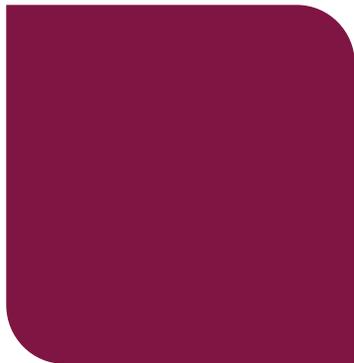
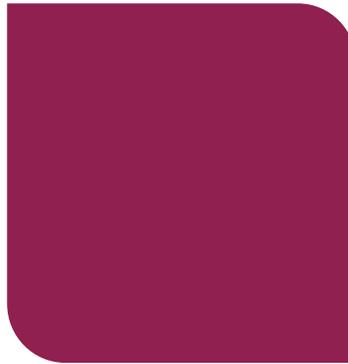




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# Shae Thot Fourth Annual Report

October 1, 2014-  
September 30, 2015

Prepared for: USAID  
Contract: AID-486-11-00010

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## Index of Acronyms and Abbreviations

3MDG	3 Millennium Development Goal Fund
AHW	Animal Health Worker
AMW	Auxiliary Midwife
ANC	Antenatal Care
ARI	Acute Respiratory Infections
BA	Beneficiary Accountability
BMSD	Business Management and Skills Development
BHS	Basic Health Staff
BWP	Beneficiary Welfare Program
CA	Change Agent
CAP	Community Action Planning
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDA	Community Development Association
CDK	Clean Delivery Kits
Cesvi	Cooperazione e Sviluppo
CHD	Community Health and Development
CHDN	Civil Health and Development Network
CME	Continuing Medical Education
COCA	Community Capacity Assessment
COP	Chief of Party
COPI	Community Organizational Performance Index
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DALY	Disability Adjusted Life Years
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOH	Department of Health
DRD	Department of Rural Department
EC	Environmental Compliance
EM	Effective Micro-organism
EPI	Expanded Program for Immunization
ER	Early Response
FEG	Farmer Extension Group

FFS	Farmer Field School
FPL	Fly-Proof Latrines
FY	Fiscal Year
GAD	General Administrative Department
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFWS	Gravity Flow Water System
GOB	Government of Burma
HBB	Helping Baby Breathe
HSS	Health Systems Strengthening
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ICT4D	Information Communication Technology for Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC-PLE	International Rescue Committee-Project for Local Empowerment
KMSS	Karuna Myanmar Social Services
KnMHC	Karenni Mobile Health Clinic
KNPP	Karenni Nationalities Progressive Party
KSDA	Kayhtoeboe Social Development Association
LBD	Livestock Breeding Department
LCSO	Local Civil Society Organization
LLIN	Long-Lasting Insecticide Nets
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
LPI	Local Partner Initiative
MAI	Malaria Assistant Inspector
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MCHD	Maternal and Child Health Defender
MCHP	Maternal and Child Health Providers
MCL	Malaria Control Leader
MFCs	Microfinance Centers
MNCH	Maternal Neo-Natal Child Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprise
MSI	Marie Stopes International
MSY	Mya Sein Yaung (government development fund)

MW	Midwives
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NFBE	Non-formal business education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
ONA	Organizational Networking Analysis
OPI	Organizational Performance Index
ORT	Oral Rehydration Therapy
PF	Plasmodium Falciparum
PGMF	Pact Global Microfinance Fund
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PV	Plasmodium Vivax
RDA	Rural Development Association
RDMA	Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID)
RDT	Rapid Diagnostic Tests
RHC	Rural Health Center
RWCT	Rain Water Collection Tank
SBA	Skilled Birth Attendants
SDF	Swanyee Development Foundation
SHINE	Sustainable Health Improvement and Empowerment
ST	Shae Thot
SVS	Social Vision Services
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TBC	The Border Consortium
TMO	Township Medical Officer
ToTs	Training of Trainer
TT	Tetanus Toxoid
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USG	United States Government
VDC	Village Development Council
VHDF	Village Health and Development Funds
VWC	Village Water Committee
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB CDD	World Bank Community Driven Development program

WIG  
WHO  
WP

Women's Income Generating  
World Health Organization  
WASH Promoters



## Executive Summary

Pact and the Shae Thot implementing partners are pleased to present the year 4 report from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015. Key highlights from this period include exceeding targets across sectors and developing better accountability and stronger governance at the village level and among partners. In particular, women continue to succeed in democratic leadership processes and take advantage of independent financing. Innovation in water, sanitation, agriculture and urban health and finances show Shae Thot adapting to needs and delivering change.

### STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

To date, Shae Thot has support the **development or revival of 1,141 Village Development Committees (VDCs)**. **This year, Shae Thot partners have worked with 914 VDCs. The program team began documenting the VDC pilot program approach with the goal of developing an operational guide for future USAID programming involving village-level governance and coordination bodies.** The guide will be finalized next year.

**Shae Thot facilitates** the establishment of community-owned and managed **Village Development Funds (VDFs)**. To date, **946 villages in all townships are actively managing funds**, 30 of which were established this year. In Central Burma, **the total fund value of VDFs is \$808,381, more than five times the initial matching grants**. A sustainability study conducted in September 2015 covering over 100 villages in six townships revealed that **68% of VDFs established between 2001-2010 in villages where Pact is no longer operating are still functioning and growing**.

This year, **Pact delivered a series of capacity development trainings to all seven Shae Thot Local Partners**. All Pact partners, including the local partners, completed trainings on the Shae Thot Beneficiary Accountability mechanism. Local partners Swanyee Development Foundation (SDF), Community Development Association (CDA), and Social Vision Services (SVS) completed their grants with Shae Thot this year. **Endline Organizational Performance Indexes** conducted with the three partners **showed marked improvements across all performance domains**, including results, standards, delivery, reach, target population, learning, resources, and social capital.

**Pact**, with support from USAID, 3MDG, and the Local Resource Center **hosted the second Myanmar Development Dialogue on June 25 to explore how the practice of capacity development contributes to Burma's civil society** and identify potential ways it can be improved.

### COMMUNITY-MANAGED MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

This year Pact implemented programming in 14 townships covering 997 villages. This included **training 1,746 Change Agents (CAs), who serve on Change Agent Committees** with Village Development Fund Managers. A total of 53,225 mothers from 4,083 groups have participated in Pact maternal and child health workshops. MCHD-1 CAs monitored 4,835 pregnancies. Of these, **3,271 (67%) mothers received four antenatal visits as per the national gold standard, about three times the amount of those who received the same**

**level of care during Year 1.** Ninety nine percent of the women received at least one antenatal care visits. Similarly, 4,443 (89%) received two tetanus toxoid injections, up from 54% in Year 1.

Of the deliveries monitored by MCHDs, **96% used clean delivery kits** for home deliveries (compared to 85% in Year 1). In addition to having more hygienic deliveries, more women, during this year, 3,552 out of 3,655 (**75%**), **delivered with skilled birth attendants (SBAs)**, versus 49% from Year 1. Additionally, MCHD-2 CAs worked together with midwives to carry out **1,842 Baby-Weighing Days** this year, during which **50,419 under-five children were monitored**.

This reporting period, MSI expanded its **mobile clinic coverage** to Yinmabin Township, thereby **servicing a total of 47,510 clients** (39,894 female, 7,616 male) in nine townships, a **113% increase in the number of clients** compared to last year. During the period, **189,650 people** (172,338 female, 17,312 male) **benefited from 18,056 interactive health education sessions** on safe motherhood, family planning and child care. A total of **16,818 pregnant women received antenatal care**, of which 546 women received tetanus toxoid (TT) injections through the clinics. Staff also provided consultations for 18,274 cases of childhood illness, among which 14,903 (82%) cases were for children under five.

This year, MSI and CDA supported the Department of Health to provide training for Auxiliary Midwives (AMWs). MSI trained 69 and CDA trained 25 newly recruited AMWs.

#### **LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY**

PGMF expanded **microfinance services** to 10,807 new households this year, increasing the **total number of active clients to 52,596**. **PGMF's overall portfolio** under Shae Thot **increased by 58% in Year 4 from \$4.46M to \$7.05M**. This growth comes from member's savings, interest repaid on loans, and from new active borrowers as PGMF expanded to new areas. The total **on-time client loan repayment rate for the period is 100%**. During the year, **client savings increased by 110%**, bringing the total member savings to \$1.9M, and the **value of loans disbursed increased by 142%**, bringing the total value of project loans to \$23M.

**Ninety-four percent** of Shae Thot's formal **microfinance beneficiaries are women**, and for many this represents the first time they have been able to financially contribute towards their household income and not have to rely solely on their husband's earnings.

Currently a total of **20,573 women are participating** in the WORTH savings-led microfinance program through **821 savings groups**. In two of the four townships where WORTH programming occurs, Pact works with Chevron's Sustainable Health Improvement and Empowerment (SHINE II) program, through a **Public Private Partnership between Pact, USAID and Chevron**.

In August 2015, Pact conducted a sustainability study in two townships where Shae Thot's training and mentoring of WORTH groups had ended. The study revealed that **after more than a year on their own, 67% of WORTH groups were still functioning**. Groups that were still active appeared to be thriving: 93% of the original members were still actively participating, and funds had grown by 57% since phase-out.

## AGRICULTURE

Currently a total of **8,244 farmers** (2,391 women, 5,837 men) **are participating in 350 FEGs in 299 villages in six townships**. Further, **236 key farmers** (18 women, 228 men) **led technical sessions for 6,996 neighboring farmers** (2,322 women, 4,674 men). To date, a **total of 5,956 farmers** (1,207 women, 4,749 men) **have participated in 237 FFS sessions**.

On-farm demonstration plots have improved knowledge and agriculture practices to support **increased crop productivity**. Groundnut demonstration plots revealed a **25% yield increase** from an improved variety of seed introduced through Shae Thot. A comparison between organic foliar and chemical fertilizer in sesame production revealed that organic foliar improved yield by 25%.

To date, 6,803 farmers have received direct seed input support from the project. Through the revolving mechanism an **additional 9,759 beneficiaries have received secondary seeds**, without direct project support. Together, these beneficiaries have received a total of 50,601 baskets of different types of seeds **covering a total of 21,545 acres**. Additionally, this year, **Cesvi distributed quality seeds to 6,000 resource-poor farmers** during the year covering 1,955 acres

**AHWs provided 4,839 livestock breeders** (1,738 women, 3,103 men) from 265 villages with technical assistance and treatment, addressing common problems. Currently there are 480 revolving animal banks, from CESVI townships with a total of 2,692 animals (2,355 piglets, 337 goats) supporting 2,438 beneficiaries (910 women, 1,528 men). Since the banks were initiated during March 2013, the project has purchased 1,632 animals, while **a further 1,610 offspring have been born increasing the number of animals that can be lent out by 98%** (Figure 16). This return allows for a greater number of farmers to benefit from the project.

## WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

This year, a total of **190 community contracts were signed between UN-Habitat and 90 Village Water Committees (VWCs)** to construct water and sanitation infrastructure. These contracts are developed through a community-driven action planning process in which communities identify their needs and then develop contracts to implement activities based on those self-assessed needs. To date, a total of **70,490 people (33,151 male, 37,339 female) benefited** from the construction of various community water supply infrastructure.

To date, through the construction of **bio-sand filters, 541,602 people have benefited from clean water**, including 615 households this year. Local partner Thirst Aid provided **2,840 Ceramic Water Filters (CWFs)**, 93% of which were still in use by the end of the year. Additionally, this year, **10,518 households constructed fly-proof latrines** with technical support from project partners.

## KAYAH STATE

This year, **Pact implemented** community-based MCH programming in **63 villages in Bawlake, Hpasawng, and Mese Townships**. Expansion into Mese took place in February 2015. Out of the 227 child deliveries monitored by Pact trained MCHD-1 CAs, **90% of women received at least one antenatal care (ANC) visit**, while 35% received four ANC visits, and 71% received two tetanus toxoid injections. Additionally, **228 baby weighing days** were led by the **MCHD-2 CAs in collaboration with the VDCs**.

**Pact began work with the Karenni Mobile Health Clinic (KnMHC) team to reach 80 remote villages in Hpasawng Township.** Pact works closely with Township Health Departments to link Shae Thot's community-based activities with, and provide support to, the formal health system.

Completed **water systems which provide clean water access to 2,980 beneficiaries were handed over for village management in 12 villages**, and commemorated through an official handover ceremony

## **CONCLUSION**

Shae Thot seeks to **foster greater community resilience**. Evidence the program collects has demonstrated that Shae Thot's interventions are contributing to its objectives of **durability and resilience**, from improving the performance of VDCs, to increasing yields of key agricultural crops, raising the income of thousands of women and their families, improving access to clean water and improved hygiene, and building community resources through sustainable VDFs.

# Program Year 4, Annual Report: October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015

Shae Thot Program: USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AID-486-11-00010

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

USAID CA No: AID-486-11-00010

Donor: USAID RDMA Bangkok

Agreement Officer: Tracy Miller

AOR: Joanna Ribbens

Total Award: \$54,999,443

Obligations: \$48,166,026

Proposal Submission: June 14, 2011

Project Start Date: September 27, 2011

Project End Date: September 26, 2016

Reporting Period: October 1, 2014–September 30, 2015

## 1. Program Overview

USAID Cooperative Agreement Number AID-486-11-00010 was executed and became effective on September 27, 2011. This Cooperative Agreement awarded \$54,999,434 to Pact, Inc., to implement “Shae Thot: The Way Forward,” a five-year program proposed by Pact in response to USAID’s Humanitarian Assistance in Burma USAID-Burma-486-11-031-RFA. The program’s four objectives are to: (I) decrease maternal, newborn and child mortality; (II) improve household-level food security; (III) increase access to sufficient quantities of safe water, potable water, and improved hygiene; and (IV) strengthen social and community institutions for development. Obligations to date from USAID total \$ 48,166,026 to achieve the goals and objectives of Shae Thot over the five years of the program. Pact has spent or sub-obligated \$ 46,857,801 against this amount. Pact partners with CESVI, Marie Stopes International (MSI), Pact Global Microfinance Fund (PGMF), UN-Habitat, and seven local partners in Kayah State and Central Burma to implement the program.

Funded through USAID’s humanitarian assistance mechanism, the Shae Thot program offers an integrated community development service-delivery model that puts communities at the center of a process of building their own capacity for decision making and long-term planning. With Shae Thot programing largely coinciding with Burma’s dramatic reform and transition process, the program has reconceived its programing with Objective IV as the core. The Shae Thot consortium partners have found that working through grassroots entities, such as village development committees, achieves efficient and effective development while empowering villagers to have a stronger voice in local decision-making processes, modeling good governance at the local level, and building linkages to the evolving formal local government system. Pact has also begun engaging local organizations

to integrate their experiences and priorities into programming that builds community resilience. Through partnership, Pact is strengthening the capacity of these organizations while creating a network of local groups working toward locally driven development solutions.

Shae Thot Villages			
	New in Year 4	Program Cumulative	Currently Active
<b>Total (including cost share)</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>1,918</b>
By Organization			
Pact MCH	0	1027	666
MSI	0	863 <sup>1</sup>	863
CESVI	0	300	250
WORTH	0	344	180
PGMF	33	562	562
UNHABITAT	0	750	90
SHINE	20	195	90
CDA	0	70	0
SVS	0	270	0
Thirst Aid	0	18	18
KMSS	0	15	15
RDA	0	25	25
KSDA	0	15	15
Swanyee	0	20	20

Shae Thot partners are currently active in 1,918 villages across 23 townships in the Dry Zone, Rangoon, and Kayah State, and have implemented activities in 2,393 villages. A total of **2,119,538** individuals (**988,861 males** and **1,130,677 females**) live in villages where Shae Thot works. The consortium supports a purposeful overlap of services in targeted villages for better community integration and program coordination. As

<sup>1</sup> 11 villages added to Year 4 Quarter 3 due to a late township report

Direct Beneficiaries		
	New	Cumulative
<b>Health</b>		
Served by community volunteers	5,534	60,575
Served by mobile clinics	8,727	94,810
<b>Food Security</b>		
Increased access to credit	6,142	86,388
Improved agricultural skills	5,947	34,328
<b>WASH</b>		
Improved access to clean water	11,949	541,602
Improved access to sanitation facilities	8,747	204,564

As of September 30, 2014, the Shae Thot program is active in the following townships:

- Magway:** Aunglan, Magway, Pakokku, Salin, Seikphyu, Sinbaungwe, Yenangyaung, Yesagyo
- Mandalay:** Madaya, Meiktila, Myingyan, Pyin Oo Lwin
- Sagaing:** Budalin, Monywa, Pale, Yinmabin
- Urban Rangoon:** Kyauktan, Shwepyithar, Thanlyin
- Kayah State:** Bawlakhe, Hpasawng, Mese



partners continue to expand to new townships over the life of the project, the overall number of villages might not increase as significantly by quarter, but the number of overlapping interventions will increase

## 2. Operating Environment

The Shae Thot program has largely coincided with the dramatic reform and transition process introduced by Burma's military and ruling party in 2011. Transitional processes such as the one Burma is undergoing do not proceed in a linear fashion. On some fronts, events continue to enable progress toward reform and development. Other areas bring greater challenges, and many are indeterminate. Over the course of this fourth year of the program, questions about the durability and direction of the reforms have increased. This makes for an exceptionally complex and dynamic operating environment.

Anticipation and concern around the **national elections**, scheduled for early November 2015, grew more pronounced and colored virtually all activity conducted this year. These elections are seen as an important step towards democratic change in Burma, after more than a half century of military rule, and questions about the how free and fair the process will be and implications for the post-election environment concern many. Voter lists published in May 2015 and then a corrected version in September contained multiple errors. Efforts to reconsider the constitutional guarantee that one quarter of parliamentary seats be reserved for military representatives, which guarantees the military veto power over new legislation, did not progress, raising the prospect that the country remains unable to move fully away from military rule.

With the easing of economic sanctions in 2013, foreign investment and tourism increased substantially, making Burma the **fastest growing economy** in the region. In 2014-2015, the country's economic growth reached a high of 8.5%, though severe flooding across much of the country in July 2015 may dampen the pace. As impressive as this growth has been, very little of the increase in wealth reaches remote, underserved areas, and inflation has increased nearly in sync with growth, increasing the burden of living costs for the country's poorest populations.

The **peace process** between the central government and ethnic armed groups offers great potential for resolving more than half a century of conflict. The effort to reach a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), however, has taken much longer than expected. On again, off again clashes between the military and ethnic armed groups throughout the year in Kachin, Shan, and Rakhine States hampered discussions around the NCA. The government of Burma has worked actively to bring the parties to the table to sign the agreement before the elections, yet as the fiscal year closed, a number of ethnic armed groups were poised to withdraw from active participation in the process, perhaps to see if better terms could be negotiated with a changed government.

The situation indirectly affects Shae Thot's work in Kayah in the southeast, as uncertainty about the process and next steps clouds the view for all parties, yet community needs for basic services persist. In playing its part to meet those needs, Shae Thot partners must carefully walk a line that does not unintentionally affect the balance of power that prevails. Withdrawal from the NCA process by some ethnic armed groups will change the dynamics of operating in post-conflict areas in unpredictable ways. As the KnPP, the predominant ethnic armed group in Kayah state, is one of the few groups that has refused to sign prior to the national election, Shae Thot partners in Kayah are waiting to see how the confluence of the peace process and the national elections will impact day to day operations.

The country managed to avoid feared flare-ups of intra-communal violence that had challenged the country in 2013 and 2014, yet the plight of displaced Muslim minorities in the state of **Rakhine** deteriorated to the point that thousands sought to leave the country via overloaded boats. As many as 8,000 were stranded on the seas for weeks as other South East Asian countries debated whether or not to grant asylum, generating critical international attention. As the situation in Rakhine impinges on all other development efforts in the country, USAID and others in the international community have looked for ways to create space to reduce tensions, moderate the often-contentious dialogue, and identify approaches that can help resolve the challenges in that state, yet at this point there does not appear to be a clear way forward.

To date these conflicts have had limited direct impact on Shae Thot operations. Yet such events cast a shadow over the entire country, and have necessitated that Shae Thot close field offices on occasion, carefully consider the possible ramifications of new violence, and ensure that security procedures are in place to prepare for emergencies. Pact and the Shae Thot partners have also examined and adjusted programming and activities to ensure they are conflict sensitive.

One important benefit of the transition has been **increased space for civil society organizations** to play a more active role in shaping the future of the country. Shae Thot's Local Partner Initiative, begun in 2014, has enabled Pact to engage with seven local civil society organizations, providing support for program activities as well as sustained capacity strengthening and mentoring to the local partners.

Yet the role and influence of civil society remains contested. Strains in government-civil society relations showed in March 2015 when authorities cracked down on students and monks peacefully demonstrating against a new Education Law, resulting in the imprisonment of a number of students. Despite objections from some civil society groups and international voices for being intrusive and discriminatory, four controversial "Protection of Race and Religion" laws were passed into law in April and August 2015. Toward the end of the year, a new Investment Law was still pending. Civil society organizations have raised concerns that this law lacks sufficient provisions on land tenure, leaving room for continued land grabbing by the powerful and connected. The ending of media censorship in 2012, together with the country's Telecommunications Law, resulted in a rapid growth in the country's telecommunications industry and online presence, and now over half the country's population has access to mobile phones. Regulation of online behavior is minimal in the country, making Burma's internet one of the freest in the region, yet also lacking are norms around spreading unchecked rumors and incendiary speech. There are signs of a tightening on freedom of expression, as exemplified by arrests of some who posted items to social media deemed to be inappropriate or offensive, and a proposed new Broadcasting Law, which would authorize a council to oversee and regulate TV and radio broadcasting.

Recognizing the power of the growing international corporate presence in Burma, and the mutual interests of the Government of Burma, the U.S. Government, corporations, and Pact, Pact has actively developed opportunities for **public-private partnership** (PPP) around the Shae Thot program. Pact continues to build on the 2014 PPP with USAID and Chevron, leveraging the investments from both donors. Over this program year, Pact has expanded its work with Chevron to pilot rural renewable electrification solutions and with Ooredoo to operate mobile clinical services; both of these projects will overlap in part with Shae Thot programming, thus further leveraging USAID's investment and bringing additional services to Shae Thot villages.

In late July 2015, heavy monsoon rains, greatly exacerbated by Cyclone Komen, caused **flash floods and landslides** in 12 of Burma's 14 states and regions, severely affecting over 1.5 million people. Although Pact Myanmar focuses primarily on longer-term development issues rather than humanitarian emergencies, its large presence on the ground and network of partnerships enabled Pact and Shae Thot partners to respond quickly to humanitarian needs caused by the flooding. With support from USAID, Chevron, Ooredoo, the Coca-Cola Foundation, and the World Food Program,

Pact, together with its partners, distributed **emergency food, medicine, household supplies, and mobile health care services** to over 122,000 people. A total of approximately \$250,000 of USAID funding was reallocated for emergency response through Shae Thot. In the coming year, Shae Thot will contribute to recovery in affected communities, through enhanced WASH training and infrastructure rehabilitation and providing an injection of capital to affected Village Development Funds for flood recovery grants and loans.

Shae Thot seeks to enable communities to manage their development needs more effectively and beyond the life of the program – in essence, to foster greater community resilience. Evidence generated in the past year has demonstrated that the program’s interventions are contributing to these objectives of **durability and resilience**. As described in the text to follow, the Shae Thot Community Organizational Performance Index continues to demonstrate that Shae Thot’s focused efforts to strengthen the capacity of Village Development Committees result in **better-performing VDCs**. Routine data collection from the program’s agricultural interventions demonstrate **substantial increases in yields of key crops**, while data from its maternal and child health and WASH initiatives depict **significant increases in access to health services and clean water, and improved sanitation**. In addition, the WORTH women’s empowerment project has **substantially increased the monthly incomes** of thousands of women, benefitting them, their families, and their communities. A sustainability study conducted in September 2015 covering over 100 villages in six townships revealed that **68% of VDFs established between 2001-2010 in villages where Pact is no longer operating are still functioning and growing**. Additionally, a sustainability study conducted by Pact in August 2015 revealed that **after more than a year on their own, 67% of WORTH groups were still functioning**. Groups that were still active appeared to be thriving: 93% of the original members were actively participating in groups.

### 3. Details of Current Progress toward Program Objectives and Deliverables

#### SHAE THOT'S INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT MODEL

##### OUR APPROACH

Shae Thot's integrated development model revolves around our archetype, Ma Mya, who represents every woman, man, child and community that our project serves. Ma Mya is at the very center of our integrated programming and serves to focus our attention on the purpose of our work, whether it is in offering community-based health care services, increasing agriculture yields through improved farming practices or building the capacity of civil society organizations and local governance structures to better respond to community needs.

Ma Mya's world sits at the center of multiple spheres of influence in which what she needs and desires in her own life are the primary driving factors for development. Her well-being in health, economic empowerment, food security and WASH, and the capacity to achieve her personal family and community aspirations are supported by an integrated, locally driven approach to development.

This approach combines grassroots governance through Village Development Councils (VDCs), financial sustainability through Village Development Funds (VDFs) and community education in key sectors. By providing information and capacity development support, and a combination of key services and products, Shae Thot contributes to Ma Mya's self-directed growth and development. By placing Ma Mya, her family, and her community, at the center of the development process, Pact is building sustainable, resilient communities across the nation.

##### OUR METHODS

In Ma Mya's village, and over 2,000 others like hers across Burma, Shae Thot uses VDCs and VDFs as a platform for integrating technical interventions in:

- primary health care for mothers and children,
- agricultural intensification and diversification,
- small livestock management,
- formal credit provision,
- women's empowerment-based savings groups, and water system development.

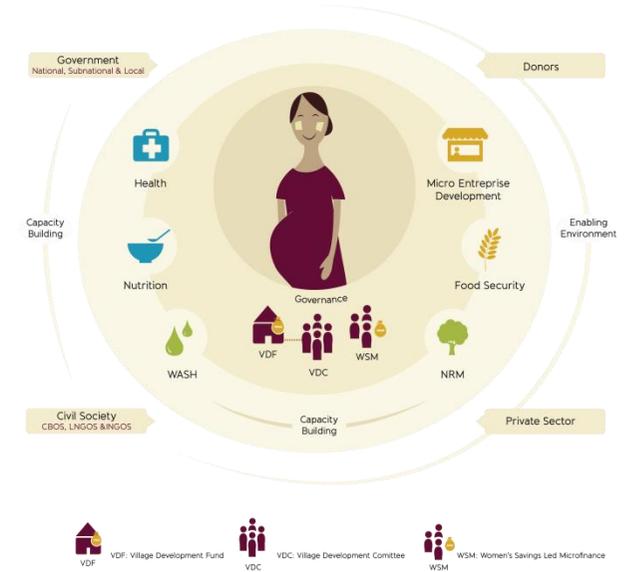
Each of the project components uses a community-based mobilization mechanism to train volunteers for specific services related to different interventions. Villages have multiple funds available to them including the VHDFs, WORTH savings groups, and animal and seed banks to support and finance this work. All of these activities are structured around the VDC, a community-elected governing body that stands alongside official leadership in the village. VDCs support good governance, build community capacity and serve as an integral focal point for community leadership and participation.



## OUR PRINCIPLES

The Shae Thot project embodies four interlinking principles to guide in all of the integrated sectoral work:

- **Inclusive and Participatory Decision Making:** Community decision making in Burma has traditionally been limited to unelected male leaders appointed by the government. To move past this limited and directive type of leadership, Shae Thot promotes inclusiveness, participation and a culture of dialogue throughout its activities and community planning processes.
- **Transparent and Accountable Community Planning, Implementation and Monitoring:** Decision makers and the agencies that control resources are more accountable when community members not only understand what decisions were made, but also how they were made and how they can be monitored. Transparent and accountable community planning, implementation and monitoring ensure that community institutions can efficiently and effectively address development needs.
- **Community-Based and Local Solutions:** Pact and its partners believe that resolving difficult development challenges requires involving and engaging the capacities and skills of local partners, who are often best placed to define and implement solutions to their own problems. Furthermore, putting the community at the forefront of these processes creates a sense of ownership contributing to the sustainability of the program.
- **Flexibility:** Given the inherent uncertainty of Burma's rapid changes, Shae Thot incorporates robust mechanisms of flexibility to respond to evolving windows of opportunity and address new



**Shae Thot's Integrated Model**



## COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING

### Overview

Shae Thot prepares Ma Mya and her fellow villagers, who sit at the center of multiple spheres of influence in their communities, to engage in a community governance system that builds, maintains, and sustains thoughtful and meaningful improvements to their health, wealth, and development. Shae Thot partners with communities to perform meaningful work that links them to greater emerging opportunities through the establishment and development of Village Development Committees (VDCs) as the primary unit for community institution building. Shae Thot also works to strengthen emerging civil society through the Local Partnership Initiative (LPI), which engages with local NGOs and community-based organizations to support locally created and implemented development projects, while developing partners' organizational capacities and roles as change agents.

### Results to Date: Community Institutions and Local Governance Strengthening

The decentralization process, widespread informal community governance institutions, and a groundswell of activity from Burmese civil society create fertile ground for the Shae Thot program to deepen its roots, expand its reach and broaden its impact in support of the country's push for greater freedom and democratic governance. To this end, the program's Objective IV aims to achieve the following:

- Communities create a **shared development vision** that includes more equitable access to and control over resources,
- Community institutions are **able to address** their humanitarian development needs,
- Community **share knowledge and collaborate** with one another, the public sector and other actors to achieve development goals,
- Local Civil Society Organizations are **better able to support** community projects that meet local development needs.

We accomplish these objectives through five initiatives interwoven throughout Shae Thot.

1. **VDC Formation and Capacity Development** – Consortium partners Pact and Cesvi form, reignite, or join existing VDCs in 1,141 villages across the Dry Zone and Kayah state. This engagement starts at the very beginning of the 3-year project cycle in a given village and involves open elections, training and support in addition to the primary activities around health and hygiene promotion, revolving funds, agriculture, and livestock.

