



## Myanmar

# Improving food and nutrition security in Rakhine State

**An overview of our work  
(October 2018 – March 2020)**

## Project snapshot

Beneficiaries  
**34 686 people**

Intervention areas  
**Buthidaung, Kyauktaw,  
Maungdaw and Rathedaung  
townships, Rakhine State**

Resource partner  
**European Union**

Contribution  
**EUR 4 000 000**

Implementation period  
**1 October 2018 to 30 April 2021**

The Global Network Against Food Crises brings together and improves the coordination of partners to prevent, respond and implement lasting solutions to food crises across the spectrum of humanitarian and development interventions and linking to other sectors, including health, WASH, peace and the environment. It supports efforts under the collective outcome related to the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger to be achieved by 2030.

## Background

Agriculture is an important sector as it contributes significantly to the socio-economic development of Myanmar. According to the Myanmar Agriculture Development Strategy, agriculture contributes to 30 percent of national GDP, and about 68 percent of the rural population relies on crop farming and livestock for their livelihoods and income. Years back, this was also true for Rakhine State, located on the west coast of Myanmar. With a population of approximately 3.3 million, more than 80 percent live in rural villages where agriculture, fishery and aquaculture are the primary source of livelihoods.

However, since 2012 the Rakhine State has been facing armed conflicts and inter-communal violence. The protracted conflict has led to a disruption of their livelihoods, prolonged human suffering, and it has left civilians acutely vulnerable to death and diseases. Worsening the situation is the vulnerability of the region to floods, cyclones and earthquakes. Every year, extreme weather events such as heavy rains, mudslides and floods hamper rice production in low-lying areas that are often inhabited by the poorest members of the community.

Another challenge faced in Rakhine State is the low investment, leaving communities to suffer from poverty, inadequate social services and a scarcity of livelihood opportunities. The State's 78 percent reported poverty and its economy marked by stagnation, under-investment, and under-development.

## FAO's role

It is against this background that Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is working to increase the resilience of livelihoods to natural hazards and conflicts. Specifically, the aim of the European Union (EU) funded project is to restore and protect agriculture livelihoods of vulnerable communities in Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, and Rathedaung townships in Rakhine State.

The project is one of 10 pro-resilience projects in food crisis contexts implemented within the broader framework of the Partnership Programme supporting the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC).

The Partnership Programme seeks to enhance the resilience of populations in food crisis contexts by strengthening the quality and frequency of food security and resilience analysis; building a body of evidence on effective options and interventions to enhance livelihoods resilience at country level; and bolstering stronger alliances at all levels to collectively address food crises through sustainable solutions along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

# Project Overview and contribution to achieving Zero Hunger

## Global goals

- SDG 2 – Zero Hunger

## Global challenges to tackle

- Data and analysis gaps
- Coordination and implementation
- Strategy and peace
- Knowledge gaps

## Myanmar country priority areas

- Peace and stability for national reconciliation, improved security and good governance
- People and the planet for improving climate resilience, reducing disaster risk and protecting livelihoods

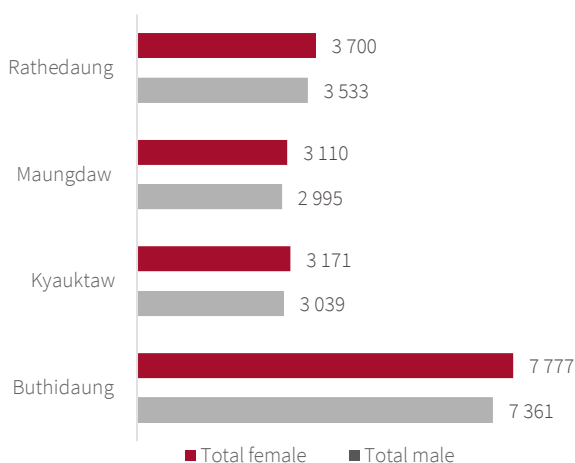
## FAO country emergency priority areas

- Ensure that targeted vulnerable communities have equitable access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food in-kind and/or through cash assistance all year round
- Enhance the resilience of affected communities to restore, protect and improve livelihood opportunities
- Improve the timeliness, appropriateness and effectiveness of the Food Security Sector response through sector analysis and information dissemination

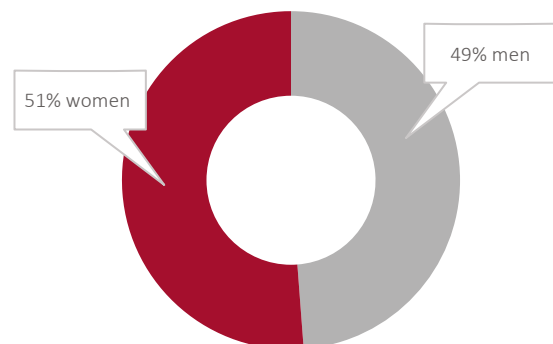
## The project in figures:

