



2013 National Women's Dialogue: Peace, Security & Development

2013 Annual Report

Gender Equality Network

Introduction

GEN's members have been incredibly active throughout 2013 - and with great results. Collectively, we have been able to influence and advance women's rights and gender equality at a number of levels, from community through to national levels. As a network, we have continued to grow and engage with each other - members regularly share information and resources, we have facilitated capacity building and learning amongst ourselves and others, and we have also been developing the evidence base to inform future efforts. Our involvement in law and policy development has been significant - we have provided technical support for the development of the *National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women, 2013-2022* (NSPAW), developed an inclusive drafting process for the anti-violence against women law, and we have co-organised several high profile advocacy events such as *16 Days of Activism* and the first ever civil society-initiated *National Women's Dialogue for Peace, Security and Development*.

Throughout 2013, GEN's relationship with its key government counterpart, the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR), has continued to strengthen. We value this partnership and look forward to providing ongoing support and technical assistance to implement NSPAW, in collaboration with a diverse range of civil society, government and other key stakeholders.

The sheer number of events in 2013 reflects the momentum within Myanmar's women's and gender equality movements, and demonstrates an increasing capacity to respond to topical issues and to voice our concerns, both strategically and collectively. Despite the heightened profile of women's rights and gender related activities in Myanmar, some still question the importance of these issues, and the usefulness of such activities. We know from a growing evidence base that women and men are not treated equally, that women's voices are frequently ignored, and that there are many causes for concern. We believe that during Myanmar's transition it is critical that women's views and the specific issues that women face are included in broader political agendas. The importance of looking at issues through a 'gender lens' in long-term national planning initiatives and at community level cannot be neglected.

Much of this work has been made possible through the financial resources provided by our donors - ActionAid, CARE, Oxfam, Pyoe Pin, Trocaire, USAID and all of the donors to the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) - we are very grateful for this generous and strategic support.

These achievements give us inspiration and encouragement for our future work, and we hope that you enjoy reflecting upon our collective successes in 2013. We also encourage members and others to use this information for reporting, and to inform future programming. Thank you for your ongoing efforts and contributions throughout 2013 - both individual and organisational.

Our Progress

The Gender Equality Network's Strategic Plan - a comprehensive and flexible framework - identifies a series of high level strategic objectives, their intended impacts, and the processes and activities for achieving positive change.

Goal

Myanmar is a society in which there is gender equality at all levels – where all women are empowered, can fully realize their rights, are in positions where they can effectively lead, and are treated with dignity and respect.

Overall Objective

To facilitate the development and implementation of enabling systems, structures and practices for the advancement of women, gender equality, and the realisation of women's rights in Myanmar.

Strategic Objectives

Throughout 2013, GEN's members contributed to meeting our strategic objectives as follows:

Strategic Objective 1

Laws, policies, systems, structures and practices are developed and operationalised to achieve women's rights and participation at every level

1. National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013 - 2022

The *National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013-2022* (NSPAW), developed by the MSWRR with technical support from members of GEN, was launched in Nay Pyi Taw on 3 October 2013. A total of 301 (61 M, 240 F) participants attended, including Union ministers and high level government staff, representatives from embassies, CBOs, NGOs, INGOs, UN Agencies, Parliamentarians and media. For the first time, a joint press release was organised to promote the launch of NSPAW. The launch of NSPAW, and the building of momentum regarding its implementation, provides a concrete basis for promoting and integrating gender equality and women's rights in all development efforts in Myanmar. The Myanmar Government's commitment in this regard will be further strengthened if increased numbers of civil society partners use NSPAW as a platform for integrating gender equality issues into their diverse program areas. The official launch of NSPAW has clear policy implications with respect to advancing women's rights and gender equality in Myanmar, and as the focus moves towards implementation, the lead ministry MSWRR and the



NSPAW Consultation Meeting

Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs will require ongoing support to operationalise the Plan - this assistance will be a key focus for GEN throughout 2014.

2. National Women's Dialogue: Peace, Security and Development in Myanmar

The National Women's Dialogue was organised by WON, the Civil Society Forum for Peace, GEN and Columbia University on 9-11 November 2013 in Yangon, with funding provided by USAID. The Dialogue was the first large scale nationwide event focussed on raising awareness and advocating for women's participation in Myanmar's peace process. The event included a public film screening of "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" attended by over 700 people from the general public and Nobel Peace Laureate/Women's Rights Activist, Leymah Gbowee. Over 320 (288 F, 32 M) delegates discussed the implementation of NSPAW, women's participation in public life and politics, women's security and prevention of VAW and women's roles in conflict prevention and peace building. To continue advocacy beyond the dialogue, a formal statement was produced that highlighted: the need for "zero tolerance to violence against women in all circumstances"; recognition that the participation of women in peace processes is crucial: key strategies identified by participants as essential to bringing about peace, security and development. Several groups, including members of GEN continue to take these issues forward.



