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**2018 Annual Report:
Action Towards Social Justice**

Our **Vision**

A just, equitable and sustainable world in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity, freedom from poverty and all forms of oppression.

Our **Mission**

To achieve social justice, gender equality, and poverty eradication by working with people living in poverty and exclusion, their communities, people's organisations, activists, social movements and supporters.

Our **Values**

Mutual Respect: Requiring us to recognize the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity.

Equity and Justice: Requiring us to ensure the realization of our vision for everyone, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, caste, class, age, HIV status, disability, location and religion.

Integrity: Requiring us to be honest, transparent and accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and our use of resources and open in our judgements and communications with others.

Solidarity with the people living in poverty and exclusion: Will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty, injustice, and gender inequality.

Independence: From any religion or party-political affiliation.

Courage and Conviction: Requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative — without fear of failure — in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty, injustice, and gender inequality.

Humility: Recognizing that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice.

The ActionAid Federation has committed to applying a feminist lens and values in our work which will guide us in interpreting and advancing our mission.



Acronyms

AAI	ActionAid International
AAM	ActionAid Myanmar
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBT	Community Based Tourism
CRSA	Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture
BRACED	Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DDM	Department of Disaster Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organisations
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
GAD	General Administration Department
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEN	Gender Equality Network
GRPS	Gender Responsive Public Services
HRHRBA	Human Resources Human Rights Based Approach
HROD	Human Resources & Organisational Development
LIFT	Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund
LRP	Local Rights Programme
MCCR	Myanmar Consortium for Community Resilience
MPF	Myanmar Police Force
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PoVAWG	Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls

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Country Director's Foreword- Looking to the future

I'm honoured to be writing this foreword to ActionAid Myanmar's 2018 Annual Report. 2018 has been a year of transition for us and for the country. ActionAid Myanmar's first Country Director, left in January 2018 after ten years at the helm. On behalf of ActionAid, I want to thank Shihab for all his hard work helping ActionAid Myanmar become what it is today.

Since July 2018, when I joined ActionAid Myanmar as Country Director, I have met wonderful staff, visited excellent programmes, and held wide-ranging discussions about ActionAid's future with colleagues, partners and funders and shaped the future country strategy. In our new country strategy, we set out how we want to develop the strengths of our projects into a coherent set of programmes that will make a substantial difference to the poorest and most vulnerable in Myanmar. In the next phase, AAM will expand its coverage in ethnic areas and design programmes that are conflict sensitive and focused on everyday peace building. We will do this by engaging with multiple governance actors while working at the grassroots, regional and national levels.

AAM will focus on three areas -- women's rights, redistribution of power and resources, and resilience. AAM will build on existing work around preventing and responding to violence against women. AAM will continue to champion people centered planning processes, especially in ethnic areas and support CSOs to function as autonomous and independent civic actors with a vision to deepen democratic practice across Myanmar. AAM will expand its work on disaster risk reduction and preparedness in urban and rural areas. The next phase will also create space for nurturing more social enterprises with a focus on women's livelihoods. AAM will strive to be innovative in its problem solving and develop adaptive and iterative programmes that are

suitable to the emerging context. Our programmes will be informed by evidence based contextual research. I hope I am able to do justice to the amazing work that has already been done and build on it to deliver these ambitious plans into the future.

As with any organisation, there are some areas where our partners and funders rightly expect us to do even better - especially in our processes, management, and funding. The year has been a difficult one as several funding streams have come to an end, and we have work to do to replace them and ensure our programmes are sustainable. To do this, we need to show our funders and partners that we have improved our processes and operations, and that we are well placed to make a big difference. We have a new management team in place. We take immense pride in being an organisation with people from 11 ethnic communities and 4 nationalities represented in the senior and middle management teams. More than half of AAM are women, of which 57% make the Senior Management Team.

With ActionAid's customary honesty and transparency, this report showcases what we are proud of and where we can do more.

Best wishes,
Araddhya Mehtta





About Us

Our Country Strategic Plan

In 2018, Action Aid Myanmar (AAM) put in place its 2018 – 2027 Country Strategic Plan (CSP) to guide our framework and priorities. The CSP gives us a long-term strategic focus and commitment to a broader change agenda while remaining agile and flexible to respond to the complex and rapidly changing external contexts affecting the programme work and organisational priorities. By having a strong CSP, we believe that sustainable change can be achieved as it keeps our work centered on addressing the social, economic and ecological injustices at the local level, taking sides with poor and excluded people.

The Cornerstone of Our Work

AAM has a strong belief that investing in local youth is the key to sustainable community development and leadership in the country. Involving youth in AAM's work takes place through two key programmatic areas. First, the Fellowship Programme deploys 'change - makers' (youth leaders) in target communities to lead a village-based process to critically analyse their own needs and recourses, define priorities and make concrete action plans to create development at a village level. Second, youth-led community plans are supported by AAM through the Local Rights Programme to facilitate the implementation of bottom-up plans through by engagement with relevant local authorities.

Fellowship Programme

Our core approach has been the 'Fellowship Programme'. This programme believes in young leaders as drivers of change. AAM has a network of over 816 Fellows trained in participatory community development. Through the Fellowship Programme, AAM equips young, energetic community members who have leadership potential, with the skills, knowledge and confidence to stimulate participatory, community-led discussion and planning. Fellows engage with local authorities to facilitate sustainable local development and enhance people's access to services, rights and justices. They act as change makers in their respective villages and communities and are the bridge between AAM and remote communities where people are often forgotten. The Fellowship Programme facilitates the work of AAM as we strive to achieve our goals and organisational mission.

Fellows support communities to develop 'Village Books' a tool designed to empower and mobilise communities to address their priority needs and to engage with local government to secure their rights. These two programmes work in parallel to develop community-based cadres of youth leaders and facilitators that drive an empowering bottom-up process and human rights based-approach. In this manner, AAM's work continues its commitment to support people to achieve their basic rights, change policies and practices that work against them, and address discriminating attitudes and behaviors.

Local Rights Programmes

AAM works through our Local Rights Programmes (LRP) that call for a 10-year commitment with 180 communities in the following six townships.

LRP 1: Pyapon in Ayeyarwaddy

LRP 2: Meikhtilar township in Mandalay

LRP 3: Patheingyi & Ngazun townships in Ayeyarwaddy

LRP 4: Myingyi township in Magway region

LRP 5: Sarlingyi township in Sagaing region

LRP 6: Pakokku township in Magway region

These LRPs are based on the principle of AAM's commitment to a human rights-based work with a focus on women and youth, where all our development works address the root causes of injustice. Following this commitment, LRPs ensure that key principles, such as accountability, transparency, power sharing, women's rights and learning are fulfilled. All LRP interventions are carried out within our theory of change that demands Fellows, volunteers, partners and AAM staff to bring about four intertwined changes.

1. Changes in people's knowledge and awareness of their rights.
2. Changes in capacity to organise.
3. Changes in people's capacity to influence institutions and policies.
4. Tangible changes in living conditions.

