



switchasia
GRANTS PROGRAMME



NURTURING
GREEN AQUACULTURE
IN MYANMAR

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ANALYSIS

AUG 2022 // PREPARED BY KHIN LAY NWE TUN



This publication was produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the author and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

Photos by: Mercy Corps

CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1. BACKGROUND.....	5
1.2. STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT.....	5
2. GESI ANALYSIS	6
2.1. ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY.....	6
2.2. LIMITATIONS.....	7
2.3. PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS.....	7
2.4. KEY FINDINGS.....	8
2.4.1. <i>Practices, Roles, and Participation</i>	9
2.4.2. <i>Beliefs and Perceptions</i>	13
2.4.3. <i>Access to, and Control of Resources</i>	14
2.4.4. <i>Institutions, Laws, and Policies</i>	17
3. GESI ACTION PLAN.....	21

LIST OF ACRONYMS

EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual
MSME	Micro, small, and medium enterprise
NGA	Nurturing Green Aquaculture
PSEA	Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
PwD	Person with Disability
SHEA	Sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

INTRODUCTION

Background

This document presents the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Analysis and Action Plan for the European Union (EU) funded Nurturing Green Aquaculture in Myanmar (“NGA-Myanmar”) programme. NGA-Myanmar aims at increasing environmental sustainability and resource efficiency in Myanmar's aquaculture sector by supporting micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in fish production in the Yangon-Ayeyarwady aquaculture corridor to access and adopt cleaner production practices and innovative green technologies, including solutions such as micro circular economies to return nutrients to the ecosystem, and application of both smart devices and lower-end green technologies that focuses on aquaculture MSMEs farmers.

GESI is a tool that aims to improve access to assets and services for all people, especially women, the vulnerable, and the socially excluded groups. It encourages more inclusive policies and attitudes, as well as increasing the voice and influence of all, particularly women, the underprivileged, and the marginalized. The main objective of the analysis is to allow programme participants and team members to discuss and reflect on present strengths as well as strategies to create positive change in GESI through programme's activities. It will also produce NGA-Myanmar GESI Action Plan that will allow the programme to track its progress toward transformative practice and outcomes. The action will support rights-holders and duty bearers to be able to explore methods for enhancing GESI, examine change approaches, and suggest areas for improvement in programme implementation activities.

Structure of the Document

This document consists of two main parts of the GESI analysis and its action plan.

- 1** The first part of the document covers the GESI analysis based on interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with programme participants and stakeholders, as well as discussions with NGA-Myanmar programme team members. This part explains the methodology used in the analysis and its limitations, profile of respondents, and the findings. The findings as the main element of this part explores GESI by using the five key domains. Data and information collected from secondary data are also presented to enrich the analysis from KIIs and FGDs.
- 2** This part presents the priorities recommendations based on the analysis as well as the proposed NGA-Myanmar Action Plan to guide the programme team to ensure that GESI is being an integral part of the NGA-Myanmar implementation.

GESI ANALYSIS

Women, men, and other groups have different and distinct needs and challenges. Analysing these during programme initial stage and implementation is essential to implement a programme that can support both women, men, and other groups. Conducting a GESI analysis can help overcome gender inequality and vulnerability and promote social inclusion. A GESI analysis tells programme team members about power relations and gender roles within households and the community, which can be culturally and geographically specific, and will impact how women, men, and other groups are targeted as participants. The analysis is useful for gathering information on gender differences in terms of access, participation, and decision-making. That information is useful to feed into programme design and intervention to ensure that activities both reach and benefit the specific needs of all.

Analysis Methodology

Sources for this GESI analysis include qualitative data gathered from primary data collection through interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with representatives of programme participants and team members, as well as secondary sources (i.e., literature reviews). Given the current challenging operational context, in-person primary data collections were carried out with a limited number of respondents. Virtual interviews and discussions were also done with key informants and key team members. To complement the primary data collection, data, and information from secondary sources like national and regional levels' census data, demographic and health survey, available township level data and past studies, are used.

Question guides for interviews and FGDs were constructed through a comprehensive review of NGA-Myanmar programme documents, Mercy Corps GESI-related documents, previous gender or GESI research reports, with a focus on NGA-Myanmar target townships, as well as interviews conducted to Mercy Corps and Village Link team members. Five team members of Village Link participated in this analysis, providing reflections on the existing company's practices, procedures, and policies regarding GESI. The relevant MC team members, including Mercy Corps Myanmar Gender Advisor, NGA-Myanmar Team Leader and Coordinators and other team members, and the GESI consultant held internal meetings and discussions to complete the methodology and research plan. The socially excluded groups to be included in the data collection and analysis are LGBTQIA+ people (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more), persons with disability (PWD), different ethno-religious groups, especially Bamar (mostly also Buddhist) and Karen (mostly Christian). Internally displaced persons (IDP) are deemed to be irrelevant to the targeted geography.

The GESI data collection was completed by the consultant with the support of Mercy Corps and Village Link team members. A total of 9 FGDs and 16 interviews were carried out. Initial analysis of the data and information collected from desk review, the KIs and FGDs and report drafting were done by the consultant. A workshop with all NGA-Myanmar team members (both MC and Village Link) was carried out to further analyse the findings and complement with additional knowledge of the team members. In addition, GESI Action Plan was also established based on the findings and analysis of this assessment, to be used by NGA-Myanmar programme to integrate GESI into its implementation.

Limitations

Given the nature of NGA-Myanmar objectives and activities, this analysis is not meant to provide a full-fledged GESI analysis of the four townships where the programme is working, but specifically looking at GESI topics related to aquaculture production. Furthermore, despite the effort to include LGBTQIA+ people and PwD as respondents, the team was not able to identify and engage them due to safety and security concerns. It is important to note that Myanmar criminalizes LGBTQIA+ people, sex between men and the gender expression of trans people.¹ Therefore, respondents in the primary data collection are men, women, and representatives from different ethno-religious groups in the target locations.

Since GESI is considered a sensitive topic and due to limited understanding of GESI, respondents were much more comfortable answering technical questions rather than rights-based, gender-related questions. In FGDs, some respondents (i.e., retired government officials) may have influenced some respondents' honesty and openness, especially on questions they considered sensitive, such as gender-based violence, division of labours, and other rights-based issues of GESI relations. Similarly, in a few interviews with women, their husband was around, making them shy or unwilling to answer some questions. Some male respondents were uncomfortable or unwilling answering questions about women, girls, and inclusion related questions, such as about LGBTQIA+, likely because they were unable to understand the complexity of GESI topics or did not believe that gender inequality and power imbalance are existed in their individual life, household, community.

