



POWER IN PARTNERSHIPS

**ActionAid Myanmar
Annual Report 2014**

OUR VISION

is a world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity.

OUR MISSION

is to work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice.

OUR VALUES:

SOLIDARITY with people living in poverty, taking sides with the powerless and the excluded.

HUMILITY in our presentation and behaviour, recognising that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and openness in our judgements and communication with others.

INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY from any personal religious, party-political or identity affiliation in the conduct of ActionAid's work.

EQUITY AND JUSTICE in working to ensure equal opportunity for everyone, irrespective of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, HIV status, colour, class, ethnicity, disability, location and religion.

COURAGE OF CONVICTION requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative – without fear of failure – in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty.



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COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

2014: A YEAR OF BUILDING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

We believe that partnerships are crucial to our work. From grassroots to government, cooperation is key

2014 was a year dedicated to building and consolidating partnerships at all levels in order to deepen and broaden our outreach further.

We were particularly proud to see former Fellows establish their own organisations and become our implementing partners.

New partnerships with local and international organisations as well as government agencies helped extend our operations and influence even further.

We experienced a sincere desire for inclusive development at government level, especially in Kayin and Ayeyarwaddy where the state governments replicated and piloted the Village Book process.

We also continued to engage with the Union Government to deepen the

bottom-up approach to planning and development.

On a different note, I would like to highlight how, in advancing our commitment to Women's Rights, we were able to engage with stakeholders across all levels in pursuing access to justice for survivors of violence.

This annual report is only a snapshot of all the amazing activities and results of 2014. I hope you will enjoy reading and will contact us for more information about particular issues of your interest.

Many thanks to all Fellows, partners, donors and supporters and not least the communities we work with.

*On behalf of the team,
Shihab Uddin Ahamad
Country Director, ActionAid Myanmar*

ABOVE: ActionAid Myanmar's staff retreat 2014 focussed on introducing new colleagues to our vision, mission and values; improving collaboration towards realising our long term goals, and not least strengthening the general team spirit



■ The communities we work with are mostly confident that progress is underway, and the government officials we engaged with showed genuine interest in improving policies and systems. We enabled even more communities to connect with local government in order to claim their rights to public services and justice. And the government committed to allocate further budget for realising community-led action plans

REFLECTIONS ON 2014

SIGNS OF PROGRESS

ActionAid continued to expand our operations and influence. We now work in most corners of the country, reaching more than 200,000 people in remote villages and supporting government at all levels on integrating a community-led, bottom-up approach to development

While observers established that Myanmar's reform process slowed down during 2014, we witnessed several heartening signs that positive change continues to occur and evolves at its own pace.

The communities we work with are mostly confident that progress is underway, and the government officials we engaged with showed genuine interest in improving policies and systems. We enabled even more communities to connect with local government in order to claim their rights to public services and justice. And the government committed to allocate further budget for realising community-led action plans.

Through numerous workshops, seminars and round table discussions we facilitated sharing of knowledge and inspiration, capacity building as well as an open and honest exchange of views between government, opposition, civil society, the private sector, academia, the media and rural communities.

We supported paralegals and male role models on taking an active role in preventing violence against women and seeking justice for survivors of violence. Taboos were broken, harmful traditions were questioned and perpetrators brought to justice. Meanwhile our policy advocacy efforts were met by concerned and receptive government officials.

After receiving training on open data, online documentation, and social media, Fellows began to establish Facebook

pages for each village we work with. When the youth team initiated the project few Fellows had mobile phones or access to the internet but today most of them do. The Fellows are now regularly updating the Facebook pages with the changes they witness due to the Village Book process. Government officials as well as potential private donors have contacted us to offer their support after learning about the challenges of these villages via Facebook.

A booming private sector were eager to engage with us for advice on context specific corporate social responsibility initiatives. The importance of sustainable business practices can hardly be underestimated when it comes to alleviating poverty by creating job opportunities with fair wages and healthy work environments.

There were of course plenty of challenges as well. The reform process did indeed slow down in many respects, the peace negotiations proved inconclusive, important aspects of poverty and injustice remained unaddressed.

However, we do believe that the people of Myanmar are determined to take the path of progress and will have the power to achieve this over time.

Forging strong partnerships from government to grassroots and across all other societal divisions remain an important key to holding everyone accountable and stay on the right track in this historic reform process.



ABOVE: A chilli farmer with his harvest in the Dry Zone. Photo: Myo Zin Htut

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

is based on the belief that the causes of poverty can be challenged and that change can and will happen; that a human rights based approach to sustainable, community-led development and strong youth and women leadership can be powerful drivers of change; and that all changes have to be led and facilitated by the people of Myanmar with support from the international community. All ActionAid's programmes are guided by this theory of change and further employ a range of innovative, context specific methodologies.

THE FELLOWS

are at the heart of all our work. They are young, energetic people with leadership potential elected by their own community. Through the Fellowship Programme ActionAid equips them with the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to stimulate participatory, community-led development. They act as change-makers in their villages, serve as direct links between ActionAid and remote communities, and engage with local authorities to facilitate sustainable local development and access to rights and justice.

THE VILLAGE BOOK

is facilitated by the Fellows in their communities by employing various participatory rural appraisal tools. The villagers collect vital demographic data about their own village, which is otherwise hard to find in Myanmar; analyse their situation using visual tools such as problem trees, seasonal calendars, dream maps and cobweb diagrams; and prioritise their own context specific action plan. The Fellows compile all this in one comprehensive Village Book, which serves as a reference document in the following implementation process. Meanwhile, ActionAid uses the village books as baseline documents and the long-term vision is for the village book to be adopted into national level planning.

ACTIONAID

is an international organisation, working with over 15 million people in 45 countries for a world free from poverty and injustice.

We have been working in Myanmar since 2006. Today we have an MoU with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Relief and Resettlement and the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation as well as Ministry of Fisheries, Livestock. We are registered as an INGO with the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In partnership with local and international organisations, we work with the most vulnerable people in remote rural areas. Along with our community-led, self-reliance work, we are actively involved with policy making at the national level.





**2014 THEME:
PARTNERSHIPS**

ABOVE: In partnership with private sector insurance provider Prudence Foundation and the government ActionAid was involved in organising the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction in Nay Pyi Daw. The event was attended by the Vice President and ministers. We also distributed awareness raising publications at national, state and regional level funded by Prudence Foundation

2014 THEME

PARTNERS IN CHANGE

Imagine if all rural communities in Myanmar had the opportunity to develop their own Village Book. This is one of the aspirations that drives us to prioritise strong partnerships

No organisation could institutionalise the Village Book process in all villages of the country without involving a much larger movement of grassroots as well as government. That is why we dedicated much of 2014 to initiate new partnerships and strengthen existing ones.

Former fellows established more than 10 community based organisations in different parts of the country, seeking partnership with ActionAid to facilitate the Village Book process in an ever expanding number of villages. These organisations are crucial for our outreach. Established by youths who are born and brought up in the poor rural

communities we work with they have an intimate knowledge of problems and potential solutions and the dedication to drive development against all odds.

The government is of equal importance. We advocate that the government adopt the Village Book process as a tool in the implementation of the National Comprehensive Development Plan. In 2014 state and regional governments of Kayin, Ayeyarwaddy, Kayah, Magway and Sagaing carried out their own pilot projects replicating the Village Book process, and the Union Government expressed interest in possibly piloting the same at national level.



CASE: FELLOWS' ORGANISATIONS

**“WE COULD NOT STOP.
PEOPLE COUNTED ON US”**

Former Fellows across the country have established their own organisations to continue their work as ActionAid’s implementing partners. They are of invaluable importance to our operations, and evidence of the long-term sustainability of the Fellowship Programme



ABOVE:
Members of the Meiktila Fellows' Organisation standing in front of the local ActionAid office, which they use for most of their meetings as well as social gatherings

In 2009 the Fellows in Rambree Township, Rakhine State, learned that their placements were coming to an end. The leader of ActionAid's local partner organisation suffered from severe health problems and had decided to terminate all activities in Rambree.

