



Ten Years of Progress towards Gender Equality in Myanmar

2008 - 2018

G E N D E R E Q U A L I T Y N E T W O R K

Main Title

Ten Years of Progress towards
Gender Equality in Myanmar

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Gender Equality Network

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGIPP	<i>Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process</i>
CEDAW	<i>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women</i>
CSO	<i>Civil Society Organization</i>
CU	<i>Coordination Unit</i>
DACU	<i>Development Assistance Coordination Unit</i>
DAI	<i>Development Alternatives Inc.</i>
DSW	<i>Department of Social Welfare</i>
EU	<i>European Union</i>
GBV	<i>Gender-Based Violence</i>
GEN	<i>Gender Equality Network</i>
GEWD CPG	<i>Gender Equality and Women Development Coordination Partner Group</i>
GEWE SWG	<i>Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Sectoral Working Group</i>
INGO	<i>International Non-Governmental Organization</i>
IDRC	<i>International Development Research Centre</i>
LGBT	<i>Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgendered</i>
LIFT	<i>Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund</i>
LNGO	<i>Local Non-Governmental Organization</i>
MNCW	<i>Myanmar National Committee for Women</i>
MSWRR	<i>Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement</i>
MSDP	<i>Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan</i>
MCPAD	<i>Myanmar Civil Society Partnership for Aid Effectiveness and Development</i>
MoE	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
MoHS	<i>Ministry of Health and Sports</i>
MoHA	<i>Ministry of Home Affairs</i>
Mol	<i>Ministry of Information</i>
MoLIP	<i>Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population</i>
NGO	<i>Non-Governmental Organization</i>
NSPAW	<i>National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women</i>
OSH	<i>Occupational Safety and Health</i>
PoVAW	<i>Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women</i>
SRHR	<i>Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</i>
STRONG+	<i>Strengthening The Realization Of the National Guidelines, Policies and Plan</i>
UPR	<i>Universal Periodic Review</i>
VAW	<i>Violence against Women</i>
WON	<i>Women's Organizations Network</i>
WLB	<i>Women's League of Burma</i>
WIP	<i>Women in Politics</i>



Nwe Zin Win
Executive Director of Pyi Gyi Khin (NGO)

Daw Nwe Zin Win has been working as a head of national NGO, Pyi Gyi Khin women organization in civil society development and health in Myanmar for more than 18 years. she has been leading to facilitate the process on lobbying and advocacy on law reform and Human Right in Freedom of Association and Right to Information law. She has strong expertise in facilitating civil society mobilization, networking and building capacity in areas of governance, accountability and transparency. Currently, she is facilitating the development of Right to Information law with the government and Parliament as the focal among CSO.

MESSAGE FROM CO-CHAIRS

GEN has been on an impressive journey these past ten years. Guided by a capable Director, May Sabe Phyu, with the support of the steering committee and an able Coordination Unit (CU) team, the network has grown both in size and credibility, with its potential to influence gaining new ground each year.

GEN is operating in a different political climate now than 10 years ago. In some ways, there is a far greater potential to advocate for change, and a window to the outside world to amplify our advocacy, that was not available before. However as the political climate has shifted, and as new and old challenges have emerged, the space for civil society appears to be shrinking once again. GEN has worked hard to build strong relationships with Government, development partners, and civil society colleagues, and importantly to operate a highly effective network in which its own members feel supported and allied with each other. This becomes increasingly important as we move forward.

GEN's CU has grown and adapted to the increasing demands of its members, other stakeholders, and each new strategic plan. Recruitment drives are frequent as GEN tries hard to compete for skilled staff members in a competitive job market. This of course places a strain on the essential task of getting the job done – meeting our objectives as set out in our strategic plan.

GEN has met this challenge by making great efforts to be an employer with excellent standards of support and development opportunities for its staff. Any individual who joins GEN will leave upskilled. However the pressure to meet salary costs, whilst also trying to seek out innovative ways of increasing GEN's financial sustainability are by no means small.

In GEN's latest Strategic Plan (2019-2021), increased efforts will be made to look at our financial sustainability. In pursuit of this goal, we seek support from our donors. GEN has worked hard to develop high levels of trust and respect from its donors, and has been grateful for the flexibility that has been afforded to the Network in the past. This flexibility from new and old donor partners alike will be key to GEN's potential for growth and success in the future.



Sandar Thant
Director of Socio Economic and Gender Resource
Institute (SEGRI)

Sandar Thant is a Gender Specialist co-founded for the Socio Economic and Gender Resource Institute (SEGRI). She has over 13 years in country working experience for UNDP, UNICEF, Population Service International (PSI), and CARE International. She worked as Programme Manager for Mekong Institute in Thailand for five years.

At GEN, we believe that our strength is our network. The collective voice that we represent is reflective of a movement that has already begun to define transformative change in Myanmar. We look forward to what we will achieve together with our members in ten years more.

We invite you to read about GEN's journey from its origins in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis (then with 17 members) to the strong and growing Network it is today; with 140 members, a coordination unit staff of 42, a head office of our own, and 4 satellite offices around the country. We reflect on the challenges of these ten years past, and celebrate highlights of the progress we have made:

- Progress in the establishment of strong mechanisms for the national agenda on women's rights;
- in shifting political, legal, and public perceptions of VAW;
- in promoting the need for support services for abused women;
- in building a strong evidence base to challenge norms and to advocate for change in law, policies, and leadership opportunities for women across all sectors;
- in growing a strong united network that is respected and renowned in Myanmar and beyond;
- in raising Myanmar's women's rights issues onto the international stage;
- And in changing attitudes and beliefs towards a more inclusive Myanmar, one step at a time.



TEN YEARS OF GEN THE HIGHLIGHTS OF TEN YEARS OF PROGRESS

The Growth of a Strong Network

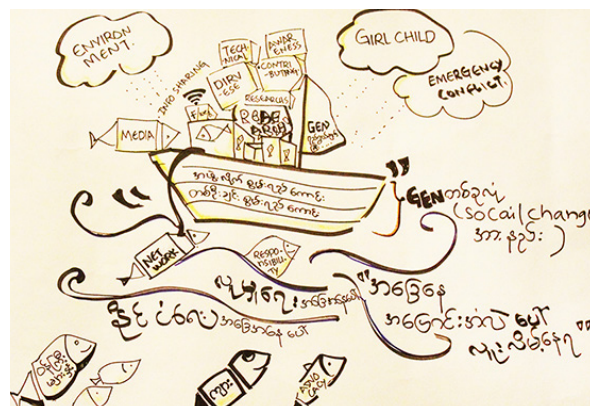
In 10 years GEN has grown from a small group of concerned individuals **(17)** to a Network numbering **(140)** member organisations, fellow networks, and technical resource persons.



GEN'S First Year End Party with members, 2015

Transforming the Nation's Approach to Gender Equality

GEN has been one of the key influencers and campaigners in the development, and now operationalisation, of Myanmar's NSPAW. GEN has influenced change in policy, law, and overall government commitment to Gender Equality.



A Commitment to Unveiling and Eliminating Violence against Women

With intensive lobbying and collaborative drafting, pulling together support and information from across the network and international legal expertise, GEN steered the drafting of Myanmar's first PoVAW law. Never faltering when faced with challenge after challenge, GEN continues to advocate for the passing of the law, and has contributed 4 major publications to the growing evidence base on Violence against Women in Myanmar.



Forever White Ribbon Event, Engaging Men Working Group, 2017



Tackling Deep Rooted Cultural Norms and Promoting Women's Leadership

Through ground breaking research, imaginative pioneering public campaigns and awareness raising events, and effective training programmes, GEN has consistently worked to break down many of the normative barriers that have resulted in the subordination of women in Myanmar across all sectors, and which have placed obstacles in the path of potential women leaders.



GEN Members' Assembly and Year and Party, 2018

The Growth of a Strong Network

The Women's Protection Technical Working Group (WPTWG) was originally established to respond to the needs of women in the humanitarian response to Cyclone Nargis and during the post cyclone rehabilitation. At that time, in 2008, the WPTWG had just 17 members.

