



## Women's Empowerment and Resilient Inclusive Communities in Rakhine

### Annual Narrative Report

For the period 01 January 2021 to 31 December 2021

<b>Programme Title &amp; Project Number</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme Title: <b>Women's Empowerment and Resilient Inclusive Communities in Rakhine</b></li> <li>MPTF Office Project Reference Number: <b>00115407</b> (Output ID)</li> <li>Programme Number: <b>00104308</b> (UNDP Project ID) <b>00114697</b> (UN Women Project ID)</li> </ul>	<b>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</b> Country / Region: <b>Myanmar / Asia and the Pacific</b>  Priority area / Strategic results: <b>People in Myanmar live in a more peaceful and inclusive society governed by democratic and accountable institutions and benefit from strengthened human rights and rule of law protection.</b>										
<b>Participating Organization(s)</b> Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme: <b>UNDP, UN Women</b>	<b>Implementing Partners</b> National counterparts and other international organizations: <b>As detailed in the report</b>										
<b>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</b> Total approved budget as per project document: <b>16,294,215</b> MPTF /JP Contribution: <b>16,294,215</b> Agency Contribution: Not applicable Government Contribution: Canada USD 10,793,665 Germany USD 5,500,550 Other Contributions: Not applicable <b>TOTAL: 16,294,215</b>	<b>Programme Duration</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Overall Duration:</td><td><b>48 months</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Start Date:</td><td><b>01/01/2019</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Original End Date:</td><td><b>31/03/2022</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Current End Date:</td><td><b>31/12/2022</b></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	Overall Duration:	<b>48 months</b>	Start Date:	<b>01/01/2019</b>	Original End Date:	<b>31/03/2022</b>	Current End Date:	<b>31/12/2022</b>		
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<b>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</b> Assessment/Review <b>No</b> Mid-Term Evaluation Report <b>No</b>	<b>Report Submitted By</b> <b>UNDP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name: Adnan Cheema</li> <li>Title: Deputy Resident Representative</li> <li>Email address: adnan.cheema@undp.org</li> </ul> <b>UN Women</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name: Nicolas Burniat</li> <li>Title: Country Representative, UN Women Myanmar</li> <li>Email address: nicolas.burniat@unwomen.org</li> </ul>										

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Arakan Army
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
CERP	COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan
CMC	Camp Management Committee
CSO	civil society organization
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DoF	Department of Fisheries
DRR	disaster risk reduction
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAD	General Administration Department
GBV	gender-based violence
GiHA	gender in humanitarian action
GLP	Gender Leadership Programme
GoM	Government of Myanmar
GRB	gender-responsive budgeting
HDPN	humanitarian–development–peace nexus
HLP	housing, land and property
ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordination Group
ICT	information and communications technology
IDP	internally displaced person
IEC	information, education and communication
INGO	international non-governmental organization
IP	implementing partner
JP	joint programme
LASP	legal aid service provider
LCM	Legal Clinic Myanmar
LRF	Livelihood Recovery Forum
MAF	Myanmar Armed Forces
MMK	Myanmar kyat
MoHS	Ministry of Health and Sports
MP	member of parliament
NGO	non-governmental organization
PPE	personal protective equipment
PSEA	Protection Against Sexual Abuse
PUNO	participating United Nations organization
QIP	quick impact project
RABP	Rakhine Area-Based Programme
RAFT	Respect, Accountability, Fairness, Transparency
RCO	Office of the UN Resident Coordinator
RLAB	Rakhine Legal Aid Board
RSG	Rakhine State Government
SAC	State Administration Council
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SES	Social and Environmental Standards
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence

TDLG	township democratic local governance
TDMC	Township Disaster Management Committee
ToT	training of trainers
TPIC	Township Planning and Implementation Committee
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States dollar
W/VTa	ward/village tract administrator

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual report covers the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021, providing a narrative account of the implementation of the Rakhine Area-Based Programme (RABP) jointly supported by the Governments of Canada and Germany. The JP seeks to work along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in Rakhine state by empowering vulnerable segments of the population, especially conflict-affected women, and enhance their resilience. Both agencies have built upon their pre-existing work in Rakhine and have created synergies between their interventions to provide impact at scale.

The COVID-19 pandemic shaped the joint programme (JP) already in 2020, with wide-ranging implications on both programme activities on the ground and the population's shifting priorities. However, the military takeover of the civilian government on 1 February 2021 had an even more drastic effect.

The UN Country Team (UNCT), in conjunction with the Headquarters-based Permanent Monitoring Group on Myanmar, developed the common guidelines for managing the UN's work in the country under the current context. The guidelines, which are a living document to be reviewed and updated as the situation evolves, urge the UN to focus on life-saving support and COVID-19 health responses as well as programming that directly benefits the population of Myanmar. UN Women and UNDP conducted a programme review after the military takeover to suggest pivoted interventions to project partners. UN Women and UNDP submitted and agreed on the respective programme review document with Canada and Germany that outlined how programming was adjusted/ pivoted in line with the UN's Engagement Principles.

Nonetheless, while looking back at a turbulent year, the RABP still progressed in supporting the needs of communities in Rakhine by:

- contributing to improving the quality of and access to a **more inclusive and gender-aware justice system**, with 2,282 direct beneficiaries (1,180 women) benefiting from legal awareness training, legal assistance and land registration support;
- facilitating partnerships to strengthen **community capacity to build trust and reduce conflict while increasing resilience** through livelihood interventions, reaching over 80,000 people, including preparing to distribute agriculture and fishery inputs to around 10,000 vulnerable households;
- supporting the recovery of 41 villages across 5 townships from 2021 flooding disasters
- implemented eight quick impact projects (QIPs)<sup>1</sup> (in 13 villages of Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships) and supporting income-generating activities (9948 beneficiaries) in northern Rakhine, improving conditions to be conducive for the **eventual return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)**;
- implementing two IDP pilot projects, supporting 58 households return to their original house-plots, and IGA to 2,481 beneficiaries (covering both IDP and host communities);
- supporting numerous community consultations and **providing extension services as well as direct support, agricultural inputs and vocational training** for hand-sanitizer production to 3,500 of the most vulnerable households in target townships, under the livelihoods component;
- **raising awareness in Northern Rakhine** with UNHCR and distributing COVID-19 information, education and communication (IEC) materials to 40 villages. In Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships, 5, 939 households (comprising 29, 930 individuals) in 48 villages were provided with mask-making kits, each producing 20 cloth masks, along with information on how to use a face mask safely. PPE support was also provided to local CSOs supporting COVID-19 response.

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<sup>1</sup> In collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and supported by Japan.

- raising additional awareness on **preventative measures and the gender implications of the pandemic** alongside distribution of dignity kits to 18,678 women and girls in 8,142 households from six IDP communities, and hygiene kits to 2,110 households from eight villages in Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, Mrauk-U and Sittwe townships. A further 2,443 households in three IDP camps received hygiene kits;
- **enhancing leadership capacities and skills** to contribute to gender-responsive policies and projects in Rakhine State to a cumulative total<sup>2</sup> of 2,910 women;
- supporting a cumulative total of 9,998 women to have **better access to income security, decent work and economic opportunity** through provision of skills and resources in climate-resilient agriculture, agri-entrepreneurship, weaving and handicrafts, and business development in Rakhine State;
- training 44 women in tailoring through UN Women’s livelihood component to produce and sell nearly 100,000 masks, managing to **generate income for themselves and their families** during this particularly challenging economic time;
- providing 325 women, girls, men and boys in camps and villages with information on the **prevention of COVID-19 and GBV**, and how to access support services through direct outreach and text messaging
- **distributing ‘dignity and health kits’**, benefitting 10,585 IDP households and 2,110 village households from Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, Mrauk-U and Sittwe townships, enhancing their ability to engage in preventative measures against the spread of COVID-19.

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<sup>2</sup> This indicates the overall total number of beneficiaries from the start of the RABP in 2018 to the end of this reporting period.

## I. Purpose

UNDP and UN Women, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and with coordination support from the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO), have been working together since April 2019 with the Government of Myanmar (GoM), other UN agencies, civil society and communities to address the development challenges and some root causes of the tensions and conflict in Rakhine State. The multisectoral JP – the RABP – leverages humanitarian, recovery, peacebuilding and development capacities to create synergies between the interventions and provide impact at scale. The approach builds on a 12-month project (April 2018–March 2019) funded by Japan that helped set up the institutional bases and programming methods of the current RABP, which has continued on an annual basis since April 2019.

The RABP consists of two JPs, which contribute to complementary development outcomes:

- Women’s Empowerment and Resilient Inclusive Communities in Rakhine. This is funded by Canada for three years (April 2019–March 2022) and Germany for one year (January–December 2020)<sup>3</sup> and implemented by UNDP and UN Women to promote socially cohesive and resilient communities that empower women. It combines support to government, civil society and communities to help realize two long-term development outcomes:
  - Outcome (D)1 (pursued with the support of UNDP): Community priorities and needs are better met through inclusive and responsive service delivery, improved access to justice, and increased local development opportunities that promote social cohesion for men and women in Rakhine State;
  - Outcome (D)2 (pursued with the support of UN Women): Women are empowered to engage in, contribute to, and benefit from community resilience, and inclusive growth and development.
- The Project for Strengthening Recovery and Development Assistance in Support of Durable Solutions in Rakhine and Kachin States. This is funded by Japan for one year (April 2020–September 2021) and implemented by UNDP and UN Women in cooperation with UNHCR, with coordination support from the RCO,<sup>4</sup> to deliver recovery and development assistance in support of the GoM’s efforts to implement comprehensive and durable solutions to the issue of displacement from and within these two states, as well as to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. The RCO supports the coordination of this project as well as other related initiatives funded by Japan, in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan States.

## II. Contextual Background for Rakhine

**Armed conflict in Rakhine State and military takeover – In previous years the fighting in Rakhine** between the Arakan Army (AA) and Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) was of major influence to the implementation. In 2021, however, there were little clashes in Rakhine, but the whole country was heavily affected by the 1 February attempted coup. The military detained the democratically elected political leaders and transferred all legislative, executive and judicial powers to the State Administration Council (SAC). The military takeover, which represents a significant setback for Myanmar’s transition towards democracy, has fundamentally changed the dynamics of the peace process and has created considerable uncertainty with regards to Myanmar’s future development trajectory.

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<sup>3</sup> For UN Women, the funding duration is January 2020 to June 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Humanitarian outcomes are reported by UNHCR in a separate document as per agreement with Japan.

**COVID-19 pandemic – Alongside with the coup, the impact of COVID-19 has been significant.** Despite the precautionary measures, COVID-19 hit hard in Myanmar and in Rakhine, especially in 2021, with many thousands of deaths. The JP project activities have been restricted as part of the measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. This has limited the capacities of project teams and IPs to move within project areas and engage with communities. The military takeover in February laid even more restrictions on travelling.

With the growing complexity of the Rakhine context, and the implications for development and humanitarian actors on the ground, continued efforts are required to manage and respond to the rapidly changing circumstances.

### **III. Results**

While highlighting the progress made from January–December 2021 in Rakhine towards achieving the JP outcomes and outputs, this section places emphasis on the programmatic adjustments undertaken to align with the twin crises situation. On the attribution of results, the following should be noted:

- For Rakhine, results achieved build on Phase 1 (April 2018–March 2019), which focused on establishing trust among key stakeholders and piloting the JP approach, and Phase 2 (April 2019–March 2020), which enabled the strengthening of working relationships with the State, subnational authorities and civil society through the implementation of multisectoral activities across 15 townships.
- The section underlines how results were achieved through the joined-up approach of the JP: (i) from the donors' perspective, complementary funding by Canada, Germany and Japan is flexible enough to adapt to evolving needs and challenges; and (ii) from the participating United Nations organizations' (PUNOs') contributions, UN Women's work on gender-responsive governance, women's leadership and civil society strengthening complements UNDP's work on basic livelihoods, disaster risk reduction and legal work to ensure improved access to inclusive basic services in Rakhine. Where relevant, area-specific aspects are highlighted. Achievements are attributable to the joint efforts of UNDP and UN Women. Nevertheless, some sections follow the structure given in the Programme Document.

#### **A. Progress**

##### **Progress on Outcomes**

Outcome (D)1 under the JP was aligned with UNDP's 2018–2022 Country Programme Document until the events of 1 February. Following the events, Outcome (D)1 has been consistent with the Community First Programme pivot launched by UNDP in Myanmar and in line with the UNCT's Engagement Principles. Outcome (D)2 was aligned with UN Women Myanmar's Strategic Note 2019–2021 and has also been brought fully in line with the UNCT's Engagement Principles after the events of 1 February.

- **Outcome (D)1:** *Community priorities and needs are better met through inclusive and responsive service delivery, improved access to justice, and increased local development opportunities that promote social cohesion for men and women in Rakhine State.*



- **Outcome (D)2:** *Women are empowered to engage in, contribute to, and benefit from community resilience and inclusive growth and development in Rakhine State.*<sup>5</sup>

Informed by regular programme criticality assessments and consequent adjustments in working modalities, the JP continued its efforts towards meeting the priorities of Rakhine communities. It helped empower women and girls, including those from conflict-affected villages and IDP camps, to engage in community resilience initiatives through enhanced leadership skills training, new livelihood options, including women's enhanced financial inclusion and entrepreneurship capacity to advance their economic empowerment, and identifying and orienting IPs dedicated to the improvement of women's lives. Women's contribution to gender-responsive policies and projects was enhanced by: improving women's leadership skills; increasing the collective voice and power of women to change adverse gender norms; engaging women's CSOs, other groups and leaders in formal and informal institutional mechanisms to inform policy-making and public service delivery; and building trust between women from different communities and professional sectors, including between women from civil society, through dialogues and sharing and learning exchanges. The JP also strengthened the international/national/local stakeholder platform to coordinate programming across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus (HDPN) in Rakhine.

## Progress on Outputs

**Outcome 1: Community priorities and needs are better met through inclusive and responsive service delivery, improved access to justice, and increased local development opportunities that promote social cohesion for men and women in Rakhine State.**

Output (D)1.1. Local governance institutions strengthened for inclusive, accountable, and responsive public service delivery that better meets the priorities and needs of local communities

**Township democratic local governance component.** The JP focused on strengthening the planning and budgeting capacities of subnational government institutions in an inclusive and transparent manner to contribute to SDGs and the goals of the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP). During this reporting period the component managed to finalize some of the remaining work. However, in line with the UNCT's Engagement Principles, all the activities related to local governance were discontinued.

Key results are as follows:

- All of the 16 (FY2020/21) Township Development Grant infrastructure activities were completed, including 13 roads and/or bridges, two water and sanitation projects and one vocational training course which are benefiting now more than 100,000 people in Rakhine State.
- A solid waste management (SWM) Masterplan, focused on coastal areas and tourism, has been developed as planned and handed over to State Department of Development Affairs.
- An Impact Assessment was conducted in 7 townships during June to August 2021 and a final report had been submitted in September 2021. The results showed that completed TDLG project activities in Rakhine State in three round fiscal years, highlighted several positive spill-over effects such as; 1) Faster and all-year access to public services impacts health, education, but also perception of the people on safety and security, 2) Increased mobility further influences the diversity of economic opportunities, allows daily workers

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<sup>5</sup> UN Women works with the following IPs for the implementation of Outcome (D)2: Oxfam (under Outputs 2.1, 2.3 and D2.2), World Vision Myanmar (under Output 2.3), Mercy Corps (under Outputs 2.3 and D.2.1), Finn Church Aid Consortium (under Outputs 2.3 and D.2.1).

to commute between the villages and towns and reduces time and cost of transportation, and as consequence, monthly income of the community increased, and 3) the project also strengthened inter collaboration and coordination between the community and township authorities, but also empower the capacity of local authorities in provision of daily services and financial management and thus, show case local development.

