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Seeds of Change:
Transforming Rural Communities
through WASH, Livelihoods
and Seed Security

THEME 2026

“Toward Vibrant,
Prosperous and Happy
Rural Communities”



Green Life Alliance
for Development (GLAD),
Myanmar



COMMUNITY
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SUSTAINABLE
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CLIMATE ACTION



INCLUSIVE GROWTH
& LIVELIHOODS

Seeds of Change: Transforming Rural Communities through WASH, Livelihoods and Seed Security

Green Life Alliance for Development (GLAD), Myanmar

1. Livelihoods Support Through Small-Scale Agriculture and Livestock for Rural Communities

Introduction

Communities living in conflict-affected areas often experience severe economic hardship due to displacement, destruction of infrastructure, loss of employment, food insecurity, and limited access to markets. In such environments, livelihood support programs play a critical role in helping families rebuild their lives and achieve self-reliance. Small-scale agriculture and livestock activities are among the most effective and sustainable livelihood strategies because they provide food, income, and economic stability for vulnerable households.

Livelihood Support in rural communities

Conflict disrupts traditional livelihoods and weakens local economies. Many families lose access to farmland, farming tools, seeds, livestock, and markets. As a result, communities become increasingly dependent on humanitarian assistance for survival. GLAD has livelihood support programs that help restore dignity and independence by enabling affected populations to generate income and meet their basic needs. Small-scale agriculture and livestock activities are particularly suitable because they can be implemented with limited resources and adapted to local conditions. These activities also improve food security by increasing access to nutritious food for households. Furthermore, livelihood support reduces negative coping mechanisms such as child labor, early marriage, migration, and unsafe employment practices that often emerge during humanitarian crises.



Small-Scale Agriculture Support



Small-scale agriculture provides households with opportunities to grow crops for both consumption and income generation. Agricultural support programs in conflict and natural disaster affected communities commonly include the distribution of seeds, farming tools, fertilizers, irrigation support, and technical training. Based on crucial needs of local people GLAD has trained farmers in climate-smart and sustainable agricultural practices to improve productivity and environmental protection. After the training GLAD has supported trainees with a small amount of initial investment for kitchen gardening and home-based farming initiatives which are especially valuable for displaced families and women-headed households because they require limited land and

resources. The outcome is that agricultural activities also strengthen community resilience by promoting local food production and reducing dependency on external aid.

Livestock Support and Its Benefits

Many local farmers who live in project target communities are fond of rearing domestic animals and GLAD has assessed their needs and gaps to uplift their income generation activities through small amounts of initial investments for target local communities as livestock farming is another essential livelihood strategy in conflict-affected areas. Small animals such as chickens, goats, pigs, ducks, and fish are often preferred because they are affordable, easier to manage, and reproduce quickly. These interventions improve household nutrition through access to meat, milk, and eggs while also creating opportunities for income generation through the sale of livestock products. Therefore, livestock ownership can serve as a financial asset for vulnerable families during emergencies. GLAD has provided technical assistance, agricultural inputs, training, and emergency livelihood support to affected populations while integrating cash assistance, vocational training, and market access. 701 individuals were supported for livelihood schemes in 2025 and 2026.



Conclusion



Despite ongoing challenges such as insecurity, displacement, and environmental risks, sustainable livelihood programs can significantly contribute to economic recovery and social stability. Continued investment from governments, humanitarian agencies, and development partners is necessary to strengthen community resilience and create opportunities for long-term peace and development in conflict-affected and disaster probed regions.

2. Establishment Local Seed Bank Activities in Rural Communities

Introduction

The rural communities where GLAD's project targets make their livelihoods through agriculture that is the primary source of livelihood for many rural communities. Farmers in these communities depend heavily on access to quality seeds to ensure food production, income generation, and household survival. However, challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, conflict, environmental degradation, and rising seed costs often threaten agricultural productivity and food security while supporting sustainable agriculture and strengthening community resilience.

