

# Improved Community Infrastructures in the Southeast of Myanmar

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**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC**



Opening of classes in the morning © SDC/HA

## Program at a Glance

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's Humanitarian Aid (SDC/HA) contributes to the improvement of lives of people affected by poverty and conflict in the Southeast of Myanmar by creating favourable conditions for trust building between the parties in the Myanmar peace process.

The objectives of the three community infrastructure programs in Mon and Kayin States are:

- 1) enhancement of the learning environment of children,
- 2) access to basic health care and water and sanitation facilities,
- 3) improved knowledge of maintenance, hygiene, disaster preparedness and waste management for teachers, students and community committees.

Priorities of the interventions are set through consultation processes with the respective communities. They are closely coordinated with the local authorities and other actors. To date SDC/HA supported selected communities with new/rehabilitated primary schools or rural sub health centres. The program includes capacity building related to community development and management and maintenance of the buildings.

The interventions in the Southeast started in 2010 and are based on previous experiences of SDC/HA in the Ayeyarwady Delta after cyclone Nargis. The allocated budget for the program, running from 2013 to 2017, is USD 12 Million.

## Myanmar – a Country Undergoing Rapid Change

Myanmar is currently undergoing significant change in different domains. The economy has opened up to the world, there is a political transition towards democratic governance, and intense negotiations are held in order to reach a nationwide peace-agreement.

Decades of internal armed conflict in the Southeast have left many people displaced with a large number seeking refuge and employment in Thailand. Most of the territory along the Myanmar–Thai border is administered by Non-State Armed Groups. As access is very limited, social services and basic infrastructures such as school buildings, health centres, roads and bridges are very scarce in rural Mon and Kayin State.

SDC/HA's activities contribute to build trust amongst ethnic communities, authorities and Non-State Armed Groups. Thanks to a conflict-sensitive community-led approach they indirectly support the consolidation of the ongoing peace process in Myanmar.



<http://www.myanmar-maps.net/myanmar-map/myanmar-maps.htm>

## Development of Rural Communities

In order to enhance sustainable development through community ownership and local governance the

SDC/HA programs in the Southeast of Myanmar combine the construction of community infrastructure with training and capacity building of community-based organizations (CBOs). This includes social, financial and management as well as maintenance skills training for the respective buildings. Villagers provide local material, participate actively in construction work and are sensitized by SDC/HA to potential changes and benefits for their village.



A community based organization is being trained in financial issues.  
© SDC/HA

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### Three Community Infrastructure Programs

To reach the threefold objective mentioned above SDC/HA has chosen three different implementing modalities for the programs. Generally SDC/HA equips the buildings with basic furniture and provides sanitation facilities including a well to ensure access to safe drinking water. After handing over the facilities the responsibility for running and maintenance lies with the communities and the respective authorities.

#### *Primary Schools and Rural Sub Health Centres*

Since 2010 23 private or governmental primary schools and 12 rural sub health centres have been newly constructed or rehabilitated (February 2015). They were handed over to the communities under a formal agreement with the representing authority of the Union Government and with the agreement of the Non-State Armed Groups.

#### *Governmental Schools funded by Unicef*

Based on a partnership between Unicef and SDC/HA that started in 2013, SDC/HA has inaugurated 17 out of 30 planned governmental Basic Education Primary Schools (February 2015). Under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, these schools enable young students to access state-run secondary and later high schools and universities.



School children in Kayin state attending class © SDC/HA

#### *Southeast Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project (SIRP)*

The SIRP-program is funded by the European Union (EuropAid) and SDC/HA. It is implemented by a consortium (Norwegian Refugee Council, Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-Building, Action Aid Myanmar and SDC/HA). The program identified young potential leaders (fellows) from local communities who conducted a needs assessment and elaborated a village development plan. These fellows were trained in analytical and communication skills as well as measures for confidence building in order to promote participatory development processes in their villages. Based on the village development plan, SDC/HA is currently supporting 30 villages in the realisation of one infrastructure project (such as a road, bridge, primary school or a rural sub health centre).

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### About SDC in Myanmar

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is Switzerland's International Cooperation Agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). SDC's Humanitarian Aid (SDC/HA) has been supporting Myanmar refugees along the Thai border since the mid-1990s. When cyclone Nargis devastated Myanmar's Ayeyarwady Delta in 2008, SDC/HA contributed to the reconstruction of the area with 42 cyclone/storm and earthquake resistant schools. Since 2013, in line with the Swiss Cooperation Strategy 2013-2017, the geographical focus lies on the South-east of Myanmar.

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### Further Information / Contact

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