream becomes true" U Ngaing Maung, the VDC Chairperson said proudly.

The school construction was completed with the participation of all the villagers. **U Tim Khaw Gay** said, "I was very happy to participate in the construction. It promises our young generation an improved education. Our villagers realized that unity can lead to great achievement". **Daw Laing Yaung**, a village resident, agreed and commented that for her children, education is now a priority.

In addition to the school building, LWF also supplied school furniture such as tables and benches. Villagers again contributed their labor by assembling the school furniture.

According to the village leaders, all primary school-aged children in the village are attending the school. Children in middle-school travel to a nearby village, named Wun Ma Thu, which is about 6 miles from Wung Khung and stay in boarding houses. The nearest high schools are in Mindat town, 48.2 km away.



Newly constructed Primary School in Baung Village, Mindat Township, Chin State

An Empowered Couple: an Entrepreneur and a Teacher

U Shein Lain and his wife **Daw Kii Myu Man**, are a socially-active and productive couple in the village. They have 5 children and their eldest son is studying Grade 11 in Mindat town.

Daw Kii Myu Man has been a primary school teacher in her native village for 15 years. She passed the matriculation exam and then proceeded to study at the teacher training school before she became a teacher. Now she teaches all subjects in Grade 1 as well as English for Grade 2, in the new primary school which LWF helped build. Daw Kii Myu Man is very proud of her school, and said, “Among 15 prizes, our school students won 12,” in an educational competition, where Grade 5 students from all 4 villages of the Ma Shein Hlwar Village Tract took part in September, 2014. “I want them (children) to be educated as this village has few graduates,” she adds. Her village has about five graduates, and there are two or three villagers, who have passed the matriculation exam.

“Among 15 prizes, our school students won 12,”

U Shein Lain, the husband of Daw Kii Myu Man, is originally from Mindat town but decided to follow his wife and settled down in her native home. Having about 5 acres of land, he has grown Elephant Foot Yams for 5 years, spending over USD 1,000 yearly in labor costs for about 300 casual laborers. He has been cultivating and selling the dried Elephant Foot Yams for 3 years now.

In 2014, LWF arranged a 2-day training on the cultivation of Elephant Foot Yams in their village. Two hired trainers from the Agriculture Department conducted the training, where more than 20 villagers including U Shein Lain attended. U Shein Lain mentioned that he gave his peers some tips on how to grow the Elephant Foot Yam. They did not know that there should be a specific distance between each yam, when planted. He taught them when they could start planting, and overall he thought the training was useful. The training also included the calculation of how many square feet

“I want children to be educated as this village has few graduates,”

are there in an acre, the different types of soil, and the usage of fertilizer.

U Shein Lain hopes the Elephant Foot Yam market will expand in his region. He gathers Elephant Foot Yam farmers then tries to sell their product at a higher price to the wholesaler. Using his experience, he has been able to increase his yield over the years.



An entrepreneur, U Shein Lain, in Wung Kung Village

A Young Lady's Life: Woman Empowerment for Livelihood Initiative

(Story on following page)



Ma Hone Hton, sewing trainee, at the Mindat Sewing Academy

Ma Hone Hton, 21, is from Baw (3) village. Her parents grow an assortment of crops, and raise pigs and chickens in their village. Ma Hone Htone studied until Grade 11 in Mindat, then started attending advanced tailoring training at the Women's Home Vocational Training School in Mindat Town, under the Department of Education and Training, Ministry of Border Affairs, where tailoring and weaving trainings are provided.

Many young women are studying tailoring in this training school in Mindat town. Ma Hone Hton says that any woman can attend the sewing trainings for free. Trainees also stay at the school hostel and have meals free of charge. The school holds tailoring trainings 3 times a year; both the basic and the advanced training course are taught at the same time. The training period is 3 months for each course. In her batch, among 42 basic training participants, only 9, including Ma Hone Hton, continued to study in the advanced sewing course. Among 3 other basic training participants from her village, only Ma Hone Hton and another young lady decided to pursue the advanced training course. The differences between the basic and advanced trainings are mostly learning to sew different types of upper garments. Basic training includes making blouses and short pants while advanced training teaches how to make the traditional jackets and plastic raincoats.