»We were all deeply upset and agreed that we could not stop now. The people who had welcomed us in their villages

and supported our work had too many expectations now, they counted on us. We had already seen how much we could achieve even with very less money, such as providing clean water in a village. And on a personal level we had become a very united group, none of us could imagine losing that. So we signed a document promising one another that we would never give up,« said former Rambree Fellow Ko Tin Htun.

This turned out to be a difficult promise to keep. The Fellow's stipend had hardly been enough to make a living, and now they did not even receive that.

»We all took up part time jobs and I sold two acres of land to continue our work. It was a painful time. Too often we felt stressed out and sad, but found consolation in each other,« he said.

The following year ActionAid helped the Fellows establish their own organisation – the Rambree Township Development Organisation – which went on to become ActionAid's implementing partner. Ko Tin Htun was elected the president of the new organisation. When the Fellowship Programme was phased out in Kayah State in 2011 the Fellows here followed suit and established the Local Development Network, which is also an ActionAid implementing partner today.

»In Kayah all the other NGOs were religious. We wanted to form an organisation that had no religious affiliations,« said Ko Li Reh Angelo, who was elected president of the organisation.

The success of these two organisations inspired other Fellows. In 2014 more than 10 such organisations were formed in different parts of the country.

“When ActionAid one day phases out in Meiktila, we want to be ready,” said Ko Khin Maung San, a member of the Meiktila Fellows' Organisation.

At first the Meiktila Fellows' Organisation set up a simple programme focussed on supporting vulnerable children in remote

rural villages. They funded the activities by collecting 1,000 Kyat (approximately 1 USD) per month per member. But with technical support and trainings from ActionAid the organisation soon expanded their work significantly.

“Now we address important issues ranging from climate change to public services and deliver trainings not only to local youths but also government officials. Organisational development and capacity for proper reporting and financial management are essential for quality implementation. We are learning all that from ActionAid and becoming systematic and accountable,” said Ko Khin Maung San.

The Meiktila Fellows' Organisation not only supports the implementation of ActionAid programmes, but also collaborates with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to conduct awareness raising activities about the recent census.

“We could not have worked with the UNFPA when we were just Fellows. Now we have systems, roles and responsibilities, we are accountable – as Fellows we were too disorganised,” said Ko Khin Maung San.

In efforts to increase the capacity of civil society organisations to use the census results, UNFPA sent out a call for proposals to local organisations, which would receive a training of trainers and replicate this at local level.

“The Fellows were selected as grantees based on their grassroots knowledge, networks with local communities and



capacity to communicate and build awareness in ways most relevant to the local context,” said Petra Righetti, UNFPA Census Donor Coordinator.

Despite the lack of registration and lack of demonstrated capacity to conduct sound monitoring and financial reporting, UNFPA was able to collaborate with the Fellows thanks to the involvement of ActionAid as a guarantor.



“Based on monitored activities to date, the Fellows have demonstrated capacity in addressing communities in ways that are most relevant to them, by contextualising the census to the needs and interests of the community. They have been able to reach out to volunteer groups, youth groups, women groups and other community organisers, targeting areas that UNFPA would otherwise not have been able to reach,” said Heli Leskela, UNFPA Program Analyst, Census.

In interviews with some of the Fellows they reported that the experience of working with a UN agency, conducting these types of training activities, has helped them build their organisational capacity, bringing more focus on reporting, checking budgets and recording expenses. One of the Fellows stated that they feel confident now to apply for registration with the local administration.



“Overall, this arrangement between UNFPA, ActionAid and the Fellows proved to be an effective modality of cooperation to reach remote areas and build capacity at all levels,” said Petra Righetti.

LEFT: Members of the Rambree Township Development Organisation; Ko Li Reh Angelo from the Local Development Network
RIGHT: Members of the Meiktila Fellows’ Organisation



“ The Village Book is a really helpful and effective way to record the history, the current situation, and the needs in any village. But the analysis part is hard work — we had to push people to finish it, even though they were graduates. Other villages might not have people who can do it, but we could help them

CASE: STATE GOVERNMENT

“THE VILLAGE BOOK IS REALLY HELPFUL”

After several years of ActionAid engagement and advocacy in Kayin State the government began piloting the Village Book process in 2014

LEFT: A farmer working his paddy field near Hpa An, the capital of Kayin State; ActionAid Programme Coordinator Ma Khin Thandar Myint shows the Chief Minister a sample Village Book; U Zaw Min, Chief Minister of Kayin State, with ActionAid Country Director Shihab Uddin Ahamad and Governance Advisor Sital Kumar

Kayin is an ethnic state located in eastern Myanmar on the border of Thailand. For more than half a century after independence the state was marred by armed conflicts between the army and various ethnic armed groups, primarily the Karen National Union. Villages across the state paid a particularly high price; apart from widespread violence, disappearances and displacements, people had few income opportunities and received next to no public services under former military regimes.

ActionAid has been working with local partner organisations in Kayin State since January 2011, implementing a comprehensive programme in 31 villages to address good governance as well as health, education, water supply, livelihood opportunities and other pressing issues. Our partner organisation, Norwegian Refugee

Council, worked in another 30 villages simultaneously.

However, it was a challenge to build trust with the local government, as it had not had a tradition of collaborating with NGOs. Delivering emergency relief during a massive flood in 2013 provided the first opportunity to meet with Chief Minister U Zaw Min in person, when he attended a donation ceremony.

“As soon as we had the chance we presented our vision, mission and methodologies to U Zaw Min. He immediately requested us to organise a training for government officials on bottom-up planning processes,” said Ma Khin Thandar Myint, programme coordinator with ActionAid Myanmar.

The officials liked what ActionAid had to say and decided that the government should pilot the Village Book process in



15 villages. Further, they committed to provide the necessary budget to address the priorities of these villages

The pilot project started in January 2014 and all village books were completed by May. Since then the Department of Rural Development has initiated similar processes in another 40 villages and cooperates with the State Government to compile priorities of all villages into one master plan. ActionAid provided technical support to the government and the long-term goal is to implement the Village Book process in all villages in Kayin State.

“U Zaw Min is really actively involved and encourages all government officials to participate,” said Ma Khin Thandar Myint.

The Chief Minister said that he strives to institutionalise inclusive bottom-up development in Kayin State.

“We are drawing on the village development plans of the Village Book in order to support the National Comprehensive Development Plan implemented by the Union Government. To be bottom-up means that all villagers participate in the process of village development. Before drawing the plan youths in the village conduct trainings to support the process. The action plans are a result of village needs prioritised by the villagers,” said U Zaw Min.

U Zay Wunna Hlaing has been the Township Administrator of the Hlaing Bwe General Administration Department since April 2014, and has extensive experience from previous postings across the country.

“A lot of change is happening these years. The union government allocated 20,000 Lakh to the state budget for rural development and poverty alleviation this year, last year it was only half of that. We also have constituency funds worth

1,000 Lakh in Hlaing Bwe Township alone,” he said.

Inspired by ActionAid the Hlaing Bwe Township has developed two village books in cooperation with the state government.

“The Village Book is a really helpful and effective way to record the history, the current situation, and the needs in any village. But the analysis part is hard work — we had to push people to finish it, even though they were graduates. Other villages might not have people who can do it, but we could help them,” he said.

U Thaug Shwe has been the Leader of Kwan Tar Village Tract, Hlaing Bwe Township, since 2012. There are 10 villages in Kwan Tar Village Tract but only two of them are target villages of the ActionAid programme.

“Last year I was asked to send volunteers from two of the other villages to Hpa An to attend a training. This was organised by the Chief Minister who was inspired by ActionAid’s Village Book concept. When they returned they started to develop their own Village Books,” he said.