Since the formal establishment of the Coordination Unit (CU), in 2011, the Network turned its focus to policy advocacy that aims to promote women's rights and gender equality from national to state and regional levels. Today, GEN is a key influencer, and the first port of call for fellow civil society members, development partners, media outlets, international organisations, researchers, visitors, academics, and others who seek to learn more about Gender Equality in Myanmar.

The Coordination Unit (CU)

The CU manages the day to day activities of the Network. Its key functions are to: facilitate communication and information sharing; be responsible for coordinating and implementing initiatives; manage finance and donor reporting; support working groups; and organise meetings and events. More than this, the CU is the heart of the Network, facilitating the smooth functioning of every piece of work that GEN is involved in.



“Having a CU Office is very beneficial, not only for members, but also for non-members and other CSOS who are working towards the same objective. For example, though our four field CU offices we are working together with local CSOs, supporting them to advocate to their local authorities for gender mainstreaming in their work”
May Sabe Phyu,
Director of GEN

In 2011 the first CU for the WPTWG was opened. It had 3 staff members and ran on a budget of 100,000 USD for its first year of operation. By the end of the year, the WPTWG had 49 members and was working principally with the Ministry for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. By 2012 the CU had raised additional funds, expanded the staffing structure, and had increased its membership number significantly.

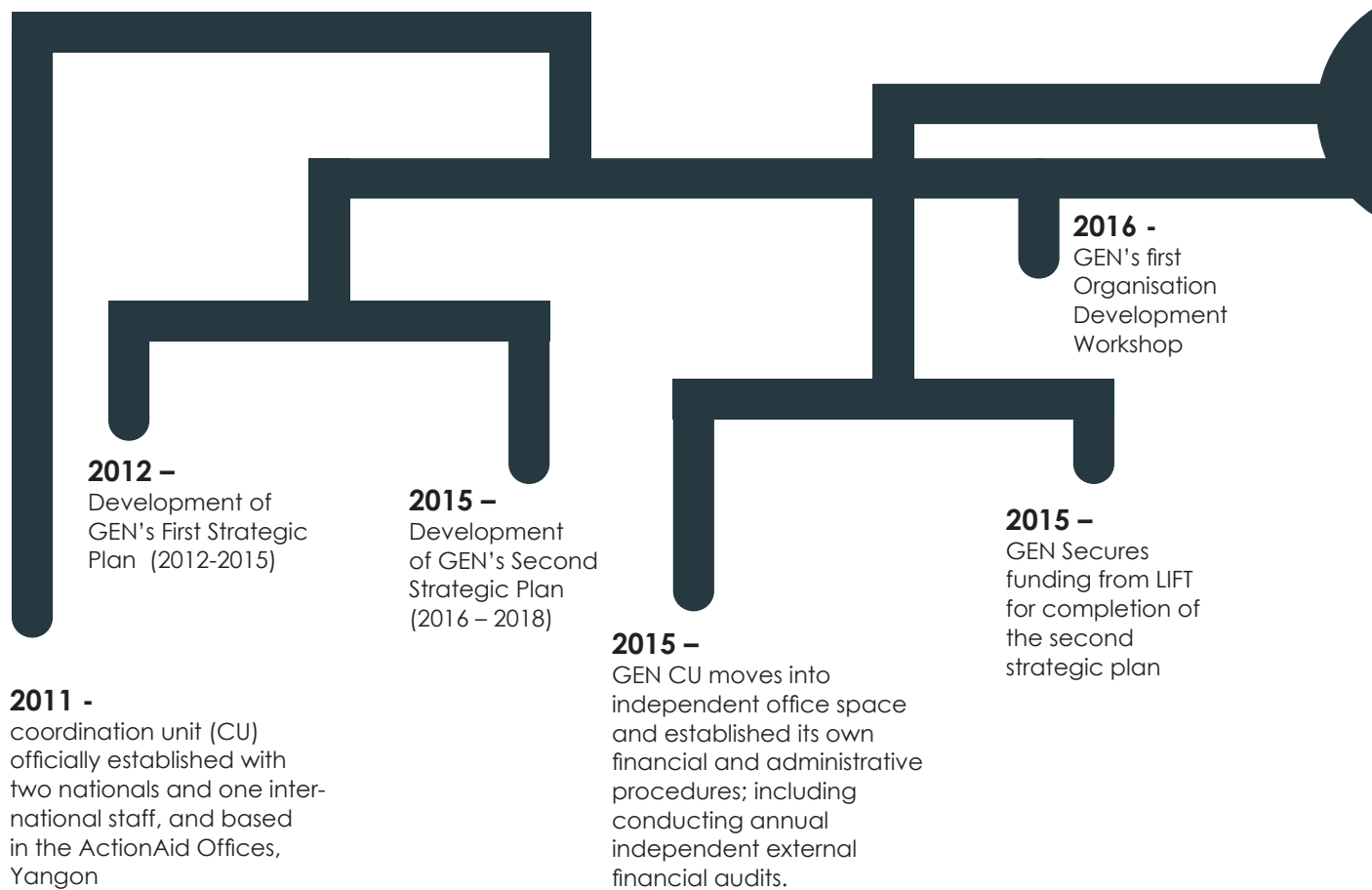
Year on year, the CU and membership continued to flourish. By 2018, the network had expanded to 140 members, the CU had grown to a staff team of 42 managing the GEN CU in Yangon, satellite office branches in 4 locations around the country, and a Gender Resource Centre, also located in Yangon. The yearly budget had also grown to more than 1,200,000 USD, with a wide variety of new donors coming on board over the years, to accompany GEN's original funding partners.

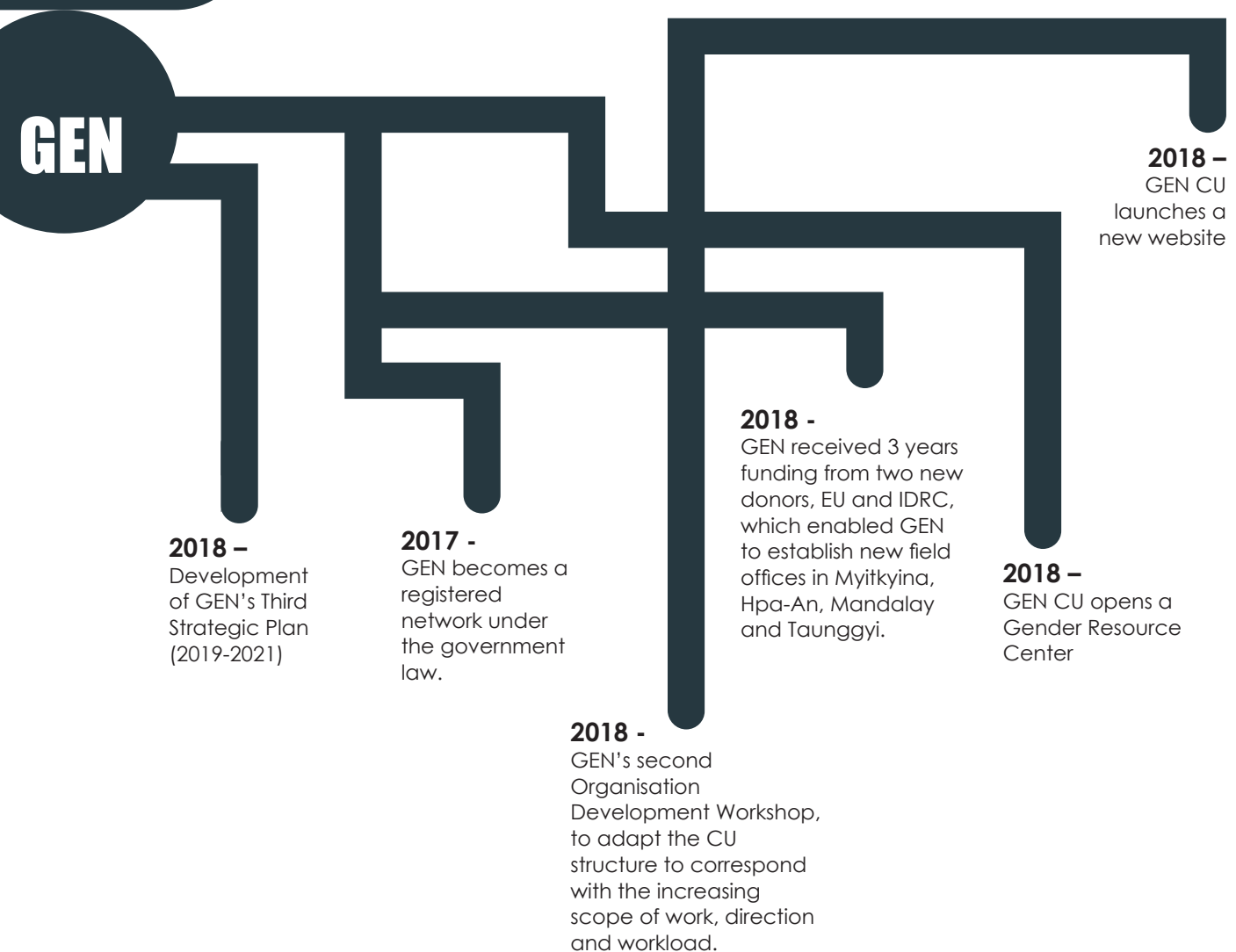
GEN expanded its work from its original sole focus on the MSWRR, to offer technical support to five additional Ministries for NSPAW implementation (Ministries of Education; Health & Sports; Labour; Immigrations and Poupalation; Information; and Home Affairs).