Profile of the Respondents

Aquaculture sector is considered a male domain because men are almost entirely responsible for the primary activities of pond preparation, stocking and harvesting². Furthermore, males represent most aquaculture owners. Throughout the analysis, the evidence-based information was collected and presented based on interviews and discussions with 65 persons (including 17 women) working in the aquaculture sector in the Ayeyarwady and Yangon townships of Pantanaw, Nyaungdon, Maubin, and Twantay. Among those participants, 18 were Karen, while 47 respondents were Bamar. Notably, 59 of them were Buddhists, and 6 were Christians. As aforementioned, none of the respondents identify themselves as LGBTQIA+ or PwD.

According to their age, 51 respondents are above 35 years old, while 14 are between 18 and 35. The older respondents tend to run a bigger aquaculture operation than the younger group. According to the respondents' educational backgrounds, 10 of them have graduate degrees. There are 11 people with a higher education qualification, 19 with a secondary education level, and 25 with a primary education. In terms of their stint working in the sector, respondents' experience ranges from 3 to 30 years. Many of them reported to have been using traditional technology and techniques for a long period of time.

¹ <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/myanmar/>

² Aregu L, Rajaratnam S, McDougall C, Johnstone G, Wah ZZ, Nwe KM, Akester M, Grantham R and Karim M. 2017. "Gender in Myanmar's small-scale aquaculture sector." Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program Brief: FISH-2017-12.

Key Findings

The presentation of the findings follows the five analysis domains of (i) Practices, Roles, and Participation; (ii) Beliefs and Perceptions; (iii) Access to, and Control of Resources; and (iv) Institutions, Laws, and Policies. (v) Power domain pervades all four domains, and informs, amongst other things: who has, can acquire, and can use resources, who is able to make decisions about their bodies and their health and that of their children, who can take advantage of economic opportunities, etc. Power also determines the way women, men, and other groups are treated by different types of institutions, policies, and laws. Thus, power dynamics is a key consideration throughout the analysis. Finally, while the focus of the analysis is around women and men, but as much as possible, the analysis is done to incorporate nuances based on religion, ethnicity, sexual orientations, and disability status.

Figure 1: The GESI Analysis Domains



Box 1: Impacts of the Double Crises

*"It's a double whammy that has left Myanmar with no room to breathe - a military coup coupled with a pandemic that has killed thousands."*³

Research conducted by UNWOMEN and UNDP⁴ shows the following worrisome findings across women living standards as it relates to security, health outcomes and economic impacts, under the pandemic and military rule in Myanmar. It is reported that women are witnessing violence against women and girls and experiencing increased insecurity and fear, with links to women's health and living standards. Nearly half of women report a significant increase in their unpaid care and domestic work, reducing their chances to earn a livelihood. Women are also bearing the brunt of drastic coping mechanisms to deal with falling incomes, while nearly half of them report a significant increase in their unpaid care and domestic work, reducing their chances to earn a livelihood.

³ Covid and a coup: The double crisis pushing Myanmar to the brink - BBC News

⁴ UNWOMEN and UNDP, "Advance Edition Regressing Gender Equality in Myanmar: Women living under the pandemic and military rule," <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/mn-Myanmar-Women%20Report-NEW-06032022.pdf>

Practices, Roles, and Participation

The norms that influence women, men, and other groups behaviours form the type of activities they engage in, as well as their roles and responsibilities. This dimension of the framework captures information on women, men, and other groups different roles; the timing and place where their activities occur; their participation in different types of economic, political, and social activities; and their participation in decision-making.

At home, gendered roles and responsibilities are frequently divided into reproductive and productive categories. There are also gendered roles and responsibilities at community level. Although it is becoming increasingly acceptable for women to earn incomes, they still engage in far fewer off-farm activities than men.⁵ Table 1 details categorization of gendered activities based on a study by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in fisheries communities in Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Rakhine.⁶ Consistent with other reports and finding of this assessment, in male-headed households (which is the majority case), reproductive tasks are mostly considered as female domain. Meanwhile, men are almost entirely responsible for the primary activities in aquaculture, although women play key roles in postharvest activities and routine management. At community-level, men dominate social activities and engage in various community-based organizations, while some women engage in a few groups, like religious, maternal and child health, or savings groups.

Table 1: Categorization of Gendered Activities⁷

Reproductive Tasks	Productive Activities in Aquaculture		Community Activities	
	Production	Harvest & Post-Harvest	Social Activities	Comm-based Orgs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare food ○ Wash clothes & dishes ○ Care children & elders ○ Collect water ○ Buy groceries ○ Construct & maintain house ○ Clean house ○ Household financial care ○ Feed & care other animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Look for capital ○ Prepare pond ○ Repair & maintain pond ○ Buy feed ○ Prepare feed ○ Feed fish/shrimp ○ Buy/repair/install nets ○ Buy/repair/clean boat ○ Hire labours ○ Buy/repair/install other equipment/needs ○ Watch pond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Harvest ○ Sort/grade/pack fish/others ○ Buy & put ice ○ Clean and cut ○ Boil/dry/paste/other processing ○ Look for price info ○ Weigh products ○ Deal with traders ○ Direct sale to local markets ○ Transport products ○ Record transaction ○ Collect money/debt from buyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community donation collection ○ Social service work, incl. road cleaning/maintenance ○ Sport activities ○ Trainings or meetings organized by the village leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Religious/social groups ○ Maternal and child health groups ○ Parent and teacher associations ○ Credit or village and savings groups

