

Building Resilience, Equity and Opportunity in Myanmar: The Role of Social Protection

Social protection delivery through community-driven development platforms: International experience and key considerations for Myanmar¹

Social protection schemes can contribute to poverty reduction objectives pursued through current community-driven development (CDD) platforms in Myanmar by building household and community resilience. In turn, existing CDD platforms provide viable options to promote a transition to government-led social protection delivery. Making infrastructure development more pro-poor and providing communities with an expanded menu of options, including social protection schemes, can be a first step in enhancing the poverty reduction potential of CDD platforms.



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1. Introduction

Community-driven development (CDD) models are based on the principle of empowering communities to directly manage efforts such as infrastructure development and service provision. International experience with CDD approaches shows the potential for these models to finance and deliver components of social protection provision such as safety nets.

Social protection is an important component of development processes by directly contributing to inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Social protection systems, policies, and programs help households and communities build **Resilience** to risks and shocks; contribute to **Equity** by preventing and alleviating economic and social vulnerabilities; and create **Opportunity** through building community assets and helping households access services for a better future. Social protection helps reduce poverty and increases social cohesion by ensuring poor and vulnerable groups benefit from economic prosperity.

Although Myanmar has experience with government-led CDD approaches, these have so far not included social protection components. On the other hand, development partners (DPs) have delivered social protection schemes through community-based approaches without establishing linkages with government structures. This note reviews Myanmar's experience with government-led CDD models and with DP social protection support through community-based structures; discusses the rationale for delivering social protection through CDD platforms based on international experience; and identifies potential avenues to deliver social protection in Myanmar through existing government-led CDD platforms to make these more effective in achieving poverty reduction and resilience-building.

2. Myanmar experience: CDD Platforms and community-based social protection models

2.1 Government CDD platforms

The Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development (MLFRD) is actively involved in the implementation of CDD programs. They are considered important instruments to achieve inclusive and sustainable rural development through people-centered approaches and ultimately to help reduce poverty, as stated in the Rural Development Strategic Framework (RDSF). The Mya Sein Young (MSY), also known as Evergreen Village Development Project, and the National Community Driven Development Project (NCDDP) are the two main government-led CDD approaches in Myanmar.² While both address key development challenges – namely, livelihoods and local infrastructure – neither has yet incorporated explicit social protection schemes in its operations.

2. Smaller CDD platforms include the Asian Development Bank's Enhancing Rural Livelihoods and Incomes Project (US\$ 12 million) in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta, Dry Zone, Tanintharyi and Shan Plateau. Besides infrastructure development, the project includes vocational training components, especially in the Delta and Dry Zone. http://adb.org/projects/details?page=details&proj_id=47311-001

2.2 Mya Sein Yaung (MSY, 2014-2016)

The MSY has the objective of reducing poverty in rural areas by creating job opportunities, achieving food security, increasing productivity, and improving the resilience of rural livelihoods to disasters through village-level revolving funds. The project provides transfers (loans) to villages for village-level revolving funds – about MMK 30 million per fund – to finance household businesses related mainly (depending on local conditions) to solar energy, viable livestock-rearing, family-owned and viable fishery and farming projects, agricultural business, and other businesses. The project targets poor villages that have the potential to make profits with the loans, are suitable for livestock-rearing, have rule of law and good behavior, and are enthusiastic and credible in reimbursing the loan (MLFRD, 2014a)³

The MSY is being rolled out in a phased manner, starting with a first (pilot) phase (April 2014-March 2015) in 1,150 villages across 136 townships and 47 districts, reaching more than 1.8 million beneficiaries with a budget of MMK 34.5 billion. Shan state (nearly MMK 8 billion) and Ayeyarwaddy (more than MMK 6 billion) are benefiting the most from MSY funds, followed by Bago (around MMK 3.5 billion), Sagaing (MMK 3 billion) and Magway and Mandalay (around MMK 2.5 billion each)⁴. MLFRD plans to extend the program to 10,000 more villages in 200 townships to reach 4.8 million beneficiaries in the 2015-2016 cycle with additional financing (MMK 335.5 billion; MLFRD, 2014b).

The implementation structure of the program uses task forces at different levels (union, state/region, township, and district), although the most critical structures are MSY committees at village level. Each is composed of seven respectable villagers (at least 50 percent women), who should be interested in the village's welfare, not belong to religious clergy, be financially literate, own a somewhat sizable business, and have the ability to allocate time for the program's purposes (MLFRD, 2014a). MSY village committees are responsible for the administration of the village fund, authorize loans, calculate interest rates, collect payments, and audit financial statements (ibid.).⁵

The design of revolving funds such as the MSY typically makes such programs more easily accessed by the non-poor. The effectiveness and sustainability of revolving fund models are based on the assumption that households will be able to pay back the loan. This limits the assignment of loans to better-off households and not to the very poor, who are less likely to have the expertise and networks to utilize the loan effectively and to be able to pay it back.⁶ In the case of the MSY, village committee members are entitled to borrow twice as much from the fund as other villagers and can pay administrative expenses (e.g. travel expenses) out of the fund (MLFRD, 2014a).⁷ Landowner and non-poor households thus tend to access larger loans than landless ones under the scheme, reinforcing the focus on the non-poor.

3. Approximately 70 percent of MSY villages are in RDSF priority districts (World Bank staff estimate).

4. Discussions with MLFRD.

5. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will provide technical support in implementation (MLFRD, 2014a).

6. Microcredit projects are also difficult to implement in post-conflict contexts since the scheme relies on trust and collective action that may be eroded, tends to benefit individuals more than communities in initial rounds (before all community members have the chance to benefit), and can have difficulties in balancing the objectives of sustainable microfinance (promote profitable investments) and community empowerment (promote access by the poor) (Strand et al., 2003).