### Summary of Key Results

- 914 VDCs received training and support via Shae Thot Partners
- 30 new communities established VDFs this year, and 946 villages in 11 townships are actively managing funds
- Local Partners show growth across all eight subdomains of the Organizational Performance Index since engaging as part of the Shae Thot program
- Beneficiary Accountability Mechanism established and piloted in 130 villages.



VDC Leadership Training Exercise

2. **VDC Pilot** – The VDC pilot is conducted in a subset of 123<sup>1</sup> VDCs and identifies capacity development interventions that lead to stronger, more capable governing bodies at the community level.
3. **Village (Health) and Development Funds** – Pact establishes VDFs in 1,027 villages through a series of workshops and trainings for communities resulting in community managed and owned funds to address priority development needs and build resilience against eventual catastrophes.
4. **Local Partner Initiative** – The LPI engages 7 local partner CSOs in the design, delivery, and monitoring of technical interventions in MCH, WASH, and livelihoods. This component includes a heavy investment in organizational systems strengthening, coaching and mentoring through a tailored, partner-led capacity development agenda.
5. **Beneficiary Accountability Mechanism** – The BA mechanism, standardized and rolled out across Shae Thot in FY15, ensures that project communities are informed about and involved in the programs that are conducted in their villages. It provides consortium partners a fuller picture of the effectiveness, efficiency and desirability of their interventions.



Villagers take part in VDC meeting

### Village Development Committees: Capacity Development and Pilot Program

Shae Thot consortium partners all contribute to Objective IV, forming new committees or reinforcing existing ones, hosting elections, and mobilizing volunteers. Engagement with VDCs primarily occurs through VDC subcommittee groups (Mothers Groups, VDF, Agriculture, Livestock, and Water), developing action plans, training members, providing funding, and monitoring progress. In FY15, **Shae Thot partners worked with a total of 914 VDCs.**

A subset of these VDCs receive additional training via the VDC Pilot program. The aim of the VDC Pilot is to identify capacity development interventions that lead to stronger, more capable governing bodies at the community level. Started as a joint initiative between Pact and Cesvi in FY14, **the pilot currently runs in 11 townships with 123 participating villages.** Pilot activities primarily target the “VDC Executive” membership (chairperson, vice chair, treasurer, secretary, and patron) and focus on leadership, planning, coordination, oversight, record keeping, transparency and accountability.

An effort was made in FY15 across the consortium partners to better integrate the activities of VDC subcommittees supported by Shae Thot including water, health, agriculture, livestock and



Participant group work at COCA in Yenaung Chaung Township

<sup>1</sup> Original pilot target villages numbered at 135. 10 villages in Magwe have phased out in FY14; <sup>2</sup> Pilot villages in Hpawsaung dropped out of the pilot.

the Village Development Fund. Partners have stressed “One VDC” within the community, to reduce duplication of work and competition for resources, and provide an integrated platform for all community development needs. Communities are realizing the value in a One VDC approach and in many cases bring pre-existing community groups (welfare groups, funeral service groups, youth groups, and school / education committees) under the wing of the VDC. Initial observations have shown that this approach has resulted in greater community awareness of the VDC, increased cohesion amongst committee members and other village leadership, and improved synchronization of development activities. Some villages have even insisted that new development projects financed by local and international NGOs work under the VDC as a precondition for engagement. This indicates increased local ownership of village development agendas and newfound confidence on the part of the VDC.

In Quarter 1 of this fiscal year, the Institutional Strengthening team completed its baseline assessment of all pilot townships and select annual reassessments of pilot village VDC performance using the Community Performance Index (COPI). The COPI, designed in Myanmar with the input of Shae Thot villages, measures the progress of VDC performance in terms of their ability to deliver services to the right people in an efficient manner and to manage resources. Utilizing an eight-point evidence-based index, COPI assesses community performance through four domains (each with two sub-domains): quality of service delivery, relevance, resource mobilization, and efficiency. The COPI is designed to be self-administered whereby VDC members assign themselves scores (1-4, with 4 being the highest) based on a series of benchmarks. Pact staff then verify the scores using evidence provided by VDC members. As shown in Figure 1, updated COPI baseline data from 133 pilot VDCs continues to show that the longer Shae Thot is engaged with a community, the higher the performance of their VDC. A second-year application of COPI in 32 select pilot townships also shows marked performance improvement in all areas of performance (see Figure 2).

Also in FY15, Pact’s Institutional Strengthening Team developed and piloted a Committee Capacity Assessment (COCA) tool. The COCA is a tool designed with input from and for Village Development Committees to provide insight into committee governance, management and leadership, record keeping, communication, monitoring and networking. The COCA is modeled off of Pact’s Organizational Capacity Assessment tool, which has been used and adopted throughout the development industry including by USAID. The COCA is a fully participatory tool which in itself is a capacity development intervention. COCA results are influencing programming, having shown a need for more work in the areas of reporting and use of records, leadership burnout and turnover, and a desire for increased networking and learning opportunities with other villages and government departments.

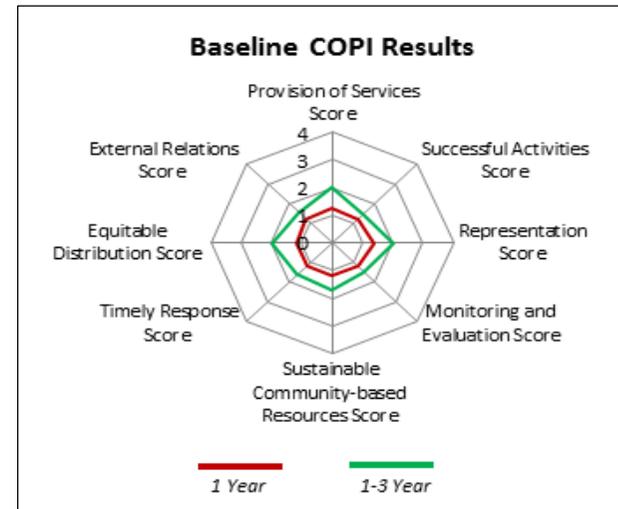


Figure 1: Baseline scores from 133 pilot VDCs

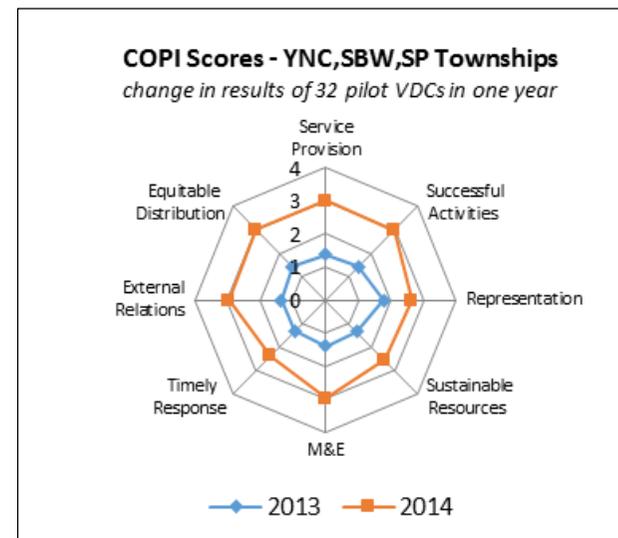


Figure 2: Baseline and 2<sup>nd</sup>-year COPI results from 32 pilot VDCs

While engagement with government was limited this fiscal year due to the upcoming elections, the pilot did focus on VDC preparation through the engaging donor workshop and hosted a small number of test advocacy workshops with township authorities in Yinmarbin township (see spotlight). The engaging donor workshop strengthens the VDC capacity to effectively identify and work with government, other NGOs and potential donors by introducing strategies for effective advocacy and networking, as well as useful skills such as proposal development.

Anecdotal evidence gathered from field visits and monthly reports along with COPI data which shows a greater increase in scores of pilot vs. baseline pilot (proxy non-pilot) VDCs seems to indicate that VDC pilot communities are developing faster than their contemporaries. While a study of pilot success is not planned until the next year, other villages are taking note and requesting additional support for their VDCs. To meet this demand, some township VDC teams have taken the initiative to extend their mentoring visits to non-pilot VDCs and incorporate non-pilot VDCs in exchange events. Government agencies may also be taking note. A number of villages have reported receiving development dollars, including up to US\$30,000 through the Department of Rural Development-run Mya Sein Yaung program, because of their perceived strengths in organization, initiative, and community cohesion.

Lastly in Quarter 3, the program team began documenting the VDC pilot program approach with the goal of developing an operational guide for future USAID programming involving village level governance and coordination bodies. The initial draft of this guide is expected to be completed in November 2015 and updated before the end of programming in Year 5. The final guide will include findings and lessons gleaned through the pilot completion study.

### **Building Community Resilience through Village Development Funds**

Shae Thot has facilitated the establishment of community-owned and managed **Village Development Funds (VDFs) in 946 communities across 11 townships** in the Dry Zone. Individuals in rural communities often struggle with economic and health-related shocks that are difficult to recover from, and financing for these shocks is limited and often leads to unbearable debt. Pact's VDFs help communities to meet their development needs in a sustainable way, while building resilience against future calamities through community-managed funds.

The VDF model engages communities in a committed partnership, creating ownership and a shared vision through a series of workshops and trainings. Community-wide workshops target at least 75% participation from households in each village to ensure the funds have a broad participant base. Communities elect Fund Management Committees, composed of at least two fund managers and at least two female members, and the funds create organizational by-laws. The fund begins with member fees, and a one-time matching Pact grant and seed money for

### ***Spotlight:***

#### ***VDC's Advocate for Child Birth Registration with Local Governments***

Shae Thot staff in Yinmabin Township organized a sharing forum with local authorities and VDC representatives to provide a space to explain the project's VDC pilot initiative and development activities undertaken by the pilot villages. VDC representatives from three villages shared their community action plans and asked for guidance and support on challenges they face. One of the issues raised was the need for registration for children, which is expensive and needs to be done in person in the capital, Nay Pyi Taw. Government representatives were impressed with the villagers' drive and their ability to organize on behalf of the community. They expressed strong interest in the VDC's community action plans. The Township Medical Officer offered to assist villagers with the birth registration process.

The event provided a space for VDC representatives to engage with government officials and effectively advocate for the needs of their communities, strengthening their confidence in engaging with local authorities and Shae Thot's extensive grassroots governance base.

specific interventions provided during an official handover ceremony. The fund grows as interest is earned from disbursing loans to members or through annual fees.

During Year 4, 30 new communities established VDFs. Pact trained 147 fund managers (79 men, 68 women) responsible for overseeing a transparent process of the VDF fund mechanism. As seen in Figure 3, membership contributions to date total \$250,284 (31% contribute to the total fund value), while donations from Pact and others total \$162,174. Retained interest from loans and savings total \$527,108, and the **total fund value of VDFs is \$808,381, more than five times the initial matching grants**. A total of \$108,858 has been distributed for individual needs, social welfare, and development.

A sustainability study conducted in over 100 villages in six townships in September 2015, has shown that **68% of VDFs established between 2001-2010 in villages where Pact is no longer operating are still functioning and growing**. The VDF model's insistence on placing a high value on partnering with the community early, and during all stages of the program increases local ownership and support for sustainability. Additionally, the flexibility in terms of funding sectors and financing modalities allows for the VDFs to be catered to the needs of individual communities. Communities collectively decide how to spend the generated interest on the development priorities of villages. As seen in Figure 4, half of the money VDFs provide in grants are to finance community infrastructure such as electricity (19%), school renovation (8%), and road construction (6%). Communities also use their funds as a safety net for individuals in need, providing grants for health, nutrition, education and social welfare. The flexibility of the fund makes it appealing to the entire community, which in turn, strengthens ownership.

### Local Partner Initiative

The Local Partner Initiative (LPI) involves seven Burmese NGOs and CBOs operating projects in livelihoods, WASH, and MCH over a period of 18-24 months. Launched in February 2014, the LPI includes an intensive capacity development component guided by participatory Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCA), network analysis, and Pact's Organizational Performance Index (OPI). Partners developed Institutional Strengthening Plans (ISPs) with Pact in Quarter 3 of FY14. These plans highlighted four common areas of organizational capacity development needs amongst the seven local partners, including project cycle management, monitoring and evaluation, human resources management, and administration and logistics. Each partner identified additional areas for strengthening including monitoring and information systems, board development, organizational planning, and team building, which are also supported by Pact and funded through dedicated funding pools ranging from \$3,500 to \$14,000 with half of the amount coming from the local partners themselves. In total, local partners have dedicated

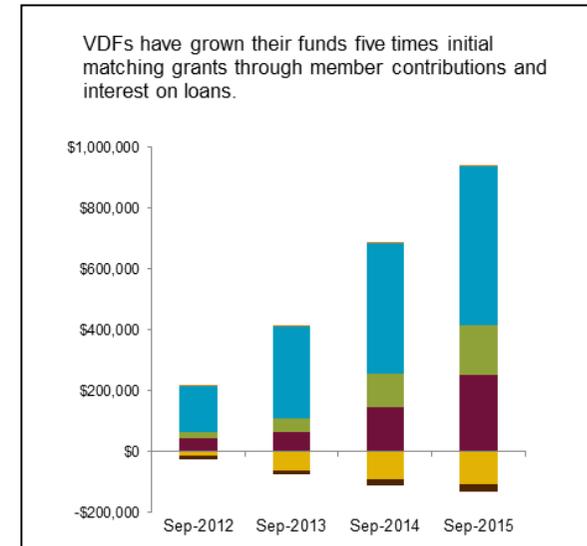


Figure 3: VDF Growth

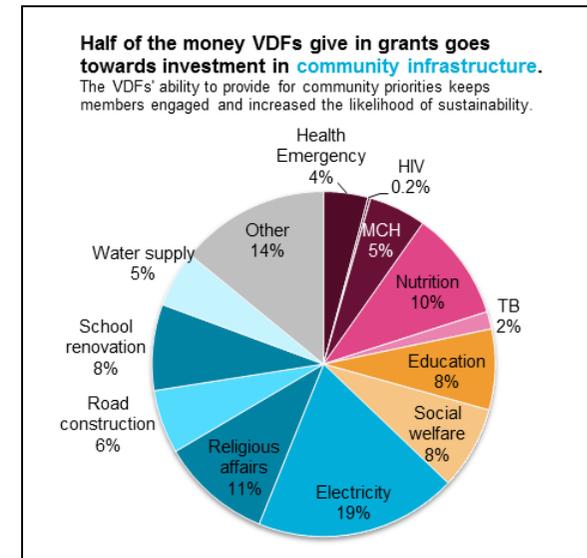


Figure 4: Disbursements of VDF Grants

\$33,500 of their own funding towards organizational development activities in line with their institutional strengthening plans.

Three CSOs participating in the LPI, Social Development Foundation (SDF), Community Development Association (CDA) and Social Vision Services (SVS) successfully completed their fixed obligation grants with Shae Thot in 2015. Endline Organizational Performance Indexes were conducted with all three partners (see Figure 5). The OPI facilitates partner understanding of the link between capacity building outputs related to technical skills and organizational development and the actual ability of a CSO to serve its constituents, and allows the project to see over time whether investments in organizational strengthening result in better performance. **Endline scores showed marked improvement across all performance domains** including results, standards, delivery, reach, target population, learning, resources, and social capital. The greatest improvements were realized in results and resources. Results considers how partners measure and analyze the longer-term (outcome level) results of their work. The improvement in resource scores indicates partners have increased their ability to generate financial resources from multiple sources in a strategic manner, making partners more sustainable and enabling them to continue providing much needed services to the people of Myanmar.

Organizational Networking Analysis (ONA) endlines were also conducted. Results will be compiled with the full cohort data at the end of the Local Partner Initiative in March of 2016. In June 2015, SVS was awarded a second grant under Shae Thot to complement UN-Habitat WASH programming in Pale Township, Sagaing Division. SVS will work with 90 villages on sanitation, hygiene promotion, and community-led total sanitation.

Capacity development activities conducted with local partners in FY15 included WASH, MCH, and livelihoods technical assistance, trainings in monitoring and evaluation, project cycle management, leadership, beneficiary accountability, human resources, office administration and logistics, and financial sustainability, as well as troubleshooting of management and staffing issues, and guidance on financial management, reporting and data quality. The remaining four partners involved in the LPI have all extended their contracts with Pact so as to continue receiving support in completing organizational capacity development objectives in addition to finalizing their work in the villages.

### Beneficiary Accountability in Shae Thot

In 2015, Pact, working from the beneficiary accountability handbook completed by the consortium in 2013 under the leadership of Cesvi, operationalized the content into step-by-step guidance for both staff and VDC members in an effort to create a common practice across all 12 consortium partners. The resulting BA mechanism consists of a step-by-step approach for staff

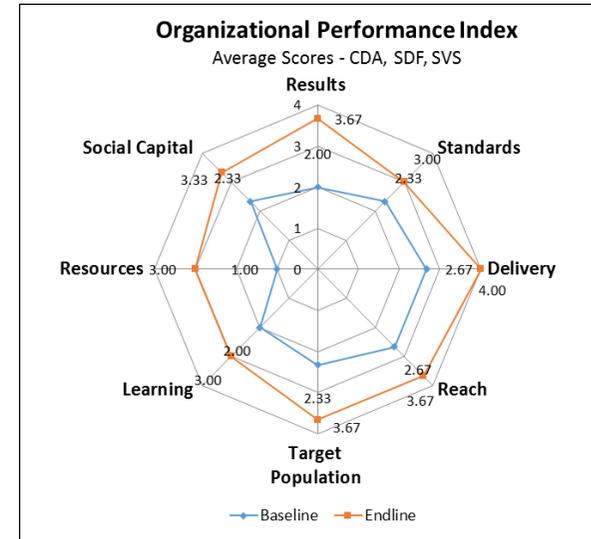


Figure 5: Endline Organizational Performance Index for SDF, CDA and SVS



Partners complete an HRM training activity

working on Shae Thot to ensure that feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders is heard, recorded and resolved in an effective and professional manner. The combination of Trainings of Trainers (ToTs) and echo trainings cover what is meant by beneficiary accountability and detail the standards and procedures for implementing a program-wide community feedback mechanism. In the end, all Shae Thot staff should be able to:

- Describe the meaning and purpose of Beneficiary Accountability
- Understand and articulate to others the Shae Thot Beneficiary Accountability Process
- Understand and articulate to others the Shae Thot Beneficiary Accountability Complaints Typology
- Accurately complete Beneficiary Accountability documentation
- Understand and implement their roles and responsibilities in the BA process

As of September 30, 2015 **BA Champions from all 12 consortium partners, more than 650 field staff in 27 townships, and 3,168 villagers in 11 townships were trained** in the practice of requesting, recording, reporting and responding to feedback from community members affected by the Shae Thot program. The BA mechanism is also being tested at the village level through the VDC pilot. BA training teaches VDC members how they can help to solicit, record, and report community feedback on Shae Thot activities and staff. It encourages VDC members to take responsibility for communicating problems, challenges, and successes associated with the project to project staff when necessary and for responding to village complaints or requests for information directly whenever possible. This includes implementers at all levels (at the village committee, field staff, implementing partners, and headquarters offices) and program beneficiaries of all kinds including the disabled and marginalized.

### Civil Society Strengthening in Shae Thot

As an extension of its work with local civil society organizations, Pact, with support from USAID, 3MDG and the Local Resource Center, hosted a Myanmar Development Dialogue in June 2015 titled, "Capacity Development: Strengthening or Suffocating Civil Society Organizations in Myanmar?" The event attracted 137 participants, speakers, facilitators and co-creators representing 26 Myanmar NGOs, 20 International NGOs, 8 donor agencies, and 11 local service provider organizations/consultants. The aim of the event was to explore how the practice of capacity development contributes to Myanmar civil society and identify potential ways it can be improved. The event challenged participants to think six key themes in capacity development that cropped up through extensive dialogue with potential participants in preparation for the event. Topics included:



Community feedback group work at Beneficiary Accountability Workshop



Local CSOs participate in Myanmar Development Dialogue

- What Works / What Could be Improved
- Capacity Development as a 2-Way Street
- Appreciating Existing CSO Capacity
- CSO Peer-to-Peer Support
- Donor Planning and Coordination
- The Role of Local Service Providers

The event was hugely successful and resulted in a number of important findings. Highlights include:

- Capacity development being more than a training or an event, but the result of a process of engagement based on mutual respect and trust.
- International actors need to structure funding, programs and approaches to allow CSO partners the space and time to try new things, learn and adapt. Donors should encourage partner-driven capacity development, and increase core funding support.
- Capacity development is a two-way street. In particular, international actors need to better understand the political and power dynamics in the regions and sectors in which they work and recognize the great diversity of Myanmar CSOs.
- CSO qualities including authenticity, unique depth of understanding, knowledge of political and power relationships, and community embeddedness, are often overlooked by donors and not captured in traditional assessments.
- A significant amount of capacity development initiatives are led by the CSOs themselves. Unfortunately, these initiatives – arguably the most transformative – rarely receive the attention, recognition and support they deserve.
- As a process, capacity development relies on internal ownership and commitment of the CSO to dedicate extra time, staff, and energy. However, CSOs expressed challenges in balancing the associated time commitments and workload with their project obligations and regular business.
- Funders of local service providers should recognize the CSO as the client (not themselves). The funder, CSO, and service provider should all clarify expectations in advance agree on the approach and be willing and able to adjust as learning occurs.
- Platforms of exchange are an important part of capacity development of CSOs. They raise the profile of CSOs in front of potential partners; facilitate cross-pollination of ideas as well as exchanges of best practices, resources and information.

The inaugural session of the Myanmar Development Debates, "Integrated Development: The Way Forward for Myanmar?" took place at the Yangon Gallery on 24th March. Around one hundred



**Volunteer moderator facilitating a session at the Myanmar Development Dialogue**



**A Local NGO panel during the Myanmar Development Dialogue**

development leaders and professionals from national and international organizations, civil society, private sector, and funding agencies took part. The aim of the debate was to catalyze discussion among Myanmar development experts about how the development community – including implementers, funders, and policy makers – views and promotes scaled responses to Myanmar’s development challenges. This discussion, held after several years of development under the country’s initial transitional period and as the country prepares for national elections, offered a chance to take stock and discuss the future direction for development in Myanmar. In particular, panelists and participants grappled with the question of whether integrated development strategies can lead to improved development impact in the coming years of Myanmar’s development journey. Key issues raised during the conversation included the importance of thinking politically and acting locally, addressing the challenges faced by local organizations looking for appropriate funding and equal partnerships and supporting civil society leadership on development issues, as well as a need to better engage with the private sector and government, consider long-term regional trends and more effectively measure integrated interventions.



**Local CSOs participate in Myanmar Development Dialogue**

# Maternal and Child Health



## COMMUNITY-MANAGED MATERNAL AND CHILDHEALTH

### Overview:

Ma Mya is at the heart of Shae Thot's community-centered approach to improving maternal, newborn and child health in Myanmar. From equipping Ma Mya and her fellow villagers with health awareness and knowledge so that they have healthy children and families, to training them as community health volunteers, Shae Thot's community-driven process engages Ma Mya and those around her to build community commitment and action to improve health. The Shae Thot model employs a variety of sustainable, integrated interventions to provide families with the knowledge and resources needed to live happier, healthier lives. Community-managed health and development funds offer financing for health emergencies or capital to invest in village-level health improvements. In addition, trained community health volunteers fill gaps in coverage and accessibility, while programming works to support strengthening of the formal health system.

Shae Thot provides technical capacity in two ways: 1) through forming networks of mothers who meet weekly to learn and discuss maternal and child-related illnesses, hygiene and nutrition and 2) Through developing a *Change Agent Committee*, composed of fund managers and six community health workers called "Change Agents" (CAs) who are selected by the community and trained to lead activities to strengthen health-seeking behaviors, home diagnosis, and treatment of common childhood illnesses, as well as to facilitate access to care. The services provided by auxiliary midwives (AMWs) and by mobile medical clinics bridge gaps in clinical and reproductive community- and facility-based care in hard-to-reach areas.

### Results to Date: Management and Innovations of Maternal and Child Health Interventions

#### Scale: Building Community-based Safety Nets for Maternal and Child Health

This year Pact implemented MCH programming in fourteen townships in Myanmar covering 997 villages. A total of **53,225 mothers' group members in 4,083 groups participated** in Pact-led **maternal and child health (MCH) workshops**, where they studied self-learning materials and participated in group reading sessions, reviewing key messages surrounding maternal and child health practices. As a result of the mothers' group sessions, community women, especially those of reproductive age, showed improved knowledge and behaviors surrounding MCH care.

To support community-led processes, Shae Thot facilitates a series of focused MCH trainings to equip community volunteer CAs to serve as Maternal and Child Health Defenders (MCHDs) responsible for specific MCH-related capacities in their communities. This year, **Shae Thot**

### Summary of Key Results:

- 53,225 mothers' group members in 4,083 groups participated in maternal and child health workshops
- 7%% of deliveries were assisted by a skilled birth attendant, a 49% increase from Year 1.
- 77% of the 50,419 under-five children were monitored during Baby-Weighing Day were at a healthy weight
- 47,510 clients accessed MCH services through mobile clinics
- 500 health education trainings for 8,233 participants were conducted by CDA facilitators



Providing health education explaining danger signs during antenatal period (Yenanchaung township)

**trained 1,746 CAs, who serve on Change Agent Communities** with the Village (Health) and Development Fund (VDF) Managers. Shae Thot staff trained and supported:

- **122 new MCHD-Level 1 CAs in Maternal and Newborn Care** to work with pregnant mothers to create birth plans for clean deliveries, assess high-risk pregnancies and infant danger signs, and work with auxiliary midwives (AMWs) and midwives (MWs) to help women access antenatal and post-natal care, including immunizations. MCHDs distributed 14,670 clean delivery kits (CDK) to enhance clean and safe deliveries, and 245,370 iron and folate tablets to 5,907 pregnant women to prevent anemia, a major cause of maternal death.
- **496 new MCHD-Level 2 CAs in Nutrition Promotion** to encourage eating from all three food groups (carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins and minerals) and eating a greater variety of food within those groups, identifying the signs and symptoms of common micronutrient deficiencies such as iron and vitamin B1, and organizing community-wide nutrition days at which all under-five children are weighed and monitored for consistent growth.
- **487 new MCHD-Level 3 CA in Common Childhood Illnesses** for diagnosing, treating, and referring diarrhea and acute respiratory tract infection (ARI) cases, including pneumonia.
- **498 new MCHD-Level 4 CAs in Early Childhood Development** for psychosocial support and social awareness for families with young children to encourage and promote child-centered learning and protection, including advocating birth registration.
- **143 new Malaria Control Leaders (117 male and 26 female)** for malaria-based prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

MCHDs play an essential role in Shae Thot's community-based MCH program. In rural Burma, medical doctors are only available at the township health hospital, and midwives serve as the primary basic health providers at the community level, covering five to ten villages each, with a total population of 4,000-8,000 in their coverage area. As it is impossible for midwives to monitor and provide care to every pregnant woman in their coverage area, the Pact-trained MCHDs fill this critical gap in the public health system, conducting community health education sessions, identifying pregnant women and under-five children, monitoring pregnant women for danger signs and children for proper nutrition, and providing referrals for further care when needed.



**Baby-weighing day in Salin Township**



**Community health education on different methods of family planning suitable for breast feeding mothers (Magway Township)**

## Community Action on Maternal and Newborn Care

The MCHD-1 introductory training initiates community action by equipping Change Agents with knowledge on maternal and newborn care. This year, MCHD-1 CAs in Central Burma provided 6,326 health education sessions on awareness of maternal and newborn health and danger signs to their villages, in which 97,383 villagers (21,359 male, 76,024 female) participated. These MCHD-1 CAs have monitored 4,835 delivery cases. Of these, **3,271 (67%) mothers received four antenatal visits as per the national gold standard, about three times the amount of those who received the same level of care during Year 1.** Additionally 99% of women are now receiving at least one ANC visit (see Figure 6). Similarly, 4,443 (89%) received two tetanus toxoid injections, up from 54% in Year 1. A total of 3,562 (74%) of postnatal cases received a postnatal care visit within the recommended three days by a MCHD-1 CA. Similarly, 2,566 out of 4,835 (53%) newborns received a newborn visit by an MCHD-1 CA within two days. During these visits, MCHD-1 CAs take postnatal measurements in order to detect danger signs, including the assessment of rapid breathing and low birth weight to ensure timely referral. This highlights the gap in services at the community level and the critical role that CAs are playing in ensuring that pregnant women are identified and referred so that they can access needed care.

Shae Thot communities continued to show significant behavior change in delivery practices towards more hygienic deliveries with trained birth attendants. Of the deliveries monitored by MCHDs, 96% used clean delivery kits for home deliveries (compared to 85% in Year 1). In addition to having more hygienic deliveries, more women, during this year, 3,552 out of 3,655 (75%), **delivered with skilled birth attendants (SBAs), versus 49% from Year 1.** Of these delivery cases, 328 pregnancies were detected with danger signs and 96% of pregnancies linked to danger signs were referred for delivery with SBAs, while 63% of pregnancies not exhibiting danger signs were attended by a SBA. This trend shows that Change Agents have been very effective in providing birth planning and aiding in safe deliveries for life-threatening cases, **contributing to a likely reduction of maternal morbidity**, and bridging the gap in care provided by midwives.

