

Food and Nutrition Security in Rakhine State

Background

Rakhine State in the Western part of Myanmar, bordering Bangladesh, is among the least developed regions with high rates of poverty. About half of the children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition, which can lead to irreversible physical and mental impairment.

Opportunities and Challenges

Food insecurity and malnutrition remain a challenge for the poorest and most vulnerable people in rural areas of Rakhine State. Among the most affected are women and children, with a high malnutrition and child mortality rate.

Insufficient dietary diversity, inadequate hygiene practices and limited access to basic health services are among the main causes of malnutrition. In addition, shortage of income opportunities, difficult access to markets, frequent natural disasters, and political unrest hamper improvements towards food and nutrition security.

Early childhood nutrition, especially during the first 1000 days (from conception until the age of two), has crucial long-term consequences for cognitive outcomes, educational attainment, adult earnings, chronic morbidity, and premature adult mortality.

Hence, efforts to improve the nutritional status of adolescent girls, women, and young children are vital to ensuring long-term national development. Better nutrition will result in improved intellectual capacity, greater economic productivity, and a lowered risk of noncommunicable diseases in the target communities.

Objective

Embedded within the Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance (TDA) of the German government, the objective of the project is **to improve the dietary and hygiene practices of people in selected regions of Rakhine State, particularly among women between 15 and 49 and children between 6 and 23 months**. Women and their needs are a particular focus of this project, and **gender-responsive approaches** are strengthened to explicitly improve the overall nutritional and economic situation of women.

A further special attention is given **to climate change awareness and adaptation** by the different beneficiaries. A "green" recovery after the destructive Cyclone Mocha is envisaged, leading to **climate-resilient food production and water infrastructure in local villages**.

Project Name	Food and Nutrition Security in Rakhine State, Myanmar
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project Region	Townships in North and Central Rakhine
Project Partners	National and International NGOs
Duration and Budget	2016-2026 with a budget of up to Euro 17.9 million

Approach

Causes of malnutrition are manifold, and to combat them, a multi-sectoral approach is required. The project therefore addresses nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions in the following interlinked sectors: nutrition and nutrition-relevant health, agriculture, sustainable aquaculture, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). The project is further elaborating synergies between the interlinked sectors, as the following but not necessarily limited to:

- Increased availability of safe aquatic proteins → improved nutrition status (1000 days approach)
- Processing and value-adding → food availability, nutrition security, and increased income.

The implementation is done jointly with national and international project partners: e.g., Consortium of Dutch NGOs (CDN-ZOA), Action for Green Earth (AGE), Metta Arrman Foundation (MAF), Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development (MIID), Relief International (RI) and Center for Social Integrity (CSI). Additionally, the project has set up a network of **volunteers in different ethnic villages** in its implementation area who are supporting the implementation on the ground and enabling rapid action.

Key Activities

The project targets 100 villages with a total population of around 98,000 people in Sittwe, Kyauktaw, and Pauktaw Townships and other areas in Rakhine State, with a focus on the approximately 31,000 women of reproductive age (15-49 years) and 4,900 children under the age of two years living there. The project comprises of 5 interlinked areas of activity. Please turn.



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Agriculture and Nutrition

Increasing the diversity of food production in the target areas by providing technical advice and agricultural inputs to promote the cultivation and utilization of nutrient-rich vegetables and fruits in their home gardens and facilitating processing and cooking demonstrations for women to gain knowledge on nutritious safe food items, including fish, through *nutrition awareness sessions*.

Health

Improving the access to and quality of advisory services with regards to nutrition-relevant basic health services by constructing and renovating sub-rural health centers, strengthening the competences of health advisory actors in the sector, and contributing the health, nutrition, hygiene awareness campaigns to the communities. Disease prevention activities like community handwashing stations and IEC materials are distributed in the project villages.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Enhancing drinking water facilities and their maintenance and improving hygiene practices by rehabilitating and upgrading water facilities, drilling deep wells and small-piped water distribution systems, providing water filters, and constructing low-cost sanitary latrines for the communities and schools.

Sustainable Aquaculture

Aims at poverty reduction and improving the nutritional status of the local population through increasing sustainable aquaculture by building the capacity of local small-scale fish farmers (SFF) and processors **on the best production methods, post-harvest handling, and processing** of aquaculture products.

Adaptation to Climate Change

New measures since May 2023: Promotion of adaptation measures for farmers and their communities, setting up inclusive disaster risk management systems at village levels.



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Our Achievements



DISTRIBUTION OF PLANTS AND FRUIT TREES

13,793 ± 17% **188** **250** **196** **218**
Households (HHs) received HHs received Special Plants Demonstration Plots Mushroom Farms Integrated Farms Table Gardens



FOOD COOKING DEMONSTRATION

5,839 **400** **23.8%** **29.1%**
Participants Training Sessions 2019 2022 Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD)

Our Achievements



HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE

74,400 **75** **11** **5**
Community Members Villages New Sub-rural Health Centres Renovation of Sub-rural Health Centres



BREASTFEEDING & 1000 DAYS CAMPAIGN

1,444 **25** **5,760**
Pregnant Women Villages Provision of Antenatal Care (ANC) and Postnatal Care (PNC)



NUTRITION AND HYGIENE AWARENESS

14,237 **94** **388** **31** **87**
Women Villages Advisory Actors Auxiliary Midwives Volunteers

Our Achievements



WASH

48,000 **9,500** **57** **188** **59**
Beneficiaries Households Villages Basic Water Facilities Safely Managed Water Facilities
4,330 **27** **3,017** **461**
Water Filters Water Committees Low-cost Sanitary Latrines Hand-washing Stations

Our Achievements



SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

1,893 **77** **715,840** **4,995,300**
Beneficiaries Villages Juvenile Fish Shrimp Larvae
6,582 **10** **90** **7** **14**
Total Hectare of Area (Inland & Coastal) Mangrove Friendly Aquaculture plots Hygienic Processing & Preservation Training Sessions Smokers Feed Mills

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