Workshop Participants

Leymah Gbowee, NWD

3. Mitigating Violence Against Women: Economic Programs as a Tool of Protection

Jointly organised by WON, CSFoP, GEN and the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) a 3 day workshop on *Mitigating Violence against Women: Implementing Economic Programs as a tool of Protection* was held in November 2013. The workshop increased understanding of how to mitigate VAW by utilising human resources, money and natural resources, how to analyse the real situation women face, and how empowering women to participate in economic markets can reduce the risk of violence. The workshop involved 31 women from 22 organisations, including service provider organizations from the Kachin and Rakhine IDP camps and CBOs in Patheingyi and Yangon.



Mitigating Violence Against Women Workshop Participants

4. Women's Needs in Emergency Situations

The Women's Needs Assessment in IDP

Camps, Kachin State assessment was released by the Kachin Women Peace Network and GEN and identified specific women's needs so that humanitarian actors can better plan and respond to the needs of women affected by the conflict. The assessment findings were shared with stakeholders in Laiza, Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon, including UNOCHA and the Kachin Response Working Group. Advocacy on these issues has contributed to recent humanitarian response plans being more inclusive of women's needs.

5. Anti-Violence Against Women (AVAW) Law Reform

Substantial progress was achieved in 2013 towards the development of an AVAW law. A series of documents in both the Myanmar and English languages was published providing information about laws related to women's rights and protection, grounded in the Myanmar context and drawing upon international and regional good practices.

Consultation workshops were also carried out by member organisations with target groups in their project areas, and between January and October 2013, a total of 51 consultation workshops were held across Myanmar. The feedback was consolidated into a briefing paper and is being used to inform the drafting process. One important point that came out of the consultations is that while the law is necessary, it will need to be implemented effectively and supported by awareness raising and attitudinal change. GEN and MSWRR collaborated to hold two large consultation workshops in early 2013. The first was with Parliamentarians and the second with Government stakeholders. The workshops aimed to: raise awareness about the problem and nature of VAW and its relevance to Myanmar; provide orientation on Myanmar's current laws, their gender sensitivity and compatibility with CEDAW and the need for new legislation; international standards and frameworks for AVAW laws; and to seek inputs from the participants. Five international resource persons and regional representatives were sourced and supported by UN Women.

Based on the discussions at the workshops, three AVAW Law Committees have been formed: a Steering Committee that will oversee the process; a Law Drafting Working Group (LDWG) that

will draft the legislation; and a Technical Advisory Committee that will provide technical and specialist advice. Composition of the groups includes representatives from numerous Ministries and Government Departments, GEN and UN representatives. The LDWG has drafted Terms of Reference for the three committees, set out the scope of the law, and developed a framework that will address domestic violence in various forms, sexual violence, incest and other non-sexual forms of VAW in the community such as stalking and cyber crimes. The proposed law will also include mechanisms for punishment and redress, protective orders, and administrative and procedural changes needed to put these measures into place.



AVAW Law Workshop with Parliamentarians

6. Constitutional Reform

In December 2013 the network made a submission to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Constitutional Review Joint Committee presenting recommendations for constitutional amendments to enshrine substantive equality and guarantee women’s equality with men.

7. ASEAN Engagement

In early 2013 GEN was invited by MSWRR to contribute to Myanmar’s feedback to the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children regarding the draft ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children.

Strategic Objective 2

Social practices and cultural norms favouring gender equality are articulated and reinforced, and strategies for responding to those that discriminate against women are identified and implemented

8. Cultural Norms, Social Practices and Gender Equality in Myanmar Research

This qualitative research aims to increase the understanding of social and cultural norms in various settings across Myanmar, and the impact they have on the lives of men and women in relation to critical areas of life - including family life, work, health and education. The research protocol was approved by the Ethical Review Committee from Lower Myanmar Department of Medical Research. In September 2013, international and national consultants were recruited and carried out the data collection. Data analysis is currently underway and it is expected that the findings will help generate an up to date mapping of the diverse social and cultural norms in Myanmar at a time of rapid political and economic transition, so as to inform evidence-based programmes and policies that seek to improve the lives of men and women, and also to provide evidence based information for consideration in overcoming NSPAW implementation barriers.