To attain these changes, each LRP supports the Fellows' work at the village level and focuses on the implementation of bottom-up participatory plans. Then, the LRP staff and the Fellows, present the village books to relevant government authorities.

The work done by LRPs, covers a range of areas including enhancing social cohesion, community capacity building, women's empowerment, and improving the provision of basic public services, such as education, health, livelihoods, infrastructure and environment.



How we work

AAM believes that to be innovative, effective and to bring about lasting positive change, it is essential to work in partnership with a range of stakeholders. This includes, government, EAOs, local/national civil society, donors, academic institutions, international civil society and the private sector.



For AAM, grassroots, community-based and national civil society are the cornerstone of our work. It is through bolstering, promoting and protecting civil society that sustainable change is achieved. We strive to build alliances and networks with civil society to promote collective action and peoples' participation in the decision-making processes that affect them. AAM works together with donors to co-create programmes and build a shared vision of change, while taking pride in supporting local and national civil society to lead the process of change from the bottom up.

AAM works closely with the government through a range of approaches. We have a Memoranda of Understanding with the Department of Social Welfare and with the Department of Rural Development. We also have a Letter of Agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and

the Ministry of Planning and Finance. First, AAM and its local partners use programme evidence to ensure that policy formulation is based on credible evidence from the ground up. Second, we support the government by providing technical advisory support in policy making. Third, together we hold government accountable in delivering basic services, protecting the rights of the people, and in monitoring the implementation of policies.

AAM strives to work with EAOs that are signatories of the National Ceasefire Agreement to build their capacity as legitimate governance actors as part of the interim arrangements and hold them accountable to the people they serve. AAM believes that to promote lasting change it is essential to adopt the 'do no harm principle' in its programme design and in engagement with government and non-government actors.



AAM believes that the private sector can play an important role in deepening democracy and ensuring sustainable change. We aim to support the private sector in promoting responsible business and encouraging collaboration where there is a common vision of change. However, we will be bold in advocating for improvements



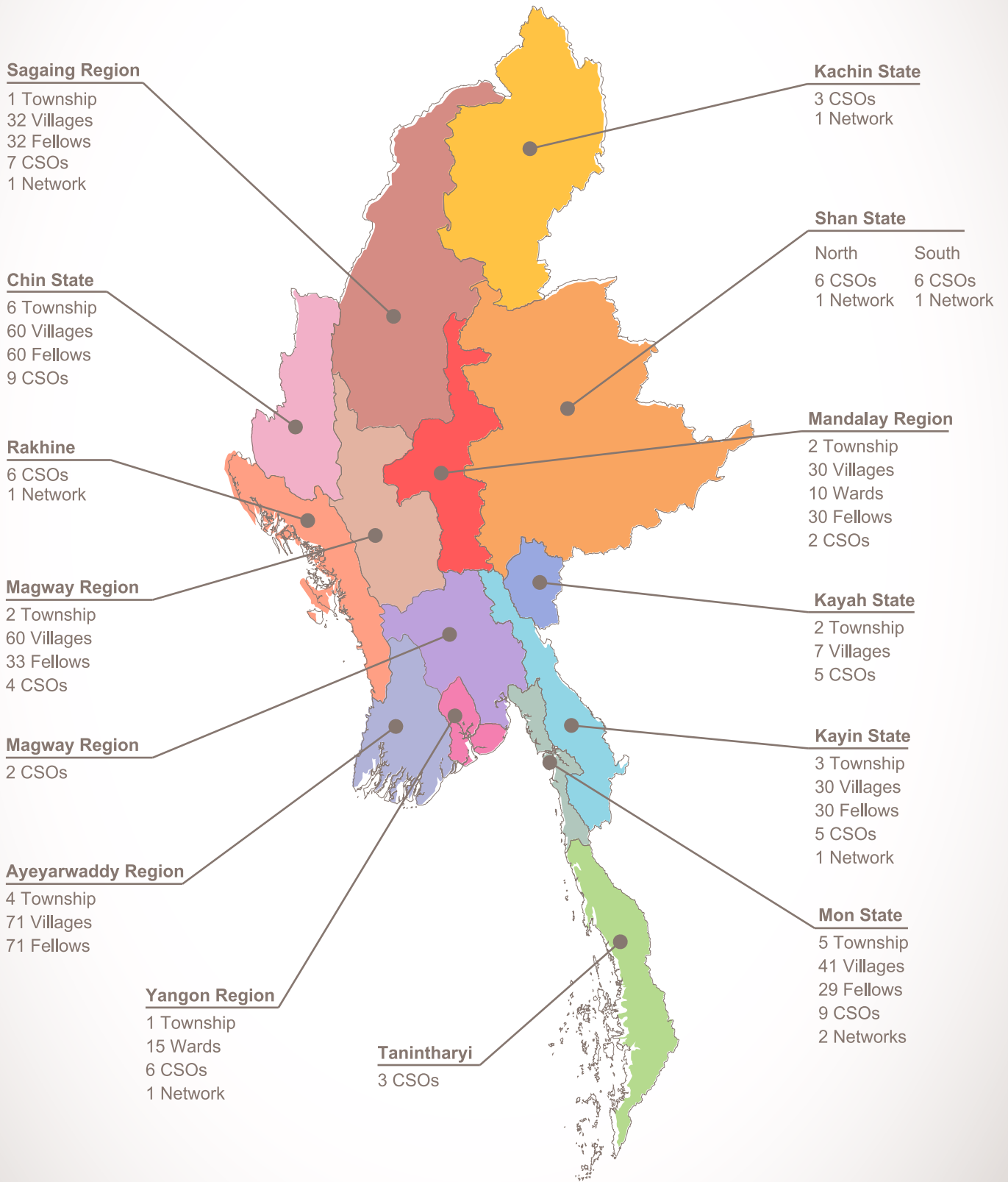
needed in the private sector to ensure their policies are designed to represent and protect the needs and interests of the people, rather than being extractive or exploitative.

AAM aims to work closely with think tanks and academic institutions to embed research in programme design. This ensures a closer connection between policy and practice, where informed research contributes to evidence-based programming, greater learning, and informed action for change. With these multiple partnerships, AAM seeks to constantly review and refine its influencing approach and work towards greater adaptive programming to respond to the changes in the context.

AAM also works with INGOs and supports strategic alliances to ensure better coordination for greater impact on the ground. Stronger bonds of solidarity across civic society – national and international will provide an effective platform for lasting change.



Where We Work



2018: Our Programme Priorities

AAM's human rights-based approach, with a feminist lens, is our fundamental positioning framework. The primary focus of our human rights-based approach is to work together with, and support, the most marginalised and vulnerable groups to realise and enjoy their rights and to hold violators and duty-bearers to account.



Our approach requires us to mobilise young leaders as drivers of change in their communities; and through campaigns, to rally public opinion to stand in solidarity with rights holders. AAM has prioritised three areas to achieve our mission. These three priority areas are interdependent and indivisible.

