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**PBF PROJECT progress report**

**COUNTRY:** Myanmar

**TYPE OF REPORT: semi-annual, annual OR FINAL: SEMI-ANNUAL**

**YEAR of report:** 2020

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| **Project Title:** Myanmar Capacity Action and Norms (CAN) for Peacebuilding Project  **Project Number from MPTF-O Gateway:** 00119214 | |
| **If funding is disbursed into a national or regional trust fund:**  Country Trust Fund  Regional Trust Fund  **Name of Recipient Fund:** SECRETARY-GENERAL's PEACEBUILDING FUND | **Type and name of recipient organizations:**  **Mercy Corps, International NGO (Convening Agency)**  **Women’s Organizations Network (WON)**  **International Alert (IA)** |
| **Date of first transfer:** 12 December 2019  **Project end date:** 11 June 2021  **Is the current project end date within 6 months?** No | |
| **Check if the project falls under one or more PBF priority windows:**  Gender promotion initiative  Youth promotion initiative  Transition from UN or regional peacekeeping or special political missions  Cross-border or regional project | |
| **Total PBF approved project budget (by recipient organization):**  **Recipient Organization Amount**  Mercy Corps $ 1,002,850.00        $        $        $  Total: $ 1,002,850.00  Approximate implementation rate as percentage of total project budget: 9%  \*ATTACH PROJECT EXCEL BUDGET SHOWING CURRENT APPROXIMATE EXPENDITURE\*  **Gender-responsive Budgeting:**  Indicate dollar amount from the project document to be allocated to activities focussed on gender equality or women’s empowerment: $828,581  Amount expended to date on activities focussed on gender equality or women’s empowerment: 83% | |
| **Project Gender Marker: 3**  **Project Risk Marker: 1**  **Project PBF focus area: 2.3 Conflict prevention/management** | |
| **Report preparation:**  Project report prepared by: Mercy Corps - Myanmar  Project report approved by:  Did PBF Secretariat review the report: | |

***NOTES FOR COMPLETING THE REPORT:***

* *Avoid acronyms and UN jargon, use general /common language.*
* *Report on what has been achieved in the reporting period, not what the project aims to do.*
* *Be as concrete as possible. Avoid theoretical, vague or conceptual discourse.*
* *Ensure the analysis and project progress assessment is gender and age sensitive.*

**PART 1: OVERALL PROJECT PROGRESS**

Briefly outline the **status of the project** in terms of implementation cycle, including whether preliminary/preparatory activities have been completed (i.e. contracting of partners, staff recruitment, etc.) (1500 character limit):

During the first reporting period, the Women CAN project team focused on establishing a strong foundation of partnership, both between the three implementing partners--Mercy Corps, the Myanmar Women’s Organizations Network (WON), and International Alert--as well as with the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement at the Union level in the capital, Nay Pyi Taw. These relationships are part and parcel of the project’s core operating principles of locally-driven project implementation and capacity-building. As such, during the reporting period, Mercy Corps signed sub-agreements and engaged in extensive networking and communication efforts to connect all the different stakeholders and establish strong coordination, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), compliance, and human resources (HR) processes. In March, an agreement was reached with the Department of Social Welfare to form a joint project management task force. The agreement involves substantial collaboration between the Women CAN implementing partners and DSW, both at the Union and State levels in all locations. The collaboration is instrumental for the project’s peacebuilding goals due to the unique position of DSW, originally tasked with the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NASPAW), which includes substantial focus on women, peace, and security.

During this time, Mercy Corps took some time to allow local partners to lead the coordination process and to build their organizational capacity in establishing structural systems and building local-level relationships. Mercy Corps consciously chose to partner with grassroots organizations at the field level in Kayin, Mon, Mandalay, and Rakhine under the umbrella structure of WON. By selecting WON, Mercy Corps designed the project to engage smaller, local grassroots organizations, including minority-led organizations in the respective locations. Due to the scale and experience of these partners, little coordination previously existed among the sub-partners, leading to a process that while instrumental in local capacity-building and engagement, was also slower than anticipated.