## Community Action on Nutrition Promotion and Child Growth Monitoring

Malnutrition is the underlying cause of under-five child morbidity, and contributes to 60% of deaths among children in this age range. Although food scarcity is typically not a major challenge in Myanmar, micronutrient deficiency (e.g., B1) is common and the national rate for severe acute malnutrition in under-five children is 9.7%. Malnutrition is predominantly caused by a lack of knowledge of what constitutes a healthy diet, as well as misbeliefs related to food intake, especially for pregnant or lactating mothers, newborns, and under-five children. Pact-trained MCHD-2 CAs are responsible for promoting nutrition and community-based monitoring to ensure that parents

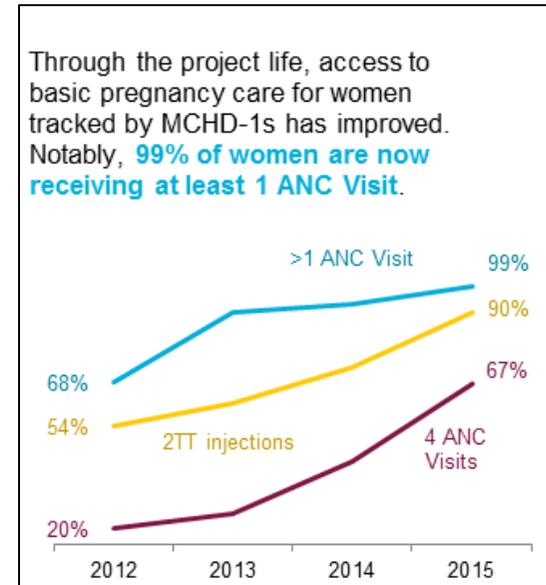


Figure 6: ANC Visits to Date



Nutrition Day at Seik Phyu

can make informed decisions about what to feed their children so that they can grow to their full potential. After Shae Thot's Change Agent training on nutrition promotion and weekly mothers' group reading sessions, communities develop action plans for growth monitoring of under-five children and holding nutrition-day events. This reporting year, MCHD-2 CAs delivered 4,682 education sessions to 79,890 individuals (21,535 male, 58,355 female) on issues ranging from balanced diets to the importance of exclusive breastfeeding and growth monitoring.

**MCHD-2 CAs, together with VDF committees, led 1,668 Nutrition Day events, in which 59,905 children participated** in a "model meal" from the three food groups, teaching parents how to maintain a balanced diet at home. MCHD-2 CAs worked together with midwives to carry out **1,842 Baby-Weighing Days this year, during which 50,419 under-five children were monitored.** Of those measured, only five percent of under-five children fell into the red zone (severe malnutrition requiring referral to a health center for further treatment), 18% fell into the "yellow zone" (need to improve nutritional intake), and 77% were in the "green zone" (proper weight/growth) (see Figure 7). MCHD-2 CAs conduct intensive awareness on feeding more well-balanced diets and conduct home visits for children in the yellow zone, and immediately refer children in the red zone to the nearest health facility by linkage with the VDFs.

### Community Action on Childhood Illness

Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) and diarrhea account for 27% and 18% of deaths respectively in under-five children. MCHD-3 CAs are responsible for diagnosing, treating and referring diarrhea and ARI cases, including pneumonia. They also support mothers' group participants to learn about hygiene and behavior practices, especially proper hand-washing and use of sanitary latrines to prevent cases of diarrhea. This year, MCHD-3 CAs led 3,863 awareness-raising health education sessions, involving 59,831 participants (45,403 female, 14,428 male). They also treated 2,484 under-five children with diarrhea, and of these, 2,342 (93%) were treated with oral rehydration treatment (ORT) and zinc and an additional 60 (4%) received ORT treatment only as zinc was not readily available in some townships (when stocks are available, zinc usage will increase). One hundred eighteen children (5%) were treated with ORT and then referred to health facilities. Nineteen under-five children were detected as exhibiting two main symptoms of ARI and nine received health services for ARI treatment.

### Community Action on Psychosocial Support of Children for Early Childhood Development

Shae Thot programming focuses not only on the physical well-being of children but also aims to support happy, educated children. This is done by enhancing an enabling environment through promoting good parenting skills and advocating for children's citizenship rights by obtaining a

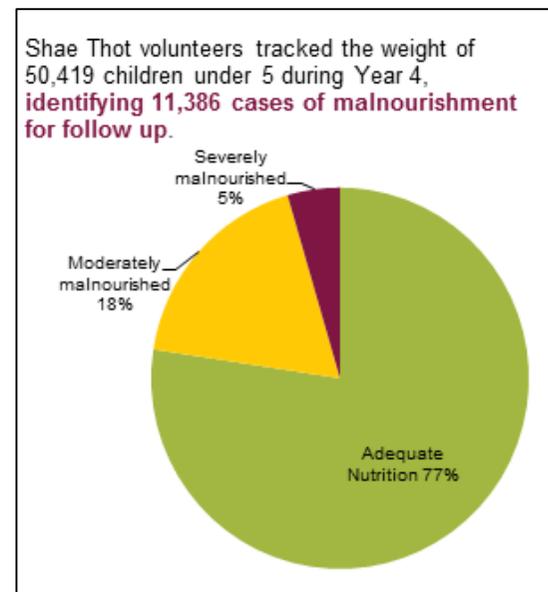


Figure 7: Child Weight Distribution



Providing treatment for childhood illness

birth certificate for every child. During this year, trained MCHD-4 CAs facilitated 3,097 health education sessions on early childhood development for 47,268 guardians (35,679 female, 111,589 male), to improve parenting skills, including guardian care, psychosocial support for children, and early childhood development. In Myanmar, 1.6 million children do not possess birth certificates. Up to two-thirds of children born in rural areas are not registered. Possessing a birth certificate entitles one to a range of children's rights including access to education and health services and protection from child labor, trafficking, child marriage, or forcible recruitment into the armed services. Change Agents raise awareness on the importance of birth registration and facilitate linkages with basic health staff and township medical departments to support parents in completing the birth registration process. To date, **of the 34,055 children documented by MCHD-4 CAs, 79% (26,737) have birth registration cards.**

### **Community Action on Malaria Prevention and Control**

Myanmar has the second largest number of malaria deaths in Southeast Asia. Malaria is most prevalent in Myanmar's remote, border regions. In the areas where Shae Thot works, malaria can be found in Kayah State and Yinmarbin Township in Sagaing Region. Although malaria causes deaths in a small percentage of the population, for those that do contract the disease, early detection and proper treatment is critical. During the final quarter of Year 3, the Shae Thot project began training community volunteers in the affected regions to raise awareness of malaria prevention, and identify and treat malaria. Malaria Control Leaders (MCLs) have conducted health education sessions on the causes of malaria spreading awareness on the importance of eliminating open water to prevent mosquito breeding and have promoted the use of long-lasting insecticide nets (LLINs). This year, MCLs detected 497 malaria-suspected cases and tested cases with rapid diagnostic tests (RDT). Of these, 407 tested negative, while 17 were PF positive, 62 were PV positive, and 11 cases were of mixed infections. Due to the MCLs, individuals were able to access diagnosis and treatment within their communities, preventing fatal complications due to cerebral malaria.

### **Cross-community Trainings for Networking and Sustainability**

Pact invited Change Agent Committees from several villages within the same cluster area to attend Change Agent Strengthening training events to foster collaborative action for health and development. During the training, the Change Agents, which represent the different VDC sub-committees and the main VDC, come together to discuss how they can collaborate on community development activities within their village, as well as how to link with other neighboring villages. The trainings also build CAs' technical skills by providing refresher courses, and support sustainability by developing handover strategies for CA turnover. They also explore ways to

### ***Spotlight:***

#### ***MCH Sustainability Evaluation Highlights***

In September 2015, Shae Thot returned to communities in four townships where project support of community-led MCH activities ended in June 2014 to assess whether communities were actively continuing health tracking and education activities.

The survey found that the VDFs were the most sustainable part of Shae Thot's MCH model, with **95% of VDFs still operating. VDFs had grown by 70%**, currently valued at an average of \$1,917 plus having given grants worth an average of \$209 per fund since June 2014.

Overall, 58% of MCH volunteers were still operating, ranging from 70% of MCHD-1 CAs to 48% of MCHD-3 CAs. Some volunteers had turned over case tracking to AMWs or midwives, who could work in a more official capacity. Volunteers continued to conduct health education sessions, either conducting them in fields while women worked or encouraging self-learning using project materials. Further results can be found on pp. 69-72.

establish and strengthen networks between the community volunteers and the township's formal health staff.

During Year 4, a total of 1,352 people (810 female, 542 male) from 177 villages participated in Change Agent strengthening trainings. Additionally, all four MCHDs, 779 in total, from the Change Agent Committees from 202 villages took part in MCHD exchange trainings. Those Pact-led trainings included the MCHDs and the midwife from each respective village cluster. Participants shared best practices and explored how to overcome challenges to community health. Additionally, a 164 villages started conducting community reinforcement workshops to review village action plans for health and development activities. These workshops help to revitalize non-functioning and under-performing change agents upon hearing of others' successes. A total of 17,973 people (13,478 female, 4,495 male) participated in these workshops.

### **Supporting the National Health System and Promoting Community Advocacy**

Shae Thot partners have continued to make important contributions to support a more holistic and long-term vision for maternal and child health, through support and collaboration with midwives, auxiliary midwives, and other basic health staff (BHS). As part of the program's health strengthening activities, Pact staff organize advocacy meetings with Township Medical Officers (TMOs), township health staff at the Township Health Department, and BHS at the Rural Health Center (RHC). During Year 4, Pact conducted **29 advocacy meetings with 1,238 participants including health personnel, Pact staff, and Shae Thot Change Agents.**

The advocacy meetings have contributed to improved coordination and linkage between Pact CAs and the Township health system in several townships, including Yesagyoo, Yenangyaung, Meiktila, Sinbaungwe, Magway, and Yinmabin. In **Yenangyaung Township**, during the RHC meeting with BHS, Pact staff, and volunteers, together with World Vision staff, discussed linking volunteers with RHC MCH and immunization activities. After **Pact volunteers identify malnourished children during Shae Thot-supported baby-weighing days, BHS will provide nutritional supplements.**

In **Yesagyoo Township**, the Malaria Assistant Inspector (MAI) from the INGO THD agreed to begin directly **supplying Pact CAs with malaria medication** through BHS from RHCs and sub-centers when the CAs bring in positive RDT test kits from community members they have tested for malaria. BHS will cross-check the tests for proper diagnosis and brief CAs on any technical malaria updates. The collaboration will also help ensure CAs continue to have access to malaria RDT kits and medication to continue their roles after Shae Thot has concluded. The Ministry of Health has also distributed a nutritional supplement, Sprinkles, through BHS in Yesagyoo. The Township Health Nurse and Health Assistant have agreed to provide the



**Malaria Control Leader conducts rapid diagnostic test (RDT)**



**Awareness session by TMO in Yinmabin**

**nutritional supplements through BHS to under-five malnourished children who have been identified by Pact CAs** during Shae Thot baby-weighing days. Pact CAs will begin sharing the volunteer list with THD and RHC so that BHS can join the community-based nutrition promotion activity, providing technical support to the CAs. The CAs will in turn assist the BHS with immunization and ANC activities in the villages by identifying children and pregnant women who are not yet fully immunized or are in need of ANC services.

In **Yinmarbin Township**, Pact organized an advocacy meeting for VDC members, MCHDs, and township administration and medical staff, providing an opportunity for VDC members and MCHDs to discuss their activities with higher-level government officials. VDCs presented their work on village development activities such as increasing access to electricity and water, and road construction. The Township Administrative Officer appreciated the hard work of the VDCs and commended the democratic election of their members. The MCHDs also presented on their collaborative work with BHS on maternal, newborn, and child health to the Township Medical Officer (TMO) who appreciated their hard work and collaboration with BHS. He also gave his **commitment to issue birth registration certificates to children under-five years** and explained the registration process

Further, RHC and THD advocacy meetings held in **Meiktila Township** resulted in **improved coordination between BHS and Pact CAs for referrals of mothers or children displaying danger signs** during pregnancy, delivery, or post-natal periods. CAs will assist BHS activates relating to immunization, prevention of water and mosquito-related diseases, fly-proof latrine monitoring, and birth registration. BHS additionally agreed to join the community-based nutrition promotion activities, providing technical assistance and promoting the use of skilled birth attendants during deliveries.

Shae Thot conducted an advocacy meeting at **Sinbaungwe Township** with BHS and RHC staff to strengthen linkages between BHS and MCHDs, sharing information on program activities conducted in collaboration with communities; MCHDs' roles and responsibilities to improve maternal and child health in their communities; and the distribution of commodities such as CDKs to pregnant mothers by the MCHDs. As a result of the meeting, **BHS engaged more with communities**, joining and providing technical support during community nutrition day and baby-weighing day activities. BHS also **supported the referral process when MCHD's identify danger signs in pregnant women and refer them for treatment at health centers**. The Township Manager from Sinbaungwe also met with the Township Medical Officer (TMO) for advocacy and sharing of project information and the TMO reported that a separate public health and administrative officer, and clinical head medical officer will be added in the township health department structure in coming years.



**Advocacy meeting with VDCs, MCHDs and Township Government Officials in Yinmarbin Township**



**RHC meeting with midwives and MCHDs**

In **Magway Township**, Pact MCH and MSI collaboratively conducted an advocacy meeting at the RHC level to strengthen the linkages between BHS and Shae Thot CAs. Through the meeting, the health officials and BHS became more informed about program activities, and the roles and responsibilities of the volunteers. BHS also had the opportunity to learn about Pact's integrated interventions, including the VDFs and the health emergency grants for referrals, and the role of WASH Promoters in mobilizing communities for fly-proof latrine (FPL) construction and renovation. As a result, the **BHS have begun attending more Shae Thot community nutrition and baby-weighing days to provide their technical support**. This collaboration also provided the opportunity for MCHDs to work with midwives in the distribution of folate and iron tablets. These linkages will help reinforce sustainability as Pact and MSI complete phase out in Magway township.

In addition to the advocacy meetings, during Year 4, **Pact also participated in National level and Township level events** organized by Department of Health (DOH) as an implementing partner. In June 2015, Pact and the Yinmabin Township Government jointly conducted awareness raising activities on Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). DHF is leading cause of morbidity and mortality among children, especially during the rainy season. MERS is a life-threatening disease which effects to the respiratory system. MERS was covered during the sessions because some families in the area have family members who previously moved to Thailand as migrant workers, and were recently alerted about an outbreak. Township staff explained about the diseases and Pact staff provided information about hand washing practices and the use of long lasting insecticide nets (LLINs) to school children and community members. The township officers expressed appreciation for Pact's support, and the collaboration strengthened relations between Pact and the township department, while promoting community awareness of disease prevention.

### **Closing the Gap: Supplementing Community Action and the National Health Infrastructure with Mobile MCH Clinics**

Shae Thot also uses a mobile clinic methodology, led by MSI, to augment access to health care and family planning facilities, prioritizing hard-to-reach villages and villages not served by a midwife or AMW. Clients receive quality health services from qualified health professionals without any out-of-pocket payments, closing the gap between inaccessibility of services and barriers such as the inability of rural clients to afford transport and medical services. Regular access to maternal and child health services and health information through mobile clinics enables community members to develop improved health-seeking behaviors, which in turn positively affects maternal and child morbidity and mortality. The clinics help ensure more women and their families access timely and regular care, improving the likelihood the health



**An advocacy meeting with BHS and MCHDs in Yenanchaung Township**



**An MSI health education session**

recommendations are appropriately followed, and that potential health risks are proactively identified and treated.

This year, MSI expanded its **mobile clinic coverage** to Yinmabin Township, thereby expanding coverage to nine townships in the Dry Zone and Yangon region, **servicing a total of 47,510 clients** (39,894 female, 7,616 male), a **113% increase in the number of clients** compared to last year. MSI offers clinical services including antenatal care, postnatal care, newborn care, family planning services, and health care to children under five through a combination of mobile clinics and health promotion sessions.

MSI recruits community volunteers, called Maternal and Child Health Providers (MCHP) in areas that do not overlap with Pact coverage, to relay health messaging and to educate communities on maternal and child health. This year, 83 new volunteers from Yinmabin, Salin, Pale, and Myingyan Townships participated in a five-day MCHP training about pregnancy care, family planning, and childhood illness. Afterwards, they received three months of coaching by outreach staff enabling them to provide their communities with health sessions both during and after mobile clinic visits. A further 129 existing MCHPs from six townships completed a two-day refresher training this year, learning about methods of contraception and childhood illnesses. As volunteers live in the communities they serve, they will be in the community after project activities end, ensuring that local capacity remains.

During the year, **189,650 people** (172,338 females, 17,312 males) **benefited from 18,056 interactive health education sessions** on safe motherhood, family planning, and child care. Community health sessions improve participants' knowledge of maternal and child health, increasing awareness of proper care and danger signs during pregnancy, delivery, and the postnatal period, and detection of childhood illnesses, leading to increased health-seeking behaviors and more timely access to health services. The number of community health sessions offered has continued to increase year after year, due both to program expansion into new coverage areas, and the increased interaction with, confidence in, and connection with community volunteer Maternal and Child Health Promoters (MCHP) in providing awareness sessions to communities. Of the health and education sessions conducted this year, **65% were provided by MCHPs** with support of project staff. Of those who participated, 42% were parents with children under five years of age, 35% were married with children older than five years or married with no children, 12% were pregnant mothers, their husbands and family members, and 11% were unmarried. Only 10% of total participants were male. This was because community members had heard that MSI services focused on maternal and child health, thereby attracting a mostly female audience, and because many of the men in project villages were busy with agriculture activities. The project continues to search for ways to engage more men in these health and education



**An MSI staff provides a community health session to mothers**



**Treatment for childhood disease at an MSI mobile clinic**

sessions, such as organizing separate health sessions for men when possible, as increasing male involvement in maternal and child health awareness sessions can enhance the male partners' support for antenatal care, as well as their ability to recognizing danger signs during pregnancy and delivery supporting more timely referrals.

A total of **16,818 pregnant women received antenatal care** during Year 4 with 10,122 of these women (60%) coming for their first antenatal visit. Out of these 10,122 pregnant women, 6,467 women (64%) accessed two or more antenatal care sessions at MSI mobile clinics, with 229 women (2%) receiving four antenatal care sessions. Additionally, mobile clinic staff work in collaboration with basic health staff (BHS) to provide tetanus toxoid (TT) injections to pregnant women in their second trimester who have not previously accessed TT injections through basic health providers. A total of 546 women received their TT injection from mobile clinics this year. MSI staff also provided consultations for 18,274 cases of childhood illness, among which 14,903 (82%) cases were for children under five. These included 803 cases of diarrhea in under-five children treated with ORS and zinc tables, and 6,087 cases of ARI, including pneumonia. The remaining visits were for other illnesses, including skin infections, wounds, and children above five years of age with diarrhea or ARI.

A total of **18,332 client visits were to access family planning services with 6,141 new clients** receiving voluntary family planning services of their choice from a range of long- or short-term methods, and 12,191 existing clients returned for continued services. Clients are counseled about the different family planning methods available so that they make informed decisions and select an option that is best for them. If mobile clinics are not able to provide a client's preferred family planning method, clients are referred to other service points to ensure they receive the methods they need. The mobile clinics increase accessibility to family planning services for those in rural areas, thereby preventing unintended pregnancies. Through family planning services provided through MSI clinics, an estimated 3,849 unintended pregnancies and 1,034 abortions were averted. Additionally an estimated 361 maternal DALYs (disability adjusted life years) and 968 child DALYs are also estimated to be averted.<sup>1</sup>

Direct access to MCH services is limited in hard-to-reach areas. To fill gaps in health services in these areas, the Department of Health (DOH) trains volunteer auxiliary midwives (AMWs), selected from under-served villages. The AMWs are trained for three months in the hospital and three months in the nearest rural health center. Midwives can effectively augment gaps for provision of lower-level MCH services in these hard-to-reach areas. Working under the supervision of midwives, AMWs provide antenatal care, routine referrals for at-risk mothers and



**A woman receives antenatal care at a MSI mobile clinic**



**Providing advice on contraceptive use during MSI mobile clinic visit**

<sup>1</sup> Based on the MSI Impact-2 Tool, 2012.

newborns, postnatal care, and treatment for minor ailments. As most births in Myanmar occur in the home, MSI collaborates with the DOH to support training of basic health staff and voluntary health workers by providing trainings for new AMWs and refresher trainings to others who would like to update their skills. **During year 4, MSI provided basic AMW training for 69 newly recruited AMWs from three townships.** The new recruits also received AMW kits containing necessary medical equipment for providing antenatal, delivery and newborn care. This year, MSI also supported AMW refresher trainings for 481 participants from six townships. Often AMWs report significant periods of time since their last formal training, so refresher trainings provide an important opportunity to gain new, up-to-date knowledge, strengthening skills for improved service delivery in underserved villages. With updated trainings and supplies, the AMWs are equipped to perform their roles, before and during delivery, as well as during the post-partum period, a critical period when the majority of maternal and newborn deaths occur.

**Results to Date: Supporting the National Health System in Underserved Communities in Central Burma**

She Thot partnered with Community Development Association (CDA) to augment and support public health systems, and promote improved health knowledge and practices in 50 villages in Meiktila Township, not previously served by Pact and MSI programing. CDAs 18-month long program came to an end during the final quarter of Year 4.

Over the past year, **CDA supported AMW training through the Department of Health for 25 women** in Meiktila Township. By March 2015, all trainees had successfully completed the six-month training program, which included three months of training in the township hospital followed by three months of field training at their respective RHCs and sub-centers. CDA also provided all 25 AMWs a training on Helping Babies Breath (HBB) and resuscitation sets. A baby’s inability to breath immediately after delivery can lead to death, making neonatal resuscitation a critical step in child delivery. The HBB training provides AMWs with the essential skills of newborn resuscitation.

During the year, direct care and health education was completed by CDA facilitators with the collaboration of AMWs. Project facilitators conducted 500 health education trainings for 8,233 participants (7,565 female, 668 male). Project facilitators increase community health knowledge, and either directly provide health care or connect communities with health staff, such as doctors, nurses, health assistants, and midwives. MNCH facilitators supported antenatal care (ANC) for 355 pregnant women, out of whom 159 women (45%) received four or more ANC visits, and 252 women (71%) received two TT injections during their visits. Out of the 223 women who gave birth this year, 132 (59%) delivered with a skilled birth attendant and 151 (67%) received a post-natal



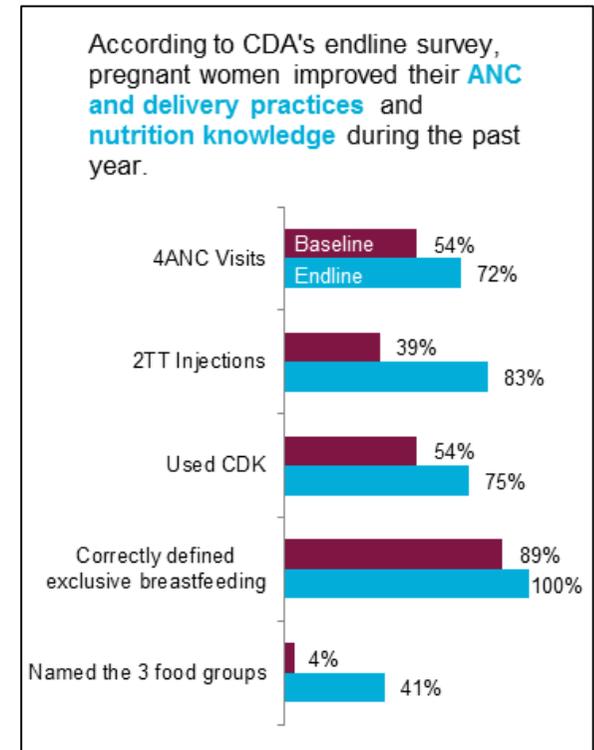
**Providing AMW kit to the AMWs in Yenanchaung Township**



**Helping Babies Breath (HBB) training for Auxiliary Midwives**

check within two days of delivery. MNCH facilitators also provided diarrhea treatment with ORS to 31 children under-five years of age.

In May, CDA completed an endline survey to determine communities' knowledge and practices relating to MCH care, contraceptive use, nutrition, and hygiene practices. The survey revealed that women are not only improving their knowledge about health behaviors and care, but are also putting this knowledge into practice. As seen in Figure 8, women significantly improved their antenatal care and delivery practices during the past year. The number of women receiving four antenatal care visits increased to 72%, while the number of women receiving two TT injections more than doubled to 83%. Three quarters of women are also having safer deliveries using clean delivery kits (CDK). The increase in CDK usage was due to both the increase in availability, as well as the mobilization efforts of the community facilitators. Additionally, women's knowledge of contraception increased significantly, with nearly five times more women, up to 86%, aware of three forms of contraception and 97% having conducted birth planning. Nutrition knowledge also improved with ten times more women, up to 41%, able to name three food groups at endline.



**Figure 8: Increased ANC, delivery practices, and nutrition knowledge**



# Livelihoods and Food Security

## LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY

**Overview:** Ensuring that Ma Mya can sustainably generate an income to feed her family and support their needs guides Shae Thot's approach to improving household-level food security and increasing livelihoods opportunities. Through a dual approach, the program provides Ma Mya with access to financial services and improved agriculture practices. Ma Mya and her community members have options for accessing credit, including targeted provision of financial services through either institutional-based credit delivery or savings-based empowerment to support microenterprise development. For community members engaged in household-level agriculture production, Shae Thot provides key rural livelihoods inputs for community-managed agricultural diversification and intensification, including improved irrigation, improved small livestock management capabilities, and seed-multiplication strategies. All financial service mechanisms and agricultural production activities enhance transparency and democratic processes, as village group members learn and practice good governance approaches to community fund and agricultural board management.

### Results to Date: Provision of Credit Services

#### Institutional Financial Services

Pact Global Microfinance Fund (PGMF) improves the livelihoods and food security of rural and urban poor, marginal farmers, and non-farmers in 696 villages across eight townships in the Dry Zone and Yangon region. PGMF's approach raises incomes through the provision of credit and savings-based financial services while promoting resilience of rural households to disease, disasters, and other shocks through a social protection program. PGMF provides members with access to credit provision services to undertake new or expand existing income generating activities thereby raising individual and family income levels. Ninety four percent of PGMF's microfinance beneficiaries are women, and for many, this represents the first time they have been able to financially contribute towards their household income and not have to rely solely on their husband's earnings.

To date, **a total of 63,546 households** have received **PGMF microfinance services**, including 10,807 new households during the reporting period. This number **exceeds the program's five year target of 34,200 households by 85%**. Out of the total clients, **52,596 are currently actively borrowing from PGMF**. As depicted in Figure 9, 99% of active borrowers used loans for income-generating activities, most popularly for trading (46%), livestock breeding (40%) and agriculture (8%). Borrowers also use loans to cover health and education expenses.

### Summary of Key Results:

- 52,596 active microfinance borrowers
- PGMF's overall loan portfolio increased by 58% from \$4.46M to \$7.05M
- On-time client loan repayment rate is 100%
- 20,573 women are participating in 821 WORTH savings groups
- 14,086 WORTH members have taken out 91,343 loans valued at \$3,169,865 to invest in micro-enterprises or agriculture

Most people take loans to promote their **business** or **agriculture**.

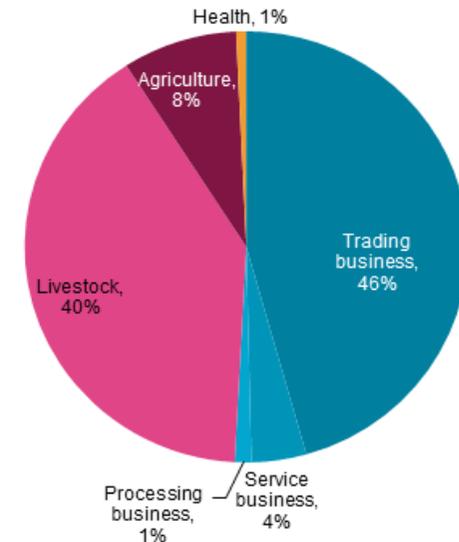


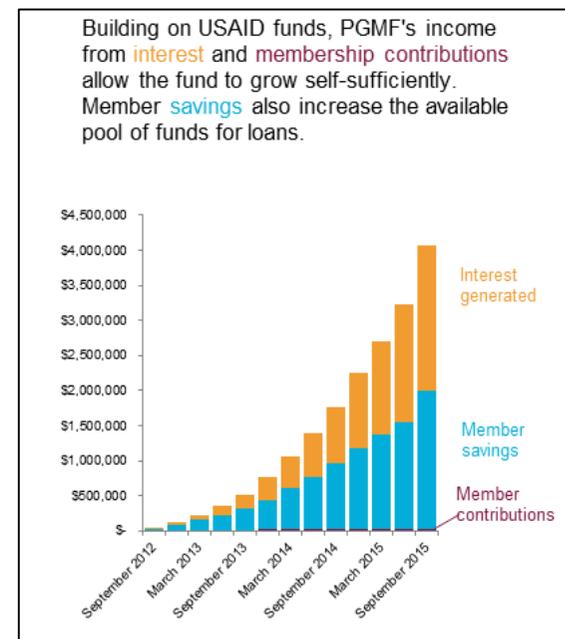
Figure 9: Microfinance Loan Utilization Chart

Microfinance services, provided in the form of standard graduating loans, provide access to credit to individuals who either have previously not been able to access credit, or have had to rely on high-interest loans from private money lender. Monthly interest rates charged by private money lenders are up to 20% compared with PMGF's monthly interest rate of 2.5%. Marginal and small farmers take agriculture loans to buy essential production inputs for farming, with loans ranging from \$40-\$500, based on the crop's nature and harvesting period. While the majority of credit activities are targeted at the middle to poor segments of the village, landless and very poor households can also receive a small amount of capital for small livestock investment. PMGF also offers micro- and small-enterprise (MSE) loan products. These loans are larger than typical microfinance loans (an entrepreneurial loan can range from \$250-\$4,000) and provide a resource for entrepreneurs with existing businesses to have access to capital funds. This year, 1,164 MSE loans have been disbursed totaling \$483,068.

