

January 2019

## SUCCESS STORY:

### Increasing Productivity and Profits for Mung Bean Farmers in the Dry Zone

U Than Oo is a 47-year-old farmer living in Htone Pauk Taw Village in Magway, Central Myanmar. He is married with two sons. He currently serves as the Secretary of the Farmer Development Committee (FDC) in his village. During recent years many farmers in the area stopped growing mung beans due to low productivity, poor quality and low prices, focusing more on growing sesame and peanuts. One of the major constraints they faced in growing mung beans was access to quality seeds, which impedes their ability to improve yields.

U Than Oo initially heard about the P4 project, managed by the DaNa Facility and Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO), and funded through DFID, when representatives from ICCO and Network Activities Group (NAG) visited his village and held orientation sessions on mung bean cultivation.

After deciding to participate in the P4 project, U Than Oo attended training and learned good agricultural practices (GAP) for mung bean cultivation and techniques to produce high quality seeds. He was selected to develop a seed multiplication plot on his four-acre farm to increase the supply of quality mung bean seeds. At the recommendation of P4 he used the Yezin-1 seed variety on his plot. The Department of Agriculture (DoA) usually only recommends Yezin-1 in lower Myanmar – in regions such as Yangon and Ayeyarwaddy – it is considered unsuitable for dry areas such as Magway, though it is a well-known variety in Yangon. Despite this recommendation, U Than Oo trusted the information he received through the P4 project and planted Yezin-1.

The results were tremendous; as U Than Oo stated: “Even though the Department of Agriculture does not recommend Yezin 1 in Magway, I took the risk to try. I attended GAP trainings and seed multiplication trainings without fail. I also applied the systematic practices I learned during the trainings. DFID provided support for us through the project with DaNa and ICCO to purchase higher quality inputs. Because of the efforts of the project staff and Department of Agriculture staff, the results were amazing! Compared to other farmer’s plots, my mung bean field was astonishing. Even though we suffered from a lack of rainfall during the growing season, especially at the beginning, I was so happy. The yield was six baskets per acre of high quality



U Than Oo (left) in his mung bean farm

mung bean seed. In total, I grew 24 baskets of premium quality mung bean seeds that I sold to the Regional Farmer Development Association (RFDA). I received an extra 5,000 MMK above the current market price per basket of seed. I made an additional profit of around 120,000 MMK (£60) from my farm this year. I am sure that I can make more profit if the weather is favourable during the growing season.”

U Than Oo intends to reinvest part of his profit in mung beans and expand production of high quality seed to sell through RFDA, as well as participating in collective marketing efforts with other villagers. The remainder of the profit will go towards his children’s education. He also wants to support other farmers in the area who have struggled to produce good quality seed, stating: “I am more than grateful to help in producing quality seeds for others. The project is excellent for us. What I like the most are trainings, collective selling and strengthening of Farmer Development Committees (FDCs). I want to suggest that we need to strengthen collective selling practices more in the future. Farmers also need trainings about planting according to the weather. I am very excited to continue working on my land and participate in more training to learn better techniques. My family and I are grateful for the support and I am proud of my achievements. Thanks to DFID, DaNa, ICCO and NAG I now have the confidence to try new practices and innovative work with my neighbours to produce more Yezin 1 seed in Magway.”