U Thaug Shwe called for a Village Tract meeting to encourage other villages to make their own Village Books as well.

“I compiled the priorities of the Village Books that we had with the most obvious needs of other villages. Four months ago we sent copies of this to the Rural Development Department and our local Member of Parliament. Last week we received 20 Lakh from the local constituency fund to build a bridge,” he said.

The state and regional governments of Ayeyarwaddy, Kayah, Magway and Sagaing are also piloting their own Village Book processes in cooperation with ActionAid.

LEFT: U Thaug Shwe, Village Tract Leader of Kwan Tar since 2012

BELOW: Scan this QR code to watch *The Dream We Are In*, an ActionAid documentary film about Kayin State



TESTIMONIES: STRATEGIC PARTNERS

SHARING OUR STRENGTHS

Apart from our direct partnerships we have engaged in a number of strategic collaborations with other like-minded organisations and networks: from hosting their secretariats in our country office to encouraging our Fellows to contribute to their field research. Below testimonies give brief highlights of such strategic collaboration in 2014

THE GENDER EQUALITY NETWORK



In 2014 ActionAid continued supporting and advocating for the implementation of the *National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW)*; supporting the Department of Social Welfare to draft Myanmar's first complete *Prevention of Violence Against Women Law*; organising a Women's Leadership training of trainers program around Myanmar; completing two major research projects (a qualitative research study on violence against women *Behind the Silence: Violence Against Women and their Resilience Myanmar* and an analysis of gender-based social practices and cultural norms); and establishing the Gender and



Environment Working Group. ActionAid also provides GEN with generous office space, and administrative and financial support. The strategic, financial and practical support that ActionAid provides to GEN is valued highly by the Network and its members. The work, activities, and achievements in 2014 are the result of the collective efforts of all the network members including ActionAid Myanmar

The Gender Equality Network is a growing inter-agency network that now comprises 105 national and international NGOs, CBOs, UN agencies, civil society networks and technical resource persons.

THE SOCIAL POLICY & POVERTY RESEARCH GROUP



As part of the DipECHO consortium, ActionAid Fellows in the Delta were trained in qualitative research methods to undertake research on participation of women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in village activities, including Disaster Risk Reduction. The resulting publication *Seen but not heard* vividly demonstrated the extent to which people with disabilities are excluded from village meetings, and exposed the numerous barriers to their participation. The

research has been widely applied within the programme.

The Social Policy & Poverty Research Group is a consortium of ActionAid, HelpAge, the Leprosy Mission, and the Myanmar Department of Social Welfare, aiming to build research capacity amongst government and non-government stakeholders to enable effective, evidence based policy for social protection, livelihoods and poverty reduction.



BBC MEDIA ACTION



BBC Media Action has expanded our work with ActionAid this year by partnering with Fellows in a project on peace building. Using the innovative and successful model of radio listener groups already launched with the youth radio show *LLKS* (Lin Lyei Kyei Sin) – we have started up 16 new groups in the Dry Zone who are listening to the weekly radio drama *The Tea Cup Diaries* (La Pe' Ye Ta Kwe Ye Diari). The drama was launched in May 2015 and will be broadcast as a 26 week series on the state media Myanma Radio. It aims to increase understanding, openness and respect for people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in Myanmar and support social inclusion. Set in a Yangon teashop the show portrays the lives of diverse characters and experiences, both touching and funny. It offers listeners a rich mix of speech, sound, and music, and performed in conversational Burmese by experienced and emerging actors, matched to the characters they are playing in terms of background, religion and ethnicity. The stories in the drama are entirely fictional, but they are inspired by personal testimonial and wide-ranging research.

The Listener Groups will provide a vital role in promoting discussion of issues related to ethnicity, religion, identity and community amongst rural audiences. The Groups have up to 20 people that meet together each week to listen to the show and discuss the emerging themes, characters and events. Action Aid

facilitators joined BBC Media Action in a two day training in May 2015, where they were introduced to the radio program, actors and production team and were trained to facilitate discussion of issues arising in the drama and the links it has to people's daily life. Listener Groups can offer valuable input into the script which is then fed back into the production team each week – giving us direct links to listeners to ensure the radio drama remains relevant and interesting. We also hope that the program will bring greater discussion and openness into the communities where listener groups are held, and help to create more tolerance and understanding between diverse ethnic and religious groups across the country. The show is available online as podcast and can be downloaded on a mobile phone, tablet or computer from www.theteacupdaire.com

BBC Media Action also currently has 86 listener groups linked with our youth radio show, *Lin Lyei Kyei Sin*. All ActionAid Fellow facilitators provide feedback for the show each week and receive training in mobile reporting / journalism which allow them to share their stories with other communities, organisations and the country. You can listen to LLKS here. www.soundcloud.com/llksradio

BBC Media Action is BBC's international development charity, using media to improve health and help people understand their rights.





OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES 2012 – 2017



LIVELIHOODS AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

OBJECTIVE: To promote sustainable income through improved access to and control over natural resource and capital, alternative livelihood practices, and build community resilience to withstand disasters.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

OBJECTIVE: To promote women's active leadership and the policies, practices and mechanisms that enable women to live free of fear and violence and to be economically independent.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION

OBJECTIVE: To encourage and support young people to become change-makers, driving peace, democracy and development in Myanmar, and to ensure that all children in the Local Rights Programme target villages have access to quality primary education.

GOVERNANCE

OBJECTIVE: To support the reform process for just and democratic governance in Myanmar, strengthening democratic institutions and promoting active citizenship.

PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

GOING DEEPER AND WIDER

In 2014 we strived to strike a balance between ensuring the deepest potential impact in each community we work with while widening the scope of our work to encompass as many communities as possible

Our work was centred around four distinct programme priorities. However, all our activities were closely inter-linked.

Our Livelihoods activities are centred around Women's Self Help Groups. In 2014 we provided funds and trainings on saving and loans, sustainable agriculture, fisheries and livestock, as well as small scale entrepreneurship for youths. We believe that increased income leads to better education, which provides the foundation for active citizenship and accountable governance.

Since Myanmar is a highly disaster prone country, we support vulnerable communities build their resilience and implement disaster preparedness plans to protect their lives and livelihoods. Rural women are also taking lead in much of this work. To ensure maximum impact, we engage with the government to support their national emergency policies and plans. In 2014 we assumed leadership for the second consecutive 18-month cycle of one of the leading Disaster Risk Reduction consortia in Myanmar, funded by the European Union's DIPECHO programme.

Our Governance activities are focused on linking remote rural communities with local government to ensure community-led, bottom-up planning, public service delivery and access to justice. In 2014 we saw concrete results in the communities we work with, where government budgets were allocated for new infrastructure; our advocacy efforts led State and Region governments to pilot our Villge Book

10450

youths were mobilised through ActionAid platforms to take solidarity action on poverty and injustice

2063

women were mobilised to challenge violence and harmful traditional practices

2061

women participated in organised income generation activities

75

villages were able to identify risks and explain and demonstrate resilient building plans

The logo for ActionAid, featuring the word "actionaid" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The "i" in "action" and the "i" in "aid" are red, while the rest of the letters are black. The logo is positioned at the top left of a white banner.

actionaid

Budget Consultation”

UMFCCI, Officer

A man in a dark suit and white shirt is standing at a wooden podium, speaking into a microphone. He is looking down at the podium. The podium is in the foreground, and the man is in the middle ground. The background is a white banner with text and logos. To the right, there is a large black camera on a tripod, partially visible. The overall scene is a formal event, likely a budget consultation.

- Our Governance activities are focused on linking remote rural communities with local government to ensure community-led, bottom-up planning, public service delivery and access to justice. In 2014 we facilitated an open and honest exchange of views between government, opposition, civil society, the private sector, academia, the media and rural communities through numerous workshops, seminars and round table discussions



PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

process; and we facilitated an open and honest exchange of views between government, opposition, civil society, the private sector, academia, the media and rural communities through numerous workshops, seminars and round table discussions.

