



Press Release

Asia World Foundation completes first 21 km of Angumaw-Maungtaw road upgrading project in Rakhine state

- *Initial study conducted to assess the initial socioeconomic impact of the first 21 km segment shows the project is expected to yield long-term benefits in accessibility, education, healthcare and jobs creation on completion*

YANGON – 1 May 2018 – Asia World Foundation, the charitable arm of the Asia World group of companies, has completed the first 21 km of the Angumaw-Maungtaw road upgrading project in Rakhine state. The road upgrading is undertaken as a charitable, not-for-profit project.

Under the directive of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD) to provide humanitarian assistance, carry out resettlement and rehabilitation and work for development in Rakhine State, the Foundation has been working on the upgrade of the 80 km road project from Angumaw to Maungtaw since 30 November 2017.

As part of the Construction and Infrastructure Task Force, a major task force amongst the nine task forces under the UEHRD, AWF rapidly organized its construction expertise and local resources to contribute its infrastructure and construction resources to this project.

Building for tomorrow, today

The original road is 12 ft wide and is mainly a macadam road. With the expertise of our inhouse consultants, we have worked with the Ministry of Construction for the geometric design, road and pavement design and box culverts design. The road will be upgraded to an 18-ft wide, 9-inch thick concrete road in accordance with Rakhine State Government's guidance.

In line with our Foundation's motto to contribute forward-looking projects which will have a lasting impact for the long-term, the concrete road is built to withstand intense vehicular usage and is designed to be monsoon-proof during the rainy season in Rakhine state where rainfall is typically heavier.

Mobilizing more than 170 construction equipment and a workforce of more than 1,200, AWF through Asia World’s construction team worked day and night over 2 shifts to execute sub-grade work (earthwork), sub-base work (stone layer) and concrete paving work. On completion, the road is designed to be ready for future use with potential for further upgrading and expansion if required.

Upgrading the road efficiently in the face of challenges

Despite massive challenges during the upgrading process due to the lack of resources in that region, our team has been working resolutely for solutions in the most efficient manner to deliver the project.

Challenges	How they were addressed
Machinery	Due to the lack of construction equipment in Rakhine state, we sent a fleet of 170 construction equipment up from Yangon by ship to carry out the work.
Materials	There are limited construction materials in the project area and Rakhine state and as such all materials for road construction have to be shipped in by sea. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand from Lemro River – 2 days per shipment (100 nautical miles away) • Gravel from Kan Taung Gyi – 2 days per shipment (100 nautical miles away) • Stones from Mote Ta Ma – 5 days per shipment (630 nautical miles away) and local sources where available • Cement from Mawlamyine and Ranong (Thai border) – 5 to 7 days per shipment (630 - 850 nautical miles away)
Manpower	Deployed more than 1,200 workers on site working 2 shifts a day to complete as much work as possible within the dry season weather window of 5-6 months.
New jetty	Purpose-built a new jetty, expanded and reinforced to accommodate 3 vessels at one time for better efficiency and round-the-clock deliveries.
Concrete batching plants	Established 2 concrete batching plants at Koe Tan Kauk and Kyau Pan Du to produce concrete at a faster rate and consistent quality required in accordance to specifications.

Looking ahead, Asia World Foundation believes that while this road upgrading project will bring long-term benefits to the local community, more needs to be done in this region. As such, AWF recently commissioned a research study to find out how the inherent possibilities for the road can be stretched to its full potential.

Obtaining feedback from the ground-up: key findings from initial research study

An independent group led by a local Myanmar research team¹ was deployed to measure the socioeconomic impact of the road upgrading project. Conducted over three days to assess the first 21 km segment of the road between Angumaw to Koe Tan Kauk, initial findings showed that this completed segment is already being used more frequently today. On completion of the project, this transport infrastructure is expected to yield even more long-term benefits in areas of overall accessibility, education, healthcare and jobs creation.

Research demographics, methodology and key findings

This initial survey interviewed a total of 112 households in 6 villages – Angumaw, Koe Tan Kauk, Don Paik, Tan Aye, Kala Chaung and Magyi Chaung. In addition to qualitative surveys, focus group discussions were conducted with 6 village heads, 2 school teachers, 1 volunteer health worker from the village and 3 businessmen from Sittwe.

The primary findings were released at the soft opening ceremony to launch the first 21 km of the road this morning in Angumaw.

- 1. Each and every one of the respondents (100%) agreed that the mode of transportation as well as the commodity flow will be improved after the completion of the project.**
- 2. Majority of respondents (92%) agreed that the completion of the project will improve education of their children.**
- 3. The bulk of the respondents (94%) say that the completion of the project will improve access to healthcare for local people.**
- 4. Almost two-thirds of the respondents (65%) agreed that the completed project will lead to increased job opportunities.**
- 5. Half of the respondents (52%) still harboured concerns about security in this area moving forward, of which 85% felt that this could be managed with adequate security forces and measures.**

In addition, other qualitative comments included the following:

- Respondents expressed that the most essential need of the villagers is to create jobs, so that they can generate adequate income.
- The villagers have indicated that their wish-list includes the establishment of factories such as garment production, cold storage and fisheries in that region.
- Also, the local people have also expressed their satisfaction with the other forms of donation to the region – such as maintenance and improvement of ponds for drinking water, construction of smaller concrete lanes at the entrance of their villages, and free access to healthcare screening at the villages.

¹ Annex A: research team biographies

Further studies will be conducted in the coming months, and there are plans for a full research report to be available in line with the completion of the entire project.

“We are heartened by the results of the initial research findings and the positive sentiment in this region. However, it is very clear that road infrastructure is only one part of the entire ecosystem within a community. In order to maximize the benefits of the road infrastructure, the participation of many other stakeholders is a must when it comes to the overall redevelopment of this region,” said U Myo Khaing, Asia World Foundation.

He added: “We are hopeful that the findings of the study will be able to drive more awareness of the sentiment on-ground and inspire other local businesses to have the confidence to contribute to other important infrastructure required here. With our collective strength and by uniting our efforts, we believe we can achieve more to do our part for the country together. Meanwhile, the Foundation welcomes any contribution or input from interested parties to coordinate with us on the completion of this road project.”

All interested parties who wish to be a part of this project can contact Asia World Foundation at info@asiaworldcompany.com.

-- END --

About Asia World Foundation

The Asia World Foundation is committed to supporting projects to help develop the wellbeing of the people of Myanmar. The Foundation has now been actively engaged in philanthropic works for a number of years. The Foundation’s projects cover a few key areas – education, disaster relief, healthcare and community development.

We are passionate in our belief that education is a crucial foundation for building a strong, egalitarian society. The second pillar to our development activities is the provision of emergency relief and assistance to those whose livelihoods and welfare are affected by major incidents, such as natural disasters. In addition, the health of our people, both physically and mentally is the health of our nation. AWF provides assistance for health checks and treatment in rural areas where required, and also supports a healthy and sporting lifestyle through the sponsorship of various sporting events such as soccer and volleyball.

Our vision is for our contributions to make a difference to people’s lives and have a positive impact on their families and communities.