- A Household Vulnerability Survey was conducted in 7 townships in September 2021 and the collected data were submitted to analysis for contributing to targeting in new programming by TDLG Project M & E Specialist based in Yangon.
- A HDI Stocktaking Survey was conducted in Rakhine State during June to August 2021 and a final report had been submitted by the end of October 2021. This HDI stocktaking survey has aimed to provide a snapshot of the current status of HDI interventions in two different townships in Rakhine, and to compare the current situation with what was in place in 2013, just after the HDI programme exit. From the findings of this survey work, two sets of recommendations and lessons learned have emerged, which pertain to both the design and development of future similar UNDP programming, as well as the application of the survey methodology in other locations. It is anticipated that this report and the related data will contribute to the complex programming landscape that UNDP faces in Myanmar in the short and medium term, and will go some way to informing the development of successful pilot programmes and projects that can bring much needed support to the beneficiary communities in a sustainable way.

**Disaster risk reduction (DRR) component.** Building on earlier phases of the JP, including capacity-building, development of tools and checklists and policy support, and to further integrate Social and Environmental Standards (SES)/DRR considerations into local development planning, the JP has completed the following in a very challenging context:

The original (i.e. pre-coup) work plan in 2021 consisted of rolling out the guidance notes on how to mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change considerations into local development planning, including validation, training, and dissemination. These tailored guidance notes were developed in 2020 for five selected townships in Rakhine (Gwa, Manaung, Ramree, Thandwe and Toungup) based on township-level risk profiling. However, since the roll out will include engagement with the local authorities, it could no longer continue in compliance with the UN principles of engagement with the de facto authorities. The risk profiles could still however be utilized in designing future interventions under the JP and beyond.

The resources allocated for disaster risk reduction were pivoted towards supporting the recovery of highly vulnerable communities which were affected by the July 2021 floods. While monsoonal flooding is an annual occurrence, the 2021 floods have been exceptionally devastating due to the heightened vulnerability of the affected population with serious impact on people's well-being, livelihoods, and community infrastructures. In conjunction with UNDP's core resources, flood recovery support is being provided in 41 villages across five townships, namely Minbya, Mrauk U, Rathedaung, Buthidaung and Gwa consisting of livelihood recovery support, strengthening of local civil society capacity, and enhancing disaster preparedness in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. These field level activities will continue in 2022.

To ensure that disaster risks do not undermine the interventions of the JP and the results, technical assistance was provided to conduct a screening of Social and Environmental Safeguard (SES) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for the proposed sites for solar dryer dome facilities (under Output (D)1.3) in Ponnagyun township. The technical assistance provided by the JP also included proposing relevant precautionary and risk mitigation measures in the construction, operation and maintenance of solar dryer dome facilities. The same technical assistance will continue in 2022.

To promote the community awareness on the importance of nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction, UNDP, in partnership with 3 local CSOs, supported plantation of mangrove and wind break tree plantations (150 local plant species and 140 mangrove seedlings) in Sittwe, Ponnagyun Township and Kyeintali on the occasion of the 2021 International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction.

**Parliamentary component.** In Rakhine, the JP supported the State Hluttaw to: (i) implement its strategic plan, by helping strengthen its capacity to set policies and draft legislation more responsive to community needs; and (ii) perform effective oversight of government budgeting and expenditure.

In January 2021, UNDP Myanmar supported the Rakhine State Hluttaw Agriculture Committee to finalise its report of the inquiry into seed improvements, which was developed based on written submissions and a hearing in Ponnagyun before the outbreak of the pandemic. The report was in the process of preparation for submission to the Speaker when the military coup occurred. No activities were implemented after the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2021.

**Output (D)1.2. Values, skills, and knowledge of local communities and justice actors enhanced to uphold human rights, promote gender equality, and improve access to justice for women and vulnerable groups**

**Rule of law and access to justice component.** The COVID-19 pandemic and political turmoil strongly affected the activities in this component. Courts and prisons have also been closed during the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of COVID-19. Court hearings were delayed that hindered meeting with clients in prisons. Nevertheless, UNDP continued supporting its relevant partners and beneficiaries in Rakhine State. This support included: provision of legal services; raise awareness of rights in law through a variety of media products; establish two community paralegal centers for better outreach to ethnic minorities living in remote areas and supporting paralegal networks; conducting thematic virtual and in-person paralegal peer legal knowledge sharing sessions and workshops.

In Rakhine, UNDP reached 2,282 direct beneficiaries (1,180 women) over this period 2021. Through three legal aid organizations – Legal Clinic Myanmar (LCM), Thazin and ILF (International Legal Foundation) - the project raised legal awareness at community level and provided legal assistance on housing, land and property (HLP) rights, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and criminal defence. Through 5 outreach legal awareness sessions and 8 paralegal peer legal education sessions on SGBV and HLP matters, the project reached 396 people; 622 individuals received in person legal counselling & mediation and mobile legal aid service and mobile legal consultation and 466 through hotlines; 236 (180 cases) people were represented in court; supported in land registration processes to 16 individuals. Geographically, legal assistance work went far beyond Rakhine borders, and reached out to other States/Regions and even abroad. This was primarily possible through promotion of 24-hour telephone hotlines and Viber applications by partners and occasional livestream videos with lawyers on social media. Awareness raising activities in Rakhine through printed materials, social media, production of educational videos reached 245,000 viewers, with 4,578 likes, and nearly 3,685 reposts. 950 legal handbook of laws protecting women was published and 1600 IECs were produced and distributed to the communities. The UNDP research paper on women's access to HLP rights has been completed as well as a HLP handbook has been drafted and under review for publication. Initiated intern and chamber program for 13 senior law students and fresh law graduates altogether to build capacity not only in lawyering skills but also in other skills such as leadership, social science, English language and computer skills. They were accompanied to communities in awareness sessions, taken to courts to learn about court procedures and hearings, involved in accepting cases

and so forth. Two community paralegal centers have been opened in Mrauk-U and Thandwe to reach more ethnic minorities living in remote areas both central and southern Rakhine. Regular paralegal meetings, refresher session and peer legal knowledge sharing sessions were conducted with paralegals to build their capacities and strengthen the paralegal networks throughout the state. A ‘Community of Practice’ on challenges of courts during COVID-19 was also held with lawyers and plan to do more on a regular basis. A legal training was conducted for ethnic CSOs and a workshop on access to justice was held with ethnic minorities who live in remote areas in Mrauk-U and 40 participants including the ethnic leaders attended. The objective is to share legal knowledge, promote A2J and understand their legal rights.

In cooperation with Myanmar ICT for Development Organization (MIDO) delivered a digital awareness training. An online training involved several representatives from each IP in Rakhine. Further to this, UNDP organized mental counselling/psychosocial social supporting session, security session and guidance notes on coping mechanism, do’s and don’ts under martial law and personal and domestic resilience. Monthly regular check-in meetings with partners to inform programming, discuss current developments and challenges related to implementation of joint initiatives. Project’s partners in Rakhine were also allowed to use some of the existing funds to enhance their security measures in office. This includes, installation of CCTV cameras, purchase of fire extinguishers, and hiring additional security personnel.

The improvement in this uncertain period is that the travel restrictions to northern Rakhine have been quite lenient lately where UNDP’s partners were able to take cases and represent at courts for Rohingya communities in those townships.

Output (D)1.3. Target communities and institutions have improved opportunities for gender-responsive community cohesion and economic development, and strengthened capacities to build peace

**Livelihoods and social cohesion component.** Livelihood interventions were initiated in consultation with community and government counterparts; partnership and coordinating mechanisms with the GoM and communities were established; conflict sensitivity, baseline and livelihood needs assessments were conducted; and conflict and access conditions were assessed in all townships in coordination with relevant actors.

Aiming to deliver on the given Output, the livelihood program has devised and implemented a strategy which builds on the partnership with local CSOs and relevant stakeholders and focuses on supporting livelihood of the most vulnerable households in project areas in 24 village tracts in 4 townships.

Based on the specifics of the local livelihood patterns, the project focuses on the rural agro-fishery sector and strengthening respective value chain, while mainstream social cohesion, gender and conflict sensitivity dimensions.

With the support of three local CSOs—People for People in Mrauk-U and Ponnagyun, Swanyee Development Foundation in Pauktaw and Action for Green Earth in Rathedaung—the livelihoods component is implementing activities in 80 villages<sup>6</sup> across the four townships, covering rural population of above 90,000 from all ethnic groups. The activities include provision of agriculture and fishery extension training at specialized demonstration farms, supporting value adding process through training, women leadership capacity building, provision of agriculture and fishery related livelihood assets and supporting market linkages development. To date, local

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<sup>6</sup> Based on the security and access situation, 8 villages in Rathedaung remained inaccessible to local implementing partners, thus total number of villages reduced to 80.

implementing partners provided direct support to 6,624 vulnerable farmers and fisherfolks, including over 11% of women and 23% of Muslim population.

Building on the achievement from the first and second phase (2018-2020), the project has further strengthened not only the partnerships with local CSOs, relevant stakeholders and the community Livelihood Recovery Forum (LRF), but also local ownership through LRF consultations, joint planning and implementation of all activities.

To support the planning and coordination at the community level, the livelihood project has established inclusive community platform which is called Livelihood Recovery Forum (LRF). UNDP and local CSOs are working through inclusive village tract LRFs with participation from all villages and communities from respective village tracts including Muslims, other minority groups and women representatives, to cooperate and articulate their demands at village tract level. This platform also enabled interactions between marginalized communities and local authorities<sup>7</sup>. With the participation of 476 community LRF members (W 30%, M 19%), 35 LRF meetings and consultation joint meetings to date were organized and conducted with the representatives of mixed ethnicities and women from all project villages.

To support the successful implementation of the three CSOs' activities in four townships, Mercy Corps provided technical assistance and different capacity building support to local implementing partners to strengthen the programmatic capacities of UNDP local CSOs, to promote inclusive value-added agriculture and fishery, to create market linkages with local markets and market actors and to be able to design and implement livelihood interventions for the Rakhine and non-Rakhine communities. In addition to the trainings on specific livelihood topics as well as cross-cutting issues, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was also identified as key capacity building areas. Overall, the technical partner MC provided 12 training modules through 19 training days to 193 trainees (30% women) from local CSO partners. The provision of capacity building to develop new skills or to refresh old ones are delivered by incorporating adult learning principles. Additionally, coaching as well as monitoring and check-ins are also carried out to ensure high quality livelihood program execution by the CSOs.

Aiming to provide comprehensive organizational development support to CSO partners in strategic planning, operations management, human resources management, financial management and external relations, in addition to technical support for the implementation of project interventions, MDF Asia Myanmar delivered the tailored organizational development capacity building trainings to each CSO of RoL and LLH projects, total 5 CSOs to be strengthened their organizational capacities through OD training programme. Not only did the participants upgrade their knowledge and skills on relevant topics, but also the coaching gave them opportunity to implement the learning into updated policies, systems and guidelines. The outcomes harvested in the participatory evaluation include the development of multi-annual strategic plans, with updated Vision, Mission and Values statements; introduction of these documents in the organization and among key stakeholders; development and application of M&E frameworks; more systematic ways of working and clearer role division among staff; and update and introduction of financial, HR and operational tools and guidelines. The OD programme was completely conducted by MDF in implementation of the learning resulting in increased organizational effectiveness for 356 trainees (51% women) from local CSO partners by 24 training modules through 85 training days.

UNDP, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture (DoA) and Department of Fisheries (DoF<sup>8</sup>), supported the implementation of the livelihood activities, particularly related to strengthening agro-fishery value-addition based on the priorities identified in LRFs. It did so

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<sup>7</sup> This was facilitated until military coup and respective UNCT "non-engagement" policy.

<sup>8</sup> IBID

through the construction of 7 large greenhouse-type solar dryer domes (SDD) facilities for farmers and fishermen/fisherwomen in project village tracts in Pauktaw and Ponnagyun townships. The facilities will support value-adding processes for agricultural and fishery production and serve as focal points for market linkages. Seven locations for SDDs had been selected through an extensive and gender-sensitive consultative process in each location including separate consultation with women, joint technical visits with MOALI staff (until end of Jan 2021) and socio-economic impact assessment. Three Solar Dryer Dome (SDD) facilities in Pauktaw are operational and used for fish drying. Four remaining SDD facilities are the last construction or pre-handover phase in 2021.

Until 1 February 2021, UNDP worked closely with the established working group of officials from the DoA, DoF and the Department of Rural Development, Agricultural Land Management and Statistics, Irrigation and Water Utilization Management and Agricultural Mechanization to align livelihood support activities with pandemic response priorities such as increased agricultural productivity, improved access to extension services, market linkages and distribution of agriculture and fishery assets to the most vulnerable households.

Through machinery provisions, 6,854 committee and user members of hand tractor, thresher (14% women, 26% Muslim) in four townships and 301 committee and user members of solar dryer domes (20% women, 11% Muslim) in two townships were benefitted by UNDP livelihood project. 19 training sessions for 532 farmers/committee/users with 22% women and 13% Muslim participation on machinery SoP were organized by UNDP with technical support of AMD and DoA in early 2021.

As a COVID-19 response support to 83 project villages, UNDP livelihood project explored a possible opportunity for targeted distribution of livelihood assets and benefitted to 5,245 farmers (17% women and 23% Muslim) who received seeds and fertilizers for home gardening, and 1,600 fishermen/women who were beneficiaries of fishing nets and crab traps to preserve the livelihoods and food security and to increase income by agro-fishery products. In addition, 3,687 households received PPE items including thermometer.

Additionally, the livelihoods component developed and delivered a capacity-building program for the comprehensive technical and managerial capacity-development of Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI) staff to expand and strengthen agro-fishery extension services for all communities. The capacity building programme was suspended on 1 February and refocused towards capacity strengthening of CSO partners and their relevant staff to provide necessary extension training to planned beneficiaries from all communities. Based on the change of training modality, MDF and Fresh Studio delivered technical and managerial trainings to 854 trainees from local CSO partners with 39% of women participation through 45 training modules with 31 coaching sessions by 123 training days.

As a result of the capacity building program, the participants increased their knowledge, average 31% in technical knowledge and 39% in managerial knowledge.

Regarding the extension services for the community, it was reported that total 1,071 key and follower farmers and fisherfolks (18% W, 17% M) and 288 women have accessed the technical knowledge through 28 agro-fishery trainings of ToT & multiplication on on-/off-farm skills, community management, value adding in 4 project townships as extension services delivered by local CSOs with technical support of MDF and Fresh Studio.

**Social cohesion pilot.** Based on experience to date, UNDP has developed a concept to pilot new approaches complementary to its social cohesion work. The report outlines the nationwide peace and conflict issues including Rakhine, where the project plans to work. Detailed analysis of the conflict context in Rakhine and consultations with relevant stakeholders in Rakhine and Yangon form the basis of ongoing discussion on the implementation strategy of the pilot.

Reflecting the impact of COVID-19 and ongoing armed conflict, the originally planned steps for designing social cohesion pilot activities in Rakhine were further adjusted and it was agreed to apply a phased implementation, in which Sittwe and surrounding areas and rural areas of central Rakhine are prioritized, and northern Rakhine and new areas of concern near the Chin state border will be considered at a later stage.

Two national staff were recruited for leading the implementation on the ground. Despite a delay of implementation of piloting projects due to military take-over, the UNDP explored existing issues between the communities and explored how communities solved issues in a peaceful and mutually beneficial manner there by exploring how UNDP could take the work on Alternative Dispute Resolution further for the benefit local communities .

UNDP conducted informal discussions with CSOs such as Youth and Community Development Network (YCDN) and Institute for Peace and Governance (iPG) in order to understand and explore youth engagement in piloting social cohesion activities .