During these 10 years GEN members have benefitted from both technical and financial support from the CU: Publications, Policy papers, training and other capacity building opportunities, small grants for IWD, and 16 Days of Activism, opportunities to participate in national level advocacy. The CU has also provided a safe space to discuss concerns, get support, and a mechanism through which to raise key issues directly with government and parliament.

GEN has grown into a highly professional and reliable Network. Key to this has been its focus on developing important policies both for the running of the CU and the Network as whole. For example: GEN's Operational Policy, Core Cost Policy, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy, Anti-Corruption Policy, IT User Policy, and GEN's Partnership Policy, to name a few. Through the new Gender Resource Centre and GEN's Resource Team, GEN will now be able to provide technical expertise to non-members and to the public more broadly. GEN's aspiration is to grow towards a national think-tank model, to continue to provide credible information and resources for women rights and gender equality nationally.

Campaigning
Together
Facilitator
Members
Positive
Justice
Media
Rights
Pioneers
Activism
Collective
CEDAW
Development
Focused
VAW
Equality
PoVAW
Provision
Leadership
NSP
AW
Sharing
Mobilizer
Knowledge
Service
Determinands
Politics
Change
Peace
Parliamentarians
Mainstreaming
Gender
Research
Evidence
Talent
Supportive
Partnership
Government
Experts
Advocacy
Network
Nationwide





Stronger Together

GEN draws its strength from the membership. GEN members are culturally and organisationally diverse, yet with a clear connection of being committed to advancing gender equality in Myanmar. GEN has evolved organically into its present form over the past ten years with members driving this change.



GEN Member Retreat, 2017

Our Partnership Model

The active participation of GEN members is crucial. GEN's monthly network meetings are designed to encouraging networking and information sharing. All members have the right to raise issues, provide comments and offer recommendations on matters relevant to our strategic direction. The meetings also provide an invaluable forum for members to share activities held by their own organisations.

Knowledge sharing and capacity building of members is a key priority for GEN. Members have access to regular training sessions and presentations on relevant topics, as well as access to all of GEN's resources and more through the regular information sharing emails and sessions.

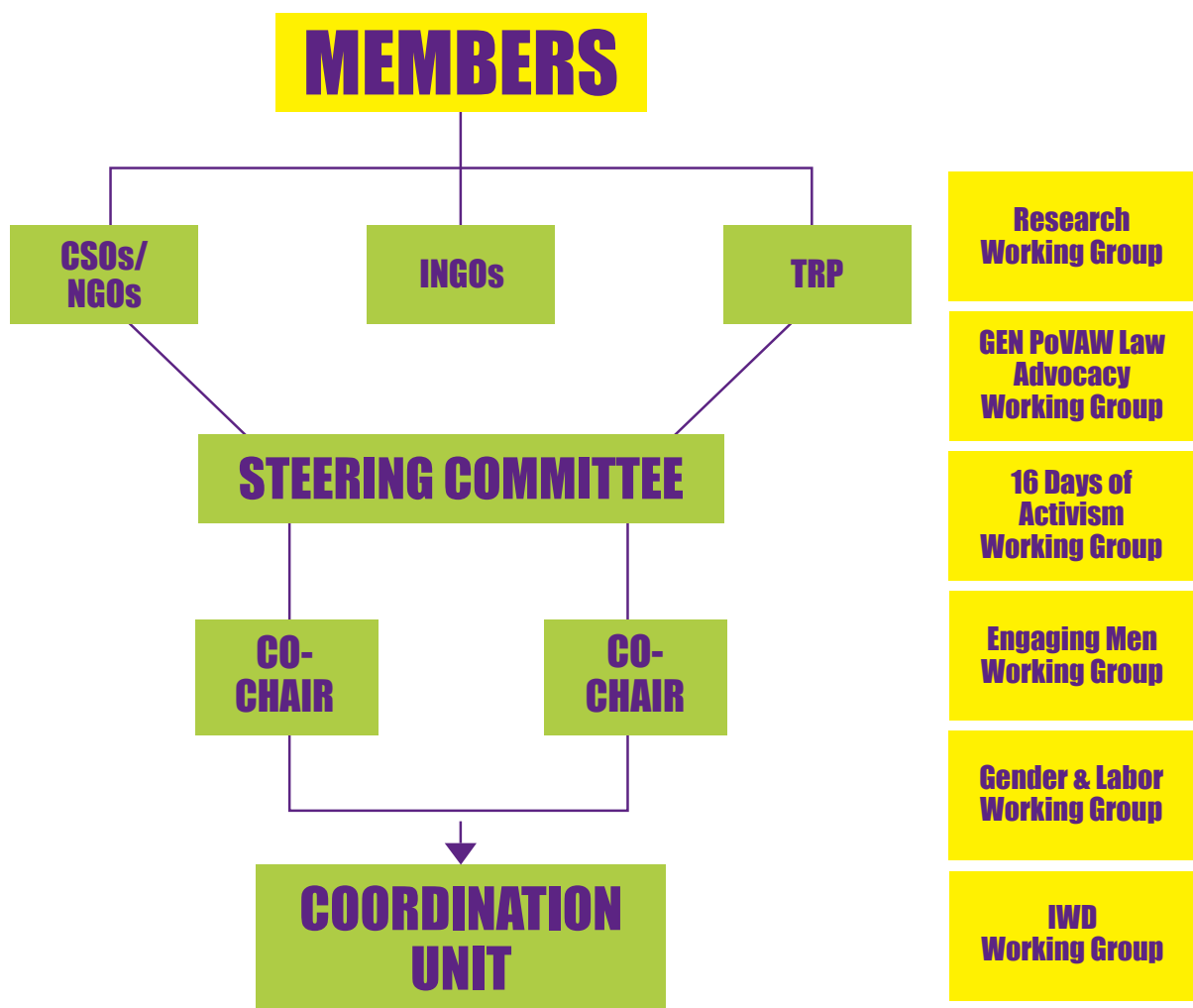
GEN's Steering Committee (SC) is its governance body. The SC is composed of eleven members who collectively represent each of the member groups (LNGO/CSOs, INGOs and TRPs). The SC guides and facilitates the effective functioning and strategic direction of GEN, and support the implementation of each strategic plan. The SC and two Co-Chairs are elected from the membership .

GEN forms issue based working groups to initiate and carry out GEN's activities with guidance from the steering committee and administrative, financial and practical support from the CU staff. The working groups are a highly effective way of involving members, drawing out expertise, sharing knowledge and amplifying GEN's reach and voice.