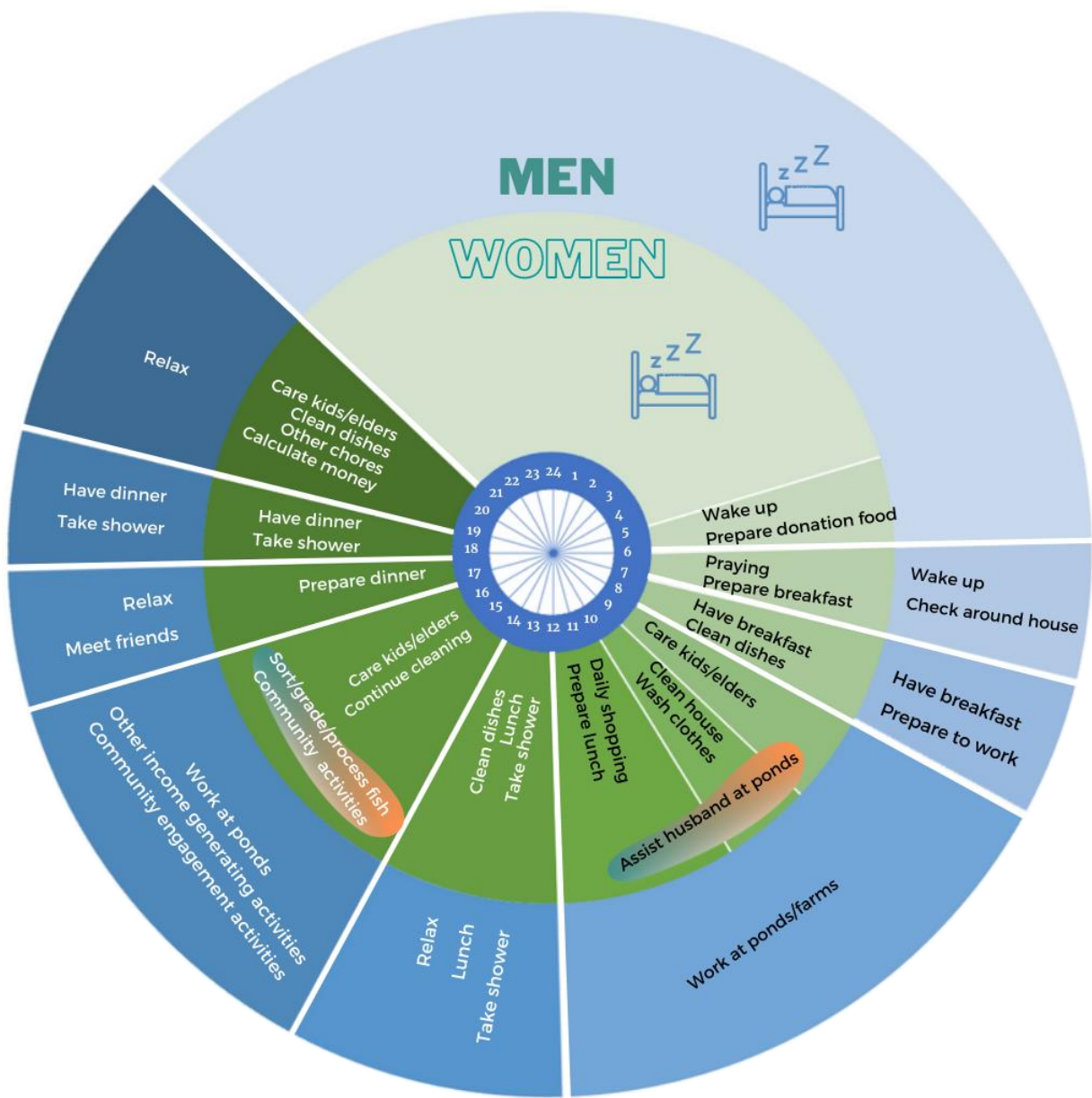
⁵ Ibid 2

⁶ Khin Thida Lwin, 2019, "Gender Analysis Report, FishAdapt Project: Strengthening the adaptive capacity and resilience of fisheries and aquaculture-dependent livelihoods in Myanmar," FAO

⁷ The report (footnote 5) includes activities both related to aquaculture and wild-catch fisheries. Since NGA-Myanmar is only focusing on aquaculture sector, activities related to wild-catch fisheries are excluded in this report. The FAO report also split out harvest and post-harvest activities, whereby it is combined in this report.

Figure 2 below presents the typical daily activity clock of women and men in aquaculture farming households in NGA-Myanmar target locations. It is important to note that there are many variations among households around their typical daily activity clock of men and women. But, in general women in the NGA-Myanmar target locations are experiencing “time poverty”. From the interviews and discussions with the respondents, it was learned that, among the respondent farms/enterprises, no women sit in any leadership or decision-making positions. Similarly, no LGBTQIA+ nor PwD, lead or manage the respondent's farm/enterprise.

Figure 2: Typical Daily Activity Clock of Women and Men



The Table 2 and Table 3 provide indicative women and men activities and decision-making powers for each of the identified key activities in aquaculture production and in using the income from aquaculture. Both at home and in their aquaculture business, men dominate the decision-making powers. Participation of women

in decision making, both at the household level and in aquaculture production, is limited. Men don't consult women in making decisions related to livelihood activities or those requiring big spending. In aquaculture production, while women also engage in some activities (like buying and providing feed to fish), most of the decisions are made by men. As aforementioned, these reproductive roles are in addition to women main roles in household reproductive work.

Table 2: Gender Activity Analysis for Aquaculture Production

Activities	Who does?		Who decides?	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Prepare land/ponds (liming, weeding, etc.)		Ö		Ö
Buy seeds	Ö	Ö		Ö
Buy or make feed	Ö	Ö		Ö
Buy other agrochemicals		Ö		Ö
Hire paid labour (if any)		Ö		Ö
Financial management	Ö	Ö	Ö	Ö
Stock seeds		Ö		Ö
Provide feeds	Ö	Ö		Ö
Harvest	Ö	Ö	Ö	Ö
Sell harvested products	Ö	Ö	Ö	Ö
Carry out processing (making fish paste, fish sauce, making dry fish, etc.)	Ö		Ö	Ö

Table 3: Gender Activity Analysis on the Use of Income from Aquaculture

Activities	Who does?		Who decides?	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Pay children education	Ö		Ö	Ö
Buy and prepare food	Ö		Ö	
Pay bills for electricity, other energy sources	Ö	Ö	Ö	Ö
Buy clothes	Ö		Ö	Ö
Buy electronics/gadgets		Ö		Ö
Pay healthcare	Ö		Ö	Ö
Save money	Ö		Ö	Ö
Make other investment		Ö		Ö
Buy boat/car/big		Ö		Ö
Expand fishponds		Ö		Ö
Store feeds, agrochemicals and others required for fish farms for next season		Ö		Ö

In rural Myanmar, aquaculture is profitable business, and it generates more earnings than other farming businesses⁸. Unfortunately, since they are considered household laborers, females and other family

⁸ The average gross margin earned by fish farmers with growout farms is nearly \$650/acre (\$1600/ha). Surveyed crop farming households in 'aquaculture cluster' village tracts make an average annual gross margin of just \$150/acre (\$380/ha) across all field crops. Gross margins for individual crops in these village tracts range from \$85/acre (\$210/ha) for monsoon paddy, to

members are unpaid. In some settings, for example among landless households, both men and women work as paid laborers for aquaculture farms owned by other families. While, in general fish farms pay higher wages than crop farms, especially for women, but gender gap in wages is common, discriminates women against men⁹. Interestingly, women engage and can make decisions around processing activities, like making dried fish, etc. This provides an opportunity for the programme to target specific support for women that has a potential to increase household incomes. Surplus catch can be processed and sold by women, and the benefits would accrue directly to women because of their role in fish processing and selling.