Our Women's Rights activities are centred around promoting leadership and economic empowerment while preventing discrimination and violence against women. In 2014 we encouraged women to take charge and speak up – in the communities we work with as well as in our own office; we supported paralegals and male role models on taking an active role in preventing violence against women and seeking justice for survivors of violence; and we improved the capacity of Women's Self Help Groups to build economic self-reliance. Meanwhile our policy advocacy efforts were met by concerned and receptive government officials.

Our Youth & Education activities are at the heart of our programme: The Fellows, mostly young women, facilitate our work in the communities. In 2014 we supported former Fellows in establishing their own organisations and become ActionAid implementing partners. Our Global Platform Youth Training centre trained hundreds of youth in campaigning, governance and citizen journalism; we facilitated local youth to open and manage two new Youth Resource Centres adding to our existing three, and current Fellows were supported in creating Village Facebook pages to provide open data, attract further attention and support for pressing issues in their communities.

ABOVE: The key note speaker during our Budget Consultation, which allowed a wide range of stakeholders the opportunity to discuss the national budget

20%

of men in the communities we work with could explain unjust and inequitable gender norms with examples

679

women reported increased awareness of rights and entitlements to land and natural resources

1128

farmers practised Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture after receiving training on this

63

local governments took steps to increase accountability to their communities



THIS PAGE: Two years ago, the Inn Yaung dam was still under construction and the surrounding land was dry and dusty from severe lack of rain



It is good luck to have this dam. Now when it rains, the area becomes so green and full of life

**PROGRAMME
PRIORITIES**

CASE: LIVELIHOODS

WATER IN THE DRY ZONE

Since 2012, ActionAid has worked with the villagers in Myaing Township to build a dam and an irrigation system to serve the local community. In 2014 the project proved to be a catalyst for growth, and embodies our approach to community-based development

It is a rare sight during the height of summer in the drought-afflicted dry zone: a large pool of water fills a wide depression in the land, surrounded on all sides by green vegetation. Daw Mya Shwe, a local farmer and member of her village mother's advisory committee, points at the rows of short, leafy plants lining the water's edge.

"These are chickpeas, grown by the advisory mother's group. We plan to use the profits from this plot of chickpeas to support vulnerable families in the villages," she says.

The chickpeas are one example of how the dam has already begun improving local agriculture, specifically summer crops. During the wet season the dam rises, and in the dry season it recedes, leaving moist, fertile soil. Thanks to the work of Daw Mya Shwe and the advisory mother's group, the proceeds from crops grown around the dam will serve the community as a whole.

The advisory mother's group is the revival of a longstanding tradition of dry zone village governance that fell out of favour during the years of military rule. Since the 28-woman group was formed

at the start of the dam project, they have played an instrumental role in the construction, and in natural resource management now that the dam is complete.

Down in the water lies something quite new to the area—fish. Last year, the community worked with ActionAid to introduce 20,000 live fish to the dam pool, with the goal of potentially providing an alternative livelihood to landless families.

"For now, the fish are still small," says Daw Mya Shwe. "They'll need a chance to grow."

Daw Mya Shwe looks back at the dam and smiles at a group of children playing in the water.

"It is good luck to have this dam. Now when it rains, the area becomes so green and full of life. It is good to have a place where the children can come play, and where all of the animals can come and drink."

She brings up a good point— so far, the dam's biggest effect has been on livestock. U Aung Win, a farmer and



THIS PAGE: Today the Inn Yaung dam is completed, and local farmers are using the water for both irrigation and livestock



200,000,000

Kyat (approximately 200,000 USD) were allocated from the local government budgets in 2014 to complete the Inn Yaung dam in Magway Region

goat herder from Inn Yaung village, says that: “before the dam was built, the only water available for our livestock was about a mile away, so raising livestock could never be a big business. Now with a source of water so close, we’ve significantly increased the amount of goat livestock in our village. Before the dam, families with livestock owned about 20 goats on average. Now the average is 60.”

On top of that, families whose livelihoods previously depended solely on agriculture are beginning to invest in livestock as well. U Aung Win says that in the neighbouring village, at least four families have begun raising goats to support their incomes.

“Livestock is a good way to supplement our income from farming,” U Aung Win says. He himself owns forty goats, and is considering owning more.

In 2014, ActionAid’s work with the community attracted the attention of regional level authorities, who elected to contribute a budget of 200,000,000 Kyat (approximately 200,000 USD), along with heavy machinery and a team of mechanical engineers, to help further the dam project. The dam’s water storage capacity now amounts to 500 cubic acres, which could serve to irrigate 500 acres of paddy fields in future years,

along with additional acreage for winter crops like sunflowers, sesame and chickpeas. In order to achieve increased crop yields, the community is currently working with local government to build an expanded system of irrigation canals to connect the dam water to a wider network of farms. Challenges remain— one in particular is water management. The new dam and irrigation systems pose new issues of governance: where should the water go? Who should allocate it?

“This is a point that ActionAid understands, and it is an area in which our focus on governance and commitment to long-term presence in the community comes into play” says U Aung Min Naing, ActionAid Myanmar’s Dry Zone Regional Manager.

The next step, says U Aung Min Naing, will be to work with the community and local government to establish effective, equitable water management policies.

“What comes next will require continuous engagement, to ensure inclusiveness to the poorest and most vulnerable members of the community,” he says. “We are ready for that, and we will be here to ensure that the benefits from this project are fully realised and the poor and marginalised gain control over the natural resources.”



THIS PAGE:
Evacuation during
a simulation
exercise; four
committee
members meeting;
children on a
new bridge to the
village cyclone
shelter; May Thu
Win





Before, we didn't know anything about disasters ...
...I'm now part of the early warning task force

**PROGRAMME
PRIORITIES**

CASE: DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

EXPANDING RESILIENCE

ActionAid has been a leading Disaster Risk Reduction agency in Myanmar since 2009. During 2014 we expanded our scope and reach with new programmes

In May 2008, cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar's Ayeyarwaddy Delta. It was the most devastating and deadly natural disaster in the country's recorded history. Not only due to the high intensity of winds and storm surges but also because the government and the population was utterly unprepared.

"Our village was destroyed. All but five of the houses collapsed," said May Thu Win, an ActionAid volunteer from Kyon Kan village.

"There was no early warning. Afterwards, we didn't have any food for five days."

Her village sits just metres above sea-level on the banks of the Ayeyarwady Delta, a huge stretch of land in south-central Myanmar prone to seasonal flooding and tidal surges. High winds and flooding caused by Nargis killed

nearly 140,000 people and left hundreds of thousands homeless.

The devastation brought by the cyclone was a turning point for May Thu Win's village. Six years on and things have really changed.

Since Nargis, ActionAid has been working in Pyapon with a partner organisation to lead a project helping communities prepare for disasters, along with four other aid agencies.

"Before, we didn't know anything about disasters," said May Thu Win.

"I'm now part of the early warning task force."

The task force is part of the village disaster management committee set up with support from ActionAid. Community



THIS PAGE: Scenes from various community-led small scale interventions in villages in Pyapon Township; children performing during an edutainment event on disaster risk reduction, which helped create awareness in several communities during 2014



We learnt why women are vulnerable to disasters – it's a result of social norms and because they lack confidence

members manage activities to reduce the impact of disasters and coordinate responses to emergencies.

May Thu Win has taken part in a simulation exercise to identify gaps in the village's emergency response plans. When warnings of a new cyclone – Mahasen – came in May 2013, she had an opportunity to put what she'd learnt into practice, helping people evacuate to a safe shelter before receiving news that the storm had changed course.

Taking such an active role in the community is a big change for women like May Thu Win. As part of the project, she and other women in her village took part in leadership training.