GLAD has supported project target communities and their management committee with specific training and technical assistance to manage local seed bank which is a community-based system for collecting, preserving, storing, and distributing seeds for future planting seasons. These seed banks help farmers maintain access to traditional and locally adapted crop varieties while promoting agricultural sustainability and food security.

Preserving Indigenous and Local Seed Varieties

GLAD has formed and collaborated with local seed bank management committee to promote local seed banks which is the preservation of indigenous and traditional seed varieties. Many local crops are naturally

adapted to the environmental conditions of specific regions, including drought, pests, soil conditions, and changing climate patterns. GLAD has raised awareness and trained target community groups about the dangers of modern commercial farming that often encourages the use of hybrid seeds, which can gradually replace traditional varieties. As a result, valuable local genetic resources may disappear over time. Therefore, local seed banks help protect biodiversity by conserving traditional seeds and ensuring that future generations continue to benefit from them. The preservation of indigenous seeds also helps maintain cultural heritage and traditional farming knowledge within rural communities.

Strengthening Food Security

Through initial support of financial investment and seed bank networks of GLAD for local seed banks contribute significantly to food security by ensuring that farmers have reliable access to seeds during planting seasons. In rural communities, farmers may face difficulties obtaining seeds due to high market prices, transportation challenges, or crop failures caused by disasters and climate shocks. By storing seeds locally, communities can reduce dependence on external suppliers and improve self-sufficiency. Farmers can quickly access seeds after floods, droughts, conflicts, or other emergencies, allowing agricultural activities to resume more rapidly. Reliable seed availability increases crop production and household food supplies, helping reduce hunger and malnutrition in vulnerable communities.

Supporting Climate Resilience and Sustainable Agriculture

Climate change has created increasing uncertainty for rural farmers through irregular rainfall, rising temperatures, droughts, and pest outbreaks. Local seed banks support climate resilience by promoting the use of diverse and climate-adapted crop varieties. Diverse seed systems reduce the risk of total crop failure because different varieties respond differently to environmental stress. Farmers can select seeds that are more resistant to drought, floods, diseases, or poor soil conditions. In addition, local seed banks encourage sustainable agricultural practices such as organic farming, crop diversification, and reduced dependence on expensive chemical inputs. These practices help protect soil fertility, water resources, and environmental health.

Economic Benefits for Rural Communities

Local seed banks can reduce production costs for smallholder farmers by decreasing the need to purchase commercial seeds every planting season. Farmers can save, exchange, and share seeds within the community, which strengthens local cooperation and mutual support systems. Improved agricultural productivity also increases household income opportunities. Surplus crops and seeds may be sold in local markets, contributing to economic development and poverty reduction in rural areas. Women farmers, who play a significant role in seed preservation and household food production, particularly benefit from community seed bank activities. Participation in seed management activities can strengthen women's economic empowerment and decision-making roles within communities.

Enhancing Community Cooperation and Knowledge Sharing

Local seed banks promote collective action and community participation. Farmers work together to collect, store, test, and distribute seeds while sharing agricultural knowledge and experiences. These activities strengthen social cohesion and encourage cooperation among community members. Training programs associated with seed banks often improve farmers' skills in seed selection, storage techniques, pest management, and sustainable farming methods. Community-based management systems also help build local leadership and increase community ownership of agricultural development initiatives. In addition, GLAD has facilitated a platform for local farmers to share and exchange their experiences, knowledge and

good practices on farming practices, pest control and seed bank management experiences to strengthen resource mobilization among themselves. Despite financial constraint of GLAD, it has supported community seed systems through technical assistance, farmer training, biodiversity conservation activities, and sustainable agriculture initiatives. 8 community-based seed bank groups were formed in 2025 through GLAD's initiatives.

Conclusion

Local seed bank activities are essential for promoting food security, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable agriculture in rural communities. By preserving indigenous seed varieties and ensuring reliable access to quality seeds, local seed banks help farmers strengthen their livelihoods and reduce vulnerability to environmental and economic shocks.