**PMGF's overall loan portfolio** under Shae Thot **increased by 58% in Year 4 from \$4.46M to \$7.05M.** This growth comes from member's savings, interest repaid on loans, and from new active borrowers as PMGF expanded to new areas. As depicted in Figure 10, by September 2015, PMGF member savings and contributions totaled \$2M, while interest generated was also \$2M. Savings are critical for fund growth as it increases the available pool of funds for loans. During the year, **savings increased by 110%**, bringing the total member savings to \$1.9M, and the **value of loans disbursed increased by 142%**, bringing the total value of project loans to \$23M. Throughout the year, the **on-time loan repayment rate for clients was 100%.**

PMGF formed 295 new Microfinance Centers (MFCs) this year across the eight townships to improve client knowledge and success at enterprise development. MFCs democratically elect an executive committee that receives training on institutional development, record keeping, and microfinance methodology, to oversee operations of the MFCs. Before accessing credit, all clients complete non-formal business education (NFBE) trainings to build competency for starting and managing small or micro-enterprises. The trainings cover the program's loan disbursement and repayment process through group lending, and teach business and financial management, including topics such as selecting a marketable business idea and managing profit. A total of 4,539 NFBE trainings were provided to clients this year.

PMGF promotes the importance of savings by requiring all potential clients to deposit a small amount of savings twice a month while encouraging clients to contribute additional voluntary savings. By starting the savings prior to receiving loans, PMGF is able to identify individuals who may have trouble meeting the minimal payments, while building financial management and



**Figure 10: Microfinance Growth**



**PMGF Loan disbursement at Thanlwin Township**

planning skills, and a habit of saving among clients. PGMF pays interest on client savings at an annual rate of 15 percent. Savings provide a critical coping mechanism during economic shocks as well as allowing clients to better plan for the future.

This year, PGMF conducted a qualitative survey of 237 randomly selected female borrowers from all eight townships to analyze program impact, asking how their lives have changed after joining the program in the areas of confidence, decision-making at the household level, and contribution to family income. While there is no baseline data to measure change against, the perceptions of respondents are illustrative of how PGMF has empowered women. As seen in Figure 11, the percentage of women contributing to their family's business increased from 43% to 82%. Their contribution to daily expenses increased from 31% to 73%, while their contribution in their family's health care and children's education fees rose from 34% to 63%, and from 31% to 70% respectively. Changes in their decision-making authority before and after joining PGMF were more modest, with women reporting a 10% increase in decisions regarding spending their own money, a 9% in decisions regarding family business affairs, and an 8% increase in decisions regarding family planning.

PGMF builds the resilience of poor urban and rural households to better cope with disease, disaster, or other catastrophes through a Beneficiary Welfare Program (BWP), which protects clients from carrying the burden of their debt in the event of an emergency. If an unforeseen natural disaster destroys the borrowers' livelihood, they receive compensation based on the extent of their loss. The membership fee for the BWP is a small, one-time savings deposit per loan term (approximately 1% of the loan amount). This amount is pooled with contributions from PGMF's interest income in a fund managed by the project. A total of 14,018 members registered in the BWP this year, raising the total number of registered members throughout the project to 63,546, which is 86% above the five-year target of the project. All 52,596 PGMF members are participating in the program and the fund balance as of September 2015 is \$260,078. During year 4, 313 beneficiaries received compensation totaling \$20,065 after the death of a borrower. Four hundred beneficiaries affected by disasters received a total of \$13,790. Child delivery support received the highest compensation totaling \$123,485 for 2,998 women. And 328 loans, valued at \$24,605, were written off (see Figure 12).

### WORTH Savings-Led Empowerment

Pact's women's economic empowerment program, called WORTH, strengthens participants' ability to support themselves and their families by providing access to financing through a savings-based group loan fund. In groups of about 20-25, women create savings groups, with each

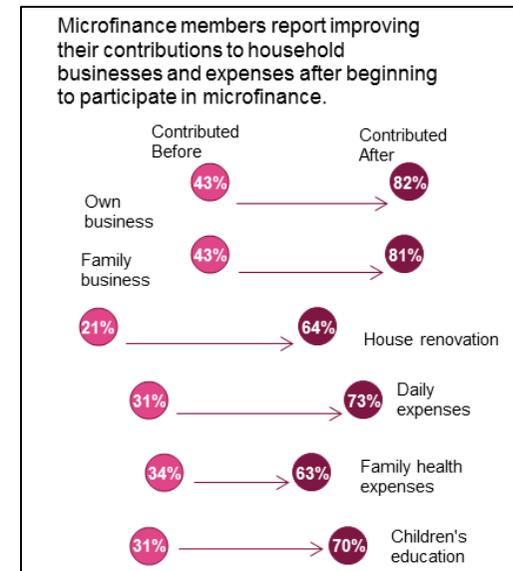


Figure 11: Contribution to Household Expenses

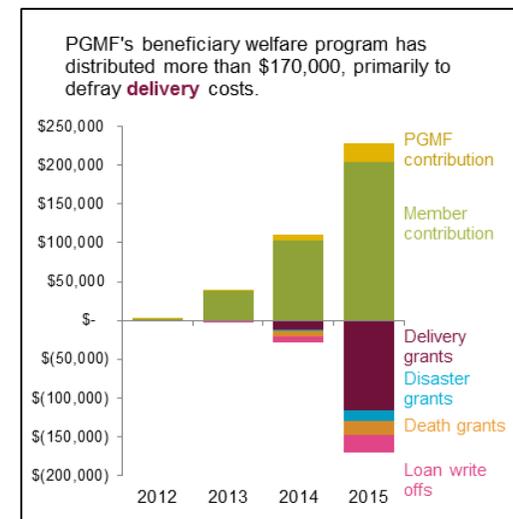


Figure 12: BWP Fund Contributions and Usage

member contributing a small investment to establish village banks. After participating in a self-learning series on financial literacy and entrepreneurial training, women begin to take out individual low-interest loans to begin or grow their own micro-enterprises. As members repay their loans, the interest generated helps grow the fund, increasing capital to be loaned out again to other members.

This year, Pact implemented WORTH activities in four townships, Yinmabin and Budalin in Sagaing Region, and Madaya and Pyin Oo Lwin in Mandalay Region. Pact began implementing WORTH in Madaya and Pyin Oo Lwin in Year 3 through the Sustainable Health Improvement and Empowerment (SHINE II) program, through a **Public Private Partnership between Pact, USAID and Chevron**. This period, 3,967 new members joined the program and 209 new savings groups were formed, bringing the **total number of women participating in WORTH up to 20,573 through 821 savings groups**.

The funds grow in two ways: through savings and through interest. Savings are the most significant contributor to growth. During Year 4, women saved \$1.13 million, an increase of more than 50% over last year due to an increase both in the number of members and the amount of savings per member.

Funds also grow through interest on loans. To date, **14,086 women** have taken out **91,343 loans valued at \$3.2 million<sup>1</sup>** through Shae Thot's savings groups. This means that savings groups are revolving their funds as loans several times each banking cycle, able to lend money, repay it, and lend it out again rapidly to the next member. This demonstrates a high demand for the low-interest credit that WORTH offers, as well as the capability of members to meet loan and interest repayment schedules. The interest also offers an additional incentive to save. Because the interest goes back to the group rather than to an outside lender, women redistribute this income in the form of dividends. If women save above the minimum amount through voluntary savings, they also receive more in dividends at the end of the banking cycle. This year, group funds generated \$61,140 in interest, for a total of \$188,283 throughout the project.

On an individual level, an average WORTH group member who started saving at the beginning of 2014 now has \$61 in savings, close to a month's salary. She has earned a quarter of that in dividends and has taken out a total of \$194 in loans (see Figure 14). The size of the average loan available has increased 218% from \$22 when she first joined to \$70 today. For these women, their savings and ability to take loans represents a significant household safety net as well as access to

<sup>1</sup> Using an exchange rate of 1214.8 MMK=1 USD, kept constant for all periods. In the PMP, conversions are made using a variable exchange rate to make reports more comparable over time and show progress.

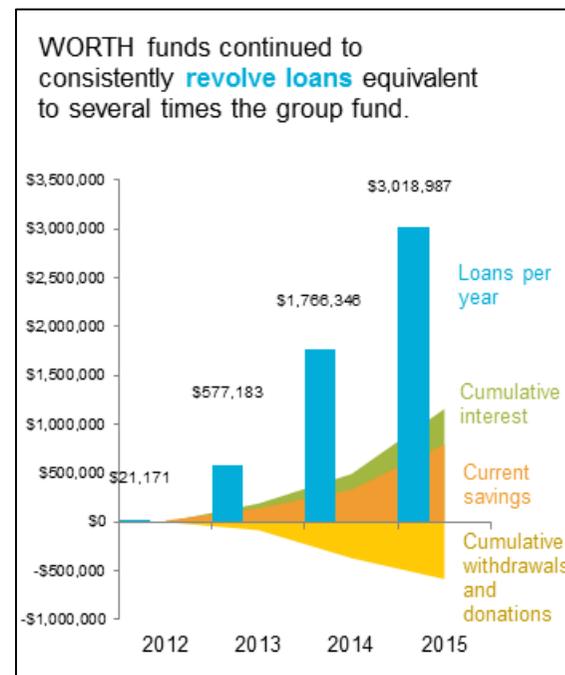


Figure 13: WORTH fund performance, including extrapolated data for Seikphyu and Myingyan



A borrower from Yesagyoo with her weaving machine

enough capital to make more substantive business and household investments. WORTH members are encouraged to use WORTH loans to make business investments. To date, 3,198 women have done so, or about 25% of members.

As women’s income and understanding about development has increased, they have also increased their participation in community development projects in their villages. Shae Thot encourages WORTH group members to give back to their communities by conducting workshops to connect members with Pact’s Village Development Funds (VDFs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs). This year, a total of 1,340 WORTH women from 335 groups participated in VDF linking workshops while 345 WORTH women from 136 groups participated in VDC linking workshops. As a result of these workshops and an understanding of the importance of engaging in community development, WORTH women have actively participated in VDFs and VDCs in their villages. In Yinmarbin, where Shae Thot collected updated group development activity data in August 2015, a total of 345 women from 322 savings groups have participated as a representative of their WORTH groups in their villages’ VDCs. A total of 138 WORTH groups have participated in 223 village development projects such as school and library construction, health care, village electrification, and environmental activities. In addition, these groups donated \$311 of their dividends to VDFs and \$101 to village social affairs in the last six months. As of September 2015, Yinmabin and Budalin groups had collectively donated \$1,371 to VDFs.

Unlike a formal credit program, the WORTH model does not use an outside loan fund and is sustained entirely through the management and initiative of the participants themselves. Each savings group is given a standard set of trainings to support group success. The trainings highlight transparency and democratic group principles and augment group trust. The trainings include:

- Introducing the idea of the savings groups;
- Forming management committees;
- Conducting group meetings and building strong groups;
- Learning the mechanics of saving;
- Providing loans; and
- Keeping financial records.

This year, a total 4,147 women from 197 WORTH groups, received financial literacy trainings and 1,213 women from 286 groups, participated in business management and skills development (BMSD) workshops learning how to better manage and expand their microenterprises to optimize profit. A few women from nearby non-project villages had been invited by WORTH members to attend the BMSD workshops, and after the training, some of these women, on their own

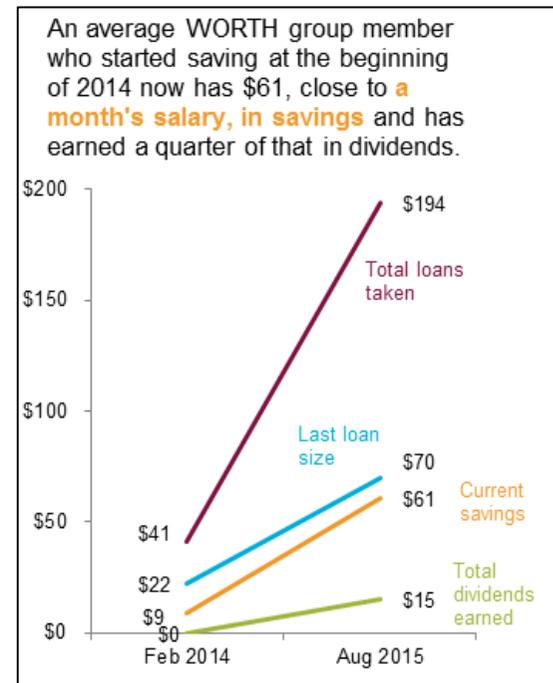


Figure 14: Average individual savings, loans and dividends



WORTH training on roles and responsibilities through SHINE

initiative, held informal BMSD meetings in their villages spreading the knowledge of effective business management.

In addition to the standard trainings, each group selects four members to serve as the group's Management Committee. They are responsible for managing group saving and loaning practices and supporting sustainability. During year four, 1,296 members from 324 groups attended Management Committee Trainings. A further 1,422 women from 400 groups participated in 17 Sustainability and Networking Workshops, highlighting accurate record keeping, lending, auditing, and networking to support group sustainability after project phase-out. Groups participate in internal and external networking. Internal networking takes place within their villages with VDF members, MCH volunteers, and through group Family Day activities, while external networking is with other villages' WORTH groups.

As a result of the sustainability and networking workshop, WORTH groups from 13 villages held Family Day events with the participation of 778 family and community members. During the events, WORTH groups announce the achievements from the close of their six-month banking cycle, and make a donation to village VDFs for community development activities. The Family Day events provide an opportunity for the women to speak with villagers about how they can better support community development activities, while teaching community members about WORTH and inspiring other women to join the program. Such events help women strengthen linkages with other community groups and increase their visibility to their communities, which leads to greater sustainability. Additionally, this year, 140 WORTH women participated in six market linkages trainings within their villages where participants conducted field visit to town markets and 100 WORTH women participated in three external networking workshops hosted in Yinmabin Township.

### ***Spotlight:***

#### ***WORTH Sustainability Study Highlights***

In August 2015, Shae Thot returned to WORTH groups in Seikphyu and Myingyan, where Shae Thot's training and mentoring of WORTH groups ended in June 2014, to assess whether groups were still functioning. **After more than a year on their own, 67% of WORTH groups were still functioning.** Groups that were still active appeared to be thriving: 93% of the original members were still actively participating, and funds had grown by 57% since phase-out.

Average savings had more than doubled since February 2014, the date of the last individual-level data collection, from \$33 to \$83 per person. Many groups had also lowered interest rates to better meet members' needs. Groups have accomplished this with very little support from Empowerment Workers, only 11% of whom are still regularly visiting WORTH groups. These results demonstrate that the **WORTH model can continue without project support**, bringing women lasting benefits. Further results on WORTH's sustainability can be found on pp.69-72.

## Results to Date: Food Security and Agriculture

Shae Thot seeks to increase agricultural productivity for smallholder farmers through the adoption of effective, locally appropriate, and environmentally sustainable agricultural techniques. Interventions promote technology transfer to address low production and productivity using a range of delivery methods, including key farmers, farmer field schools, and agricultural extension networks. After developing community action plans in coordination with the community and the VDC, key farmers participate in a training of trainers (ToT) on a wide variety of topics, including soil management, fertilizer application, crop husbandry, seed technology, post-harvest technology, pest and disease control, soil conservation, and cash crop production.

Two Shae Thot partners, Cesvi and Swanyee Development Foundation (SDF), implement agriculture activities in Central Burma. Cesvi leads agriculture and livestock interventions in the region, and during the reporting period conducted activities in 300 villages across six townships (Meiktila, Yenangyaung, Salin, Seikphyu, Magway, and Pale) serving an estimated population of 195,366 people from 40,179 households. Interventions in Magaway phased out in February 2015, while project activities continued in the other five townships. Local partner SDF is serving 5,200 households in 20 villages in Aunglan Township where Cesvi is not currently active.

Both Cesvi and SDF implement project activities in close partnership with VDCs in order to ensure community ownership of project activities. Cesvi engaged VDCs in identifying key farmers, managing seed and livestock revolving funds, and developing infrastructure plans, and implementing and monitoring them for the construction and rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation systems. To strengthen the capacity of VDC, Cesvi conducted 19 training sessions on organizational management, financial management, accountability, leadership, and sustainable development for 250 VDCs with a total membership of 2,755 people (2,040 men, 715 women). As a result of direct engagement and management of project activities, 50 VDCs supported by Cesvi (about 20% of all VDCs), on their own initiative, utilized the surplus generated from seed and livestock banks to create new revolving funds to disburse loans to community members in need. SDF also conducts agriculture and livelihoods interventions in close collaboration with VDC sub-committees for agriculture, livestock, and income generation.

### Expanded Use of More Effective Agricultural Techniques and Inputs

In Cesvi townships, VDCs select key farmers to participate in ToT sessions to equip them with the training skills and technical knowledge needed to mentor farmers in their communities. This year, a total of 162 key farmers (144 men, 18 women), out of whom 94 were new recruits, participated

### Summary of Key Results:

- 8,244 farmers are participating in 350 FEGs in 299 villages across 6 townships
- 5,983 farmers participated in Farmer Field Schools
- Revolving seed banks have increased 143%, resulting in 9,759 secondary beneficiaries
- 6,000 resource-poor farmers have received direct seed input
- 1,610 offspring have been born through revolving animal banks, a 98% increase



VDC member checking project material

in ToT sessions. A total of **246 key farmers** (18 women, 228 men), including those trained in previous years and this year, **led technical sessions for 6,996 new farmers** (2,322 women, 4,674 men) on topics such as organic agriculture and best practices for nine crop varieties. They also increased emphasis on soil conservation practices, through the application of different types of traditional and organic compost and fertilizer. Key farmers also supported technical talks in Pale, Salin, SeikPhyu, Meiktila and Yenangyaung in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture (DOA), where 1,669 farmers (1,413 men, 256 women), including 1,271 new farmers, listened to university professors lead sessions on plant pathology, soil chemistry, and climate change. Participants were active during the talks as they raised technical questions and strengthened their networks with the technical specialists and each other.

Key farmers also led Farmer Extension Groups (FEGs) to introduce new technologies across field demonstration plots. FEGs provide an opportunity for farmers to meet regularly and share information, and to see first-hand the potential improvements in yield when appropriate technologies are applied, such as weed control, agro-forestry, and addressing problems of soil fertility. To date, a total of **8,244 famers** (2,391 women, 5,853 men) **have participated in 350 FEGs, covering 299 villages in the six project townships.** Among them, 51 groups with 716 members (304 women, 412 men) were formed during year 4. FEG topics this quarter were divided into three sub-groups: seeds, research, and technology, with each concentrating on particular aspects of the crop production cycle.

Shae Thot establishes Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) to increase the capacity of groups of famers to test new technologies in their own fields, assess results and relevance for certain circumstances, and interact on a more demand-driven basis with researchers and extension workers when assistance is needed. FFSs are held in the community where farmers live, so that they can easily attend weekly sessions and keep up with regular studies. FFSs focus on either major crops or technology management, and subjects include different crop variety trials, application of different types and dosage of soil fertilizers, integrated pest management techniques, and comparison of different agriculture practices. Experience shows that when farmers are knowledgeable about the basics of agriculture, combined with their own experiences and needs, they make more effective decisions and are better clients for extension and research systems because they have more specific questions and demands.

SDF established two FFSs this year in Aunglan Township, one in Pyin Pin Hla village conducted during the summer, and one in Ye Baw Haung village conducted during the rainy season. Twenty farmers, two from each village, participated in each FFS, learning about the various stages of crop growth; cropping practices; soil analysis; pest, weed, and disease classifications; systematic



**Farmer Field School in Kyun Bo Kone**



**Explanation of agricultural techniques for rice cultivation (SDF)**

fertilizer applications; post-harvest technologies; seed storage techniques; calculating costs and profits of cultivation; and making compost. The schools met twice a month for a total of 10 times during the cultivation seasons. As seen in Figure 15, farmers were able to compare three different sowing methods and determined that the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) showed a comparative advantage in terms of the return on investment. Directly testing different methods improves local buy-in and ensures locally appropriate solutions.

Cesvi also incorporates a variety of on-farm demonstrations. This year, a total of 30 FFS demonstration plots, 27 agro-forestry plots, two integrated farming plots, and two field days to visit the integrated farming plots were supported by the project, engaging 3,314 farmers (2,436 men, 878 women). To date, a total of **237 FFSs are running in project areas with the participation of 5,956 farmers** (4,749 men, 1,207 women). Starting with Year 4, Cesvi introduced a new mechanism, agriculture clinics, to its FFSs to support farmer discussion and self-learning. The 30 clinics established were set up in villages providing farmers training and learning materials for soil testing and classification, detection of plant diseases, and identification of pests. Materials and tools distributed and utilized in these clinics include, microscopes, insect nets, insect boxes, pH meters, thermometers, spraying devices, and protective gear such as shoes, clothes and masks for pesticide application.

Thirteen demo plots established in CESVI townships during Year 3 were harvested this year and groundnut yields analyzed. In Gone Kone village, farmers compared a control plot of local groundnut with an improved type of groundnut introduced through Shae Thot. While the control plot yielded 28 baskets per acre, the improved variety yielded 35 baskets, an increase of 25% (see Figure 16). Experimental plots in six FFSs in Pale Townships were harvested this year and farmers from neighboring villages were invited for a field day session in Thet Kei Kyin village. FFS members presented their findings of using organic foliar fertilizer versus a chemical fertilizer on sesame production. The organic foliar had a greater yield producing 10 baskets of sesame per acre, versus eight baskets with the chemical fertilizer. Additionally, the sesame plants that utilized organic fertilizer were larger in height (42 inches versus 38), and had a greater number of branches per plant (5.5 versus 3.5), pods per plant (89 versus 74), and seeds per pod (44 versus 40) compared to the sesame plants that used chemical fertilizer.

The 27 agroforestry plots were established in five townships covering an area of 33 acres. These plots aim to promote soil conservation techniques and crop diversification in order to increase farmers' resilience to economic and environmental shocks. The project supported key farmers with a variety of eight multipurpose trees and technical assistance to design and set up demo plots. After planting the trees, the beneficiaries started to intercrop annual species between the trees'

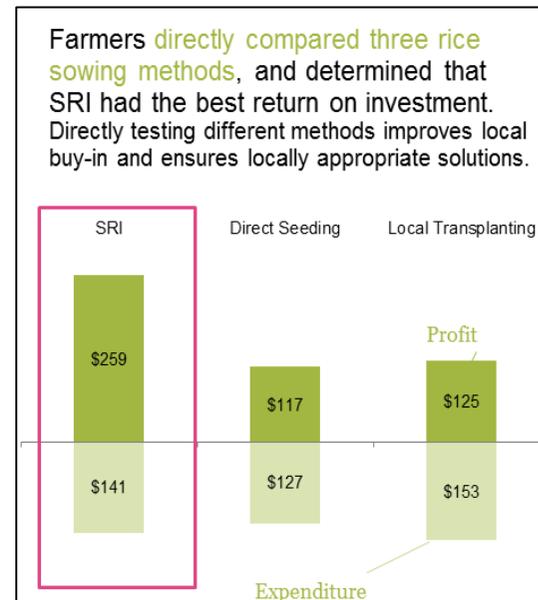


Figure 15: Yields with SRI

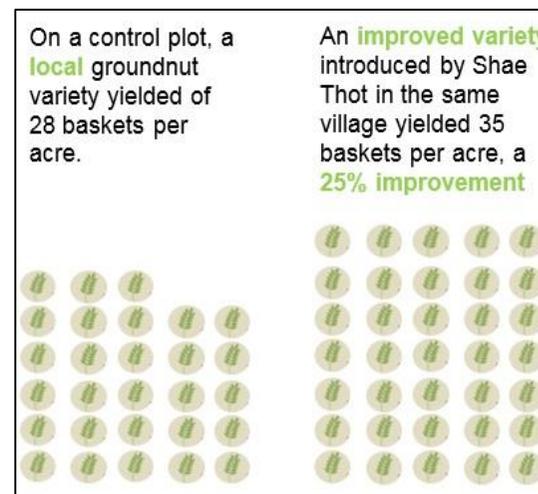


Figure 16: Improved Yields of Groundnut

lines. Agroforestry contributes towards the restoration and maintenance of soil fertility, reduces erosion and produces annual crops easily marketable. Also this year, the project supported the establishment of two integrated farming plots in Pale Township. The integrated plots, each covering 0.5 acres, are used for growing vegetables and raising pigs. These plots demonstrate to farmers how such integration can lead to improved soil fertility, increased utilization of crop residue and livestock waste, and provide added income and food for consumption.

Cesvi held the Third Annual Agri Fair held in Yenangyaung Township in September 2015 in which 400 people including 250 farmers and VDC representatives from the five project townships, technical experts, officials from local authorities, the DRD and DOA, and representatives from the private sector, and NGOs participated. This year's fair focused on the promotion of high quality seed production and post-harvesting.

### **Increasing Yields through Seed Multiplication Mechanisms**

Shae Thot supports farmers through a seed multiplication program that aims to increase access to quality seeds among farmers and improve seed multiplication farm practices for long-term multiplication at the community level. Seed multiplication is supported through four integrated project activities:

1. Training certified seed growers to provide farmers with locally-produced, high quality seeds;
2. Revolving seed bank mechanisms to increase access without indebtedness;
3. Direct provision of seed inputs to additional low-resource farmers;
4. Seed stores to provide farmers with a safe place to store seeds between cropping systems.

During the year Cesvi trained 151 farmers (10 women, 141 men) as seed growers, and provided them with quality certified seeds. The project also organized a seed grower forum in Meiktila, in which 81 seed growers (75 men, 6 women) participated, and 26 farmers (2 women, 24 men) participated in an exchange visit to private seed multiplication farms in order to improve their knowledge on seed quality, compare professional seed production techniques, and link seed growers with government departments and the private sector. The seed growing program is devoted to forming a network of highly qualified famers specialized in the local production and dissemination of seeds, increasing the availability of high quality, locally produced seeds that are better suited for local weather and soil conditions. Seed growers raise awareness of the benefits of high-quality seeds, and promote experience-sharing among farmers. In addition to increasing access to seeds, the program empowers village-level seed growers to continue to serve as a source for quality seeds beyond the life of the project. The DOA significantly supports this methodology



**Agro forestry at Kya Pin Village in Salin Township**



**Seed Grower Training in Pale Township**

citing the lack of certified seed availability in the Dry Zone as a main obstacle to increasing crop productivity.

The revolving seed bank mechanism allows small groups of farmers to cope with current and future seed shortages caused by natural disasters, crop failures, and other unforeseen challenges. Seed banks produce, maintain and reintroduce indigenous varieties of seeds and encourages proper adaptation of post harvesting techniques in order to optimize seed storage and to guarantee a better access to quality seeds. The bank grows as farmers take out loans in the form of seed, which is repaid in seeds after the harvest period with additional interest. Village Development Committees (VDCs) play an important role in managing the seed bank system which have demonstrated great value for money as community capital continues to sustainably grow from the initial project investment, without the need for additional direct project support.

As depicted in Figure 17, to date, 6,803 farmers have received direct seed input support from the project. Through the revolving mechanism an **additional 9,759 beneficiaries have received secondary seeds**, without direct project support. Together, these beneficiaries have received a total of 50,601 baskets of different types of seeds **covering a total of 21,545 acres**. Based on an analysis comparing the value of seeds provided by the project, versus the value of seeds generated through the revolving mechanism, Cesvi discovered that the latter is 1.54 times higher than the initial project support. Additionally, to provide further support to some of the most economically disadvantaged farmers, **Cesvi distributed quality seeds to 6,000 resource-poor farmers** during the year covering 1,955 acres.

SDF established community seed banks in 10 villages, donating seeds for winter crops to 48 farmers and rain fed crops to 42 farmers, covering a total of 90 acres. Community members contributed labor for the construction and established seed bank committees responsible for selecting beneficiaries and seeds appropriate for local conditions. The revolving mechanism with SDF's seed banks began during the last quarter of this year. Four additional farmers had received winter crops through the revolving mechanism. Seeds for rain fed crops will be received next year once the crops are harvested.

To mitigate the damage of seeds, especially when stored in between cropping seasons, the project encourages farmers to use seed stores and metallic silos to store their seeds. VDCs have participated in the selection of appropriate sites to build four new seed stores, including two in Meiktila, one in Yenangaung, and one in Pale. In communities where seed banks and seed stores are not available, the project has begun establishing small-scale seed silos which are distributed to groups of three to five farmers to provide a safe place to store seeds after harvest. A total of 295 seed silos were built in Meiktila, Yenanchaung, Seik Phyu, Pale and Salin with the community

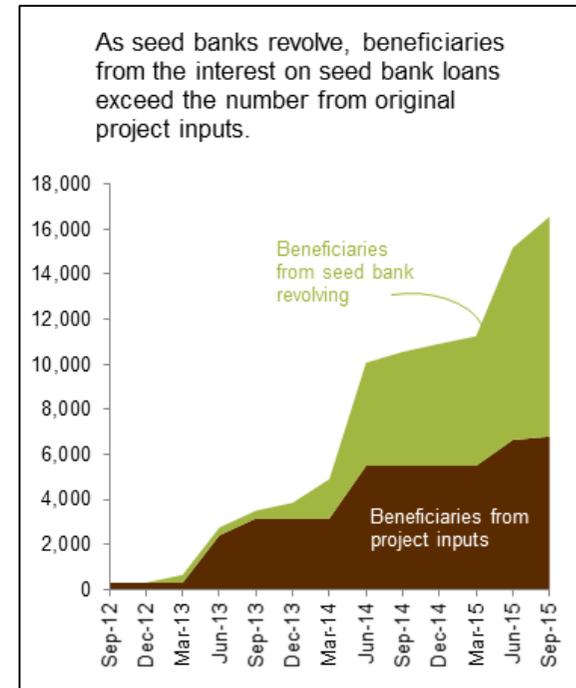


Figure 17: Cesvi Revolving Seed Banks



Completion of seed store construction

members directly involved in the construction of the silos providing labor and locally available construction material. Twenty-four seed stores constructed during Year Three and the beginning of Year Four are also currently in operation.