Ma Hone Hton explains how she became a sewing trainee, saying, "Initially, I didn't know about

the training. Only when LWF staff told me about it, I became aware. As they told me they would provide support, I attended the (sewing) training. LWF staff including **Law Sheing Mang**, the Livelihoods Officer, who is mainly responsible for our village, said in the meeting that we can attend the training and LWF will support us because there are many jobless women among us". LWF made a contribution to the foundation of Ma Hone Hton's new livelihood venture. According to the young lady, other women from other villages, where LWF implement development projects, also attend the sewing trainings. Ma Hone Hton says that LWF supported all basic training participants, "They supplied all the cloth when I was a basic trainee. I didn't need to buy all the necessities." But, advanced training participants have to buy cloth to make the clothes during training exercises. Her parents pay for the cost of buying the material used for the training.

At the end of the courses, exams are held and those who stand first in the exams are awarded a sewing machine by the training school. Ma Hone Hton has received a sewing machine as a 1st prize winner of the basic course.



Sewing trainees at the Mindat Sewing Academy

I chose tailoring because I think this is most suitable. This is a craft a young lady can have for a livelihood.

She completed her advanced tailoring training on 28 November 2014. Her dream is to open a small tailoring shop in Mindat town. "I chose tailoring because I think this is most suitable. This is a craft a young lady can have for a livelihood. I am willing to teach my younger sisters and others from my village after I learn as much as I can," she concluded. ■

AYEYARWADDY DELTA

LWF began working in Myanmar in 2008 as part of an ACT Appeal to respond to the devastation of Cyclone Nargis in the Delta, (known as the 'Rice Bowl' of Myanmar, it is the largest rice-producing region in the country).

At present, LWF is working on two projects in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta. Rights Based Empowerment is being implemented in all 50 villages. The villages are spread across four townships (Bogalay, Dedaye, Pyapon and Twantay) within the Ayeyarwaddy and Yangon regions, where most of these villages are reachable only by boat.

LWF also focuses on the livelihood status of women in the delta through the Project for Improving Women's Livelihoods (PIWL). LWF is implementing women empowerment activities in 6 villages of Dedaye Township to contribute to the improvement of women's livelihood status through maximizing the role of women in sustainable development. These two projects involve (28,003) people of (5,839) households.

U Hla Kyine, a chairman of a Farmer Group, working in a paddy field in Sar Phyu Su Village, Pyapon Township

Farmer Group: Essence of Delta Society

Sar Phyu Su is one of the RBEP implementation villages, situated in Pyapon Township. What makes this village unique is that every house is close to its farm. If the house is at the front, the farm is directly behind it.

U Hla Kyaing, a 56 year-old farmer, has been working as the chairman of his village's farmers group (facilitated by LWF) for nearly 2 years. He has a wife, an 8-year-old daughter, and an 8-month-old boy. A healthy man, he is actively involved in every community-based organization's activity in the village.

He briefly explained the livelihoods situation of the farmers in his group. "Our main business is rice. We all have our own farms. We are currently preparing our rice paddies. Some have already started seeding in their farms."

In June 2011, the farmers group set up a savings and loan system in order to avoid the huge interest rates demanded by moneylenders. Their current savings amount is over 1,531USD intended for livelihoods and payment for health problems. To be a group member, each person must pay a registration fee of 2 USD, and should contribute a monthly savings amount of 1USD. This group started out with 42 members but the number has since been reduced to 26. The number of farmers in the group has declined because not all farmers have the same

goal of bringing development to their community.

He shared some challenges of the group, saying, "The stronger the savings group is, the better livelihoods opportunities there are for our farmers. For instance, buying land from the company and then distributing to farmers is one of our future plans. Since we don't have enough money yet to buy land, we have to rely on moneylenders who impose a high interest rate of 7-8 %. If we can save enough money, our group will buy and then sell land at a lower interest rate of 1.5 – 3 %, to member farmers or others. Thus, we will try our best to reach our goal."

He then proudly expressed the team spirit of his group, saying, "To be honest, our group has no big issues except for not having enough savings. There is mutual trust in the group because we all have the same goals to strengthen the livelihood status of our farmers. In every group meeting, we explain the expenditure of the group to all members, to have transparency and accountability."

The loan term of the group is biannual, and the group meetings are held according to this routine. Every member tries his best to pay back his debts.

He also described the social funding status of his group, saying, "100USD out of the group's revolving fund is reserved for health needs of mem-



U Than Myo Zaw working in the paddy field in Sar Phyu Su Village, Pyapon Township

bers. We have a ground rules that require using this fund only for one's health. This emergency fund can be used but must be paid back after 15 days; the interest rate is flexible as the borrower can pay as much as he can afford. We think of it as a donation of our group. We are trying our best to solve the problems of our members."