→ Realisation of rights. Strengthened role of the State and its ability to provide public services and protect people living in poverty and exclusion. This area of work involves nurturing the agency of the most excluded and their movements to build their individual and collective power and co-generate learning and knowledge from the bottom up. It also focuses on reduced violence against the most excluded, particularly women.

→ Redistribution of power and resources. Redistribution of resources guarantees a dignified life for all, especially those living in poverty and exclusion. This area of work relates to the changes that need to occur to attain an equitable share of resources. This includes the benefits of both productive resources and natural resources, such as land.

→ Resilience of communities and people. Communities affected by various shocks and stresses, such as conflict, protracted crises and climate change can safeguard their livelihoods and food sovereignty and build back after any shocks or disasters. This area of work focuses on absorptive (ability to cope), adaptive (ability to prepare for, predict and adapt), and transformative resilience.

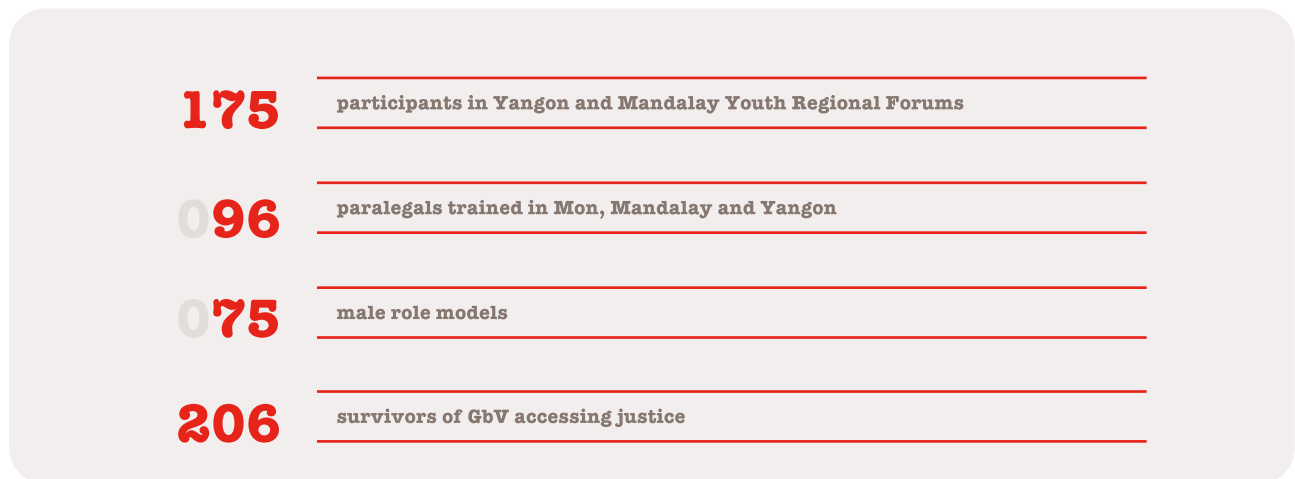
Our projects and programme innovations, initiatives and interventions are developed and implemented within the strategic framework of these three-broad priority areas and anchored at a grassroots level. The following pages present the work that we did in 2018 to achieve our mission.



Programme Priority One: Realization of Rights

Women living in poverty and exclusion are often the most affected by issues such as climate change, migrations, conflicts and lack of employment. In this context, the focus of our work remains on the rights of women and girls. In 2018, AAM worked on the three programme areas: (1) Women’s economic empowerment; (2) Women’s freedom from gender-based violence; and (3) Women’s right to participation in public life.

A Holistic Approach to Women’s Rights



Women’s Economic Empowerment

Our focus is to ensure that the women we work with have access to, and ownership of, assets and/or capital as well as the skills and capacity to own or engage with economic enterprises. In 2018, our work focused on providing women with livelihood skills to help them in times of economic hardship, and on our Social Enterprise Development Network.

- **Resilience:** A total of 3,021 women living across the six LRPs were given training on alternative ways of securing sustainable

livelihoods and income in the event of and aftermath of a disaster. This approach integrates gender and women/girls’ safety into earthquake preparedness as part of the resilience initiative.

- **Social Enterprise:** In 2013 AAM set up a women’s socio-economic development network, supported by LIFT. In 2018, this network, ‘Mboutik’ transitioned into an independent business. Gaining autonomy was a very important step for Mboutik and this special occasion was celebrated with the opening of a new production space and emporium in Bagan.

Women's Freedom from Gender-based Violence

Throughout this year, AAM continued to contribute to, and monitor, the government's commitment to the Myanmar National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW 2013 – 2022). In addition, the AAM's Women's Rights team continued its involvement in the development and strengthening of the "Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls" Bill (PoVAWG) tabled in Parliament. This bill is crucial for women's rights as it guides Myanmar law enforcement systems and practices to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.



Using funding from the European Union, AAM's Safe Spaces project worked with urban and rural communities to increase women's access to the justice system. The project is implemented in Yangon and Mandalay and is a community-level approach to gender-based violence (GBV) prevention in an urban context. The initiative aims to change regressive social norms and behaviors that perpetuate GBV and works towards addressing women's safety needs. Safe Spaces works closely with government institutions, including the Myanmar Police Force, General

Administrative Department, Department of Social Welfare and ward authorities, to improve institutional and community responses to GBV as a critical means of improving women's safety.

The MyJustice project, funded by the European Union and led by the British Council, is implemented in Yangon and in Mon State. It seeks to identify and respond to the long-term justice needs of women located in diverse rural and urban settings. Specifically, MyJustice aims to address issues of physical and sexual violence. The project empowers women and girls to claim their rights through community-led support systems and provides high quality legal aid services to survivors of violence through a well-established referral system. The project brings legal aid service providers together to strengthen institutional responses and inform national policy reform and implementation.

Both programmes trained and supported ward-level volunteers, paralegals and male role models, at the grassroots level. Training helped equip participants with the necessary capacities required to offer support to women who have been victims of abuse.

In addition to training, AAM supported the development of a system to track the number of women who were using the information and referral services provided by local paralegals. This information is crucial to present to the government as evidence of need. In Yangon, in 2018, a total of

156 women were recorded as seeking help when confronted with gender-based violence. With the use of discussion and mediation, 126 of these women did not need to go to court. AAM offered finance to 30 women, and of that number 16 went to court and 6 got justice. For Mandalay, between 2017 and 2018, 53 cases were reported. Ten of those cases went to court and have not finished.



Through the LRP's, AAM has provided opportunities for women to participate in discussions with local government, tackling issues related to government accountability, including taxation and gender responsive budgeting.

Women's right to participation

Our focus is to ensure that women in the communities we work with have the skills and capacity as well as the space to participate in organisations and structures (including in elected offices) at community, local, regional and national levels, extending beyond women's own organisations.

In 2018, seven women-focused civil society organisations and three women's networks were given training to strengthen their financial management skills, organisational development, advocacy, strategic planning, and accountability to encourage them to participate more actively in public life.