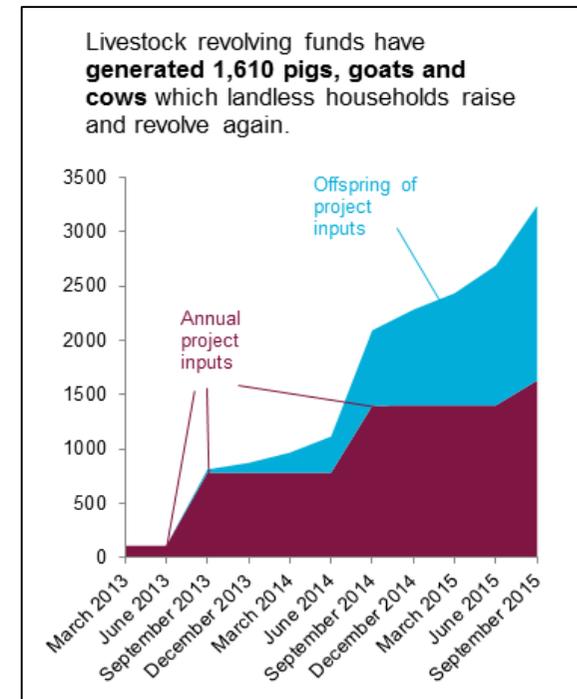
### Alternative Support for Landless Citizens

Shae Thot supports landless citizens through a small livestock program that includes training animal health workers (AHWs) to improve animal health in their communities, and increasing access to livestock through revolving livestock funds. To date, the project has trained 403 Animal Health Workers (AHWs) (52 women, 351 men), including 194 this year. At the end of these trainings, new AHWs receive kits that include medical and vaccinating tools. During the year, AHWs provided 4,839 livestock breeders (1,738 women, 3,103 men) from 265 villages with technical assistance and treatment, addressing common problems such as reproductive disorders, as well as the prevention of and protection from disease through vaccinations in collaboration with Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department. As most small livestock problems in the area are related to incidence of disease in rural communities without access to animal health services, AHWs fill an important role in supporting proper livestock management and minimizing disease and death.

Shae Thot has also established revolving livestock funds, through which beneficiaries receive start-up stock of pigs and goats. Currently there are 480 revolving animal banks in Cesvi townships with a total of 2,692 animals (2,355 piglets, 337 goats) supporting 2,438 beneficiaries (910 women, 1,528 men). When animals produce offspring, half of the newborn stock is maintained by the initial beneficiaries for income generating opportunities, while the remaining half is distributed to secondary beneficiaries. Given the low start-up and maintenance costs, and rapid turn-over, revolving livestock funds are a viable activity for landless citizens. Once beneficiaries have repaid the livestock bank through an offspring of their “loaned” animal, they are then able to sell any new offspring for additional income. On average, initial beneficiaries who receive pigs can count on five new piglets born after six to eight months. They can generally keep at least three, passing the others to secondary beneficiaries. An average fattening period takes about eight months and costs \$60 for feeding and husbandry. The selling price for an average pig of that age is \$250, resulting in a net profit of \$90 per pig. On average, this amount is sufficient to cover a household’s food expenses for 40 days. Since the banks were initiated during March 2013, the project has purchased 1,632 animals, while **a further 1,610 offspring have been born increasing the number of animals that can be lent out by 98%** (Figure 18). This return allows for a greater number of farmers to benefit from the project. During the final quarter of the year, Cesvi has started piloting the distribution of fish through a newly established Fish Farming System.



**Boar distribution for advance livestock group in Seik Phyu Township**



**Figure18: Revolving Livestock Banks**

SDF established 20 revolving livestock funds this year which includes locally bred pigs and chickens, managed by the 17 livestock working groups, with a total of 340 members, which are part of VDCs. SDF provided capacity development training to the group members on fund management, leadership and book-keeping, and helped them open bank accounts. Since the groups were introduced in 2014, the total number of farmers has increased from 340 to 756 (a 122% increase) due to the revolving mechanism.

Complementary crops also provide important food security support, especially for landless citizens. Vegetable gardening has proven to be a good option, easily applied to a small area of land. Cesvi key farmers trained by the project are responsible to disseminate knowledge and required skills to promote home gardening. This year, 602 landless and vulnerable households – such as households with female heads, pregnant women, or with children under five years of age – received horticultural kits including seeds, planting tools, and seedlings, to promote home gardening. These gardens provide added nutrition to households and an alternative source of income. On average, households consume half of the harvest from their home gardens, while selling the remainder at local markets. On average, households earn from \$80-\$100 per cropping season. Given that the monthly income in the area is \$100-\$150, and that food expenses can range from \$60-\$80 per month, the **additional income generated by home gardens significantly improves vulnerable households' food security** and provides income for other household expenses such as education and healthcare. SDF also provided home gardening trainings for 35 participants in the 20 villages.

### **Construction of Water and Soil Conservation Structures**

In the Dry Zone, low and uneven rainfall patterns and frequent dry spells, compounded by the presence of low natural soil fertility and poor vegetation coverage, contribute to decreased agriculture productivity. To counteract these barriers and develop a sustainable natural resource base, the project undertakes a variety of water and soil conservation measures. To date, a total of 557 farmers have benefited from these soil and water conservation activities that have directly enhanced the soil conditions of 963 acres of land, and indirectly benefited an estimated 1,500 acres. Cash for work schemes are utilized targeting the most vulnerable households for the construction of water and soil conservation structures. During year 4, Cesvi supported 326 vulnerable households (89 women, 237 men) in digging 3,417 contour trenches and drainage systems to improve soil conditions.

In close collaboration with VDCs – which devise an 'infrastructure plan', and manage and monitor implementation – the project has also supported the construction or rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation systems including the establishment of 21 tube wells with pumps in five townships, one

### ***Spotlight:***

#### ***Promoting a Nutritious and Balanced Diet Among School Children***

In the Dry Zone, crops produced locally are often insufficient to meet consumption needs making malnutrition a pressing concern. To promote nutritional security among school children, Cesvi is currently supporting 16 school gardens in five townships. The children get to decide which fruits and vegetables to grow, and the harvest is shared among the students for household consumption. The project also supports schools organize 'Harvest Lunch Days', cooking demonstrations, and seed fairs to spread the importance of a nutritious diet among the broader community.

CESVI partners with Shae Thot partners MSI and Pact to implement the gardens. CESVI provides the schools with seeds, seedlings, home gardening tools, water facilities, and IEC materials, while medical doctors from MSI and Pact spread key nutritional messages and lessons among the participants. To date, 2,903 people have been involved in school gardening activities, including students, teachers, and parents.

artesian tube well in Salin, one open well with pump in Yenangchaung, and the renovation of three ponds in Magway, Meiktila and Pale, and one well in Yenanchaung. During Year 5, Cesvi will support the construction and renovation of additional tube wells and ponds, and install an irrigation system including pumps, engines, and pipe fittings to benefit agriculture production. Twenty four sites, in four townships, were selected this year to benefit from the irrigation system.



**Digging countour trenches in Seikphyu Township**

# Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene



## WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

**Overview:** Shae Thot's community-driven model engages Ma Mya and her fellow villagers in activities to increase access to sufficient quantities of safe water and sanitation facilities and improve hygiene practices in their communities. Through a community action planning process, communities identify village-level priorities around water and sanitation and create activities to facilitate infrastructure improvement and installation. Community education workshops build knowledge and promote good hygiene practices.

Shae Thot transfers and develops skills via hands-on training and community-designed approaches. Infrastructure projects leverage community resources and engagement while promoting local planning and implementation of community needs and priorities. Hygiene education and promotion activities raise awareness and actively engage communities in the behavior-change process.

### Results to Date: Community Management of Water and Sanitation Infrastructure

Shae Thot partner UN-Habitat leads water and sanitation infrastructure activities in Central Burma, promoting low-cost, low-technology solutions that utilize community expertise and resources and help ensure sustainability. Infrastructure improvements prioritize training local carpenters, masons, and artisans, and developing local expertise, obtaining locally sourced materials whenever possible.

Activities are initiated through UN-Habitat's "People's Process," a community-driven action planning process in which communities identify their needs and then develop contracts to implement activities based on those self-assessed needs. These community contracts reflect each community's proposed activities and budget, and provide the basis for a plan of action. Village Water Committees (VWCs), which UN-Habitat helps establish as sub-committees of VDCs, take the lead in ensuring a transparent contracting process and directly manages the implementation of their respective villages' activities, including, labor management, procurement, quality maintenance, progress-reporting, timely completion, and financial clearing to the community. Community grants administered through VWCs help to improve local skills and expertise, while fostering a sense of ownership among community members and enhancing village capacities. UN-Habitat provides trainings to VWC members increasing their technical and financial management capacities and strengthening their confidence and negotiating skills in working with people from local authorities and the private sector. During year 4, 90 trainings were conducted on leadership and management for 792 VWC members (479 men, 313 women), and a total of 9,893 people in all target villages participated in community action planning sessions. Based on these planning

### Summary of Key Results:

- 70,490 people with improved access to water
- 10,518 fly-proof latrines constructed or renovated
- 190 community contracts with 90 VWCs to build water and sanitation infrastructure
- 93% of 2,784 households that received ceramic water filters are actively using them



Election of a Village Water Committee

sessions, a total of **190 community contracts were signed between UN-Habitat and the 90 VWCs** to construct water and sanitation infrastructure.

UN-Habitat works in villages where water is scarce or far away, requiring villagers to spend hours fetching water, time that could be used for other purposes such as school attendance and livelihoods improvement. UN-Habitat conducts technical studies to propose feasible alternatives for these communities to access safe drinking water. This reporting period, project activities covered 90 villages in three townships: Yenangyaung, Yesagyo and Pale. In Yenangyaung Township, located in the northern part of the Dry Zone, rainfall is 25 inches annually. Yesagyo Township, which has the warmest temperatures in the Dry Zone region, is plagued by water scarcity and underground water is very deep, making it difficult to install deep tube wells. Pale Township, has the highest water scarcity of all townships in Sagaing Division.

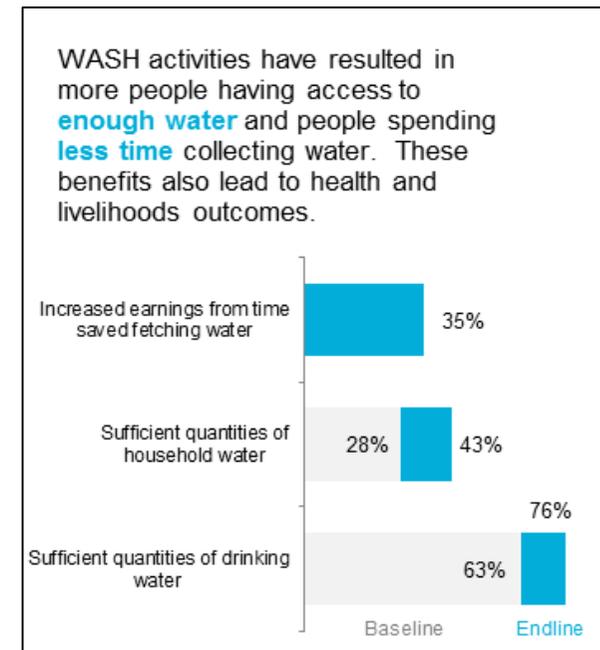
UN-Habitat regularly coordinates with the government through the General Administrative Department (GAD), Department of Rural Development (DRD) and Township Planning Department to synchronize work on water and sanitation infrastructure. This year, the Director of the DRD in Nay Pyi Taw visited four project villages in Yesagyo, and the Regional DRD, township GAD, and Pact's Regional Coordinator visited Pale Township to observe Shae Thot's project progress. The project ensures joint monitoring missions: in May 2015, UN-Habitat and the DRD conducted joint monitoring missions in villages in Yenangyaung and Pale. The DRD was pleased with VWC's participation in development activities and suggested transparent collection of water fees from households for the piped water system.

As a result of the project, the supply of drinking water has significantly increased in project villages. As depicted in Figure 19, the daily drinking water availability per person (measured at more than three liters per day) increased in all three townships: 61% to 76% in Pale, 82% to 85% in Yesagyo, and 47% to 68% in Yenangyaung. A total of **70,490 people (33,151 male, 37,339 female) benefited** from the construction of various community water supply infrastructure. Greater and closer access to water also increased the daily quantity of water collected by community members from all water sources. For example, in Yesagyo it increased from 53% to 73%, in Yenangyuan from 13% to 26%, and in Pale from 19% to 30%.

In order to improve local knowledge and expertise in developing low-cost, low-technology water and sanitation solutions, this year UN-Habitat conducted four trainings for 120 people on constructing Rain Water Collection Tanks (RWCTs), and nine trainings for 210 people on constructing fly-proof latrines. As proper maintenance of WASH infrastructure is critical in ensuring adequate hygiene and continued usage of the infrastructure, the project also conducted 90 trainings on Operations and Maintenance for 1,957 people. Utilizing the knowledge received,



**Water quality test training at Hpan Kan San Village in Yenangyaung Township**



**Figure 19: Impact of WASH Activities on Access to Water and Household Incomes**

the trainees are expected to provide technical assistance to masons to build RWCTs and fly-proof latrines in project villages.

In order to improve community members' knowledge of the importance of and access to clean water, UN-Habitat conducted awareness raising events on the use and benefits of bio-sand filters, and encouraged community members to construct them. These filters can be built locally, are easy to use and maintain, do not need electricity, and are inexpensive to construct. During the reporting period, 55 awareness sessions were conducted with the participation of 1,944 people. In order to monitor bacterial levels in the water, the project conducted 37 trainings with the participation of 323 people on water quality tests. An H<sub>2</sub>S strip test kit bottle was used to carry out bacteriological examinations of drinking water. If bacteria is present in a water sample used in the bottle, the color of the water will change after 24 hours. As the filtered water samples from the bio-sand filters did not change color, participants were able to better understand the advantages of constructing bio-sand filters. To date, **541,602 people have benefited from clean water** from bio-sand filters, including 615 households this year.

Access to water continues to be a challenge in project villages. Many old wells dry up during the summer months. Based on a UN-Habitat estimate, this requires villagers to spend about 90 to 120 minutes per day fetching water as other forms of water storage does not meet the demand. In order to alleviate the burden, this year, UN-Habitat supported the construction and renovation of a variety of water storage infrastructure based on the needs of those communities. These included the construction of one pond, 11 hand dug wells, 18 shallow wells with pumps, 35 deep engine tube wells. An additional seven ponds, one hand dug well, and 14 deep engine tube wells were renovated. Furthermore, 15 river water supply systems with pumps were constructed allowing communities to obtain piped water to their premises. In order to collect water during rainy seasons, the project supported the construction of 71 large RWCTs (each with a capacity of 5,000 gallons) for communal use and smaller RWCTs (each with a capacity of 100 gallons) for 851 families. The project also supported the construction of two sand dams with hand dug wells. Sand dams have a lifespan of about 30 years and require low maintenance providing communities an opportunity to install wells with auxiliary piping and dripping systems for irrigation and water for livestock. Additionally, this year, in collaboration with the VWCs, UN-Habitat supported the construction of 63 gravity flow pipe water supply installation systems with overhead tanks, **providing water to all households in 60 villages** (see Spotlight).

Having direct access to water impacts people's lives, not just through increasing the availability of clean water, but also through decreasing the amount of time households need to spend collecting water for their daily needs. UN-Habitat conducted a survey this year in all 90 current project villages with 450 randomly selected households to assess the project's impact on time and

### ***Spotlight:***

#### ***VWCs Strengthen Confidence of Communities to Gain Access to Water***

In order to improve access to water in 60 villages, this year, UN-Habitat supported the construction of 63 gravity flow pipe water supply installation systems with overhead tanks (capacities of 3,000 and 5,000 gallons). The project provided funds to construct the main pipelines for water distribution and expected community members to contribute funds to get water connection to their households.

Initially, community members were not keen as they were unfamiliar with this type of system. Being from those communities, the VWC members stepped in playing a critical role in strengthening their confidence to invest in the system. As a result, the communities joined hands to install hundreds of feet of pipelines and household connection lines contributing their labor and funds which resulted in all households in the 60 villages having water taps and meters.

Each household pays about \$0.25 per cubic meter of water which provides enough water for about two days. The VWCs collect the fees for operation and maintenance costs.

livelihoods. Respondents reported that the distance they had to travel to collect water had decreased significantly. In Yesagyoy and Pale, the plurality of households said that they had to travel more than 1,000 feet to collect water (52% and 29% respectively), while in Yenangyaung the plurality had to walk between 500-1,000 feet (29%). After UN-Habitat's water projects, **in all townships the plurality of households reported now having to walk less than 100 feet to collect water** (87% in Yesagyoy, 36% in Pale, and 33% in Yenangyaung).

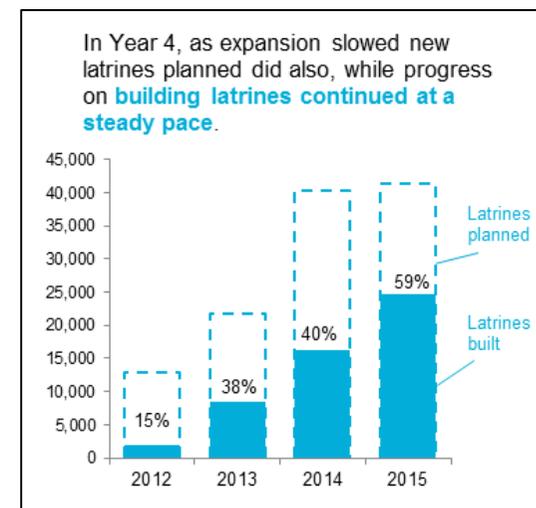
This decreased distance means substantially less time spent every day fetching water for household needs. Many household members are then able to spend this time earning additional income. In the survey, 35% of households reported using this additional time on income-generating activities, resulting in an average of \$23 additional income each month to those households. This \$23 monthly represents a significant sum when households in project areas are making an average of \$83 per month (Shae Thot Midterm Evaluation data)—a 27% increase of average household income. This income in turn can be used to meet health needs, pay school fees, improve food security, reinvest in businesses, or any other needs that households prioritize. The full results of the UN-Habitat survey will be available in a separate report and disseminated to USAID in FY16.

Open defecation is a common practice in the project villages where many people do not have access to latrines. To mitigate this, UN-Habitat and Pact support the construction of fly-proof latrines. UN-Habitat builds sample fly-proof latrines (FPLs) in target villages (approx. five latrines per village) and trains community members on how to construct them. As a result of the training and understanding the importance of latrines, community members built additional latrines on their own. This year, a total of 906 households built FPLs. The UN-Habitat survey revealed that the number of people who openly defecate has reduced from 882 to 667 people in Yesagyoy, from 997 to 748 people in Yenangyaung, and from 445 to 227 people in Pale. To promote proper hygiene practices in schools, the project also supported the construction of six school latrines inclusive of hand washing facilities, benefiting about 1,500 school children. Improved sanitation in schools helps reduce absenteeism and dropout, especially among girls.

Pact's MCH programing also focuses on improving access to hygienic latrine facilities as they have a profound impact on community health and hygiene. Pact trains WASH Promoters (WPs) to lead action around proper hygiene and sanitation activities. During the initial Community Health and Development Workshop, WPs lead awareness-raising sessions on hand washing and the importance of FPLs to prevent diarrhea. The WPs then work with communities to design action plans to construct or renovate FPLs in their communities. To date, communities have planned to construct or renovate 42,277 FPLs. Of that amount, 24,649 latrines (59%), including 9,612 latrines this year, have been constructed or renovated by communities themselves through the



**New storage tank (5,000 gallons) with pipe supply system in Yesagyoy Township**



**Figure 20: Pact's Fly-proof Latrine Construction**

project (see Figure 20). Both UN-Habitat’s and Pact’s accomplishments demonstrate how communities have taken a sense of ownership to prevent diarrhea by constructing latrines, with little financial support from the project.

The USAID Regional Inspector General’s draft audit report had suggested the Shae Thot program conduct an assessment of the WASH activities implemented in the first two years of the program assessing the sustainability and sufficiency of WASH activities. Pact is recruiting an external consultant to conduct the assessment in a sub-sample of at least 35 of the 468 intervention villages located in seven townships of the central Dry Zone of Myanmar. The assessment is to begin in November 2015 with the consultant’s recommendations due January 2016.

### Results to Date: Community-led Hygiene Promotion

Two Shae Thot local partners, Social Vision Services (SVS) and Thirst Aid, have been implementing hygiene promotion activities in Central Burma since January 2014. This year, SVS’s work in implementing hygiene promotion activities in 60 villages in Monywa Township and 85 villages in Pakokku Township came to a close in January 2015. In August 2015, SVS received a second Shae Thot grant to promote good hygiene practices in 90 villages in Pale Township complementing UN-Habitat’s WASH programing in the region.

During the year, SVS conducted a series of hygiene promotion awareness raising sessions in Monywa and Pakokku Townships, using the “4-Clean” methodology, which explains the importance of clean water, clean hands, clean food, and clean latrines. The sessions were conducted in all project villages (8,992 people participated), in schools (16,130 children participated), and among fellows and volunteer teachers (492 people participated) who act as WASH promoters in their villages. SVS will continue work during year 5 on its second grant supporting hygiene promotion in 90 villages in Pale Township. SVS acts as a key hygiene promotion partner, filling in integration overlap gaps between Pact and UN Habitat. The project, running from August 2015 to April 2016 intends to reach 65,115 people 13,216 households.

In October 2015, Both SVS and Thirst aid celebrated Global Hand Washing Day in project villages, leading awareness activities to teach the importance of and proper method of hand washing, engaging community members of all ages, especially targeting school-age children. A total of 870 villagers and project staff from Magway, 387 from Monywa and 146 from Pakokku participated in a variety of activities, including an education fair and competitions led by community facilitators and WASH committee members.

Local partner Thirst Aid continued its safe water and hygiene promotion activities this year in the 18 project villages in Magway Township, serving a population of 11,637 people from 2,784



Community construction of fly-proof latrines



Global Hand Washing Day in Let Pan Ywar Thit village, Magwe Township

households. All project villages are situated close to the Ayeyarwaddy River and small streams. Households are dependent on water from these rivers and streams and also from ponds. There are no underground tube-wells in the area and most water sources are not safe for direct drinking as they include chemical substances and pathogens. In order to promote safe water practices, Thirst Aid combines awareness raising activities with distribution of ceramic water filters (CWFs).

Thirst Aid implements activities in villages where Shae Thot partner CESVI has been implementing water access activities to improve access to water for crops and animals, but not on increasing access to water for community consumption. Thirst Aid works through existing VDCs established under CESVI programming, through community-selected WASH sub-committees. The WASH sub-committees initiate campaign activities together with community facilitators and Thirst Aid. This process allows for greater community ownership and sustainability of project activities. At the beginning, community members performed activities under the management of Thirst Aid. Now they are able to lead their own activities, addressing community needs themselves. For example, this year, **15 out of the 18 project villages, on their own initiatives, decided to conduct water resource and environment cleaning activities.** Ten of the villages formed groups to clean garbage in their communities and five villages created water resource cleaning groups to clean pond embankments and repair pond inlets.

During the year, a total of 2,840 CWFs were distributed to 2,784 households. By the end of the year, **2,584 Households (93%) were using the CWFs.** The households that were not using the CWFs were from households that had to migrate for seasonal work, thereby not being able to regularly use the CWF, or working long hours in farm land thereby not having time to fill the CWF.

To promote hand washing practices in villages where water and resources are limited, Thirst Aid introduced the “Tippy Tap” system developed in India which is a hands-free way to wash hands especially appropriate for rural areas. The system uses a plastic jug and string which can be easily built in communities with available, low-cost materials and uses little water. During the year, Thirst Aid supported the creation of 143 tippy tap systems in 14 villages and 118 tippy tap systems in 17 schools. After receiving one gallon plastic containers and a demonstration from Thirst Aid on how to develop the system, **the communities created their own Tippy Tap systems.**

To educate communities on water and hygiene promotion and proper CWF use, Thirst Aid developed many IEC materials, including a three-episode comic and a two-part video clip. Several village WASH committees have organized reading and showing activities for community members. A total of 30 reading sessions with the participation of 3,382 people, and 15 video screening sessions attended by 1,493 people were conducted this year. During the summer, school children participated in these sessions, helping community members that could not read well. Additionally, during the reporting period, Thirst Aid conducted 15 clean food trainings with the



**Water resource and environment cleaning at Min Ywa Taung Village, Magwe Township**



**Distribution and use and care training of ceramic water filters in Telpin Kan Pauk Village**

participation of 1,361 people. These trainings explained the linkages between proper hand washing, use of safe water and clean food. Participants also learned the importance of safe food preparation, cooking, storage, and waste disposal.

To promote WASH activities in schools, with the support of WASH committee members, project staff and teachers, a series of school activities such as teaching sessions, video screenings, “4 Clean” method quizzes, Tippy Tap system demonstrations, and sports competitions were conducted in 17 schools, with the participation of 1,956 students. Additionally, the project provided the schools with IEC materials, 15 toilets and 24 slow sand filters to promote proper hygiene and sanitation among school children. These events have helped to increase students’ interest in good hygiene and safe water practices, and led them and teachers to actively participate in the World Water Day celebrations organized by VWCs in Sae Kan and Pan Nyo San villages, which included education booths for WASH promotion, talent shows, video screenings, and games.



**Tippy Tap System demonstration in school at Net Sal Kan village, Magwe Township**



# Kayah State Programming

## SHAE THOT PROGRAMMING IN KAYAH STATE

**Overview:** Shae Thot's approach to improving the health and development of Ma Mya and her family in Kayah State recognizes that development interventions are not a one-size-fits-all approach. Ma Mya's realities and needs are a reflection of her life and surroundings, and as such Shae Thot provides tailored activities to meet her specialized needs in a region that has long had extremely limited access to health services, infrastructure, livelihoods opportunities and community resources.

Shae Thot's integrated program in Kayah provides a blend of community-based health services, agriculture support, water and sanitation infrastructure, capacity building and community strengthening targeted for remote and isolated communities. Shae Thot works with local partner organizations in the region, which have established knowledge about the local languages and cultures.

### Community-based Programming in Kayah State

Kayah State is a conflict-affected region with many operational and developmental challenges, such as pervasive poverty, areas with ongoing security and landmine concerns, and very hard-to-reach villages. The March 2012 ceasefire agreement and the initiation of talks between government forces and the Karenni Nationalities Progressive Party (KNPP) stopped the majority of fighting in Kayah State and allowed a small space for community development.

An initial assessment in 2012 identified the health sector as being in need of support and that livelihoods were badly interrupted. The three southern townships of Hpasawng, Bawlakhe and Mese had greatest need and had no other international development support. Pact began operations in April 2013, with community-managed maternal and child health programs in all 15 villages in Bawlakhe and in 32 villages in Hpasawng. In June 2013, Pact launched the Local Partner Initiative (LPI) in Kayah, aiming to promote stronger civil society and governance in rural areas through community-based organizations (CBOs) engaged in service provision. Through the LPI, Pact began collaborating with local partners to provide community assistance in the areas of livelihoods and food security, and water, sanitation, and hygiene. Pact local partners started implementation in January 2014.

In September 2013, Pact carried out a conflict and a Do No Harm assessment in Kayah. The assessment suggested placing greater emphasis on local staff, adapting the pace of programming to accommodate village sensitivities, ensuring full coverage of townships, and considering engagement with non-government service providers in armed group controlled areas. These

### Summary of Key Results:

- Pact implement's MCH programming in 63 villages
- 387 people engage in MCH community learning sessions and 1,089 in childhood nutrition sessions.
- 90% of Pact-monitored pregnancies received at least one antenatal care visit; 95% of deliveries utilized a clean delivery kit
- KnMHC reaches 80 remote villages in Hpasawng Township
- CDA supported AMW training for 10 women in Hpasawng Township



**A mixed ethnic, religious, linguistic, and gender team from Pact's Bawlakhe Office**

recommendations have all been acted upon. After an assessment in April-July 2014 to establish access to hard-to-reach villages, Pact extended coverage to 80 additional remote villages in Hpasawng by working together with the Karenni Nationalities Mobile Health Clinic (KnMHC). In February 2015, Pact again expanded programming to all 16 villages in Mese Township.

Particular challenges for working in Kayah include:

1. **Political Situation in the Townships:** There are a number of competing political/armed groups in the area.
2. **Staff Safety & Security:** There are landmines areas in the project townships and projects are in areas of mixed control.
3. **Challenging Transportation:** Poor road conditions make travel by motorcycle challenging and travel by foot is required in some areas. Many villages are in remote locations requiring several day's walk to reach them.
4. **Challenging Weather:** Floods and landslides are common during wet season.
5. **Challenging Communication:** Language barriers due to different languages in use in the region. Phone and Internet communication is also poor. Villagers are unused to interacting with strangers and low levels of trust hamper establishing commitment for change.
6. **Limited movement in the Townships:** Permission to travel to villages must be requested in advance.

In February 2015, consultant Simon Richards, who also conducted the initial conflict assessment, visited Shae Thot projects in Kayah and conducted interviews with staff, partners, communities, ethnic armed groups, and civil society in Loikaw, Bawlakhe, and Hpasawng. The aim of his visit was to assess program adaptations and conflict sensitivity, and to take stock of program implementation, successes, and challenges within the current context of Kayah. He produced a report of lessons learned and recommendations for further practical adaptations (see Spotlight). In particular the report recommends Shae Thot deepen its focus on a holistic integrated governance-based approach in order to support community rebuilding in this fragile and conflict-affected context. The report also highlights the emphasis on staffing and the creation of mixed ethnicity, religion and gender teams, modeling the diversity of the communities and demonstrating respect, as a form of best practice, which should be continued and deepened. The visit demonstrated the success of the program so far and the large potential for future work. In particular, the visit to Taung Por village in Mawchi area made clear the challenges of transportation, communication, language, and literacy. It also highlighted the complex dynamics of implementing in villages at the center of competing economic and

### ***Spotlight:***

#### ***Lessons Learned from Shae Thot in Kayah***

Adapting the Shae Thot model in Kayah is a process of continuous learning. The key lessons learned so far stress five main aspects:

1. Tailoring the program approach to different community experiences ensures programs are respectful and community orientated. It helps emphasize the process of engagement and empowerment alongside sector outcomes.
2. An integrated approach focusing on good governance is critically important in conflict-affected environments in order to re-establish the concept of self-reliance. In this respect the VDCs play an important role.
3. Language, literacy and education, time, demography and access are as important as specific conflict dynamics when adapting programs.
4. Trust is crucial for success and needs to be earned. Shae Thot has won trust by taking the time to participate in village activities, build relationships with key community members and demonstrate concrete results.
5. Teams, which reflect mixed ethnicity, language, religion, experience and skills, are able to empathize and communicate with communities, model diversity, and help to build each other's capacity and understanding, making strong teams and appreciative communities.

governance interests. The health risks associated with artisanal lead mining and accompanying social issues were also readily apparent as an area of possible further work for Pact and partners.

