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**Post-Civil War Socio-Economic Development in the Kachin State of
Myanmar through Integrated Organic Rice-Based Farming Systems
Using the Farmer Field School Approach**

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Abstract

Over the last two years, the farmer field school (FFS) program of Metta Foundation in the Kachin State of Myanmar, in close collaboration with three local partner organisations, the KBC (Kachin Baptist Convention), KIO (Kachin Independent Organisation), and the Catholic Diocese, has achieved to lay the foundation for the development of an agricultural training and capacity building program based on the principles of the farmer field schools for organic rice-based farming systems. The three partner organisations nominated suitable persons as FFS facilitators. After the training they will conduct FFS in selected villages. Until today, two TOT (training of trainers) were conducted and a total number of 56 FFS facilitators graduated. In the rice cropping season 2001, 29 FFS have been conducted by 19 facilitators and a total number of 461 farmers of whom 86 were women, have participated in this training. In those fields, where several IPM/ICM techniques could be applied, rice yield increased more than two-fold. The economic analysis showed a net return of the IPM/ICM plots of 26.940 Ks vs. 10.300 Ks on the conventional plots. Particularly the SRI system of rice cultivation is highly productive. These first data impressed farmers and encouraged the program.

Based on an analysis of the first field FFS, it was learned that for a successful implementation of FFS a more comprehensive introduction to the community is essential. Furthermore, the senior leadership of the partner organisations has to fully support the program by linking it appropriately to the structure of their organisation, by providing the necessary staff capacity and by encouraging the local leaders in the communities to collaborate with the FFS program. Their political weight greatly supports the work of the FFS facilitators in their communities. They also play a vital role in inducing synergistic collaboration between the partner organisations in the communities. Thus the FFS are also an important contribution for the much needed peace-building process after 30 years of civil war and 8 years of cease-fire agreement during which a heavy exploitation of the rich natural resources in this mountainous state have reached a serious dimension.

Keywords: Farmer field school, IPM/ICM, Kachin state, Myanmar, organic rice-based farming systems, peace-building process, SRI