

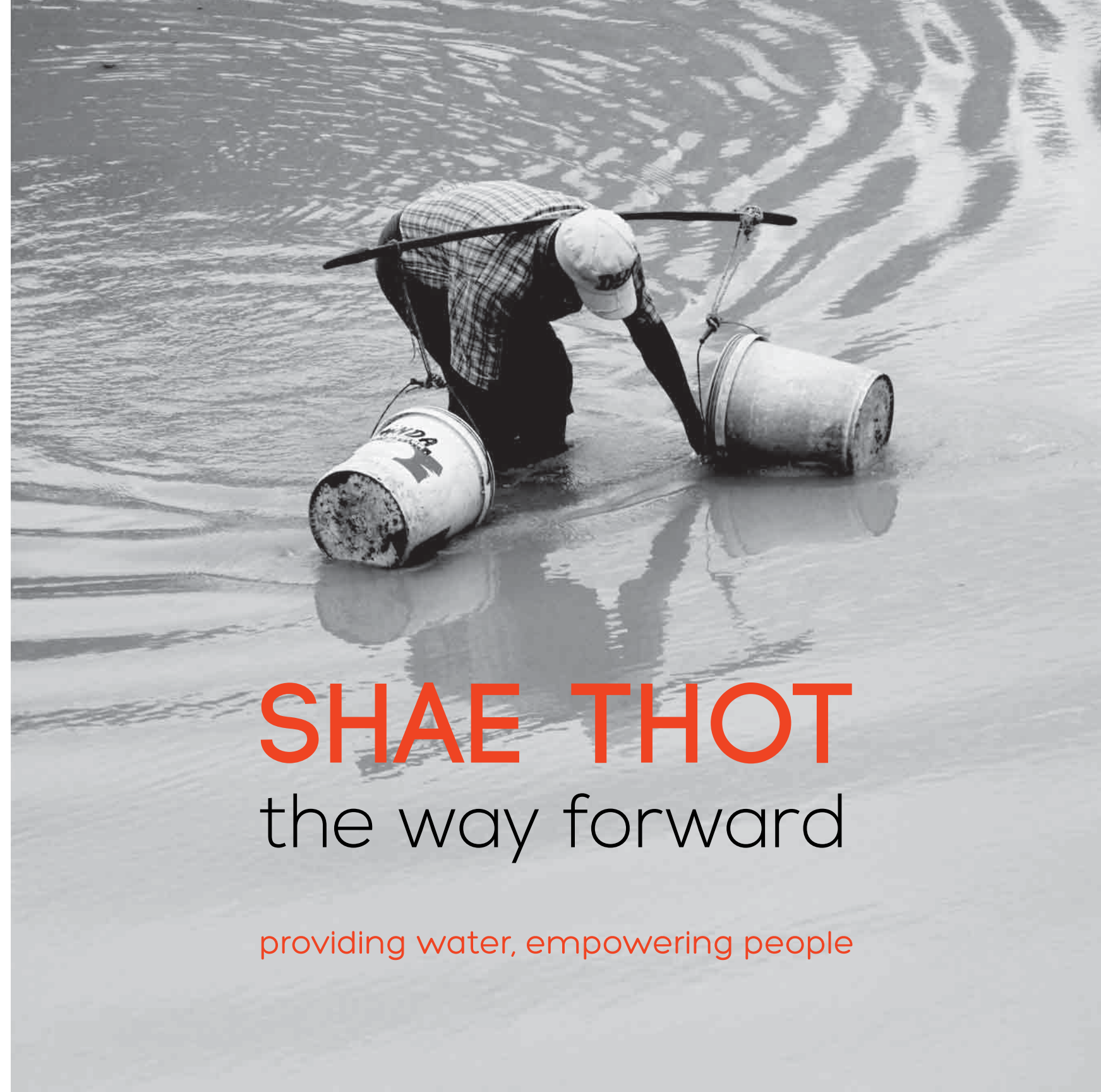
The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, is the agency of the United Nations dedicated to promoting socially and environmentally sustainable development of human settlements in an urbanizing world, with the goal of providing safer and inclusive human settlements. The agency provides technical assistance to countries and cities in the areas of urban governance , urban safety, housing, poverty reduction strategies, water management, post-disaster rehabilitation and disaster mitigation in human settlements. During the provision of support, UN-Habitat's approach, the People's Process instills capacities of hundreds of communities for achieving safer settlements, while delivering cross cutting impacts of local governance, sustainable livelihoods, empowerment and capacity building. Shae Thot - the way forward - supported by USAID concentrates on increasing people's access to adequate and safe water and improved hygiene through not only infrastructural improvements but also transfer of knowledge and development of skills of the people by means of hands-on training. During Year 1 and Year 2, of a five year program, the project has benefited communities of 468 target villages across five townships of Dry Zone and an poor-urban settlement of Yangon, Shwe Pyi Thar. By the end of the program in 2016, it is expected that approximately 850 villages will be covered.