“We learnt why women are vulnerable to disasters – it's a result of social norms and because they lack confidence,” said May Thu Win.

The training gave women the skills and knowledge to be able to speak up and contribute to the decisions that were being made in their community – decisions made mostly by men.

“Women participate much more in development work now,” said May Thu Win.

It's clear that Kyon Kan village is well on its way to becoming a much better prepared village. But May Thu Win explains there is more to be done.

“We need to get more women involved, and we need to revise our emergency response plans,” said village leader, Kyaw Lin Oo.

He was keen to see more community members practice how to get the most vulnerable people in the village – including people with disabilities and the elderly – to safety.

Since 2010 ActionAid has been the lead agency of the DIPECHO project, a consortium of five I/NGO members, one UN agency member, one national partner and two local partners.

Acknowledging the massive need in Myanmar, ActionAid expanded our scope and reach in 2014, by initiating or securing funding for another three programmes on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.

All programmes focus on disaster preparedness, inclusion of the most vulnerable people and building long-term resilience through sustainable livelihoods.



THIS PAGE: Nwe Nwe Hlaing and her sister, Zin Zin Naing are happy studying under fluorescent light; earlier the two girls would do their homework by candle light at night. Nwe Nwe Hlaing said: “We didn’t want to study at night because we couldn’t see the lessons well and the candle light made us sleepy”; the girls now spend their free time watching TV; now their mother, Thin Thin Hlaing, can keep her small grocery shop open after sunset; and Khin Maung Swe can continue to punch iron plates which are used in farming machines



Now we can watch TV, which provides us with information and connects us to our country and the rest of the world. Our children can study and people have proper work conditions in the evenings

**PROGRAMME
PRIORITIES**

CASE: GOVERNANCE

TURNING ON THE LIGHT IN REMOTE RURAL VILLAGES

Life was transformed when a total of 951 people in Kan Seik and Ngu Taw villages were connected to the national electricity grid in October 2014

“Now we can watch TV, which provides us with information and connects us to our country and the rest of the world. Our children can study and people have proper work conditions in the evenings,” said U Kyaw Myint Oo, Chair Person of Zing Baung Village Tract.

Even though Myanmar exports energy to neighbouring countries, the vast majority of villages are still left in the dark. Years of ActionAid’s engagement in Pyapon Township have, however, enabled the villagers of Kan Seik to penetrate the bureaucracy and become connected to

the national electricity grid. In October 2014 the government provided the needed transformer as well as one-fourth of the additional cost.

Thin Thin Hlaing, 35, is the assistant mid-wife and owner of a small grocery shop in Kan Seik village. Her family of four appreciate how electricity have enabled them to do everything from ironing to cooking a lot faster; that they can watch TV and recharge their mobile phone at home.

“I can look after my daughters more than





I am so pleased that we can now expand our business. Before we were only selling groceries. Since we now have electricity, I can make hot water and sell coffee and tea at the shop as well. My husband and I are thinking about how to expand our business even more

before as the electricity saves time in my daily household chores,” said Thin Thin Hlaing.

But most importantly it gives new opportunities for the family’s livelihood and studies.

“I am so pleased that we can now expand our business. Before we were only selling groceries. Since we now have electricity, I can make hot water and sell coffee and tea at the shop as well. My husband and I are thinking about how to expand our business even more,” said Thin Thin Hlaing.

Her daughters love watching TV in their free time, but even homework has become a lot more enjoyable activity.

“We didn’t want to study at night because we couldn’t see the lessons well and the candle light made us sleepy,” said Nwe Nwe Hlaing, 13.

Electricity was identified as a high priority during the Village Book process in the two villages.

“This is the first time these people

received direct financial support from their government, which they can prioritise and manage at community level,” said Sital Kumar, Governance Advisor to ActionAid Myanmar.

Around the same time four other villages in Pyapon Township received local government grants to establish better access to water, information and transportation – their respective Village Book priorities.

Several other villages in the township were promised support as soon as the local government budgets and infrastructure allows.

In other townships across the country similar results have been brought about by the Village Book process combined with active engagement with the government.

“Five states and regions started bottom-up planning in 2014: Ayeyarwaddy, Kayin, Kayah, Magway and Sagaing, which I regard as another huge success since our end goal is to institutionalise the Village Book all across Myanmar,” said Sital Kumar.

LEFT: Villagers from Kan Seik village are standing proudly in front of their transformer



“ I believe that the perpetrator will be convicted, not least thanks to the support from ActionAid and Legal Clinic Myanmar, which was very effective. There were already pending cases against him under the prostitution law, but now we charge him for human trafficking, which is a much more comprehensive law

CASE: WOMEN'S RIGHTS

LEGAL AID IN HIGH DEMAND

The Anti-Trafficking in Person Task Force requested support from ActionAid on a rescue and rehabilitation case in 2014, which proved the individual strengths of each agency involved as well as the benefit of cooperating

In September 2014 the Anti-Trafficking in Person Task Force received a desperate call through their hotline number.

“A 20 year old woman from Yangon had been promised a job in Meiktila, but when she arrived she was forced into prostitution. The main perpetrator and his son both beat and raped her too,” said police captain U Myo Lwin of the Anti-Trafficking in Person Task Force, Meiktila Township.

U Myo Lwin called in support from the regular police as well as the Township authorities and went to rescue the woman immediately. While the

perpetrator managed to escape, they caught his son at the scene and later tracked down and arrested everyone involved.

The Anti-Trafficking in Person Task Force was established in 2007, and the Meiktila branch has handled 25 cases over the years. Most often Myanmar women are trafficked out of the country, for labour and sexual exploitation and even marriage.

In this particular case, the woman was an orphan who lived with her grandmother and older siblings in Yangon. The family was poor and she

LEFT: Police Captain U Myo Lwin from the Anti-Trafficking in Person Task Force, Meiktila Township



“ When we met her first time she seemed depressed. We told her she had nothing to be ashamed about. During the legal proceedings we represented her and accompanied her every time she had to meet in court. At one point the perpetrator threatened her when they met in court and said that she should be the one prosecuted, for prostitution. She was very scared, but we told her that she had nothing to fear

had few income opportunities – an easy target for the broker, who sent her to Meiktila.

“She was scared and injured, so we called in the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation for extra support,” said U Myo Lwin.

The Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation provided the woman with a safe place to stay during the investigation and subsequent court proceedings. They also recommended the Anti-Trafficking in Person Task Force take contact to ActionAid.

“We had been cooperating with ActionAid on awareness raising activities for three years, and knew that they could offer psychosocial support and, more importantly, legal aid,” said Daw Tin Tin Myint, a member of the Executive Committee of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation in Meiktila.

The very next day ActionAid received a request for support from the Anti-Trafficking in Person Task Force. Two female staff members from the Meiktila office immediately went to meet the woman in the police station.

“First the police captain briefed us about the case. Then we met with the woman in private, with no police officers present. At first she felt ashamed to talk about her injuries and the sexual violence, but we encouraged her to not feel shame or fear. When we left she seemed to be better already,” said Mya Thet Nwe, then the Programme Officer in Charge at the ActionAid office in Meiktila.

After the meeting Mya Thet Nwe

contacted the Meiktila branch of local partner organisation Legal Clinic Myanmar, who could provide legal aid to the woman.

“When we met her first time she seemed depressed. We told her she had nothing to be ashamed about. During the legal proceedings we represented her and accompanied her every time she had to meet in court,” said Daw Khin Myat Lin, a lawyer from the Legal Clinic in Meiktila.

The woman was offered vocational training or any other support she needed, but once her presence was no longer required in court all she wanted was to leave. Meanwhile the Legal Clinic Myanmar stayed on the case.