7. Fieldwork showed loans to individual households can range between MMK 50,000 and MMK 500,000. Interest rates vary across villages, ranging between 0.5 percent and 1.5 percent per month.

2.3 National Community Driven Development Project (2012-2021)

The NCDDP (supported by the World Bank) has the objective of delivering key infrastructure and services through community-block grants. It also aims to build government's capacity to respond promptly and effectively to crises or emergencies. The initial phase (2012-2014) had a budget of MMK 88.5 billion⁸ and started a gradual rollout in Chin state, Tanintharyi division and Shan state, aiming to cover 640 village tracts in 15 townships (one in each state/region).

Townships are selected based mainly on poverty criteria in consultation with region/state governments. Poverty criteria are complemented by factors such as absence of external funding, willingness and capability of township authorities to implement the project, peace and stability of the township, and relative ease of access to and within the township. Region and state governments hold consultations with a wide range of stakeholders to apply these criteria in their particular contexts and shortlist townships based on local-level knowledge (GoM, 2014).⁹ All village tracts in selected townships benefit from the program.

The NCDDP has been rolled out in annual implementation cycles with positive achievements that have motivated an expansion. During the first implementation cycle in three townships, the NCDDP financed 357 subprojects aimed at increasing access to and use of basic infrastructure and services, including rehabilitating and expanding school buildings, health centers, water supplies, roads, footpaths, jetties, and bridges. Similarly to the MSY, transfers averaged MMK 30 million per village (MLFRD and World Bank, 2014). The second implementation cycle is currently underway with additional government and DP resources that translate into more than MMK 453 billion to expand the project to 40 additional townships, home to approximately 6 million people.¹⁰ The number of grant cycles available to beneficiary communities will increase from three annual cycles in the original grant design to four cycles. The additional cycle will increase the funds available to communities to around MMK 39 million, drawing on international evidence that CDD projects increase in effectiveness over time as communities become more familiar with the approach.

Government roles are found at union, region/state, township, and, critically, village tract and village levels.¹¹ Village tracts are the main planning and supporting unit at community level. Village Tract Project Support Committees (VTPSC) are responsible for consolidating and submitting proposed projects made up of subprojects put forward by villages and village tracts. MLFRD's Department of Rural Development (DRD) along with township authorities verifies that the proposed infrastructure subprojects do not duplicate existing government efforts. A finance subcommittee is formed at the village tract level to manage the block grants and village support committees un-

8. USD 86.3 million, USD 80 million International Development Association (IDA) grant and USD 6.3 million from government funds. Exchange rate = 1,025.50.

9. More information on targeting in Myanmar can be found in the Note on 'Reaching the poor and vulnerable in Myanmar'.

10. Additional resources include additional government funds, USD 300 million from an IDA grant, a USD 20 million concessional loan from the government of Italy and a grant of approximately USD 11 million from the Japan Trust for Social Development to enhance key elements of the project, including capacity-building for community facilitation and further development of social accountability mechanisms.

11. More information on government roles in the NCDDP can be found in the Note on 'Institutional landscape for implementation and financing of social protection programs: Towards effective service delivery in Myanmar'.

undertake subproject implementation, along with other subcommittees for monitoring and procurement. Support is envisaged in the near future through a finance clerk in each village as project tasks are challenging and time-consuming for committee members.

Building capacity of local-level structures, particularly township and village tracts, to undertake program operations effectively will be an important challenge in future implementation cycles.

In light of the ongoing expansion of the program and the underlying objective of strengthening government-led service delivery at local level through program implementation, the current design of the program sets aside resources for specific capacity-building activities at union and township levels, which can also finance additional technical support at lower levels (e.g. village clerks).

The ongoing expansion of the program offers opportunities to explore areas where the program can be complemented to address poverty reduction more comprehensively.

For instance, the expansion will test the adequacy of strategies and procedures for engagement and risk management in areas affected by conflict, as well as the flexibility of the model to foster partnerships on key complementary issues of interest for communities (e.g. on livelihoods, income security, and social services). Lastly, the NCDDP has a component on emergency contingency support (e.g. rapid response to disasters). This has not been used yet but options for resilience-building and emergency support could already be identified and articulated in current program operations.

3. Current experience with social protection schemes delivered through community-based approaches¹²

DPs have been actively involved in the implementation of social protection schemes as part of community-based approaches. The Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) has been the main sponsor of community-based models, which often include the provision of social protection to particular groups within communities. Annex 1 includes a list of social protection schemes delivered through DP-led community-based approaches in Myanmar.

Livelihood support features strongly in DP-led schemes, although access to services is also encouraged. Help Age International (HAI) supports in-kind and cash transfers (CTs) for productive investments (partial loans) in Mandalay and Sagaing. ActionAid supports vulnerable women in communities in Magwe through cash-for-training and micro loans for productive investments, although a more innovative feature of this model is the way it links women to government services such as ID provision, health care, and business development. Lastly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has supported contributory and non-contributory health emergency funds in Ayeyarwaddy.

12. This Note refers to 'DP-led community based approaches' given the diverse range of DP-led initiatives that have communities as main beneficiaries but that may not strictly follow the definition of CDD models.