The project held a kick-off workshop during the inception phase followed by several coordination meetings, identifying practical lessons learned from the experience of implementing partners and creating a detailed work plan for the duration of the project. Attendees included implementing grassroots organizations from across the country who jointly focused on tightening integration of the project’s three main components and increasing synergies between WON coalition members, International Alert, and Mercy Corps. Significant time was spent identifying the project’s targeted communities based on their conflict risk profiles and partners’ outreach capacity in identified locations. Additional foundational efforts and capacity building activities included a half-day partner training on financial and compliance regulations and collaborative development of a robust M&E system that was launched during a workshop with all partners and team members. In preparation for the action research, initially scheduled to start in February, the team jointly developed the project’s action research tools and methodology, selected locations, and reached out to local authorities, community members, and potential project participants in all respective locations. In addition, to prepare for a process of revision of the Interest Based Mediation curriculum, Mercy Corps’ peacebuilding team facilitated a full Interest Based Mediation training for Women CAN staff, engaging them in an internal review process of the current curriculum, using a gender lens to identify areas in need of more gender-responsive approaches to mediation.

Please indicate any significant project-related events anticipated in the next six months, i.e. national dialogues, youth congresses, film screenings, etc. (1000 character limit):

Unexpectedly, COVID-19 restrictions have made drastic changes to the project implementation schedule due to concerns related to the safety of staff, partners, and participants. Travel to project locations and implementation sites has been severely restricted since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, 2020. Government restrictions have impacted planned activities including planned action research and training, as well as local stakeholder coordination meetings, due to limits on mobility and restrictions on numbers of individuals gathered together in one place. However, in order to mitigate delays, additional adaptations have been undertaken to better position Mercy Corps and partners to speed up implementation once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted in Myanmar. Adaptations included preparation and adaptation of training to a virtual format from the previously designed in-person training modules. As such, even if restrictions are not lifted completely, plans are in place to facilitate discussions with a minimum number of participants at the field level in June, either virtually or in-person depending on the situation.

Therefore, as a result of COVID-19 related delays to the project implementation schedule, no specific significant project-related events are currently anticipated in the next six months. The Women CAN project is only planning one national level event, to be held in Naypidaw featuring women-led action research results and revised gender-responsive IBM methodology and lessons learned. However, this event was initially planned to be help closer to the project end date, and Mercy Corps anticipates that this will remain the timeline for this event.

FOR PROJECTS WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF COMPLETION: summarize **the main structural, institutional or societal level change the project has contributed to**. This is not anecdotal evidence or a list of individual outputs, but a description of progress made toward the main purpose of the project. (1500 character limit):

N/A

In a few sentences, explain whether the project has had a positive **human impact**. May include anecdotal stories about the project’s positive effect on the people’s lives. Include direct quotes where possible or weblinks to strategic communications pieces. (2000 character limit):

The project’s planned **women led action research** is viewed as an innovative approach in aiming for a dual impact: (i) to collect information about the local gender context, dispute resolution, and conflict dynamics to inform the design of subsequent programming at the community level; while also (ii) seeking to empower the women participants themselves by building their capacities and confidence to undertake critical conflict and gender-focused research in their communities and enabling them to set the priorities for the action grants which will be implemented in stage 2 - addressing the root causes of conflict in their communities.

The project approach is based on the **adaptation of global approaches of negotiation and mediation** to the local Myanmar context, utilizing the Interest Based Mediation tool that Mercy Corps developed globally, adapted and implemented widely in Myanmar with local authorities as well as religious leaders. The unique intersection of a locally-adapted mediation framework, as well as the newly introduced adaptation of the curriculum to create a more gender-responsive Interest Based Mediation approach, will hopefully contribute to global resources in the field of women in peace and security

The project intends to have an explicit focus on **young women’s role in peacebuilding,** and will ensure they are targeted throughout all project components. The Myanmar context of gender and peacebuilding efforts currently have limited interventions focused on this particular group and the key roles they play and may play in promoting peacebuilding goals in their communities

The Women CAN programmatic approach of **engaging men**, particularly male community gatekeepers, is unique and critical in order to challenge gender norms and power inequalities that lead to limited participation and that minimize influence of women in peacebuilding efforts. It is expected that the joint gender dialogues and the implementation of joint peacebuilding projects will positively shift existing biases and increase women’s meaningful participation in resolution of conflict in their communities.