SHAE THOT

the way forward

providing water, empowering people



SHAE THOT

the way forward

access to safe water is a
fundamental human need
and therefore
a basic human right

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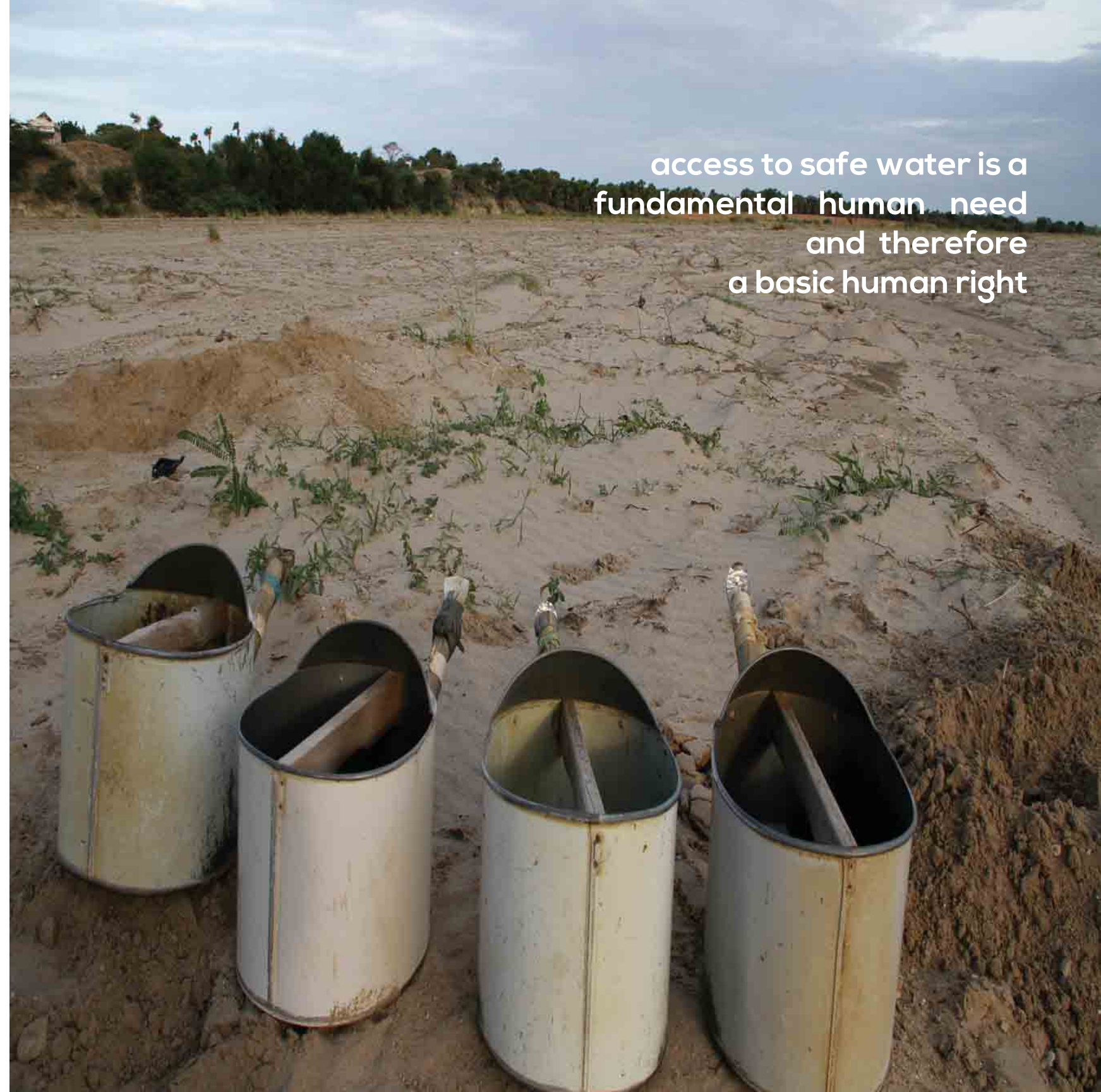
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SHAE THOT | ရှေ့သို့



PROVIDING **WATER** empowering people



SHAE THOT the way forward

Support through holistic approach

Shae Thot, a five year program, is designed to provide over 3,000 villages in Rangoon Division, the Dry Zone and Southern Shan State of Burma with comprehensive, holistic services on maternal health and child health, livelihoods, food security and water and sanitation and hygiene in order to alleviate suffering and prevent death. These activities are intrinsically linked, since improvement in one area bring about improvements in other areas. Shae Thot is the collaborative design of four main partners, where UN-Habitat concentrates on increasing people's access to adequate and safe water and improved hygiene through not only infrastructural improvements but also transfer of knowledge and development of skills of the people by means of hands-on training.