Evidence on the impact of social protection schemes delivered through community-based models is scarce. Some of these schemes (e.g. ActionAid) are new so evidence on impact is not yet available. Impact evaluations for the other two schemes in Annex 1 have not been conducted.¹³ Other schemes used in Myanmar and supported mostly by LIFT include community-based infrastructure development (with less emphasis on social protection than on infrastructure development objectives)¹⁴ and rice and paddy banks. Emerging models that could bring future lessons include business development grants with extensive technical support in vulnerable communities in Rakhine, implemented by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

4. Social protection provision through CDD platforms in Myanmar : a way to enhance pro-poor results

Expanding the scope and reach of current CDD programs is a sensible step towards achieving poverty reduction in Myanmar. Discussions during the Third Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum acknowledged the importance and achievements of the MSY and NCDDP, but also the need to clearly identify progress in poverty reduction and exploit even further community-based approaches as poverty reduction tools. Against a backdrop of low productivity in agriculture, over-reliance on single crop income, an underdeveloped manufacturing and services sector, and sharp regional disparities, there is potential to further reduce poverty through enhanced CDD platforms and overall rural development.

Social protection provision through CDD platforms can help Myanmar identify opportunities to strengthen its poverty reduction agenda. Selecting the more effective schemes based on Myanmar's needs and institutional capacity and taking advantage of existing delivery platforms can complement current government efforts on poverty reduction through the MSY and NCDDP.

Conversely, embedding social protection schemes as part of CDD platforms in Myanmar can be an appropriate option for social protection implementation. Current experience with government CDD models can facilitate the gradual transition from DP-led social protection provision to a more sustainable government-led system. This gradual transition would need a) significant efforts to build government capacity, especially at local levels, through a learning-by-doing approach on roles of government and non-government actors, as well as enhancing coordination across local stakeholders; b) overcoming current perceptions of communities vis-à-vis government in many places (e.g. conflict-affected communities); and c) providing models that can help overcome political economy issues in Myanmar. On the latter, large-scale national social protection programs, which are often the preferred option for 'quick wins', make raising a budget difficult and imply dealing with large-scale initial operational issues that can derail even a good program. Scaling-back if the model is not found to be very effective would be hard. In addition, designing national programs is challenging given the diversity of needs and priorities across Myanmar.

13. An evaluation of livelihood changes in areas where LIFT-supported programs are implemented (e.g. the HAI scheme) is available although it does not cover the impact of specific programs. The IOM scheme was evaluated in terms of its operational performance, as shown in Annex 2.

14. See Noteon 'The experience of public works programs in Myanmar' for more information on PWPs in the country.

From that perspective, a platform like the NCDDP could become more effective in achieving poverty reduction and community empowerment by strengthening the emphasis on pro-poor investments in infrastructure development, as well as by using an expanded menu of options that includes social protection interventions. The NCDDP already generates important employment opportunities for local communities, with 80 percent of assets built directly by communities (instead of contractors). Modifying the guidelines for infrastructure development to prioritize pro-poor infrastructure (see Box 1) through labor-intensive approaches that prioritize the poorest can maximize the amount of resources that reach the poor directly.¹⁵ A menu of interventions beyond infrastructure development delivered through the NCDDP can also help address a wider set of issues that the poor face, such as access to social services (see next section for a potential menu). A pro-poor emphasis can also make project resources reach more directly priority groups such as women, children, and migrants, which may benefit less directly from traditional infrastructure-oriented approaches. In addition, the effort made by the program to meaningfully include women in project committees presents an opportunity to achieve gender-sensitive community choices as part of an expanded menu.

Box 1: Preference targeting - options for increasing the pro-poor focus of CDD platforms

Preference targeting (Van Domelen, 2007) refers to the need for CDD programs to successfully incorporate the poor into planning processes in order to enhance pro-poor results, given that certain investments and schemes tend to be more pro-poor than others. Preference targeting is mostly, though not exclusively, relevant to infrastructure development projects. For instance, basic sanitation and infrastructure for social service delivery reaches more poor households than do complex infrastructure development such as sewage systems. Making sure the poor can meaningfully influence the type of projects chosen and pro-poor options are available on project menus can enhance pro-poor results through preference targeting.

Besides infrastructure projects, preference targeting could also be encouraged in the selection of social protection schemes out of a menu of options. Social protection schemes such as CTs to vulnerable groups can be more pro-poor than more complex and costly contributory schemes such as community-based health insurance (CBHI) (Batthamishra and Barrett, 2008).

Preference targeting can be an important complementary targeting mechanism to reach the poor through CDD platforms. The targeting success of Argentina's Trabajar program (Phase II; see Annex 2), where 85 percent of the beneficiaries fell in the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution, was achieved through a combination of geographic targeting, wages that promoted self-targeting of the poor, and preference targeting by encouraging pro-poor infrastructure (potable water and social infrastructure, both labor-intensive and disproportionately benefiting the poor).

