



Joint Action to Keep Goats for Income Generation A Case study from Kawarchaung Community

A revolving fund initiated by the Community led Coastal Management in the Gulf of Mottama Project sparked a joint initiative to keep goats. A win-win situation for the goat owners, the herders and the village as a whole.

Nu Nu Wai, a 50 years old widow with no children, is living by herself in the Kawarchaung community, in Kyaikhto township, Mon State. She is working as a goat-herder to take care of the livestock from others.



Daw Nu Nu Wai is carrying a kid while driving the goat herd back to the shed at Kawarchaung Village, Kyaikhto Township. (Picture: Nyanseik Rarmarn / HELVETAS Myanmar).

“In the beginning, we started with 20 goats and now we got over 50. Phyo Lin Pine, a 15 years old kid and me are taking care of them. As a goat-herder, I now own eight goats myself”

The value of the entire herd of 50 animals amounts in current prices to around one million kyats (740 USD). Daw Nu Nu Wai is not paid in cash for her work. She is remunerated by receiving half of the animals' off-springs.

“I currently don't have any other job besides the herding. I like my work and love the animals. Every day I take them to the pastures to let them graze and bring them back to their sheds in the afternoon. When it is raining, I take them two times a day, once in the morning and another time in the afternoon for them to be able to graze sufficiently.”

Shared responsibilities to the benefit of all

The joint business design for keeping livestock was initiated by the communities themselves after receiving a small loan through the Community led Coastal Management in the Gulf of Mottama project; a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation implemented by the Swiss NGO Helvetas and partners. Keeping livestock is among the initiatives to provide the predominantly fishing community with livelihood alternatives, since fish resources are depleted and income from fishing is dwindling.

Ko Ko Latt, one of the goat keepers explains:

“After I received the loan, I bought two goats which cost me around 30,000 kyat (22 USD) per animal. Many of the villagers did the same thing as me, but at that time, we had not yet had the idea of this joint business design. Soon after, we realized that keeping goats requires daily worktime, that we could have spent doing other things. Then we came up with the idea of keeping all the goats together in one place and discussed among ourselves who was a potential candidate to take care of the herd every day.”

The group agreed to use half the offsprings as payment to the herder who is responsible to take care of the goats and to graze them. In case of infections or illnesses the herder needs to inform the owners, and they are then responsible to take care of their own animals.

Daw Aye Kyine, who is one of the goat owners, stated that her animals fell sick. She asked the veterinarian from the village nearby for treatment. To receive treatments, she had to pay around 1,000 to 1,500 Kyats (around 1 USD) per animal.



Goats are often called the “poor men’s cows”. Their advantages are low initial investment costs and a fast reproduction cycle. (Picture: Nyanseik Rarmarn / HELVETAS Myanmar).

U Soe Thein, vice-chairman of the Village Development Committee is of the opinion that goat keeping is a good business. He stresses the point that goat have a short reproductive cycle and that the goats are starting to mate already at the age of six months. Normally they get two kids twice a year. He states that goat meat is one of the preferred meats in the area, and for a one-year-old animal, the price is around 80,000-100,000 Kyat (USD 60 to 75).

The joint business design of a group herding their goats together leads to a win-win situation for the herder and the owners; resulting in higher family incomes for all of them.



Daw Khin Than Maw is a mother of four kids and runs a small shop. She has no time to herd her goats herself. (Picture: Nyanseik Rarmarn / HELVETAS Myanmar).

Daw Khin Than Maw runs a small shop in the middle of the village. She is a mother of four children who are attending school. She is a busy woman and therefore does not visit the goat herd frequently. This is also possible because she trusts the goat-herders fully.

“My husband put two goats to the joint herd. But I rarely visit them since I am busy with my job as is my husband. He is working at a barber shop in Yangon and he can only come back home once every two months. The money I gain from the small shop can cover my family’s daily needs. My husband transfers his salary of about 300,000 kyat (220 USD) to me every month. I only use this money if needed for the children’s education or other important things.”

Even though she has to leave half of her goats’ offsprings as a fee to the herders, she now already owns four goats.

Starting point: A revolving fund

Traditionally, the Kawarchaung community relies on fishing, agriculture and livestock keeping. Some families are landless and working as daily laborers to fill their stomach. Since income opportunities are rare, many villagers decide to migrate to larger towns such as Yangon or even to Thailand.

The project provided the Village Development Committee (VDC) of the Kawarchaung community with a revolving fund of around 6,200,000 Kyat (4,600 USD). The objective of the

fund is to increase the income generation within the community and create job opportunities. The process of receiving a revolving fund from the project is based on an evaluation of livelihood business plans from the communities and their suggested budget.

However, the size of the revolving fund does not allow to provide individual loans to all families at once. Therefore, the Village Development Committee categorized the villagers with rankings according to their wealth through a livelihood assessment. In the first cycle, only the poorest group received a loan of 100,000 – 150,000 Kyat (75 to 110 USD). The repayment schedule of the loan and the small interest rate were discussed and set by the Village Development Committee to suit the local conditions.

By now the first cycle of issuing loans has already finished. The first loan takers have reimbursed their loans. Now the VDC, in collaboration with the project staff, is providing another round of loans to the community members who have not yet received any support. The VDC is proud about the results observed after the first distribution-cycle of the revolving fund.

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