“If she had not received legal aid, I am not sure whether she would have even filed a case. The perpetrator had hired a very great lawyer, and tried to bribe the woman to avoid a court case. She was very afraid, but the Legal Clinic Myanmar and the police encouraged her stay strong. If the perpetrator went free, other girls would end up in the same situation,” said Mya Thet Nwe.

It is expected that the main perpetrator will be sentenced to at least 10 years imprisonment – the minimum punishment for human trafficking.

“I believe that the perpetrator will be convicted, not least thanks to the support from ActionAid and Legal Clinic Myanmar, which was very effective. There were already pending cases against him under the prostitution law, but now we charge him for human trafficking, which is a much more comprehensive law,” said U Myo Lwin.

LEFT: Daw Khin Myat Lin and Daw Nyunt Nyunt Wai, from the Legal Clinic in Meiktila; Daw Tin Tin Myint, a member of the Executive Committee of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation in Meiktila



All participants came up with their own ideas for activities, we only coordinated the celebrations. I feel proud that so many youths participated and showed solidarity. We are becoming a strong, confident and experienced network



CASE: YOUTH & EDUCATION

“WE ARE BECOMING A STRONG, CONFIDENT AND EXPERIENCED NETWORK”

Activistas, along with fellows and other youth networks, managed to mobilise 10,000 youths to celebrate World Environment Day 2014 – quite an achievement in a country where public gatherings of more than five people was illegal until recently

In 2010 Ma Ei Mo Ko became an intern with ActionAid, and after half a year she had the opportunity to attend a six months long Activista training in Nepal.

“I did not know anything about Activista before. In Nepal I learned everything about campaigning and activism and when I returned to Yangon and joined Activista,” said Ma Ei Mo Ko.

The Activista network is made up of urban and rural youth activists from various organisations, social movements and of course Fellows. They have all participated in trainings on campaign and leadership through the Global Platform, an ActionAid youth space and

training centre that plays a significant role in the delivery of ActionAid’s country strategy.

Since 2010, 350 youth activists in Myanmar have received training and joined the Activista network, which already covers a large part of the country, and aims to become active in all states and regions within the next four years.

The main purpose of the Activista movement is to mobilise youth in Myanmar to create active platforms in their communities and address social challenges at regional and national level. After her return to Myanmar Ma Ei

LEFT: Ma Ei Mo Ko, programme officer, youth engagement; participants picking garbage to celebrate World Environment Day 2014





When I was a child, I was ashamed to pick up rubbish on the streets, but these activities made me happy and satisfied. When the elder people from the community prayed and showed appreciation, it made me proud and this was an unforgettable life experience

Mo Ko was involved in several mini-campaigns, but all activities had to be very low profile.

“Compared to that time, the situation is a lot more open today,” said Ma Ei Mo Ko, who has since become a permanent staff member in the ActionAid Youth Team.

The celebration of World Environment Day is an indicator of the growing space for and achievements of the Activista network.

In 2012 the Activista network mobilised 2,000 youths in 16 locations across Myanmar who planted 1,000 trees; the following year 5,000 youths in 57 locations planted 5,000 trees; and in 2014 more than 10,000 youths from 155 locations planted 6,000 trees.

The activities before, during and after the celebrations included planting trees, collecting garbage and creating awareness through talks, pamphlets, and competitions.

“All participants came up with their own ideas for activities, we only coordinated the celebrations. I feel proud that so many youths participated and showed solidarity. We are becoming a strong, confident and experienced network” she said.

The youths were excited and proud to

participate and show solidarity.

“We, the Burma Study Centre, have grown 150 trees, shared information about environmental issues, and distributed environment pamphlets in villages around Hsipaw. 17 young people joined in our activities. The villagers are very happy that we plant the trees for them. I believed this activity will be the seed from the villages to know the value of trees and gain environment knowledge,” said one participant named Thum Ai.

“When I was a child, I was ashamed to pick up rubbish on the streets, but these activities made me happy and satisfied. When the elder people from the community prayed and showed appreciation, it made me proud and this was an unforgettable life experience,” said another youth who participated in the event.

Activista’s future objective is to take action and influence policies related to migration, environment and other important issues.

“Most young people in rural areas migrate to urban areas or abroad in search of job opportunities. I did the same myself. I don’t want to stop that, you can’t, but I would like to help them be better prepared, so they can control their own situation and avoid being taken advantage of,” said Ma Ei Mo Ko.

LEFT: Snapshots from various activities at different locations during the World Environment Day 2014



OUR ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES 2012 – 2017

STAFF CAPACITY

OBJECTIVE: To empower AAM staff, equipping them with knowledge and skills and creating an organisational culture which promotes the internalisation and practice of ActionAid's values, with a special focus on building women's leadership.



RESOURCE MOBILISATION

OBJECTIVE: To mobilise adequate financial resources to fund our programme priorities from compatible funding partners.

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

OBJECTIVE: To strengthen organisational systems and processes to promote and measure our accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES

IMPROVING FROM WITHIN

Strengthening skills, confidence and knowledge of our staff – particularly women – while enhancing systems and structures to promote accountability, efficiency and effectiveness were our priorities during 2014

Being a feminist organisation we are committed to create a work environment that appeals to women, providing space to grow professionally and take leadership of the organisation. In 2014, 63 percent of our staff members were women, while 80 percent of all internal promotions were awarded to women.

Opportunities for capacity building were of high priority. An accumulated 372 staff members attended a total of 50 trainings, workshops and meetings in Myanmar and abroad to improve their understanding and skills within a wide variety of topics – from first aid to photography, from women's rights to climate change. Our Human Resource department also conducted in-house trainings for managers and supervisors on staff management.

We continued our collaboration with ActionAid Denmark's People4Change programme around placements of international advisors and inspirators, who disseminated their knowledge, skills and experience across the organisation.

ActionAid Denmark's Global Platform also continued to provide high quality training to ActionAid staff, partners, Fellows and external participants.

Through our internship programme 20

Myanmar youths had the chance to get hands-on work experience in the development sector, an important first step for their further careers.

We recruited an international advisor to deepen the culture of monitoring and evaluation within the organisation.

We acknowledged the need to strengthen our capacity for delivering trainings on the Village Book process. Earlier only a few dedicated ActionAid staff members conducted these trainings. In 2014 we created a pool of trainers among staff, partners and senior Fellows, and conducted three Training of Trainers on the Village Book process. We also completed a Village Book Manual to further enhance knowledge and skills.

Our field offices received support on improving systems for monitoring and evaluation of the Village Book process. A Fellows Diary was introduced as a simple tool to record activities and results.

At the country office we employed new strategies to compile village baselines and action plans by township and state, information that can be shared with government and policy makers and uploaded to social media for further awareness.



CASE: STAFF CAPACITY

FELLOWS TAKING CHARGE

Former Fellows took charge of three of ActionAid's five long term projects in 2014, namely in Salingyi, Pathein and Meiktila. This is in line with our philosophy of equipping local youths with skills and confidence to become leaders in the country's development process

Khin Saw Win, 27, became a Fellow in her native Kannel Village, Magway Region, in December 2010. Initially she applied for the position to avoid another risky term as a teacher in one of Myanmar's conflict areas.

"My family worried a lot for me first time I was away. It was a very remote and unsafe part of Shan State," she said.

After four years in Shan State, she worked as a community teacher in Kannel Village for one and a half years.

But since it was not a government job, she worried that there were no future for her there and began considering another conflict area posting, the only job she could realistically get with the government.

One day an announcement at the village notice board changed her plans.

"We were a handful of youth considering the Fellow position, but I was the only one who had the courage to apply. My family encouraged me a lot since they



They thought women were uneducated and would not be able to manage well. But the women exceeded all expectations

**ORGANISATIONAL
PRIORITIES**

did not want me to go back to Shan,” said Khin Saw Win.

She found the position to be more than challenging. Everything was new to her. The most difficult thing was to deal with adults — villagers as well as local government staff.