### **Leading Coordination of Development Interventions in Kayah State**

Due to the fact that Pact is supporting all communities across the southern district of Kayah and has more than two years of experience in the state, **Pact is taking a lead role in coordination amongst various development actors.** The size of Kayah and its relatively short exposure to development aid (rather than border-based humanitarian aid) offers an opportunity for all actors to establish common, community orientated approaches.

Pact has been actively working with colleagues from other organizations such as IRC-3MDG, IRC-PLE, IRC-Prosper, Mercy Corps, Save the Children, TBC, Shalom and Coord. In this respect, Pact shares knowledge on the operating environment and encourages newer organizations to work with existing VDCs, looking for chances to link programs where practical. In particular, Pact is working closely with IRC-PLE to link their long-term border based support with Pact's community approach inside Kayah. Pact, along with Mercy Corps and Coord, has also led the establishment of a working group for coordination of capacity strengthening support to local partners and CSOs in Kayah. This group is trying to build a common platform to support CSO institutional strengthening in a holistic way which prevents repetition, overstretch and projectization. Finally, from a health systems perspective, Pact is building a good relationship with CHDN and hopes, in coordination with other partners, to support some of their outstanding capacity and health system needs.

### **Staff Capacity Development Trainings in Kayah**

Pact employs local staff well-versed in the languages, conflict, and culture in the area. In order to further their knowledge in conflict sensitive community development practices in complex, contested environments like Kayah, a training on Do No Harm concepts was organized for 50 Pact staff and partner staff. In addition to conflict, safety and security are a major concern in Pact project sites. Therefore, all staff received training on Mine Safety and Security in April 2015. Moreover, they received a Gender Awareness training in June 2015 to make sure their programming is gender sensitive. During August 2015, Pact staff conducted a security planning workshop to improve staff security knowledge and update Pact's security planning in line with the context of Kayah and staff concerns. These types of capacity development trainings help to develop staff capacity for community mobilization in areas with diverse ethnicities and improve their ability to operate successfully and safely.



**Meeting with communities at Mawchee Vilalge during consultant visit**



**Group Play Game in MCHD training to KnMHC**

## Results to Date: Community-based MCH Care in Kayah State

Pact implements MCH activities in Bawlakhe Hpasawng, and Mese Townships. Due to the different and challenging contexts in the region, the Shae Thot model has been adapted to suit the needs of the local communities in remote and conflict affected areas and to ensure that the approach is conflict sensitive.

Adaptations to Pact's MCH model in Kayah include the following:

- The program doubles the cash grant for villages, due to their remoteness and limited livelihoods opportunities.
- To address the language barrier, program materials incorporate interactive media such as portable DVD players and educational DVDs.
- Self-Learning Materials (SLM) are illustrated and adapted to the local context to accommodate illiteracy.

This year, 387 people engaged in community learning sessions on maternal and child health in Bawlakhe, and 1,089 people engaged in childhood nutrition learning sessions in Hpasawng. Additionally, 80 women received MCHD level 2,3 and 4 technical trainings. The MCHDs are expected to provide critical support relating to nutrition, childhood illnesses, and early childhood development in areas such as Bawlakhe and Hpasawng where there is limited access to health care facilities. The trainings used a number of methodologies including case scenarios, knowledge sharing sessions with local languages, presentations and group discussions in order to ensure the quality of the training and competency of the participants. Participants learned how to identify danger signs during pregnancy, delivery and postnatal periods, essential maternal, newborn and child health care, and management of common childhood illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria. In Mese, 16 community health and development workshops were conducted this year.

This year, Pact trained MCHD-1 CAs monitored 227 child delivery cases with government midwives in Bawlakhe and Hpasawng, of which **90% of women received at least one antenatal care (ANC) visit**. Thirty five percent of the women received four ANC visits, while 71% of the women received two tetanus toxoid injections. The number of women monitored during Year 4 (227) increased significantly from Year 3 (32) both as a result of expanding project activities into additional villages in Hpasawng this year, and as a result of increased activeness from the volunteers.



Pact Community Facilitator conducts a workshop in Kayin Language, in Nan Kit Village, Hpasawng Township



Baby Weighing Session in Nan Phe village, Bawlakhe Township

Communities also demonstrated behavior change in delivery practices towards more hygienic deliveries with trained birth attendants. Of the deliveries monitored by MCHD-1 CAs, **95% used clean delivery kits** for home deliveries. In addition to having more hygienic deliveries, 89 women (43%) delivered with skilled birth attendants (SBAs). Of these delivery cases, nine pregnancies were detected with danger signs, and all nine were referred for delivery with SBAs.

MCHD-2 CAs led 140 nutrition days this year, in Bawlakhe and Spasawng during which 3,862 under five children participated. Similarly, **228 baby weighing days were led by the MCHD-2 CAs together with VDCs**. Out of the 6,464 children weighed, 82% were in the adequate nutrition zone, 14% in the moderately malnourished zone, and only four percent in the severely malnourished zone (see Figure 21)

After the interventions of Pact trained WASH Promoters, Fly Proof Latrine development also increased this year from 77% to 97% in Bawlakhe, from 17% to 55% in Hpasawng, and up to 44% in Mese. A total of 764 out of 1,219 latrines were constructed and renovated this year on the self-initiative of communities.

During this year, 15 villages in Bawlakhe and 32 villages in Hpasawng showed progress in managing their revolving **Village Development Funds (VDF)**. Although there have been challenges in the area of management and setting up revolving fund mechanisms due to issues of trust and liquid financial assets, the funds have grown significantly during their one and half year existence. Figure 22, shows that **the total fund value in 42 villages doubled in size** from \$18,522 to \$38,646. The funds utilized a total of \$784 in grants for community health, education, and water needs. In Mese, 16 villages successfully established VDFs this year after the community development workshops. The fund hand overs will be conducted next year.

### Health System Strengthening (HSS) Activities in Kayah

Pact works alongside Township Health Departments to support strengthening the formal health sector and facilitate linkages with Shae Thot's community-based activities. This year, Pact held advocacy meetings with Township Medical Officers (TMOs) in Mese to discuss maternal and child health start-up plans, and also in Bawlakhe and Hpasawng Townships for Crush Immunization (Mass Measles and Rubella). Pact discussed challenges faced by volunteers and their integration with township health staff, LLINs distribution plans in Bawlakhe and Hpasawng, and discussed supporting the Expanded Program for Immunization (EPI).

Additionally, this year Pact held advocacy meetings with TMOs and INGO partners Save the children and 3MDG in Mese Township to discuss the coordination of MCH interventions. The

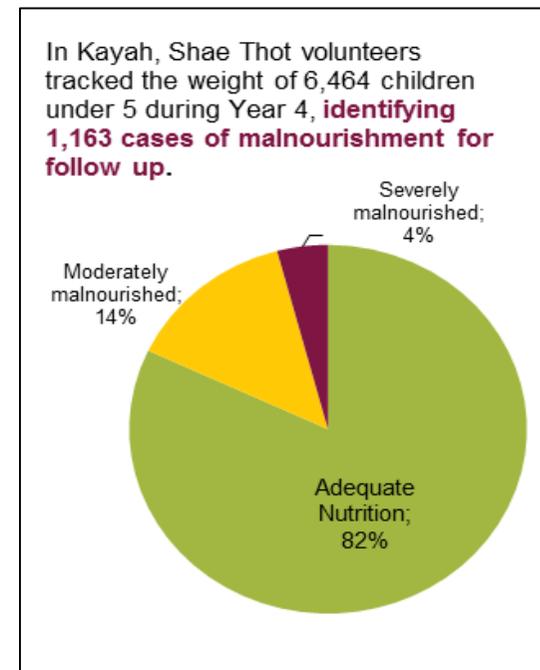


Figure 21: Child Weight Distribution



Pact advocacy meeting in Bawlakhe Township with BHS

group also held advocacy meetings in Hpasawng Township to discuss conducting excursion visits of pregnant mothers, challenges faced by volunteers, and their integration with township health staff. Pact also participated in a State Health Coordination meeting at Loikaw with INGOs and NGO partners. At this meeting, Pact shared information of existing implementation activities, target areas, and quarterly work plans.

Based on local needs, Pact began an innovative activity, conducting excursion visits for pregnant mothers in remote areas of Hpasawng to their village assigned Rural Health Center (RHC). The objectives of these visits include: introducing pregnant mothers to BHS; helping them overcome the transportation barrier to reach the RHC; teaching them about the services they can receive in the RHC; providing exposure to antenatal care from BHS; and promoting health seeking behavior among pregnant mothers so that they voluntarily go to RHCs when needed. In April and June 2015, Pact conducted two excursion visits for Ywar Thae Do and Out Ywar villages. These activities supported 50 pregnant mothers from 10 villages in the Mawchee area. Many of these women would not have been connected to services without these visits. Significantly, Pact staff play the interlocutor between ethnic groups who cannot communicate to government trained BHS. Pact staff build relationships and establish connections that are important for future initiative in seeking care.

In addition to the excursion visits, Pact provided monthly transportation support to the Township Health Department of Hpasawng to conduct EPI activities of midwives.

### Coordination with KnMHC for Hard to Reach areas in Hpasawng Township

Pact partners with the Karenni Mobile Health Clinic (KnMHC) to reach 80 remote villages in Hpasawng Township. Without a full peace agreement between the KNPP and the government it is important that Pact does not alter the balance of the peace process and works to strengthen community governance and provide health and nutrition support to people on both sides of the ceasefire lines, in all villages, across all project townships. For most people in hard to reach villages, KnMHC is their only access to limited healthcare and they are seen as the legitimate service provider in the area. Access to these remote villages is physically difficult and limited for security reasons; only KnMHC is able to reach the 80 most remote villages in Hpasawng.

After Pact approached the statewide ethnic health service provider, the Civil Health and Development Network (CHDN), they recommended Pact to begin a partnership directly with KnMHC due to their coverage in these remote areas of Hpasawng. From January to July 2015, Pact co-designed a six-month pilot and trust-building phase of maternal and child health and capacity training with KnMHC. Shae Thot aims to develop KnMHC's ability to provide health

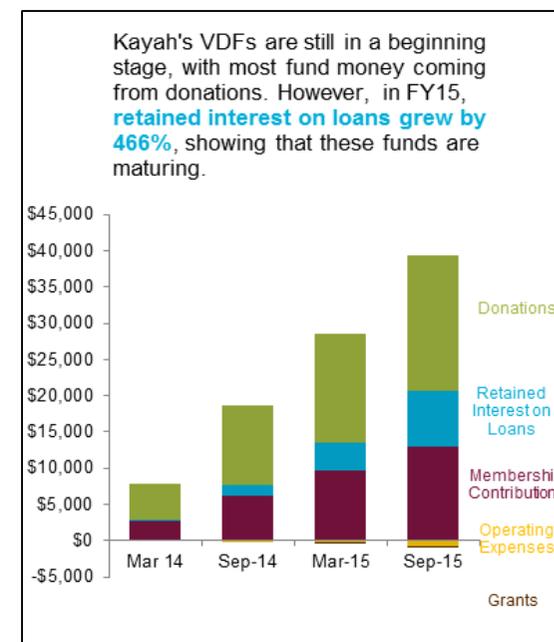


Figure 22: VDF Growth



VDC present their activities in Nan Kit village, Hpasawng Township

services and offer community development to these 80 villages through four mobile clinic sites and seven backpack teams with a total of 31 KnMHC staff. Starting in January 2015, Pact gave an initial training on the 'Importance of Maternal and Child Health' and a program launch orientation training to KnMHC staff at the Mawchee area of Kayah. Since then Pact has provided technical ToTs on MNCH and capacity trainings for the 31 KnMHC field staff and has embedded one staff member to model good community health work, monitor work, and offer on-the-job guidance. Additionally, this year, KnMHC staff completed sessions on safe motherhood and newborn care, childhood nutrition, communicable childhood diseases, and child psychosocial development trainings. As a result, KnMHC staff delivered **988 health education sessions** through their clinics and backpack teams to local people who live in very remote areas.

This year, KnMHC reached 294 pregnant mothers for antenatal care service, and held family planning consultancies for 144 clients. They also conducted 130 safe deliveries at mobile clinic sites, of which, 25 cases were delivered by backpack teams and 105 cases were delivered by TBAs. They were also able to give 122 postnatal and newborn care service sessions.

After an initial six months work, the pilot was satisfactorily completed with useful learning on both sides. Pact and KnMHC are now ready to commit to a deeper, long term and evolving partnership to further support the most in need villages and gradually assist in their recovery from years of isolation and conflict. Between May and September 2015, KnMHC and Pact held discussions to understand the successes and challenges in implementation in the remote villages of Hpasawng and developed a strong understanding of what interventions are needed in these communities.

In Year 5, in partnership with KnMHC, Shae Thot plans to expand its implementation in the 80 remote Hpasawng villages across all four Shae Thot objectives of maternal and child health, livelihoods and food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, and community strengthening around finance and governance. Pact aims to broaden KnMHC's community health and development vision and strengthen their capacity to deliver it. The partnership is a delicate combination of increasing the technical capacity of KnMHC and access to healthcare for remote communities while simultaneously building community solutions to local needs especially in the areas of maternal and child health, nutrition, sanitation, medical referral, and finances for development priorities. Pact will continue to assess this approach throughout the project and if it becomes appropriate to do so will increase the emphasis on community mobilization, ultimately strengthening and empowering fractured communities with a fully integrated



**KnMHC backpack teams travel to hard to reach villages in Hpasawng Township**



**Safe Motherhood training to KnMHC at the Bawlakhe Township Office**

development model. Pact is proactively coordinating with all other partners of KnMHC and CHDN to advocate for joint, partner-led approaches and to avoid any areas of overlap.

### **Supporting the National Health System in Hard-to-Reach Areas in Hpasawng Township**

Shae Thot local partner Community Development Association (CDA) augments and supports public health systems, and promotes improved health knowledge and practices in 20 hard-to-reach villages in Hpasawng Township. During this year, **CDA has supported the training of 10 new AMWs through the Department of Health** in Hpasawng Township and conducted a Helping Babies Breath (HBB) training with the AMWs as well as a further 10 midwives. As of March 2015, the trainees had all successfully completed the six-month training program. Since that time, CDA has continued to train and support the newly trained AMWs to build their skills and confidence. During the year, CDA facilitators worked alongside the AMWs to deliver direct care and trainings. In total, project facilitators conducted 199 health education trainings for 2,723 participants.

In May 2015, CDA completed an endline survey to determine changes in knowledge and health seeking practices over the course of project implementation. Pregnant women in Hpasawng have greatly increased their access to antenatal care providers. **At the beginning of the project 40% of pregnant women did not seek care** from any professional medical providers, while 30% had accessed MWs, 20% consulted nurses and 10% were seen by doctors. **At endline, all women had accessed an antenatal care provider.** Instead of seeking assistance from doctors and nurses, access to MWs increased from 30% to 56%, TBAs increased from 0% to 33% and AMWs increased from 0% to 11%. The number of women accessing two TTs increased from 40% to 56%. The number of women who know at least three danger signs increased fourfold, from 10% to 44%. Women not only increased their knowledge about when to wash their hands, but by the end of the project 100% of women responded that they used soap to wash their hands, versus just 40% at the beginning of the project.

With CDAs 18-month long program coming to an end during the final quarter of Year 4, CDA conducted meetings with the township and village authorities, linking the AMWs and MWs in the area so they can continue receiving support after program phase-out.



**CDA-trained AMWs provide health education**



**A beneficiary who received antenatal and newborn care through CDA**

## Results to Date: Livelihoods and Food Security in Kayah State

In Kayah State, Shae Thot works with two local partner organizations, Kayhtoeboe Social Development Association (KSDA) and Rural Development Agency (RDA), to support a variety of locally-driven interventions that seek to promote improved agriculture practices, strengthen market linkages, and build community capacities. KSDA works in 15 villages in Bawlakhe Township serving 863 households, while RDA works in 25 villages in Hpasawng Township serving 176 households. Although many project interventions are similar to those in the Dry Zone, households in Kayah State face additional challenges, such as transportation and communication barriers, and limited access to markets. Over the year, the partners focused on a combination of technical trainings to improve farmer knowledge and direct provision of seed and livestock.

In Bawlake Township, Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) initially established by KSDA at the end of Year 3, convened twice monthly, with 27 participating farmers from the target villages. Topics included making effective micro-organism (EM) fermented plant and fruit extract, foliar and compost fertilizers, natural insecticide, as well as soil conservation and planting practices. As a result of the trainings, six farmers are now using EM fermented plant and fruit extract, eight farmers are applying new technologies learned through the trainings, and a further six are using new sesame varieties.

During the course of the year, KSDA distributed locally bred piglets to 30 households who did not receive them the previous year, helping them increase their yield and income. In June 2015, KSDA also conducted home gardening training for 22 people teaching participants how to grow vegetables in their yard to improve their access to fresh produce, while reducing food expenditures. Participants learned about growing different plants given their weather, soil, and environmental conditions. Lastly, KSDA also led a vocational training for 22 women on how to make traditional snacks from banana, a crop that regularly grows in the area and that many farmers have naturally growing on their compounds. The participants were very interested in learning these skills, and expressed interest in learning about other uses for their local products. After the trainings, tools to make the snacks were distributed to the participants.

KSDA selected 13 farmers from Bawlake to establish demonstration plots, providing support for planting, harvesting, and de-weeding techniques for sesame and rice. All fifteen farmers attended a workshop on sesame production and marketing in May 2015. The project has supplied them with four different seed varieties, the cost of land preparation, agricultural tools,

### Summary of Key Results:

- 870 households provided with seeds and 118 households provided with livestock.
- 42 farmers participate in demonstration plots.
- Community water systems which support 2,980 beneficiaries have been handed over for village management in 12 villages.
- 302 household latrines constructed by villages



Farmer Field School classes in Kayah

and technical support in collaboration with the DOA. Farmers have begun applying the technologies in their fields. Currently, eight farmers, including four demo-plot farmers and four new farmers, are using sesame row planting learned through the demonstration plots. KSDA also organized cross visits for 97 famers to visit different demonstration plots and share practical knowledge, cross-fertilizing their knowledge as well as their fields. On top of this, KSDA arranged two Market Crop Survey Workshops in cooperation with a technician from the Ministry of Agriculture in Bawlakhe with a total of 51 participants. Building on the knowledge gained in the workshops KSDA organized two cross visits for 50 farmers from target villages to Magway and Mandalay wholesale centers and organic farms in the Dry Zone. The participants were able to learn about markets and product prices, planting techniques, and pest and disease control, as well as the advantages to linking with the government. KSDA also established a seed bank this year in Hpasawung Township.

In Hpasawng, RDA has supported 29 farmers to participate in three types of demonstration plots for testing cropping practices, testing marketable crops, and for farmers demonstrating livestock breeding. RDA provided seeds and livestock to all participating farmers. Demonstration plot farmers will return seeds to the VDCs through a revolving seed mechanism. The crop demo plots enable farmers to learn first-hand about new cropping practices, and learn about new marketable crops they have not previously had experience growing, without the risk of investment. If the cropping practices or new marketable crops are doing well in their area, they can make an informed choice about the benefits of following the practice. To support their learning, RDA conducted nine cross learning visits between demonstration plots with a total of 222 participants from 13 villages. In addition, RDA supported livestock demo plots to teach farmers the practice of breeding pigs. As farmers in the area generally only own pigs to fatten and slaughter, learning about the benefits of pig breeding, provides an opportunity for farmers to consider a new sustainable approach to income generation.

This year, **RDA provided 870 households with seeds and 88 households with livestock from 21 villages.** Inputs were distributed in collaboration with VDCs according to each village's community action plan. Procurement and distribution of livestock and seeds was completed through collaboration between VDCs and RDA. RDA also established 7 seed banks, focusing on the most vulnerable villages which have no proper storage facilities and villages which have the potential to store marketable crops. The communities manage the seed banks with the purpose of storing seeds for the farmers working in the demo plots. During the seed distribution period, farmers have committed to contribute seeds to a revolving seed bank mechanism.



**Market Crop Survey workshops in Bawlakhe Township**



**Seed Bank established through RDA in Hpasawung Township**

## Hygiene Promotion and Water and Sanitation Infrastructure Management in Kayah State

In Kayah State, Karuna Myanmar Social Services (KMSS) implements water infrastructure construction and hygiene awareness in four villages in Bawlakhe Township and 11 villages in Hpasawng Township, serving a total population of 5,547 individuals (2,816 men, 2,731 women). Project activities enable the communities to sustainably enhance their health and hygiene through the implementation of water and sanitation infrastructure construction and hygiene promotion activities.

Project activities focused on the construction of water infrastructure systems through the joint participation of communities, VWCs, KMSS and the Rural Development Department. Gravity flow water systems were completed in five villages, renovation of pipe lines and filter tanks in four villages, renovation of pipe lines and collection tanks in two villages, and construction of a water river pumping system in one village. These 12 projects directly **provided access to clean water systems for 2,980 beneficiaries.**

Completed **water systems were handed over for village management in the 12 villages**, and commemorated through an official handover ceremony. The ceremonies were attended by village administrators, VDCs, WASH committees, villagers, and KMSS staff. Ownership and management of the water systems has officially been transferred to Village WASH Committees, enabling communities to take full responsibility of the daily operations, while helping to instill a sense of ownership, and supporting the long-term success and sustainability of the system.

This year, KMSS also conducted trainings for villagers on the construction, maintenance, and repair of communal and household water systems, equipping them with the skills to sustainably manage these systems. Between February and July 2015, 66 participants (44 men, 22 women) from 13 villages attended trainings on catchment protection and maintenance gaining knowledge on water source protection, how to repair pipelines, and the sustainable use of water systems. The trainings were organized by VDCs, WASH committees and village volunteers with sessions led by the Forestry Department. Villagers also attended a session on rules and regulations of revolving funds for water usage for the WASH groups.

Furthermore, representatives from 650 households in 15 villages were trained over the course of the year to make concrete molds for small water tanks. KMSS provided a bag of cement to each household, while the villagers contributed sand. Ceramic filter pots were also distributed to 15



**Water Filter Tank in Do Mu Pel Village**



**KMSS contributed pipes to provide water to communities**

villages, and villagers received instruction on their proper use to filter water for drinking purposes.

KMSS, along with Shae Thot's other local WASH partner, Thirst Aid, attended a water quality testing training this year conducted by Pact. Staff learned about different water sources, water-borne illnesses and the different types of water filtration. The teams tested and demonstrated water from four communities for PH levels and the presence of different minerals. Thirst Aid and UN-Habitat also helped to organize a cross visit for 29 participants from 12 villages to Magawy township.

In order to promote proper hygiene practices and prevent the spread of diarrhea, KMSS encouraged villagers to construct household latrines. Between October 2014 and September 2015, **villagers have constructed 302 household latrines** and community members are currently gathering materials for the construction of latrines in 15 additional villages. The latrines are constructed through the initiative of each household, with the support of village volunteers and monitoring from KMSS staff. KMSS has also conducted handwashing campaigns with 479 participants across 15 villages and held hygiene workshops with 693 participants, as well as distributing hygiene kits. Moreover KMSS also gathered the members for the WASH committees of every village to hold a WASH forum for villages to share challenges and learn from each other.

Please see the Governance and Capacity Development section for a discussion on the Local Partner Initiative including partners operating in Kayah. Pact believes the attention paid to building stronger and more effective local organizations is as important as the direct service provision they are providing with Pact technical assistance.



**Hand Washing Campaigns in 15 villages in Phasaung and Bawlakhe Townships**

#### 4. Quarterly Performance Management Data (Annex A)

Shae Thot reports quarterly on the required indicators listed in the program's Performance Management Plan (PMP), the revised version of which was submitted to USAID in September 2014. These indicators provide up-to-date, vital programmatic information to judge the breadth, scope and short-term outcomes of the Shae Thot program. These data are presented in Annex A. Most data are collected through Shae Thot's routine monitoring system and are reported on quarterly, though a few indicators will be measured on at baseline, midterm and endline. Reporting for FY15 includes midterm progress on these key indicators.

Results are presented cumulatively for the project. The data are presented against targets for Year 4, which were developed during the first quarter of FY15 and revised during the second quarter to account for revised workplans, plus the achievement in Years 1-3 to show a snapshot of how far the project has progressed against the expected achievement by the end of the year.

In addition, the cumulative data for FY15 includes data for MCH and WORTH activities from villages where regular data collection was phased out in FY16. In August-September 2015, Shae Thot data collectors returned to a randomly selected, statistically representative sample of these villages to collect regular monitoring data, analysis of which is presented above. For key Objective A and B PMP indicators, the achievement from the sampled villages was extrapolated to estimate achievement for all phased out villages and added to regularly collected data for FY15 to represent the continuing impact Shae Thot is having in these areas.

#### 5. Monitoring and Evaluation

**Midterm Evaluation:** Beginning in FY14, Shae Thot solicited a midterm evaluation in order to assess project progress, gather lessons learned, and use the findings to improve program activities. TNS, the independent consultants conducting the midterm, presented the findings of the midterm to Shae Thot and USAID on June 17, 2015 after receiving comments on drafts of the report from Shae Thot. The final report was submitted to USAID on August 3, 2015. Key quantitative findings from the midterm include:

- Increases in knowledge of MCH-related danger signs and good practices, e.g. a rise of knowledge of three or more pregnancy danger signs from 7.5% to 26.5%
- An increase in pregnancies with four ANC visits from 21.1% to 35.2%
- Increase in use of clean delivery kits from 51.7% to 82.2%
- Households with access to safe drinking water sources rose from 65% to 89%
- Households with improved latrines rose from 63% to 72%
- Open defecation decreased from 14% to 11%
- Increase in income from an average of MMK 85,500 per month to MMK 101,375, a 20% growth

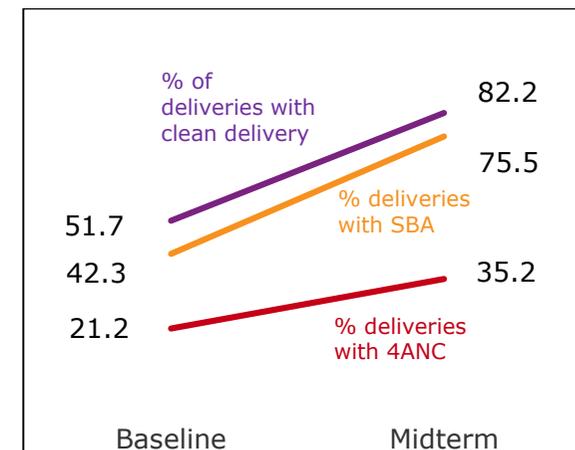


Figure 23: Key MCH findings from midterm evaluation

- Average increase in crop yield of 26.3%
- Decreased reliance on commercial money lenders from 31% to 5%

In addition, qualitative findings highlighted the impact that Shae Thot’s governance activities through the VDC and VDF have had in communities. Community members spoke of how the VDC and sub-committees have brought people together, building a community based around the project activities:

*“Before this organization come to the village, it was difficult for us to gather people, but now villagers come because they are interested in gaining more health knowledge.”*

- Sar Taing Village, Myingyan

They also spoke of how the VDF has helped their communities build resources for improving their lives:

*“We need to have cash. Now, we can use money from [the VDF]. If we have money, we don’t need to be worried about the health and the education. If we have money, we can build a school. If I have capital for investment, I can do anything.”*

-Nan Kit Village, Hpasawng

The Shae Thot target villages tended to be more remote and poorer than control villages, which complicated the quantitative comparisons. Qualitative feedback was useful in putting the results in context, though findings from both the quantitative and qualitative research emphasized that there is still need in the areas that Shae Thot serves.

The midterm offered recommendations for Shae Thot, the full text of which can be found in the report. Key recommendations included:

- Continue training VDC members on active management skills, leadership, advocacy and feedback
- Deepen local leadership by mentoring potential leaders, with a focus on women and youth
- Scale up the VDC pilot and apply lessons learned in other VDCs
- Seek out opportunities for increased community engagement with local government officials
- Encourage Mothers’ Group members to more actively serve as “health ambassadors”
- Consider expanding the current mobile health service approach beyond MCH
- Explore options to support health system strengthening
- Incorporate maintenance and sustainability plans more strongly into WASH activities
- Look at the gap between knowledge and practice related to hygiene
- Continue to support the positive uptake of the program’s livelihoods activities through scaling up agriculture and access to credit interventions
- Pilot linking a sub-sample of villages to micro-insurance to mitigate against environmental shocks

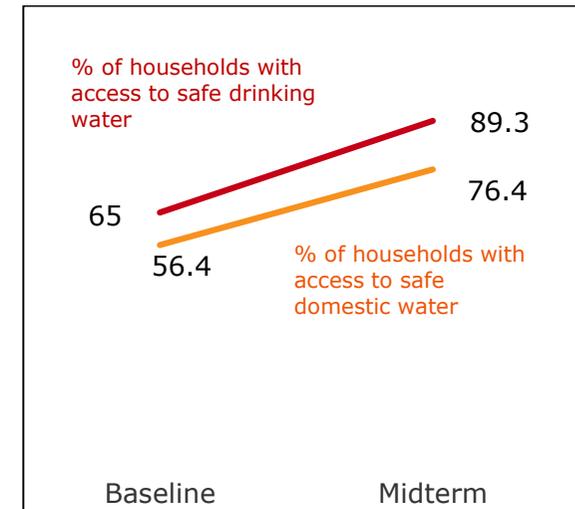


Figure 24: Key WASH findings from midterm evaluation

- Expand the livestock and poultry banks and explore the possibility of diversifying further through adding other types of animals to the revolving banks
- Support key farmers further through either increasing the number of key farmers or mentoring them to widen their outreach, so that the skills they gain spill over into communities
- Strengthen training related to the mixed use of fertilizers (organic, chemical, and natural) where appropriate in order to improve uptake
- Develop risk reduction activities to augment communities' ability to respond to food scarcity during lean months related to environmental changes
- Conduct a study on the effectiveness of the integrated approach
- Conduct a sustainability study of VDCs, VDFs, savings groups and community volunteers in project areas that have phased out, using the lessons learned to strengthen ongoing activities
- Promote the participation of more women in water, agriculture and livestock activities

The Shae Thot consortium discussed these recommendations at a partners meeting on August 19, assessing whether the recommendations were realistic and how they could best be applied. This timing allowed recommendations to be incorporated into workplans for the final year of Shae Thot where relevant and realistic. Other recommendations should be considered for future USAID-funded programming.

