

Soe Khaing

I am Soe Khaing from Myanmar. I had the opportunity to study as part of the Master's programme at HAFL, with specialisation in value chain and rural development, with the help of a Helvetas Swiss intercooperation scholarship. Before I came to Switzerland, I had a chance to act as a translator for the HAFL Bachelor student Anna Braun. She came to Myanmar for her Bachelor's thesis in collaboration with Helvetas. Together we developed a survey for data collection in the Gulf of Mottama region villages. The rainy season of June and July gave us a lot of memories. We went to the villages by motorbike, and at times had to ride the motorbike under the rain, cope with slippery tracks, and push the motorbike together. This really brought us closer and helped us understand each other better as we exchanged our experiences.

I got a lot of experience within the study period at HAFL. It was the time that HAFL started to use a paperless system in teaching and examination and the exam time was very limited. I was faced with a lot of challenges in writing and reading on the computer in my study courses. That was the first such experience in my life. I have some friends and they are also studying for a Master's degree at HAFL like me. However, unfortunately, the global pandemic situation is getting worse, and after finishing the first semester we could no longer meet each other at the school. I felt very lonely at that time. Besides, the pandemic hit all the processes of my study, constraining the study time and delaying the research. It was difficult to come back to Myanmar to do my research. However, finally, I got a relief flight ticket with the help of the Myanmar Embassy in Switzerland and the Helvetas organisation. All the challenges and difficulties that I faced made me stronger and more confident. Moreover, I got an opportunity to learn a variety of teaching methods in different situations. That will be very useful in my professional life, as I am working as a demonstrator at Yezin Agricultural University (YAU). I would like to say thanks to the organisations that supported me, opening the doors to such a great opportunity.