Activities which directly engage the primary target cohort of the project will be carried out during future reporting periods, which will enable Mercy Corps and partners to expand the real human impact, and which will be reported on in upcoming progress reports.

**PART II: RESULT PROGRESS BY PROJECT OUTCOME**

*Describe overall progress under each Outcome made during the reporting period (for June reports: January-June; for November reports: January-November; for final reports: full project duration). Do not list individual activities. If the project is starting to make/has made a difference at the outcome level, provide specific evidence for the progress (quantitative and qualitative) and explain how it impacts the broader political and peacebuilding context.*

* *“On track” refers to the timely completion of outputs as indicated in the workplan.*
* *“On track with peacebuilding results” refers to higher-level changes in the conflict or peace factors that the project is meant to contribute to. These effects are more likely in mature projects than in newer ones.*

*If your project has more than four outcomes, contact PBSO for template modification.*

**Outcome 1:** Existing and emerging female mediators are empowered to influence peaceful and effective resolution of conflicts

**Rate the current status of the outcome progress: off track**

**Progress summary:** *(3000 character limit)*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's announcement and order for no gatherings of more than five people until the end of May, the project hasn't yet directly engaged female participants on the ground. However, the Women CAN team completed all necessary preparation work to ensure that once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, the team can rapidly expedite planned activities.

Under **Output 1.1, emerging female mediators to utilize research skills to better understand context specific drivers of conflict, barriers and opportunities for women and female youth meaningful participation in dispute resolution and mediation processes**, the International Alert team led in the participatory development of the anticipated action research including the tools, methodology, training, and planning processes for emerging female leaders to lead the design of an analysis of approximately 100 interviews in four locations. To ensure women and female youth are empowered to lead the process and analyze root causes of conflicts in their communities, a robust training agenda was developed including three days of training in each location, followed by research activities and a joint analysis session in each location. Local partners coordinated with local authorities and community leaders, selecting participants and making arrangements on the ground for the implementation of the research. Unfortunately COVID-19 restrictions meant that these plans were delayed. Initially it was expected that the restrictions would be lifted after April, however once it was clear that the restrictions would be maintained, attempts were made at transferring in-person activities to virtual platforms. This proved to be quite challenging, partly due to the fact that digital literacy is quite low among the local partners and program participants in the field. At the same time, poor internet and phone connectivity in some areas has also been a major challenge for engaging participants. This has meant that the process for finalizing plans for conducting activities virtually has taken some time. The upside, however, has been that preparing for virtual training has gone hand-in-hand with enhancing the partners’ digital literacy.

Under **Output 1.2, existing and emerging female mediators will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to resolve disputes using the adapted gender-responsive Interest Based Negotiation tool and methodology**. During the reporting period and to better position the team for fast implementation once restrictions are lifted, the Women CAN team focused on an internal review of the current Interest Based Mediation Curriculum, generating lessons learned emerging from previous field experiences as well as global literature in the field of gender and mediation. The process included the facilitation of the Interest Based Mediation training for Women CAN staff so they could start reflecting on the extent to which the existing training was gender responsive and where adaptations might be necessary. In addition, the team engaged in a multi-stakeholder workshop exploring lessons learned from the [recently published Mercy Corps study exploring women’s experiences, roles and influence in Community-Based Dispute Resolution and Mediation in Myanmar](https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/their-own-voices-women-s-experiences-roles-and-influence-community-based-dispute) which is highly relevant to achieving sustainable peacebuilding goals.

Efforts are underway to map existing experienced mediators at the national level, who are expected to inform the curriculum revision process. Due to the delays in project implementation, it was decided that the revision process will be conducted simultaneously to the action research process to reduce delays and start the adapted IBM training for female project participants as soon as possible. These steps will be followed by **communication and cross learning to establish linkages between expert women mediators (Output 1.3)** through two regional level events designed to foster a deepened understanding and best practices.