Case Story: My Justice - A Story of Triumph

Win Win is a 24 year old mother of two daughters. She dropped out of school at the age of 11, and since then she has worked at various factories in Hlaing Thar Yar, Yangon's manufacturing hub, earning under 3 dollars a day. Coupled with rapid change, Hlaing Thar Yar is an area known for issues of poor health and sanitation, weak public services, unsafe living conditions, an increase in incidents of sexual and gender-based violence amid rising crime rates.

After several altercations, including being badly beaten by her intoxicated neighbour, Win Win found herself being sued for using a weapon while defending herself in their initial altercation. Win Win received bail and was placed on remand. Faced with potential jail time, Win Win sought the advice of Daw Mway Mway, a paralegal trained by AAM. Win Win learned that she could countersue.

Paralegals are members of the community instructed in basic legal matters, as well as human rights, facilitation skills and issues of gender-based violence. Despite her doubts and low income, with help from Daw Mway, Win Win felt empowered to countersue. Throughout the process, Daw Mway received support from AAM to help. During the trial, Win Win joined many

awareness activities hosted by AAM aimed at raising awareness of customary law and gender-based violence. Win Win went through many challenges including harsh criticism from her community. She said, "I want to be a role model for other women and my daughters". AAM staff supported her throughout this process and provided encouragements to not give up. She said: After one year and many trials her attacker was finally sentenced to six months in prison.

"I used to be afraid to speak up for myself and for other women. I do not know much, but the little that I know is that my children must be more educated than I am to defend themselves. In a patriarchal society, women are always judged whether they are right or wrong."



Case Story: My Justice - Shaping Male Role Models

U Than Htay is a 55-year-old man from Hlaing Thar Yar who used to consider housework as a “woman’s job”. He had never done any housework or ever helped with cooking, washing clothes or cleaning. He did not need to for he was a boy and favoured by his parents. Although he was never violent, it never crossed his mind to stop other men from being abusive. He said “Men are favored and do not need to do household work. This has been normalized for decades. I continued those norms in my own family. My wife and I would scold our daughter if she went out at night and let our sons do whatever they want”.

Everything changed after a chance encounter with AAM’s Women’s Right’s team. U Htay’s engagement in the Safe Spaces programme was the start of a transformative journey. He is one of several trained male role models from Hlaing Thar Yar, one of the biggest and most populated townships in the country. Hlaing Thar Yar is a poor, overcrowded area inhabited largely by economic immigrants from other states and towns. The occurrence of gender-based violence is high and support for survivors is limited. AAM’s aim is to reduce violence against women and to raise awareness through education and the empowerment of male role models.

Organized training sessions aim to promote the engagement of men who play a vital role in changing society. The issue of gender-based violence had never been brought to U Htay’s attention prior to his engagement with AAM. Now he has become a passionate and vocal advocate for the cause.

He stressed that Myanmar is dominated by a patriarchal culture and men should take responsibility to reduce gender-based violence in their communities. “I am a firm believer that we can break barriers and have a significant outcome” he says, “If it wasn’t for ActionAid Myanmar, I wouldn’t have had my eyes opened.”

“I am a firm believer that we can break barriers and have a significant outcome. If it wasn’t for ActionAid Myanmar, I wouldn’t have had my eyes opened.”



U Than Htay - 2018 Hlaing Thayar

Programme Priority Two: Redistribution of Power & Resources

Throughout 2018, AAM focused on promoting and protecting civic space through two programmatic areas. First, AAM worked on strengthening civil society by increasing the sector's capacity, collaboration, and influence, and building civil society institutions, at all levels from local, to national, regional and international. Second, AAM has been focusing on people-centred planning to strengthen people's platforms and capacity for participation, participatory planning, and monitoring and analysis, particularly in favour of poor and excluded women and young people. The following explains our work in these two areas.

Strengthening Civil Society Participation and Action

EC CSO: Partnerships for Change

AAM is leading a consortium of three organisations implementing a project to strengthen civil society's engagement in matters related to policy formulation and implementation.

Since its inception in March 2016, the consortium has worked with 93 CSO's, including 10 CSOs networks. Most of these CSOs are fledgling organisations, staffed solely by volunteers with limited experience in project management. Despite this, these teams of young and enthusiastic men and women have been committed to promoting democratic practice and accountability within the government, civil society and the private sector.

2018 marked the third year of this four-year project. This year focused on providing CSOs with organisational development training and

tailored mentoring. In practice, this means that an AAM-led consortium provides individualised capacity building to each CSO, deploying staff to visit and work with them at least once every four months. A total of 100 days of training was provided to partners.

As part of the strengthening process, the project awarded 40 sub-grants that enabled many of the partners to get their first taste of managing projects and to account for project funding. Although an exciting challenge, this meant a lot of additional work for EC CSO project staff, to guide sub-grantees towards greater transparency and accountability.

The second CSO Forum was held in Yangon. This forum brought together 77 CSOs and 9 network partners to begin work on future advocacy campaigns. It was also an opportunity

for the many CSO partners to share information and opinions among themselves. This large gathering of civil society organisations provided a spring-board for CSO-led campaigns in 2019, covering the following issues:

(1) Peace and Reconciliation, (2) Drugs Eradication, (3) Land Rights, (4) Rule of Law, (5) Poverty Reduction, (6) Employment Creation, and, (7) Public voice in policy-making.

These campaigns will take place in 2019. Project staff will monitor and motivate the various groups in preparing for these campaigns and the project will provide limited financial support once the campaigns have effectively been designed.



Global Platform Myanmar

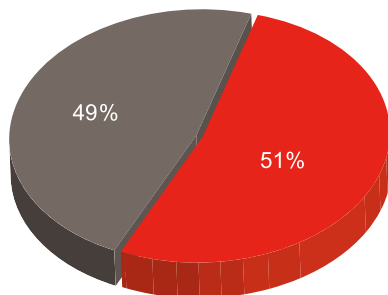
The Global Platform (GP) is a worldwide network of training hubs for empowerment and activism. Its primary objective is to provide innovative training and capacity building for organisations and young individuals who wish to take positive action in their societies. The platform aims to provide youth with the knowledge, skills and attitude to be active global citizens and to become catalysts for social and political empowerment.

The activities of GP aim to inspire young people to realize their ability to positively change their lives and those of the people in their communities. Through GP's activities people live and learn together with other people from a diverse range of backgrounds. GP creates an international creative and inclusive atmosphere for all its members.

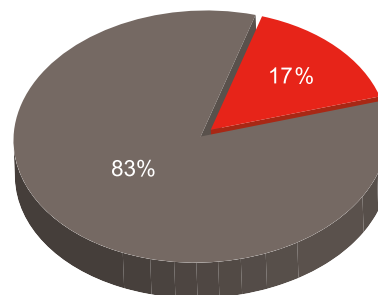
The GP has been in existence in Myanmar since 2012. During 2018, Global Platform Myanmar (GPM) facilitated capacity building and training for local youth. The aim of these training sessions was to equip participants with the skills to contribute more towards the youth policy process in their own states and regions, and to support their own community's development. GPM also facilitated training for international youth through the Global Volunteer Course and through the Global Citizen Course. The

experienced gained through workshops, discussions and field trips to AAM's Local Rights Programmes throughout Myanmar works to prepare participants for future work in their placement countries. GPM also facilitated Adolescent Social Media Awareness Training which seeks to educate young persons on the use of social media as a tool.

