



# Shae Thot: The Way Forward

## Integrated Community Development in Myanmar

### Overview

Shae Thot is a USAID-supported six-year integrated community development project working in over 2,700 villages across Central Myanmar and Kayah State. Guided by Pact's core approaches of civil society strengthening and enhanced self-governance, Pact, four international partners, and seven local partners provide resources and technical assistance to increase community-based knowledge, ownership, and implementation of local development priorities. The project facilitates community participation to achieve sustainable solutions in the areas of maternal and child health; livelihoods and food security; and water, sanitation, and hygiene; in addition to strengthening community governance.

Shae Thot works in areas where civil society has traditionally been weak, and space for citizen participation is limited. For this reason, Shae Thot is working at the community level to support the development of grassroots organizations to play an essential role in identifying and addressing local needs, ensuring inclusive service delivery to the poorest and marginalized community members, while at the same time fostering democratic principles.

### Interventions

**Strengthened Community Institutions** —In each project village, Shae Thot forms a Village Development Committee (VDC), comprised of democratically elected village members who are independent from village authorities. Through these committees, Pact supports inclusive and participatory village decision making and transparent and accountable community planning, implementation, and monitoring. In addition, Shae Thot has established Village Development Funds (VDFs), through which communities raise funds from household-level contributions. In Kayah State, Pact builds on this approach to address the rapidly changing environment in Myanmar by promoting a

### At a glance

**Duration:** Oct. 2011 – March 2018

**Donor:** USAID

**Value:** \$70M

**Implementing Partners:**

Pact (Consortium Lead)

Cesvi, UN-Habitat

Marie Stopes International (MSI)

Pact Global Microfinance Fund (PGMF)

And seven local partners

**Target areas:** 22 townships in Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing, and Yangon Regions and Kayah State

Implementation in **2,762** villages to date



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strong civil society in rural areas on the Thai-Myanmar border, far from the centers of change. Through Shae Thot's Local Partner Initiative (LPI), Pact engages with community-based organizations and NGOs to improve service provision and strengthen their organizational capacity.

**Maternal and Child Health (MCH)** – Shae Thot's approach to improving MCH includes community-based actions and mobile clinical services and strengthening health systems. Volunteer health workers called "Change Agents" are trained in safe pregnancy, diagnosing and treating common illnesses of under-5 children including pneumonia, diarrhea, and malaria, and facilitating emergency referral. They are linked to Mothers' Groups, networks of mothers who meet weekly to learn about and discuss MCH-related illnesses, hygiene, and nutrition. The Village Development Funds provide immediate access to financial resources for health emergencies – addressing a common barrier to vital MCH care services. Shae Thot's health system strengthening approach complements community-based action through supporting continuous medical education sessions for midwives, training of auxiliary midwives, and deploying mobile clinics to targeted villages on a regular basis to offer a range of maternal and child health services.

**Livelihoods and Food Security** – Household-level food insecurity is widespread in Myanmar as a result of frequent drought, uneven rainfall patterns, and landlessness due to internal displacement. Shae Thot takes a dual approach towards improving livelihoods and food security that includes expanded access to financial services and improved agriculture services. Credit provision services – both institutional and savings-group models – are combined with microenterprise training to promote income generation. The program supports improved agriculture production through technical education and support for sustainable, climate-resilient agricultural practices, knowledge-sharing activities, and providing quality agriculture and livestock inputs.

**Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene (WASH)** – Shae Thot's WASH activities are conducted through building community members' hands-on skills in order to develop local expertise. The project trains local carpenters, masons, and artisans to create low-cost, low-technology solutions for providing or constructing bio-sand filters, ceramic water filters deep-tube wells, hand-dug wells, small dams, sanitation for community schools, or other types of water and sanitation infrastructure. Community grants are a central element of the WASH strategy, enabling communities and groups to develop joint plans for infrastructure projects. "Four Clean" hygiene and Community Lead Total Sanitation (CLTS) trainings for community volunteers and school teachers promote sustainable behavior change across the community.

### For More Information

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Photo by Pact

*A mother feeding her daughter during a Shae Thot community-organized Baby Weighing and Nutrition Day event.*

Pact is an international, nonprofit organization with forty two years of experience. Our vision is a world where those who are poor and marginalized exercise their voice, build their own solutions, and take ownership over their future.

**pact**

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## SHAE THOT KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**1,128** Village Development Committees established, facilitating community decision making and strengthened self-governance

**\$1,248,870** total fund value across 1,009 Village Development Funds

**95%** of VDFs continue operating after direct support from the project

**63%** of VDF funds support village development beyond initial project scope

**1,002,935** community members trained in health and nutrition, including **8,711** community health workers and volunteers

**100,503** clients received services from mobile clinics, of whom **45,399** have accessed family planning services

**96,358** clients received financial services through microfinance and savings groups

**550,486** individuals have improved access clean water and **240,732** to improved sanitation facilities