In addition, since women engage closely in the seed selection, feed making, farm management, providing capacity building to women in those aspects can be used as an entry point to strengthen their participation and may increase their confidence to participate in decision-making with men in aquaculture. In addition, from food and nutrition security point of view, by increasing local fish availability, small- scale aquaculture may also indirectly benefit other households by reducing market prices and food expenditures¹⁰.

While men have decision making powers in almost everything, including on key resources, to some extent, women and men participation in household decisions depend on the type of decisions being made. In any decisions require considerably larger costs or investments, women power is very limited, or if not, inexistence. Buying a boat (or a vehicle), expanding ponds, or investing in a new business, even buying, and storing commercial feeds or agrochemicals for the next season, are all men decisions. Furthermore, women may be responsible for keeping or managing family money, but activities close to their reproductive roles (such as paying children education needs, buying, and preparing foods, etc.) are where women engage very closely and to some extent able to participate in the decision-making, together with the men. Given the strong gendered roles within the household, targeting women is the most direct way to improve household nutrition because they are the ones responsible for purchasing, preparing, and allocating household meals¹¹.

Since women suffer “time poverty” due to their reproductive and productive roles at home, their engagement in community activities is very limited. As such, their voice in community decisions is also low. Invitations for any community activities are mostly addressed to the head of households who are mostly men. When asked who were invited for any meeting or training regarding aquaculture or other community events, the KII and FGD participants, overwhelmingly responded that women, girls, other gender, and PwD who are not household leader were not invited to community meetings, and in aquaculture-related activities (such as trainings). Furthermore, when women are invited to community or aquaculture-related events, they will find it extremely difficult to attend because they must spend time for household chores and income-generating tasks.

In the aquaculture sector in Myanmar, inequalities based on gender and social groups are perpetuated and even created by practices (as well as beliefs) at all social and institutional levels.¹² These structural drivers

\$175/acre (\$430/ha) for black gram. (Ben Belton, Mateusz Filipowski and Chaoran Hu, 2017, “Aquaculture in Myanmar: Fish Farm Technology, Production Economics and Management”, FSP USAID, 2017.)

⁹ The daily wage for work on fish farms averages \$4.22/day. Workers on crop farms earn 27% less on average (\$3.32/day). Further, the gender gap in wages is smaller in aquaculture than in agriculture: Women employed in crop farming receive about 2/3 of the average male daily wage for their work, whereas women employed in aquaculture earn 3/4 of the male daily wage. (Ben Belton, Mateusz Filipowski and Chaoran Hu, 2017, “Aquaculture in Myanmar: Fish Farm Technology, Production Economics and Management”, FSP USAID, 2017.)

¹⁰ Ibid 2

¹¹ Ibid 2

¹² Ibid 2

need to be addressed for on-the-ground interventions to be successful. While it might be challenging right now to bring together stakeholders to work together in partnerships to build coherent gender-equality action plans; Programmes like NGA-Myanmar, may help address the imbalance of focus placed on engaging with and meeting the needs of predominantly male household heads, and do not necessarily represent the needs of other household members, including women, LGBTQIA+ people and PwD. This can be done by putting ambitious inclusion targets of programme participants across different programme interventions. Discussions and interviews with respondents confirmed that (unlike men) women and socially excluded groups have very limited power to obtain ownership positions in both visible and invisible resources.

Beliefs and Perceptions

Social and cultural expectations and beliefs about appropriate behaviours (including individual expectations about appropriate behaviours) for women, men, and other groups, affect their behaviours, dress, participation, and decision-making capacity. They may also facilitate or limit women, men, and other groups access to education, services, and economic opportunities. Social norms and traditional gender roles have a strong influence on social structures and women involvement in decision-making and livelihood activities in Myanmar, including in aquaculture communities¹³.

The traditional view of men as the main income providers, and consequently, men dominate livelihood decisions and rarely consult their wives when deciding on household livelihood strategies. Meanwhile, women are expected to fulfil domestic duties and to assist their husbands in livelihood activities¹⁴. There is also ingrained gendered norms, whereby men are expected to be “good farmers” or “good fishers” involved them seeking new knowledge and skills and earning income; while women as “good wives” or “good mothers” are expected to fulfil domestic duties and playing a supporting role to the men’s lead livelihood¹⁵.

Interviews and discussions with the respondents suggest that there is a strong belief that men have capacities to take decisions at household, aquaculture business and community levels. While there are different ethno-religious backgrounds across NGA-Myanmar programme’s locations, this norm seems to be consistent across those different groups.

From the KIs and FGDs, a strong gender stereotyping against women and girls is found. Respondents believed that girls and women do not possess inherent leadership qualities. In addition, heterosexual men are perceived to have required competencies, and therefore, should own authorities, both in terms of visible and invisible powers¹⁶. This belief is recognized both formally and informally, as reflected in the family and community structures (i.e., key leadership positions in most communities are held by men). Because of this, even when women have a place on any committees or are asked for their opinions during community meetings, they may be nervous or feel that their suggestion is unworthy.

¹³ Ibid 2

¹⁴ Ibid 2

¹⁵ Ibid 2

¹⁶ Visible powers include controls over resources like land, ponds, boats, money, etc. Meanwhile invisible ones include social respect, trust, self-confidence, self-esteem, etc.

The assessment also identified stereotyping against LGBTQIA+ and PwD. When questioned about what kind of employments LGBTQIA+ can do, respondents assume that gay people solely work in beauty businesses, like make-up and hair styling. Meanwhile, lesbians are perceived as capable as heterosexual men in performing the distress work and hard work (such as labour jobs on farm or pond). Males are perceived as having nobility, therefore, women with sexual identities like men are seen superior, while men with sexual identities like women are considered inferior. Only 9 percent of respondents believe that women, LGBTQIA+ people, and those with disabilities can be successful in the aquaculture sector, if budget and technology are provided.