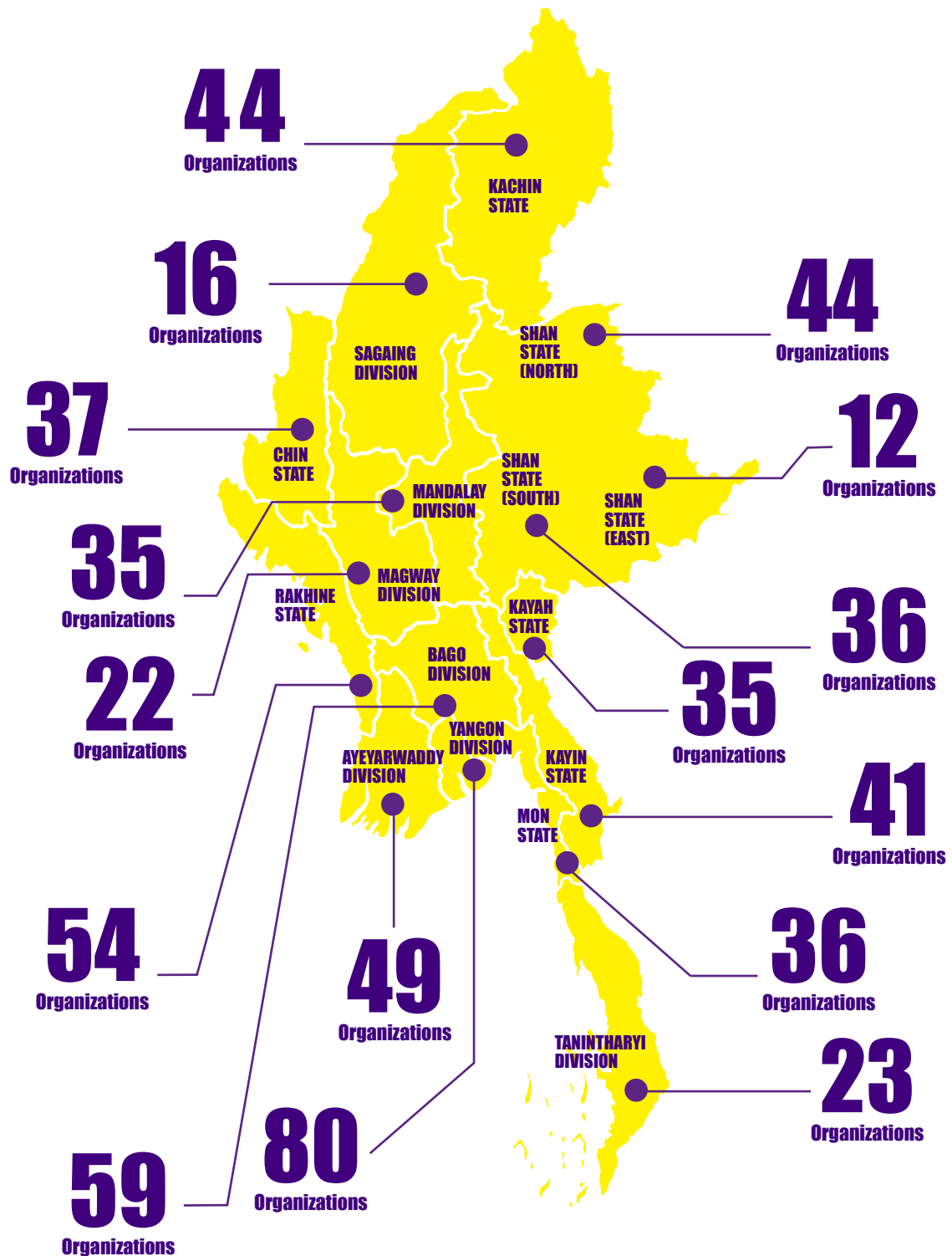


²The Co-chairs role is to oversee all GEN's activities; represent and speak on behalf of GEN; chair meetings; ensure inclusion and communication with all members; and to liaise with government and key stakeholders. Co-chairs are elected for two-year periods. Steering Committee - Significant issues that require a decision or determination to be made by the GEN are put to the vote of the entire GEN membership. The role of the SC is to lead GEN in determining strategies, priorities and initiatives; oversee the implementation of GEN's activities, ensuring transparency and accountability; guide and support fundraising and oversee the management of funds; appoint the senior staff of the Coordination Unit; and represent GEN on committees, at relevant forums and events and maintain external relationships and communication with relevant stakeholders.

GEN'S STRUCTURE

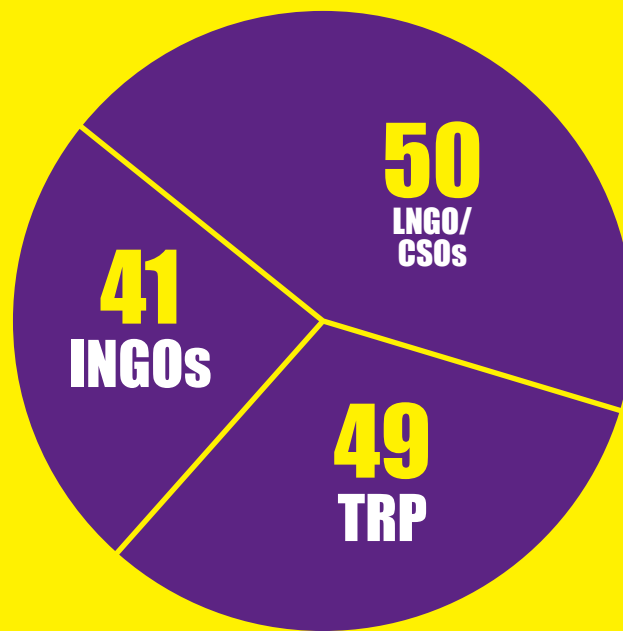


WHERE OUR MEMBERS WORK

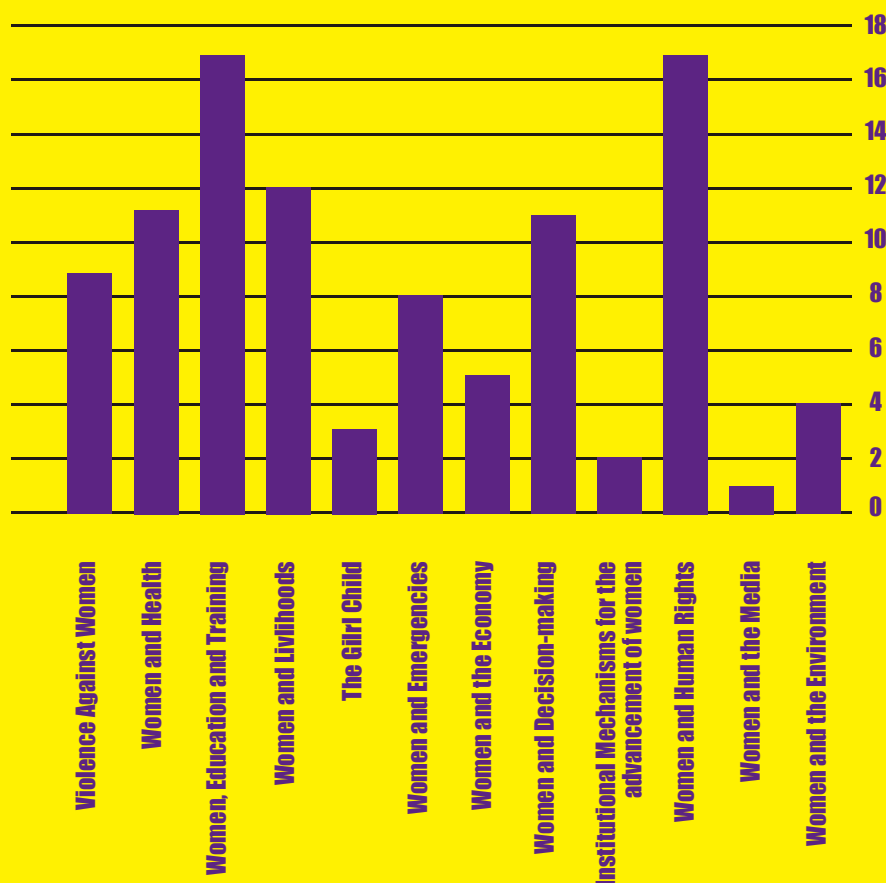


2015 Figure

OUR MEMBER COMPOSITION



WHAT OUR MEMBER DO



Network Cooperation

GEN believes in great value of working together, both within and outside of our own Network. Since 2008 GEN has forged important alliances with other civil society networks, including:

- Alliance for Gender Inclusion in Peace Process
- Civil Society Forum
- CEDAW Alliance Group
- Women's Organization Network
- Women's League of Burma
- Myanmar Civil Society Partnership for Aid Effectiveness and Development

Transforming the Nation's approach to Gender Equality

The NSPAW

Since GEN's success in lobbying for and supporting the drafting of a National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW), GEN has been at the front and centre of NSPAW advocacy efforts. In 2013 the Gender Equality Women's Empowerment Sectoral Working Group (GEWE SWG) became the formal mechanism for taking the plan forward and GEN successfully petitioned for CSO representation in the group. Over the following three years GEN continued to call for a whole-of-government approach, as well as direct donor commitments, to implement the plan. In part thanks to GEN's tireless lobbying, The Myanmar National Committee for Women³ (MNCW) was reformed in late 2016, its main responsibility being the implementation of the NSPAW. GEN is one of 7 CSO members.