**34 686** – Total number of beneficiaries supported by the EU-funded project.

**Distribution of beneficiaries by area of operation**



**Distribution of beneficiaries by gender**





Distribution of agriculture inputs in Rakhine state  
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## Initiatives to enhance food security and nutrition and resilience of communities

- **Assessments** – The Rakhine State Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) and FAO completed assessments in 34 village tracts located in Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, and Maungdaw townships to provide information about livestock to help inform initiatives that will be implemented to boost livestock production and productivity. Moreover, the Rakhine State Department of Fishery (DoF) and FAO, completed feasibility studies for the establishment of small-scale integrated aquaculture schemes in seven villages in Buthidaung and Maungdaw.
- **Provision of planting material (rice seeds and organic fertilizer)** – FAO together with Myanmar Heart Development Organization (MHDO), People for People (PfP), and Phyu Sin Saytanar Activity Group (PSSAG) completed the supply of rice seeds and fertilizer to 4 500 farmers spread across three townships in time for the imminent monsoon planting season.
- **Good Agriculture Practices Training** – training organized by FAO and implementing partners intended to help farmers improve their yields covering vegetable production, soil fertility management the proper use of fertilizers was completed.



Agriculture mechanization equipment distributed to farmers in Rakhine state  
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## Initiatives to increase household income through the rehabilitation and construction of small-scale multipurpose infrastructure and the strengthening of agriculture value chain

- **Village Mechanization Committees (VMCs)** – VMCs have been established in various townships to ensure the effective management and use of mechanized tools to boost farmers' productivity. The 37 VMCs established have also received basic skills related to managing, maintaining, and repairing their mechanized tools (power tiller, thresher, and a combine harvester).
- **Agriculture mechanization** – FAO provided 16 power tillers; one rice harvester and 20 rice threshers to improve rice production and productivity and therefore increase food availability and counter labor shortages in the region following significant population movement address labour shortages.

## Initiatives contributing to improve access and consumption of nutritious food

- **Nutrition gap analysis** – FAO completed a nutrition gap analysis with data collected from 160 households to help identify response activities.
- **Capacity building** – FAO developed training manual consists of the following modules: healthy balanced diet (variety, balance and proportion); recommended daily intake (age group and gender);

nutrition during pregnancy and breastfeeding; infant and young child feeding using locally available food; hygiene; nutrient values and the health benefits of legumes, vegetables, livestock (mutton), poultry (chicken), egg and milk; and cooking methods that preserve nutrient value (cooking demonstration with distributed items). In addition, FAO and partners completed basic nutrition training covering the following topics: balanced diet, meal planning, food hygiene and the special feeding needs of children, women and men, and of old, sick and malnourished people.

- **Production and consumption nutritious food** – assorted vegetable seeds and fertilizer were provided to 6 000 households for the 2019 planting season that covers the monsoon and the dry (winter) season.
- **Mother and child cash transfers** – The Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, FAO, in collaboration with its United Nations sister agencies concluded deliberations to explore opportunities to develop shock-responsive social protection in Rakhine State.

## Contacts

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### Partnership Programme

[www.fao.org/europeanunion/eu-projects/gnafc/en](http://www.fao.org/europeanunion/eu-projects/gnafc/en)

### Global Network Against Food Crises

[www.fightfoodcrises.net](http://www.fightfoodcrises.net)

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## Cross-cutting issues

- **Social Cohesion (non-discrimination)** – FAO, together with implementing partners, worked to ensure the balanced incorporation of Rakhine and Muslim beneficiaries in project activities. For example, Rakhine and Muslim communities jointly participated in the village mechanization and good agricultural practices awareness training sessions held in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships. Also, some Rakhine and Muslim community members jointly use the power tillers provided in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships. The described interventions present an opportunity for FAO to explore the impact of communal management of property and possibilities of how these systems can be used to promote social cohesion.
- **Constructive engagement, not confrontation** – application of the conflict sensitive programming approach has been applied to help all staff and partners involved in the delivery of activities to understand the conflict context in the current operating environment to promote social cohesion. Moreover, this helps to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts.

## Partnerships

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) together with: Action for Green Earth (AGE); Myanmar Heart Development Organization (MHDO); People for People (PfP); Phyu Sin Saytanar Activity Group (PSSAG) with the financial and technical support of the European Union.



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Partnership Programme  
Global Network Against Food Crises

Evidence, innovations  
and policy change