Box 2: Strong Patriarchal Society Influenced by Masculinity

Practices of masculinity that emphasize the superiority of masculinity over femininity and the authority of men over women influence the strong gendered norms in NGA-Myanmar target areas. Consequently, the ideas about and practices of patriarchal masculinities maintain gender inequalities. Furthermore, women, girls, LGBTQIA+, PwD, and other marginal groups, influenced by those norms, must accept such societal standards.

In addition, males have total control and are perceived to have overall responsibility within their household. Socially, their family members, such as their wife and children are their property; Hence, the man is the king in their house. Consequently, men have immutable control and power over all economic, political, and educational decisions.

It has been observed that males occasionally help their wife with household chores when women are absent, ill, or delivering a baby. But this happens without men awareness that they are accountable for the roles and efforts involved in their household reproductive function. It has been demonstrated that men would engage in more public-related tasks, such as community activities or hangouts with friends, after completing their productive work. By spending time together with others (i.e., at local coffee shops), men also build external networking.

Access to, and Control of Resources

Limited land and financial resources can be a barrier to aquaculture business. Furthermore, while women, men, and other groups' ability to access and use the resources necessary for a person to be a productive member of society includes tangible assets (e.g., land, capital, tools), as well as intangible assets (e.g., knowledge, education, information, employment, benefits); However, their access to, and control of key resources is different from one group to the others.

Households in Myanmar have an average of 4.2 members, and 23% of households are headed by a woman.¹⁷ Female-headed households are typically in the poorest socioeconomic group as they did not own land and had limited financial and labour resources. In male-headed households with land resources, women

¹⁷ Ibid 5

conventionally have limited access to and control over livelihood assets.¹⁸ In male-headed aquaculture farming households in NGA-Myanmar programme locations, the typical access and control profile is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Access and Control Profile in Aquaculture Farming Households

Key Resources	Access		Control	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Fishpond	Ö	Ö		Ö
Farmland, other lands	Ö	Ö		Ö
Boat	Ö	Ö	Ö	Ö
Generators		Ö		Ö
Storage house	Ö	Ö	Ö	Ö
Water Pumps		Ö		Ö
Small equipment (fishnets, baskets, etc.)	Ö	Ö	Ö	Ö
Fish feeds	Ö	Ö		Ö

Since women also play important roles in supporting men in aquaculture, they may have access to most of the resources, although they do not necessarily have control of those resources. Meanwhile men have access to, and control of all resources. This is likely consistent across different ethno-religious backgrounds. While we don't specifically assess access to, and control of those resources for girls and boys, as well as LGBTQIA+ people and PwD. it is very unlikely that they have access to, and control of key aquaculture resources.

Women and men also receive financial support in the form of credit and loans, differently. Some NGOs targeted women to receive financial support, but these were often not specified for activities and therefore spent on household utility.¹⁹ Comparatively, men were more often the beneficiaries of government support targeted at specific livelihood activities.²⁰ Specifically, in male-headed households with land resources women conventionally have limited control over land and/or pond. Since proof of property ownership is needed to apply for low-interest government-subsidized formal loans, women would not be able to borrow this loan since women don't control the land/pond certificate.

In agriculture, aquaculture, and other businesses, owning any property title is important. For example, it helps operators to have better access to loans from formal financial institutions. In general, to be able to access these loans, a farm or pond operator is required to submit proof of land use certificate²¹, and since the certificate is mostly under the name of men, women find difficulty to access formal loans from financial institutions. In rare cases, properties are legally registered jointly between men and their wife, as indicated by 15% of respondents in this assessment.

Traditionally, property inheritance is passed over to males. When asked why only for males, respondents provided answers that it was because farms, ponds, and other agricultural assets are for family income, and

¹⁸ Ibid 2

¹⁹ Ibid 2

²⁰ Ibid 2

²¹ Two commons certificates are Form-7 (land use certificate) and Form-39 (pond use certificate). Those certificates are released by the Department of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics (DALMS).

consequently, men will eventually take over it as head of the household. This is likely consistent across different ethno-religious backgrounds. Typically, the property registration is handed to the family's leader, the father. Only after the father's death, the property registration is transferred to the mother's name or the individual who will engage in the family bread-winning work.

Men are also having stronger networks with authorities, market actors, and peer groups in the local areas. This makes men more likely to receive support than women and other excluded groups. Since men have much better access to support and resources to do aquaculture business, 98% respondents argued that men have superior technical knowledge and skills on aquaculture production. Men are also perceived to indicate more interest to learn and have better access to information, knowledge and skills on aquaculture techniques or technologies, as well as capacity to network, than women. Time poverty, combined with the recently increased mobility restrictions (i.e., due to safety and security concerns) and lack opportunities to gain new knowledge and resources, have further limited productive participation of women in aquaculture and reinforced the ingrained negative social norms.

Development of small-scale aquaculture in Myanmar has been impeded by a lack of technical support, but aquaculture extension services are very limited and only available through NGOs; The Department of Fisheries officers provide none and staff from the Department of Agriculture are not trained in basic aquaculture techniques.²² Discussions with respondents suggest that technical opportunities and support are very limited and have not directly benefited women. Aquaculture programme funded by donors have also come to an end since the military takeover of 1st February 2021. As such, NGA-Myanmar offers an opportunity to improve access of knowledge and skills to participants including women and other excluded groups.



Box 3: The Availability of Safeguarding Services in the NGA-Myanmar Target Townships

Gender-based violence (GBV) which includes sexual violence, intimate partner violence, trafficking, forced and early marriage and exploitation occurs across all countries, in every society, and at every income level around the world. Women living in poverty, those from socially marginalized groups, and those living with disabilities or HIV can face multiple forms of discrimination and are at an increased risk of experiencing violence. For that reason, safeguarding services are important to support survivors of GBV.

While there are relatively limited organizations providing safeguarding services in NGA-Myanmar target townships, the following organization provide services in/around Yangon and Ayeyarwady. In case of experiencing GBV issues in the areas, international or local NGOs can be contacted for advice on reporting and referring cases. They are: International Legal Foundation, Legal Clinic Myanmar and Yangon Justice Centre officer legal services and support in the Yangon and Ayeyarwady regions. In addition, Action Aid Myanmar, Myanmar YMCA, FXB Myanmar and Association for Labour and Development (ALD) also support responding to safeguarding incidents, including protection, prevention, and community mobilization.²³

²² Ibid 2

²³ From the Referral Directory of the Myanmar GBV Coordination Working Group (CWG) website hosted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Institutions, Laws, and Policies

This domain focuses on information about women, men, and other groups' different formal and informal rights, and how they are dissimilarly affected by policies, rules, and regulations of governing institutions. This domain includes an individual's right to (amongst other things) inherit and own property, legal documents, etc.