GEN has been asked to provide technical support to develop and to implement the NSPAW through its role as Co-Chair of two of the MNCW's technical working groups: Violence against Women and Girls; and

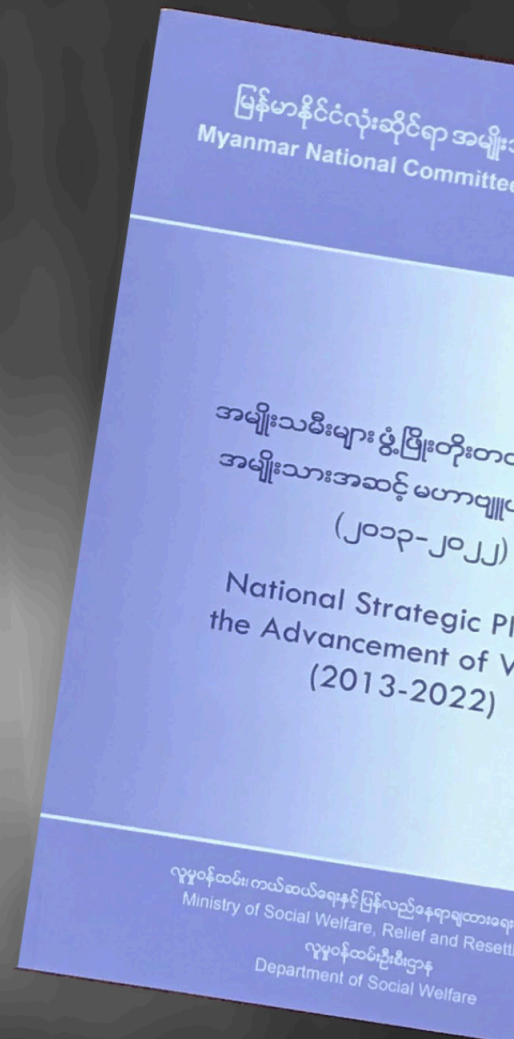
Gender Mainstreaming. Co-Chairing has offered GEN a unique opportunity to advocate for gender equality across government ministries and to stakeholders in states and divisions nationwide.

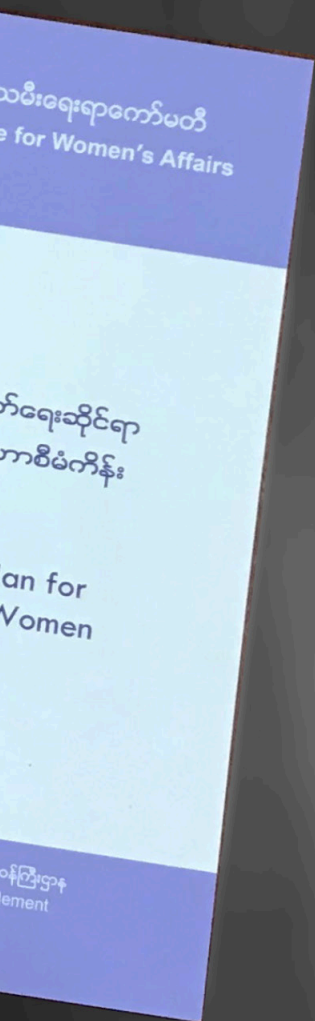


NSPAW Official Launching Ceremony, 2013

In early 2018 GEN began working on the "Empower Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities promoting Gender Equality in Myanmar" project. The project is being implemented in four states/regions in Myanmar (Kachin, Shan, Kayin and Mandalay) from February 2018 to January 2021. It is co-funded by the European Union and Dan Church Aid-Norwegian Church Aid. The aim is to enhance the capacities of CSOs to participate in policy dialogue and contribute to strengthening the accountability of local authorities for the implementation of gender-related initiatives. Also to enhance joint planning between CSO and local authorities to implement policies, strategies, and initiatives. Through the project selected, CSOs who have undergone a capacity assessment, will be offered organizational development support and multiplier trainings to enable those CSO members to work with local authorities on specific issues such as NSPAW implementation, Political and Economic Analysis using a gendered perspective, and social accountability and governance workshops.

³ The MNCW provides recommendations to the inter-ministerial committee and helps to implement the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) through four Technical Working Groups (TWGs) (i) Women, Peace and Security; (ii) Violence Against Women and Girls; (iii) Women and Participation; and (iv) Gender Mainstreaming





National Strategic Plan for the Advance- ment of Women (NSPAW)

A Triangulated Approach

Working with Government, Development Partners, and Fellow Civil Society Groups, is important to GEN. Since 2014 GEN has continued to serve in the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Development Partners Group which provides technical support on gender issues to the Development Assistance Coordination Unit (DACU). GEN is one of 15 members of the SC for the Myanmar Civil Society Partnership for Aid Effectiveness and Development (a member of the Development Assistance Policy Working Group at national level), and GEN chairs the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process.

Gender Mainstreaming Advocacy

GEN is convinced of the need to address the structural issues that compound gender inequality, with a whole-of-government, multi-sectoral approach. GEN advocates for an enabling national policy environment so that women's rights and gender equality issues are prioritised by decision makers in their policies, programs and legislation. Key successes and exciting recent developments include:

- successfully lobbying to ensure the inclusion of a gendered lens on the government's National Land Use Policy (2014-2015), in partnership with the Land Core Group;
- providing a gender analysis of three labour related laws: Labour organisations law, Labour dispute law and Occupational Safety and Health Bill (OSH) (2017);
- collaborating with Labour Rights organisations to form the "Gender and Labour Working Group" in a bid to mainstream gender in Labour issues (2018);

- Participating in the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Policy development committee and successfully arguing for the inclusion of protection against vulnerable women to be included in the policy, which will be approved in early 2019;
- Implementing a five-year project: "Strengthening The Realization of the National Guidelines, Policies and Plan (STRONG+)" with the support of "Access to Health" to disseminate SRHR policy to reach the grassroots level through public campaign and training for media personnel, together with PATH, Marie Stopes International and Local Resource Centre;
- Working with the Ministry of Health and Sports to revise "Guideline for GBV service providers", with a launch of the guidelines in 2018;



Gender & Labor Awareness Campaign, 2018

In 2018 GEN began the work of expanding its advocacy to the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Labour Immigration and Population (MoLIP), Central Institute of Civil Service, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Information. By the end of that year GEN had organized gender awareness workshop with the MoE and MoLIP on gender inclusion in the school curriculum, gender sensitive legislation, and implementation of the NSPAW effectively.



