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SUCCESS STORY

Pyoe Khin Thit Foundation Utilize Participatory Mapping to Address Village Land Rights



U Myo Thant of Pyoe Khin Thit Foundation delivers a village folio to community members from Shaw Pyar Village Tract, Pathein Township, Ayeyarwaddy Division

Pyoe Khin Thit Foundation (PKTF), a USAID Land Tenure Project partner, worked in eleven villages of Shaw Pyar Village Tract, Pathein Township, Ayeyarwaddy Division, to increase community members' awareness of land laws and map village boundaries and land resources, creating an evidence base of community land use. The village tract has large areas of land with rubber plantations that were allocated with limited consultation. Community members now find their livelihoods constrained.

After six months of participatory engagement, in October 2017, PKTF organized a folio handover ceremony to share project results with members of the village tract, the Pathein District Member of Parliament, and government officials from the Forest Department and Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. Folio handover is the final step in the participatory mapping process. At this event, communities and local government officials receive copies of village folios and maps that document the participatory process including all activities, community members who participated and findings related to land tenure concerns. Maps document the village's land uses and boundaries.

Village leaders and the village tract administrator together identified how they want to use the community maps in conjunction with building a greater understanding of the law. "Before PKTF we didn't know much about the status of [Vacant, Fallow, Virgin] VFV land and what could be done to secure our rights," says Myit Tun of Hlay Lone Taung Village. "However, now we have plans to apply for Form 7s to protect our individual fields." While acknowledging that the maps are not formally recognized, the village leaders still see the maps as important tools.

In addition to securing household lands, the community also identified the need to secure community land. The village tract administrator stressed, "Our available land is used up and we see VFV land that government tells us is off limits, but it is not being used and we don't see any plans, we would like to apply for access."

The process has sparked an interest in having local level spatial information, and the village tract administrator has requested additional support and spatial analysis to help solve longstanding challenges.

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Telling Our Story

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