While there are no legal regulations limiting women's ability to control property ownership (either acquired from buying or inheritance) and although women are frequently given gold and silver jewellery, men are frequently given land, house, as well as farms and/or ponds critical to their livelihood. When asked who the legal owners of their land and pond are, all respondents in the interviews and discussions mentioned that the owners are all men.



Box 4: The Crisis and its Implications for LGBTQIA+ People

The COVID-19 pandemic has socially and economically devastated many members of LGBTQIA+ communities in Myanmar. The coup exponentially amplifies the impacts of the COVID crisis for vulnerable communities, including LGBTQIA+ people²⁴.

Under the Penal Code 1860, Section 377, Myanmar criminalizes same-sex sexual activity between men. In addition, according to the Police Act 1945, Section 35(c), the gender expression of trans people is also criminalized. Sentences include a maximum penalty of ten years' imprisonment. Provided that Myanmar is now under military rule, it is increasingly perturbing that the laws have been strongly enforced and weaponized against LGBTQIA+ people²⁵. Nevertheless, this group has been regularly subjected to discrimination and violence, including harassment and discrimination in accessing services



Box 4: GESI, Land Tenure, and Access to Loans

The Myanmar Constitution (2008) provides for private property rights, while maintaining that the state is the "ultimate owner of all lands and all natural resources" and shall "supervise extraction and utilization of State-owned natural resources by economic forces".²⁶ However, many landholders lack of basic land tenure documentation, and women face systemic barriers in accessing land.²⁷

²⁴ <https://outrightinternational.org/myanmar-crisis-implications-lgbtq-people>

²⁵ Ibid 1

²⁶ Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008), Article 37.

²⁷ Alvarado G., Louis E., 2018, "Examining Livelihoods, Tenure Security, and Land Rights in Rural Myanmar", Innovation for Poverty Action, Landesa.

One respondent shared a woman's experience of not being able to secure a government-subsidized, low-interest loan from a financial institution due to an issue related to land use certificate (LUC). Since her husband has passed away, she was inherited a land with LUC, but it was still under her late husband's name. Because of that, her loan application was rejected. Since she had no information on how to transfer the LUC to her name, nor any network to help her to deal with the relevant authorities, she spent a significant amount of money for a third-party service to help her do it. Responsibilities for land management are divided among the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation for lowland agricultural land, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC) for upland (forest) lands. Residential land, meanwhile, is managed at the city level. Fragmented administration system, lack resources and upkeep on the township offices, few accurate and up to date maps to specify boundaries are among other reasons for a multiplicity of tenure arrangements.

The respondent, who informed this story, argued that those would not be the case, if her late husband is still around. Firstly, the husband could just be the loan applicant and secure the loan easily, and, secondly, if he would transfer the LUC, he could also manage it without the need to use a third-party service, since he has the knowledge and network. Thus, save a lot of money. The respondent further explained that sadly, when the name in the LUC was finally transferred to the woman's name, the loan application period was closed, so that she was unable to secure the loan.

From the assessment, it was also learned that for women to get access to informal loans, in many cases, their husband plays a role in establishing trust with informal lenders. While it is much easier to get loans from informal lenders (such as no need to use LUC as collateral), these lenders charge significantly higher interest rates.

In Myanmar, over 70 different laws govern land management, some of them dating from the 19th century British colonial period.²⁸ However, land reforms in Myanmar can be drawn back since 2012. The Vacant, Fallow and Virgin (VfV) Land Law, Foreign Investment Law, and the Farmland Law, all passed during that year, were designed to increase investment, encourage large-scale land use and promote agricultural income. These laws have been criticized for supporting investors' interests over secure land holdings of smallholders and enabling seizure and re-allocation of land as "vacant" or "fallow" that is under cultivation. Despite the critics, it is argued that the 2012 Farmland Law marked a turning point for farmers where paddy has been cultivated for generations, providing for the issuance of land use certificates (LUCs) that can be transferred, inherited, and mortgaged.²⁹

Amendments was made in September 2018 to the VfV Land Law, reportedly to boost economic development in the country by making vacant lands available for agriculture, mining, and other purposes. But it has been the subject of continued concern by observers. While customary lands were exempted in the last-minute of the amendment, the Law requires all those occupying lands that are classified as VfV land to submit applications for a 30-year land use permit within 6 months of the amendment, whereby most local villagers were unaware of the legislation,

²⁸ Peel M. 2016, "The great land rush: Myanmar: The dispossessed." Financial Times Investigations, <https://ig.ft.com/sites/land-rush-investment/myanmar/>

²⁹ Scurrah N., Hirsch P., and Woods K., 2015, "The political economy of land governance in Myanmar", Mekong Region Land Governance.

including the customary land exclusion at the end of the registration period.³⁰ Also, there have not been any frameworks to determine how this type of tenure rights. In addition, because of a stipulation that requires VFV permits to only be applied from within the country, hundreds of thousands of refugees outside Myanmar has not been able to do it.

In January 2016, the parliament, while still under the control of the military-affiliated Union Solidarity and Development Party, approved a new National Land Use Policy (NLUP) to “harmonise the many existing land-related laws”³¹. The following National League for Democracy government decided in 2018 to establish a National Land Use Committee (NLUC), which would implement the NLUP to assure equitable land access for smallholders and landless people, with consideration of customary tenure and gender equality. The NLUP and NLUC is considered a reflection of widening political space in Myanmar, including over land issues.³² Civil society movements have used these spaces for advocacy on land rights issues. Farmers’ associations and other grassroots organizations have emerged in every region of the country. The Land Core Group, formed in 2011 by domestic and international NGOs and concerned individuals, plays a coordinating role among diverse civil society groups.³³ However, the military takeover of the government in 2021, has put these NLUC and NULP and other relevant work on hold.

Boys typically assist their father in farming and aquaculture because they had to work together, males were better at related tasks, and their competence and alliances were stronger than women or other excluded groups. In general, complying to the gendered social norms, males have been indoctrinated and trained by their parents from the age of basic literacy that they should handle household matters such as ensure safety and security, making, accumulating, and controlling money and other resources, etc. Meanwhile, girls perform housekeeping work at home alongside their mother, and therefore developing competence deems to only about completing domestic chores.