9. **Gender, Buddhism, Development Actors and Civil Society Workshops** in Sagaing and Yangon, February/March 2013. This workshop was convened for members to meet with Buddhist nuns and monks to exchange ideas and information about ways to foster understanding and synergies. It also aimed to learn about traditional Buddhist values that may help promote better cooperation, and to discuss indigenous methods of engagement with society in order to find areas that could contribute to peace building and development of civil society. The workshops were led by Dr Hiroko Kawanami, member of Richardson Institute of Peace, Lancaster University, UK, and Dr Monica Lindberg Falk, Vice-Director of the Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies, Lund University, Sweden.



Workshop Participants, Sagaing

Strategic Objective 3

Women's leadership enabled through quality technical inputs, opportunities, and enhanced public legitimacy

10. Women's Leadership Training Needs and Initiatives Assessment

The *Taking the Lead* assessment was carried out to identify the skills and capacity development needs of current and emerging women leaders, and to review existing women's leadership training initiatives. The results provide a broad picture of women's views on leadership and basic patterns in capacity and training needs and were disseminated to all members and key stakeholders for use in future relate programming.

11. Capacity Development Resources on Women's Leadership

Drawing on the above needs assessment, GEN and the Center for Creative Leadership undertook significant planning towards a Women's Leadership Development train-the-trainer and ongoing training program for 16 women leaders from INGOs, NGOs, and CBOs to be held in January 2014. An additional 2 Day Leadership Essential Training for approximately 100 potential women's leaders from political parties, INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, Civil Society Organisations, and disability associations will also be organised in January 2014.

12. Media Monitoring

Media monitoring covering the 2012/2013 Ward and Village Tract Administrator Election process, focusing on women's participation, was finalised in January 2013 and disseminated to members. Many articles implied that the position of Administrator is intrinsically a male role, however on a positive note, some articles suggested that women are capable of performing community leadership roles when given the opportunity. Throughout 2013, members have observed a marked increase in media coverage on women's issues, including women's leadership. Members have actively contributed to this by holding press conferences at women's forums and being available for interviews with media outlets. Mizzima and Myanmar Times now have dedicated columns and web pages on women's issues, and there has been an increase in feature articles on women's issues across multiple outlets, including Popular News Journal, The Irrawaddy, MRTV, and the New Light of Myanmar.

13. Role Model Campaigns and Awareness Raising Events

On 29-30 October 2013, GEN helped to jointly organised the two day "Second Women's Forum" with a number of other actors¹. The forum was entitled "Voice of Women" and 270 participants (68M, 206F) attended from parliaments (both national and state), political parties, INGOs/LNGOs, CBOs and media. Participants discussed current issues facing Myanmar regarding Women and Politics, Women and Decision Making, Women and Economics, Women and Social Issues and Women and the Media. The Women's Forum's concluding document called for the adoption of temporary special measures to accelerate women's participation in decision making at high levels in accordance with CEDAW's Article 4, the removal of barriers for women's participation, the development of an AVAW law and the strengthening of national women's networks.

¹ Colorful Girls, Equality Myanmar, Rainfall, Phan Tee Eain, Karen Women's Action Group, CDEC, FXB, Trocaire, Mizzima News, CARE, WLB, NCA, UNFPA, WON, CSFoP, GEN, Akhaya, UNDP, ActionAid and COM.

Strategic Objective 4

Awareness increased and support provided to stakeholders to implement effective evidence-based mechanisms and strategies to reduce gender-based violence

14. Violence Against Women Research

Throughout 2013, a strong foundation was laid in collaboration with DSW for undertaking rigorous qualitative research on violence against women. The research findings will strengthen the evidence base about violence against women in Myanmar, inform the development of effective legal and social services for women affected by violence, support the AVAW law drafting process by providing contextual information, and will contribute to the NSPAW's priority area No 4 "Violence Against Women".

In preparation for this research, a workshop was held with Government Stakeholders on *Qualitative Research on Violence Against Women* in Nay Pyi Taw on 23-24 March 2013 with senior representatives from 16 ministries, the MMCWA, MAAF and Parliamentary committees. Another workshop on *Violence Against Women Research Protocol* was also held with 19 Ministries, MMCWA and MAAF representatives in Nay Pyi Taw on 8 April 2013.

GEN recruited a skilled research team including an international consultant and 4 national consultants. The team finalised the research protocol and methodology and submitted it to the Ethical Review Committee from the Lower Myanmar Department of Medical Research for approval. Release of the report is expected mid- 2014.

