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SUCCESS STORY

Yway Gone Village Tract Carries Out Mapping and Land Inventory to Strengthen Land Rights Security



Photo: Terra Tech

A representative of a local civil society organization outlining the participatory mapping process undertaken at the folio handover ceremony.

Land administration in Burma has historically been characterized by a centralized, static approach that does not incorporate community perspectives in a transparent manner. With the endorsement of the National Land Use Policy (NLUP) in January 2016, which promotes bottom-up approaches, USAID is supporting pilot communities to test implementation of the NLUP in practice.

The participatory mapping and land use inventory activities undertaken by the USAID-funded Land Tenure Project (LTP) in Yway Gone Village Tract in Burma culminated in November 2016 with the LTP team's presentation of the final village folios of mapping and inventory information. The folios include the final agreed maps for each village, comprehensive boundary points, and information about land usage in the area.

The project brought together community members (including women and youth), civil society organizations (CSOs), and local authorities to document community land rights and uses. Project staff and representatives of local CSOs facilitated the process, including educating the communities about the NLUP and land-related laws in the country.

USAID's support has resulted in information products, including map data that for the first time accurately describe the perspectives of community members on their land and can be used by them when discussing land resource issues with local government officials. The use of inclusive, participatory, data-driven methods introduces participatory engagement between communities, CSOs, and local government. This participatory engagement represents a change from traditional top-down governance and promotes more accountability and transparent resource governance.

Nick Thomas, LTP Country Coordinator, said, "The information gathered with the support of all stakeholders will serve communities well in communications with local authorities and private companies in the event of access and land use disputes."

For more information, contact:
USAID COR: Stephen Brooks; sbrooks@usaid.gov
USAID Land and Urban Office:
landmatters@usaid.gov

Telling Our Story
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>