A commitment to unveiling and eliminating Violence against Women through legislative reform and a robust evidence base

GEN has built on the existing evidence base to ensure the establishment of a CEDAW compliant PoVAW law; worked on establishing a national response mechanism to respond to cases of violence; and campaigned ceaselessly. In 2013, GEN produced three briefing papers to initiate a drafting process for a law which aims to Prevent Violence against Women in All Forms. The same year, GEN conducted 51 consultations with women groups in various areas to add the voices of women on the ground to discussions about the legislation. Then, as part of a multi-stakeholder Law Drafting working group, GEN developed the first draft of the PoVAW Law in 2014. The period that followed, between January and June 2015, witnessed many rounds of revisions and edits. Whilst the draft process was initially consultative and inclusive it became increasingly opaque as time progressed. GEN continued to stress the need for consultation and civil society input. In June 2015 the Myanmar version of the law was submitted to MSWRR, where it remained for the rest of 2015, awaiting submission to parliament. GEN has now been advocating for and assisting with this law for more than five years, but the lack of understanding on the nature and threat of GBV among powerful political actors has made negotiation and passage exceptionally challenging. GEN understands however that mountains are not moved in minutes, rather it's the collective effort made again and again, and the many moments of resilience and patience, that over time ring through true change. Over the past ten years, GEN has expanded its activities to conduct gender analysis on a wide range of laws and policies and intensified its efforts to advocate for mitigating gender-based violence by conducting public campaigns. GEN organised the very first publically authorised awareness raising walk through the streets of Yangon in 2012, since the late 1980s, and launched major new publications on different facets of GBV, including considerable recommendations to government on service provision. GEN's previous and current research on social and cultural norms exposes deeply held beliefs in Myanmar that women are to be controlled, underwritten by a systemic and normative structure that condones forms of violence against women to supposedly preserve culture and tradition. GEN's interviews with GBV survivors show the impact of VAW in establishing cycles of poverty and disenfranchisement, especially among disadvantaged communities and point to the lack of support services for survivors and low faith in formal justice. The barriers to seeking services such as health or justice reveal the deep silence on this issue both in the private as well as public domains. GEN has now produced four major published works, to compliment other shorter briefing papers, focusing on GBV.



Valentine's Day Campaign, 2017

Behind the Silence (2015), a qualitative study, explores intimate partner violence and its cause and consequences, and confirms that trends in Myanmar are consistent with global trends on VAW data; Service Provision for GBV Survivors in Myanmar (2018) details available services for survivors and highlights gaps in service provision in Myanmar; Hidden Blanks to Be Filled (2018) is a comprehensive compilation of GEN's 2013 briefing papers, and discusses key topics necessary for inclusion in the development of legislation on the prevention of the violence against women; and A Hundred Cases (2018) describes a number of VAW cases and expands on the failings of the Myanmar justice system for survivors. Additionally, GEN has a broad catalogue of accompanying Training Programmes on VAW, and has kept up a huge National Level Advocacy Effort in response to relevant international and national opportunity to promote an end to violence against women, and justice for the survivors.



The Book Launch Ceremony

Tackling Deep Rooted Norms and Cultural Beliefs + Women's Leadership

Combining Research, Advocacy, and Training to tackle deep rooted discriminatory norms and practices tackling the underlying norms and beliefs which justify the subordination of women in Myanmar, has been key for GEN. In GEN's early days investigation was, by political necessity, tentative and slow. In 2013, GEN initiated an important workshop on "Gender and Buddhism" at Sagaing Convent. The workshop aimed to help participants think about traditional Buddhist values, so integral to so much of Myanmar Society, with a view to



promoting cooperation, and peace building. Over the course, a landmark study into cultural norms and social practices was undertaken by GEN, culminating in the report launch in 2015. Raising the Curtain: Cultural Norms, Social Practices, and Gender Equality in Myanmar, is a qualitative study that focuses on the ways in which discriminatory social practices and

norms serve as obstacles to women's advancement across all sectors, including in decision-making and leadership positions. This study is now widely acknowledged as the starting point to understanding the systemic imbalances that impact gender equality in Myanmar.

In the years that followed, GEN conducted awareness raising campaigns to bring these findings into the public domain. The GEN working groups on Engaging Men and International Women's Day partnered with other organizations and networks and designed campaigns to generate awareness on restrictive norms both within the general public, as well to targeted stakeholders such as parliamentarians. On Valentine's Day 2016, GEN and partners conducted a public event in the People's Park to create awareness of alternative norms around masculinity. The focus on positive masculinity fuelled new male engagement in the quest for gender equality. That same year, GEN partnered with the Human Rights Human Dignity Film Institute to train eight filmmakers on key gender concepts. Their resulting films were screened as part of the renowned Human Rights Human Dignity International Film festival. And for the 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2016, GEN's flash mobs & singing contest reached thousands of people to spread the word about mutual respect and a violence-free society.

Advancing Women's Leadership

GEN advocates for greater women's participation at all levels of decision making. Early in 2012, GEN and Phan Tee Eain produced two briefing papers, "Gender Equality in Public Life and Elected Office" and "Myanmar Women in Parliament 2012" offering gendered analysis on the participation of women in government and in parliament. These documents became useful tools in advocating for temporary special measures to be introduced. In 2014, GEN launched "Taking the Lead: An Assessment of Women's Leadership Training Needs and Training Initiatives in Myanmar" and partnered with the Centre for Creative Leadership to deliver a training of trainers (TOT) programme to develop women leaders amongst the membership. As of 2018, these trainers had delivered more than one hundred trainings around Myanmar including several ethnic minority areas. In 2017, GEN launched a gender impact assessment of the 2015 elections, "Gender and Politics: Women and Men Candidates in 2015 Election" The assessment identified key factors affecting women's desire and ability to run for and secure parliamentary seats. The assessment additionally lays a foundation for a study on decentralisation. In 2019, through a partnership with IDRC, McGill University and the Asian Institute of Technology, research on "Gender and Decentralisation" will explore the parliamentary political system with a view to drawing out male perspectives on women's political participation.



"Women's Leadership of Training of Trainers" with Center for Creative Leadership, 2014

⁴ 2016 GEN engaged parliamentarians in a joint meeting conducted with Oxfam and Women Can Do It (WCDI) on the importance of adopting temporary special measures (TSMs), such as quotas, within all governance tiers to promote women's leadership, and launched a joint briefing paper at the event.

Women and Human Rights

Since early 2013 GEN turned its attention towards a broader rights based legal framework, strongly advocating - "Women's Rights are Human Rights" This has been an important perspective to project both in terms of GEN's work at home, and in terms of GEN's international advocacy.



Myanmar CSO's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Report Presentation to UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, 2015

After almost 2 years of hard fought advocacy against the four Protection of Race and Religion Bills, the laws were passed in 2015. Among other contentious issues the bills restrict women's reproductive rights and restrict their right to choose a life partner. The passing of these laws despite GEN's continued lobbying through government, parliamentarians, and media channels, was a great disappointment for GEN and all those working towards women's rights in Myanmar. However, with the characteristic resilience, the passing of these laws ultimately only served to strengthen the network and garner further public support for rights respecting legislation in Myanmar.

To this end, GEN has engaged with the Interfaith Dialogue and various organizations working on freedom of religion, social cohesion and religious harmony.

GEN has taken every available opportunity to connect with broader human rights work, at home and abroad, in the interest of pushing ever closer towards the networks ultimate vision, of a Myanmar with gender equality at all levels. GEN has been involved in the "Human Rights and Human Dignity International Film Festival -Myanmar" in 2016 & 2017 and has provided a Gender Equality Film Award.

GEN's international engagement continues to grow, with two distinct advantages, one is the increased international focus and pressure on Myanmar towards reaching a goal of a more inclusive and equal society; and secondly, in terms of new connections



Official Hearing Session of Myanmar CSO Women Delegations at 64th Session of UN CEDAW Committee Meeting in Geneva, 2016

fostered with international institutions. These connections have supported and informed GEN's growth and maturity over time, into the large, strong, influential network that it is today. Too many to number in their entirety, here are a selection of the International Women's Rights and Human Rights Events that GEN has participated in between 2015 and 2018: Stockholm Forum on Security and Development (Sweden), Commission on the Status of Women (USA), UN's CEDAW review (Switzerland), the Convergences Myanmar Forum (Myanmar), TEDx Yangon (Myanmar), the Human Rights Human Wrongs panel discussion (Norway), the 2018 4W Summit on Women, Gender and Wellbeing (USA), as well as key events in Cambodia, Thailand, Germany, and Nepal, among others. Additionally, since 2015 GEN has participated in the Myanmar Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a key UN forum which reviews the human rights records of all UN Member States, providing an extensive report on Myanmar's gender progress.