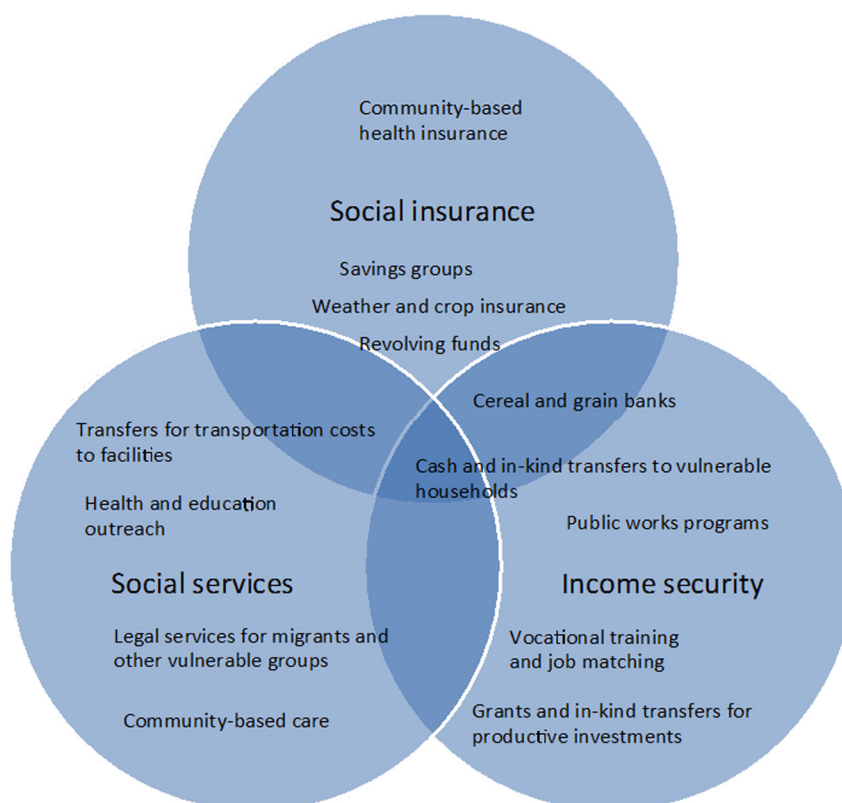
15. An example of practices that can be changed to maximize income support to the poor comes from LIFT-supported public works programs (PWPs) in the Dry Zone. Households with ox-carts were paid higher wages as their contribution to rapid completion of infrastructure was higher. However, if the emphasis of PWPs shifts to providing protection to poor households, this practice may need to change (e.g. better-off households with ox-carts are not encouraged to participate and poor households with no assets are prioritized).

5. Potential modalities to incorporate social protection schemes in CDD platforms

Several social protection programs may be suitable to meet the needs of the rural poor. Labor-intensive public works programs (PWPs) can simultaneously provide the infrastructure communities need and generate income for local vulnerable and income-insecure households. Cash and in-kind transfers (e.g. food transfers) can help vulnerable households (e.g. the elderly and those unable to work) meet their needs.

Social protection schemes as part of CDD models include those that support individuals and communities manage risk and shocks, protect them from poverty and destitution, help them access services, and build skills and assets for a better future. There are three broad project areas that have been financed by CDD models and that include social protection schemes, as shown in Figure 1: income security, access to social services, and community-based social insurance.

Figure 1: Social protection schemes as part of CDD platforms



Source: Adapted from Da Silva and Sum (2008).

A focus on the poorest and most vulnerable along a selection of the simplest schemes can be a good starting point to narrow down options for Myanmar. Annex 2 shows four international examples of social protection provision through CDD platforms, in Argentina, India, Indonesia, and Tanzania. These and other models have achieved a wide array of social outcomes and provide important lessons that can be useful for Myanmar. Priority should be given to schemes that capitalize on opportunities to make infrastructure development more pro-poor, support access to services by the poor and vulnerable, and build social cohesion and community resilience. Within these, schemes with relatively simple operational considerations, like those with which Myanmar is familiar or that make identifying beneficiaries easy, can facilitate implementation.

Box 2: Public works programs and cash transfers

PWPs, also known as workfare or labor-intensive rural works programs, can serve two objectives: creation of jobs for needy workers and creation and maintenance of small-scale community infrastructure. These programs provide temporary employment at low wages, mainly to unskilled workers in rural areas. Such temporary employment during the slack season or during crisis will typically contribute to consumption-smoothing and poverty alleviation. Public works can also be used to promote social cohesion; schemes are now present in 94 countries. CTs provide assistance in the form of cash or near-cash instruments (vouchers) to poor and vulnerable households to satisfy consumption needs, allow for more risk-taking in productive activities, and invest in human capital development. While the number of countries with in-kind social assistance programs such as school-feeding remains stable, CTs are becoming increasingly popular. CTs can be unconditional or conditional, depending on the specific objectives, administrative capacity for monitoring conditions, and supply of education and health services. UCTs or CTs with soft conditions (e.g. encouragement of behavior rather than full enforcement) can be more appropriate in contexts with evolving administrative capacity or with limited availability of services that can constrain compliance with conditions. CCTs are now present in 64 countries, more than double the 27 in 2008. In the past year, new information has become available for 11 countries with UCTs, totaling 130 worldwide.

Sources: Fiszbein et al. (2011); Subbarao et al. (2013); Fiszbein et al. (2011); (World Bank, 2015).

5.1 Strengthening the emphasis on pro-poor investments in infrastructure development

Myanmar CDD platforms could explore the possibility of delivering basic community infrastructure through labor-intensive PWPs in order to provide a safety net for income and food insecure households.¹⁶ PWPs can simultaneously provide the infrastructure communities need and generate income for local vulnerable and income-insecure households through labor-intensive practices (see Box 2).

An important step to maximize the benefits of PWPs in platforms such as the NCDDP is to explore feasible modifications to guidelines for infrastructure development to prioritize pro-poor infrastructure. Given the public-good nature of assets developed through CDD approaches, addi-

16. Information on PWPs in Myanmar and further elaboration of some recommendations on PWPs can be found in the Note on 'The experience of public works programs in Myanmar'.

tional elements embedded in program design can help make these projects more pro-poor. Options of feasible projects can be expanded to facilitate ‘preference targeting’ through assets that benefit the poor more directly in specific contexts (see Box 1).