Lastly, he talked about how trainings are useful to farmers. "Four years ago, some of the group members received accountancy training conducted by LWF staff. Only one representative from each village could attend the training, and I was one of them. As a large number of our farmers are poor in education, the financial management of this training is beneficial, as it taught me how to handle the financing in our farmers group."

Transparency: The Way Forward

Starting in mid-2014, LWF became the first NGO in the Delta region that initiated a Complaint & Response Mechanism (CRM) program, which enhances mutual trust, respect and transparency between LWF and its partners. LWF conducted CRM trainings, displayed CRM posters and installed ‘complaints boxes’ in public places around the LWF implementation areas.

In every step of project implementation, LWF ensures transparency and accountability. This complaint-response mechanism helps maintain relations between the implementers and rights-holders (people from the communities) and aims to make future project plans run smoothly.

U Hla Htay, a farmer group leader, from Ta Yoke Seik village shared his insights on CRM “I made a phone call to LWF Pyapon Office and complained against the football competition held at the International Youth Day in my village in August 2014. During the match, I found out that LWF staffs are unfair in decision making as they want only their team to win. One day after my phone call, the empowerment officer, **U Thit Lwin**, came to the village and solved the problem. We had face-to-face discussion with the youth group members and LWF field staff till both of us was satisfied. Then, we considered this case as a lesson learned and the responsible staff was given

written and verbal warnings as far as I know.”

The chairperson of Pale’s Village Development Committee (VDC), **U Hla Nyein**, also expressed that after attending a CRM training conducted by LWF staff in his village, he started to realize the importance of transparency and how it helps him when he prepares and produces financial reports for VDC activities. “Transparency is very important when it comes to development,” he says, “this practice re-

duces conflict and makes relationships better between two parties.”

“The CRM is one of the great supporting tools for our Community Empowerment Facilitators as it is the best solution for misgiving, mistrust, and misunderstanding among each other. It makes our RBEP activities smooth and efficient,” said **Hein Maung Maung**, an LWF Community Empowerment Facilitator assigned in Pyapon township.



Complaint Response Mechanism poster found in Ta Yoke Seik Village, Bogalay Township

A Holistic Approach: Child Rights in Early Education

On 29th May 2014, The Lutheran World Federation, coordinating with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR) held the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) closing ceremony in Pathein Township, the capital city of the Ayeyarwaddy delta. LWF has worked closely with MoSWRR in training youths to become pre-school teachers for 3 years.

A total of 38 young women from LWF's 4 project implementation townships have undergone training since the introduction of this activity in 2012. LWF provides financial support for the youths who want to attend the training as its costs 110 USD for the enrollment of each trainee.

People interested in the training must meet the following requirements: a high interest in teaching, at least 18-years-old, must have finished middle school, and have the approval from the villagers. LWF also considers the background of the candidates; are there enough children in their village, who they can teach? Does their village have plans to build a pre-school, or do they already have one? These points are all taken into consideration when selecting trainees.

This academic year, 6 young women received scholarships from LWF to attend ECCD training. The trainers are from the Department of Education and the Myanmar Red Cross Society. Intensive classes are held from 9:00am to 4:00pm (which include a 1-hour lunch break) and lasts for about one month in Pathein town.

The soon-to-be teachers were so excited to go back to their homes that they could not sleep. **Ma Zue Zue Maung**, a young lady aged 18 said "I heard about this training from one of the big sisters who lives in my village, Phoe Kone (located in Bogalay Township). She joined the training in 2013 and now, she has a job as a teacher. That's why I am here, since I believe it can be a stepping stone for a brighter future."

