

Virtual Field Visit: Expansion of Agricultural Activities within a Humanitarian Assistance Program.

The Shae Thot Humanitarian Assistance Program is planning on expanding the activities of its Livelihood Component.

This Livelihood component is part of the \$55 million, 5 year, Shae Thot humanitarian assistance program. The Livelihood component was designed to increase household-level food security through activities that increase agricultural production and productivity at the household level and increase household-level income. This is done by providing agricultural inputs, training, veterinary commodities, and improving access to financial services and agricultural loans. The program is currently completing its second year of implementation.

So far, the implementation of this component in the field has produced positive results, leading to requests from the governments of two other Townships, namely the Chaung U and Magway Townships in the Dry Zone, to expand the program's agricultural activities to additional villages within these Townships as well.

The proposed action is to expand activities being implemented under the Livelihood component of the Shae Thot program to these two additional Townships. Currently the program reaches 32 villages, and will include some villages in Chaung U Township and Magway township by the end of the third year of implementation. The proposed expansion would see replication and full roll-out of this in additional villages in Chaung U Township and additional villages in Magway Township. The expanded program will focus on replicating the Livelihood activities currently being carried out. These activities include:

- The distribution of agricultural inputs to beneficiary farmers. These inputs include fertilizers (both natural and chemical) and pesticides (Neem cake and oil, with a recommended level of active ingredients for Neem pesticide being at 0.75% of Azaradaritin in 500 ml of pesticide)
- The distribution of improved seed varieties
- The training of key farmers and extension workers in Farmer Field Schools (FFS) using the Training of Trainers (TOT) approach. These modules will be on: the systematic utilization of fertilizers and pesticides, including the use of natural fertilizers and recommended rates for specific crops, proper methods and timing of application, as well as proper storage; and safe handling of fertilizers and pesticides through modules on soil fertility management and integrated pest management
- The distribution of veterinary commodities such as lotions, antiseptics, and injections for livestock medical care and treatment
- The training of veterinary extension workers on best practices in the use of good indigenous practices and medication

- The provision of agricultural loans and credit services, as well the establishment and/or strengthening of micro-financing and savings schemes for farmers.
- The provision of training in financial literacy to farmers and beneficiaries

These expansion activities will also provide capacity-building for the agricultural development department of the Ministry of Agriculture within the Chaung U and Magway Townships, as well as for the Village Development Committees and the Township-Level Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department. The TOT learning approach which will be used in the Farmer Field Schools is intended to put in place local capacity that will result in more efficient dissemination of best agricultural and veterinary practices in the townships. Shae Thot will operate the FFS for two years, then provide technical assistance to the village development committees and extension services for a third year.

More about the Shae Thot Humanitarian Assistance Program in Central Burma

Although the expansion of the Livelihood activities is a made-up scenario for the sake of this environmental analysis exercise, the Shae Thot Humanitarian Assistance Program and its three main components are quite real.

As mentioned above, Shae Thot is a 5 year humanitarian assistance program implemented by PACT in Central Burma. The program was designed to provide 2500 or more villages in Rangoon Division, the Dry Zone and Southern Shan State of Burma with comprehensive, holistic services in maternal child health (MCH), livelihoods, food security and WASH in order to alleviate suffering and prevent death through expanded humanitarian assistance in Burma. Started in September 2011, Shae Thot is just under two years into implementation by PACT, in partnership with CESVI, Marie Stopes International (MSI), the PACT Global Microfinance Fund (PGMF) and UN-Habitat. As of April 2013, Shae Thot partners have been active in 1064 villages across 18 townships in the Dry Zone, Rangoon and Kayah State, and has implemented activities in almost 1600 villages.

The Maternal Child Health component of Shae Thot is aimed at addressing the major cause of maternal, newborn and under-five mortality in Burma. The Shae Thot approach to this issue is by putting communities at the center of prioritizing and creating strategies to ensure that mothers have safe pregnancies and children and protected and nurtured to become healthy adults. This is done through the provision of family planning, provision of capacity building opportunities through the Village Development Committees, and the distribution of supplements and Distribute Long Lasting Insecticide-treated Nets (LLIN) bed nets to at risk communities. As of April 2013, a total of 213,449 community members and 3093 health workers and volunteers have been trained in child health and nutrition through USG- supported health area programs. And thanks to the mobile clinic component being implemented by the program, a total of 19,467 individuals have received health services and 6957 individuals have received family planning services.

The Livelihoods and Food Security component of the Shae Thot component was used as the basis for the above-mentioned scenario. So far, 7607 individuals (71%) have received USG-supported training in agriculture, food security and livestock breeding, and 27,139 individuals (87.2%) have received financial-literacy training.

The third component of the Shae Thot program focuses on Water Sanitation and Hygiene activities, intended to improve access to sufficient quantities of safe, potable water and improved hygiene by facilitating infrastructure improvements. Activities being implemented in this component include training local carpenters, masons and artisans to develop local expertise in improving water infrastructure, and obtaining building materials and supplies from local sources whenever possible. Some of the milestones achieved so far in this respect include building or renovating 229 community-based water systems and distributing 25,859 household safe water systems. Thanks to these endeavors, over 102,000 individuals in target areas now have improved access to safe drinking water supply.

(Information accurate as of 2013)