Another potential modification to infrastructure development is to promote labor-intensive approaches that prioritize the poor through community-based targeting.¹⁷ This can help maximize the direct benefits (e.g. through wages) from local infrastructure development to the poor in local communities and would be aligned with operational demands of current platforms like the NCDDP where understanding local labor markets is needed. LIFT has implemented PWP through community-based structures that can provide interesting lessons in light of implementation through government systems and the need to balance objectives of asset creation and employment generation.¹⁸

5.2 Incentivizing utilization of social services and improving human development outcomes

CDD programs can encourage access to services by giving communities flexibility on how to address access constraints. For instance, Indonesia’s PNPM Generasi (see Annex 2) gives communities options and discretion (with the help of trained facilitators) to choose schemes that can better help households invest in health and education. Schemes chosen include scholarships, uniforms and textbooks, transport costs to schools and health facilities, and nutrition services for children and pregnant women, among others. PNPM Generasi has significantly increased growth monitoring and school enrollment and attendance, and has significantly decreased malnutrition, with the strongest effects in worse-off areas.¹⁹

Several instruments can be considered when designing a menu of options that encourages access to services by the poor. Cash and in-kind transfers can help vulnerable households in the community (e.g. the elderly and those unable to work) meet their needs. Social services such as immunization, nutrition, and sanitation campaigns as well as legal support for conflict resolution (e.g. protection of migrant workers) can support vulnerable groups in communities (e.g. children and the elderly).

Operationally simple options such as unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) for vulnerable groups²⁰ and community-based care can be considered in an initial phase. In addition to supporting infrastructure development, CTs can support particularly vulnerable groups such as the poor elderly,

17. See the Note on ‘Reaching the poor and vulnerable in Myanmar’ for more details on how community-based targeting is being implemented in Myanmar. The World Food Programme (WFP) has some experience with this type of beneficiary identification in its asset creation programs.

18. See the Note on ‘The experience of public works programs in Myanmar’ for more information on PWPs in the country.

19. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/07/04/pnpm-generasi-program-final-impact-evaluation-report>

20. Information on CTs in Myanmar can be found in the Note on ‘The experience of cash transfers in Myanmar’.

people with disabilities, and people living with chronic illness. There is a wealth of international examples of community-based care services for vulnerable groups such as older people, people living with disabilities, and female-headed households.²¹ The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has started a pilot program for older people self-help groups, with support from HAI. Linkages with this structure could be established if possible, but working through existing informal arrangements or DP-led community-based initiatives can also be pursued in a first stage.

Additional medium-term interventions to facilitate access to social services can pursue both the establishment of linkages with government agencies for service delivery and the contracting of service delivery provision to fill remaining delivery gaps. Models such as the ActionAid one (see Annex 1) that explicitly bring in government officers (mainly from township level) to share information and provide services (ID, health and education campaigns) could be replicated as part of a CDD platform. India's self-help groups (SHGs) (see Annex 2) build on community mobilization to demand government services, including social protection. When services are unavailable through government agencies, communities could identify alternative providers (e.g. non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and DPs. For instance, adapting models such as World Food Programme (WFP) school-feeding and nutrition programs to be delivered through CDD platforms can benefit food-insecure communities and help promote access to education.²²

5.3 Promoting social cohesion and building community resilience²³

Social protection schemes can help respond to post-conflict needs as part of CDD platforms. PWPs can help with reconciliation efforts by including ex-combatants and ethnic minorities in community development efforts. These approaches have brought positive results in countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone.²⁴ Implementing these schemes as part of CDD platforms can help address the need for quick results against a backdrop of weak institutional capacity in post-conflict areas. Other services needed in post-conflict contexts can also be delivered as part of CDD platforms, such as legal services for returning migrants and displaced populations (Strand et al., 2013).

Community empowerment can be reinforced by social protection schemes, particularly benefiting vulnerable groups. Besides planning process around infrastructure development, schemes for community mobilization through SHGs have been found to have significant positive effects on female empowerment in India, even among non-participants (Deininger and Liu, 2009).²⁵ ActionAid's model (see Annex 1) aims to further empower vulnerable women in the Dry Zone by going

21. See, for example, Voluntary Home Care in Sri Lanka, the Home and Community-Based Care Program in Korea, Grameen Vikas Santhsa in Uttar Pradesh, India, and Hogares Comunitarios in Colombia.

22. See Andrews et al. (2011) for more on school-feeding delivered through CDD platforms in Togo.

23. More information on disaster risk management (DRM) and social protection can be found in the Note on 'Social protection for disaster risk management: Opportunities for Myanmar'.

24. See Andrews and Kryeziu (2013) for more information on PWPs and social cohesion.

25. Economic empowerment is measured based on the ability of a woman to set aside money for her own use, go to the market, to the clinic or the community center, visit friends, or work on fields outside the village, without asking permission from her husband or other males in the family.

beyond economic vulnerabilities to support access to services, community mobilization, and capacity-building.

Social protection can complement the potential of CDD platforms to build community and household resilience. Schemes such as CTs and PWPs can support household economic recovery in times of crises. They provide a mechanism to deliver cash to households, which can be readily available to support disaster response, enable households to recover faster, and reduce the long-term economic impact of disasters on households and communities. Disaster response has been enhanced and accelerated by the existence of household-level transfers and SHGs in India and Tanzania, where droughts and macroeconomic crises have challenged governments' response (see Annex 2). In these contexts, existing social protection schemes as part of CDD models have served to channel resources, identify beneficiaries, and ultimately deliver response programs timely and effectively, resulting in less severe impacts on the nutritional status of communities in the case of India (Deininger and Liu, 2009). PWPs can also promote resilience by building hazard-proof infrastructure and by enabling quick response and recovery activities after disasters, such as debris removal and community reconstruction.²⁶

