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Livelihoods and Social Cohesion



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Pillar 1/Output 5: Livelihoods and Social Cohesion
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Empowered lives.
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1. OVERVIEW

EXPECTED OUTPUT	Target communities and institutions will have more capacities for social cohesion, sustainable livelihoods and peace
EXPECTED RESULTS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poor households receive social protection assistance 2. Communities have increased opportunities for social cohesion and livelihoods 3. National and local partners have more capacities for building peace 4. Early recovery coordination is improved in target locations
LOCATIONS	Rakhine, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Shan, Chin and Mon Approximately 300 villages in 21 townships
2013 BUDGET	USD 10.066

2. PROGRESS AND RESULTS TO DATE

- UNDP initiated livelihood assistance activities in 12 villages across 3 townships in Rakhine state. These activities were designed and implemented in ways that improved relations between Rakhine and Muslim communities. To that end, villages were mobilized to establish 12 committees bringing together people from both ethnic groups, to take forward these activities. As a result, there is evidence of gradually increasing inter-village visits, participation and interaction in joint activities and intercommunity dialogue among the communities.

- To-date, UNDP has completed the construction of 5 water ponds, 3 bridges, 2 market access roads and 1 jetty and 1 embankment/access footpath, generating cash-for-work (C4W) for approximately 14,460 persons, of whom 50% are women. As a result, affected communities have been able to access their livelihood mainstays (including markets) as well as public and social services, in addition to earning much-needed income.



Community members and UNDP staff jointly inspect embankment in Rakhine.

- UNDP facilitated a South-South knowledge-sharing exercise between the Country Offices of Myanmar and Indonesia, where experiences on social cohesion from Indonesia were shared with union and state government officials in Rakhine, UNDP partners and staff. As a result, there is increased awareness of the relevance of social cohesion among government official, UNDP staff and community partners.
- UNDP-led early recovery coordination mechanisms are fully operational at national (Yangon) and state (Rakhine) levels. As a result, there is increased participation of humanitarian and development partners in early recovery forums and stronger attention to early recovery in planning and programming frameworks.

3. CHALLENGES AND LEARNING

- Due to the time needed for putting in place management, implementation and partnership arrangements for a new project, including for consulting partners, recruiting staff and establishing field offices, project implementation has been predictably slow in the first two quarters of 2013.



Members from Rakhine and Muslim villages participate in community meeting in Rakhine.

- While the project has improved interaction between Rakhine and Muslim communities, these preliminary results need to be deepened and consolidated. For example, while the joint infrastructure activities have provided opportunities for inter-village interaction, building on this, it would be important to provide the communities with more opportunities for dialogue, exposure and exchange in order to sustain and strengthen positive relations between them.

- Given the persisting humanitarian needs, donors and agencies are still paying

comparatively less attention to early recovery needs in Rakhine. A comprehensive recovery strategy and plan would help draw attention to (and leverage resources for) early recovery assistance for returnee areas.

4. LOOKING AHEAD

- UNDP is undertaking stakeholder consultations, finalizing village selection, establishing field offices and identifying implementing partners as preparatory activities and project implementation will be underway in all 07 states shortly.
- UNDP is also revising its village-based assessment tools, in order to collect information and record baselines for early recovery and social cohesion. This is being done so that UNDP will be able to share stronger evidence of its livelihood and social cohesion results with partners in the future.
- UNDP’s continuing coordination efforts will feed into the formulation of a Recovery and Development Strategy for Rakhine and additionally to other recovery, transition and development plans and frameworks being devised. UNDP will also step up early recovery coordination efforts in Kachin shortly.
- UNDP is also finalizing plans for improving national and sub-national social cohesion analysis and supporting civil society peacebuilding initiatives.

5. FINANCIAL PROGRESS (AS AT JUNE 2013)

Donor	2013 Budget	EXPENDITURE
Government of Japan	8,782,938	183,178
UNDP core	1,083,129	5,148
UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)	200,000	4,528
Total	10,066,067	192,854

6. CASE - STORY

Fostering peace for development: UNDP implements a pilot project in Rakhine



3 July 2013, Sittwe – UNDP pilots a series of community projects to help reestablish livelihoods and to rebuild trust and confidence between communities in conflict-affected areas in Rakhine State. The initiative implemented from April to June provides space for both communities to work and interact with each other.

With the ultimate aim to strengthen social cohesion in Rakhine State, so far the initiative was implemented in 12 villages in Pauk Taw, Minbya and Mrauk-U townships. During their recent joint visit with UNDP to the pilot project areas, Rakhine State Minister of Social Welfare Dr. Aung Kyaw Myint and other government officials had an opportunity to learn from the early progress of the initiative.

The immediate results of UNDP's assistance include restoration of rural infrastructure and creation of immediate job opportunities through cash-for-work initiative. As witnessed by UNDP and State Government officials on their joint visit, support to livelihoods provided by UNDP helped to increase peaceful interaction between the two communities.

Building trust takes time, according to Mr. Toily Kurbanov, UNDP Country Director in Myanmar, and yet it is possible to gradually restore trust between the affected communities through joint collaboration for their improved livelihoods. On top and above of creating space for inter-community dialogue, such joint collaboration empowers the communities as "stakeholders in peace".

Though many challenges remain the positive results and lessons learned will help UNDP, government counterparts and international development partners to scale up livelihoods support for social cohesion in future, Kurbanov said.

The initiative is part of UNDP's new country programme for Myanmar and is cost-shared by UNDP and the government of Japan.

Photograph: Members from two communities together with Rakhine State Minister of Social Welfare Dr. Aung Kyaw Myint, UNDP Country Director in Myanmar Toily Kurbanov, UNDP staff and government officials from various ministries seen near an embankment renovated by the collaborative efforts of two communities.
<http://www.mm.undp.org/NewsandPressreleases/NarNewsandPressreleases/SocialCoProject.html>