“There is no tradition for talking to the elders, youths are only supposed to listen. I immediately felt strange and not accepted. Elders are used to take lead and make decisions, so they reacted to all my suggestions by saying: not possible,” she said.

One of Khin Saw Win’s main projects as a Fellow was to facilitate the construction of a mini-dam for irrigation. Most elders deemed it ‘not possible’ from the very outset. But Khin Saw Win managed to persuade some of the more flexible-minded elders as well as local government officials. Gradually even the most negative elders got involved and when the mini-dam was finished they conceded: ‘it is possible’.

However, when Khin Saw Win involved women in the dam committee, the attitude among male elders once again was: ‘not possible’.

“They thought women were uneducated and would not be able to manage well. But the women exceeded all expectations,” she said.

Women’s empowerment is what Khin Saw Win remembers as her biggest achievement as a Fellow. Through meetings in Self Help Groups women

organised and mobilised to speak up.

“Traditionally women are also only supposed to listen, but the women in Kannet came to the front during community meetings because I, as a facilitator, asked them questions and showed appreciation of their inputs,” she said.

During Thingyan (Myanmar New Year) the women built their own stage, to have a safe place to celebrate.

“The stages are usually built away from the village, near the main road. Men get drunk and few women go there because they feel unsafe ... they want to celebrate too, but on their own terms,” she said.

The men could not believe that the women were capable of building the stage and getting the necessary permissions from the local government.

“But they did. And the officials appreciated the women’s attitude and gave them the permission straight away,” she said.

Later, when the village had issues with a malfunctioning water pump the men asked the women to approach the General Administration Department for help because of their success obtaining permissions for the Thingyan stage.

“The women brought calculations and an action plan, and their proposal was accepted by the local officials,” she said.

The most important thing Khin Saw Win learned from being a Fellow was to



ABOVE: QR code linking to the film ‘Inspiring Women’, which features Khin Saw Win
LEFT: Khin Saw Win by the Kannet village mini dam, which was still under construction in April 2013 when this photo was taken



When I meet new fellows I know their situation and I can help fill the gaps — this makes me feel happy. In turn, the Fellows feel very close to me because they know I have been a Fellow myself. They have no hesitations confiding in me

prepare well before she raises any issue.

“There are bound to be questions as well as critique, so I need to have my facts straight, choose my words and not make promises I cannot keep,” she said.

After three years as a Fellow, Khin Saw Win went on to become a field assistant with ActionAid in Magway Region for the next one and a half years.

“I continued to learn. Now I had to mobilise several different villages and participate in office processes,” she said.

In September 2014 Khin Saw Win was asked to be in charge of ActionAid’s new long term programme in Salingyi, Sagaing Region.

“I thought: ‘It is possible’. I had the necessary confidence so I accepted,” she said.

But at first she struggled.

“It was quite different from what I had done before. I was used to be surrounded by friends and colleagues. But Salingyi is far away and, it is a very sensitive situation and all responsibilities were on me. I am the representative of ActionAid so I have to deal with high officials, even the Chief Minister,” she said.

Today, Khin Saw Win does not carry all the weight on her shoulders anymore, but the responsibility still keeps her alert.

“Work is challenging but I am not alone. I have support from my colleagues and line manager. So it is not such a big burden and I manage well because of this support,” she said.

Her main responsibilities include communicating with the Yangon office, coordinating local operations and managing the office and three staff members — and dealing with local authorities.

“The most difficult thing is dealing with the demands and requests from the government — these are not always the same as our programme priorities, and it can be difficult to say no. But it is the same challenge as a Fellow — government is government. And now I have experience,” she said.

Her experience as a Fellow gives other advantages too.

“When I meet new fellows I know their situation and I can help fill the gaps — this makes me feel happy. In turn, the Fellows feel very close to me because they know I have been a Fellow myself. They have no hesitations confiding in me,” she said.

Khin Saw Win remembers her time as a Fellow as lighter and more free.

“Now I need to think about the wellbeing of staff and Fellows all the time, it is very different and I never just sit back and enjoy,” she said.

But the position is well worth the extra worries, she insists.

“What I do now is for the entire region — to meet the needs of many.”

Country Director Shihab Uddin Ahamad

says that it is a strategic decision to let the Fellows take charge of the local offices.

“The Fellows can listen to the heartbeat of the communities in a way not even the most professional development practitioner from abroad can do, no matter how professional. They understand people’s struggles and can easily translate opportunity into action. Meanwhile ActionAid contributes with technical advice and support from our more experienced staff at the country office,” he said.

BELOW: Khin Saw Win in office. Today she is in charge of ActionAid’s long term programme in Salingyi, Sagaing Region



78% of ActionAid Myanmar's income came from institutional donors in 2014

**2014 INCOME:
7.3 MILLION USD**

**2013 INCOME:
5.9 MILLION USD**

**2012 INCOME:
3.6 MILLION USD**

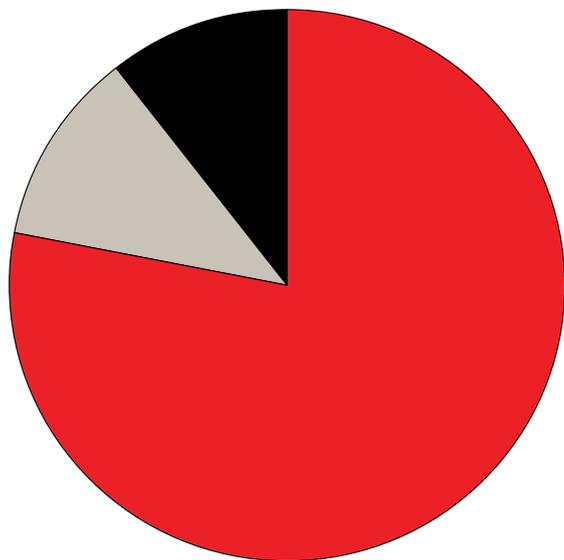
**2011 INCOME:
2.7 MILLION USD**

FINANCIAL UPDATE 2014

**GROWING
SUPPORT**

In 2014 our funding surpassed our hopes and dreams as we successfully increased our overall income by 18 percent compared to 2013. The primary reason for the increase was a number of projects funded by major institutional donors such as the European Commission (EC), the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, the Department for International Development (DFID), the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Danish International Development Cooperation Agency (DANIDA), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT). Private foundations and donors such as the English Family Foundation, the Corti Foundation, the Haremead Foundation, the Planet Wheeler Foundation, the DLA Piper Foundation, Nick Weeden, Alex Graham, Paul Dacam and others also contributed significantly – as did our ActionAid affiliates and about 3,400 regular supporters from the UK and Italy.

72% of ActionAid Myanmar's expenditures went to direct community support in 2014

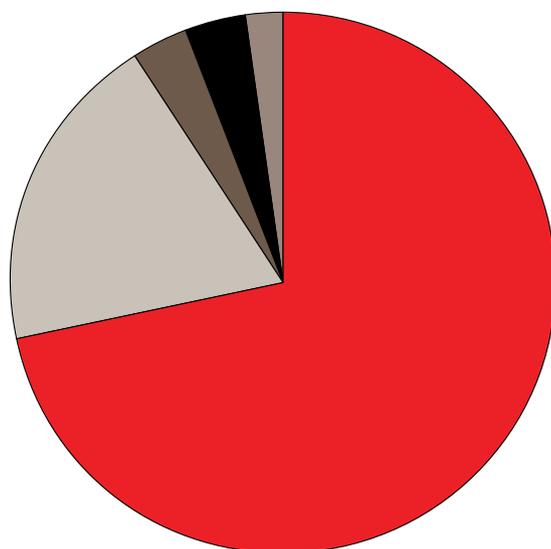


2014 INCOME

-  Regular giving = 11 %
-  Private donors = 11 %
-  Institutional donors = 78 %

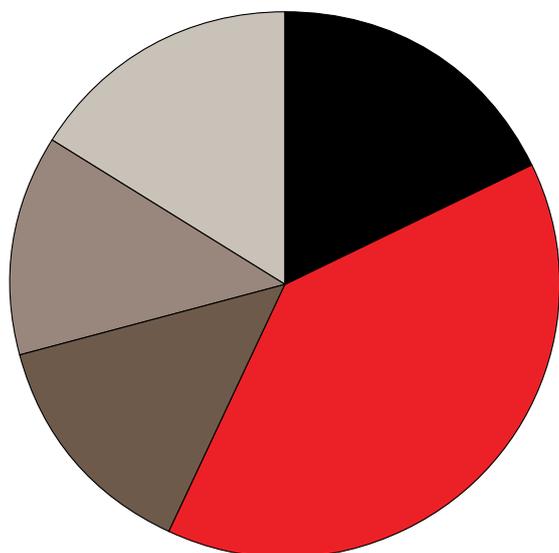
2014 EXPENSES

-  Property costs = 2 %
-  Office and service costs = 3 %
-  Travel and transportation = 3 %
-  Salaries and benefits = 19 %
-  Direct community support = 72 %



