

DURABLE PEACE PROGRAMME

ACHIEVING PEACE IN KACHIN AND NORTHERN SHAN



Over 130,000 people are displaced in Kachin and Northern Shan; a number that has been increasing since the seventeen-year ceasefire was broken in 2011. An estimated 3,900 armed clashes have taken place in the last seven years between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), as well as ongoing fighting with and amongst Ethnic Armed Group in Northern Shan.

Many Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) still cannot return to their homes; some have been displaced since 2011, and many have experienced multiple displacements, causing economic insecurity, as well as lack of stability and repeated trauma; experiences of displacement often involve fleeing into the jungle, losing livelihoods and property, and being subjected to violence. Peace and support for conflict-affected communities remains critical.

The Durable Peace Programme (DPP) has been implementing activities since 2015. The programme will continue to work in dozens of townships in Kachin, and is now also expanding to Northern Shan for a second phase that started in August 2018.

THE CHALLENGES WE ARE FACING

The situation in both Kachin and Northern Shan is deeply troubling. A 2018 DPP survey shows that fear has increased, and resilience and trust in the peace process and authorities have deteriorated severely since 2015, especially with the reescalation of conflict. The results also show that 50% of IDPs in Kachin have an average of only three days' expenses worth of savings. Extreme vulnerability is worsening, both in terms of physical security and loss of livelihoods, with the bottom 25% of IDPs reporting no income at all over the last year of phase one of DPP(2017-2018). There has been increased reporting of Gender Based Violence and of both women and men's acceptance of domestic violence - and IDPs are more likely than non-IDPs to believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife. The vast majority of IDPs want to return to their original homes - 92% in non-government controlled areas and 83% in government



DPP strengthens livelihood opportunities and generates income for IDPs and conflict-affected communities

controlled areas - but armed conflict, the presence of armed forces, and land mines are reported as three major barriers.

Increasing land grabbing is compounding the problem; when land is deemed to be 'vacant,' it can be reallocated, making return to land of origin near impossible. These factors result in widespread uncertainty about the future; nearly 90% of all IDPs interviewed stated that they do not know when they can expect to return home. These are systemic issues that require comprehensive political solutions and reconciliation beyond any efforts of ceasefire.

THE CHANGE WE WANT

The long-term goal of the DPP is to contribute to lasting peace, security, stability, and sustainable development in Myanmar, with a particular focus on Kachin and Northern Shan. This will be achieved through a multi-faceted approach, supporting communities and civil society to lead this change, while engaging with authorities to be more responsive to community needs.

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THE PEOPLE WE WANT TO REACH

DPP reached an estimated 85,000 conflict-affected people in Kachin over the first three and a half years of the programme, with a particular focus on IDPs, especially women and youth. For the second phase, the programme will be expanded to townships in Northern Shan and activities will continue to be implemented in Kachin, and expects to reach an additional 105,000 people directly.

HOW WE PLAN TO BRING CHANGE

We support women and men to have greater awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and increased capacity and motivation to participate in key peace and development processes. We support civil society in their crucial role in peace-building, and raise the voices of women and men of all ethnicities in Kachin and Northern Shan. We engage with Myanmar government officials and ethnic authorities, so that they will have a better understanding of the needs of people living in Kachin and Northern Shan, especially those of the IDPs.

We will support conflict-affected communities and IDPs to develop improved resilience to the effects of living with protracted conflict. This means supporting IDPs with potential return and resettlements, as well as increasing and improving the incomes of conflict-affected communities, and contributing to improved social cohesion. We will take action to empower women and reduce Gender Based Violence, as well as ensure women are included in important decision-making processes, and have their specific concerns addressed.

For example, during the first phase of the programme, women reported that they were too busy taking care of children to participate; in response, the DPP set-up early childhood centres, thus freeing women to attend trainings, agricultural workshops, and post-trauma counselling sessions. Furthermore, some of our activities had unexpected positive outcomes; activities aimed at increasing and improving livelihoods also brought people from disparate groups together in a neutral way and transformed relationships

between previously mistrusting communities. In phase two, we will continue to deepen the expertise of Civil Society in Kachin and Northern Shan, as well as respond to what we learn from these communities and adapt accordingly, enabling us to provide meaningful, context-specific support.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

To reach some of the most remote and challenging areas in Kachin and Northern Shan, we implement our work through a consortium of 7 national and international organizations (Kachin Baptist Convention, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity, Metta Development Foundation, Nyein Foundation, Oxfam, SwissAid and Trocaire), and over 25 local CSOs. Each has its own unique expertise, helping us achieve our goals on peace, reconciliation, rehabilitation, and development in these states.

"In November 2016, trauma healing started in the camp. Before the project, DPP consortium partner, Shalom (Nyein foundation) staff came to the camp and asked us about our stories and histories. After that they started counselling and taught us healing activities to help deal with our traumas. The healing exercises involved breathing exercises and techniques for relaxation. This has helped me quite a bit. Through the exercises I really was able to relax my mind and fall into a deep sleep. I was able to imagine positive things, like my favourite garden. I feel that our minds have become so much more resistant since learning these healing exercises. This has helped make me more stable. I also hope this activity will reach other people in other camps, this is good for many others too."

– 'JMT', Trauma Healing Recipient



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The project is funded by the European Union. The total budget of the Programme which will run from 2015 to 2022, is 19.5 Million EUR.

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