

# Skills Development for Vulnerable Youth in Rakhine State (SDY)

## Context

Rakhine State, one of the least developed regions of Myanmar, is geographically isolated with limited road connectivity to capital cities in the country. The region has been marred with ongoing conflicts which have caused civilian casualties and the displacement of over one million Rohingyas into neighboring Bangladesh and tens of thousands of people within its boundaries, with very limited access to basic services, healthcare, and education.

Poverty and unemployment rates in Rakhine State are significantly higher compared to other regions in Myanmar. The lack of economic opportunities, limited infrastructure, and ongoing security concerns have hindered socio-economic development. Agriculture, fishing and small-scale trade have traditionally been important sectors for the local economy, but they have been severely disrupted due to the conflict and displacement.

Cyclone Mocha that hit Rakhine state on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023 left a trail of devastation, aggravating the already dire humanitarian crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing political tension resulting from the military coup of 2021 and decades of civil war. Among the most affected are women and youth from vulnerable population groups, especially amongst the internally displaced persons who have very limited pathways to skills development and income generation options.

## Opportunities and Challenges

Against this background, a holistic community-development approach offering tailor-made skills trainings, capitalizing on the economic potentials and concrete income generation opportunities, whilst embedding conflict-sensitive and inclusive measures is required.

Given the ongoing conflict, the dysfunctionality of basic social services, the considerable restriction of movement and the ensuing isolation and vulnerability of rural settlements and IDP camps, the project's multi-sectoral approach envisages to strengthen the economic, social and climate resilience of the most vulnerable populations in Rakhine State.

## Objective

Embedded within the Transitional Development Assistance strategy of the German Government and co-funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the project aims to improve the structural, individual and social conditions for the economic and social participation of vulnerable population groups in northern and central Rakhine state. It also envisages to bring together discriminated populations such as the Rohingyas and other ethnic minorities with historically hostile groups through joint project activities and the creation of productive networks.

## Main Targets

- 7500 young and adults benefit from vocational and/or social qualification measures
- 2000 vulnerable individuals increase their monthly income
- 40 executives and core staff of 20 civil society organizations benefit from a series of capacity-building measures and funding to implement conflict-sensitive and inclusive measures, and access international funding
- 25 basic economic and/or social structures are rehabilitated and 10 electrified in 25 communities and/or IDP camps

Project Name	Skills Development for Vulnerable Youth in Rakhine State (SDY), Myanmar
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Co-Financed	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)
Project Region	Northern and Central Rakhine State
Project Partners	International NGOs, as well as national, regional, local level CSOs
Duration and Budget	December 2017 – March 2026 with a budget of Euro 16.9 million



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## Approach

The project's multisectoral community-development approach intervenes in community "clusters" consisting of a main settlement or IDP camp with around 5 satellite communities or villages with different cultural, ethnical and religious backgrounds to strengthen dialogue and cooperation amongst them. At least 40% of the total beneficiary population are selected from minority groups and 60% are women. Project interventions all capitalize on local skills and the most viable economic opportunities to secure livelihoods and reinforce the communities' socio-economic resilience.

## Key Activities

The project contributes to four interlinked areas of activity:

### Providing comprehensive skills training programs

The project offers 75 labour market-oriented, conflict-sensitive and inclusive training programs to improve professional and social skills, 19 of them in occupational fields that are particularly relevant for young women aiming at required competency and career development. To improve the quality of the TVET measures, the project is training 500 trainers in technical and didactic modules.

### Empowering Youths and Groups for Self-Employment

Transitional management measures (e.g. internships, on-the-job training, career counselling) targeting 4000 trainees are geared towards concrete employment and most importantly self-employment opportunities. In parallel, 2000 selected beneficiaries are provided with tools and equipment, access to finance and renewable energy, complemented by cooperative management training and group coaching to ensure the highest possible level of economic integration.

### Developing the Capacity of Civil Society Organisations

The project builds the capacity of local civil society organizations and implementation partners for more effective project delivery in favor of vulnerable population groups. This is achieved by a combination of project management training, peer-to-peer learning within thematic platforms and coaching in simulated implementation of innovative approaches in vulnerable communities. The project is targeting 20 CSOs, besides cooperating and also contributing to the institutional capacity building of 14

implementing partners, 5 of whom are international and 9 national, regional or local.

## Rehabilitating Key Community Infrastructure

Social and economic community infrastructure such as multipurpose halls, training centers, markets, bridges, jetties, feedr roads etc. are rehabilitated with the participation of the community members. Due to the extremely high level of destruction caused by Cyclone Mocha, the project has engaged in an emergency response also covering the rehabilitation of shelters and WASH facilities. In carrying out these interventions, the project and its partners seek the highest level of community participation and ownership by capitalizing on skilled workforce within the villages and camps, whilst providing upskilling and technical training as well as cash for work to the community volunteers. Wherever needed, the selected structures will be equipped with solar systems to boost productivity and / or contribute to improved social services, complemented by essential maintenance training to community members through the establishment of village electrification committees (VECs).

## Achievements

 37 development workers from 18 CSOs benefited from ongoing capacity development measures	 56 types of technical skills training provided	 88 beneficiary locations (villages, IDP camps)
 5102 attended skills Trainings (50% women, 46% Muslim)	 772 attended advanced trainings (60% women)	 382 trained in ToT programs
 3266 were placed in the job market (46% women, 47% Muslim)	 664 youths engaged in IGA (83% women, 35% Muslim)	 1235 increased their income (53% women, 52% Muslim)



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