



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

BURMA

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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

The United States Government (USG)'s fundamental objective in Burma is to help the Burmese people establish a representative government that governs justly and democratically, respecting the welfare and rights of its diverse citizens. U.S. assistance in Burma supports efforts to foster a peaceful transition in the country; aids displaced persons, refugees, and migrants who have been driven from their homes; and addresses the dire need for humanitarian assistance, health care, and educational opportunities. These programs strengthen civil society and assist millions of Burmese living both within and outside of Burma's borders.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Governing Justly and Democratically

In FY 2009, Burma continued to make progress in strengthening civil society. The media capacity-building program produced radio news reports for the first Burmese language program systematically to cover news from the ethnic states in mainstream media in Burma. The program also continued to provide journalism training and internship opportunities to independent Burmese journalists, to improve the professionalism of the media, and expand media coverage inside the country and around the world.

The Embassy's small grants program directly improved the capacity of local non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and community leaders, providing them support to organize and address local needs. Embassy-funded projects promoted the development of lateral linkages among local organizations and disparate communities, as well as fostered opportunities for local decision-making and community participation to address self-identified needs.

The National Endowment for Democracy continued its support for democracy in Burma through its grant program. Funding priorities in FY 2009 were internal organizing and coalition building, independent media, human rights education, documentation, international advocacy, support for ethnic nationalities, and women's empowerment.

Investing in People

The higher education focus this year shifted from distance education to providing Training-of-Trainers courses. The program focuses on strengthening civil society through community development as a catalyst for change. This shift allowed the program to reach a broader target audience throughout the country.

Innovative public health activities have also continued. HIV/AIDS coverage was increased in FY 2009 for men who have sex with men, female sex workers, and their clients through expanded peer outreach networks, 4 new drop-in centers (for a total of 12), 7 new sexually-transmitted infection clinics, and 2 new voluntary counseling and testing sites with free services. Further to mitigate the risk of Avian Influenza outbreaks, new risk management plans were put in place for border areas, production zones, and wetland areas.

The U.S. Agency for International Development's Regional Development Mission Asia also initiated tuberculosis (TB) and malaria activities in FY 2009. The development of multidrug resistant TB was slowed through enhanced drug resistance surveillance, border TB control, laboratory strengthening, and expansion of community Direct Observation Therapy programs. Case management of TB was improved through implementation of the "International Standards of TB Care," and through enhancement of public private partnerships. The USG also supported surveillance for anti-malarial drug resistance in four sites in the country, among other activities.

Humanitarian Assistance

Through the humanitarian assistance program, more than 600,000 Burmese migrants and refugees had better access to quality health and education services in migrant settlements and selected camps along the Thai-Burma border. As a result of continued advocacy, the USG, in close collaboration with Thai provincial health offices and community colleges, successfully developed Border Health Worker training modules and registered them at community colleges in the Thai provinces of Tak and Chiang Rai. A close working relationship was established with the Thai Ministry of Education to further migrant education services and a standard curriculum for primary school students from migrant communities was developed. This curriculum reflects the requirements of the Thai national curriculum, so that migrants who complete these studies can pursue opportunities in higher education.

Although post-Cyclone Nargis relief falls outside the purview of this Operating Unit, the USG's cumulative contribution of approximately \$75 million in humanitarian assistance since Nargis has benefited more than one million cyclone victims. Assistance included needs assessments; relief flights; distribution of relief supplies, seeds, and tools for farmers; recapitalization of microcredit programs; "cash for work" programs; and civil society capacity building. Unmet humanitarian needs stemming from Cyclone Nargis remain significant, and the USG continues to work with local and international partners to bring relief to storm-affected communities.