389 LOCAL YOUTH TRAINED



65 INTERNATIONAL YOUTH TRAINED



■ Male ■ Female

People Centred Planning

After decades of military dictatorship, AAM has worked towards helping citizens engage with local authorities, while demanding more accountability and better public services. This has been a long journey, as the legacy of the military system is visible in the working of local government officers that work at township and village tract level.

AAM has outlined its vision to strengthen bottom-up planning and CSO platforms at village

and township level. They are defined as institutional structures that bridge and strengthen relationships between the communities and the government. The CSO platforms bring together youth and women focused CSOs (including CBOs) and NGOs that build collective leadership at the township level. The aim of this process is to strengthen civic participation and enhance community decision making.

011

Village Book introduced across regions and states;

2,743

community development plans have been produced in **240 villages**;

0934

community development plans have been implemented in **226 villages**;

0816

Fellows trained, including **391 male** and **425 women**;

0233

community development plans in the process of implementation in **142 villages**.

Through the CSOs platform, AAM and partners organised advocacy meetings with government stakeholders in Thandaunggyi, Pakokku and Pyapone. These advocacy meetings have brought together citizens with members of parliament, government officers from the departments of planning and administration, as well as other key stakeholders. With support from AAM, the meetings provided a platform to address key issues, such as discussions regarding land ownership, and policy-level concerns, namely the amendment of the National Land Law.



Village Book

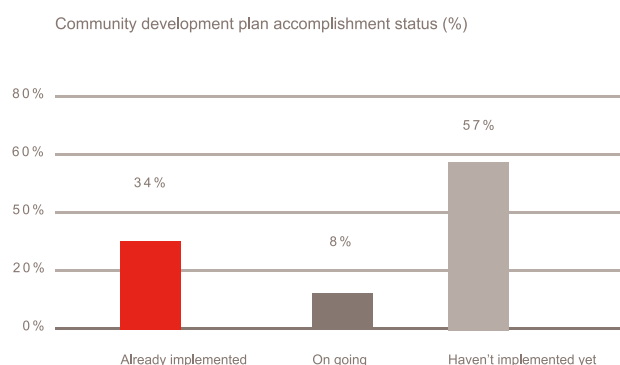
For most rural communities, progress often falls short of their ever-growing needs. As needs continue to grow, it becomes more and more critical to implement a tool through which community leaders can approach the government to claim the funds and resources they so desperately need. Since 2012, AAM has facilitated a bottom-up planning process in the form of a 'Village Book'. The Village Book is a collection of valuable information, tailored to aid in the planning, implementing and monitoring of community developmental priorities across multiple sectors. The Village Book captures the situation of a village, both quantitatively and analytically in terms of social, economic and demographic conditions. It includes information on the most excluded and vulnerable groups, social and cultural practices, gender relations and power dynamics and disaster preparedness. Once the Village Book is compiled, the information is used to prepare a village developmental plan that covers the identified priorities of the village. Such priorities include the construction of large dams to collect rainwater used for irrigation, electrification, and construction of schools.

The Village Book was designed to encourage a collective approach to community development through a participatory process. Utilizing the existing Fellowship Programme, AAM organized a series of workshops to equip Fellows with the information needed to guide the implementation of Village Books at the community level. Equipped with the knowledge provided, Fellows were deployed to various

areas across the country, Magway, Ayeyarwady, Kayin, Chin, Tanintharyi, Sagaing, Mandalay, Mon State, Bago and Rakhine.

The information collected in the Village Book has proved to be valuable to community members in putting together community development / action plans. Most of these plans cover the education sector, basic infrastructure, health, child rights & development, capacity building, and communication. The Village Book process facilitates the participation of the community, and especially women, to play an active role in the development of their communities.

By the end of 2018, 2,743 community development plans had been identified by communities through developing Village Books from 240 villages in the Dry Zone, Kayin, Mon and Chin states. Thanks to extended engagement with the government, a third of these plans (934) have already been implemented in 226 villages with the financial support from AAM, Government departments, other agencies and communities' contributions (see table below).



Source: AAM, Village Books (Up to December 2018)

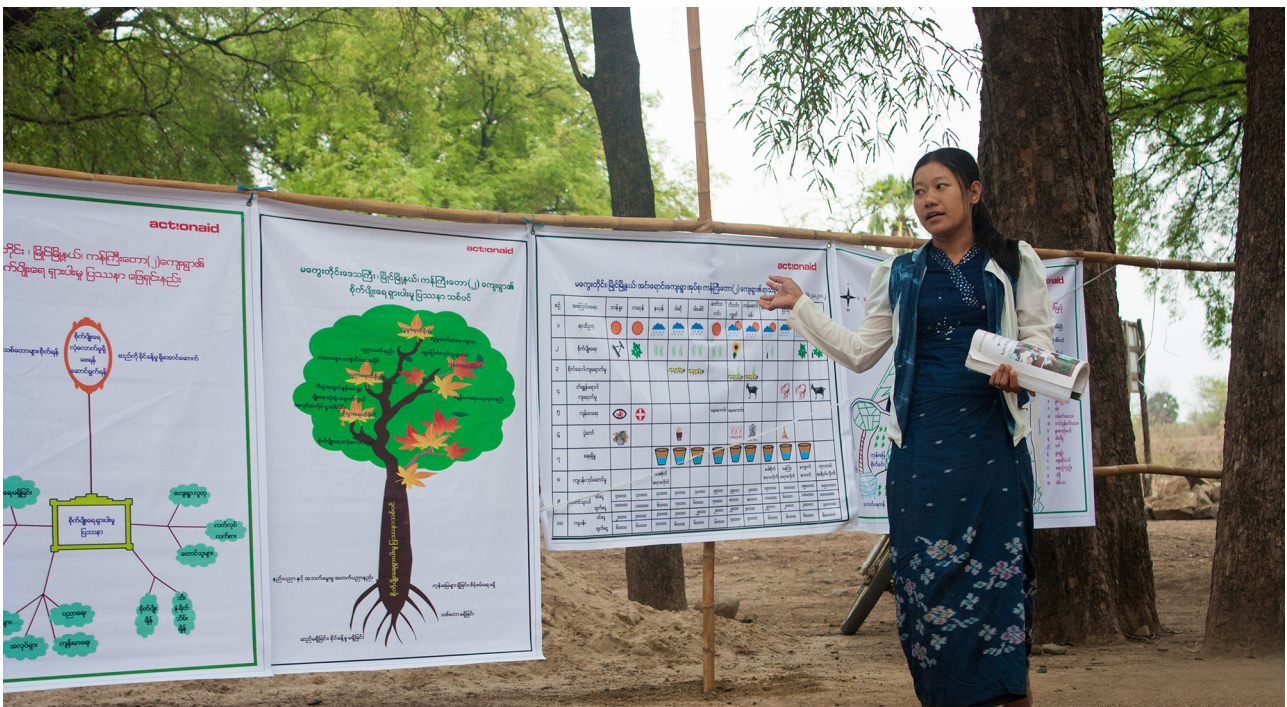
The Education Book: Building Evidence Based Budgets for Education

Due to its success, the Village Book methodology has been applied to other key areas in community development. One of the main examples has been the Education Book which has helped to provide analysis on the transparency of public education spending in schools. The concept of education financing is not well known, and many people are unaware of the governmental processes through which revenues are generated and distributed to support and fund formal education.