**Indicate any additional analysis on how Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and/or Youth Inclusion and Responsiveness has been ensured under this Outcome:** *(1000 character limit)*

Project activities aim to expand the cohort of women in Myanmar who can play key roles in promoting localized peacebuilding goals and play key mediation roles. The approach is innovative in focusing on **emerging** women leaders at the **community level** who are typically not targeted in peacebuilding and mediation functions, as they do not hold these formal positions in the communities due to restrictive cultural norms. Currently, there is not much existing focus on women at the community-level in mediation processes, and it is expected that Mercy Corps and partners will be able to build local capacity that can be translated into national-level capacity.

**Outcome 2:** Local drivers of conflicts are addressed through women-led actions linked to the Myanmar National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) at the community level

**Rate the current status of the outcome progress: off track**

**Progress summary:** *(3000 character limit)*

There is currently no progress under this outcome, as Outcome 1 activities were not completed. Identification of local drivers of conflict by women themselves and Interest Based Mediation trainings are key stepping stones towards **engaging less visible women’s CBOs, influential female leaders, and individual young women to identify, design, and implement community action projects addressing drivers of conflict (Output 2.1).**

**Indicate any additional analysis on how Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and/or Youth Inclusion and Responsiveness has been ensured under this Outcome:** *(1000 character limit)*

**N/A**

**Outcome 3:** Male gatekeepers demonstrate increased support of women's meaningful participation in the peaceful resolution of conflicts

**Rate the current status of the outcome progress: On track**

**Progress summary:** *(3000 character limit)*

There is currently no progress under this outcome, as this is designed to be the final stage of the project. Outcome 3 activities are scheduled for the latter phase of project implementation, and will be reported on in future progress reports.

**Indicate any additional analysis on how Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and/or Youth Inclusion and Responsiveness has been ensured under this Outcome:** *(1000 character limit)*

**N/A**

**PART III: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

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| --- | --- |
| **Monitoring:** Please list monitoring activities undertaken in the reporting period (1000 character limit)  The project’s baseline study which was expected to be conducted early on was delayed due to described challenges. However, all systems, including the Program Performance Monitoring Plan and evaluation tools were collaboratively developed and finalized in a two-day online M&E Workshop, with the participation of all partners. | Do outcome indicators have baselines? no  Has the project launched perception surveys or other community-based data collection? no |
| **Evaluation:** Has an evaluation been conducted during the reporting period?  no | Evaluation budget (response required): $53,740  If project will end in next six months, describe the evaluation preparations *(1500 character limit)*: N/A |
| **Catalytic effects (financial):** Indicate name of funding agent and amount of additional non-PBF funding support that has been leveraged by the project. | Name of funder: Amount:  N/A |
| **Other:** Are there any other issues concerning project implementation that you want to share, including any capacity needs of the recipient organizations? *(1500 character limit)* | Due to the COVID-19 pandemic period, the project implementation activities have been delayed.  Particularly in Rakhine State, it has been challenging to confirm which WON member organizations will be leading the work on the ground in order to start identifying required adaptations to the methodology in this highly sensitive area.  However, the training materials and questionnaires for the Action Research/ Scoping Consultations have been prepared, in order to allow the project activities to be conducted whenever this becomes possible.  Project partners are currently discussing the feasibility of delivering the training and conducting the research process through remote, online methodologies. However, online training requires different methodologies and tends to be less successful in supporting individual and group transformation processes. |

