

Narrative report ALiSEA Small Grant Facility

THE ORGANISATION

Name of the organization : *Partners* Myanmar, Representation of *Partenaires*, France

Legal status of the organization: *Partenaires* is a non-profit organisation under French 'Loi de 1901' for associations.

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Date the organization was established : December 28th 1990

Main activity of the organization:

Partners INGO has been active for many years in Magway Division cooperating with UNICEF and WFP on big scale projects. Our team (>10 staffs) keeps working on different subjects (education, poverty alleviation, rural development, water, sanitation and hygiene promotion) and assessing the villagers' needs from previous and current experiences. An expatriate agronomy specialist was part of our team from 2015.

We have been responsive to the huge floods in August 2015 as the first intervening INGO in Salin Township.

In 2016, a grant from Australian High Commission allowed *Partners* to start a pilot project called 'Garden Towers' based on the same principles as the 'Easy Gardens' but with different materials (plastic barrels, plastic pipe...). We learnt a lot from this last experience and now the proposed technology is more efficient and ecological.

THE FUNDED INITIATIVE

Title : "Easy Gardens"

Main Field of involvement(*One among : Sharing experiences, Documenting case studies, Testing innovative practices, Co organizing national or regional event*) :

Mainly: 'Testing new practices' (+ Sharing experiences)

Summary of the initiative (10-15 lines):

The project is the continuation of activities that *Partners* INGO has been promoting for many years in Magway Division in working with UNICEF and WFP on big scale projects. *Partners* has worked on different projects (education, poverty alleviation, rural development, water, sanitation and hygiene promotion) and assessed the villager's needs.

Using the past and current experiences *Partners* decided to implement and develop a sustainable rural development project taking into account the first priorities of villagers in Dry Zone. Considering the situation in Dry Zone, the main goal of the implementation of "Easy Garden" was to secure a better livelihood for landless villagers. This was considered in 3 ways:

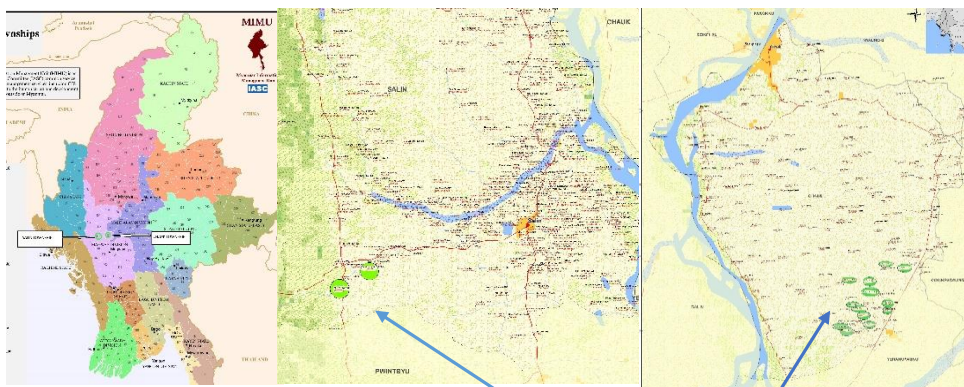
Social: The 'Easy Gardens' technique being cheap, easy to use and needs no field but only a small balcony or yard were targeted landless farmers, women and PwD (People with Disabilities). The project planned to produce its own seeds. In other hand community planned to grow local seed which received by sharing of each other. The empowerment of these excluded groups should contribute to a better social balance in the villages.

Economic: 'Easy Gardens' enable all people with an even small yard to grow vegetables and/or fruit on a tiny area. It's a side activity allowing families to improve their livelihood all year long. This system is scalable, easily reproducible and may become a true income generating activity if people get involved.

Environmental: 'Easy Gardens' use a very small space and produce food in a short time, about 2 to 3 months after setting up. Working in organic way, the system is very simple: in a bucket full of organic matter, two vermicomposting pipes will enrich the substratum continuously, while reducing significantly water needs.

Precise location (country, region/province, town/villages): Add one or two small maps showing the location of the implementation area within the province/region, and the province/region within the country.

'Easy Gardens' has been implemented in 15 villages (599 households) in Salin & Chauk Townships, Dry Zone, Magway Division, Myanmar. Chauk and Salin Township is located in Magway Division which situated in the middle of Myanmar and it was encompassed by arid climate. So it was so called Dry Zone. The lowest temperature in Dry Zone is about 14 C° in January and the highest temperature is about 39 C° in April. It has only less than 1000-mm of annual rainfall and maximum rainfall is 113-mm per rain.