Water, a basic human right

Village communities in rural Burma obtain water for drinking and day-to-day consumption from open wells, unprotected springs, creeks, rivers, or ponds – often located some distance away from the village. The task of fetching water usually falls to women and children. During the dry season, the probabilities of these water sources drying up increase, forcing villagers to walk even further for alternative water sources, which are almost always contaminated. In addition, the use of latrines is not common in many areas of rural Burma, and knowledge of safe, hygienic practices is also limited: many people do not make the connection between poor water quality and diseases; dirty hands and unsanitary waste disposal perpetuate the cycle of disease and poverty. Due to these circumstances, water-borne diseases such as dysentery and diarrhea spread, making many people, particularly children, ill. Access to sus-

tainable sources of safe water is a critical development and humanitarian issue.

Women are limited in their abilities to engage in either entrepreneurial or agriculture activities, for example, if they must spend many hours each day collecting and hauling water. Shae Thot aims to upgrade water collection and storage infrastructures throughout our target region, while actively involving community members at each stage in the process, from needs assessment and prioritization, to developing water and sanitation improvement plans, to carrying out construction and developing mechanisms to ensure long-term maintenance.

People at the center of the process

UN-Habitat strongly believes that unleashing the potential of the people is the only way in which all the affected people can work together for their recovery and development in a short time. The UN-Habitat's People's Process requires trust in people and recognition of the way people organize themselves. Communities are expected to lead in assigning priorities, in decision making and in taking action. They are encouraged to execute development programmes which build on their own skills and know-how. Groups of families and whole communities that share common interests and goals, work out action plans. In order to implement these plans UN-Habitat signs contracts, provides funding and sets up joint accountability formats, in such a way that the community groups are in full control of their own expenditures with the technical assistance of UN-Habitat.

This photo book showcases two years of project implementation where the human spirit of target pop-

ulation has got united to work for the improvement of their communities, 468 villages across Meiktila, Myngian, Nyaung-U, Pakoku, Sinbaungwe, Seikphyu and Aunglan townships of the Dry Zone, and Shwe Pyi Thar of Rangoon.

Community Mobilization

This project is fundamentally based on the philosophy of community mobilization and empowerment, where target communities actually lead the process of planning, implementation, monitoring and maintenance. It allows people to contemplate and come to terms with their situation; to organize and initiate action for their recovery and development with their own initiative and creativity. Through community mobilization, people can organize themselves to take action collectively by developing their own plan and strategy for recovery rather than having it be imposed from outside.

Local Governance: Village Development Committee

All project activities are directly executed by UN-Habitat in target areas by establishing Village Development Committees (VDCs) where members are sourced from the community.

During the selection of members for Village Development Committees (VDCs), numbering usually 7-10 persons, the community is encouraged to nominate and vote for people that do not already hold posts with local authorities or NGO's to minimize the possibility of conflict of interest and at the same time select those people that have influence and sway (village elders and local opinion leaders) over the community, the latter ensures that decisions taken by the VDCs are upheld by the community allowing for sustainable development building on existing power structures and hierarchies within the community.

Community Action Planning and Community Contracts

The project is implemented through community contracting system. A community contract is the formal instrument of agreement between UN-Habitat and the beneficiary households. The implementation of community contracts promoted by UN-Habitat follows a step-by-step methodology within the framework of the Community Action Planning (CAP) approach, where UN-Habitat supports community to prepare develop-

ment plans. In the UN-Habitat community contract system the community is at the center of the process in terms of identifying the works, design of the works, managing the execution, controlling the finances, procurement of materials, managing labor, store keeping and accounting, and accountability to the community.

Women Empowerment

An important response to inequality is building awareness. This requires that any decision considers its impact on the condition and position of both men and women, and the relationship between them, and adjusts interventions to promote fairness. A widely accepted strategy to achieve this is mainstreaming. UN-Habitat ensures mainstreaming of gender equality throughout the project implementation.



Myanmar recently opened and is on the way to become a democratic country. What we do with the UN-Habitat program is also an application of democracy. The community selects its own leaders and committee members to represent the villagers. Elected persons have to be transparent; therefore, we show the budget to the villagers and anything we do. Transparency is an essential indicator of democracy. When we apply it in our VDC management, we apply democracy in our village. We also share with our community the challenges, and how we solve problems to achieve our community's common goal.

U Aung Myo Min, VDC Chairman
Paung Lan Kan Village, Pakoku Township







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