A study conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2016 found that 63% of children residing in villages where inland fisheries are a main source of income participate in economic activities related to fisheries. In the study area, children started working in fisheries as early as age five and up through teenage years and into adulthood, and they carry out a variety of activities, many causing direct risk of harm including drowning and exposure to disease-carrying mosquitoes. The pandemic and the government takeover by the military, that have been followed by economic and social crises have worsen the child labour situation in NGA-Myanmar target locations.

³⁰ O’Neil K, 2020, “New Laws Threaten Family Farmers and Ethnic Communities in Myanmar,” Oakland Institute

³¹ <https://www.lift-fund.org/en/land>

³² Ibid 29

³³ Ibid 31



Box 5: Myanmar's Child Labour Legal Framework³⁴

Myanmar has adopted the key international treaties on the rights of the child, namely the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which the government signed in 1991. In November 2011, Myanmar accepted recommendations by multiple countries regarding child rights, as submitted for the Universal Periodic Review.

Myanmar's 1993 Child Law is the primary instrument that guides legal decisions. The state enacted the Child Law in 1993 to meet its obligations to the CRC. Even with modifications the law falls short of compliance. The law defines a "child" as one with up to 16 years of age or younger. The CRC has not been integrated in the constitution and local legal frameworks override the CRC. The 2008 constitution enshrines some regulations that do not comply with the CRC. Article 345 allows citizenship only to children whose parents are both Myanmar citizens and those who are already Myanmar citizens when the constitution comes into force.³⁴ Without documented citizenship or birth registration, child workers are particularly vulnerable to abuse with no clear agency given jurisdiction over undocumented children.

The 1993 Child Law does not provide specific provisions about children's economic activities. There is no specific child labour law. The 1951 Shops and Establishments Act, as amended in January 2016, prohibits children under 14 from working in any establishment. Children between the ages of 14 and 16 can secure a "fit for work" certificate from a medical professional which legally allows entry into the workforce. In practice, such "fit for work" certifications are used only in urban, more formalized industrial settings and not informal or cottage type industries including agriculture. Though some processing of products could be considered formal work, most work in agriculture would fall under a broad definition of informal work. Myanmar currently does not have a functioning legal definition of "informal" work and therefore no legal or regulatory stipulations on conditions.

³⁴ Agricultural Sub-Sector Child Labour Surveys – Children working in the cultivation and processing of inland fishing stocks, sugarcane, and beans and pulses in Myanmar / International Labour Office, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS) - Yangon: ILO, 2016.

GESI ACTION PLAN

The table 5 below presents key gender issues to be addressed by NGA-Myanmar based on a deeper analysis of the findings. The table also identifies action to be integrated into NGA-Myanmar implementation. Priorities and action are organized according to the GESI domains used in the analysis. Given the current unconducive political situation, not all identified constraints and opportunities will be addressed. As such, it is determined to prioritize gender trends and related interventions where the programme's interventions could feasibly improve, given NGA-Myanmar resources and timeframe.

Table 5: Key Gender Trends and its Potential Consequences to NGA-Myanmar

Key GESI trends	Potential Consequences	Plan for Action
Practices, roles, and participation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gendered roles and participations present in both household-level reproductive and productive roles as well as community-level activities. Women are experiencing “time poverty” due to combined reproductive, productive roles as well as engagement in gendered community activities. Men are almost entirely responsible for the primary activities in aquaculture, although women play key roles in harvest and postharvest activities and routine management (like feeding, etc.). Very few aquaculture MSMEs are led or managed by women and socially excluded groups (including ethnic minority, PWD, LGBTQIA+ people). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While women and socially excluded groups actively engage in aquaculture activities, they don't have access to know-how to support their participations. This will negatively impact the effectiveness of programme interventions. An opportunity exists for the programme to target specific support for women and socially excluded groups (i.e., in post-harvest processing) that has a potential to increase household incomes. Skilled and knowledgeable women and socially excluded groups on aquaculture will potentially increase local fish availability, that indirectly benefit other households' food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGA-Myanmar has an ambitious target around women participation in programme activities (50%). This can be further expanded to include socially excluded groups, whenever feasible. Provide capacity building to women in aspects where they already engage as an entry point to strengthen participation and increase confidence to participate in decision-making with men in aquaculture. This will require efforts to (i) target women (and other excluded groups, whenever feasible) as programme participants, (ii) design activities (like demo trainings, field day events) by putting into considerations of women's time poverty; (iii) encourage women leadership at cluster/group-level activities. In addition, data should be collected by disaggregating them based on gender (and other inclusion grouping). The data needs to be analysed and discussed on a regular basis and make improvement accordingly. Provide targeted support for women and other excluded groups to improve their leadership capacities (such as through exposure visits, training, etc.); process and market surplus production (by

Key GESI trends	Potential Consequences	Plan for Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and socially excluded groups' engagement in community activities is very limited. Key community leadership positions are held by men, and their voice in community decisions is also low. 	<p>security by reducing market prices and food expenditures.</p>	<p>improving access to equipment, training, etc.) and ensuring that the benefits would accrue directly to women (i.e., by improving access to financial services – see below).</p>
Beliefs and perceptions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The traditional view of men as the main income providers (as “good farmers” or “good fishers”, while women are expected to fulfil domestic duties (as “good mothers”) and to assist their husbands in livelihood activities. Stereotyping exists against women and girls, whereby they do not consider of possessing inherent leadership qualities. Meanwhile, heterosexual men are perceived to have required competencies, and therefore, should own authorities, both in terms of visible and invisible powers. Lack of GESI awareness among participants due to strong patriarchy values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to engage women in programme activities might be challenged by men. Women may also showcase lack of interest to participate in programme interventions. While it might be challenging right now to bring together stakeholders to work together in partnerships to build coherent gender-equality action plans; NGA-Myanmar, may help address the imbalance of focus placed on engaging with and meeting the needs of predominantly male household heads, and do not necessarily represent the needs of women and socially excluded groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct GESI training to all team members. The programme has allocated budget to support the implementation of GESI action plan, However, reviews to this budget should be done. If needed, this budget can be increased. Deliver awareness raising training to participants. This can be done by reviewing technical training and other materials and ensure that GESI lens are incorporated into those materials. Awareness raising around GESI can also be included into technical training. Conduct gender inclusive consultations through focus group discussion in the targeted areas. Empower women (or socially excluded groups) economically with the aims of (i) reducing women's time poverty spent on household tasks, and (ii) women-led microenterprise development.
Access to, and control of resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since women also play important roles in supporting men in aquaculture, they may have access to most of the resources, although they do not necessarily have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowering women, along with the associated improvements in knowledge sharing and female involvement in livelihood activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip women and marginalized groups with digital skills, financial literacy, and hands-on leadership experiences in the aquaculture sector.

