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SUCCESS STORY:

Improved Growing Techniques Increase Incomes for Smallholder Farmers in Rakhine State



Khine Khine Nyunt on her farm in Mrauk U Township, Rakhine State

Khine Khine Nyunt is one of more than 350 key farmers participating in the 'Transforming Rakhine's Vegetable Market' (TVeg) project. The 25-year-old farmer from Pan Maw village, Rakhine State, has been working with the project since June 2019.

The TVeg project, implemented by East-West Seed and supported by the UK aid-funded DaNa Facility, aims to improve the livelihoods of smallholder vegetable farmers by increasing output, product quality, and market demand. The project provides technical assistance to key farmers, who then showcase their 'demonstration' farms and share their experiences with other members of the community.

Before participating in the TVeg project, Khine Khine Nyunt used traditional farming techniques, which often led to low yields and poor quality.

"Sometimes our plants were damaged because of the weather or pests and diseases. I've always thought I should be able to get a more stable income from my farm," she said.

The project's technical team provides training on a range of agricultural practices; the farmers learn how to use

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seedling trays and netting to prevent pests and diseases; how to apply fertiliser correctly at the right time and at the right dose; and how to prepare the soil at different stages of the growing season.

Khine Khine Nyunt's involvement in the project has led to a surge in her income over the last six months.

"I have learned improved planting techniques and have been able to obtain high quality seed. My yield has been increasing with the new techniques and my income has increased more than 10 times," she said.

For her crop of hot peppers, net profits have increased from 20,000 kyats (£12.25) per 0.1 acre to 286,250 kyats (£175). Khine Khine Nyunt has put the extra income to good use – part of it has gone to support her niece's education while part was donated to help pay for a local road.

Yet the real impact of Khine Khine Nyunt's participation in the project is felt across the community. Now, more farmers in her village are visiting her demonstration farm to see the results for themselves and several have started following the new techniques, replicating her successful model. She even has farmers from other villages coming to the farm to learn from her experience.

As for the future, Khine Khine Nyunt has applied to train three more women farmers as part of the project's Training of Trainers programme. As key farmers pass on their skills in the community they are laying the foundations for good farming practices in Rakhine State, helping smallholder farmers increase their incomes by improving the yield and quality of their produce.