Ma Zin Zin Aung who is in her late twenties is the only married lady among the 6 trainees. She comes from Sar Oh Chaung village, Dedaye Township. She is now living alone as her husband is running a fishery depot in the commercial capital of Myanmar, Yangon. She sent her 2 children; 9-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son to live in their grandmother's home to be looked after. "Re-

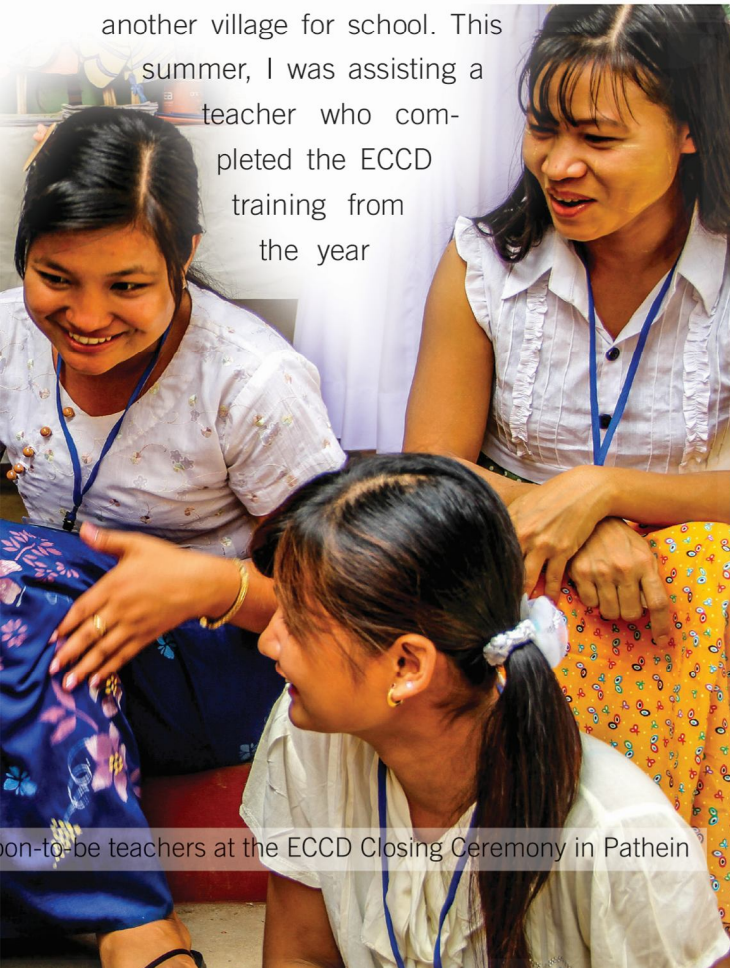
garding my children's futures, I dare not expect a lot but at least, I want my daughter to be a teacher. In the meantime, my son is still too young to plan his career. If I cannot find a job immediately after this training, I can apply my ECCD knowledge to my children."

Ma Hay Man Oo who is from Shan Kwin village, Pyapon Township worked as an account-



tant in both her village's Youth Group and Village Development Committee before she came for this ECCD training. She has attended accountancy training twice, both provided by LWF."My parents encourage me to attend capacity building trainings and I also enjoy working for the development of my native town. Regarding education, villagers are facing many challenges. In the past, we only had a high school but not a pre-school. Transportation was a big difficulty when children would travel to

This summer, I was assisting a teacher who completed the ECCD training from the year



on-to-be teachers at the ECCD Closing Ceremony in Pathein

before. We were teaching Myanmar, English, Science and Mathematics in a community hall constructed by the village with support from LWF. The constraint is that the hall is used for various purposes; it is a meeting hall, pre-school and also a gathering place of villagers. We don't have fixed school hours like a regular school. To me, a separate building for young learners would be better. In addition, poorly educated parents have no idea when the best age is to send their children to school. On the other hand, our teachers also don't have enough confidence to suggest or explain to the parents about the proper age that children should be at school. As a consequence, children are the ones who suffer from bad decisions made by their parents. They are forced to attend the school while their brain cannot yet absorb information very well."

She continued on how she benefitted from this training, saying, "I found the self-confidence to deal with these problems; balancing education and social activities for kids because we have learnt how to raise kids mentally and physically with poems, songs and how to make handicrafts which are easy to attract young kids. We got to know things like gender, child rights, and emergency response in detail. Among the different syllabus, child rights is already familiar with us because LWF provided us with a CRC (Convention of the rights of the child) poster for the child club. I also learnt the right and system-

atic teaching approaches which are really useful for us."They have not decided yet whether they should apply as a volunteer in their own village with a limited salary of 20-30 USD or as a government teacher with the bigger future, but require them to work in places assigned to them. Generally, however their goal is to work for their own villages if possible. ■

RAKHINE STATE

A woman wearing a colorful patterned blouse and a purple sarong walks through an IDP camp. She is carrying a large woven basket on her head and a blue plastic tub. The camp consists of simple, rustic buildings with thatched roofs and bamboo walls. The ground is made of stones and dirt. The sky is blue with some clouds.