GEN continues to endorse and release statements calling for an end to violence against women and for the abolition of practices, policies, and legislation that would amount to a violation of women's human rights. All of this ongoing advocacy work is absolutely essential to advancing the cause of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Myanmar, it is time consuming and costly and hard to fit into a project framework. Some of it is predictable, some reactionary, but it is the bread and butter of rights based work.



Women and Peace

As one of the strongest voices and information providers on gender equality in Myanmar, and by virtue of GEN's work on VAW, Women and Peace is an area which GEN has maintained an import influence.

GEN, along with WON and the Civil Society Forum for Peace, held the hugely successful National Women's Dialogue: Peace, Security and Development in Myanmar in 2013. The Dialogue was the first large scale nationwide event focusing on raising awareness and advocating for women's participation in Myanmar's peace process. The event, attended by over 700 people from the general public, included a key note speech by Nobel Peace Laureate and Women's Rights Activist, Leymah Gbowee, and a public film screening of "Pray the Devil Back to Hell".

GEN's Director is the Chair of the AGIPP and GEN has been an active participant since the beginning of the formation of the alliance, supporting AGIPP events, drafting policy briefings, advocacy letters and a WPS Standards document, as well as contributing resource persons to the steering committee meetings and events. Additionally, GEN members and CU staff have also contributed substantial time, budget, and technical expertise to the ongoing 21st Century Pan Long Process, advocating for gender equality in peace negotiations and key priorities.

GEN participated in the CSO Forum on Peace and also works closely with the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee to which GEN has contributed by providing technical input and gender analysis of a (i) Policy Paper on Federalism; and a (ii) Policy Paper on Relief, Resettlement and Rehabilitation.



Women, Peace And Security Forum, (WPS) Forum

Knowledge Experts and Field Leaders



CEDAW Sign Language Development Workshop with Deaf Resource Center in Yangon, 2016

GEN has become a leader in the field and the go-to body on gender equality in Myanmar. As such GEN is often called on to support and comment on topics and causes beyond our strategic plan's remit. One of the greatest strengths that GEN has, in the eyes of its members and broader community, is its ability to support and respond.

GEN offers technical support to a wide variety of stakeholders and GEN's myriad briefing papers, policy documents and IEC materials, provide a significant technical source base from which others may draw (both members and beyond), to shape and improve their programming, policy, and advocacy efforts towards greater success on gender equality.

GEN stands for the needs of the marginalized and the vulnerable. GEN has provided technical and financial support to the Myanmar Deaf Community Development Association to develop a sign language interpretation of CEDAW, as well as GBV TOT and multiplier trainings to the deaf community. GEN has worked with the LGBTQI groups in advocating for a repeal of the highly discriminatory penal code section 377, and GEN has offered support when needed to sex worker groups and women from various ethnic communities.

GEN responds to emergencies: From GEN's roots during the response to Cyclone Nargis, and over the past 10 years GEN has published papers and research reports relating to gender in emergency response.

"Women's Protection Assessment, Post Cyclone Nargis" 2010

"Women Needs Assessment in IDP Camps, Kachin State" 2013

"Gender Needs Assessment in Myanmar Floods, 2015" 2016

GEN also supported the DSW in Kayin State to include a gender analysis in their needs assessment of the 2018 Floods in Kayin State.

Innovative, Pioneering Advocacy

GEN has pushed boundary after boundary in its relationship with the media, and in finding ways to bring key messages to the general public. This is significant considering the highly conservative and censored approach to media publishing and broadcasting in Myanmar before 2012. Then, women's rights and gender equality issues were entirely absent from any reporting. GEN, with great caution and patience, gradually convinced media outlets, including government-owned media, to begin to include women's rights issues. Over the years that followed, GEN built on these relationships to make campaigning through the media a key feature of all campaign strategies.

GEN has been organizing annual campaigns for 16 Days of Activism, a global campaign to emphasize that violence against women is a violation of human rights. 16 Days has provided inspiration for some of GEN's most imaginative advocacy events. In 2016 GEN organised a series of events including, flash mobs, a VAW themed talk show, and a multi-round 'Forever White Ribbon Singing Contest', to spread the message about a violence free society. These events reached thousands of people and were covered in a wide variety of TV, radio and print media outlets. The "Forever White Ribbon" Singing Contest used the popular format of a televised contest to engage a wide audience across Myanmar with GEN and key GBV messages. The live final was attended by an audience of 300 people.



Forever White Ribbon Singing Contest, 2016

For 16 Days of Activism 2017, GEN organised a Traditional Chanting (Than Gyat) Contest in Mandalay and Yangon. The event, broadcast on MRTV and Facebook Live, was the very first time chanting contests been used to share key messages about GBV. The online broadcast alone had 503,000 viewers for the Mandalay contest and 1 million viewers for the Yangon contest. GEN was again pushing boundaries in 2018, in organising the “Forever White Ribbon Film Festivals” in Sittwe, Yangon, Mandalay, Myitkyina, Hpa-An and Taunggyi. Ten Documentaries and short films related to violence against women were aired in accessible public spaces. In all areas the films received wide public attention and good coverage: about 700 views were recorded in Yangon, 780 in Mandalay, 412 in Myitkyina and 335 in Taunggyi and 950 in Sittwe and 488 in Hpa An. Very importantly the festival was the first large public event in Sittwe since the start of the conflict in Rakhine State. GEN engaged in positive dialogue with local authorities in Sittwe to ensure that the event could take place. From Television and Radio Appearances by GEN members and staff, to flash mob events, awareness raising walks, public televised singing competitions, films, documentaries, street theatre, themed musical performances, and even taking-over a shopping centre with an awareness raising event. Here are some images of GEN's most special memories of these hugely important moments.



Forever White Ribbon Traditional Chanting (Than Gyat) Contest, 2017



Note on Finances

Our financial sustainability is crucial to our ability to achieve our strategic goals. It becomes very challenging for GEN to implement long term advocacy projects, or the institutional development although GEN has been fortunate in its relationships with donors to date. Without dedicated fund for core cost to maintain a committed and skillful human resources, future sustainability of network could be at a risk.

Fund Received (Up to 2018)

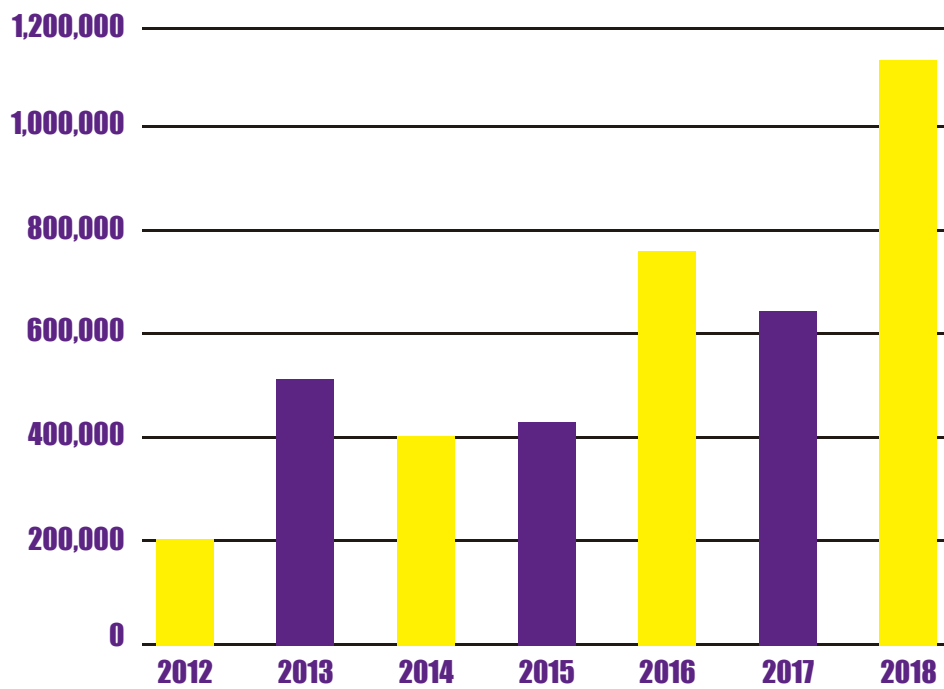
DONOR	AMOUNT (\$)
Action Aid	117,959
CARE	252,055
DAI	468,690
EU	525,031
IDRC	68,851
LIFT	2,265,055
Oxfam	48,000
Pyoe Pin	399,967
Trocaire	596,515
US Embassy	15,000
TOTAL	4,757,123

