

EC Partner

GRET - Groupe de recherche et d'échanges technologiques

Facts and Figures

- EC Contribution: € 1 750 000 (100% of the total)
- Duration: 2006 - 2010
- 30 000 direct beneficiaries



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Food security

Improving the lives of the most vulnerable in Myanmar

Poor women get better living conditions through agricultural activities

"Before I faced irregular meals due to poverty and life was very hard. I worked for the wealthiest people in their vegetable fields and collected firewood in the forest. Thanks to the project I have an income from selling vegetables and have managed to establish my own small betel vineyard and send my kids to school"

Mrs Taw Ro Bah, Home Garden beneficiary from Buthidaung township

**Context**

The project was based in the North Rakhine State of Myanmar, an area inhabited by 850 000 people, from where 200 000 people fled to Bangladesh in the early nineties. The refugees started to come back in 1995 under the auspices of a UNHCR sponsored returnee resettlement programme. The majority of the population are landless and still rely on daily labour, fishing, or subsistence farming on leased land. Poverty is the major cause of food insecurity and many need regular food assistance to cope with the seasonal hunger gap.

Objectives

- To improve food security and enhance community development by promoting innovative income sources and using under-tapped local resources.
- To strengthen communities by training project staff, and by creating networks related to income generation activities at grass roots and institutional levels.

Impact

- 95% of the vegetable growers at least doubled their income and 75% tripled it. Diets were improved due to different types of vegetables being cultivated.
- 600 unemployed young beneficiaries, were trained in mechanics, horticulture, pesticide application and animal health. 520 trainees started their own businesses after the training.
- Increased social integration and recognition of the beneficiaries within their communities.

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Vegetable growing group from Gaw Ya Kha Li in South Maungdaw

A vegetable growing group joined the project in 2007. Before one of the members was a farmer and used to farm half a hectare by hiring land. The others were farm labourers, mat makers, or beggars. None of their children went to school and their families regularly faced food shortages. They were not involved in vegetable cultivation because they could not make any investment at that time. In 2007 they received some help from the project in the form of seeds and fertiliser as well as training. Gradually they were able to improve their business. As their incomes improved, they increased the quantity of land they rented.

After three cropping seasons they have fine-tuned their marketing strategy. They now grow higher value crops like okra, shallots, garlic, red beans and cowpea. The group was also trained to produce their own seeds in order to secure production from one season to another and reduce the investment needed.

All members are now sending their children to school and their children are better fed. One beneficiary could finance the marriage of her daughter. In addition they have started to breed chickens and four beneficiaries out of the group of five have bought a goat. Their livelihoods are now diversified and they are food secure.



Women planting vegetables