In Northern Rakhine, as an integrated approach, a mapping exercise during the rapid needs assessment was conducted to better understand the situation and identify locations, in order to strengthen understanding of how quality interactions can be promoted. The exercise reviewed the presence of social cohesion actors/interventions, existing knowledge materials, past and current dynamics around security, safety and access, and social cohesion impacts, such as the presence of mixed populations and IDP camps and the possibility of furthering a durable solutions agenda.

Priority locations have been identified ,the implementation strategy, including the methodology for needs assessment and initial activities drafted and in the process of being approved. Once approval is granted initial needs assessments will be rolled out to inform UNDP programming and targeting criteria while bearing in mind the existing COVID-19 restrictions pertaining to numbers that can be meaningfully engaged.

#### Output (D)1.4. Resilience-based recovery and development activities implemented to support dignified solutions to displacement and the creation of conducive conditions for the sustainable return of refugees and IDPs

The tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) among the GoM, UNDP and UNHCR was signed on 6 June 2018. It aims to create conditions conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of refugees from Bangladesh while supporting recovery and resilience-based development for the benefit of all communities living in Rakhine. The MoU expired on 5 June 2021 and discussions on the arrangements to continue the quick impact projects (QIPs) in Northern Rakhine are on-going. Supporting its implementation, the JP engaged communities and vulnerable households to collectively identify, plan and undertake livelihoods and income-generating activities to restore productive assets and rehabilitate socio-economic community infrastructure, while promoting interactions and social cohesion among community members and between communities. QIPs are implemented jointly with UNHCR, and through World Vision and CARE International as Implementing Partners. While much of the UNDP's programming are suspended or repurposed due to the military takeover, on-going QIPs in Northern Rakhine were implemented as planned. It remains a critical intervention in providing direct and tangible benefits to IDPs and vulnerable populations in northern Rakhine and are in line with UNCT Engagement Principles.

The QIPs have strengthened recovery and resilience-based development of IDPs and communities living in northern part of Rakhine State. The completed projects from 2019 to date have contributed to restoring livelihoods of 4,313 families, benefitting over 20,338 individuals. The 2021 projects covered 1888 families, benefitting over 9948 individuals. In response to the COVID-19

pandemic, UNDP and UNHCR conducted public health campaigns in 40 villages. They provided mask-making kits to 5,939 households (comprising 29, 930 individuals) in 48 villages under Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships, including PPE items support to Buthidaung and Maungdaw hospitals and three local CSOs supporting COVID-19 response.

During the reporting period, Rapid Needs Assessments (RNA) were conducted in 28 locations (RNA Round 8) in Maungdaw and Buthidaung. To date eight rounds of RNAs were held: +157 locations assessed, +250 focus group discussions with community members and +3,000 persons consulted resulting in identification and design of 154 Quick Impact Projects (QIPs).

95 QIPs approved for implementation, with 45 completed, 30 on-going and 20 at planning and technical review stage.

- Supported restoring livelihoods of 1888 families, benefitting over 9948 individuals through 11 types of income generating activities (IGA): home gardening, livestock rearing (goat/chicken and pig), small business start-ups, snacks making, vocational skills training on tailoring, masonry & carpentry, welding, and auto motorbike mechanics covering 13 villages under Maungdaw and Buthidaung. IGAs have contributed to enhancing family income by 66%.
- Established 38 Village Steering Committees (VSC) to support planning and monitoring of livelihoods activities, 50% of members are women.
- Under the environmental conservation component of QIPs, 807 families in Tha Yet Oke village tract supported with fuel-efficient cook stoves and waste management tools. The improved cook stove(s) is expected to reduce household fuel wood consumption by 50%, cut smoke emissions from traditional fires used in poorly ventilated dwellings thereby improving women's health, time, and energy.
- To enhance community waste management in Maungdaw North, 232 dustbins were installed at local shops and community gathering locations; 6 schools supported with waste disposal bins; mobile garbage bins installed in 20 public locations; 4 pushcarts and 4 iron drums distributed to the local waste-management working committee.
- 255 families in Let Thar village, Buthidaung were provided awareness on environmental conservation and training on waste management, including skills on repair and maintenance of rice-husk cook stoves. Families were also supported with necessary materials and tools for repair of rice-husk cook stoves and household waste management items.
- Environmental conservation awareness and waste management trainings conducted for 355 individuals from 5 villages in Maungdaw North and Buthidaung.
- 346 youths and women trained in vocational skills, including 16 youths trained in making improved fuel-efficient cook stoves. Impact survey on vocational skills training showed 80% increase in employment opportunity after the skills training.
- Under the framework of the QIPs, six access roads and village footpaths were restored providing 6 villages with better roads and safe bridges, resulting in better market connectivity and enhanced livelihood conditions.
- 10 water supply infrastructures including ponds, tube-well and market water supply and hand washing points were constructed in 9 villages and 1 market.
- 62 solar lamp posts were installed in 4 villages, improving the safety of women and girls.
- Persons with special needs (PSN) support provided to 12,479 BNFs.
- Social cohesion strengthened through inter-communal exchange and joint projects, supporting them to interact and collaborate in greater harmony. Particularly through livestock sales, vocational skills training, small business and trade, skilled labor exchange, etc.



- 2 IDP pilot projects were implemented with UNDP providing livelihoods support to 496 families, benefitting 2,481 individuals in six villages of Nyaung Chaung and Pa Din village tracts, Maungdaw (covering both IDPs and members from host communities)

## **Outcome 2: Women are empowered to engage in, contribute to, and benefit from community resilience and inclusive growth and development in Rakhine State <sup>9</sup>**

The JP focuses on empowering conflict-affected and vulnerable women to participate in decision-making and inclusive development in their local communities by providing them with leadership and advocacy skills, participation opportunities, and access to livelihoods. Under this outcome there is also a focus on developing an enabling environment for women's participation and empowerment by strengthening civil society networks; engaging men, boys and the broader local community; and fostering a coordination environment and partnerships conducive to gender-responsive humanitarian and development efforts.

Output 2.1.<sup>10</sup> Women and women's groups have enhanced capacities, resources and skills to benefit from and contribute towards gender-responsive policies and programmes on development, humanitarian action and peace in Rakhine

**Women's leadership and participation.** Many achievements under this component were built on the leadership capacities of the Gender Leadership Programme (GLP) alumni in villages and IDP camps in four townships in central Rakhine (Sittwe, Pauktaw, Ponnagyun and Mrauk-U) that have been developed since the beginning of the RABP. Through the continued strengthening of the capacities of the GLP alumni, skills and knowledge have been cascaded to other women, as well as the members of their communities more generally, to create the conditions necessary to enable greater participation and decision-making by women.

The 63 GLP alumni from the first phase of the RABP in villages and IDP camps, plus six additional GLP graduates from IDP camps in Sittwe, further increased their capacity through a Master GLP curriculum designed to strengthen their knowledge and leadership skills as well as a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme designed to enable the GLP graduates to lead multiplier trainings for other women in their communities. It was observed that the leadership and mobilization skills of the GLP alumni have strengthened significantly over the years of support – they are now able to constructively engage with village leaders to obtain permission to conduct activities in the villages themselves without external support, and today not only the village leaders but most members in their local communities recognize the capability of GLP alumni and the importance of their contribution to community affairs<sup>11</sup>, particularly in the form of leading community projects such as those resulting from the Rapid Care Analysis (reported on below).

Following the completion of the ToT, the GLP alumni from villages and IDP camps went on to deliver the multiplier trainings on women's leadership in their local communities, reaching 1,140 women in IDP camps and 1,204 women in the villages during 2021. The multiplier training

<sup>9</sup> UN Women works with the following IPs for the implementation of Outcome (D)2: Oxfam (under Output 2.1), World Vision Myanmar (under Output (D)2.3), Mercy Corps (under Output D.2.1), Finn Church Aid Consortium (under Output D.2.2).

<sup>10</sup> The activities of Output 2.1 under the Women's Empowerment and Resilient Inclusive Communities in Rakhine JP and Output D2.2 under the Project for Strengthening Recovery and Development Assistance in Support of Durable Solutions in Rakhine and Kachin States JP are cost-shared by funding from the Governments of Canada, Germany and Japan.

<sup>11</sup> Final Report of implementing partner Oxfam GB, *Women's Empowerment and Resilient Inclusive Communities in Rakhine* (Sep 2019-Dec 2021) submitted in January 2022.

covered such topics as: sex and gender, gender roles, CEDAW and NSPAW, as well as leadership skills and self-reflection.

36 GLP graduates from six IDP camps in Sittwe improved their basic literacy skills. In recognition of a critical need among IDP women to bolster their leadership, UN Women provided basic literacy training for six months from mid-2021 (the training was paused in mid-July and resumed in September 2021 due to the third wave of COVID-19). By the end of the training period, the IDP women began to read and write, albeit at a slow pace, which was a considerable achievement. These women expressed much gratitude and excitement at the opportunity to raise their levels of literacy.

“Women’s clubs” were established in six IDP camps in Q3 of 2021 as endeavor to nurture women’s leadership and networks. Typically, inspiring women are invited to club events to share their experiences as guest speakers to encourage other women to develop themselves as leaders despite the manifold challenges. To date, these clubs have had eight meetings with each of them attracting approximately seven participants (including women and men). Similar events were conducted in the villages, although not under the banner of a “club” (four events held in Q4 of 2021 in the villages). Guest speakers have included women leaders who shared their experience in participating in the national peace process in Myanmar or women who have set up their own organizations to work for diverse communities in Rakhine.

16 men from eight villages in central Rakhine and nine men from five IDP camps in Sittwe became male champions of gender equality. The male champion training activity is part of the effort to foster an enabling environment for women’s leadership and participation through male engagement and encouraging the development of positive masculinities. The number of participants in the male champion training was halved due to disruptions caused by the third wave of COVID-19. The participants underwent training to further their understanding on subjects such as social norms, power and privilege, gender inequality, gender-based violence (GBV), women’s unpaid care work, and leadership and decision-making. They also gained skills related to their own confidence building and group facilitation capacity. Following their training, the male champions organized dialogue sessions to share their learning with others in their communities. Five dialogue sessions were held in eight villages, with participation from 81 men and boys. The male champions have also played a key role alongside the GLP alumni in carrying out the gender-responsive COVID-19 prevention outreach, the 16 Days of Activism advocacy campaigns, as well as in facilitating the participatory Rapid Care Analysis in their communities (details provided below). By the end of 2021, requests for a second round of dialogue sessions were received from the local village communities. The following are observations from one of the village-based male champions: “I came to understand that there are fixed norms on gender and that custom can lead to discriminations at times. I am learning to understand gender concepts. When it comes to gender dynamics, it seems some people are more accepted or enabled than others. We need to have more discussions like this at the village level”.

Decreasing women’s care burden through locally led solutions. To help derive community solutions to the care burden that women in Rakhine shoulder, a participatory Rapid Care Analysis (RCA) was conducted in target villages and IDP camps in the four target townships during Q3 and Q4 of 2021. The RCA entailed holding focus group discussions at the community level with the participation of a range of community members to contemplate the nature of the care work that women carry out and to derive ideas to alleviate this burden. As a result of the RCA, five village projects were commenced with the aim of providing local solutions to women’s care burden, including building a childcare centre out of bamboo, constructing a protective fence

around the lake<sup>12</sup>, distributing plastic buckets to households<sup>13</sup>, and lake restoration efforts<sup>14</sup>. The GLP alumni and the male champions played a central role in facilitating the development of the community action plan and budgeting.

### **Gender-responsive COVID-19 prevention and response.**

In Q1 of 2021, 18,678 women and girls in 8,142 households from six IDP camps and one host community in Sittwe received dignity kits, containing longyi, underwear, sanitary napkins, and soap. 2,110 households (5,272 female members, 4,645 male members) from eight villages in Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, Mrauk-U and Sittwe received dignity and hygiene kits. A further 2,443 households in three IDP camps who benefitted from agricultural assistance under Output 2.3 also received hygiene kits. The hygiene kits contained towels, toothbrushes, toothpaste, cleaning disinfectant, shampoo, bathing soap, laundry soap, carbolic soap bars as well as sanitary napkins. The GLP alumni in both the camps and villages played an important role in facilitating the distribution of the kits and were instrumental in conducting in-person COVID-19 prevention awareness raising at the time of distribution.

By mid-2021, 44 women trained in tailoring through UN Women's livelihood component had produced and sold nearly 100,000 masks, managing to generate income for themselves and their families during this particularly challenging economic time, while contributing to COVID-19 preventative efforts as most of the masks were sold to humanitarian and development partners who distributed them to particularly vulnerable people in Rakhine.

A "Covid-19 Prevention measures and Gender Responsive awareness raising" curriculum was developed and delivered to 124 IDPs (100 women; 24 men) from six camps, and to 36 villagers (20 women; 16 men) from Sittwe and Ponnagyun townships in Q1 and Q2 of 2021. The training focused on COVID-19 prevention from a perspective of gender-responsiveness, and covered topics such as sex and gender, local power dynamics, GBV and its various forms and specific measures to be taken for COVID-19 prevention (eg. Handwashing and pathways to infection), and provided information on the quarantine processes. The participants of the training were instrumental in disseminating information on COVID-19 prevention in their local communities.

325 women, girls, men and boys in camps and villages have been provided with information on the prevention of COVID-19 and GBV, and how to access support services through direct outreach, involving vinyl posters and distribution of pamphlets and personal protective equipment (PPEs) as well as text messaging. Text messaging was used as a channel to disseminate key advocacy and awareness messages on COVID-19 prevention and GBV due to the increased security tensions created by the coup d'état in February 2021. These advocacy efforts were informed by the survey research conducted through a research consultancy firm to gauge women's understanding and experience of the COVID-19 crisis (research was based on 246 interviews with women leaders and male champions in IDP camps and villages).

### **Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA).**

The GiHA workstream, consisting of UN Women and UNFPA, ensured that the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) was gender-responsive by providing inputs and by facilitating the

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<sup>12</sup> Constructing a protective fence will preclude the entry of animals and thereby prevent water contamination (in the village of Nat Taungpyin in Pauk Taw township). This in turn will help villagers access clean water, which has a direct correlation to the workload of women.

<sup>13</sup> Distribution of plastic buckets in Thaywe village, Pauk Taw township, will help women and girls store water and thus save them time by reducing the burden of fetching water frequently during the day.

<sup>14</sup> Lake restoration efforts in two villages of Yar Chang and Ahtet Myat Hlay in Ponnagyun township, will enable ready access to water by the villagers. Women and girls, who shoulder the cooking and washing responsibilities, will directly benefit from these efforts.

inclusion of two women-led organisations in the HNO Working Group. UN Women has supported gender mainstreaming of the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) narrative documents and cluster/sector inputs both in the Protection Strategic Advisory Working Group and through OCHA. UN Women initiated the collaboration meetings of advisors and co-leads of accountability to affected populations (AAP), prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and GiHA to develop HRP indicators and cross thematic area sections of the HNO while ensuring that gender is mainstreamed across the HNO documents using available and evidence based data/information.

Through the GiHA workstream, UN Women supported cluster leads prioritizing WASH and nutrition to better integrate GiHA within their work and programming. In the last quarter of 2021 and with increase demand for gender expertise because of escalating humanitarian crisis resulting to political, civil and economic unrest in Myanmar, the humanitarian cluster system was activated. From a workstream of two 2 UN agencies, GiHA was expanded to become a GiHA Community of Practice (CoP) with additional membership from UNHCR, UNOCHA, WFP, Gender Equality Network, OXFAM, CARE International and ACTED. UN Women initiated the development of its Terms of Reference and the 2022 workplan. A strategy plan was developed to guide the establishment of a field-based GiHA CoP. The CoP will be piloted in Rakhine and the lessons learned from the Rakhine GiHA CoP will inform scale-up strategies of field based GiHA CoP in other humanitarian coordination hubs.

