I had to carry at least 15 gallons a day, but this was not enough for us, there was not much left for latrine use and personal hygiene. Water was not enough for elderly and children to use at home. Sometimes we did not bath for several days. Now we have enough water that can easily access from home – enough for all family – that is clean and of easy access to all, this will help us very much to improve our personal hygiene, our health will consequently improve and we could live with dignity. Our future is brighter.

Ma Mu Mu Kyi, Kyaung Wun Du Village, Pale Township

In Dry Zone, only 58 percent of households have year round access to protected water (including rain water). About twenty percent people are not using improved water sources, and majority of households use strain through a cloth as water treatment, a practice which will not make water safe to drink. Safe drinking water and sanitation are basic necessities for good health, contaminated drinking water can be a significant carrier of diseases such as trachoma, cholera, typhoid, and schistosomiasis.

The water sources get dry in summer and fetching water takes more than 3 hours to get 50 gallons of water. The longer period it takes to collect water; the less water will be collected. This has a detrimental effect on hygiene, especially for people who are unable to go to the water source to bathe. Most families shower at well and many mothers in the village bath their children in a basin, then keep that water for another child to bath, that is the way they can recycle the water. This long practice habit is not healthy at all, especially for young children. In Dry Zone, fetching water task usually falls on women or children. Furthermore, water scarcity in many villages is one of the biggest threats to livelihood; a majority of households spend most of their time – almost half day of their day time working hours – to make a living from cultivation and plantation, and effort fetching water for drinking and other uses, depriving them of income generating opportunities and education. Majority of households in Dry Zone make a living from cultivation and plantation of sesame, peanut, onion, winter crops and other seasonal plants, however due to water scarcity cultivation stop in summer.

Support WASH to Community in Dry Zone

Shae Thot, funded by USAID, improves the quality of water, increases quantity of domestic used water and reduces the water fetching time and distance of school children and women who usually are responsible with the job of water fetching for their households. Shae Thot also focused on protection of water resources from contamination, transferring knowledge and skills through hands-on trainings, awareness on household level water treatment facilities, all activities lead by community driven development approach.

Over the course of Shae Thot (Y1~Y6), 573,402 people which represents 118,208 households benefitted to get safe drinking water, about 53% of the total beneficiaries were women, more than 32,072 families provided with rain water collection (RWH) and storage tanks, and 65,596 families supported to improve drinking water quality by using bio-sand filters. In addition, more than 129,374 people represents 26,482 families supported by household piped water supply from different water sources.

Household Piped Water Supply Systems

228,181 People benefitted
A short step from improved WASH to healthier communities, funded by LIFT, is implementing in 212 villages across six townships at Dry Zone (Yesagyo, Pakokku, Myingyan, Natogyi, Mahlaing, and Taungtha) providing communities with high-quality hygiene education, improved sanitation focused on zero open defecation (ZOD) and access to safe drinking water in order to give them basis for healthy and productive life through continuous community mobilization and engagement. Under this project activities, UN-Habitat trained local people to improve their knowledge and their skills development. As of now, 85 TOT of PHAST trainings (participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation), 25 TOT of WSP (Water Safety Plan) trainings and 10 community WSP awareness trainings were conducted respectively.

**Water Safety Plan (WSP) Awareness Training**

WSP trainings are organized as part of the project activities to inform communities on what WSPs are about and how communities need to get engaged and involved in the preparation of WSPs for their own communities. Water Safety Plan (WSP) awareness of community training is a preventive management approach used to assess and manage threats to a rural drinking water system from water catchment to consumer. It helps in the management of activities in the watershed to control contamination of source water. Removal or inactivation of contaminants during treatment. Prevention of recontamination during water distribution, storage, and handling. More than 4,000 people were educated with safe drinking water and safe route from water source to their mouth including method of storage in their households. The communities were practiced safe water storage and usage system with inspection questions.

**Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) Training**

At the PHAST training event, the community identified good and bad hygiene practices, transmission and prevention of diseases from feces to foods and in turn come into human body. Reviewing the hygiene messages-4 cleans concept, good hygiene practices. The presentation and discussion expressed about the linkage between nutrition and hygiene. They also discussed about their current step, current condition of the village to Zero Open Defecation (ZOD), current condition of villagers on hygiene practices. They also set up for achieving community health related goals. The following sessions were included: drawing action plan for achieving the goal from the current condition including implementation activities and time frame, discussing about determinants (health related and non-health related, negative and positive factors), choosing the determinants for giving message for changing the intended behavior. They also discussed about methods and target groups. Conducting PHAST Event led by the Hygiene Promoter (HP) volunteer group (conducting on job training). After the events, included with review and discussing about PHAST awareness Events: Discussing of outcome activities to be done during the coming months and time frame.
Training and Skills Development

Training and skills development play an important role for successful implementation of activities and for sustainability of the work carried out through community-driven approach. UN-Habitat Myanmar provided trainings and skill development for community by UN-Habitat Technical staffs using structured training in thematic areas which promote not only the construction works but include management and monitoring of work and subsequent operations and maintenance which help community participation in long term sustainable development. Training sessions were focused on; Community Action Planning (CAP), Artisan Training (RWCT/Storage Tank/ Reinforcement/Brick), Artisan Training on Fly Proof Latrine (FPL)/Concrete ring/post, VDC Committee Training, Water Quality Test Training, Operation and Maintenance training (O&M), awareness on using Bio-sand filter training. Moreover, UN-Habitat trains carpenters and masons to construct high quality infrastructure by in class and on job trainings. This has a double benefit – good standard water infrastructures are built, and the capacity of local artisans improves, enabling them to continue to apply these practices in further activities such as maintenance works of constructed infrastructures. From the UN-Habitat studied in October 2015, 44% of trained carpenters were receiving a daily income from this building work. On average they cited a gain of about $2 per day. “People living in remote areas much depend on local carpenters to build or renovate their traditional houses. I gained better job opportunity to work as a carpenter within and surrounding villages because people trust me more than before. I decided to transfer my knowledge with my team and the community to upgrade their traditional building technique.” Myint Htay, Ah Nyar Taw Village of Yesagyo Township.