6. Opportunities and challenges for social protection provision as part of CDD platforms

CDD platforms bring several advantages to social protection provision in contexts where service delivery systems are still evolving. First, CDD platforms maximize effectiveness by taking advantage of having first-hand information on the goods and services communities need, as well as on households and groups in need of assistance. This can potentially translate into relevant schemes, targeting efficiency, and program ownership. Second, CDD platforms can help weak local governments transition to a more responsive service-delivery approach, as participatory planning and budgeting around social services help local governments get familiar with social protection needs of communities, available mechanisms to respond to these needs, and their potential roles in delivering those services. Lastly, the existence of strong community-based mechanisms for risk management can support the deployment of central-level responses to crises (Deininger and Liu, 2009).²⁷

However, measures to mitigate risks associated with weak institutional capacity and elite capture are needed. Elite capture and the creation of structures parallel to local governments are both common risks in CDD approaches, and Myanmar is no exception. Elite capture can be a significant risk for social protection delivery since schemes intended to reach the poor and vulnera-

26. Additional examples can be found in the Note on 'Social protection for disaster risk management: Opportunities for Myanmar'. For example, following the Pakistan earthquake, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund was able to set up disaster relief centers and provide support in 2,000 communities within one day and USD 220 million in CTs was delivered to households. Indonesia's PNPM Mandiri CDD program was used to provide UCTs to the poorest and most affected households as part of response and recovery efforts after the 2004 tsunami in Aceh and other disaster events between 2005 and 2010. The CDD program accelerated community economic recovery with funds spent locally to purchase replacement goods. It also provided employment opportunities by clearing rubble and rebuilding community infrastructure through cash for work programs.

27. See also the Note on 'Social protection for disaster risk management: Opportunities for Myanmar'.

ble can fail to do so if the poor are excluded from decision-making processes in the first place. CDD platforms can also create parallel structures to those of local governments, which can undermine the sustainability and scalability of schemes, particularly if local government stakeholders are not sufficiently involved in program activities. Despite the privileged information communities possess, clear program guidelines and sufficient community facilitation of decision-making processes are needed for schemes to be able to reach target groups and strengthen, rather than replace, government structures in the process.

7. Recommendations: Social protection a short-term option for expansion of CDD platforms

Sustainable and government-led PWPs and CTs can be powerful instruments for social protection and poverty reduction in Myanmar; exploring them through a CDD platform can be the most appropriate vehicle to promote a transition towards government-led social protection provision. CDD platforms can address some of the key outstanding questions regarding implementation of PWPs and CTs in Myanmar: how to balance objectives of asset creation and employment generation in PWP implementation and how to test household-based CTs with relatively simple design and implementation arrangements, in order to complement efforts on community development. Basic care for vulnerable groups could be part of a more comprehensive menu of social protection schemes, in addition to cash-based interventions. From this perspective, the following can be feasible social protection options to explore operationally in Myanmar in a first stage.

- **Strengthening the emphasis on pro-poor investments and resilience-building in infrastructure development:** Features of PWPs such as labor-intensive approaches and encouraging the participation of the poor through community-based targeting can be promoted in order to provide a safety net for income- and food-insecure households. Pro-poor infrastructure can be encouraged through active participation of poor households in community decision-making process and a pro-poor menu of projects (preference targeting). Incorporating these features can also support community resilience-building, provide a mechanism to channel resources for household support in time of crises, and become a vehicle to further support social cohesion in post-conflict contexts.
- **Expanding the menu of options to include selected social protection interventions:** Interventions beyond infrastructure development can also help address a wider set of issues that the poor face, such as access to social services. Examples could include:
 - o **UCTs for vulnerable groups:** In addition to supporting infrastructure development, CTs can support particularly vulnerable groups such as the poor elderly, people with disabilities, and people living with chronic illness.
 - o **Community-based care for vulnerable groups:** Linkages with existing informal arrangements and SHGs can help identify the services vulnerable groups most need in communities.

As CDD platforms stand today in Myanmar, the NCDDP appears technically more viable to test social protection schemes in the short term than the MSY or any DP-led platform. First, the principle of community grants – as opposed to loans – that underpins the program allows for exploration of a wider range of social protection schemes and takes the pressure off of choosing only profitable options. Second, enhancing the pro-poor focus of the local infrastructure created through the NCDDP requires relatively minor adjustments to the existing model, making it simpler to operationalize, at least in communities that have already experienced the first implementation cycle. Third, components of the NCDDP such as community facilitation, administrative support, emergency response mechanisms, and institutional capacity development can facilitate the implementation of social protection implementation functions – such as beneficiary identification and payments – in low-capacity settings while minimizing the risk of developing parallel structures that undermine sustainability or exacerbating elite capture. The NCDDP has also served as a viable platform to pool resources from DPs, decreasing the risk of fragmentation. Lastly, the time envisaged for project implementation (until 2021) allows enough space to test the effectiveness of delivering social protection schemes through CDD platforms in Myanmar and provide government with lessons for an eventual scale up, if effective.

DPs involved in social protection provision could support government in gathering lessons from their implementation experience and providing technical advice in particular stages of program design and implementation.²⁸ DPs like LIFT and its partner NGOs have a wealth of experience in implementing community-based models in Myanmar. Advising design phases and supporting government with particular functions of service delivery such as community mobilization and communication can contribute to strengthening government's capacity to implement social protection programs.

28. Additional information on potential roles of DPs in specific delivery functions of social protection provision can be found in the Note on 'Note on 'Institutional landscape for implementation and financing of social protection programs'.