2014 EXPENSES, THEME BASED

-  Disaster risk reduction = 16 %
-  Youth & Education = 13 %
-  Livelihood = 14 %
-  Governance = 39 %
-  Women's Rights = 18 %



KACHIN STATE

Partner: Legal Clinic Myanmar, Knowledge Resource and Initiative

Outreach: 1,400 people *

SHAN STATE

Partner: None
Outreach: None

SAGAING REGION

Partner: None
Outreach: 22,400 people*

MANDALAY REGION

Partner: Legal Clinic Myanmar, Meiktila Fellows Organisation
Outreach: 21,000 people*

MAGWAY REGION

Partner: Thadar Consortium, Myaing Youth Development Organisation, Pan Pyo Latt, Lan Pya Kyal
Outreach: 243,600 people*

CHIN STATE

Partner: None
Outreach: None

RAKHINE STATE

Partner: Rambre Township Development Organisation
Outreach: 21,000 people*

AYEYARWADDY REGION

Partner: Action for Social Aid, Patheingyi Myaungmya Sgaw Kayin Baptist Association, Thadar Consortium, British Council, Myanmar Consortium For Community Resilience, Ayeeyarwaddy Fellow Organisation, Mobiliser Based Organisation
Outreach: 91,000 people*

YANGON REGION

Partner: British Council, Legal Clinic Myanmar, Labour Rights Defenders & Promoters
Outreach: 175 people*

BAGO REGION

Partner: Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-Building, Thadar Consortium
Outreach: 85,400 people*

KAYAH STATE

Partner: Local Development Network
Outreach: 14,700 people*

KAYIN STATE

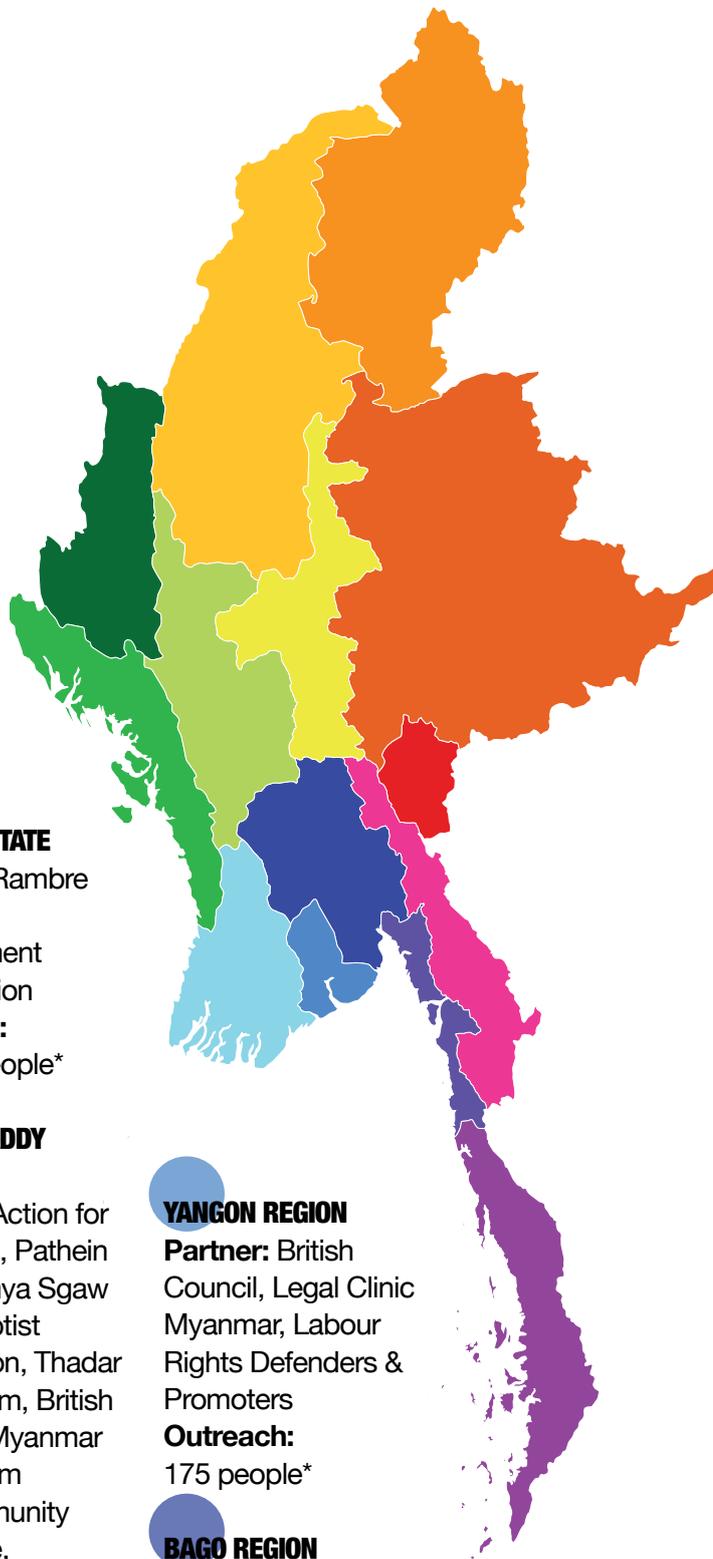
Partner: Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-Building, Norwegian Refugee Council, News Steps, Kayin State Fellows Organisation
Outreach: 52,500 people*

MON STATE

Partner: Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-Building, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
Outreach: 25,200 people*

TANINTHARYI REGION

Partner: Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-Building, British Council
Outreach: 37,100 people*



WHERE WE WORK AND WITH WHO

**these numbers are based on direct beneficiaries as well as estimations of in-direct beneficiaries*

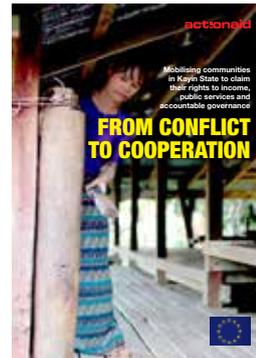
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

PUBLICATIONS, VIDEOS, AND ONLINE RESOURCES

This annual report only provides a snapshot of all the amazing activities and results of 2014. Please feel free to visit our website and Facebook page, download publications and videos or contact us for more information about particular issues of your interest



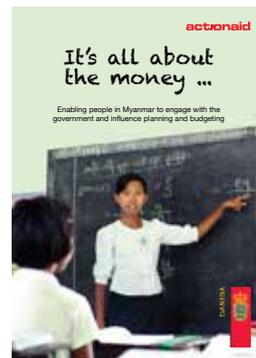
COUNTRY STRATEGY



FROM CONFLICT TO COOPERATION



ANNUAL REPORT 2013



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