To support the system-wide efforts of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) to integrate Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG) into the HNO and HRP in Myanmar and strengthen the evidence base on GiHA, UN Women and UNFPA jointly led sector-specific workshops to review and update the GiHA Profile in partnership with UNOCHA. The 2021 GiHA Profile primarily focused on capturing key changes related to the context and priority sections from the 2020 profile. The exercise validated and updated existing recommendations, identify new areas which require interventions, highlight areas of progress and recognize persistent and new challenges which may have emerged in the past year. The sector specific workshops also allowed for engaging sectors in GiHA related work more widely. The COVID-19 context and the inability to carry out face-to-face workshops has limited the reach of the consultations that was carried out this year and forced workshops to be carried out over Zoom. Between March and April 2021, GiHA workshops were conducted with 7 humanitarian clusters<sup>15</sup> with 153 members (94 women and 59 men) of the clusters and coordinators from Rakhine, Kachin, Kayin and Northern Shan participated in the virtual workshop. Workshops were held in Myanmar language to ensure strong inputs from local actors and a specific breakout session was held for Rakhine participants in each workshop. The 2021 Gender profile, which was endorsed by the HCT, was published on Relief Web and disseminated widely in July 2021.

In December 2021, a GiHA training was conducted, participated by 30 individuals from WLOs/WROs working in humanitarian response and other cluster members. This training intended to build the gender capacity of field-based humanitarian organization personnel to be able to contribute in their organization's humanitarian activities like needs assessment and gender mainstreaming while building a pool of gender focal points who can be tapped for gender in humanitarian action related work. In two Myanmar Humanitarian Fund's (MHF) allocations in 2021, UN Women supported increased gender responsiveness in the MHF project proposals by reviewing 19 pre-selected proposals for their use of the Gender and Age Marker. Through the review, UN Women ensured that gender mainstreaming and gender targeted actions were enhanced and applied throughout the project cycle of each proposal. With the support and encouragement from UN Women, three women CSOs (Yaung Chi Thit, WEDO, Rakhine Women's Union) from Rakhine were included in the initial due diligence assessment of OCHA for consideration of the MHF.

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<sup>15</sup> Health, Food Security, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter/NFI/CCCM, WASH and EiE.

Leveraging UN Women's coordination mandate and strategic partnerships, the RABP, in collaboration with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) organised a Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF) information session to representatives of 8 CSOs (6 female and 4 male representatives) in Rakhine State, in response to the CSOs' request for support in applying for funding through MHF. Efforts were made particularly to encourage WLO/WRO to participate to increase women's leadership and participation in humanitarian action and the session equipped the participating CSOs to prepare for the next call for funding in 2021.

### **CSO Strengthening.**

UN Women strengthened capacities of 38 representatives from 17 CSOs, NGOs and WLO/WROs to drive inclusive participation, leadership and decision making in planning, implementing, and monitoring of GEWE and strategies to end GBV in development and humanitarian settings. In a joint effort with UNFPA and UNDP, UN Women led and organized a half-day consultation workshop with CSOs on "Strengthening Civil Society Organizations to respond to humanitarian and development" on 17 September 2021, which aimed to develop a plan to strengthen the capacity of CSOs. At the end of the virtual workshop the participants came up with a capacity strengthening plan and recommendations with a tentative timeline. During the session, participants identified the support they need and shared the current safety and security concerns and other operational challenges.

UN Women supported 15 local CSOs working on gender in Rakhine to develop their skills in advocacy, coordination, consensus building, facilitation and the creation of spaces for human rights and gender equality, with a view to strengthen CSO engagement on gender at policy levels. This assistance was provided through a three-day capacity strengthening training on Project Cycle Management (PCM) for local CSOs in Rakhine from 15-17 December 2021. The training aimed to enable CSOs to better utilize PCM tools in proposal writing, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and to integrate gender analysis at every stage of project cycle management in the context of humanitarian, peace and development.

### **GEWE advocacy and community outreach.**

On International Women's Day (IWD) in March 2021, community outreach to 521 women and men was carried out in six IDP camps and four villages in Ponnagyun and Pauktaw townships. Information was disseminated on the history of IWD, game and quizzes were conducted that focused attention on issues of gender equality, women's leadership and social norms related to gender. In accordance with the UN Principles of Engagement following the coup in February, the state level IWD events with the government did not proceed in 2021 as per previous years of the RABP.

UN Women in collaboration with two CSOs (WEDO, RWIO) held an in-person 16 days of Activism event on 25 November 2021, where women, men, boys, and girls from diverse communities from the villages and IDP camps in central Rakhine joined the event (130 attendees). The campaign advocated an end to GBV and raised awareness on the relationship of financial hardship resulting from the economic impact of the current crisis on the one hand, and domestic violence and other forms of GBV on the other. In addition, UN Women and UNDP organized a virtual commemoration for 16 Days of Activism in Rakhine state in collaboration with other UN agencies (UNFPA, UNHCR and UNICEF) as well as local and international NGOs, bringing together 80 participants, including representatives from women leaders in camps, male champions, youth leaders and women, girls, boys and men in camps and villages.

At the community level, a total of 739 participants attended the 16 Days of Activism campaigns in IDP camps and 344 participants took part in the campaigns in 16 villages in four townships in central Rakhine. These campaigns were led by the GLP alumni, male champions and camp-based staff in 2021. Through the advocacy campaigns, people in the communities gained an understanding of GBV, where to seek help and relevant information on GBV services.

#### Output 2.2. Institutional capacities of government enhanced at the national, state and local levels for gender-responsive policies and service delivery

Due to the UNCT Common Principles that were adopted following the coup, engagement with government on developing gender-responsive institutional capacities was halted since February 2021. The engagement with DSW on engendering COVID-19 response policies in January was the last programme activity held in collaboration with the government.

UN Women in collaboration with State DSW, the State and Township Women Committees, and CSOs organised a knowledge sharing forum on 22-23 January 2021 with 15 CSOs (23 women; 12 men), including women's rights and women-led CSOs, where the challenges and obstacles of women's economic participation, such as access to finance, movement restrictions, and access to health services during COVID-19 were discussed with a view to reflecting the insights into COVID-19 response policies. Learning from the gender gaps in the government's 2020 COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP), the women representatives of the CSOs recommended greater gender responsiveness in the new Myanmar Economic Recovery and Reform Plan (MERRP) and following the forum the next step was to advocate with the Union Government for the reflection of these recommendations in the MERRP. However due to the coup in February 2021, all engagement, coordination and support to the union and state level governments have stopped.

#### Output 2.3.<sup>16</sup> A supportive environment established to increase women's access to and control over financial resources and new sources of income for promoting their leadership and participation outside household duties

To date, a cumulative total of 9,998 women were supported to have better access to income security, decent work and economic opportunity through provision of skills and resources in climate-resilient agriculture, agri-entrepreneurship, weaving and handicrafts, and business development in Rakhine State.

507 women artisans and entrepreneurs (200 Rohingya and 307 Rakhine) have improved capacity to start and run their own businesses. UN Women worked with 507 women who were previously involved in the first phase of the RABP (thereby building upon earlier skills development endeavours) to start their own businesses and improve the quality of their weaving and handicrafts, while improving their leadership and cooperative business skills. Apart from assisting individual women, UN Women also supported the establishment of five cooperatives in areas such as fishing net production, soap production, weaving and tailoring, benefiting 100 women artisans from both Rakhine and Rohingya communities. Another five women's cooperatives were established to provide a revolving seed fund (each with MMK 2.5 million) to help women start businesses, which will enable 470 women entrepreneurs access finance. Dissemination and

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<sup>16</sup> The activities of Output 2.3 under the *Women's Empowerment and Resilient Inclusive Communities in Rakhine JP* and D2.1 under the *Project for Strengthening Recovery and Development Assistance in Support of Durable Solutions in Rakhine and Kachin States JP* are cost-shared by funding from the Governments of Canada, Germany and Japan.

outreach activities under this component beyond the training and grants support reached 966 people. The support under this component concluded in June 2021. UN Women's field monitoring visit to Thin Pone Nan village and Yoe Yoe Pyin village in June 2021 confirmed that the women who had undergone tailoring and weaving training reported increased income ranging from 150,000 to 240,000 MMK per month<sup>17</sup>. The women interviewed recounted how their husbands and families, who had previously prevented them from leaving the village to attend the training, changed their views and are now encouraging them to carry on their income generating activities, showing the women more respect for their greater economic autonomy<sup>18</sup>.

The women's livelihood strengthening component in climate resilient agriculture equipped 75 female farmer promoters to disseminate agricultural training to 2,265 women from 38 villages and three Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps, contributing to the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices (Systems of Rice Intensification, mushroom cultivation and vegetable farming) and resulting in increased agricultural production, strengthened market linkages, and increased income among programme participants. The support under this component, which was based on a community-based farmer-to-farmer extension system that encouraged peer-to-peer learning among farmers, also concluded in June 2021. UN Women's field monitoring visit to Thiri Thae village confirmed that women farmers who received the agriculture training and input support for cultivating vegetables and perennial crops reported income generation between 300,000-600,000 MMK (depending on the size of the land owned). The women interviewed expressed satisfaction with the results of assistance received both in terms of the agricultural skills and business knowledge they gained as well as the increase in their monthly income<sup>19</sup>. The JP supported women's entrepreneurship development and financial inclusion by building the capacity of 1,956 women in 70 villages and four IDP camps in central Rakhine through the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training methodology. 93 per cent of the women who took the pre- and post-tests following the SIYB training<sup>20</sup> displayed increased knowledge, skills and self-reliance. These women also underwent six months of business development coaching and created business plans. 250 of the trained women supported received seed grants (each of 200,000 MMK) to develop their businesses, and 26 women accessed the micro-finance services of Vision Fund - a financing partner formed during the programme. In addition, 74 Women's Advisory Groups for those who completed the SIYB training were formed in target communities to support women's entrepreneurship and knowledge exchanges, and 12 Savings for Transformation (S4T) groups were established with members numbering over 200 women.

In Q4 of 2021, UN Women signed two further partnership agreements with implementing partners (Mercy Corps and Finn Church Aid) after a decision was taken to repurpose unspent funds under Output 2.2 to humanitarian assistance. Building on UN Women's livelihood work to date, these interventions are in full alignment with the strategic objectives of the 2021 Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and aim to build the resilience of women and girls in central Rakhine amidst a multi-layered crisis heightened by COVID-19. The interventions focus on cash and livelihoods support with a view to enhancing food security, protection, and dignity. There will also be specific efforts made to support crisis-affected members of women groups<sup>21</sup>, vulnerable women farmers, women producer groups, and female market actors hit hard by COVID-19. This assistance will be constituted by efforts to promote market systems recovery

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. The official poverty line in Myanmar is living below 1,590 kyats/day, which is 47,700 MMK per month.

<sup>18</sup> Views heard from women interviewed during UN Women's field visit to Thin Pone Nan village, Sittwe township on 9 June 2021 and Yoe Yoe Pyin village on 11 June 2021.

<sup>19</sup> UN Women's field-monitoring visit to Thiri Thae village on 14 June 2021.

<sup>20</sup> 777 women out of 834 women (trained between December 2020 and January 2021) showed increased knowledge on business and financial knowledge according to pre- and post-tests. The test results of 114 participants who accomplished the SIYB training in February 2021 are yet to be finalised.

<sup>21</sup> These include Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), micro-finance groups, handicraft groups, food processor groups, etc.

through the active engagement of women actors, supporting women groups with the means to buy necessities (food items and non-food items) to meet their basic needs and reduce negative coping mechanisms while assisting women farmers with the means to buy or access inputs in preparation for upcoming crop seasons. It is expected to strengthen the resilience of female farmers by improving local value-added processing and market access along the agricultural value chains.

## **B. Qualitative Assessment**

### **The development of key partnerships**

Building on existing relationships and partnerships under the RABP, the JP is continuously strengthening and developing partnerships with key stakeholders, aiming to establish sustainable exchange platforms among key partners that foster collaboration as well as mutual trust and ownership between communities. With new priorities emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic and the military takeover, new entry points are being explored. With UNFPA a collaboration started on health, legal services and psychosocial support, including a Rapid Assessment of COVID-19's Impact to GBV Service Provision was completed in May 2021. The UN agencies partnered closely together in the reporting period, with a noteworthy joint mission of OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, RCO and UNDP to Kyauk Pyhu for the camp closure strategy as part of the durable solutions core working group. In the IDP camps UNDP and UNHCR collaborated to ensure that women's rights to HLP issues are correctly dealt with. Women and girls in need of legal services when faced with GBV violations were referred by UNHCR and its partners to UNDP's implementing partners for support. In the reporting period UNDP also added CARE as a partner for its QIPs work.

### **Support to humanitarian and development coordination**

During the reporting period, there have been strong coordination efforts, both under the UNCT and the HCT frameworks. Joint activities have been planned and UNDP has intensified its engagement with UNHCR to develop shared analysis and planning of joint initiatives under the triple-nexus approach. At the same time, in an effort to support the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, the JP actively led or took part in various thematic groups in the UNCT, including the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus (HDPN) Work Stream, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment working group (GEWE), Gender Thematic Working Group (GTWG), MARA and the Gender based violence coordination working group (GBVCWG).

In the IDP camps during discussions UNDP observed that most women highlighted the issue of firewood as a major concern as they are not allowed anymore to collect firewood by the military for security concerns and cannot afford to buy it. UNDP discussed with WFP who expanded their fuel-efficient stoves programme to cover some of the camps that had not initially been targeted for the project .

### **A focus on gender**

The COVID-19 crisis provided the opportunity to adapt to the changing context and work building the capacity of partners to promote gender equality in Myanmar and in Rakhine State in particular while working online. JP provided data packages to help CSOs to remain engaged online.

The JP advocated for the expansion of GBV services in non-humanitarian settings so as to strengthen coordination and partnerships. The 4Ws analysis was recently completed aiming at providing a clear picture of the GBV services that are readily available in Rakhine. In 2021, GBV partners provided GBV prevention & response services and capacity building to partners to build their capacities to better respond to the community needs. The SOP will be translated into local



languages to ensure that partners use it effectively. Coordination and partnerships lead to the Joint GBV safety Audit Plan been prepared for maximizing coverage of GBV risk assessments. This will ensure that no one is left behind. Reaching the most vulnerable people in need of the much-needed services.

Furthermore, the JP contributed to the drafting of the Rakhine Quarantine guidelines to be used in the Quarantine facilities ensuring gender sensitivity is respected through ensuring that women had separate facilities so as to reduce chances of GBV in the centers. Contributions by the JP were also made towards the Draft Guidance on GBV in Cash based interventions (CBI) in Rakhine State. The livelihood component, which has a CBI aspect, would benefit from the guidance note.

Ensuring that broader sectoral interventions are in place requires that services are in place, the JP worked towards strengthening the Referral pathway for GBV survivors by supporting the access to justice component. Using the network recently referred GBV survivors in northern Rakhine to legal aid services providers. Working with WFP to ensure gender inclusion at community-level and to find ways of ensuring activity participation of men, women, boys and girls in both Humanitarian and development programmes. Next step towards this is developing a questionnaire that gives an insight into the level of participation by women.

With UNFPA a Joint Rapid Assessment on COVID-19 impact to GBV on service provision was conducted and key findings shared with the relevant partners a Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) consultant was hired under the rule of law and access to justice component to work with IPs in Rakhine to integrate GESI principles into their programming from early June 2020. This started with a review of the CSOs' outreach materials and progressed to training sessions and mentoring on how to integrate GESI into planning, implementation, monitoring, etc. From 3–7 August 2020, 32 staff (19 women) of CSOs and legal aid service providers (LASPs) received training on integrating gender principles into HLP programming. According to the pre- and post-training assessments, participants showed an increased understanding of gender issues in this context.