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Annex 1:

Examples social protection schemes delivered through community-based approaches in Myanmar

	HAI – LIFT-supported	ActionAid – LIFT-supported*	IOM
Name	Reducing Economic Vulnerability through an Equitable Inclusive Approach to Livelihood (2011-2014)	Socio Economic Development Network for Regional Development (2013-2016)	Village Health Funding Mechanism (2010-2013)
Main objective	Improve livelihoods and reduce vulnerability of food-insecure households in Dry Zone	Contribute to social and economic development of vulnerable families in Magwe region	Increase access to maternal and child health services by communities affected by Cyclone Nargis (2008)
Description/emphasis	Community-based transfers to establish a revolving fund to finance community development activities. Social protection components (analyzed subsequently): livelihood in-kind transfers for poor and vulnerable households. Cash and in-kind assistance to vulnerable people (elderly, disabled, children)	Provision of cash-for-training and facilitating access to services through a referral system for poor and vulnerable women. Promotion of women support groups through soft loans after training	Three funds per village: a) revolving fund to finance health emergencies in villages by means of loans; b) non-contributory health emergency referral fund for pregnant women and young children and subsidies to health workers to reach remote areas (financed by interests from revolving fund) (social protection component analyzed subsequently) ; and c) development fund (financed by interests from revolving fund)
Geographical scope	15 villages in Ma Hlaing township (Mandalay region) and 15 villages in Ayadaw township (Sagaing region)	40 villages in Myaing and Pakokku townships, Magwe region	60 villages in Myawlamyine-gyun township (Ayeyarwaddy region)
Target population	Entire villages for development activities. Poor and vulnerable households for livelihood transfers	2,500 poor and vulnerable women with children	Pregnant women and children particularly poor and in hard-to-reach areas
Targeting criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic: not clear Categorical: elderly, disabled, women-headed households Poverty: use of Economic Vulnerable Score (3 levels of poverty beneficiaries belong to Level 1), verified by communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic: villages with high levels of poverty, existing LIFT-Adventist Development and Relief Agency support such as 'trained youth fellows' and Village Development Committees (VDCs), good relations with government authorities, potential for commercialization of goods in Bagan touristic area Categorical: poor and vulnerable women with children Poverty: as determined by VDCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic: township affected by Cyclone Nargis Categorical: pregnant women and children

	HAI – LIFT-supported	ActionAid – LIFT-supported*	IOM
No. of beneficiaries	Between 50% and 75% of villagers are categorized as poor and benefit from transfers	200 women so far	About 300,000 people had access to these funds
Benefit levels	In-kind provision of inputs: cash equivalent of USD 125 per vulnerable household to start livelihood activities	USD 30/month/trainee	About USD 8 to subsidize transport costs
Frequency of payments	One time only	Monthly for 3-4 months while training	As needed
Conditions	Repayment of 25% of transfer after 9 months	Attending training	Access health service
Budget	About MMK 30 million per village fund (loan)	-	-
Role of government in implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Township: coordination with project implementation teams and township authorities for service provision Village: none. Village administrators excluded from project-established VDCs to ensure vulnerable groups are part of the VDCs 	Over 50 state service providers are part of the referral network (e.g. GAD, MOE, Ministry of Immigration, NATALA, MOH, MRRSW, Ministry of Commerce, etc.)	Implementation has been handed over to local stakeholders but there is no clarity yet on roles of government
Impact	-	-	An evaluation was done on fund status, not on outcomes on beneficiaries. Findings: a) funds have disappeared in some villages; b) meetings and activities regarding fund management are more frequent than those on health-related activities (e.g. referrals) although villages where funds still exist carry out more referral activities than those where funds no longer exist; c) referral fund could extend to other emergencies if contribution to this fund is established

Note : * Although not exactly a CDD model, this approach illustrates how linkages with government structures can be encouraged through non-government-implemented programs.

Annex 2:

International examples off social protection delivery through CDD platforms

	Tanzania – Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) (Phase II, 2004-2013)	Indonesia – PNPM Generasi	India – Districts Poverty Initiatives Project (DPIP) (2000-2003), and Rural Poverty Reduction Project (RPIP) (2003-2011)	Argentina – Trabajar (Phases I, II, III; 1997-2001)
Main objective	Improve access of beneficiary households to enhanced socioeconomic services and income-generating opportunities	Address three lagging Millennium Development Goals: Maternal Health, Child Health, and Universal Education	Socioeconomic empowerment of women by promoting and strengthening SHGs	Improve living standards of communities through execution of infrastructure projects with high social value that provide work to unemployed workers
Budget	USD 176 million (National Village Fund (NVF))	USD 44 million from government (2012) plus USD 28 million from DPs for expansion (2011-2012)	DPIP: USD 110 million; RPRP: USD 150 million	Phase II: USD 1,200 million Phase III: USD 1,077 million
Description and social protection emphasis	The NVF provides a mechanism that allows local and village governments to provide social protection schemes demanded by communities. These schemes include NVF-financed PWPs and CTS, grants for income-generating activities, and improved service delivery and infrastructure	Incentivized community block grant program that builds on the architecture of government's CDD program, the National Community Empowerment Program in Rural Areas (PNPM Rural). The program uses a facilitated community decision-making process to allocate block grant funds to target 12 health and education indicators. Communities work with facilitators and health and education service providers to improve access to and use of health and education services. Average block grants total approximately USD 12,000 village/year. Subsequent funding is partly informed by performance on the 12 indicators	DPIP: existing SHGs were encouraged to convert to the program-promoted SHGs, which means a) inclusion of poor and vulnerable women (e.g. from excluded castes) previously excluded from SHGs; b) viable economic opportunities identified by community facilitators; c) savings and loans for business development; d) food transfers under the public distribution scheme; e) in-kind credit for food; and f) insurance RPRP: similar to DPIP but with greater emphasis on the poorest and aiming at convergence with government schemes and institutional structures	Implementation of PWPs by local governments, NGOs and civil society. Average project cost USD 100,000, employing about 20 workers. Labor intensity of 60%. Project duration 4.5 months. A positive menu of options is provided. Types of projects include potable water, sewerage, latrines, housing, roads, urban works, irrigation, schools, health centers, and other community social infrastructure. A pilot within Phase III encouraged pro-poor investments by giving additional resources for non-wage costs. These projects satisfied the following criteria: a) located in one of the 300 municipalities in which the share of the population with unsatisfied basic needs is over 40%; b) fall into the category of either potable water or social infrastructure (including education, health, and sanitary facilities for those and other community infrastructure); and c) cost no more than USD 35,000