A woman walks through her IDP camp in Sittwe Township, Rakhine State

Addressing the Concerns of Internally Displaced People

The long-standing inter-community conflict between the Buddhists and the Muslim groups in Rakhine State that flared up again in early June 2012 and resurged in October 2012, resulted in massive displacement, and loss of lives and livelihoods. LWF entered Rakhine State in June 2012 to assist Rakhine Buddhist and Muslim IDPs, as well as the surrounding host communities affected by the violence with a number of project activities.

LWF's major activities in Rakhine include **Education in Emergencies (EiE), Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Community Based Psychosocial Support (CBPS), Non-Food Items (NFI) Distribution and Fire Safety (FS).**

Coordination and collaboration with government and other humanitarian agencies becomes an integral part of LWF's work when dealing with a complex situation such as the crisis in Rakhine State. To ensure that projects go smoothly, LWF partners up with local government agencies such as the General Administration Department, the State Education Department, the Fire Brigade Department, and the Relief and Resettlement Department. LWF's major donors in Rakhine include CoS & SIDA through the ACT Alliance, ECHO/FCA, FCA, CZECH DIACONIA (ECCB), UNICEF, and the UNHCR.

Basara is one of the Muslim communities found in Rakhine. **U Aung Pe**, 54, is the chairman of Basara IDP camp's Camp Management Committee (CMC). He lives together with his wife, children and grandchildren in the village as a 'host' community member.

U Aung Pe attended 3 trainings on Camp Management, Gender-based Violence and Complaint Response Mechanism organized by LWF in 2014. Regarding camp coordination and camp management, U Aung Pe explains, "We have to act on and present the needs of the camp such as water, sanitation, food rations, health, education, entry and the exit of people. We write reports and present them to LWF staff bimonthly. LWF tells the respective agencies, reports on WASH to another INGO and on health and education to government agencies. For example, LWF presents textbook distribution issues to the State Education Department and EiE Sector lead UNICEF."

Since June 2014, 'Complaint boxes' have been installed at the camp. "If unsatisfied, anyone can write a letter and put it in the box. IDPs can make complaints about me or the committee." U Aung Pe explains how the complaint-response mechanism is

applied in his IDP camp. LWF staff in presence of CMC members used to open the complaint boxes monthly but now boxes are open every week on Mondays. Until now no complaint letter has been found according to U Aung Pe. But **Ma Nan Oo Hlaing**, an Assistant Camp Coordination & Camp Management (CCCM) Officer says that IDPs of Ohn Taw Gyi South IDP camp complain about CMC members because some of them take food rations, and distribute them to other families who aren't IDPs. These are one of the challenges that LWF staff face in the camps.

Interagency meeting in Sittwe IDP camp, Rakhine State

Hla Hla Shwe's Hope: Being a Teacher Means Many Things to Me

Hla Hla Shwe, 23, was a first-year university student when inter-communal violence affected her daily life in 2012. She had to give up her university studies, but the dream of education never faded. She will soon start working as a teacher in one of the Muslim IDP camps, thanks to an LWF project-supported by Finn Church Aid (FCA) and the European Union (EU), the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize winners.

“As education is vitally important for the future of children, every child should have the right to education. An educated child will at least know how to tell right from wrong better than an uneducated child”, Hla Hla Shwe says in a training session held in That Kal Pyin High School.

Education in Emergencies (EiE) ensures learning opportunities for children between ages 3-17. It encompasses early childhood care and development, primary education, and non-formal education (NFE). This involves construction and maintenance of Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) and Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), the provision of teachers, and distribution of teaching and learning kits. Under the EU Children of Peace Initiative (CoPI), LWF with FCA, is supporting the operation of 15 TLSs, 10 CFSs and 6 NFE centers in Muslim camps, and 4 NFE centers in Rakhine Buddhist camps in Sittwe Township. Children aged 3-17 are

supported in these school sessions. Basic literacy and numeracy classes are also taught for out of school children aged 11-17.

Hla Hla Shwe is one of the lucky ones, from a new batch of recently



Hla Hla Shwe will teach the primary students in new Temporary Learning Space in Ohn Taw Gyi South, Sittwe Township, Rakhine State.

recruited community teachers. “If possible, I would like to go to Yangon for further study after living here for more than a year. Being a teacher means many things to me. It brings self-satisfaction with happiness, knowledge improvement and some earnings for survival at the same time,” she explained.