15. Standard Operating Procedures Development for Women Affected by Violence

Four representatives from DSW, MAAF, WON and GEN attended the *Subregional Seminar among Mekong Countries on Shelter Management for Women and Children* who are survivors of violence in Thailand organised by the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women in July 2013. A training program covering psychosocial counselling and the provision of holistic services to women affected by violence, for MAAF, DSW staff and GEN members is being planned for 2014.

16. Campaigns

Celebrities Discussing VAW Talkshow (MRTV4) Survey. The member survey to assess members' views on the effectiveness of the talk-show campaign concluded that the talk-show was successful in raising awareness about VAW and that this initiative: included high-profile celebrities that were engaging and appealing to ordinary people; MRTV4 is a national broadcaster reaching a broad and diverse audience; the celebrities delivered clear and appropriate messages; and the talk-show delivery style was accessible to wide-ranging audiences, using jargon-free language.



Filming MRTV4 Talkshow on Violence Against Women

International Women’s Day 2013. An IWD event with the theme ‘A Promise is a Promise: Time to End VAW’ was held in Nay Pyi Taw by the Government in close collaboration with the IWD Working Group, including representatives from 25 organisations and networks. Displays were set up in a ‘marketplace’ highlighting more than 40 organisations’ work related to gender equality and women’s rights in Myanmar, and performances about gender equality and VAW were given by a variety of civil society groups, including from the LGBT community. More than 550 people took part in the event, including 277 civil society participants (approx. 87% women and 13% men).

16 Days of Activism Campaign 2013. 28 organisations and networks jointly organised a public event for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women at People’s Park in Yangon on 24 November 2013. About 650 participants from the general community from within and outside of Yangon attended. The event included performances related to Positive Masculinity, Gender Based Violence and the history of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, and a press conference was held. Women leaders from women's and humanitarian organisations took part in the “White Campaign” to raise awareness



16 Days of Activism to Eliminate Violence Against Women 2013



on the need to eliminate VAW by wearing white blouses during the 16 Days from 25 Nov to 10 Dec 2013. In a significant step for Myanmar, the 16 Days of Activism Working Group posted billboards with the message “From Peace in the Home to Peace in World” in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, Taung Gyin Dala, Ayeyarwaddy, Kalay, and other areas in Myanmar. In taking advantage of increasing media freedom, illustrated messages related to VAW were also published in daily newspapers.

16 Days of Activism 2012 Historic Walk and Event Photobook. GEN produced an advocacy publication about the historic walk from Sule Pagoda to Kandawgyi Park carried out in Yangon in 2012 to

commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in August 2013. The bilingual publication includes photos, inspirational quotes from participants and practical suggestions for different sectors of the community on working towards ending VAW. The publication was distributed to members, government stakeholders and to the community for increasing awareness on the VAW, and has been used at major events such as the NWD and at meetings with the Myanmar Peace Centre.

Strategic Objective 5

GEN is a strong and influential network of skilled and confident members effectively coordinating and collaborating for women's rights and gender equality

17. GEN Membership and Coordination

GEN membership increased to 105 members during 2013 (43 CSOs/LNGOs, 27 INGOS, 9 UN Agencies and 26 technical resource people). Implementation of the network's Strategic Plan (2012-2015) is largely on track. GEN's monthly steering committee meetings and monthly member meetings are consistently well attended. Issue-specific GEN working group meetings were also regularly held (Law Drafting, Social Norms and Cultural Research, and 16 Days of Activism etc).

The GEN Coordination Unit collected information for the mapping of member organisations at the start of 2013 and about 23 organisations completed the information. It has been difficult to get members to complete the mapping matrix and efforts will continue in 2014. GEN is planning to more fully develop an accountability framework during 2014 that will include a member feedback survey to inform by the mid-term review planning process.

18. Advocacy and Communication

GEN participated in a wide range of meetings and events with member agencies and other stakeholders carrying out gender work, or planning to work on or fund gender activities in Myanmar. GEN used these opportunities to promote initiatives by individual member organisations, foster linkages, fundraise, coordinate and harmonize with other programs and advocate for an increased focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in Myanmar. GEN developed a new brochure on the network and the importance of advancing women's rights and gender equality in Myanmar. By highlighting key issues and graphing GEN's member composition, this brochure has proved to be a particularly useful advocacy tool. The process for developing the GEN website has been slower than planned and along with a Facebook page will be launched in mid 2014. The network continues to facilitate the effective sharing of resources amongst its members through electronic means, and at GEN meetings and events.