These trainings help to enhance the confidence and promoted leadership of local community, this strengthened their participation and increased their knowledge in water supply and sanitation improvement. Appropriate participatory systems of reporting and monitoring helped to mature project activities in a more organized, system and accountable manner. A tangible impact was seen where all VDCs very transparently reported the funds allocated for their project activities.

Fly-Proof Latrine (FPL) Construction Training

The project supports demonstration of construction household latrines for most vulnerable households; where beneficiaries are identified by the community themselves. The project aims at providing small subsidy to the poorest of the poor and expects contribution from household in terms of materials and labor. The project makes emphasis on behavior change to create demand for hygienic latrines, as well it supports with various hygienic latrine designs and technical support so household able to build their own latrines.

26 trainings conducted across nine townships; the trainings are conducted in host villages where participants come to from nearby villages. Consequently, trainees return to their villages to provide support to household for self-help latrines. Total 393 people participated of the demonstration trainings, 143 of them were women (36%).

Road to Zero Open Defecation Community

U Yin Su Taung village located 14 miles away from main town of Natogyi Township, the community of Yoe Ma face their daily life with open defecation, approximately 70% do not have latrine. Majority of the households make a living from cultivation and plantation of peanut, toddy palm tree and other seasonal plants; and rolling tobacco to get daily income of average 3,000 kyats. During UN-Habitat’s behavior change communication activities, U Ku Lar – a father of 5 children – actively participated of the PHAST events. He said “Before, most villagers defecated in the open, the few existing latrines were unhygienic and in poor condition.” U Ku Lar and other people now understand the problems of open defecation and benefits of using latrines, such as health improvement, upgrade of living standard and increase of social and economic conditions. He continued “There was a habit of open defecation nearby drinking water sources, we used the water however most people did not practice proper water treatment, therefore many children got diarrhea and other water and fecal transmitted diseases every year.”

While taking his family in front of their newly built latrine U Ku Lar proceeded “We learned about the benefit of having a proper latrine and now most people initiate their self-help latrines like us. Although it cost us 550,000 kyats to get a septic latrine, we believe that this would be a long term investment for the health of our family. My children, especially my 3 adult girls, used to go in the field to defecate” – U Ku Lar showed sadness – “Now we have proper latrine at home and we are happy and proud to have it. We will maintain and keep it clean. I share and practice the knowledge gained from hygiene trainings with my family, now they always tell me: wash your hand with soap after using it!” - He laughed.

The community of this village are becoming aware of the importance of positive hygiene practices, and of having own latrines and how this improve their health and living conditions. Eight other families have built their latrines, and the whole community agreed to save 200 kyats per day from each family with the support of hygiene volunteers in order to have a fund to support other families to build and maintain their latrines. Positive change is happening thanks to LIFT’s support.
Women have accumulated considerable knowledge about water resources, including location, quality and storage methods. However, efforts geared towards improving the management of the world’s finite water resources and extending access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, often overlook the central role of women in water management. Therefore, their role is highly important during the preparation and posterior implementation of Water Safety Plans (WSPs) for their communities.

As of March 2017, total 240 people received training on development of WSPs, out of this 130 were women. Moreover, during the first sessions of developing their community plans 71% were women. Women are also taking leading roles in their communities, they are participating of decision making process, 45% of Village Water Development Committees (VWDCs) are occupied by female members; 27% holding treasurer post. They are also the large number of training participants, receiving knowledge and acquiring technical skills, 61% of total trainees are women.

Encourage Gender Equally Participate In Development Process

Almost all of 263 households of Khin Mon village of Yesagyo work making traditional textiles, as casual and labors in cultivation, and some of them are migrant carpenters to Shan State.

Ma Kyu Kyu Thin – a treasurer of Village WASH Development Committee (VWDC) and a hygiene volunteer - actively participated during community action planning (CAP) of their village. Ma Kyu Kyu Thin said “Out of 9 VWDC members 6 are women and we feel very motivated to participate of the project activities. Before, people could be indifferent and not interested in the development of our village, and women were not very much encouraged to play key role in development activities”. She also said “Nowadays, when we invite to community meetings, almost every family joins together to talks about their problems and together we try to find out solutions, we openly give feedback and suggestions.”

Ma Kyu Kyu Thin – a 28 years old lady– as many other hygiene volunteers in the village, visits households to monitor people’s behavior change regarding improved hygiene practices. “We prepared – she said – a checklist to inspection latrines cleanness, how many families share latrines, the status of construction materials collection, how many households dig pit or are getting prepared to build new latrines.” She continued “We attended training on PHAST, then we started sharing with our community and we now see people practicing proper hygiene methods, they wash their hands with water and soup, keep water protected and use their latrine”. Ma Kyu Kyu said that she felt her community was changing their view about open defecation, that there were becoming more aware of the different negative effects that it brings in.

To conclude she said “We will continue coordinating and building trust among VWDC, hygiene volunteers, the social protection groups and with all the community. We will be moving forward to improve living condition in our village”.

Women’s Involvement On Their Community Development