	Tanzania – Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) (Phase II, 2004-2013)	Indonesia – PNPM Generasi	India – Districts Poverty Initiatives Project (DPIP) (2000-2003), and Rural Poverty Reduction Project (RPIP) (2003-2011)	Argentina – Trabajar (Phases I, II, III; 1997-2001)
Geographical scope	All of Tanzania's 11,000 villages (Phase I targeted 40 poor villages)	8 provinces, 290 kecamatan, and 2,892 villages	DPIP covers six poorest districts in Andhra Pradesh RPRP aimed to cover the remaining districts of the state	National program; 85% of municipalities
Target Population	Poor households in food-insecure and/or remote communities, vulnerable groups (people living with HIV/AIDS or disabilities, orphans, elderly)	Communities with poor results on maternal and child health and education. Vulnerable groups most benefiting from the program are poor women and children	Women, particularly poor, vulnerable, and previously excluded from SHGs	Poor unemployed and unskilled over 18 years old, in poor areas
Targeting criteria	Rural villages prepare project proposal, for which funding is allocated based on population and poverty data	Geographical: provinces of West Java, East Java, North Sulawesi, Gorontalo, East Nusa Tenggara, West Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, and West Sulawesi to target high levels of malnutrition and severe malnutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic: Andhra Pradesh (6 poorest districts initially) Categorical: women Means-testing: government's 'below poverty line' Census information Community-based: participatory identification of poor complemented quantitative means-testing indicators with criteria such as social exclusion and vulnerability 	Geographic: additional incentives for investments in poorest areas (pilot Phase III). Self-targeting through low wage. Additional pro-poor focus through financing pro-poor infrastructure
No. of beneficiaries	20.2 million, 54% women	3,630,818 (approximately 1,835,100 of whom are women)	11.3 million households mobilized into 1 million SHGs	700,000 jobs created. 26,453 projects completed (72% of those initiated)
Role of government in implementation	Village governments support implementation at local level and district-level officers compile and submit proposals. A central office approves proposals and disburses funding	In addition to the Ministry of National Development Planning, the Coordinating Ministry for People's Welfare, and the Ministry of Finance	Line agencies are using Village Organizations (VOs) (associations of SHGs at village level) as effective service delivery agents. VOs are entry points for government programs such as PWPs (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, food support)	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security manages program through its central, regional, and provincial structures: preparation of positive list of projects, allocation of provincial resources based on poverty, unemployment and implementation performance data. Municipalities and local organizations can propose subprojects to be financed

	Tanzania – Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) (Phase II, 2004-2013)	Indonesia – PNPM Generasi	India – Districts Poverty Initiatives Project (DPIP) (2000-2003), and Rural Poverty Reduction Project (RPIP) (2003-2011)	Argentina – Trabajar (Phases I, II, III; 1997-2001)
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22,850,497 person-days of temporary employment provided by PWP, increased meals per day, increase in household assets such as poultry, goats, and pigs, and increased household consumption Flexible design allowed rapid scale-up to respond to 2008-2010 financial, fuel, and food crises to reach the vulnerable poor with PWPs, platform to pilot the community-based conditional CT that was the foundation (along with TASAF's lessons) of Tanzania's Social Safety Net Program launched in 2012 	Significantly increased growth monitoring and school enrollment and attendance, and significantly decreased malnutrition, with strongest effects in worse-off areas: enabled over 1.6 million women and children to receive nutrition counseling and support; assisted over 1 million children under the age of 5 to obtain Vitamin A supplements; ensured over 770,000 pregnant women received iron supplements; helped over 365,000 children receive immunizations; eliminated over 185,000 cases of underweight children; provided training and operational support to over 59,000 community health volunteers; enabled 556,000 poor primary and junior secondary students to obtain textbooks; provided assistance to approximately 382,000 poor primary and junior secondary students in the form of scholarships, transportation money, and uniforms; and engaged women in basic health and education service planning and decision-making processes – on average 67% of participants in program socialization, planning, and monitoring meetings were women	<p>DPIP: greater participation of women in political activities of communities; economic empowerment; higher consumption and better nutritional status among members of SHGs</p> <p>RPRP: increased income and asset accumulation for poor member households, poverty reduction, livelihood diversification, higher school enrollment among girls</p>	Trabajar II and III successfully reached the poor: 85% of beneficiaries fell into the bottom 20% of income distribution. Forgone income was, however, considerable (about half of what was earned through the program). Female participation was low (15%) though without gender disparities in income. Satisfaction with infrastructure projects was high

Source: Tanzania – World Bank (2009, 2013); Indonesia – World Bank (2012a); India – Deininger and Liu (2009), World Bank (2012b); Argentina – Berra (2010), World Bank (1998)

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