Among the numerous negative socio-economic implications of the triple crisis triggered by COVID-19 is an increase in GBV incidents compared with the pre-COVID-19 period. In collaboration with other UN agencies the UNDP contributed to the drafting of TOR for the PSEA working group in Rakhine as well as inputs for the PSEA compliance tracker to promote or undertake a joint tracking of PSEA Minimum Operating Standards compliance. This will help increase the protection concerns of vulnerable groups in the communities. During the year the JP expanded its collaboration and partnerships and worked closely with UN Women and UNFPA on a joint initiative on strengthening civil society organisations to respond to humanitarian and development concerns in Rakhine. Further joint activities are planned for 2022. The JP also jointly supported the 16 days of Activism in 2021. The JP also produced a Gender, Political Participation and Conflict in Rakhine – Thematic paper to be better able to understand the gendered dynamics of conflict from a gender responsive lens. The research on women's access to HLP rights has been completed and translated into English. HLP guidebook to help inform HLP rights has been drafted and UNDP is in the process of reviewing the same. In order to help strengthen HLP rights awareness UNDP has hired a HLP advisor.

UNDP and UN Women have made headways in linking legal aid services to women in villages and IDP camps and once COVID-19 restrictions were lifted supported IPs to access the camps and provided the much-needed legal services. Women with cases filed under the legal system continued to face difficulties in having their cases speeded up due to closure of courts because of Covid. Court hearings only resumed effectively on 29 October 2021. As part of the repurposed activities in the context of COVID-19, JP supported the strengthening of referral pathways on GBV, legal and health services to include new partners in Rakhine. To improve availability and accessibility of essential services for GBV survivors during the pandemic, gaps and challenges in GBV service provision need to be assessed and suitable action identified. In this regard, UNDP

collaborated with UNFPA on the Rapid assessment of GBV essential services package provision in Myanmar which was completed in July 2021. This provided a baseline and recommendations on how best to strengthen the essential services package in Myanmar.

### C. Challenges and Delays

The complex and rapidly changing environment in Rakhine posed numerous challenges to the JP implementation. As reported above, the reporting period has been highly impacted by the wide-ranging implications of the COVID-19 outbreak and the coup d'état, resulting in delays in activity implementation as well as the introduction of new working modalities and programmatic repurposing to adapt to the evolving context. The situation in Rakhine is also strongly shaped by a fluid security context in relation to the coup.

#### Implications of the military takeover

While Myanmar continues to experience widespread and growing civil unrest, Rakhine remains relatively calm. Nevertheless, the situation affected the partners' movement to the villages and IDP camps. Face to face training is still not possible and hence all training is virtual and schedule depending on available internet. The situation has caused disruptions to travel and supply chains and has severely affected banking operations in Rakhine with increasing difficulties for financial transactions and implementation.

#### Implications of COVID-19

Despite the military actions overshadowed the impact of COVID-19, the pandemic still had a very significant toll on the population, including in Rakhine. This also impacted the UN work, causing, inter alia, access restrictions and consequent delays in activity implementation; challenging working environment for staff in field offices and implementing partners. The impact was also increased by the limited infrastructural capabilities – both in terms of internet access and living conditions – to adjust to remote working modalities.

### D. Lessons Learned and Good Practices

The importance of close collaboration and exchange on experiences, challenges faced, lessons learned and best practices has become even more evident during these challenging times. The RABP's platform approach is proving effective in addressing multifaceted and long-standing challenges and in coordinating initiatives and responses by key stakeholders. Some of the key lessons learned are:

- Seen the rapid changes in context in 2021, it is learned that the **risk management** could have been more thoroughly spelled out, including alternative plans for business continuation in case of adverse political changes and armed conflicts. For components that were severely affected by the change in political context, like the township local governance, there should have been an exit strategy as it solely relied on the government as its partner. Nevertheless, the RABP was able to respond swiftly in adjusting its programming and ensure the support to the people of Rakhine was continued.
- It would be advised to differentiate and **broaden the implementing partners base**. This can include larger number of CSOs as well as vetted private sector interlocutors. The RABP has good partners, but with all the restraints in the challenging times, the implementation would have benefitted from a wider implementing partner base, that covers different geographic areas and ethnic groups. It would coincide with a capacity development plan to build CSO capacity on conflict sensitivity, organizational

development and ensuring staff safety in the current environment. For private contractors in the local governance component it was learned that proactive planning, coordination and collaboration among project staff and project implementation partners of local government at different levels including private sector construction contractors provided good results with a 100% financial liquidation. Contracting private contractors directly also offer an alternative to working through the township governance system.

- There is a need to **increase financial flexibility** to address restrictions and challenges posed by the new political and operational context. This applies both to the use of funds by UNDP and secondly to the funds passed through to the implementing partners. Flexible funds with limited reporting requirements would increase the implementation pace and amount of beneficiaries reached.
- **Beneficiary selection** for QIPs carried out through a set criteria left out 10 to 15% of HHs in different locations, and IDPs returning to project locations in the middle of project implementation. These have occasioned grievances and misunderstanding amongst community members and village representatives. QIPs will now follow “all of HHS/communities” and “village tract” approach for assessments and programming – in the spirit of building trust and ensuring conflict sensitivity. Also, all HHS are equally vulnerable and exposed due to the breakdown in local socio-economic system, protracted crises and conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Gender transformative programming in Rakhine requires interventions that are concerted and long-term.** Implementing partners observed that it is difficult to address deep-set gender norms, harmful and inhibitive social practices, and consequently bring-about sustainable impact that includes transforming gender roles through a one-year programme. Addressing structural challenges, particularly in areas such as women’s meaningful leadership and participation, and women’s economic empowerment, require long term interventions. Strengthening women’s economic empowerment through the creation of micro-enterprises and small business’ involves multiple stages and sustained hand-holding from business set-up and building specific skills, to providing financial literacy and marketing training, to analysing value chains and creating market linkages. Longer term programming would allow for more concerted planning from the beginning, and with respect to agricultural assistance, it would enable the seasonality factor to be taken into account.
- **Promoting social cohesion and women’s active role along the value chain are key elements of a holistic approach to Women’s Economic Empowerment in Rakhine.** UN Women’s livelihood assistance aimed to strengthen social cohesion where possible by creating an environment in which Rakhine and Rohingya women can directly interact with and support one another, particularly in terms of market linkages and value chain development. For example, Rakhine women brought products directly from IDP camps to the Sittwe market, where they negotiated with market actors. Although it would have been preferable for Rohingya women to access the markets themselves, in the context of movement restrictions for IDPs it is nevertheless a very positive step that women from different communities are supporting one another along the value chain, and thus strengthening social cohesion and peacebuilding through the creation of joint businesses and horizontal inter-communal linkages. A related lesson was that livelihood programmes in the future could benefit from encouraging women to take a more active role along the value chain (e.g. as buyers, processors) by providing targeted support to this end. During this programme, some women were already organically transforming themselves to assume such roles by acting as aggregators, especially after an increased reliance on brokers and traders was seen as a result of the transportation constraints and movement restrictions.
- **Virtual and digital channels of communication were pivotal to programme adaptability and versatility during the double crisis.** The COVID-19 pandemic and the political crisis in Myanmar made it imperative for flexibility and adaptability in

implementing the programme. Different channels of communication (Viber, SMS, digital learning platforms, and video tutorials), some of which was enabled through the provision of tablets among the beneficiaries, were critical in ensuring continued access of the participants to training and guidance even when travel to programme sites became impossible.

#### **IV. Programmatic Revisions/ Programme Criticality Assessments**

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic and the military takeover, programmatic criticality assessments were undertaken and discussed with the donors.

- Following the military coup, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Myanmar in conjunction with the Headquarters based Permanent Monitoring Group on Myanmar developed common guidelines for managing the UN's work in Myanmar in the current context. The guidelines, which are a living document that will be reviewed and updated as the situation evolves, specify that under the current context the UN will suspend all policy work, technical assistance, capacity building and institutional strengthening with the de facto authorities and associated government bodies and focus instead on its life-saving assistance and COVID-19 health response mandates as well as on programming that benefits directly the population of Myanmar and does not require working through the de facto authorities.
- The guidelines also required all UN agencies in Myanmar to proceed to a programme review to determine what programming and activities can go on and what need to be stopped, suspended, or modified. The process was carried out by UN agencies.
- A joint assessment for reprogramming was conducted, leading to the No-Cost Extension request.
  - UN Women proposes that the activities focus on supporting vulnerable women and girls to manage the effects of COVID-19 and the challenges brought forth by the current political situation, as well as enabling them to engage in COVID-19 relief and recovery, through public health and hygiene-promoting measures and livelihood activities. The priority will be on humanitarian assistance to vulnerable women and their households, strengthening their food security (such as through cash for food and cash transfer/e-vouchers) and their livelihoods in the areas of agriculture, weaving and handicrafts, business development and women's entrepreneurship. UN Women will also continue to focus on women's leadership and civil society strengthening.
  - UNDP has proposed and it was agreed that activities between now and end of December 2022 focus on supporting vulnerable communities with immediate livelihood support, small-scale infrastructure, cash for work activities that can also foster collaboration between different communities, including displaced populations and other vulnerable communities living in the same area. UNDP will also explore opportunities to launch strategic and effective social cohesion initiatives, and, as appropriate, continue to support legal awareness and assistance. A number of these activities will be planned and carried out jointly with humanitarian partners to amplify the impact and ensure the triple nexus approach is mainstreamed across UNDP's work in Rakhine.

## Annex I: Indicator-based Performance Assessment

Indicator	Achieved Indicator Targets	Variance	Source of Verification
<b>Outcome (D)1 Community priorities and needs are better met through inclusive and responsive service delivery, improved access to justice, and increased local development opportunities that promote social cohesion for men and women in Rakhine State</b>			
<b>Indicator J.1.A:</b> <sup>22</sup> # of government development plans, at national/subnational level, formulated with UNDP support based on the following principles of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: use of data, inclusive participation, cross-sectoral coordination <b>Baselines:</b> Union: 0/0; Township: 0/0 (2017) <b>Target:</b> 7 townships (2021 <sup>23</sup> )	<b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021 Up to Feb 2021, UNDP supported the Government in preparing development plans in seven townships, with reasonably satisfactory levels of inclusive participation and cross-sectoral coordination.	In line with the UN Principles of Engagement, the Local Governance Forum has been postponed.	Review of project documents; government records
<b>Indicator J.1.B:</b> % of trained government participants who successfully apply the knowledge and skills on social cohesion and conflict sensitivity gained from training initiatives into their work. <b>Baseline:</b> 0 (2017) <b>Target:</b> 75% (2021)	<b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021	In line with the UN Principles of Engagement, the Insider Mediation Training has been put on hold.	Review of project documents; survey, using questionnaire (annually)
<b>Output D1.1</b> Local governance institutions strengthened for inclusive, accountable, and responsive public service delivery that better meet the priorities and needs of local communities			
<b>Indicator 1.1.1:</b> Number of supported townships which meet set criteria to perform participatory planning effectively (functionality index) <b>Baseline:</b> All supported townships start at Level 1 (April 2019) <b>Planned Target:</b> Out of 5 townships all 5 meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>level 3 across 4 function (March 2020)</li> <li>level 4 across 4 function (March 2021)</li> <li>level 5 across 4 function (March 2022)</li> </ul>	<b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021 Up to Feb 2021: Function 1. Inclusivity of key stakeholder's groups: <b>5 townships at level 4; 2 townships at level 3</b> Function 2. Facilitation capacities of township administration: <b>5 townships at level 4; 2 townships at level 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Function 3. Enhanced use of evidence in annual township plan: <b>2 townships at level 3</b></li> <li>Function 4. Respect of Public Financial Management standards: <b>5 townships at level 4.</b></li> </ul>	Function 4 and Function 5 will be covered under the next reporting cycled.	Function 1: planning workshop attendance sheet Function 2: Planning workshop report Function 3: Procurement guidelines checklist Function 4: Public financial management standards checklist Function 5: Monthly situational reports

<sup>22</sup> Indicators numbered J.1.A and J.1.B derive from the Japan project document.

<sup>23</sup> Target for March 2021 has been adjusted as the Township Development Local Governance project has been expanded from five existing target townships to seven townships across Rakhine State.

Indicator	Achieved Indicator Targets	Variance	Source of Verification
<b>Additional Planned Target:</b> Out of 2 townships all 2 meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>level 3 across 4 function (March 2021)</li> <li>level 4 across 4 function (March 2022)</li> </ul>			
<b>Indicator 1.1.2:</b> Number of supported townships in which at least five social accountability mechanisms are used. <b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019) <b>Planned Target:</b> Out of 5 supported townships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 use at least five social accountability mechanisms effectively (March 2020)</li> <li>4 use at least five social accountability mechanisms effectively (March 2021)</li> <li>all 5 use at least five social accountability mechanisms effectively (March 2022)</li> </ul> <b>Additional Planned Target:</b> Out of 2 supported townships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 use at least three social accountability mechanisms effectively (March 2021)</li> <li>2 use at least four social accountability mechanisms effectively (March 2022)</li> </ul>	<b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021 Up to Feb 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mechanism 1. Public presentation of the township development plan: <b>in all 7 townships</b></li> <li>Mechanism 2. W/VTAs present project activities to their constituents for feedback: <b>in all 7 townships</b></li> <li>Mechanism 3. Public notice of the contract signing and announcement published on the noticeboard of the Implementing Department and of GAD: <b>in all 7 townships</b></li> <li>Mechanism 4. W/VTAs part of the TRAC and QAVC: <b>in all 7 townships</b></li> <li>Mechanism 5. Grievances are addressed by Tender Committee that is responsible for resolving complaints: <b>in all 7 townships</b></li> </ul>	Mechanism 3 and Mechanism 5 will be covered under the next reporting cycle.	Social accountability mechanisms checklist
<b>Indicator 1.1.3:</b> Number of supported townships where projects meet minimum benchmarks as per Procurement Guidelines. <b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019) <b>Planned Target:</b> Out of 5 supported townships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 partially comply with criteria (March 2020)</li> <li>3 fully comply with criteria (March 2021)</li> <li>5 fully comply with criteria (March 2022)</li> </ul> <b>Additional Planned Target:</b> Out of 2 supported townships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 partially comply with criteria (March 2021)</li> </ul>	<b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021 Up to Feb 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step 1. TRAC and QAVC are formed: <b>in all 7 townships</b></li> <li>Step 2. Tender documents produced and respect mandatory sections as in PGL: <b>in all 7 townships</b></li> <li>Step 3. Tender notice advertised according to PGL: <b>in all 7 townships</b></li> <li>Step 4. Tender opening meeting conducted and bid opening timeline respected: <b>to be reported</b></li> <li>Step 5. Report of tender assessment drafted and mandatory sections included: <b>to be reported</b></li> <li>Step 6. Public notice of the contract signing and announcement published: <b>to be reported</b></li> </ul>	Tender bidding process has been closed in all 7 townships. Nonetheless, tender opening meetings were postponed due to the COVID-19 restrictions in Rakhine State. Accordingly, reporting on Step 4 to Step 6 will be covered in the next reporting cycle.	Procurement guidelines checklist