Six Days of Training

The community teachers attend a six-day course (facilitated by LWF) where Myanmar government teachers deputized by State Education Department lead the training. Participants learn about developing the learning environment, and teaching methods for primary school aged children.

One of the teaching techniques is “Do, Talk and Record”. The technique includes the showing of photos and the students have to explain what is happening in the picture and then record it in their books. For 3-5 year-old children there are Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), where children can play freely with their friends and toys, which brings happiness. Through games they also learn general and hygiene knowledge, communication skills, creative thinking, decision-making and how to raise their self-esteem. Most of the training has to do with giving first hand psychological help to the children and those close to them.

“Implementation of these programs is believed to improve basic literacy and numeracy in the camp, and it will bring a better environment for the future generations,” said **May Myint Aung**, an LWF Psychosocial Support and Protection Officer.

In the end more than 7,000 children between 3-17 years old from Rakhine Buddhist and Muslim IDP camps will benefit from the education project. Children aged 3-17 years make up 60% of the target camp population.



A Perfect Example of Resilience

As an annual event, the UN General Assembly sees the International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) as a way to promote a global culture of disaster reduction, prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

Led by the Relief and Resettlement Department (RRD), the LWF, along with the UNDP, the EU, ACF, Oxfam and Plan, supported to organize this year's event, which took place in the beautifully decorated Main Hall of the Royal Sittwe Resort, on the 13th of October. This year's theme was, ‘Resilience is For Life,’ and amongst the attendees were students, members of women's organizations, the Myanmar Red Cross Society, government officials, as well as staff from participating INGOs.

The Minister of Ethnic Affairs, along with a UNDP representative opened the ceremony with speeches, touching on the subject of disaster reduction, and resilience.

Soon after, winners were announced for the art, and the essay writing competitions, all related to the theme of resilience. In total, there were 14 students ranging from primary to high school that participated in the event's art, and long-essay writing competition in Sittwe, with these students coming from various schools all over Rakhine State.

The event was concluded with an interesting video, created by the Office of the Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, showcasing a Cyclone Simulation Exercise, which was held on September 15 to 17, 2014.

In closing, the Minister of Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement stated that due to global warming, it is evident that the numbers of natural disasters are increasing, as well as intensifying. “Adapting to the situation by working together and preparing adequately to mitigate effects is the key to resilience.”

Two finalists from the essay-writing category of the competition proudly shared their experience after the ceremony.

Chaw Su Shwe Han is a shy, 13-year-old 9th Grader. She was a first placer, in the 2014 IDDR High School Level Essay competition, and when asked what her essay was on, she timidly said it was about, “the negative effects of Carbon Dioxide emissions, released by machines in factories, that go into the atmosphere and deplete the ozone layer.” She continued, saying, “Harmful UV rays from the Sun then pass through the atmosphere, and this causes harmful effects on humans, like skin cancer.” She mentioned that it is important for young people to know about the harmful effects, so that we know how to prevent these things.

Myo Khine Cho is a 14-year-old boy currently in Grade 10. Sitting down and proudly clutching his 2nd place certificate on his lap in front of him. When asked what he wrote about in his essay, he confidently answered in his local language, saying it was about, “How disasters affect lives and people’s financial situations, and how the government helps with rehabilitation.” He knows this topic very well as his family was affected by Cyclone ‘Nargis’ which brought about death and destruction to tens of thousands of people in the Delta Region of Myanmar in 2008. It is regarded as the worst natural disaster in the recorded history of the

country. “My parents owned a business there (Delta Region), that got destroyed, so my family relocated to Rakhine State because we had family here.” When asked why he thinks it’s important for students to know about disaster risk reduction, he responded saying,

“So they can be more educated and have more knowledge on knowing how to react to disasters.” Myo Khine Cho’s family has since opened another business in Rakhine and has decided to settle down there – A perfect example of resilience.



Ma Chaw Su Shwe Han and Mg Myo Khine Cho winners of the essay competition for IDDR day together with LWF Sittwe staff in the Royal Sittwe Resort.

Smiles in Darkness: Hundreds of Education Kits Bring Happiness to IDP Students

As an organization that serves people irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religion, race or political conviction, we try to ease the tensions between the two communities in Rakhine State, by working with both sides.

It was a sunny and wonderful day, as evidenced by the smiles of the primary school students, as they received education kits in a big sack.

