The Human Development Initiative in Myanmar

UNDP works in Myanmar under a mandate from the Executive Board which focuses activities at programmes with grassroots level impact in the areas of basic health, training and education, HIV/AIDS, the environment and food security. In response to this mandate, UNDP delivers its assistance through what is known as the Human Development Initiative, or HDI.

The HDI is a set of projects which is currently providing assistance to poor rural communities in 63 townships in 11 different regions of the country. The HDI focuses on helping communities to meet their basic social and food security needs, on promoting participation by all segments of the community in collective decision-making, and on building capacity so that communities can plan and implement their own self-help activities.

So far, about 5 million women, men and children in over 8,000 villages of targeted townships in Myanmar are beneficiaries of the HDI.

HDI projects have three overarching objectives

1. Helping communities to meet their basic needs
2. Promoting participation and participatory processes in community activities
3. Building local capacities and skills

Specific results of the HDI since 1994 include (i) improved food security and social services for the poor households; (ii) development of functional groups of women managing small savings and credit needs for their households as well as mixed ad-hoc committees to manage community resources in a participatory manner (iii) improved economic and social status of poor women; and (iv) improved village-level basic infrastructure.

HDI’s fourth phase (HDI-IV) began in early 2003 and was extended to the end of 2007. A further extension of time for 2008 to 2012 was also approved by the Executive Board.
HDI-IV comprises the following projects:

**Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP)** strengthens the capacity of poor communities to address the basic social and livelihood needs of the community, particularly those of the poor and disadvantaged.

**Community Development for Remote Townships (CDRT)** project operates in border states, where it strengthens the capacity of poor communities in selected remote townships to address their basic needs through a participatory community development approach.

**Sustainable Microfinance to Improve the Livelihoods of the Poor (MF)** focuses on disciplined and sustainable microfinance services to small women micro-entrepreneurs in selective poor villages.

**Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHLCA)** looks at the extent and nature of poverty in Myanmar, at both the national and regional levels. It also monitors Myanmar’s achievements towards the MDGs and national targets. The IHLCA project produces a comprehensive set of reports on the poverty line and poverty incidence in Myanmar based on quantitative and qualitative surveys conducted. All reports are translated into Myanmar for wider dissemination.

**Enhancing Capacity for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Project (HIV/AIDS)** is focused on strengthening the capacity of the Self Reliance Groups (SRGs) on raising awareness of the villagers including young adults, adolescents and men to the risks of HIV/AIDS. It also works to improve the greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS in self-help initiatives, as well as increasing understanding and tolerance in communities.

HDI Donor Partners:

Australia, Denmark, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA, European Commission