**Sustainability of Shae Thot:** To evaluate how sustainable Shae Thot's interventions are, in line with recommendations from the midterm evaluation, in August-September 2015 Shae Thot visited a representative sample of villages in townships where MCH and WORTH activities phased out during FY14 to collect quantitative and qualitative data from community groups and volunteers and to understand the challenges that groups and volunteers face when they are no longer receiving direct program support. The results show that 95% of VDFs, 58% of all MCH volunteers and 67% of WORTH groups were still operating one year after the project support phased out.

VDFs were the most sustainable project activity, with 95% of funds still operating more than a year after the project phased out. On average, these funds had grown 70% in value since June 2014 when counting grants given and had 53% more capital available (subtracting grants given), having an average current fund value of \$1,917. The average fund had granted \$209 during that time. In the sampled villages, VDF grants more heavily emphasized grants going towards community development projects like road construction, electricity or water supply, versus 50% during project support. This may be in part due to the larger size of the funds after an additional year of growth, which allows communities to spend larger sums of money on these more expensive projects. Qualitative findings from focus groups tell us that the key factor to these funds was the continued community interest in the fund and the ownership they took over the fund.

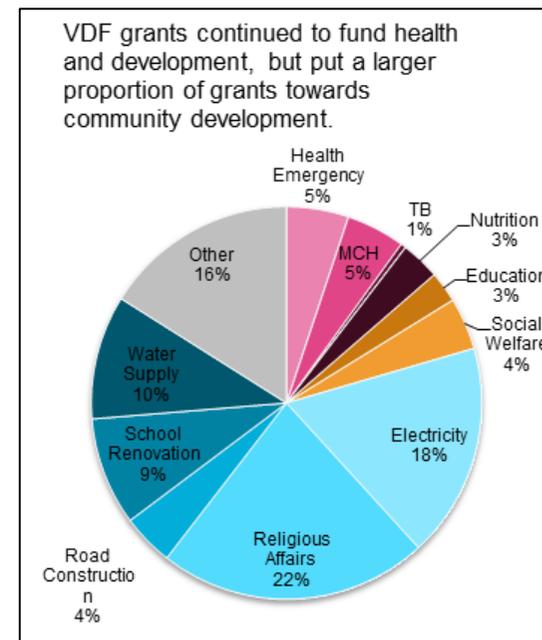


Figure 25: Disbursement of VDF Grants

Many health volunteers also continued to operate, though they faced different challenges than VDFs. Overall, 58% of MCH volunteers were still active. A major challenge was migration, with 12% of all volunteer positions vacant due to the original volunteer migrating from the village without a replacement in place. In an additional 7% of villages, volunteers had quit but trained a replacement.

The most active volunteers following project phase-out were the MCHD-1s, the volunteers in charge of tracking pregnancies, deliveries, and newborns. These volunteers are elected first during the project and also generally the leaders on the Change Agent Committee. 70% were still active, with 37% still tracking cases and 33% only doing Health Education sessions. Qualitative findings tell us that some volunteers, both MCHD-1s and MCHD-3s (who track childhood illnesses), who have stopped case tracking have turned over their books and responsibilities to AMWs and midwives present in the village. Other challenges volunteers have encountered have been cultural barriers to indoor defecation as a deterrent to constructing latrines and the heavy workload caused by nutrition and weighing days. These findings, as well as others that will be detailed in a later report, will help Shae That's technical teams to modify training and program guidelines to better meet community needs.

Health Education sessions were particularly challenging because of the time investment required by women to meet in a group. Volunteers addressed these in two ways: through conducting HE sessions in fields while women were working so that they didn't have to sacrifice time spent on work, and through making sure that newly pregnant women had access to copies of the self-learning materials for individual study. These community adaptations have been key to the sustainability of activities.

Two-thirds of WORTH groups were still functioning as of August 2015, after project activities had phased out in June 2014. Drop out within groups that continued was low; groups had 93% of the members participating when the project phased out, and 94% of members were continuing to save weekly. These funds grew by 57% since June 2014. The average group member had \$83 in savings, more than a month's salary for most of the women, and had earned \$26 in dividends at the end of the last six-month banking cycle. In focus groups, women cited these continued economic benefits, including access to credit at low-rates, as the main benefits from the WORTH groups.

Groups had also continued to actively adapt their bylaws; the most common changes were to lower interest rates, from an average of 3.9% to 3.7%, and change repayment rates to be more convenient. Fifteen percent of groups had a repayment period longer than one week, which is an adaptation

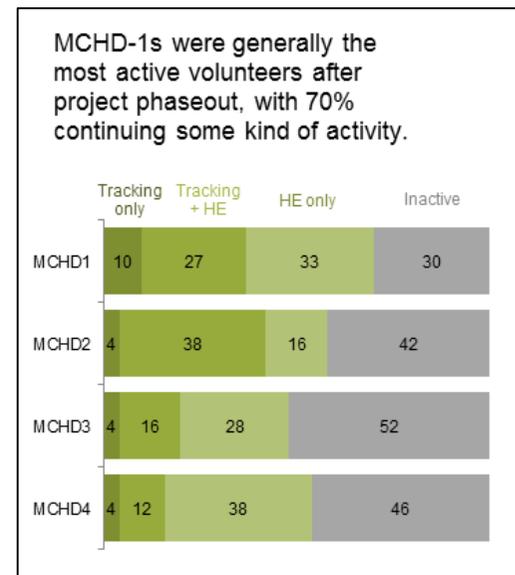


Figure 26: Active and Inactive MCHDs

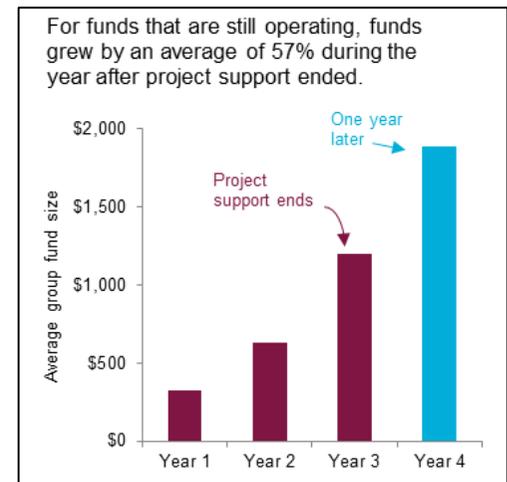


Figure 27: WORTH Fund Growth

especially useful in groups where women are primarily taking out loans to invest in agricultural inputs that take a month or longer to yield profits. Groups continued to grow and adapt despite only 11% of functioning groups being supported by an Empowerment Worker after the project phased out. During the project, Shae Thot paid a small stipend to volunteers who would travel between villages and help mentor WORTH groups. However, these volunteers also learned a number of new skills and gained both experience and confidence through their work with Shae Thot. Following the end of the project, many were able to get jobs that left them unable to continue mentoring WORTH groups. The groups continued to operate, however, demonstrating that they had learned enough skills during the project to manage their funds without the Empowerment Worker's support.

Groups that dropped out tended to do so one year after the project support ended, at the end of a banking cycle when they had to close their books; consequently, 48% of all group drop outs happened in January 2015. The low rate of drop outs since then suggests that current groups are likely to be stable. Drop out groups were also most likely to be in the township where implementation had been most difficult. Drop out groups cited lack of group unity and turnover in their management committees as reasons for dropping out.

The remaining groups were able to articulate plans for their future, both what they were individually saving and planning to take loans for and what development projects they were planning in their communities. One member said,

*"Come back again to our group in the next three or five years. We promise that our group will still be here. We would never think about dropping out. We will continue our group forever. Our next plan is to buy a car for our village to be available for health emergencies."*

-Kyauk Kan Village, Myingyan

The final analysis from this sustainability study will be available in the first quarter of FY16, and a full report shared with USAID at that time. The findings will be discussed with program teams to improve plans for phase-out with villages in townships where implementation is currently active, as well as any future implementation.

**Social Return on Investment:** In the final quarter of FY15, Shae Thot began a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study of the project's Objective B. Shae Thot' SROI will focus on the savings group and agriculture components of the project in order to narrow the focus of the research. This study was proposed in the PMP revision submitted to USAID in August 2014.

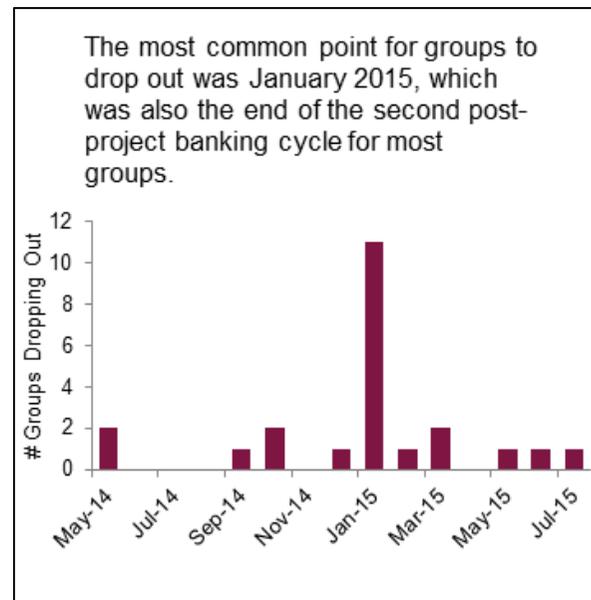


Figure 28: WORTH Group Dropouts

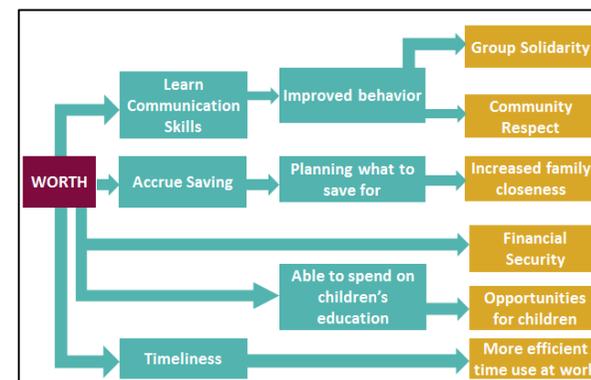


Figure 29: Simplified Theory of Change from SROI Stakeholder Assessments

SROI is a methodology that looks at the investment that stakeholders, including both funds from USAID and the time and resources that beneficiaries invest, versus the value generated in people's lives. The purpose of the SROI study is to get a more holistic view of the change occurring in community members' lives, including unexpected changes that might be outside the logical framework, and find a common unit of measurement to weight and aggregate these changes. SROI is similar to cost-benefit analysis, but derives its validity from stakeholder engagement. Beneficiaries are continuously consulted throughout the study to articulate the most important outcomes of the project, assigning a monetary value to the outcomes, and validating the project's analysis. This means a series of at least three stakeholder assessments. Shae Thot completed the first round of stakeholder assessments—focus groups to articulate the primary outcomes for beneficiaries—in September. SROI also takes into account the integrated nature of Shae Thot's work, acknowledging that the project's livelihoods work might have outcomes related to health, education or empowerment, and including these in the theory of change and measurements.



**Exercise to assess how much WORTH members value their outcomes**

In the focus groups, WORTH members, their families, and agriculture participants articulated many expected outcomes, including increased investment in business, group and community unity, greater empowerment, and greater financial security. The uses of additional income ran a wide gamut, improving food security for the most vulnerable but also going to children's education, improving household structures and assets, contributing to community initiatives in the form of donations, and emergency health costs. These expenditures gave community members a sense of security, pride, and hope for the future. Respondents tended to say that they valued the increased community and family unity and the respect and trust they gained most highly. In an exercise to attach monetary value to these abstract outcomes, community members ranked these outcomes above such tangible things as a new house, access to the electric grid, and rural health centers. In October and November 2015, Shae Thot will be collecting and compiling additional data on how frequently key outcomes occur and finalizing the value communities assign to these outcomes. A final report assessing Shae Thot's SROI for Objective B and lessons learned from the assessment will be finished in early 2016.



## **6. Environmental Compliance**

In May, USAID/Asia's Bureau Environment Officer, Will Gibson, accompanied by USAID/Burma mission program development specialist Aung Naing, visited Shae Thot sites in Seikphyu Township in which Cesvi and UN-Habitat have implemented activities. The USAID team found environmental compliance to be sound in the project sites.

The Shae Thot partners have continued to incorporate environmental awareness in project trainings and activities following an effort the previous year to review and update Shae Thot Environmental Mitigation and Management Plans (EMMPs).

For example, PGMF's training modules include information on how to use fertilizers and pesticides properly, as well as information on livestock and manure management. During non-formal business training, clients are trained in how to consider environmental, economic, and legal impacts of their small-scale of agriculture, livestock breeding, trading, or processing enterprises. The project screens for environmentally and socially sound businesses during the processing of loan applications and loan monitoring.

Following a WORTH environmental workshop in La Boat village, Yinmabin Township, the group members decided to plant a small forest near their village. They requested and received an in-kind contribution of 250 shade trees from the township Department of Forestry. The WORTH group invited the entire village to participate in the planting to raise environmental awareness.

UN-Habitat conducts trainings on hygiene education, clean and safe water supply, protecting water sources from contamination, and improving and maintaining environmental conditions. A survey conducted of 906 household latrines in three townships found that all project-built latrines were good condition and beneficiaries were using the latrines regularly. However, household latrine coverage in project villages was less than 100 percent, and some non-project latrines in villages were not in good condition. In response, UNH provided model household latrines for other households to replicate, and also provided artisan trainings for fly-proof latrine construction and operation and maintenance.

Pact regional staff and designated partner staff conduct routine environmental compliance visits to project sites, during which they discuss adherence to EMMPs and observe practice in the field, using checklists and guidelines developed as part of Shae Thot's environmental efforts. The teams share findings from these visits with Shae Thot partners and provide suggestions for improving compliance.



**Plant-growing Festival at Yinmabin Township  
lead by WORTH women**



## **7. Management and Personnel Changes**

A major focus this year was preparing for and supporting a program audit by the USAID Office of the Inspector General. In March, two auditors spent one month in country and undertook a two-week field visit to seven townships and 18 villages from different phases of the Shae Thot program. The audit focused on sustainability and program overlap, in addition to the usual focus on data quality and program management. Pact and Shae Thot partners found the preparation for the audit visit an opportunity to focus on enhancing internal systems and communication strategies. Field staff accompanying the auditors subsequently held their own lessons-learned meetings and have disseminated internal notes on opportunities to improve field operations and program overlap for greater synergy between program components. Verbal feedback from the auditors was generally positive.

The auditors required that Shae Thot conduct an assessment of water and sanitation activities conducted in Years 1 and 2, focusing on effectiveness and sustainability. An external evaluator will be identified in Q1 of the coming year and the assessment findings will be available by Q2.

The Shae Thot program has now provided four years of experience implementing integrated development programming at scale. To capture the lessons learned from this work, and explore the advantages and challenges of development in Burma, this year Pact launched an occasional series of

“Myanmar Development Dialogues.” In March, Pact organized the first Dialogue, focused on the lessons and evidence from Shae Thot and other integrated development projects to catalyze discussion about how the development community – including implementers, funders, and policy makers – views and promotes effective responses to Burma’s development challenges. A central question the forum addressed was “To what extent does integrated development programming offer increased value for money, economies of scale, and more effective results than single-sector or less-integrated programs?” The forum was well attended, and 10 representatives from local NGOs and civil society, INGOs, and the Burma business community offered their insights and questions on the topic. A session of leading donor organizations included panelists from DFID, JICA, the European Union, and USAID/Burma Mission Director Chris Milligan. Panelists discussed frameworks for integration and the need for data-driven analysis upon which to base future programming decisions.

In June, Pact organized the second Dialogue, this one focused on capacity development, titled “Capacity Development: Strengthening or Suffocating Civil Society Organizations in Myanmar.” The forum drew on capacity development experience in Shae Thot and other organizations and projects that have worked to promote a stronger civil society. Nearly 150 participants from 26 national civil society organizations and a range of INGOs and donor organizations participated in the event.

In May, Cesvi’s livelihoods sector coordinator resigned her post. Cesvi’s Shae Thot project manager, supported by an increased contribution of the Cesvi country representative and the M&E unit, fulfilled the duties during the position vacancy. A new livelihoods sector coordinator, Mr. Adrien Peyer, began his duties in early July.

Competition for qualified staff has continued to grow, and as the program approached its final year, turnover of skilled staff both in Rangoon and the field increased. Over the course of the year, Pact’s senior-most national colleague on the Shae Thot team, the senior program coordinator of Pact’s maternal and child health unit, and a deputy program coordinator resigned, as did Pact’s grants and contracts manager and communications specialist. Recruitment of replacements continues to be difficult, with several positions remaining unfilled even after multiple rounds of advertising. Pact and partners have been exploring additional outlets for position announcements, and devised flexible approaches to manage the tasks of open positions.

In December United States Ambassador Derek Mitchell visited Nat Kan U Village in Yenangyaung Township, Magway Region, to commemorate the 2,000th Shae Thot program village. During the visit, Ambassador Mitchell, the USAID/Burma Democracy and Governance director, Government of Burma representatives, and Shae Thot consortium member organizational and program leaders observed activities in the village, including a baby-weighing and nutrition day event, a health education session, mobile clinic operations, water infrastructure training, and revolving livestock and seed bank systems. The Ambassador spoke with leaders of the Village Development Fund and the Village Development Committee, democratically elected local associations that manage program and general development activities in the community.

In August, USAID staff from both the Burma and Thailand missions traveled to Kayah State to observe USAID-supported program activities by Shae Thot and the Project for Local Empowerment, led by International Refugee Committee, and discussed opportunities for collaboration between the projects, to maximize USAID’s investments in the area. Pact and IRC staff have since agreed on how to collaborate in support of two local health-providing organizations. Shae Thot will offer organizational development support that complements what PLE has provided to date, including but not limited to strengthening M&E systems and training on community fund management. Both projects are also discussing collaboration on capacity support for other civil society organizations, with Shae Thot introducing gender, mediation skills, and human-rights-based approaches to Shae Thot

VDCs. Pact and IRC will also share organizational performance assessment approaches and consider working together to adapt tools for conflict-affected environments.



## **8. Problems Encountered and Response**

As mentioned above, turnover of key staff has been one of the principal challenges this year. In addition to the senior staff who have moved on, Shae Thot partners have experienced turnover among township managers and technical and operational support staff, many accepting offers for higher salaries. As the program enters its final year, staff are beginning to look for their next employment options and Shae Thot management has started some creative planning to retain top talent. Pact has conducted a comparative salary exercise and adjusted the organization's salary scale to ensure that salaries and benefits remain competitive.

Staffing in Kayah has been a persistent challenge. An increasing number of INGOs and projects have begun operating in the state. Most base their operations in the capital, Loikaw, and many candidates prefer to be stationed there rather than the remote townships where Shae Thot operates. Pact has created some roving positions that work across Kayah townships to provide more supervision and support for field staff.

The flash floods that hit much of the country in July affected 116 villages in Shae Thot implementation townships. Given their presence on the ground, Shae Thot staff and partners (MSI, PGMF, UN-Habitat, and Cesvi) were able to respond rapidly, transporting donated and project-purchased water and food relief, and hygiene kits. The response delayed project implementation by approximately one month, as staff efforts shifted to relief activities and recovery planning. Affected villages had to delay planned project activities into September. Shae Thot staff will work to accelerate implementation in Year 5 to make up implementation delays.

Shae Thot partner flood responses:

- Pact has distributed emergency food and supplies in Yesagyp, Yinmabin, Budalin and Sinbaungwe Townships, covering 74,621 people in 15,307 households from 223 villages or camps.
- MSI provided medical services through their mobile clinics and necessary supplies, including 4,000 hygiene kits, to a total of 2,646 households in flood affected areas in Magway and Sagaing regions.
- PGMF started Early Response (ER) programs in severely hit villages distributing basic food packets, water purifying tablets, and ORS to 30,136 households.
- UN-Habitat supported the reconstruction of a deep-tube well and a water pumping system that was damaged in the floods.
- Cesvi provided clothes, food, and hygiene kits to 3,424 individuals from 833 households in project villages located along the Ayyarwaddy River.

In July, USAID informed Shae Thot management that the next program obligation was likely to be delayed, in light of a delay in approval in Washington for the fiscal year's budget. Shae Thot partners began planning for the possibility of slowing down program implementation through end of calendar year and to speed up once the obligation became available. Toward the end of the year, the Mission managed to make a partial obligation from funds on hand and had requested early release of the next obligation.



## **9. Information on Cost Overruns and Spending**

As of the end of September 2015, a total of \$48,166,026 had been obligated for Shae Thot, and the program had spent and sub-obligated a total of \$46,857,801 against this amount. As the program enters its final year, all consortium members have planned and budgeted carefully to minimize the possibility of cost overruns.

## 10. Annex A: Program Management and Required Indicator Reporting

Indicator	July-September 2015	Year 4 to date	Project Cumulative	Year 4 Target (Project Cumulative)	% Achieved
<b>Objective 1: Improved Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health</b>					
<b>Activity Outputs</b>					
Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through USG-supported health area programs (3.1.9-1)	<b>97,469</b>	<b>439,634</b>	<b>979,590</b>	<b>905,728</b>	<b>108%</b>
Community members	96,842	436,418 <sup>1</sup>	971,009 <sup>2</sup>	898,257	
Health workers and volunteers	627	3,216 <sup>3</sup>	8,581	7,471	
<b>Outcomes</b>					
<b>Outcome 1.1: Communities have immediate access to resources for health care, including emergencies</b>					
# of individuals who received treatment through mobile clinics	<b>8,727</b>	<b>28,043<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>94,810</b>	<b>85,317</b>	<b>111%</b>
Men	1,884	5,710	19,359		
Women	6,843	22,333	75,451		
# of cases of clients who received treatment through mobile clinics	<b>24,110</b>	<b>83,092</b>	<b>243,411</b>	<b>212,460</b>	<b>115%</b>
Care for under 5 children	4,490	14,903	43,672 <sup>5</sup>	37,906	
ANC	4,954	16,818	39,984 <sup>6</sup>	30,983	
Family planning	11,593	43,553	110,341 <sup>7</sup>	105,921	
Other MCH Services	1,996	5,792	43,633 <sup>8</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> 5 individuals were subtracted from the Year4 achievement after correcting a data entry error.

<sup>2</sup> 102 individuals were subtracted from the project total after correcting a data entry error.

<sup>3</sup> 38 participants were added to the Year 4 Quarter 2 achievement after adding township data that had not been reported by compilation time.

<sup>4</sup> 7 individuals were added to the Year 4 achievement after correcting the township data to match the source file.

<sup>5</sup> 882 cases were added to the project total after correcting the township data to match the source file and fixing a formula error in the township's excel database.

<sup>6</sup> 784 cases were added to the project total after correcting the township data to match the source file and fixing a formula error in the township's excel database.

<sup>7</sup> 4,351 cases were subtracted from the project total after correcting the township data to match the source file and fixing a formula error in the township's excel database.

<sup>8</sup> 4,642 cases were added to the project total after correcting the township data to match the source file and fixing a formula error in the township's excel database.

Indicator	July-September 2015	Year 4 to date	Project Cumulative	Year 4 Target (Project Cumulative)	% Achieved
Other	1,077	2,026	5,781 <sup>9</sup>		
<b>Outcome 1.2: Increased access to family planning services and knowledge of options</b>					
% of married women of reproductive age who knew of at least 3 contraceptive methods	n/a	41%	41%	32%	128%
<b>Outcome 1.3: More women receive all key focused ANC interventions</b>					
# of pregnant women who received 4 or more ANC visits during their last pregnancy	1,464 <sup>10</sup>	3,767	5,730	3,260	176%
# of pregnant women who received 2 tetanus toxoid injections during their last pregnancy	2,151 <sup>11</sup>	5,435	10,044 <sup>12</sup>	7,508	134%
<b>Outcome 1.4: More women deliver with at least a trained birth attendant</b>					
# of women who gave birth with a skilled birth attendant	1,638 <sup>13</sup>	4,161	6,991	4,775	146%
<b>Outcome 1.5: Improved post-natal follow-up</b>					
# of newborns receiving postnatal health check within 2 days of birth.	<b>1,297<sup>14</sup></b>	<b>3,157</b>	<b>5,583</b>	3,851	145%
Male	646	1,619	2,815		
Female	651	1,538	2,768		
<b>Outcome 1.6: Improved Nutrition for Children</b>					
% of children exclusively breastfed (3.1.9-4)	n/a	67%	67%	59%	114%
Average diet diversity score for children (6 – 59 months)	n/a	5.9	5.9	3.3	179%

<sup>9</sup> 729 cases were added the project total after correcting the township data to match the source file and fixing a formula error in the township's excel database.

<sup>10</sup> Includes 496 cases extrapolated from the sustainability research in phased out townships.

<sup>11</sup> Includes 799 cases extrapolated from the sustainability research in phased out townships.

<sup>12</sup> 3 pregnancies were added to the project total after correcting the township data to match the source file and fixing a formula error in the township's excel database.

<sup>13</sup> Includes 609 cases extrapolated from the sustainability research in phased out townships.

<sup>14</sup> Includes 591 cases extrapolated from the sustainability research in phased out townships, split evenly between male and female.

Indicator	July-September 2015	Year 4 to date	Project Cumulative	Year 4 Target (Project Cumulative)	% Achieved
# of children whose growth is tracked through community weighing days	7,570 <sup>15</sup>	27,378	50,017	31,481	159%
Male	3,683	13,725	25,065		
Female	3,887	13,653	24,952		
<b>Outcome 1.7: Improved prevention and treatment of childhood diseases</b>					
# of detected malaria cases that were treated with effective anti-malaria medication	17	69	69	42	164%
# of cases of diarrhea among children under 5 treated with ORS	948 <sup>16</sup>	3,496	6,652 <sup>17</sup>	4,570	146%
<b>Outcome 1.8: Communities more effectively monitor and nurture children</b>					
% of children under 5 whose births were registered	66%	66%	66%	45%	147%
<b>Objective 2: Improved household-level food security</b>					
<b>Activity Outputs</b>					
# of individuals who have received USG supported short term agricultural sector productivity or food security training (4.5.2-7)	6,221	14,822 <sup>18</sup>	44,902 <sup>19</sup>	35,430	127%
Men	3,752	8,997	31,017		
Women	2,469	5,825	13,885		
# of individuals who received financial literacy training	5,998	19,116	81,391	82,293	99%
Men	77	470	3,046		
Women	5,921	18,646	78,345		
<b>Outcomes</b>					
<b>Outcome 2.1: Increased access to fair financial services</b>					
Value of Agricultural and Rural loans disbursed (in USD) (4.5.2-29)	\$5,625,596	\$17,259,736	\$31,992,094	\$32,478,932	99%

<sup>15</sup> Includes 4,204 cases extrapolated from the sustainability research in phased out townships, split evenly between male and female.

<sup>16</sup> Includes 266 cases extrapolated from the sustainability research in phased out townships.

<sup>17</sup> 77 children were added to the project total after correcting the township data to match the source file and fixing a formula error in the township's excel database.

<sup>18</sup> 484 individual were added to the Year4 achievement after updating the indicator definition to add newly added activities.

<sup>19</sup> 93 individual were subtracted from the Year 3 to Quarter 4 achievement after fixing a data entry error.

Indicator	July-September 2015	Year 4 to date	Project Cumulative	Year 4 Target (Project Cumulative)	% Achieved
Microfinance institutions	\$4,267,048	\$14,853,863	\$27,013,157	\$28,179,619	
Savings groups	\$1,358,548 <sup>20</sup>	\$2,405,873 <sup>21</sup>	\$4,978,937 <sup>22</sup>	\$4,299,314	
Total number of clients benefitting from financial services provided through USG assisted intermediaries (4.7.1-22)	<b>6,142</b>	<b>21,831</b>	<b>86,388</b>	<b>82,620</b>	105%
Microfinance institutions	5,412	15,373	63,546	59,833	
Savings groups	730	6,458	22,842	22,787	
Men	102	461	3,342	79,156	
Women	6,040	21,370	83,046	3,464	
<b>Outcome 2.2: Increased income and household assets</b>					
Value of interest earned by savings groups	\$172,471 <sup>23</sup>	\$222,219 <sup>24</sup>	\$390,353	\$313,314	125%
<b>Outcome 2.3: Expanded use of more effective agricultural techniques and inputs</b>					
# of hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance (4.5.2-2)	973	4,047 <sup>25</sup>	10,345 <sup>26</sup>	9,181	113%
# of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance (4.5.2-5)	<b>5,947</b>	<b>12,746<sup>27</sup></b>	<b>34,328<sup>28</sup></b>	<b>28,221</b>	<b>122%</b>
Men	3,564	8,197	24,785		
Women	2,383	4,549	9,543		

<sup>20</sup> Includes \$934,581.27 extrapolated from the sustainability research in phased out townships.