Indicator	Achieved Indicator Targets	Variance	Source of Verification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 1 fully comply with criteria (March 2022)</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.4:</b> % of parliamentary committee reports on policy inquiries with recommendations that receive government response.</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> No policy inquiries completed (April 2019)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> of all completed policy inquiries in Rakhine State, 10% (March 2020) 20% (March 2021) 40% (March 2022)</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021</p> <p>Up to Feb 2021: Policy inquiry was finalized in the reporting period. Given the state of emergency, it is considered unlikely that a government response will be made, as there is no democratically elected Hluttaw nor government in existence.</p>		Hluttaw records (yearly)
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.5:</b> % of parliamentary committee inquiries that integrate gender and diversity analysis (different degree of compliance – partial vs. full integration into all stages of inquiry process).</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> of policy and bill inquiries in Rakhine State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partial integration in 20% and full integration in 10% (March 2020)</li> <li>Partial integration in 40% and full integration in 20% (March 2021)</li> <li>Partial integration in 50% and full integration in 30% (March 2022)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021</p> <p>Up to Feb 2021: Rakhine State Seed Improvement Policy Inquiry is complete. Gender and diversity analysis partially integrated, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of Inquiry ToR</li> <li>Consideration in stakeholder mapping</li> </ul> <p>Consideration in preparing for and conducting hearings and field visits.</p>		Inquiry reports
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.6:</b> Level to which the Hluttaw manages plenary and committee documents electronically and publishing these documents on their websites</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1: Backup server, intranet infrastructure and ICT governance structure in place in Rakhine Hluttaw – March 2020</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021</p> <p>Up to Feb 2021: In the Rakhine State Hluttaw, a file server, intranet infrastructure and ICT governance structure are in place and by 1 February staff were using them.</p>		Plenary and committee meeting documents, meeting minutes, training records, Hluttaw reports

Indicator	Achieved Indicator Targets	Variance	Source of Verification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 2: Intranet working and modules for plenary and committee systems launched – March 2021</li> <li>Level 3: Website linked to intranet developed and regularly updated by Hluttaws – March 2022</li> <li>Level 4: Plenary and committee documents are regularly published on the Hluttaw website – March 2022</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.7:</b> Number of MPs applying a systematic approach in representing constituents in an inclusive manner</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1: Union Hluttaw administrations provide official data for use in constituency work for all townships in Myanmar (all 17 Rakhine townships) (March 2020)</li> <li>Level 2: Constituency work professional development is delivered to MPs, introducing use of official data, and a case management approach to constituency work (March 2021)</li> <li>Level 3: MPs apply a case management approach to solve constituent problems; MPs use official data to identify priorities for constituency development and advocate at the Hluttaw for the interests of their constituents (March 2022)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021</p> <p>Up to Feb 2021:</p> <p>Level 2: Profiles for all townships in Rakhine produced and made available to Rakhine State Hluttaw. Constituency work professional development delivered to MPs. MPs were able to use the data from both government office and their constituents, with a small number already using electronic case management tools to support representation, oversight and advocacy.</p>		<p>Case studies, plenary session documents,</p> <p>RSG Record, meeting minutes</p>
<b>Output (D)1.2 Values, skills, and knowledge of local communities and justice actors enhanced to uphold human rights, promote gender equality, and improve access to justice for women</b>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.1:</b> Number of government officials trained by UNDP on rule of law, GBV and human rights</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 95 (April 2019)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> (cumulative)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>110 (March 2020)</li> <li>130 (March 2021)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021</p> <p>Up to Feb 2021:</p> <p>295 government officials (212 W/VTAs and 83 law officers) have been trained on the rule of law, HLP and SGBV standards</p>		<p>IP reports, field monitoring reports, agenda/list of participants</p>



Indicator	Achieved Indicator Targets	Variance	Source of Verification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>150 (March 2022)</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.2:</b> % of men and women trained who show an increased understanding of the rule of law, SGBV, gender equality and women's rights, and barriers to women's access to justice</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> N/A (April 2019)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% (March 2020)</li> <li>65% (March 2021)</li> <li>70% (March 2022)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status:</b> In progress</p> <p>The understanding on rule of law and access to justice increased from 44% of participants pre-training to 95% of participants post-training (increase of 51%)</p>	<p>The COVID-19 and challenges associated with recent political developments - such as sporadic internet connection, restriction in movements and security concerns – refrained the project from organizing in-person workshops. This in turn limited the options to gather adequate inflation from the ground.</p>	<p>Training feedback reports (pre- and post-training assessments) by participants, lists, community feedback reports, service provider mapping report</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.3:</b> Number of women, girls, and other vulnerable individuals benefiting from legal information, counselling and/or representation</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 200 (April 2019)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> (cumulative)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3,000 (March 2020)</li> <li>6,000 (March 2021)</li> <li>9,000 (March 2022)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status:</b> In progress</p> <p>In Rakhine, 2,282 direct beneficiaries (1,180 women) benefited from legal information such as training and awareness-raising sessions and counselling through consultations and hotlines, and representation in court.</p>	<p>Due to COVID-19 and related restrictions, the project was not able to hold enough in-person training, awareness-raising sessions and representations in courts. Once the situation allows, the rule of law and access to justice component will commence its anticipated activities.</p> <p>Since after the coup, courts have resumed the operations in Rakhine but was closed again in July till September due to 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of Covid. In person outreach awareness sessions, peer legal education sessions were held where permitted.</p>	<p>CSOs and legal aid providers' records; UNDP progress reports</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.4:</b> Number of actions/initiatives jointly developed by communities and local government actors to address women's justice issues and women's rights</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 2 (April 2019)</p> <p><b>Target:</b> (cumulative)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 (March 2020)</li> <li>6 (March 2021)</li> <li>8 (March 2022)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021</p> <p>Up to Feb 2021:</p> <p>6 meetings/discussions on women's access to justice and addressing challenges around HLP, GBV and inheritance rights conducted.</p>		<p>Meeting minutes of Rakhine Coordinating Body for Rule of Law Centres and Justice Sector; agenda/list of participants of Rakhine IPs meeting.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.5:</b> Number of government / land administration bodies strengthened to deal with housing, land and property cases</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> On hold in 2021</p> <p>Up to Feb 2021:</p>		<p>Training reports</p>

Indicator	Achieved Indicator Targets	Variance	Source of Verification
<b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019) <b>Target:</b> (cumulative) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 (March 2020)</li> <li>4 (March 2021)</li> <li>8 (March 2022)</li> </ul>	5 VTAs strengthened through training on land laws.		
<b>Output (D)1.3: Target communities and institutions have improved opportunities for gender-responsive community cohesion and strengthened capacities to build peace</b>			
<b>Indicator 1.3.1:</b> % of community members reporting increased trust between ethnic groups after the introduction of inter-village/village tract activities <b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019) <b>Planned Target:</b> 50% (March 2022)	<b>Status:</b> On track 98% of LRF members reported that their community collaborated with other communities on joint initiatives		Project reports; partners' reports
<b>Indicator 1.3.2:</b> % of targeted stakeholders reporting increasing in awareness on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding <b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019) <b>Planned Target:</b> 60% (March 2022)	<b>Status:</b> In progress As of now, reported progress, based on the targeted stakeholders' self-evaluation, is 46%	Due to COVID-19 restrictions, data collection on Indicator 1.3.2. proved challenging.	Project reports; partners' reports
<b>Indicator 1.3.3:</b> % of community-led cohesion projects implemented assessed by communities as successful in building trust and reducing conflict <b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019) <b>Planned Target:</b> 75% (March 2022)	<b>Status:</b> On track 99% of LRF members report that LRF meetings are helping improve relations between different communities 93% participation of representatives from Muslim villages at LRF meetings		Project reports; partners' reports
<b>Indicator 1.3.4:</b> # of lessons-learned case studies produced with communities used to replicate successful approaches <b>Baseline:</b> 0 (April 2019) <b>Planned Target:</b> 10 (March 2022)	<b>Status:</b> On track 4 case studies developed with community		Case studies
<b>Output (D)1.4. Resilience-based recovery and development activities implemented to support dignified solutions to displacement and the creation of conducive conditions for the sustainable return of refugees and IDPs.</b>			
<b>Indicator 1.4.1:</b> Number of persons accessing new infrastructure, disaggregated by gender. <b>Baseline:</b> N/A (April 2019) <b>Planned Target:</b>	<b>Status:</b> On track In 2020: 14,761 (total no. of persons accessing facilities built by UNHCR through QIPs) <sup>24</sup> . In 2021: 19832 (total PoCs accessing facilities built in 2021)		UNDP-UNHCR QIPs Progress Tracker & beneficiary data

<sup>24</sup> At this point, data is not disaggregated by gender; coordination is under way to collect gender-disaggregated data.

Indicator	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Variance	Source of Verification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10,000 (March 2020) (direct and indirect)</li> <li>10,000 (March 2021) (direct and indirect)</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.4.2:</b> % of beneficiaries in target communities reporting increased household income after receiving program support</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> N/A (April 2019)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6,000 (March 2020) (direct and indirect)</li> <li>6,000 (March 2021) (direct and indirect)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status: On track</b></p> <p>In 2020 – 4835 BNFs (81% reached)</p> <p>In 2021 – 12429 BNFs (201% reached)</p>	<p>QIPs delayed in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions were completed in June 2021</p>	<p>UNDP-UNHCR QIPs Progress Tracker &amp; beneficiary data</p>

Outcome 2: Women are empowered to engage in, contribute to, and benefit from community resilience, and inclusive growth and development in Rakhine State <sup>25</sup>			
Canada/Germany support to Outcome 2	Achieved Indicator Targets	Variance	Source of Verification
<p><b>Indicator 2.1:</b> Number of women who have enhanced capacities and skills to contribute to gender-responsive policies and projects in Rakhine State</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 63 women (GLP alumni)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 4,563 women</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Target needs adjustment</p> <p>Including baseline data, 2,910 women have enhanced capacities and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>566 learned about the importance of mainstreaming gender, women's rights and ways to address challenges women face.</li> <li>2,344 women (1,140 IDP women and 1,204 village women) from Sittwe, Pauktaw, Mrauk-U and Ponnagyun increased their leadership skills through the multiplier trainings conducted by GLP alumni.</li> </ul>	<p>The number of women trained could not reach the target as there was significant variance in the number of women that the implementing partner planned to reach as compared with the target that was initially set in the project document on <i>Women's Empowerment and Resilient Inclusive Communities in Rakhine</i>. The partnership agreement with the implementing partner was necessarily formed after the finalization of the project document, and the realities of implementation and the nature of the women's leadership multiplier training meant that lesser number of women could be feasibly selected as project participants.</p>	<p>Project reports, case studies, community feedback, consultation records</p>
<p><b>Indicator 2.2:</b> Number of women who have increased access and control over financial resources and new sources of income in Rakhine State</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 2,495 women</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 4,342 women</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Achieved</p> <p>Including baseline data, 9,998 women were supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,495 women's skills and resources in weaving and handicrafts making, business development, climate-resilient agriculture, agri-entrepreneurship and organic toiletries making were enhanced during the Japan-funded "Inclusive Development and Empowerment of Women in Rakhine State" JP (2018–2019) (baseline)</li> <li>Skills, resources and capacities of 3,771 women were enhanced in climate-smart agricultural practices</li> <li>Skills, resources and capacities of 1,776 women<sup>26</sup> were enhanced in weaving and handicrafts making (including mask production)</li> <li>1,956 women were capacitated in business development</li> </ul>	<p>The target of Indicator 2.2 has already been exceeded since the selection of project beneficiaries supported under the JP's business development component did not share common beneficiaries supported under UN Women's livelihoods component as initially planned. As different sets of women beneficiaries were reached under each component, consequently more women were supported under this output than the initial target.</p>	<p>Project/training reports, case studies, participants lists, community feedback</p>
Output 2.1. Women and women's groups have enhanced capacities, resources and skills to benefit from and contribute towards gender-responsive policies and programmes on development, humanitarian action and peace in Rakhine			

<sup>25</sup> Progress reported under Outcome 2 in the results framework reflects cumulative progress of the indicators since the beginning of this JP programme funded by Canada and Germany.

<sup>26</sup> Among these 1,700 women artisans, 450 were trained in business development (of whom 393 received small grants to start up their businesses) and 194 were supported with business registration at SSID.