To remedy this problem, and to promote awareness at the community level, AAM with support from its LRPs, organised education financing awareness workshops with communities within PyaPon, Patheingyi, Meiktila, Myaing, Sarlin Gyi and Pakokku. The education authorities of these townships approached AAM to conduct the same process in a additional 100 villages.

The Education Book is now used by school management committees and by education officers to assess an individual school's needs and develop the plans and budgets accordingly. Equipped with the necessary knowledge and training, schools and communities are now empowered to gather evidence on which to build claims from the authorities.

The Education Book enables parents, teachers and the community at large to access information that can be used to measure the quality of education and the facilities provided. The process also informed teachers on child rights issues and quality education while facilitating the process of village and township planning.



Source: Education Book facilitation – Kai Daw Ma Village Tract, Myaing Township 2014

The Citizens Charter - A Story of Success



In Myanmar, accessing government services is not easy. After decades of military dictatorship, citizens have little information on the workings of the government, and few opportunities to have a say in local development priorities. To consolidate the democratic transition, it is critical that citizens are informed about their rights and entitlements and are equipped to hold government to account for local service delivery.

Since 2016, this participatory citizen engagement in local governance has been strengthened through development of a key information resource. In late-2015, changes at

national level led to a transition in management of the General Administration Department from military control to administration by the civilian government. Taking advantage of this opportunity, AAM supported the Township Administration Department in Pyapone District in the Irrawaddy Region to develop a Citizens Charter.

The Citizens Charter provides citizens with the information they need to access essential government services and help government officials connect to each other more efficiently. The Citizens Charter maps public services that citizens are entitled to, including education, health and

immigration services, providing information on how and where these services can be accessed. Young people, including Fellows, have been active in disseminating the Citizens Charter in their respective communities as well as building community understanding on the Charter and how to use it. This information allows communities to target their advocacy at the right service providers and understand what their entitlements are so they can advocate for them.

An example of the impact of the Citizens Charter is the effect it has had on the ability to obtain an ID card. SDG Target 16.9 provides that by 2030, governments will provide legal identity for all people, including birth registration. In Myanmar, the national ID card is integral to many aspects of civic participation and inclusion, such as voter registration and digital banking. However, in many parts of Myanmar, getting an ID card is a daunting task, sometimes requiring people to travel for miles across difficult landscapes to the nearest Immigration Department office, often to be turned away for lacking the necessary documents.

Following implementation of the Citizens Charter Book initiative in Pyapone, this situation dramatically improved. The government had planned an outreach visit to communities to support citizens to get ID cards – a process that usually resulted in around 150 new ID cards issued per visit.

Armed with the information in the Citizen's Charter, Fellows and volunteers worked with communities to ensure they understood what documents were needed to obtain ID cards and negotiated for the government representatives to come to the community for a longer time than planned. As a result, the government officers were able to issue a total of 1,600 cards over four days in the communities in Pyapone. These citizens now enjoy greater freedom of movement, the ability to purchase property and other fundamental civic rights.

Inspiring greater change, as well as improving accessibility of government services, both the Village Book and Citizens Charter processes have improved the civic awareness of young people and other citizens, and thereby strengthened accountability at local level. Citizens have developed a greater understanding of how their taxes are spent, what services they are entitled to, and at what standard.

Thanks to the learning process of making a Citizens Charter Book in Pyapone, other local areas are starting to develop their own. For example, the Meiktila District launched a Charter in hard copy and as an android app. The General Administration Department is also considering implementing this initiative nationally to help guide citizens through the process of accessing government services.

Programme Priority Three: Resilience of Communities & People

Most communities in Myanmar are dependent on agriculture for livelihood, making them vulnerable to droughts, floods and tropical cyclones, all of which are liable to increase in intensity with climate change. AAM works with people and communities to develop capacities, create opportunities and build resources of people living in poverty and exclusion to withstand, recover from, and transform systems that underlie and increase their vulnerability. To achieve the third priority, AAM will focus on two areas: (1) Sustainable and resilient agriculture; and (2) Disaster and conflict vulnerability reduction. Most of the work done in these priority areas has been to support farmers in climate sensitive thinking: supporting schools and factories to implement disaster resilient models: and community led disaster planning and management.

Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture

Considering most of the Myanmar's population live in rural areas and rely on farming, AAM prioritises making agricultural livelihoods sustainable and resilient to climate induced disasters, including flood, drought, and loss of biodiversity.

Within the last few years Myanmar has seen much transformative change. However, its agriculture sector lags due to usage of harmful techniques which result in community - wide issues such as deforestation, soil erosion and depletion of soil fertility.



Source: Beatle leaf plantation in Pathein 2018



Since 2010, AAM has been promoting Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture. We work alongside farmers to promote climate sensitive thinking in several townships across Myanmar. Carefully orchestrated workshops are used as a forum to dispel long carried notions on harmful traditional farming practices and to promote and develop skills related to responsible agricultural practices.

Since 2017, and as part of the Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) project, five agricultural plots were cultivated to be used as models to display the positive outcomes of climate responsible sustainable

agricultural (CRSA) practices and to promote climate forecasting as a production tool in small-scale farming. These plots are in Meiktila (2), Labutta (2) and Hpa Ann (1) townships.

In 2018, three of these demo plots were converted into Resource Centres where farmers can engage with trained AAM Fellows as well as with other farmers from their communities. In addition, thanks to the demo plots of Meiktila, the number of farmers interested in introducing CRSA methods has increased. For 2019, AAM will seek to extend the reach of the Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture Project through the establishment of additional Resource Centres.



Case Story: My Justice - Turning Over a New Leaf in Meik Hti La

Te Lah Villlage is situated in the southern parts of Tan Bo Village track in Meik Hti La Township. There are 52 households, 125 men and 125 women living in the village. Residents of this village earn their income from the production of tomatoes, ground-nuts, sesame, and boll trees and onions. However, in the last few years production has dwindled due to climate change.

Working alongside the concerned villagers, AAM facilitated the creation of the village's first farmer's group. AAM facilitated training on Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture as a means of reviving the village's agricultural sector through climate forecasting.