<sup>21</sup> \$10,818 was added to the Year 4 Quarter 4 achievement after fixing a formula error in the compilation file.

<sup>22</sup> \$41 was subtracted from the Year 3 Quarter 4 achievement after a fixing formula error in the source file.

<sup>23</sup> Includes \$150,777.11 extrapolated from the sustainability research in phased out townships.

<sup>24</sup> \$244 was added to the Year 4 Quarter 4 achievement after fixing a formula error in the compilation file.

<sup>25</sup> 12 hectares added to Year 4 achievement after updating the indicator definition to add newly added activities.

<sup>26</sup> 5 hectares added to Year 3 achievement after updating the indicator definition to add newly added activities.

<sup>27</sup> 277 individuals were added to the Year 4 achievement after updating the indicator definition to add newly added activities.

<sup>28</sup> 247 individuals were subtracted from the Year 3 Quarter 4 achievement after fixing a formula error in the source file.

Indicator	July-September 2015	Year 4 to date	Project Cumulative	Year 4 Target (Project Cumulative)	% Achieved
<b>Objective 3: Increased access to sufficient quantities of water, potable water, and improved hygiene</b>					
<b>Activity Outputs</b>					
# of community based water systems built or renovated	58	257	1,599	1,463	109%
# of household safe water systems distributed	84	3,453	68,594	69,351	99%
<b>Outcomes</b>					
<b>Outcome 3.1: Improved Infrastructure makes safe water more available</b>					
% of households using an improved drinking water source	n/a	75%	75%	83%	90%
# of people with access to improved drinking water sources	11,949	73,271	541,602	554,772	98%
<b>Outcome 3.2: Increased use of water purification equipment</b>					
% of households that used water purification equipment to treat the household's water	n/a	94%	94%	30%	313%
<b>Outcome 3.3: Households use improved sanitation infrastructure</b>					
# of improved sanitation facilities built or reconstructed	4,253	13,465 <sup>29</sup>	43,730	35,742	122%
# of people with access to improved latrines	22,081	67,763 <sup>30</sup>	217,793	178,003	122%
<b>Outcome 3.4: Improved hygiene behavior</b>					
% of households with soap and water at a hand washing station commonly used by the family (3.1.6.8-1)	n/a	93%	93%	76%	122%
<b>Objective 4: Strengthened Social and Community Institutions for Development.</b>					
<b>Activity Outputs</b>					
# of village development committees supported by USG funds	0	17	1141	1,127	101%
# of community sub-groups supported by USG funds	<b>910</b>	<b>3,427</b>	<b>15,833</b>	<b>15,414</b>	<b>103%</b>
Village Development Funds	14	239 <sup>31</sup>	1,001		
Income Generation Groups	846	2,805	12,437		

<sup>29</sup> 53 latrines were subtracted from the Year4 Quarter 4 achievement after fixing a formula error in the source database.

<sup>30</sup> 265 beneficiaries were subtracted from the Year 4 Quarter 4 achievement after fixing a formula error in the source database.

<sup>31</sup> 6 villages were added to the Year 4 Quarter 4 achievement after fixing calculation errors in a township report.

Indicator	July-September 2015	Year 4 to date	Project Cumulative	Year 4 Target (Project Cumulative)	% Achieved
Women's Savings Groups	35	277 <sup>32</sup>	913		
Water Committees	0	90	783		
Agricultural Groups	0	0	359		
Livestock Groups	15	16	340		
# of pilot VDCs with integrated village development plans	14	90	90	27	333%
# of cross-community exchange visits	19	19	19	43	44%
# of participants in VDC strengthening trainings	185	772 <sup>33</sup>	772	810	95%
# of CSOs receiving USAID financial support	0	0	7	7	100%
<b>Outcomes</b>					
<b><i>Outcome 4.1: Community institutions are transparent and accountable to their community</i></b>					
# of communities with beneficiary accountability mechanisms in place	0	126	126	122	103%
# of VDC re-elections conducted	41	45 <sup>34</sup>	590 <sup>35</sup>	214	272%
<b><i>Outcome 4.2: Communities possess a shared vision of their development and are able to address their development needs</i></b>					
# of community organizations that increase their COPI score	10	43 <sup>36</sup>	43	20	115%
% of pilot VDCs which had whole VDC meetings in the last three months	15%	67%	67%	29%	231%
<b><i>Outcome 4.3: Increased capacity of local organizations to develop and implement development projects</i></b>					
% of CSO institutional strengthening plans >90% on track	100%	100%	100%	80%	125%
# of CSOs with increased OPI scores	2	3	3	7	43%
% change in network connectivity	n/a	n/a	n/a	30%	

<sup>32</sup> 83 groups were added to the Year 4 achievement after receiving late data.

<sup>33</sup> 6 participants were added to the Year 4 achievement after correcting the reported numbers to match source documents.

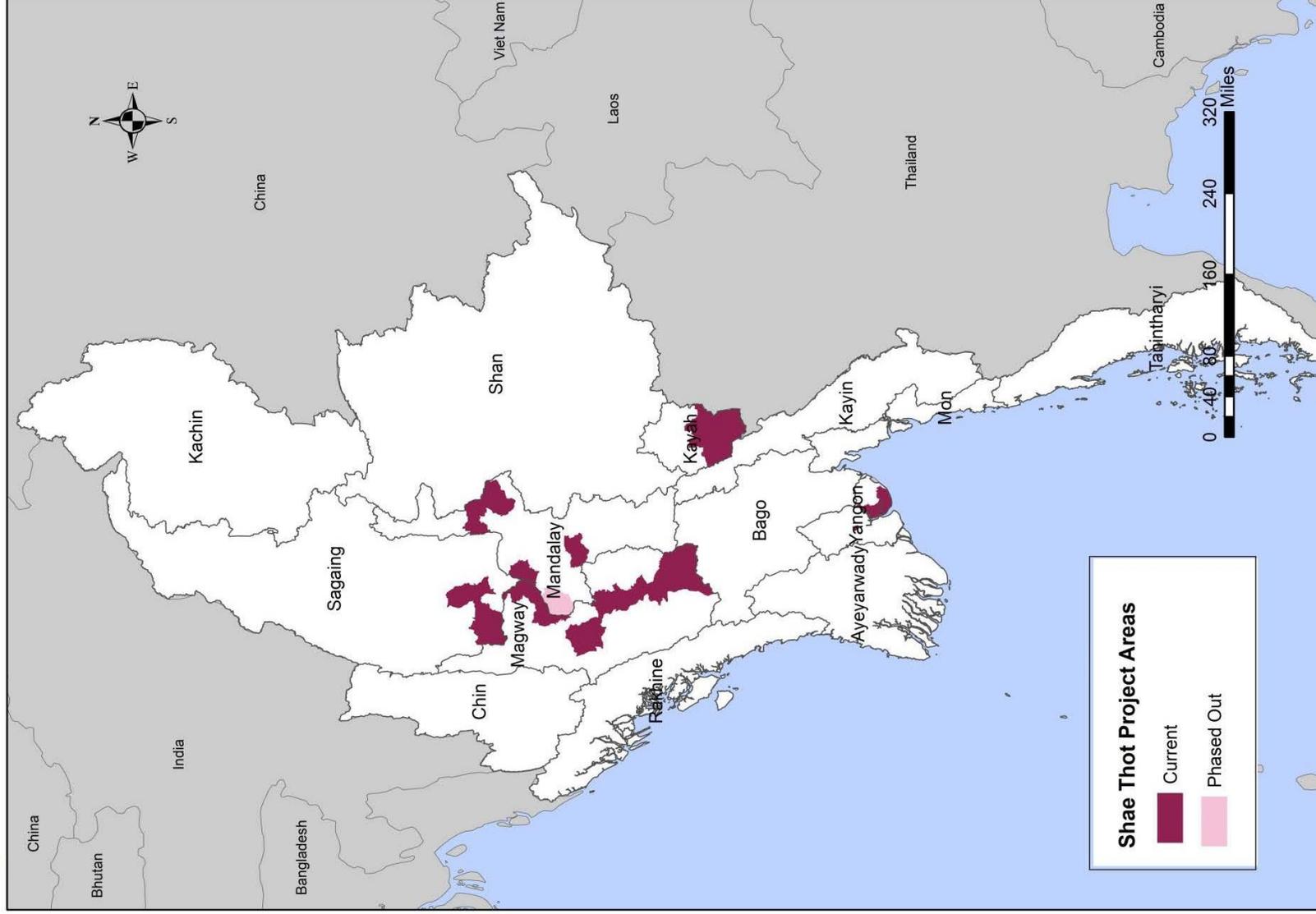
<sup>34</sup> 1 VDC added to the Year 4 Quarter 3 achievement after a late township report. 3 VDCs added to Q1 after updating the formula to include MCH VDC Reinforcement workshops.

<sup>35</sup> 582 VDCs added to the project total after updated the formula to include MCH Reinforcement and VDC Reinforcement workshops.

<sup>36</sup> 10 VDCs added to the Year 4 Quarter 3 achievement after adding a late report from one township.



## 11. Annex B: Shae Thot Map





## **12. Annex C: Success Stories**



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## FIRST PERSON

# We Are Now Able to Shape our Future Development



Daw Myint Myint San (bottom right) at a VDC meeting

*“USAID’s investment in building the capacities of our community has improved our livelihoods, as well as, enhanced our knowledge and skills to continue our future development.”*

**Daw Myint Myint San  
VDC President  
Than Boet Village  
Salin Township**

My name is Daw Myint Myint San and I am 50 years old. I live in Salin Township. My village name is Than Boet village. We did not have many resources to develop our community, but that changed in 2012 when the Shae Thot program came to us. Pact staff introduced the Village Development Committee (VDC) to our village. We were taught how these committees are founded with the collaboration of project staff and community members.

I was elected as VDC President by the villagers, and I promised to serve my community to help bring about development. The project contributed 35,000 Kyat (\$29) as an initial investment to establish a village development fund which was managed by the VDC. The community also contributed the same amount. The fund started supporting vulnerable farmers with 50,000 Kyat (\$41) and spent the remaining 20,000 Kyat (\$17) on emergency health activities.

Within two years, the revolving fund had grown into 1,387,000 Kyat (\$1,142). In addition to providing loans, the community also used the fund to donate money for various community development activities. We donated 889,000 Kyats (\$732) for the renovation of the village religious hall, for a new amplifier and electric cables for the village, table covers, medicines and nutrition supplements for children under five years of age, and for a new roof for the school. With the support of Cesvi, we also decided to set-up a Farmer Field School which focused on soil fertility improvement, and on testing different systems of fertilization such as using organic fertilizer, chemical fertilizer, or both. Our fund spent 35,000 Kyat (\$29) to set up the school.

In 2013, also with the support of Cesvi, the community was able to set up a seed bank and an animal bank. Cesvi provided paddy seeds to seven farmers and pigs to three farmers. Over time, the banks grew as loans were made and returned with interest and the number of animals increased through off-spring. Today, through the revolving mechanism, the seed bank supports 29 farmers and the animal bank supports 18 farmers.

Our VDC also works with MSI, utilizing their mobile clinics, for nutrition activities targeting children under five years of age. Shae Thot has really supported our village. Thanks to the USAID investment and support from Pact, Cesvi and MSI, our village now runs a successful business, and our rotating fund is 1,750,000 Kyats (\$1,441). Our livelihoods and health has improved and we have enhanced our knowledge and skills. We are now able to shape our future development.

**In Burma, three-quarters of the population live in rural areas and include the majority of the country’s poor. Shae Thot takes a dual approach towards improving livelihoods and food security that includes expanded access to financial services and improved agriculture services. The VDCs and VDFs support work in health, livelihoods and natural resource management and provide communities safety nets.**

### Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

<sup>1</sup>All currency converted with a 1,214.8 MMK = 1 USD exchange rate



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building  
local  
promise.

## SNAPSHOT

### From MCH Promoter to Auxiliary Midwife



Ma Wei Zar Thin at a Maternal and Child Health Promoter meeting

*“I’m so happy to participate in the AMW training. When I was a MCHP, I was able to conduct health education session for family planning. After I complete the AMW training, I believe I can do more for the village.”*

**Ma Wei Zar Thin  
MCPH Volunteer  
Hta Naung Pin Su (South) Village**

Hta Naung Pin Su (South) village is located seven miles away from the nearest town in Myingyan Township. The poorly constructed roads flood frequently during the rainy season. Most residents find it difficult to reach town health centers, and therefore depend on health workers visiting their village.

The midwife who visits Hta Naung Pin Su (South) village covers four villages. Due to the high number of clients and bad road conditions, she is unable to provide care for all residents. Women in the village lack information about reproductive health, family planning, and the need for adequate spacing between children. Women there have children even beyond the age of 45.

Ma Wai Zar Thin, who is in her final year of college, longed to help the women in her village. When she heard that Marie Stopes International (MSI) was providing health education sessions for volunteers to be maternal and child health promoters (MCHP), she immediately joined. An MCHP since March 2014, she not only served her village but also Taung Boet Thar Village, helping raise awareness about family planning and maternal and child health by conducting community health education sessions.

In an effort to provide health services in rural areas, the Department of Health trains volunteer auxiliary midwives (AMWs). In partnership with township health departments, MSI provides support for the trainings. When it came time to recruit a candidate from Hta Naung Pin Su (South) village, the midwife and community leaders decided that Ma Wai Zar Thin was an easy choice given her hard work and interest in health issues. Ma Wai Zar Thin was thrilled to hear about her nomination. She was eager to learn more about antenatal care, how to detect danger signs in pregnancy, and how to assist the midwife for a safe delivery.

On August 18, 2015 she began attending the six-month long ‘Basic AMW Training’ supported by MSI at the Myingyan General Hospital while continuing her volunteer work as a MCHP. Ma Wai Zar Thin is already excited about the opportunity: “I’m so happy to participate in the AMW training. When I was a MCHP, I was able to conduct health education session for family planning. After I complete the AMW training, I believe I can do more for the village. I can help and care for the mothers and children in my village with my utmost abilities.”

**Burma’s maternal mortality rate (240 per 100,000 live births) and under-five mortality rate (71 per 1,000 live births) are high, especially in rural areas (UNICEF, 2010). Shae Thot partner, MSI, provides much needed MCH services to these areas.**

# FIRST PERSON

## Low Interest Loans Provide Diverse Business Opportunities



Daw Soe Soe Thu inside her snack shop at home

*“We are now able to better support our children’s education and participate in social activities. For that, I really thank PGMF for their invaluable contribution toward us.”*

**Daw Soe Soe Thu**  
Ba Yet Village  
Thanlyin Township

I am Daw Soe Soe Thu from Ba Yet village in Thanlyin Township. I am married to U Soe Aung, a farmer. We have two children, a son and a daughter. In the past, my family relied on our small paddy field plot, our sole source of income at the time. We would earn about 90,000 Kyat (\$74)<sup>1</sup> a month, but it hardly met our expenses. We have always hoped to start our own business to have a better income, but did not have the money or knowledge to do so.

In May 2013, the Pact Global Microfinance Fund (PGMF) began working in our village providing financial services without collateral. I attended five modules of Non Formal Business Education (NFBE) Training provided by PGMF to expand my financial skills and gain entrepreneurship skills necessary to run a business. I gained a significant amount of knowledge after I became a PGMF client.

After completing the NFBE training, I took my first regular loan of 80,000 Kyat (\$66) from PGMF to open a snack shop at home. Since that very first loan from PGMF, our family’s economic situation has improved greatly. In November 2013, I took an agriculture loan for 100,000 Kyat (\$82) to purchase seeds and fertilizer for post monsoon cultivation. Our income gradually improved due to higher yields, and so, six months later, I took a larger second regular loan of about 150,000 Kyat (\$124) to support additional business activities. I used the money to buy snacks for my shop and also bought two small pigs to start pig breeding.

PGMF allows clients to access different types of loans which is very helpful to us. Our family’s income continued to increase and our businesses are doing well, so this year I had the confidence to take on a third regular loan of 250,000 Kyat (\$206) and another agricultural loan of 300,000 Kyat (\$247) to purchase fertilizers, seed and equipment to expand our paddy cultivation.

Now, our economic situation has greatly improved. Today we have about 150,000 Kyat (\$124) in hand each month. Our family’s standard of living is much better. We are now able to better support our children’s education and participate in social activities. For that, I really thank PGMF for their invaluable contribution toward us.

**Burma’s banking sector has found it commercially challenging to extend financial services to the poor. As a result, fewer than 20% of people have access to formal financial services, with most people relying on family savings or costly alternatives such as informal money lenders. Shae Thot partner PGMF provides opportunity for such individuals to gain the skills, knowledge and capital necessary to run a profitable business and increase their income.**

## SNAPSHOT

### Overcoming Debt Through Women's Savings Groups



Ma San Yee is preparing food for her ducks

*“WORTH saved my life and has shown me the way to succeed and support my family.”*

**Ma San Yee**  
**Myit Kat Vilalge**  
**Madaya Township**

Myit Kat village, situated in Madaya Township in Mandalay, has about 70 households. The majority of the villagers farm as their main source of income. While some farmers earn a decent income, the majority of them face financial difficulty.

For Ma San Yee, who has two children, the farming business alone could not support her family. Therefore, she has been selling *Mont Sein Paung* (a local snack made of rice) in Madayar Township for more than eight years. Her eldest son was in school, and she had to invest a lot of money for his education. However, he failed the Grade 11 matriculation exam three times and was not able to continue schooling because Ma San Yee was not able to pay for his education. She accumulated 600,000 Kyats (\$494)<sup>1</sup> in debt which she could not repay, therefore increasing her interest and spiraling her into further debt. She was tired and had many sleepless nights worrying about her family. She fought and quarreled with her husband a lot.

While facing all these difficulties, she had a chance to meet and talk with Ma Nwe, the Treasurer of Shwe Thaya Phu WORTH Group, a women's economic empowerment group. Ma San Yee shared her difficulties with Ma Nwe and asked her advice. Ma Nwe explained how the WORTH revolving fund works. Encouraged, Ma San Yee decided to get a loan from them.

The following year, Ma San Yee became a member of the Shwe Thaya Phu group and started saving 1,000 Kyats (\$0.82) per week, the required savings contribution. Three months later, she got 300,000 Kyats (\$247) from the group and combined it with her saving to buy 254 ducks. She was able to save money from selling duck eggs and *Mont Sein Paung* and was able to pay back the loan in installments. She was also able to pay back her debt.

Today, six months after she joined the group, Ma San Yee is free from debt and has 254 ducks of her own. She now earns 450,000 Kyats (\$370) per month, almost four times higher than her previous earnings of 120,000 Kyats (\$99) per month. Her husband asked her to not sell *Mont Sein Paung* anymore as they are doing really well with the poultry business. But Ma San Yee will keep selling the snack and doing poultry farming so as to save more for the future. She plans to continue saving money with the savings group. She has a strong commitment and hope for her future: “WORTH saved my life and has shown me the way to succeed and support my family.”

**Shae That's WORTH programing in Madaya Township is conducted in partnership with the Chevron-funded 'Sustainable Health Improvement and Empowerment (SHINE II) program. The public private partnership has allowed women like Ma San Yee to begin or grow their own businesses, thereby improving the wellbeing of themselves and their families.**



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# FIRST PERSON

## Fly-Proof Latrines and Water Filters Prevent Spread of Diarrhea



U Soe Than next to the fly proof latrine he built

*“I share my knowledge and experiences with my neighbors and encourage them to also build fly proof latrines. I really thank Thirst Aid for its activities and contribution to our community.”*

**U Soe Than**  
**Kun Ohn Village**  
**Magway Township**

Telling Our Story  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

My name is U Soe Than and I am a 56 year-old home owner. My wife’s name is Daw Than Htay and we have two daughters. They are married now and no longer live with us. I earn money by working as a farm assistant on a few farms. Sometimes, I get extra income from my own pig breeding work. I live in Kun Ohn village which is situated 36 miles away from Magway Township. There are 98 households in my village, and people work as farmers or mine-workers.

One time, there was a bad diarrhea outbreak that spread throughout our village. Many people were hospitalized and some people even lost their lives. Back then, we used to think that if the water is clear of dust particles, it was safe for drinking. And many of us used to openly defecate. Fly proof latrines were too expensive for us. Even though we openly defecated, it was actually inconvenient for us as we had to wait until no one was nearby, had to watch out for any poisonous animals, and also we could not go out if it was raining or after dark.

Though there were some local and international NGOs working in our village on agriculture, health and microfinance activities, we did not receive any support for water, sanitation or hygiene. Finally, Thirst Aid brought the ‘4 Cleans’ project to us. They distributed ceramic water filters to us and taught us how to use them and about waterborne diseases. We learned that just because our water is clear does not mean that it is safe for drinking. The water could have chemical or biological substance that is harmful for us.

Thirst Aid also taught us about how flies spread diseases from feces causing diarrhea, and that fly proof latrines can help prevent it. After hearing Thirst Aid staff speak, I realized the advantages and importance of fly proof latrines, so I participated in the trainings they provided on how to construct the latrines so I could build one on my own. It did not cost me much to build; I was able to use things I had such as small pieces of wood, a rubber plate, nails, some pans, and pipes. I now have a fly proof latrine which can be used anytime during the day which is very convenient. I share my knowledge and experience with my neighbors and encourage them to also build fly proof latrines. I really thank Thirst Aid for its activities and contribution to the community.

**Diarrhea is one of the most common illnesses in Burma, especially during the rainy season. The disease is mainly caused by the usage of unhygienic food and water, lack of proper handwashing, and open defecation which allows the common house-fly to spread the disease. The lack of knowledge of these factors and lack of an enabling environment perpetuate the disease. The strategy implemented by Thirst Aid, a Shae Thot partner organization, addresses both issues.**



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**UN HABITAT**  
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME



## SNAPSHOT

### Access to Piped Water Provides Time to Improve Livelihoods



Renovated water tank in Nyaung Pin Aint village



Daw Khin Yee is happy with the newly built piped water system in her household

*“Children and women are happier than ever before because they are able to save time from fetching water. We believe our community is getting a chance to live healthier.”*

**Daw Khin Yee**  
**Nyaung Pin Aint Village**  
**Yenangyaung Township**

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Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Nyaung Pin Aint village is located in the southeast part of Yenangyaung Township in Burma’s Dry Zone with a total population of 202 households (909 people). The village is located 23 miles away from the Township center. Though there is a stream near the village, community members face regular water scarcity especially during the dry seasons.

Daw Khin Yee explains, “We used to face a lot of water scarcity issues. There was an old tube well with a pump, but it had not been working since 1987. In the summer, villagers had to get water from the hand dug well located 2,000 feet away and use bullock carts to get there which takes about two hours. But the well doesn’t always have water as the ground water levels are decreasing year after year. We get our drinking water from a nearby stream, but it takes about 30 minutes to fetch one bucket of water [about 5 gallons].”

To provide better access to water for Nyaung Pin Aint residents, Shae Thot partner UN-Habitat worked with the local Village Water Committee (VWC) to support the renovation of the existing well and provided a main piping system to deliver water from the well to the village. Daw Khin Yee explains: “The Village Water Committee members encouraged the villagers to get water lines to their households by contributing their labor and 24,000 Kyat (\$20)<sup>1</sup> for pipes. Today we have access to piped water. There are water taps in our houses with water meters, and we pay the Water Committee members the fees [350 Kyats (\$0.29) per cubic meter]”. Tasked with the management of the piped water system, VWCs utilize these fees for operation and maintenance costs.

UN-Habitat leads water and sanitation infrastructure activities in Central Burma, promoting low-cost, low-technology solutions that utilize community expertise and resources. All infrastructure work is implemented in partnership with VWCs through a community-driven action planning process where communities identify their needs and develop contracts to implement activities based on those self-assessed needs. The process increases local skills and expertise, while fostering a sense of ownership in communities.

Having piped water in her village has provided Daw Khin Yee and her neighbors extra time that they can use for other needs. “We are very grateful to UN-Habitat and the Shae Thot project. The new water supply system gives us more time to engage in other chores, children have more time to study and play, and women don’t have to walk long distance nor carry heavy water buckets. We also have water at home in case of a fire. I’m able to spend more time in my basket weaving business. I can weave one more basket each day. That’s an additional 1,500 Kyats (\$1.2) per day.”

**Temperatures are increasing year by year in Burma, causing severe shortages in water throughout the country. The Government Meteorological Department cites temperatures as high as 40 degrees Celsius in Burma’s Dry Zone. In Yenangyaung Township, located in the northern part of the Dry Zone, rainfall is only 25 inches annually.**

<sup>1</sup>All currency converted with a 1,214.8 MMK = 1 USD exchange rate



# FIRST PERSON

## WORTH Group Becomes Business Role Models



Padamyar Young WORTH group members share a moment of laughter while making interest payments to the group during their banking meeting

*“We feel that group business can unite the women in the village. People from other villages have also acknowledged our success. We are proud to be WORTH group members.”*

**Padamyar Young WORTH Group  
Kone Thar Village  
Butalin Township**

Our village name is Kone Thar Village and it is located in Butalin Township. This village is far from the cities and here education levels are low. Most of the residents are farmers and they depend on agriculture.

One day, the Pact Myanmar staff organized a meeting with the villagers and introduced their women’s economic empowerment program called WORTH. Many people were not interested in the program because they could not manage to save money regularly. But we were motivated by the WORTH program and so a few days later we started a group with 20 women and named the group Padamyar Young. That was on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April in 2014.

We started by saving 500 Kyats (\$0.41) per person every Sunday. Now we are already in our third six-month banking cycle and our fund is 1,408,700 Kyats (\$1,160)<sup>1</sup>. We continue to save regularly and provide loans with a 4% interest rate. We have become role models in our village. Some women even asked to join our group. Because there were so many, we helped them create their own group instead. We showed them how to set-up a WORTH group and taught them how to calculate banking forms, what rules and regulations to follow as members and when giving out loans, and how to manage the group successfully. They have 29 members and their group is called Shwe La Young.

This year, as we still had some extra money in our savings box, we thought of selling traditional Burmese snacks like Mohinkhar, noodle salad, coffee, and children’s toys to grow our business. We discussed this together as a group and decided to sell the Burmese snack at our village’s pagoda festival that took place in February 2015. We invested 50,000 Kyats (\$41) from our savings. All of the group members and even other villagers were happy to participate in this business. Since we had a lot of support, all of the snacks we made sold quickly. We got 80,000 Kyats (\$66) in profit from the sales. We put that money back into the group savings bank as a group profit not owned by any individual, but by the entire group.

We feel that group business can unite the women in the village. People from other villages have also acknowledged our success. We are proud to be WORTH group members.

**Shae That’s women’s economic empowerment program, called WORTH, strengthens participants’ ability to support themselves and their families by providing access to financing through a savings-based group loan fund. After participating in a self-learning series on financial literacy and entrepreneurial training, women begin to take out individual low-interest loans to begin or grow their own micro-enterprises. As members repay their loans, the interest generated helps grow the fund, increasing capital to be loaned out again to other members.**

<sup>1</sup>All currency converted with a 1,214.8 MMK = 1 USD exchange rate



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# FIRST PERSON

## New Sesame Growing Technique Improves Yield



U Zaw Zaw in front of his sesame demonstration plot

*“After seeing my experiment, other villagers are also encouraged to use the new technology in the coming season... I am very happy and grateful to the Shae Thot program and to KSDA for teaching me the new agriculture technique and for providing the tools and support”*

**U Zaw Zaw Lwin**  
**Wan Chai Village**  
**Bawlekhe Township**

My name is U Zaw Zaw Lwin. And my wife’s name is Ma Khin Myint. I have four children, and I live in Wan Chei Village in Bawlakhe Township. Most people are farmers here. Our main crop is sesame and we depend on it as our main source of income. We do some extra work like fishing and growing vegetables in order to meet our daily expenses. Sometimes, we have to borrow money and rice from our local money lender or merchant. We pay them back with interest from the sesame harvest. The interest is high and we are not always able to pay. We did not know how to overcome these problems and we were always worried about our children’s education and health expenses.

In 2014, Kayhtyoboe Social Development Association (KSDA) started a project funded by USAID in fifteen villages in Bawlakhe Township. Our village is one of them. We received agriculture tools and trainings from KSDA about how to select good seeds and to grow them with new technologies. I attended the trainings and shared my knowledge with my friends. I then decided to put my knowledge to action in the next farming season. I decided to conduct an experiment by setting up a demonstration plot to see the impact of using a new technology to grow sesame seeds.

On half of a 0.82 acre piece of land, I grew sesame using the old technology of spreading the seed on the land using a mini-track. I needed five cups of seed to cover the plot. In the other half, I used the new technology I learned from KSDA of growing the plants in a row. I used a small cup with a hole in the bottom to spread the seeds in rows. I only needed three cups of sesame seeds to cover the plot with this method. Once the plants had grown, I tested a sample area on both sides. The side grown in rows produced three cups of seeds, while the other side only produced two.

The results are quite remarkable. Not only is it easier for me to cultivate the sesame and harvest it as it grows in rows, but the seed quality of the harvest is better also. From the plot of land I cultivated using the new technology, I was able to make a profit of 366,500 Kyats (\$302)<sup>1</sup>. My monthly income has significantly increased as a result. Last year I earned about 190,000 Kyat (\$156) per month. This year, I earn 250,000 Kyat (\$206) per month.

After seeing my experiment, other villagers are also encouraged to use the new technology in the coming season. I will continue growing sesame this way as well. I am very happy and grateful to the Shae Thot program and to KSDA for teaching me the new agriculture technique and for providing the tools and support. Now we can somehow take care of our family’s living expenses.

**Agriculture is Burma’s main industry, accounting for 60% of GDP and employing about 65% of the labor force. In Kayah State, Shae Thot works with two local partner organizations, Kayhtyoboe Social Development Association (KSDA) and Rural Development Agency (RDA), to support a variety of locally driven interventions that seek to promote improved agriculture practices, strengthen market linkages, and build community capacities.**

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