<p><b>Indicator C2.1.1:</b> Number of women leaders, groups, networks and CSOs trained by UN Women to engage in gender responsive policies and programming</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 63 women leaders, 16 women's groups, networks and CSOs</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 4,563 women leaders; 40 women's groups, networks and CSOs</p> <p>Baseline data includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>63 women who graduated from Gender Leadership Programme;</li> <li>11 CSOs trained on gender advocacy in quarter 1 of 2019;</li> <li>5 MNCW/Women's Committees at Rakhine state level and across 4 townships trained on advancing gender equality and operationalizing gender equality commitments in quarter 4 of 2018 and quarter 1 of 2019</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status:</b> Achieved for CSOs</p> <p>2,530 women and 73 CSOs were trained to engage in gender responsive policies and programmes, as of now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>112 women trained in GRB</li> <li>48 women trained on GiHA in Rakhine State</li> <li>26 women trained as trainers on GiHA in Yangon</li> <li>18 CSOs trained on GiHA</li> <li>2,344 women (1,140 IDP women and 1,204 village women) from Sittwe, Pauktaw, Mrauk-U and Ponnagyun increased their leadership skills through the multiplier trainings conducted by GLP alumni.</li> <li>8 CSOs in Rakhine provided guidance on applying to the MHF so as to mobilise resources to increase women's leadership and participation in humanitarian action.</li> <li>15 CSOs in Rakhine orientated to discuss gender gaps of COVID-19 policies and services with a view to reflecting the insights in the Myanmar Economic Recovery and Reform Plan (MERRP)</li> <li>17 CSOs engaged to devise a capacity development plan for civil society strengthening to respond to humanitarian and development needs in Rakhine in September 2021</li> </ul> <p>15 CSOs trained to Project Cycle Management tools such as proposal writing, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and to integrate gender analysis at every stage of project cycle management in the context of humanitarian, peace and development of Myanmar.</p>	<p>While the target for CSOs was achieved, the number of women trained could not reach the target as there was significant variance in the number of women that the implementing partner planned to reach as compared with the target that was set in the project document on <i>Women's Empowerment and Resilient Inclusive Communities in Rakhine</i>. The partnership agreement with the implementing partner was necessarily formed after the finalization of the project document, and the realities of implementation and the nature of the women's leadership multiplier training meant that lesser number of women could be feasibly selected as project participants.</p>	<p>Project/training reports, case studies, participants lists, community feedback</p>
<p><b>Indicator C2.1.2:</b> Number of consultations, dialogues and events for knowledge sharing organized</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 120 consultations, dialogues and events</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 550 consultations, dialogues and events</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Achieved</p> <p>Including baseline data, 685 consultations, dialogues and events organized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 community theatre performances (baseline)</li> <li>1 16 Days of Activism event in 2018 (baseline)</li> <li>1 meeting and sharing session of GLP graduates in villages with community members (baseline)</li> <li>2 awareness-raising sessions with local CSOs in Rakhine (baseline)</li> <li>2 International Women's Day events in Sittwe and Nay Pyi Taw (baseline)</li> <li>3 exposure visits (national) for GLP participants (baseline)</li> </ul>	<p>The target for this indicator has already been achieved since the number of community-based awareness-raising sessions led by GLP alumni was significantly higher than planned thanks to the success of the GLP under the first phase of the RABP (2018–2019) and the continued need for additional community outreach sessions.</p>	<p>Attendance sheets, participants lists</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 sharing sessions between women led by GLP graduates (baseline)</li> <li>• 8 discussion sessions among GLP graduates, CSOs and government representatives (baseline)</li> <li>• 5 community awareness-raising sessions on gender-responsive WASH services (baseline)</li> <li>• 50 community-based awareness-raising sessions led by GLP graduates (baseline)</li> <li>• 12 mass meetings by Finn Church Aid (FCA) (baseline)</li> <li>• 14 focus group discussions by FCA (baseline)</li> <li>• 11 seed production and rice production activities by the International Rice Research Institute (baseline)</li> <li>• 1 inception workshop by FCA (baseline)</li> <li>• 4 farmer field visits (baseline)</li> <li>• 2 International Women's Day events (at township and state levels)</li> <li>• 28 16 Days of Activism events in 2019 (state, township, village and camp levels)</li> <li>• 1 media roundtable</li> <li>• 1 Annual Dialogue in 2019</li> <li>• 3 GiHA updating consultations (1 with CSOs, 1 with women beneficiaries, 1 with the Rakhine ICCG)</li> <li>• 17 gender and social inclusion sessions</li> <li>• 1 follow-up consultation with Rakhine-based CSOs</li> <li>• 1 Myanmar National Women's Day event</li> <li>• 2 Women's Evening forums</li> <li>• 4 participatory community theatre performances</li> <li>• 394 community-based awareness-raising sessions led by GLP alumni</li> <li>• 11 sharing sessions on natural toiletries production by GLP alumni</li> <li>• 4 gender awareness workshops with Camp Management Committees (CMCs), religious leaders and community leaders</li> <li>• 76 women's leadership stories sharing sessions in safe spaces</li> <li>• 11 awareness-raising sessions on gender-responsive WASH services</li> <li>• 1 dialogue consultation with Rakhine-based CSOs and DSW</li> <li>• 1 UNDP-UN Women Peer Review Workshop</li> </ul>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 sector-specific consultations held with WASH, food-security, health, protection, and education clusters including a Rakhine-specific breakout room</li> <li>1 knowledge sharing forum in January 2021 with 15 CSOs in Rakhine to discuss the gender gaps of COVID-19 policies and services with a view to reflecting the insights in the Myanmar Economic Recovery and Reform Plan (MERRP)</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Indicator C2.1.3:</b> Number of gender knowledge and information products developed by UN Women through the inter-agency gender mainstreaming working group and circulated to the Humanitarian Country Team, Rakhine Coordination Group and Inter-Cluster Coordination Group</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 1 gender knowledge and information product</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 3 gender knowledge and information products</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Achieved</p> <p>Including baseline, 7 gender knowledge and information products were developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">2019 GiHA Profile</a> (baseline)</li> <li><a href="#">Gender Mainstreaming Checklists for Humanitarian Action</a></li> <li><a href="#">2020 Myanmar GiHA Profile</a> (updated version of the 2019 GiHA Profile)</li> <li><a href="#">Gender Alert for COVID-19 Outbreak</a> (localized to Myanmar context and translated into Myanmar language)</li> <li>Gender package for COVID-19 quarantine centres</li> <li><a href="#">Myanmar Rapid Gender Analysis</a></li> <li><a href="#">Rakhine Rapid Gender Analysis</a></li> </ul>		Documents
<p><b>Indicator C2.1.4:</b> Number of people who received training on gender in humanitarian action including members of inter-agency gender mainstreaming working group, and other government, UN, INGO, NGO, CSO and other humanitarian/HDP actors in Rakhine State, including women's CSOs, networks and groups</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> Approx. 40 people (one GiHA training conducted in 2018 in Sittwe)</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 100 people</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Achieved</p> <p>Including baseline, 179 people were trained on GiHA.</p>	The target of this indicator has already been exceeded, as additional resources for GiHA were mobilized from UN Women's HQ.	Participants lists, attendance sheets
<b>Output 2.2. Institutional capacities of government enhanced at the national, state and local levels for gender-responsive policies and service delivery</b>			
<p><b>Indicator C.2.2.1:</b> Number of key policy and planning documents with substantive reference to gender equality and women's empowerment</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 12 key policy and planning documents</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Achieved</p> <p>Including baseline data, 25 key policy and planning documents with substantive reference to GEWE were developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">National Strategic Plan for Advancement of Women</a> (baseline)</li> </ul>		Documents

<p><b>Target:</b> 20 key policy and planning documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Report of Advisory Commission on Rakhine State</a> (baseline)</li> <li>• Report on the Mapping Analysis for National Strategic Plan on the Advancement of Women (baseline)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Myanmar: A Situation Analysis</a> (Joint Study of DSW, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women) (baseline)</li> <li>• Terms of Reference for Myanmar National Committee for Women for States and Townships (baseline)</li> <li>• Gender and Age Analysis: Sociocultural and Structural Barriers to Essential Services in Central Rakhine (INGO Rakhine Initiative study) (baseline)</li> <li>• <a href="#">2019 Myanmar GiHA Profile</a> (baseline)</li> <li>• <a href="#">2019 Humanitarian Response Plan</a> (baseline)</li> <li>• <a href="#">2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview</a> (baseline)</li> <li>• Emergency Response Preparedness Plan (baseline)</li> <li>• Joint Communique of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the United Nations on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (baseline)</li> <li>• United Nations Country Team Confidential Report to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on the situation of women and girls from northern Rakhine State, Myanmar (baseline)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Gender Mainstreaming Checklists for Humanitarian Action</a></li> <li>• GiHA Action Plan</li> <li>• UN Women–ILO joint study, “Gender-Transformative Livelihoods: A Pathway to Women’s Empowerment: Findings of a Study into the Economic Opportunities and Barriers for Women in Rakhine State, Myanmar”</li> <li>• 2020 Myanmar GiHA Profile</li> <li>• <a href="#">2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">2020 Humanitarian Response Plan</a></li> <li>• Myanmar COVID-19 HRP 2020 Addendum</li> <li>• Analysis and suggested HCT/ICCG messages on the MSWRR “Action Plan for the Control of COVID-19 Outbreak in IDP Camps”</li> <li>• Interim Operational Guidance for COVID-19 Isolation in Humanitarian Settings in Myanmar</li> <li>• Gender-Responsive Budgeting Roadmap</li> </ul>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview</li> <li>• UN Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP) for COVID-19 and its Operational Plan</li> <li>• 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Indicator C.2.2.2:</b> Number of informal and formal institutional mechanisms that actively engage women's groups, leaders and relevant government departments in dialogue to inform policymaking and public service delivery</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 5 mechanisms</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 10 mechanisms</p> <p>Baseline data includes 5 mechanisms that were formed during the Japan-funded "Inclusive Development and Empowerment of Women in Rakhine State" JP (2018–2019).</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Achieved</p> <p>Including baseline data, 12 informal and formal institutional mechanisms have been formed and/or strengthened:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network of Rakhine-based CSOs working on GEEW (baseline)</li> <li>• Women's groups in villages and IDP camps that can engage with community leaders in four townships (baseline)</li> <li>• Coordination Group for 16 Days of Activism (baseline)</li> <li>• Coordination Group for International Women's Day (baseline)</li> <li>• Informal network of GEWE focal points among the protection cluster/sector in Rakhine (baseline)</li> <li>• Informal GiHA Coordination Group in central Rakhine</li> <li>• Myanmar National Committee on Women (MNCW) meetings</li> <li>• CMCs – 1 GLP beneficiary elected to CMC during the reporting period</li> <li>• Annual Dialogue</li> <li>• Women's Evening forum</li> <li>• Strategic Dialogue Forum between RSG and CSOs to strengthen gender-responsiveness of humanitarian, development and peace efforts in Rakhine in the context of COVID-19</li> <li>• Annual consultations to update the GiHA Profile to inform the Humanitarian Need Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)</li> </ul>		Meeting minutes and records
<b>Output 2.3: A supportive environment established to increase women's access to and control over financial resources and new sources of income for promoting their leadership and participation outside household duties</b>			
<p><b>Indicator C2.3.1:</b> Number of women with increased knowledge on solutions to addressing barriers they face, including through ICT innovation, business development and entrepreneurship</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 416</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Achieved</p> <p>Including baseline data, knowledge of 2,814 women on solutions addressing barriers they face, including through business development and entrepreneurship, was increased:</p>	<p>The target of Indicator C2.3.1 has already been exceeded since the selection of project beneficiaries supported under the JP's business development component did not share common beneficiaries supported under UN Women's livelihoods component as initially planned. As different sets of women</p>	<p>Project/training reports, case studies, participants lists, community feedback, beneficiaries' business plans</p>

<p><b>Target:</b> 1,200</p> <p>Baseline data includes 416 women farmers and artisans who were trained in business development and agri-entrepreneurship during the Japan-funded “Inclusive Development and Empowerment of Women in Rakhine State” JP (2018–2019)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 416 women farmers and artisans who were trained in business development and agri-entrepreneurship during the Japan-funded “Inclusive Development and Empowerment of Women in Rakhine State” JP (2018–2019) (baseline)</li> <li>• 442 women capacitated with knowledge on solutions to addressing barriers they face from April 2019-March 2020</li> <li>• 1,956 women equipped with business development and entrepreneurial skills through the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme.</li> </ul>	<p>beneficiaries were reached under each component, consequently more women were supported under this output than the initial target.</p>	
<p><b>Indicator C.2.3.2:</b> Number of partnerships formed to enhance women’s access to financial services, resources and business opportunities</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 0 partnerships</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 3 partnerships</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Achieved</p> <p>3 partnerships formed, as of now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSID</li> <li>• Sunflowers Organic Dye Textiles and Crafts Shop</li> <li>• Vision Fund</li> </ul>		<p>Project/partners’ reports</p>

## Annex II: Stories of achievement

### From women's involvement in livelihood activity towards social cohesion

May Nyein Saw, aged 25, lives with seven family members in traditional, male-dominated rural society. Her challenge in such a community is to tackle her own family. Social norms and cultural traditions discourage female participation in decision-making, particularly in group activities.

In 2018, UNDP and its partner, community representative group Livelihood Recovery Forum (LRF), started livelihood recovery activities in four village clusters in Pauktaw Township under the JP. In 2019, May Nyein Saw was appointed an LRF member in Pyaing Taung cluster.

“Nobody would deeply recognize me, [such an ordinary woman involved in the LRF], but in the next few months, at any LRF gathering, [through me] you’ll be listening to what the women think about their visions and cultures”, she says.

Since being appointed, she has engaged proactively in the JP, participating in LRF meetings and engaging in the distribution of water pumps and agricultural training. “To me, it looks like women are fantastic at being a part of the LRF to serve the interests of society. I guess even men aren’t able to count all the trees from a large forest. Doesn’t it sound like it reflects the collective opinions when you stop to think about it?” she asks.



*Daw May Nyein Saw's involvement in a community meeting*

Her family lives in Pyaing Taung village, situated on the bank of the river Sin Tet Maw. Khami and Muslim communities live in nearby villages. As those poor villages are nearer a river, all household income comes from fishing and lowland farming. But since the intercommunal conflict in 2012, these groups have been living separately, rather than in an interactive socio-economic partnership with their neighbours, sharing domestic resources, for example. The result has been few benefits and poor employment opportunities.

“When LRF meetings started among villages, we organized different groups at one place”, May Nyein Saw said. “People initially had mild worries at such events like training sessions and joint implementation, but



*Daw May Nyein Saw helps distribute farming and community assets.*

later on, the atmosphere became like a party. We laugh, smile and chat together at such events.”

In collaboration with the DoA, the JP and its local partner provided “water pump engines” to the community for their winter crop cultivation. Training is conducted in good agricultural practice following distribution of agricultural tools and materials. May Nyein Saw actively participates in such activities to assist with her community’s development, which is strongly appreciated by community members.

“It’s amazing! After some collaborations, Muslim and Khami have both begin arriving in our village. We also then dare to go to their villages. Nowadays we can resume our rapport by sharing fresh water resources as well as casual labouring, and selling fish and vegetables across the different villages. Think about that! During these days, I’m going here and there in Khami and Muslim villages to sell my fresh fish and farm products. Those people are also coming to our village to find jobs and sell their farm products.”



## Fortifying nature and communities as first line of defense against disasters

Ma Tin Tin and Ma Soe Thanda (22 and 23 years old), both graduate students from Sittwe university, volunteered to join in the tree planting during the International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. *“We didn’t know much about the benefits of having forests and mangroves. It is only recently that we have come to know that these are life saviors and natural barriers which are protecting us from disasters”*, according to Ma Tin Tin Oo.

UNDP Myanmar, in partnership with local CSOs in Rakhine supported in the planting of mangrove and wind break tree plantations in Sittwe, Ponnagyun Township and Kyeintali to promote community awareness on nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction.

Awareness raising through such events is important in Rakhine State as it is one of the most disaster-prone regions in Myanmar and suffers regularly from floods and cyclones.



*Volunteers during the International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction in Sittwe, 18 October 2021.*

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*“A healthy environment will benefit women, children, and society and it will always be crucial for disaster reduction. Even a small step sometimes become a concrete foundation in building awareness among local community”*  
- Ma Soe Thanda -

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the local communities and creating ownership is key in making a lasting impact. Both young women were unanimous in their conviction that “these efforts make communities more resilient through appreciating and understanding the value of forests and mangroves.”

Women and children are disproportionately affected by disasters. However, the role of women in responding to natural disasters is also crucial and significant.

Nature-based solutions help to enhance local biodiversity and restore ecosystems which are vital in building community resilience. That is one of the strong reasons why nature-based solutions need to be promoted to reduce the impacts of natural disasters on communities and their environment. Engagement with



*Volunteers planting seedlings along the Mayu River river*

## Women tackling COVID-19: Countering economic impact and strengthening women's involvement in the health response

UN Women supported women trained in sewing under its current weaving and handicrafts interventions to transition their production skills to help meet COVID-related needs and maintain their livelihoods. During the reporting period, 44 women from villages and IDP camps across three townships have been engaged in making 100%-cotton masks according to the guidelines issued by MoHS. Each of the women involved in the mask production cooperatives has a specific role in the production process. Using their collective bargaining power, the women were able to achieve lower prices when procuring raw materials.



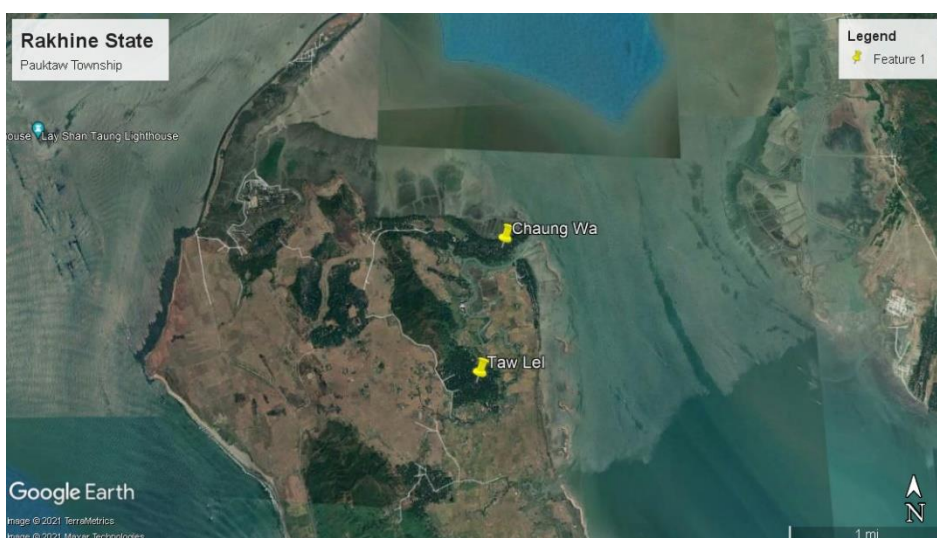
Photo Credit: FCA Consortium (FCA, LWF and CERA), Myint Myint Than

The families of the women producers are grateful for the economic contributions the women make through their mask production, alleviating the financial burden on their families while helping reduce the spread of COVID-19. At a household level, women reported positive transformations from a gender perspective, such as husbands and other family members taking over some of the women's household work. "Fifty to sixty percent of our household burden has been delegated to other members of the household", women from the Kyauk Tan Gyi cooperative in Sittwe explained proudly. While aiming to achieve a sustainable source of livelihood for the women in the mid to

long term, initially, masks are being sold to humanitarian actors and distributed to those most in need. The women produced more than 100,000 reusable cloth masks by the end of 2021, most of which were sold to humanitarian and development partners who distributed them to particularly vulnerable people in Rakhine. UN Women's efforts towards mask production have been commended at national and global levels.

