

## Living all around open defecation

Located 13 miles away from main town of Pakokku Township, the community of U Yin Su Taung face daily life with open defecation. Majority of the households make a living from cultivation and plantation of sesame, peanut, onion, winter crops and other seasonal plants; before they were involved in betel leaf cultivation since it provided higher income, however due to water scarcity cultivation had to stop.

During UN-Habitat's visit to the village, Ko Kyaw San - a member of the community – expressed “Most of villagers defecate in the open, out of 125 households 85 do not have latrines, and of the existing ones almost a quarter are in poor condition”.

Ko Kyaw San and few other people who understand the problem of open defecation talked about health issues and other problems that this causes in their village. He continued “There is a habit of open defecation nearby a water stream where greeneries and vegetables are cultivated. We sell and eat these, but most people do not clean them well”.

While pointing out the stream location he said “During raining season, water covers all surface and due to water flow the feces spread all over. If a person has diarrhea or other disease, it can be easily transmitted to others. Animals like pigs, chickens and dogs eat humans' feces and if a child plays with these animals he gets the feces in his hands, then to his mouth” – Ko Kyaw San's showed sadness – “We are not all aware of good hygiene practices, parents let children eat on the ground, parents themselves are not aware about risks of open defecation. They practice it too, use sticks, leaves or whatever to clean up, and almost never wash their hands after”.

Today, this is the reality of U Yin Su Taung village, an entire community living all around and being affected by open defecation. This as many other alike villages, is where LIFT will support communities to practice improved sanitation and to enjoy improved nutrition.

U Yin Su Taung village, Nyaung Pin Hla Village Tract  
Pakokku Township, Photo UN-Habitat ©



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