In the camps, smiles are rare for many reasons: “I am so tired and I have even lost my voice; however, I am so glad for my students receiving the kits. As IDP students, they have to attend classes in small schools, share small spaces and they don’t have enough learning materials,” said **Than Than Shwe**, 47, a teacher based in the Rakhine Buddhist IDP camp of Sat Roe Kya.

But on the 24th of June, the children were all smiles and looked curiously about trying to imagine what kind of items were waiting for them inside the enclosed bags, delivered to them by the teachers, Village Administrator, officials from the State Education Department, Relief and Resettlement Department and LWF staff. As the children received their kits, they looked for their family members to

come and help them carry the heavy kits home. The 1st grade students’ family members were ready and waiting outside of the school for them.

Education Kit: Rubber Slippers and a Rain Coat

Each student received one sack, which included pencils and erasers, a sharpener, a ruler, a pencil case to store them in, a school bag, a lunch box, a water container, rubber slippers, a raincoat and several exercise books, which were all funded by the EU-CoPI grant.

“The kits are very useful for students, as they include stationery and other necessary items for the primary students. For example, some of the students come to school without slippers. Honestly, they don’t have good slippers to wear during the rainy season as parents cannot afford to buy nice ones. But now, parents don’t need to worry about the slippers”, a student’s mother **Khine Khine Nwae**, 43, said.

In IDP camps, receiving small, colorful objects such as stationery often have a positive psychological impact upon children.



Three friends with their student kits



“I am sure I will see my pupils filled with happiness and satisfaction using the items in the class. They themselves are very proud of owning these kinds of kits. Moreover, these items support IDP students physically, mentally and contribute towards trauma healing process. It will build up their self-esteem and they will be more interested in attending school in order to use all the items,” explains teacher Than Than Shwe, with a smile.

Students from Grade 1-5 in Sat Roe Kya No.1 Primary School received 289 kits. Also, those who attended school from nearby and one of the Rakhine Buddhist camps of Sittwe Township received another 39 kits. 1,600 IDP students have received the CoPI education kit for the academic year.

“I will write until there are no more blank pages left in the exercise books”

“No one will feel unhappy when they have received their kits. I will write until there are no more blank pages left in the exercise books and try very hard to be an outstanding student in the class”, **Soe Moe Nwae**, 6, said.

In the end, some of the children had to carry the heavy items by themselves. In IDP camps, parents don't always have the time for anything else than to think about livelihood and daily work in the town centre, for instance, as construction workers, or at the market place, carrying bags, stones, firewood, or work as tri-cycle drivers. But at least today all the children, teachers and parents left with a big smile on their faces.



A student attending a class in a Rakhine Buddhist IDP camp in Sittwe

Psychosocial Activities at Maramagyi IDP Camp

Since August 2014, LWF has provided books on general knowledge, English language study, children's journals and daily newspapers every month to 11 libraries in 9 IDP camps. A monastic school at Set Yone Su (1) also has a library. LWF has provided furniture including tables, a cupboard, a box, benches and chairs for that library. In addition to the provision of reading materials and furniture for the library, LWF organizes recreational activities such as sport competitions for the school children of the monastic school according to May Myint Aung. "(The) library is almost perfect, as LWF has contributed a monthly donation of books, child journals, a cupboard and box to store books", the abbot of monastic school says.

Among the IDP camps in Sittwe, a camp, hosted by Set Yone Su (1) village, is the nearest camp to Sittwe Township. Buddhist Maramagyi ethnic IDPs are staying at the camp. Set Yone Su village is a 10-minute drive from Sittwe Township. There is a school, called **Min Kyaung Welfare Monastic Education School**, at Danyawadi quarter of Set Yone Su. Grade 1 to Grade 9 students from Set Yone Su's host community, the IDP camp and nearby villages are schooling there. The monastic school has 485 students including poor students and IDP children. Since 1998, the school has been established by a sixteen-nine year old Buddhist abbot, named **Ashin Baddanta Thi Reinda**.

According to the abbot, only 12 teachers are teaching all students from Grade 1 to Grade 9, and out of that number, 4 teachers are university graduates, some others are university students (distant education) and some have passed the Grade 11 exam. The abbot says, "Five more teachers are still required" to make a better student-teacher ratio

The abbot takes care of his school children mentally, physically, socially and educationally. He holds sport competitions in every December and occasionally, a singing event for his school children. He says, "Children need happiness as they just do lessons month by month, year by year."

