

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF OLDER PERSONS IN MYANMAR THROUGH OLDER PEOPLE SELF-HELP GROUPS

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HelpAge International's Partners in Myanmar

- National Young Men Christian Associations
- Department of Social Welfare/Ministry of Social Welfare

Who we are



HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can **lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.**

Older Persons in Myanmar



-numbers are **growing significantly**

-becoming **psychologically weak** and increasingly **socially and economically isolated** as traditional sources of support dwindle

Older Persons in Myanmar



- Vulnerability of rural older persons is growing due to **increasing economic migration and preference for nuclear families** among young adults to urban areas.
- With changing marriage patterns, older persons are likely to become **more frequently reside by themselves.**

Older Persons in Myanmar



*These trends are likely to **accelerate the isolation** of older persons in rural villages in the future.*

Situation in Delta



-Ayerrawady Delta was affected by **Cyclone Nargis** on 2-3 May 2008.

- over **140,000 killed**, and approximately **800,000 people displaced**

(The situation of older people in cyclone- affected Myanmar: Nine months after the disaster, HelpAge International)

Situation in Delta



-over **450,000 homes destroyed** along with majority of food stocks, livestock, livelihood related equipment, infrastructure and paddy.

(The situation of older people in cyclone- affected Myanmar: Nine months after the disaster, HelpAge International)

Situation in Delta



-30% of orphans and vulnerable children in the project locations are **under the direct care of older people.** (IASC)

- 37% older people report going to bed hungry because of the need to **share food with family.** (HelpAge)

(The situation of older people in cyclone- affected Myanmar: Nine months after the disaster, HelpAge International)

Specific **Objective**



Community-based Self Help Groups have the capacity to **lead activities** that **strengthen livelihoods** and **reduce vulnerability** among older people and their families in the selected communities in Myanmar

Project Locations and Beneficiaries

801 older people, 2,403 family members and 8,010 community members in Kyait Lat, Pathein and Pynoolwin townships in Myanmar.

Some **Highlights** on the project actions



- Joint needs assessment by NYMCA, DSW and HelpAge
- Project socialisation (national, township and village levels)
- Baseline
- Participatory exercises (seasonal calendar, resource mapping, PVA, livelihood analysis, etc)

Some **Highlights** on the project actions



- Health need analysis
- Formation of OPSHGs in 20 villages by Older persons with support from village authorities
- Facilitated developing constitutions/rules regulations
- Annual plans
- Capacity building training

Some **Highlights** on the project actions



- Skills development training based on OPHGs' requests
- OPHGS structures comprises sub-groups to address health, education, welfare and others needs of older persons

Some **Highlights** on the project actions



- Older persons established productive income generation activities based on a market analysis conducted by the project.
- Income generation venture for OPSHGs, etc.

Lessons Learned



- Effective capacity building of national partners and OPSHG requires **a flexible and participatory approach.**
- **Challenges** in introduction of modern health care practices to older persons in rural areas are from superstitions and traditional health practices among older persons in rural areas

Lessons Learned



- Successful and sustainable socio-economic empowerment of older persons requires **active participation of traditional, religious and local authorities in rural areas.**
- Supporting the government stakeholders' exposure visit to successful older people's initiatives in the region **accelerates the government policy making process.**

Lessons Learned



- Successful models help us to **positively influence** the government's policy/decision making process.
- Recognition of older people's wisdom, skills and experience and their contributions to their families and communities **brings in a new impetus** among them.

Lessons Learned



- **Older people can make significant contributions** to village level disaster risk analysis, hazards mapping, and developing disaster preparedness and mitigation planning exercises

What's **NEXT?**



- Support DSW to **finalise and implement** the National Plan of Action on Ageing
- Support DSW and NGO partners to **replicate OPSHG model**

Thank
you