Key GESI trends	Potential Consequences	Plan for Action
<p>control of those resources. Meanwhile men have access to, and control of all resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Both at home and in their aquaculture business, men dominate the decision-making powers. Participation of women in decision making, both at the household level and in aquaculture production is limited. › In male-headed households with land resources women conventionally have limited control over land and/or pond. Since proof of property ownership is needed to apply for formal loans, women would not be able to borrow since women don't control the land/pond certificate. › Men are having stronger networks with authorities, market actors, and peer groups in the local areas. This makes men more likely to receive support than women and socially excluded groups. 	<p>and decision- making, is beneficial to households and has positive impacts on local and national economies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Technical opportunities and support are very limited and, without intended effort by the programme, it will not reach women. Aquaculture programme funded by donors have also closed in response to the military takeover of 1st February 2021. As such, NGA-Myanmar offers an opportunity to improve access of knowledge and skills to participants including women and socially excluded groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Provide specific support for women- (or socially excluded groups-) led MSMEs (i.e., become demo-farm locations, support with processing equipment) and promote them as examples to encourage and inspire other women and socially excluded groups to be active, productively, in the sector. › Support women (or women groups) to improve their processing capacities (i.e., organize training [incl. hygiene and packaging], support with market linkages, etc.) › Include awareness around shared household work to men in the GESI training or other GESI awareness sessions. › Work with FI partners to promote access women to productive loans. › Provide information about other grants or other opportunities for women from other projects or donors.
Institutions, laws, and policies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › While there are no legal regulations limiting women's ability to control property ownership (either acquired from buying or inheritance), property registrations are mostly under men. › Women has a little knowledge about the legal procedures to register property title 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Women (and socially excluded groups) will not be able to access capitals to be more productive, if no loans that accommodate their needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Register both men and women (i.e., register both husband and wife in a male-headed households) in the participant registration of NGA-programme, to recognize the role of women and encourage women participation in the programme activities. › When partnering with financial institutions to develop green loans, ensure that they are willing to exclude the requirement to submit either Form 7 or Form 39. Also put ambitious targets to serve women and the excluded groups.

Key GESI trends	Potential Consequences	Plan for Action
<p>(i.e., land or pond use certificate Form 7 or Form 39).</p> <p>› Under the Penal Code 1860, Section 377, Myanmar criminalizes same-sex sexual activity between men. In addition, according to the Police Act 1945, Section 35(c), the gender expression of trans people is also criminalized</p>		<p>› Allow participants not to declare their sex (i.e., the options in the registration form/attendance sheet/etc will be male, female, or non-binary/not declaring sex).</p> <p>› As much as possible use gender-neutral pronouns (they/them/theirs) in training and communications materials.</p>
Others		
<p>› Violence against women, girls, and other excluded groups especially LGBTQIA+ people are increased due to the impacts of the double crises.</p> <p>› Child labour issue is prevalent in the target location.</p> <p>› While there are relatively limited organizations providing safeguarding services in NGA-Myanmar target townships, some organizations provide services in/around Yangon and Ayeyarwady.</p>	<p>› If there is any GBV or other safeguarding issues faced by programme participants, they cannot get appropriate support and will negatively impact their participation in the programme activities</p>	<p>› Develop safeguarding referral map and provide orientation to field team about it, to be used in case any programme participants need to be referred to the relevant service providers.</p>

Annex 1. Glossary

Gender	The roles, behaviours, activities, expectations, and attributes that a given society may construct or consider appropriate for the categories of “men” and “women”.
Sex	<u>Sex</u> refers to anatomical, genetic, hormonal, and other characteristics that play a role in reproductive or developmental processes and is used roughly as a classification system to identify people as male, female, undetermined or intersex, usually assigned at birth.
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)	GESI is a concept that addresses improving access to livelihood assets and services for ALL, including the women, poor, and excluded. It supports more inclusive policies and mindsets and increases the voice and influence of all including of the women, poor and excluded.
LGBTQI+	<u>LGBTQI+</u> shorthand or umbrella term for people who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality. There are many different initialisms people prefer. LGBTQ is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people add a + at the end to be more inclusive). There is no "correct" or "official" initialism to represent everyone who is queer or LGBTQ+. When a "P" is included, it usually means pansexual; and an "I" generally represents intersex.
Social Inclusion	The process of improving the ability, access, dignity, and opportunity for people who are disadvantaged based on social identity, to take part in society. The process requires changing systems and challenging social norms.
Patriarchy:	A system of male authority which legitimizes the oppression of women and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression through political, social, economic, legal, cultural, religious, and military institutions. Men’s access to and control over resources and rewards within the private and public sphere derive their legitimacy from the patriarchal ideology of male dominance.
Power	<i>Invisible Power:</i> Invisible power is in many ways the most insidious and problematic of all to challenge and confront because we rarely see it operating on us, yet it has the capacity to shape people’s self-image, self-esteem, social attitudes, and biases, without playing any apparent role in doing so. The media and marketing/advertising industries are classic purveyors of such invisible power. <i>Visible Power:</i> Visible or direct power operates in both public and private realms and determines who participates and who is excluded from decision-making; how privileges, tasks, and opportunities are allocated and who has the authority to control resources, people, or access to knowledge and information.
Gender Relations	Gender Relations are the social relationships between men and women shaped by beliefs and social institutions. Gender Roles are the behaviours, tasks, and responsibilities that are considered appropriate for women and men as a result of socio-cultural norms and beliefs. Gender roles are usually learned in childhood. Gender roles change over time because of social and/or political change.
Gender Stereotypes or social norms	Gender Stereotypes or social norms are ideas that people have about masculinity and femininity: what men and women of all generations should be like and can do. (e.g., girls are allowed to cry, and boys are expected to be brave and not cry.) ³⁵

³⁵ Reference from Mercy Crop Myanmar

CONTACT

AYE AYE AUNG
GESI & CARM Officer | NGA-Myanmar
ayeaung@mercycorps.org

WAHYU NUGROHO
Team Leader | NGA-Myanmar
wnugroho@mercycorps.org

About Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Now, and for the future.



45 SW Ankeny Street
Portland, Oregon
97204
888.842.0842
mercycorps.org