Map of targeted township

Map of targeted villages

Background of the intervention: why the intervention took place and how it intended to address the initial situation?:

We have been responsive to the Floods in August 2015 as the first INGO intervening in Salin Township. In 2016, the grant of Australian Embassy allowed Partners to start a pilot project called "Garden Towers" based on the same principle than "Easy Garden" but with different materials than those first selected (plastic barrels, plastic pipes...). We learnt a lot from this last experience and now the technology is more efficient and ecological.

Based on the "Garden Towers" pilot project and through participative sessions conducted during 2016 the same assumptions were confirmed with both villagers and local authorities. The main concerns remained the need to support countrymen regarding Food, Water and Seeds.

During the pilot project of "Garden Tower" the villagers (including the non-selected beneficiaries from neighbours' villages) were interested and enthusiastic regarding this new approach of gardening. Looking at the positive impact of the "Garden Towers" project in Dry Zone in 2016, Partners wished to implement for a second year a similar technique with less cost and less impact on the environment.

Who were the target beneficiaries of the intervention and target audience?

The targeted population were:

- Women head
- People with Disabilities (PwD)
- Elders
- Landless farmers

What were the main objectives of the funded initiative?

Main Objective: Improve the livelihood of rural households in Dry Zone, while raising awareness on more sustainable agricultural practices.

The goal was that the gardening will provide food without land, all year long (except plantation time). It will contribute to a better livelihood in Dry Zone, where the subject does remain an issue.

What has been the approach & methodology applied for implementing the funded initiative? (so that the implementation is efficient and effective and your partners share the responsibility and accountability with you in capturing and disseminating the knowledge)

The Easy Garden allow to grow many plants in small basket and only need small area to put it. It is especially forecast to landless and the area where the vegetable can't grow well. The methodology of EG is based on permaculture technic. EG is constructed with soil filled basket and compose tube. The basket can be made with bamboo mat and plastering with cement. Then tube (with holes all around) can be used. For EG earthworms are the main actor to refill the fertilizer or nutrients for plants. The EG is setting up and functioning as; the soil mixture about 70% of normal soil and 30% of compost or/and manure is filled in basket or container and suitable number of compose tube is erected in the soil of EG. Compose tube is a tube which have top hole and many small holes around the tube for entering of worm into the tube. The compose tube is the throat of EG to fill kitchen scrap to feed earthworms. After filling of earthworm into the EG soil, the kitchen scrap inside the compose tube are transformed to fertile soil by earthworm in few days.

In every targeted village, one or more focal person are organized to supervise and monitor the project implementation and data collection. All focal person participate in all process of organizing for training, construction, plantation and data collection of production. Beneficiaries were encouraged by a focal person and Partners Myanmar staff. The focal person delivered the knowledge, technic and keep a high motivation to the beneficiaries.

What were the main activities implemented?

Trainings to beneficiaries for establishment of EG including:

- Demonstration for construction,
- Agricultural awareness

Then distribution of materials for Easy Garden, implementation, follow-up and supervision (including construction, plantation, maintenance), monitoring and technical assistant.

What were the main benefits of the partnerships of the action (their contributions and potential difficulties)?

Most of community in targeted area received training on the plantation in their compound. The Easy Garden plantation was initiated in their compound. Partners Myanmar Staff were providing technic and support but the beneficiaries were requested to share their own knowledge if they had some. After implementation of project the outcome money of purchasing vegetable reduce. If production were high they shared vegetable to neighbours or other family members. The beneficiaries participation and contribution is very important and may become a potential problem if the motivation goes down. We found the cases of beneficiaries showing initial interest and changing their mind after few weeks/months. In the technical part, the location of the Easy garden can also present difficulties such as positioning regarding the sun location.

How the project has contributed to promoting agroecology transition ?

In general there is the usage of chemical fertilisers or pesticides by the population when they grow plants. In the case of "Easy Garden" the organic fertiliser is provided by the 'Easy Gardens' technic itself. We anticipate and mitigate this risk along the 12 months of the project by providing trainings and organic outcomes to fight harmful insects and plant diseases.

What are the communication & dissemination activities and events that have been organized (and for whom)

800 guide pamphlets of "how to construct an Easy Garden" were distributed to selected beneficiaries in targeted 15 villages and who are trained practically how to establish and implement an Easy Garden. 831 interested farmers from targeted villages attended the training on "knowledge and awareness of agricultural" and 600 booklets of "how to use natural pest and fertilizer" were distributed to the communities.