AAM also organised for representatives from the farmers' group to visit a sugar cane plantation in Nay Pyi Taw. There they gained knowledge on the cultivation of sugar cane, a climate resistant crop that can be cultivated year-round. On their return, farmers shared the knowledge with their counterparts.

Having received seeds from the government, three farmers volunteered to cultivate pilot plots. This was an important step to confirm the viability of the crop and to create a working environment through which farmers could learn cultivation methods and hone the skills necessary for sugar cane production.

The plots flourished, requiring little insecticide and pesticide. In addition, farmers were able to get higher income as sugar cane crops were less affected by drought and required little land preparation.

Having witnessed these results, other farmers have begun production. The project left the required infrastructure to facilitate exchange among farmers and nurture the relationship between farmers and the town's agricultural department.



Source: Meik Hti La sugar cane plantation 2018

Disaster and conflict vulnerability reduction and resilience.

From 2018, AAM's focus has been on earthquake and climate induced natural disasters (flood and drought) risk reduction and building resilience in the urban and rural areas where we work. This will focus on build communities to adapt and transform their existing ways of living and working to be more prepared for disasters if and when they happen. We will ensure that all our work is disaster risk sensitive and responsive.

The Myanmar Consortium for Community Resilience (MCCR) was formed to address many of the underlying issues that contribute to the above-mentioned issues. The consortium consists of 6 partners including ActionAid Myanmar, Plan International Myanmar, Oxfam, Humanity & Inclusion, UN- Habitat and the International Organisation for Migration.

This Consortium is working in four townships of Yangon: Latha, Lanmadaw, Dala and Dagon

Seikkan. These areas have seen a rapid growth in population, without the necessary infrastructure and planning. The rapid population growth, absence of basic infrastructure and poverty has put these townships at high risk if a natural disaster, such as flooding and an earthquake, happens. AAM works in these urban and peri-urban areas of Yangon to raise awareness and build the capacity of these communities to be better prepared for possible disasters.



Disaster resilient models were implemented in:



The purpose of the MCCR is to support institutions and the Government of Myanmar to manage disaster risks in line with local, regional and national policies and frameworks. In addition, the project's disaster preparedness approach is reinforced and inter-linked through information sharing and awareness raising at both community, township, state and national level.



Within the MCCR, AAM's focus has been the implementation of disaster resilient models within schools and factories, community led disaster planning and management. AAM also works to facilitate the development of The Yangon Region Urban Awareness Strategy to increase the capacity of urban community volunteers to guide relief efforts and increase awareness through coordinated activities, public events and the distribution of information and educational material.



Source: Disaster Risk Reduction exercise in schools - Latha 2018

Child Sponsorship

Children are among the most vulnerable in society, even more so when communities are fractured by economic and social hardships. In 2012, to directly target the most vulnerable among us, AAM launched the Child Sponsorship Programme. The Sponsorship programme was put in place in Myanmar's first Local Rights Programme in Pyapon, where 1,000 children were matched with sponsors from Italy. Since then, the Child Sponsorship Programme has been extended to Meikkhthila, Pathein, Myaing, Sadingyi and finally in Pakakku.

In 2018, activities were organised for the celebration of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child in all townships where the Child Sponsorship programme is in operations. The hard work of AAM was acknowledge this year, as the ActionAid Federation rated it as the strongest performing programme of its kind.

Despite this important acknowledgement, the AAM Sponsorship programme faces challenges due to a decline in child sponsorship income because of declining economic situation of child sponsors. To address this, several key initiatives have been identified and prepared to be executed in 2019 and beyond. This includes the implementation of more efficient processes to make sponsorship more cost effective and to attract new sponsors to the programme.



Organisational Priority #1: Staff Capacity

AAM is deeply committed to advancing the capacities of its staff. In 2018, a total of 40 people travelled to receive training and participate in international meetings. In addition, Human Resources organised for 177 people to participate in several meetings and workshops on building women's leadership, providing capacity development support, and giving women the space to practice their leadership skills.

As part of its capacity development, in July 2018, AAM started a restructuring process to ensure alignment of AAM with its new Country Strategy Paper (2018-2027) entitled 'Action towards Social Change'. To best contribute to its implementation, the new strategy revised its future income projections for the next three years and introduced a new organisation structure.

The proposed structure was approved by the Country Director on 21st December 2018 and shared with all AAM staff on 14th January 2019. It presents our new core structure and how each team coordinates with one another to deliver the organisational mission and vision. The following is a summary of the organisation's new structure.

Senior Management Team

The new country senior management team (SMT) comprises 6 positions with the name of job holder as of April 2019 as below:

Country Director, ActionAid Myanmar

Araddhya Mehta

Head of Programme, Policy and Advocacy

Khaing Zar Lin

Head of Innovation & Partnerships

Abihjit Patnaik

Head of Programme Quality & Research

Mariana Cifuentes

Head of Finance and IT - Vacant

(Acting by Imranul Haque)

Head of HROD & Administration

Phyu Phyu Aung

Organisational Development Initiatives

In addition to the restructuring process, we are focusing on refining our organisational culture and ways of working by strengthening our Human Resource policies. The following took place in 2018.

- Ensuring mutual understanding of AAM's country strategy paper in terms of key delivery and shared vision.
- Refining human resource processes to address the key problems and significant changes in the new structure.
- Reviewing the salary scale and pay structure.
- Updating the office policy manual for human resource development.
- Implementing a new online human resource system.
- Initiating innovation and learning among staff.

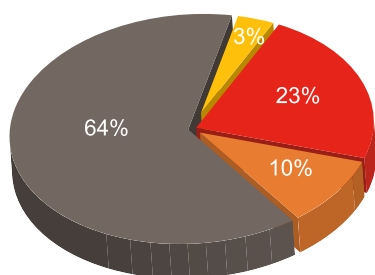


Source: ActionAid Myanmar Staff Retreat 2017 – Ngue Saung - 2017

Organisational Priority #2: Finance

The total income during the year 2018 was around GBP 3 million, 105% and 78% of the 2018 plan and 2017 respectively. The total income constituted with Individual Giving Income (23%), Institutional, Philanthropy & Partnership Income (74%) and other income (3%). The main partnership incomes came from DFID, DANIDA, SDC, EC, ECHO, LIFT, GDS, KCF, Planet Wheeler and other organisations. The actual expenditure booked was around GBP 3 million for the year 2018, with 97% used

in 2018 and around 72% the prior year. The expenditure plan was based on our on-going activities and projects plan. Those activities were performed satisfactorily over the period but were less than the previous year because the finalisation of several projects. The country level reserve stood around GBP 467K that was 6.2 months reserve, which is more than the statutory reserve level of 2 to 4 months. The following tables details income, expenditure and reserve movements.

