

SWISSAID Ecological Farming Pilot Project

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Introduction: Ecological Farming in Myanmar

1. Traditional farming system
2. Agroforestry
3. Natural farming movement
4. Integrated farming system
5. Farmer field school movement
6. Commercial organic agriculture



Main Problems

A. Capacity of SWISSAID & Partner Organization

- promoted a mix of practices rather than coherent approach to ecological farming
- efficacy or economic viability of some of those practices
- pre-determined packages of technology not being adapted to local conditions
- stand-alone interventions not as an integrated package that considers and supports the whole farming system

B. Vulnerabilities of Rural Livelihoods

- limited access to quality seeds
- depletion of soil fertility
- price fluctuation
- increased use of chemical fertilizers & pesticides

Partnership

- Smallholder farmers from 18 villages in 6 townships in Kachin & Shan States
- Metta Foundation
- Kachin Baptist Convention
- Aung Sett Kyar Local Development Organization
- Namkui Parahidha Foundation
- Myitkyina Lisu Baptist Convention
- Mauk Kon Local Development Organization
- Southern Shan Local Development Organization
- Shwe Danu Local Development Organization
- Township Agriculture Departments
- Department of Agriculture Research (DAR)
- Field Alliance/Thai Education Foundation
- Mekong Extension Learning Alliance (MELA)
- SEARICE

Achievement

- SWISSAID & Partner staff have increased capacity for designing and implementing “farmer-first” integrated ecological farming projects
- Created opportunities for partners and farmers to come together for the exchange of good practices and experiences through “Learning Alliance” workshop
- integrated farming systems approach worked effectively at a sub-farm level – at the level of the home garden
- 12 Farmer Field School (FFS) have developed a system for Community-based seed production through Participatory Varieties Selection (PVS) approach
- Seeds Forum in Nay Pyi Taw to explore the global and Myanmar policy context on seeds and to consider policy alternatives to strengthen farmers’ community seeds systems
- Farmer consultations on the Farmer’s Protection Law in Kachin & Shan States

Key Lessons Learnt

- Ecological farming can't be a standalone project; the ecological farming approach will need to be better integrated in all other projects of SWISSAID where agriculture plays an important role
- Ecological farming approach requires much more brain power, willingness to support the experimentation of partners and farmers
- Need critical reflection about known practices and adaption capacities for known practices
- More engagement with partners, tools and handholding support by SWISSAID
- Need to provide sufficient staff resources (quantity and quality) to partners

Future Intervention & Approach

- Consolidate capacity of SW-MY and partners on agroecology / integrated farming systems approach
- Extension and Farmer based research: set up farmer to farmer extension system, builds on knowledge, skills and experiences of the innovative leader farmers / farmer researchers
- Upscale the learning alliances by:
 - Linking them with other national actors for learning and building synergies; establishing a national level learning alliance
 - Linking them with regional actors and networks
 - Establishing thematic networks for knowledge sharing and advocacy
 - Establishing farmer (producer) groups for marketing and advocacy
- Value chain and market development
- Networking with national / regional actors for policy advocacy

Thank you for your attention!