What are the lessons learnt from the project? (please also share your new/innovative management practice you have come up with if you have such)

- Beneficiaries selection
The selection of beneficiaries is the most important in project implementation. Some beneficiaries showed initial interest for the project but they changed their mind slowly and slowly. They are lazy to weeding, watering and taking care of their EG. Beneficiary selection should be done carefully to have right, motivated people.
- Organizing committee
It is one of most important issue for project implementation. When organizing of project committee or village committee all the member show the interest in initial but later they reduce their interest. The reason of them was that they were busy with their own work. Only few members are remain with motivation and help to follow up the project. The committee should not be too big. The committee member should be selected according to their real interest.

Comment [PF1]: Has this been monitored / evaluated ? It was monitored by Agronomist and Partners staffs when project has been implementing.

What kind of organic fertilisers have been used? We didn't use special organic fertilizer. We only use kitchen scrap which was transformed by earth worm to organic fertilizer. That is the main technic for plants nutrients in Easy Garden.

Have all the farmers adopted the use of such organic fertilisers ? We just train the farmers who interest to our training. In Easy Garden project we followed up all beneficiaries to adopt worm transformed fertilizer. And they use it. Usually, we observe that many farmers are reluctant to switch for various reasons (time consuming, lack of access to raw materials to produce organic fertilizers...)

Our technic is very simple, it only need to put kitchen scraps to the compose tube. Within the training we provide awareness of good and bad effect of chemical.

Comment [PF2]: What kind of pesticide and other organic solutions have been used in order to address these issues of pests and diseases?

We used handmade pesticide. The natural raw materials of garlic, chili, crush insect, neem leaf or fruit, etc... were used to do organic pesticide. Detail technic was mentioned in booklet.

Comment [PF3]: Could you share the softcopy of this pamphlets so that it can be disseminated?

Comment [SM4]: Softcopy has been shared in the mail

Comment [PF5]: Could you share the softcopy of this booklets as well?

Comment [SM6]: Softcopy has been shared in the mail

Comment [PF7]: This is very judgemental and could potentially be further inquired. Usually people are not just lazy, they have other constraints that lead them to not adopt specific technic. It would have been good to assess the reasons behind such non adoption We monitored regularly to the project and found some beneficiaries didn't care the Easy Garden even they had nothing to do. We can distinguish who is active and who is not active in project implementation.

- Plantation
Staff or committee member should carefully follow up or monitor when planting (to choose the right plant to grow in the right place in the Easy Garden). Otherwise beneficiary plant whatever they like and it's become very dense in the EG and then don't receive enough nutrition and sun. Plantation should be systematic.

What are the main outputs of the projects (and their intended use / impacts)? (attach full reports/case studies of these outputs with all types of media files documented)

The project receive the main outputs of

- Community realized that they can produce vegetable in small area of their compound
- Community aware of how to grow vegetable by using permaculture in every season
- Community aware the biological pest control methodology
- Beneficiaries can reduce their outcome of money by stopping buying vegetables
- Beneficiaries realized even small area of plantation can help of their food security

Few elements from the proposal that we would need to have more feedback about:

- *"Facilitate and promote the diffusion of 'Easy Gardens' will be one of our priorities". To what extent the Easy Garden has been spreading in the area of intervention?*

Partners Myanmar has promoted its activities through meeting with authorities and general population. Training and promotion have been done inviting all population including beneficiaries and none beneficiaries.

- *The project will encourage a wide replication by communication, advertising and consulting: How this was conducted, what activities exactly since it does not appear in the narrative report?*

Meeting have been done with surrounding villagers to encourage the usage of Easy Garden.

- *Could you share the report of the Survey of the non-beneficiaries about the impact of "Easy Garden" Project in villages (motivation to do it again and go further, application of the trainings in the crops) (as per activity A3.1*

Please see the attached file for the list of none beneficiaries present in the meeting

Comment [PF8]: How do you measure the awareness of the community?
Replantation of Easy Garden in second season is the evident of increasing awareness of awareness in second season plantation. We found the improvement of awareness in second season plantation. Have you carried out an assessment of behaviour change at community level?
We didn't do on paper assessment but agronomist closely checked to community level.

Comment [PF9]: Reduce in which proportion ?
- Reducing time for waiting of vegetable seller from villages
- Reducing cost for buying vegetable