## Building resilience, Aiding recovery: Cushioning the impact of COVID-19 on marginal farmers in Rakhine

Water and its accessibility are key for farmers all around Myanmar. It is a crucial aspect of generating income and sustain livelihoods for households, depending on agricultural activities. External shocks such as the global COVID-19 pandemic often affects the most vulnerable – often including farmers – with long-



term implications on their well-being. A rapid survey conducted by UNDP showed that with the outbreak of COVID-19, particularly smallholder farmers are among the most affected. Accordingly, timely and effective efforts in building resilient communities are vital to equip people with necessary capacities to sustain livelihoods and mitigate the negative consequences of such crises.



A large majority of the villagers from Taw Lel Village earn their living as farmers. Taw Lel Village is situated on southernmost part of Pauktaw Township, Rakhine State, near the mouth of Kaladan River. Landscape around the village is crisscrossed by rivers and creeks, with low lying hillocks in between. Being almost on the shores of Bay of Bengal, climate is humid with heavy rainfalls, and soil is fertile. Yet, water accessibility is a big challenge for the farmers.



47 years old Daw Oo Hla Myint is one of the them. Being a widow for more than eight years, she has been the breadwinner of the family of six. Her son-in-law works on fishing boats and doubles up as a seasonal laborer – when time permits. So, looking after the plantation falls upon woman of the family. On her half an acre of land, Daw Oo Hla Myint grows betel leaves, chili and beans.

“I wish I had more plots, so I could grow and earn more,” she remembered her thoughts back then. But more plots, mean also more water needed. “Carrying water by hand needs a lot of strength and it is time consuming. We would spend hours on end every day, just to water our plot. Besides, I would have to do house chores – it is too much for me.”

Against this background, Daw Oo Hla Myint hired a water pump. “Yet, the water pump I hired costed me MMK 1,000 per hour in addition to operating fuel costs,” she remembered, “it was too expensive, but I could not afford to buy one myself.”

Under the Rakhine Area-Based Programme (RABP), Department of Agriculture in partnership with UNDP

distributed water pumps to 2,568 vulnerable households, focusing on poor and smallholder farmers in four townships and setting up water pump user groups to operate maintain and sustain these investments

Daw Oo Hla Myint was one them. When attending the training session, she was very enthusiastic: “We were trained how to operate and maintain our water pumps. We were formed into groups and urged to help each



*Testing water pumping unit, Ponnar Chay village, Pauktaw Township*

other. It helped women farmers like us very much.” Instead of three hours, watering the plantation can now be done in under half an hour. “Like this, I can schedule my work for the plantation and it give me more time other chores – this makes life much easier,” she said.

The training sessions and the water pump user groups have enabled, especially, women farmers to participate in community meetings to share and

discuss their needs and priorities. “Before, we [women] were afraid of speak of our feelings and needs. However, at the community discussions all are equal and women are encouraged to speak on what we think.”

Besides that, the water pumps impact the income of the farmers and their families, as they can now grow larger amounts and do not spend money on renting water pumps and thus, earn more. Daw Oo Hla Myint was able to double her income from half a million to expected a million MMK a year. She says that “Thanks to UNDP’s water pumps, I can grow more betel, chili and beans, which means more income. Also, there’s no need to pay for water pump (renting anymore). Now, I can spend more on the education and health of my kids.” Also, for U Sein Win Maung and Daw Win Ma, parents of four children, from Chi Wei village, Pauktaw Township the water pump was a big relief. “We can now grow more betel leaves without worry and it increased our monthly income from MMK 60,000 to more than MMK 80,000.”

Although COVID-19 highly impacted the villager’s lives, its outbreak of COVID-19 has not slowed down these farmers. Daw Oo Hla Myint said, “Sons and nephew of our neighbors came back from Thailand in May and were unemployed. They learned about us and were much impressed. Some said they would rather help in family plantations than going abroad again.” She was impressed by what she heard from them: “They said the government would focus on agricultural sector during and after the pandemic. It means more opportunity for us. With water pump, we can grow more crops, hence more income. For the first time, we look forward to future with some confidence.”

The water pumping unit distribution is a part of wider support to vulnerable smallholder farmers under From Farm to Market for All initiative, implemented under RABP. Other components include improving on-farm and off-farm skills, strengthening value adding process, developing market linkages to rural areas, as well as capacity building program for Department of Agriculture. Under the plan, 542 mobile water pumping units were distributed to 2,568 smallholder farmers, including 384 women farmers from Mrauk-U, Pauktaw, Ponnaguyn and Rathedaung.

### **“From where I stand”: A personal success for Daw Aye Mu during a difficult year in Myanmar**

Rakhine State, Myanmar – 31-year-old Daw Aye Mu had always wanted to learn how to be more business savvy and expand her small-business. Attending the UN Women and World Vision *Start and Improve Your Business* (SIYB) training in July 2021 in her hometown in Rakhine State gave her the confidence to take the leap forward.

Daw Aye Mu’s trainer confirms this confidence and said that throughout the training, she was energetic, optimistic, and an active participant who was always ready to share experiences with her other peers.

Myanmar’s compounded crisis has been hard for Daw Aye Mu and other small-business owners, but this did not deter the 31-year-old. Rather, she put her training into practice, slowly expanding her business and even managed to save money. Today, she recounts to us her story and her plans for the future in her own words.

“My name is Daw Aye Mu, and I live in Nga Tauk Ta village, Sittwe Township in Rakhine State. I am 31 years old and I have a husband and two children. My son is very sweet and he is currently in grade 9, while my lovely daughter – the youngest – is in grade 3. My husband is a migrant worker in Thailand and he has been working there for seven years now, and we both work to support our family. I worked two jobs, as a pig farmer and as a casual labourer, but I have always wanted to start my own business so with the help of my husband, I finally established my very own business making a popular snack in Rakhine State called *parpalar*, which is made out of fish flesh and flour.



In recent times though, I have been thinking about how I can further expand my business so when I enrolled in the SIYB training in July 2021, it made my expansion plans possible.



*Meikswe Myanmar meeting Daw Aye Mu in her home in Nga Tauk Ta village, Sittwe Township, Rakhine State to inform her that she will be a small-business cash grant recipient. Photo: Meikswe Myanmar / Myat Noe*

The SIYB training included several training sessions that taught us about business ideas, financial planning, basic marketing, market assessment and business coaching, and entrepreneurship skills. My favorite session during this training, however, was learning how to be a competent entrepreneur, because it has shown me how to be a smarter business-woman as well as how to earn an income through the business.

I practice much of what I have been taught during the SIYB training, especially on book-keeping, how to communicate with customers and how to promote one's goods. All this has not only helped me in increasing the number of customers but also to procure more items and become a distributor to other stores. In fact, I've even set up a new juice stand next to my small store. I'm excited about the future and the growth of my business and this is very new for me.

When I first started the business, I didn't even have many customers and it became more difficult after the political situation changed in February. The price of goods also increased and I was having doubts about expanding the business because I saw how other small businesses were affected. Financially, it was also difficult because I wasn't earning enough, and it was always a struggle to keep up the business, so the SIYB training couldn't have come at a better time. Being selected to receive the cash grant support from Meikswe Myanmar was also crucial and this is the support that has allowed me to be where I am today. Since the training and since I expanded the business, I'm not only earning more but there is also profit so I've even been able to put aside and save \$130 (200,000 – 250,000 Myanmar Kyat) every month.

My husband is also very supportive of my ambition. He told me that neither of us should have to depend on the other, and that the income and household chores should be shared between us. The financial stability that I have gained through this business will not only help me to save towards building a better home, but also support my children's future and education. Today, I feel brave and hopeful enough".

*Meikswe Myanmar is a sub-partner of World Vision, one of the UN Women's implementing partner for the Rakhine Area Based Programme (RABP).*

**A Rohingya women fishing net producer is now running a thriving micro-enterprise to support her family in a camp for internally displaced persons**



Women fishing net producers are thriving despite the multiple systemic restrictions they face because they are both Rohingya and female. With support from UN Women, the women are now producing a variety of quality products that meet the demands of their clients. Local fishermen and boat owners are now devoted buyers of their outputs. The women are adapting their products to changing needs while also finding new ways to access raw materials and clientele.

Mrs Ahrayesha Baygaung is a 30-year-old Rohingya fishing net producer from Ohn Taw Gyi – South IDP camp in Sittwe Township. She is the main breadwinner for her family. She is supporting her husband who has a disability as well as making sure their four children are properly fed, cared for, and able to attend and excel in school.



*Mrs. Ahrayesha Baygaung, a Rohingya fishing net producer at home in Ohn Taw Gyi South Camp for displaced populations in Sittwe Township, Rakhine State, 22 June 2021. Photo: Finn Church Aid*

“In the past, we had a very hard life because neither my husband nor I were earning any income. We struggled terribly to support our children and worried so much about their futures,” she says. “But luckily, I was selected by my peers to participate in these trainings for making fishing nets. I also was able to gain business skills and become more confident as a leader. Finally I applied and received a grant to start my business. This was the turning point in our lives. Now I am earning up to MMK 150,000 (US\$ 100) in a month. Not only am I earning a good income, but we have hope for improving our living condition and educating our children.”

### **Traditional weaver relies upon successful micro-enterprise to support family during a time of hardship**

A community of 21 artisans are producing traditional woven products in Myo Thit village of Mrauk-U Township. The local style is called “backstrap” and is popular with international clients and buyers in other parts of Myanmar. Backstrap weaving is a traditional practice among ethnic Mro women in Rakhine State. Produced in classical colours and styles, items produced through backstrap technique include shawls, traditional women’s cloth, skirts, tote bag and other high-quality products.

UN Women supported training courses for women on basic and advanced weaving skills, product diversification, dyeing, quality assurance, marketing, and other professional skills such as leadership, business planning, and financial planning. Women who demonstrated the requisite capacity were encouraged to apply for business start-up grants through the programme.

After the training courses, ongoing technical backstopping and counselling were provided for improving the quality of products, learning about their client’s needs, and expanding entrepreneurship skills. Women were

successful in expanding the diversity of their hand-woven products and increasing their sales through reaching markets in Yangon and Mandalay. The dual crises of COVID-19 and political changes made raw materials more difficult to procure and simultaneously halted demand from the higher-end tourism sector. Yet the women have adapted to the situation, relying on one another for advice, and are now producing for the local market. Though profit is well below what it was before, they are earning vital income that ensures that their households are able to survive the hardships.

Mrs. Khine Sein Yin is 45 years old and the head of her household. She is responsible for the well-being of



*Mrs. Khine Sein Yin, a traditional backstrap weaver and micro-entrepreneur at home in Myo Thit village, Mrauk-U township, Rakhine State, 25 June 2021.*

herself and four other family members, including one individual with special needs. She has managed to continue her backstrap weaving microenterprise. The income is important because now with market disruptions, job opportunities have dried up everywhere. Through support of the programme, she is now self-sufficient and earning MMK 5,000 per day (US\$ 4). “I am proud of what I have managed to achieve for my family”, she says. “In spite of everything, I have hope for the future. We are able to get by for now, and I am confident that when the situation improves, I will be well-positioned to export my products to Yangon and beyond.”

### **Re-establishing livelihoods of IDP families**

U Rawshid Ahmed and his family are happily back to their original house plot after about three years of living in a displacement. He has re-established his house and business in the south of Nyaung Chaung village, two miles from Maungdaw town.

U Rawshid Ahmed used to run a small-scale trading unit in their village since 2008, it was the main source of income for his family of 10 members. He has two sons and six daughters; of them two daughters and one son are attending school. Following the August 2017 incident in northern Rakhine, about 80% of the families from the locality fled to Bangladesh. U Rawshid Ahmed and his family's house and business were destroyed completely and were displaced to the north part of Nyaung Chaung village. The family lived with the support of humanitarian food aid, casual labour and mobile trade of dry fish and vegetables, earning an average monthly income of about 60K MMK. Considering the low income for the family of 10, the family frequently borrowed money from relatives and neighbours to meet the family's food need and send children to school. In second the quarter of 2020 U Rawshid Ahmed and his family together with other 32 IDP families were able to return to their original house plots through the ‘multi-sectoral support pilot project for the return of IDPs’ supported by UNHCR and UNDP under the tripartite MoU with the government. He constructed a family house through the materials support provided by the government and UNHCR, and received goat rearing and small business start-ups support from UNDP to rebuild family livelihood. After receiving training on small business start-up and a cash grant of 390,000 MMK, U Rawshid Ahmed established a



vegetable shop in the village, and sell dry fish, vegetables and local produce. The family also received two numbers of goats, including support to construct goat shelter.



U Rawshid Ahmed and family say they are confident and much happier. From the business the family is earning a net profit of 200,000 MMK /month, and now owns four goats. Income from small business covers expenses for food, medical treatment, sending children to school including community donations. Additionally, they can save on average 10,000 MMK/month for family's future health needs and education of children. Rearing goats is a family asset, besides earning income from sell, in the event of unforeseen emergencies goats can be taken with the family

and sold during health emergencies without having to rely on local moneylenders paying high-interest rates.

### U Ba Nyunt as paralegal

U Ba Nyunt is a high profile social worker of Mrauk-U township. By doing these voluntary and social work



for long, he found out most of his community members do not even have basic legal knowledge and do not even know how to claim their legal rights if their rights are violated by others. Since that time, he had been willing to learn laws for serving the justice and raise legal awareness of his community as much as he could. But, he could not initiate his desire until the days he met with LCM lawyer, U Khin Lurn Kyaw, whom asked him to join paralegal training organized by Legal Clinic Myanmar.

U Ba Nyunt started to join the paralegal training provided by LCM on 2015. He joined the paralegal training of LCM for three consecutive years till 2018. As he got network with the people who are willing to serve for the justice of community members from those trainings, he initiated and formed two network groups (each group includes 6 members) with his other 11 colleagues to give legal remedies for legal issues, to raise legal awareness among public and to serve for justice of his community on 2018. Through the network of groups, he and his other 11 colleagues have been giving legal advice connectively for legal issues of their respective villages of Mrauk-U township. Due to their quality service and their connective network systems, most of groups member including U Ba Nyunt gradually gain trust from the public of Mrauk-U areas in concerned with legal issues and public reached out to them whenever they need legal support. Right now, some of the group

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*"Paralegal Trainings are like sparks of hopes for the people who don't even have basic legal knowledge but willing to serve for legal problems of their respective communities like me"*

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members became lawyers and U Ba Nyunt also became the staff of LCM. But, the network and connectivity still remain between the group members.

As per interview with him concerned with quality of paralegal training, he said “the paralegal trainings of are just like rewards for me because it makes me to fulfil my strongest desire which is to serve for justice of my community. Skill, knowledge and abilities acquired from paralegal trainings could make me to solve the legal problems confidently. By this way, I gradually gain trust from the community and became charismatic among public in solving legal issues. As the results, I could serve more and more for my community and community members are also easier to claim their legal rights and to get access justice and formal justice system than ever. In conclusion, paralegal trainings are like sparks of hopes for the people who even don’t have basic legal knowledge but willing to serve for legal problems of their respective communities like me”. This kind of story reflect the concept of seeding community-led sustainability by training the community members as paralegal worked out.