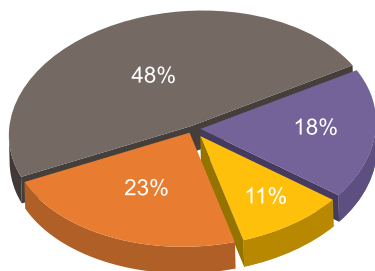
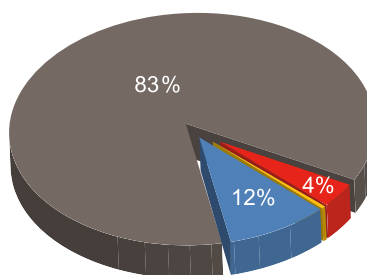


2018 Income GBP 3,011K

- Institutional
- Other Income (Including Trading) 3%
- Individual Giving - Regular 23%
- Philanthropy and Partnership 10%

2018 EXPENSES GBP 3,036K

- Programme 83%
- Support 12%
- Fundraising 4%
- Governance 1%



2018 EXPENSES PER PRIORITY

- Priority 1: WR & Women's economic justice 23%
- Priority 2: Civic participation & Gender-responsive public services 48%
- Priority 3: Resilient, livelihoods & climate justice 18%
- Other Indirect Programme 11%

AAM is working towards the implementation of a robust 'contract management system' which is recognized as the best within ActionAid Federation. We have strengthened our procurement and finance policies after feedback from ActionAid International (AAI) audit team report.

→ Developing short procurement policy documents that are easily accessible to all staff.

→ Compliance training for budget holders across AAM in Yangon and at the field level.

→ Contract vetting through external legal advice or internal, where appropriate.

→ Review and develop partnership policies to cater to each partner spanning the government, private sector and civil society (local and international).

→ **Administrative costs:** Globally ActionAid is trying to develop a system of Indirect Cost Recovery. AAM entered the pilot phase and we received the training from AAI. We have a plan to develop a fair and consistent allocation method of indirect costs recovery including overhead costs for all donor funding. In most cases however we must follow donors' guidelines and budgets.

→ Required partner audits will be implemented based on discussions with donors on a case-by-case basis (depending on budget threshold and donor policies/requirement).

→ We will ask internal auditors to conduct spot checks on a regular basis particularly for partners' who are receiving large advances.

→ Streamlining delegation of authority and allocating clear responsibility for donor and partner management in addition to procurement processes.

→ Digitisation of internal record-keeping subject to country regulations.

→ Communicating key changes in HR/Finance policies to donors to ensure compliance to be actively taken up by the partnerships team.

→ Regular convening of an audit committee (comprising of internal and external members) to review upcoming issues and provide recommendations.

→ Quarterly meetings with AAI audit stakeholders to be convened to ensure compliance and to building a culture of learning and sharing across the federation.

→ Empowering the finance team to keep checks and balances on project budget holders.

We are developing a comprehensive funding strategy guided by our programme priorities that allows for sustainability of our programmes and partners. AAM is putting in place a diversified funding strategy which is aligned with its values and programmatic framework as outlined in our new country strategy. Over the next decade, ActionAid will focus on building a new funding model shaped by the following strategic priorities: (1) Diversified income base that allows to withstand external challenges; (2) Meaningful culture of innovation which is incentivised and maintained across programmes; and (3) Focus on financial sustainability secured through both in-country fundraising and financial management.

Organisational Priority #3: Systems and Processes

Organisational Focus Towards Evidence-based Planning and Learning

Our approach to tracking and measuring change builds on learnings from our past and current country strategy. AAM will continue to focus on ensuring programme quality and research continue to privilege the voices, perspectives and analysis of people living in poverty and exclusion by improving the ActionAid's Accountability, Learning and Planning System. At the same time, the new Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy puts greater emphasis on linking processes of evidence generation with decision making.

→ Medium and long-term impact: We are putting in place a research unit to look at medium and long-term impact, as well as having a longitudinal vision of change that can support reflective learning and contribute to the design/development of programmes. Our focus is addressing the question of societal structural issues and power relationship and facilitate shifting of power.

→ Evidence based-decisions: AAM integrates knowledge produced through reports, evaluations and research into the management chain of the organisation, as well as with partners, to have evidence-based decision making. This knowledge

management includes capacity/learning support for internal knowledge management strategies, design of research programmes and facilitation of programme design to put in place effective networks and communities of practice.

→ Digitally enabled knowledge exchange: AAM is looking into the “thoughtful use of technology”, to curate and share knowledge produced by, right's holders, partners and our organisation. We are looking into the best digital technologies available in Myanmar that can help us with knowledge exchange and to build the capacity of others.

Establishment of a Research Hub: Evidence-based Management

AAM is working towards establishing a research hub that supports the Senior Management team with evidence for decision making. Together with Programme Quality and Learning, the research unit will help to meet high-standards of accountability to both the rights holders and the donors we work with. By linking up the AAM research unit with the demand for evidence from rights' holders, civil society partners and government authorities, AAM incorporates learning in an interactive way into the cycle of evidence, policy and practice.

Establishment of an Innovation Hub: Making AAM more Efficient, Effective and Agile

Innovation has a major role to play in driving the ambitious agenda outlined in the 2018-2027 country strategy. A culture of experimentation and innovation, which identifies tests and scales up new ideas, including new social enterprise business models, will make AAM more efficient, effective, and agile at all levels. Technology will strengthen AAM's engagement with local partners,

people's organisations and movements, as well as the millions of current and potential supporters and activists and the broader public. Capitalising on the demographic dividend of Myanmar and its high internet use, technology-led innovation can bring rapid and far-reaching impact across programmes, including campaigning and solidarity actions. This entails both advancements in digital platforms and growth in social media presence. A culture of digital innovation will transform AAM. Key changes will encompass systems, connectivity, programmes and fundraising.



What's Next?

In our new country strategy, we have set out how we intend to develop AAM's existing strengths into a coherent set of programmes that will make a substantial difference to the most vulnerable in Myanmar. In the next phase, we will expand our coverage in ethnic areas and design programmes that are conflict sensitive and focused on everyday peace building. We will engage with multiple governance actors while working at the grassroots, regional and national levels.

We will establish a new 'Innovation Hub', the first within the ActionAid Federation. The primary aim of the Innovation Hub is to design, develop and implement innovative programmes with high impact in communities and partnerships. The Innovation Hub will focus on special projects to test ideas that will enable us to leverage our existing strengths and develop new ones.

AAM will build on the existing work around preventing and responding to violence against women. We will continue to champion people centered planning processes, especially in ethnic areas and support CSOs to function as autonomous and independent civic actors with a vision to deepen democratic practice across Myanmar. We will expand its work on disaster risk reduction and preparedness in urban and rural areas.

The next phase will also create space for nurturing more social enterprises with a focus on women's livelihoods. The Fellowship Programme will serve as the foundation for all programmes and will seek to involve more women, have a greater presence in conflict areas and include the elderly. We will strive to be innovative in our problem solving and develop adaptive and iterative programmes that are suitable to Myanmar's emerging context. Our programmes will be informed by evidence based contextual research.



actionaid

www.actionaid.org



ActionAid Myanmar

1 Wingabar Road, Shwe Gone Daing
Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar

Tel: +95 154 66 71

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