In 2013 there was one meeting with the Minister from MSWRR, twelve meetings with the Department of Social Welfare, one meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chair of Rule of Law Committee, one meeting with the Population and Social Development Committee, Amyotha Hluttaw and one meeting with the Myanmar Peace Centre. The meetings were used to advocate and raise awareness on women's issues, including women's participation in the peace process, and to achieve more effective coordination and communication.

In order to raise public awareness on women's issues GEN worked with two women's ambassadors - Actor and Vocalist Chit Thu Wai for Lower Myanmar and Vocalist Rebecca Win for Upper Myanmar. The two Women's Ambassadors participated in GEN events such as the NSPAW Launch, the Second Women's Forum, the National Women's Dialogue and the 16 Days of Activism. The Lower Myanmar Women's Ambassador committed to contribute to the implementation of the NSPAW.

19. Seminars, Workshops, Events

In addition to the initiatives above, other 2013 activities included:

- *Myanmar Laws and CEDAW: Developing AVAW Laws Seminar* led by Ms Brenda Belak, Legal Researcher and principle author of GEN's AVAW Laws papers, January 2013
- *When NSPAW is Approved What Next? Mobilising Ministries and Resources*, Professor Marilyn Waring, Feminist Economist, jointly organised by GEN and ActionAid Myanmar in February 2013
- *AVAW Laws* workshop, Dr Heisoo Hsin, a member of the CEDAW Committee from 2001-2008, March 2013
- *Gender Equality in Disaster Risk Reduction* workshop in Nay Pyi Taw with Myanmar Government officials organised by Oxfam, GEN presented on 'Gender Equality in Myanmar: A Summary of Trends and the Current Situation'
- Tomas Quintana, UN Special Rapporteur to Myanmar meeting, Senior Coordinator
- The Elders meeting, Senior Coordinator
- Attended Women's Initiative Network for Peace meetings at WON
- Participated and presented at the *Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society for Advocacy and Learning* workshop for LIFT Implementing partners jointly organised by LIFT, Paung Ku, SPPRG, the Land Core Group and GEN
- Gender Integration in Project Cycle Management Training for LIFT Implementing Partners, October 2013
- Participated in a panel discussion on women's leadership at the Women's Forum Myanmar organised by the French Embassy
- Participated in the International Girl Child Day organised by Colorful Girls

20. Resources

- *Myanmar Laws and CEDAW: The Case for Anti-Violence Against Women Laws*, Gender Equality Network, January 2013 (Myanmar and English)
- *Developing Anti-Violence Against Women Laws: Background Information, Discussion Paper Part 1*, Gender Equality Network, January 2013 (Myanmar and English)
- *Developing Anti-Violence Against Women Laws: Content Options, Discussion Paper Part 2*, Gender Equality Network, January 2013 (Myanmar and English)
- *Women's Needs Assessment in IPD Camps, Kachin State*, February 2013 – available in Kachin, Myanmar and English
- *National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) 2013-2022* in October 2013
- *Photobook - A Historic Walk and Event* for the 16 Days of Activism 2012
- *Taking the Lead: An Assessment of Women's Leadership Training Needs and Training Initiatives in Myanmar*, briefing paper (Myanmar) and full report (English) in November 2013
- *GEN Brochure* in both Myanmar and English
- *'Gender and Education in Emergencies'* in *IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action* – translated to Myanmar.

Well done to all members - and thank you for your part in this important work. This transitional period in Myanmar is an opportune time for all of these initiatives, and as space continues to open for political and social change, the value of the Gender Equality Network in bringing together women's and gender equality advocates and organisations is evident.

2013 Finances

Table 1 - 2013 Funding Overview

| Donors | USD |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| GEN Member Funds - Pyoe Pin, Trocaire, ActionAid, CARE, Oxfam | 230,592 |
| LIFT | 144,225 |
| USAID | 212,617 |
| Total Funds Received 2013 | 587,434* |
| Total Expenditure 2013 | 382,536 |

Table 2 - 2013 Budget Summary

| Budget Details | 2013 Budget | 2013 Expenditure |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Human Resources | 204,574 | 212,868 |
| 2. Office Costs, Equipment and Supplies | 14,556 | 18,982 |
| 3. Program Costs | 168,008 | 129,034 |
| Total Direct Costs | 387,138 | 360,883 |
| Indirect Costs (6%) | 23,228 | 21,653 |
| Grand Total | 410,366 | 382,536** |

* The majority of funding received for the AVAW Law, VAW Research and Women's Leadership Training programs in 2013 will be used in 2014 as planned

**Funds not spent in 2013 will be carried over to 2014

GEN would like to thank the following agencies for their funding in 2013.