**PART IV: INDICATOR BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

*Using the* ***Project Results Framework as per the approved project document or any amendments****- provide an update on the achievement of* ***key indicators*** *at both the outcome and output level in the table below (if your project has more indicators than provided in the table, select the most relevant ones with most relevant progress to highlight). Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, state this and provide any explanation.* Provide gender and age disaggregated data. (300 characters max per entry)

|  | **Performance Indicators** | **Indicator Baseline** | **End of project Indicator Target** | **Indicator Milestone** | **Current indicator progress** | **Reasons for Variance/ Delay**  **(if any)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome 1**  Existing and emerging female mediators are empowered to influence peaceful and effective resolution of conflicts | Indicator 1.1  % of female project participants reporting they have increased influence over resolution of conflicts | **0** | **70%** |  | **0** |  |
| Output 1.1  Emerging female mediators utilize research skills to better understand context specific drivers of conflict, barriers and opportunities for women and female youth meaningful participation in dispute resolution and mediation processes | Indicator 1.1.1  # of emerging female mediators reporting they utilize research skills to better understand context specific drivers of conflict, barriers and opportunities for women and female youth meaningful participation in dispute resolution and mediation processes | **0** | **60** |  | **0** | Due to both delayed initialization of the program and the COVID-19 crisis before the series of Action Research trainings start, this action research activity was not able to start. |
| Output 1.2  Existing and emerging female mediators are equipped with the skills and knowledge to resolve disputes using the adapted gender- responsive Interest Based Negotiation tool and methodology | Indicator 1.2.1  # of emerging and existing female mediators trained on IBM | **0** | **100** |  | **0** |  |
| Indicator 1.2.2  # of trained women mediators receiving coaching, mentoring and thematic trainings | **0** | **20** |  | **0** |  |
| Output 1.3  Linkages between emerging and expert women mediators are established | Indicator 1.3.1  # of regional meetings facilitated between expert and newly-trained women mediators | **0** | **2** |  | **0** |  |
| Indicator 1.3.2  # emerging and expert women mediators who commit to continue to collaborate with each other beyond program life cycle | **0** | **75** |  | **0** |  |
| **Outcome 2**  Local drivers of conflicts are addressed at the community level through women-led actions linked to the Myanmar National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women | Indicator 2.1  % of community led action projects that are reported to have addressed at least 1 local driver of conflict | **0** | **75** |  | **0** |  |
| Output 2.1  Less visible women’s CBOs, influential female leaders and individual young women identify, design and implement community action projects | Indicator 2.1.1  # of community action projects around NSPAW WPS priority areas implemented by women’s CBOs, influential female leaders and individual young women thanks to CAN small grants | **0** | **12** |  | **0** |  |
| Indicator 2.1.2  # of field visits conducted to provide support through the design, implementation and monitoring process of women's action projects | **0** | **24** |  | **0** |  |
| **Outcome 3**  Male gatekeepers demonstrate increased support for gender responsive resolution of conflicts | Indicator 3.1  % male gatekeepers reporting more equitable gender attitudes about women and female youth meaningful participation in the peaceful resolution of conflicts | **0** | **10%** |  | **0** |  |
| Indicator 3.2  % of female project participants reporting male gatekeepers increased support for gender responsive resolution of conflicts | **0** | **10%** |  | **0** |  |
| Output 3.1  Local CSOs / CBOs capacity to lead gender dialogue groups is strengthened | Indicator 3.1.1  # of community dialogue guide developed | **0** | **1** |  | **0** |  |
| Indicator 3.1.2  # of female members of local CSO/ CBO members participating in gender dialogue training that report increased capacity to lead gender dialogue groups | **0** | **10** |  | **0** |  |
| Output 3.2  Influential male and female community members collaborate to challenge gender norms and promote positive masculinities | Indicator 3.2.1  # of dialogue groups facilitated to unpack and better understand gender barriers and promote positive masculinities | **0** | **32** |  | **0** |  |
| Indicator 3.2.2  # of joint / collaborative initiatives for male- female collaboration initiatives that challenge gender norms thanks to small grants | **0** | **12** |  | **0** |  |
| Output 3.3  Religious, political and community leaders, MPs and political dialogue leaders increase their knowledge of gender responsive conflict resolution approaches | Indicator 3.3.1  # of national event in Naypyidaw featuring women-led action research results and revised gender-responsive IBN methodology and lessons learned | **0** | **1** |  | **0** |  |
| Indicator 3.3.2  # of people participating in national event in Naypyidaw featuring women-led action research results and revised gender-responsive IBN methodology and lessons learned | **0** | **50** |  | **0** |  |