With regard to the library, the abbot says, "more new books are still necessary for the children to be knowledgeable (such as) books written about different wild animals". He adds, "I find out some books (donated by LWF) provide knowledge, such as the books about Christopher Columbus, who discovered America, and scientists, who firstly invented the airplane. (I) find out the books written in English are conducive to the children". The abbot requests LWF to build a toilet for his school children. He expresses another request, "One thing I want for children to play in, is a playground with a see-saw, swing, etc." ■



Students studying in the monastic school at Set Yone Su 1



All LWF staff gathering retreat in Pyin Oo Lwin

Challenges in Our Working Environment

LWF is able to assist a large number of Myanmar people, but things do not always go smoothly. We actually face many challenges day in and day out. The following points show common challenges faced in the field:

- When it comes to the scope of our development activities, we try to focus our work on the rights-based empowerment approach, while actors in power prefer us to focus on building infrastructure.
- Using the lesser-known rights-based approach has led to misunderstandings with both the villagers and the government as their expectations from projects may be different.
- Internet and telecommunication services have continuously been one of the biggest challenges we face in our project offices. Myanmar lags behind its neighbors when it comes to the provision of these services. This hinders information-sharing between Yangon and field offices.
- Occurrence of frequent power-outages. LWF's project areas have under-developed electrical utility services, which often lead to project staff members experiencing daily power outages. All LWF project offices come equipped with generators.
- The loss of trust between government and the common people make stakeholders shy away from active participation with duty bearers.

• Limited capacity and resources of government staff in the field at times make it difficult to collaborate.

• The legacy and continuation of tensions and conflicts in parts of Myanmar make some areas off limits to INGOs, while other areas are difficult to access due to poor roads or the requirement for travel authorizations or other special permissions and even accompaniment by the authorities at times.

The points below illustrate challenges specific to each area:

KAYIN

• Kayin State is currently a high-risk area. Government and non-state actors have been in conflict for decades, making the region difficult to work in. In 2014, LWF has been in talks, conducting painstaking negotiations with government offices and non-state actors, respectively, to seek permission for access to controlled areas.

• Issues with land mines planted by different groups. This obviously brings a great risk to staff, and makes mobility in the region somewhat limited.



Currently, roads being widened between Mindat and Matupi are affecting accessibility to LWF project villages



Assessment and Relief Management Training in Shwe Taung Su Village, Pyapon Township



Participatory Learning Appraisal practice in Kayin State



For nearly two years, Ohn Taw Gyi South, Sittwe, Rakhine State has been a temporary home to hundreds of families. People's lives are cramped and without privacy, living in these long and dilapidated bamboo houses.

CHIN

- Accessibility to LWF's partner villages in remote areas. Most of the roads leading to these villages are unpaved, dirt roads (sometimes only wide enough for a motorbike), and during rainy season, they turn to chocolate muck and become nearly impossible to navigate.
- Due to the lack of schools in the region, there is a high percentage of illiterate and non-formally educated people amongst the ethnic groups with whom we work. They, at times, have difficulty in grasping our concepts and methods and this can create setbacks in the empowerment process.

DELTA

- The inability of some savings groups to manage loan repayments. Individuals have become hesitant in participating in village savings and loan associations due to previous bad experiences.
- We are experiencing an increasing shift in population. Losing LWF-trained resource persons through the phenomenon of 'rural to urban migration' creates setbacks in the development cycle and in our own organizational development.

RAKHINE

- The current situation in Rakhine State is among the most complex that the international community has faced. Working in areas affected by inter-communal conflict brings intense pressure for all partners to operate in full respect of the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, and neutrality.

- Communities' perception of bias in the delivery of assistance towards particular groups of beneficiaries over others causes resentment that slows the reconciliation process.
- In 26-27 March 2014, an attack was carried out on humanitarian aid agencies. 33 office premises, warehouses and residences of 14 organizations were ransacked (the LWF project office included), and humanitarian operations were suspended, as staff had to be evacuated for safety. LWF resumed activities in mid-April, and relocated the project office to a new assigned area dedicated to humanitarian and development agencies.
- Travel restrictions have been placed on certain areas for expatriates as well as travel authorization from union and state levels are taking longer time than expected. ■



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A young girl carries a toddler in the Set Yone Su Camp, Sittwe Township, Rakhine State

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