3. WASH Projects in Rural Communities

Introduction

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) interventions are fundamental to improving public health, human dignity, and sustainable development in rural communities. In many rural areas, limited access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation facilities, and poor hygiene practices continue to contribute to the spread of waterborne diseases, malnutrition, school absenteeism, and economic hardship. Vulnerable populations, including women, children, older persons, and people with disabilities, are disproportionately affected by these challenges. Therefore, WASH projects play a critical role in addressing these issues by improving access to clean water, promoting safe sanitation practices, and strengthening hygiene awareness at the household and community levels.



Importance of Safe Water Access

Access to safe and reliable water sources is essential for the survival and well-being of rural populations. Many rural households rely on unsafe water sources such as rivers, ponds, or unprotected wells, which expose communities to waterborne diseases including diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. WASH projects support the construction and rehabilitation of water systems such as boreholes, gravity-fed water schemes, protected wells, rainwater harvesting systems, and community water storage facilities. These interventions significantly reduce health risks associated with contaminated water and improve household access to safe drinking water throughout the year while improving water access also reduces the time and physical burden associated with water collection, particularly for women and girls who are often responsible for fetching water over long distances. As a result, women and children have more time for education, income-generating activities, and household responsibilities.

Promoting Hygiene Awareness and Behavioural Change



Access to water and sanitation infrastructure alone is not sufficient without proper hygiene practices. Hygiene promotion is therefore a critical component of WASH programming. GLAD has conducted both schools and communities for hygiene promotion sessions along with hygiene kits and related items as rural communities often require awareness campaigns and training on safe hygiene behaviors such as handwashing with soap, safe water storage, menstrual hygiene management, and household sanitation practices. Community-based hygiene education helps prevent disease outbreaks and improves public health outcomes. GLAD has formed relevant groups to sustain awareness sessions such as schools, health centres,

women's groups, and community leaders play important roles in promoting sustainable behavioural change. GLAD has understood that hygiene promotion activities are especially important during emergencies and disease outbreaks when vulnerable communities face increased health risks. These interventions help reduce environmental contamination and prevent disease transmission. Healthier communities experience

lower medical expenses and improved productivity, supporting overall community development and economic stability.

Supporting Education and Gender Equality

WASH projects have a strong positive impact on education in rural communities. GLAD has a project activity as cash and voucher assistance to children, especially girls who are more likely to attend and remain in school when safe drinking water, gender-sensitive sanitation facilities, and hygiene services are available. At the same time GLAD has constructed school latrines to maintain adequate toilets and menstrual hygiene facilities often contribute to school attendance among adolescent girls. By improving school WASH infrastructure, projects create safer and more inclusive learning environments. In addition, reducing the burden of water collection allows girls and women to participate more actively in education, livelihoods, and community decision-making processes. This contributes to greater gender equality and women's empowerment.



Strengthening Community Resilience and Sustainability

GLAD has incorporated with partners/donors to strengthen Sustainable WASH interventions for the resilience of rural communities to environmental, economic, and public health challenges as climate change, droughts, floods, and water scarcity increasingly threaten rural livelihoods and water systems. GLAD has always facilitated community led initiatives by incorporating community participation, local management committees, maintenance training, and climate-resilient infrastructure improve long-term sustainability. Thus, communities that are actively involved in planning and managing WASH facilities are more likely to maintain and protect these systems over time. Integrated WASH approaches also contribute to improved nutrition, food security, and livelihood outcomes by supporting healthier living conditions and reducing vulnerability to disease.

Conclusion

GLAD is able to uplift up lives of rural communities through WASH projects which are essential for improving health, dignity, education, and resilience in rural communities. Besides, strengthening community led project activities will boost access to safe water, improved sanitation, and proper hygiene practices significantly reduce disease risks and enhance the quality of life for vulnerable populations. Through WASH interventions, GLAD can contribute to gender equality, educational access, economic development, and long-term community sustainability.

