



Community Development Education, Phase II - Myanmar

Budget: \$42,000 needed. Year 2 of a 3-year project (year beginning 1 November). Year 2 budget total: \$52,000

Update:

This three-year project is phase II to a successful community development project. The project involves training facilitators in the troubled Rakhine state to work with local communities to undertake participatory, community-driven, sustainable development. The Rakhine State is extremely poor and suffers from the upheaval of inter-ethnic violence between the Buddhist Rakhine majority and the Muslim Rohingya.

Ten villages with 5000 community members are benefitting from this project. In spite of the conflict, our partners report that the ten facilitators, selected and appointed in a process driven by the community, are doing well. The new facilitators are now working in their own communities building rapport with village members and importantly, local authorities. In areas of ethnic tension this takes time and sensitivity. A series of peace-building initiatives will be held in December as a key element of this project is to encourage religious and ethnic minorities to work together.

Livelihoods have been improved through the manufacturing of bio sand filters (BSFs) at our partner's compound in Sittwe in the Rakhine State. It is anticipated the current staff of four will grow as demand increases. There are some orders from other NGOs (non-government organisations) which contribute to the income and sustainability of the manufacturing workshop. Local authorities have also received BSFs, experiencing the benefits of clean water for their own families and encouraging them to become more involved in improving their communities. The area also suffers from extreme weather events such as severe flooding and a new Disaster Risk Reduction component has been added to the project.

A number of seed projects including roads and bridges have opened the way for the movement of produce. Through these community-driven opportunities, villagers are learning the value of working together in projects such as building a dam, a new classroom or a community meeting place. Jenny Crameri and Richard Beaumont visited some of the more remote communities in September 2017 and saw the enthusiasm and pride of the local communities as they worked together to improve their communities.



Our partners said, "We have also seen an improvement in gender equality through the projects. In a hierarchical system, it is good to see women and men working alongside each other, for example in the manufacturing of BSFs with male/female staff. (see pic). Outcomes such as this benefit the whole community – the villagers realise it is better to work together rather than alone."

Thank you for your support of this project in the troubled Rakhine State. As locals our partners are able to access and work within the complicated cultural issues in the area - this is the benefit of engaging and empowering local communities.