Expenditure Summary by 2018

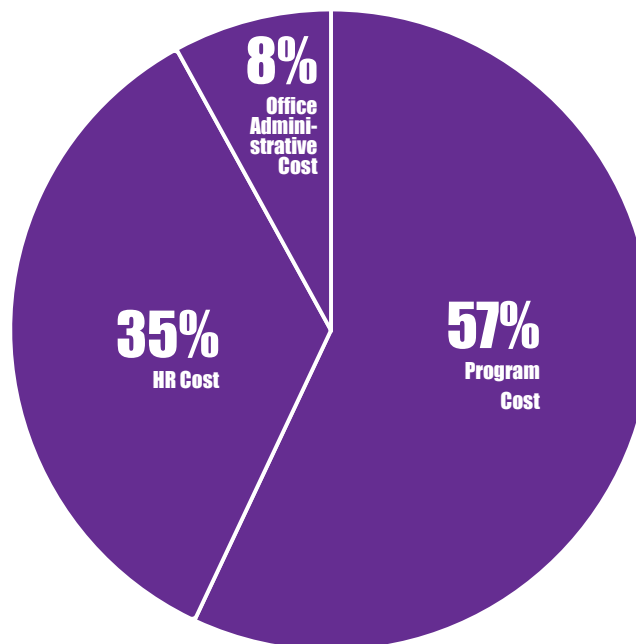
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (\$)
HR Cost	1,450,215
Office Administrative Cost	322,671
Program Cost	2,395,121
GRAND TOTAL	4,168,007

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (\$)
Current Fund Balance	392,918

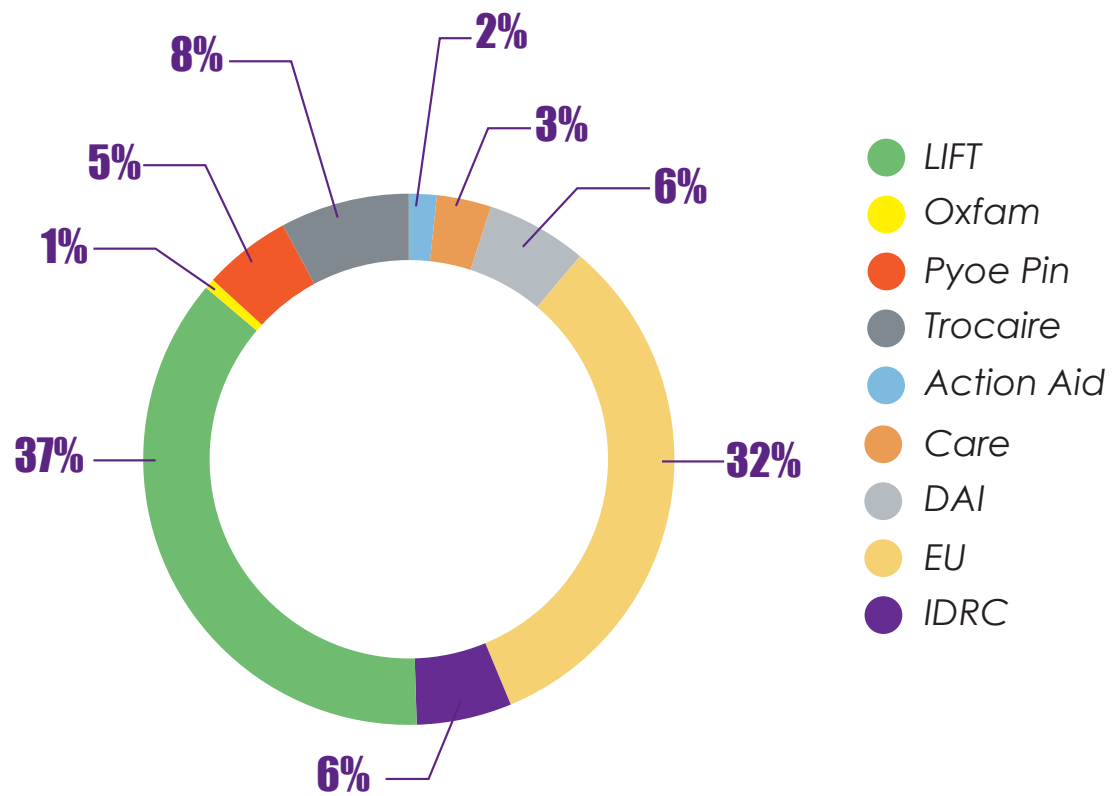
Expenditure 2012 - 2018



Expenditure Summary by 2018



Donor Contribution 2011 - 2021











Great progress has been made, but there is still so much more to do, and so many challenges to be overcome ... This is only the beginning.

GEN has faced many significant challenges, notably those wrought by the complexity of political life in Myanmar and the highly sensitive nature of much of GEN's work. Breaking down normative barriers and pushing for change has at times been dangerous and obstructions to progress have been numerous, especially in relation to the passing of the PoVAW law, and in response to GEN's advocacy against the Four Protection of Race and Religion Laws. Criticism of GEN from conservative stakeholders continues. While not new, these critiques represent a substantial threat, not only to project outcomes but also to the safety and wellbeing of key individuals in GEN's CU and SC. GEN continues to balance advocacy with an awareness of the risks posed. There is a growing concern that space for civil society continues to shrink in Myanmar, which makes the pre-existing links GEN has built, in particular with government, all the more crucial.

GEN has had to continually adapt, be resilient and resourceful; finding innovative ways to work with the new government and forming alliances with other civil society groups and development partners to bolster advocacy messages. An important recent example was the formation of a joint advocacy team of GEN and women's groups and networks to continue to push forward on advocacy for the passing of PoVAW. The Network and the CU itself is often challenged by the expectations of different stakeholders. Whilst GEN's strength lies in the diversity of its members, it can be hard to reach consensus, and harder still to satisfy everybody. At times GEN members' expectations and demands can be quite different from those of other stakeholders, this is additionally complicated when stakeholders see GEN as something it cannot be, for example as "a service provider" rather than "an advocacy network".

GEN operates on a basis of trust with its members and stakeholders. Members, once accepted into the network are not bound by any legal or financial obligation to GEN. GEN endeavours to be inclusive and generous in sharing knowledge and information, and in return seeks the active participation of members in network activities. In this way GEN is vulnerable in that it offers a great deal to members without necessarily being guaranteed a return, or even adherence to GEN's code of conduct. A related concern is the dwindling of engagement by senior staff from member organisations. In their place unsupported junior staff or gender focal persons (who may have little guidance to build knowledge in the gender aspect of their role), may be sent along to activities and meetings.

The CU itself has been consistently challenged by the nature of the job market in Myanmar. Maintaining suitable and committed employees is difficult, due to the competitiveness of the sector. GEN continues to prioritise building the capacity of its staff, and creating learning opportunities for all team members. GEN has been fortunate in its relationships with donors to date, however an ongoing struggle for GEN is the inflexibility of much of the available funding. The format of donor funds is often most suitable to project activities, rather than long term ongoing advocacy projects, or the building of institutional capacity. For GEN this poses a real threat. Without dedicated funds for office running costs and staff salaries to help maintain a committed and able staff team, and funding which reflects the slow nature of political advocacy, the pursuit of gender equality, and indeed the networks own future sustainability, could be placed at risk.

Where is GEN Going Next, and How Can You Help?

All of this has been achieved in 10 short years, when 10 years ago to even mention “gender” was highly sensitive, indeed next to impossible. And yet none of this would have been possible without an ongoing commitment from the donors who enable GEN to keep going and to keep growing, giving GEN the space and flexibility to do the tireless work of slowly, steadfastly, pushing forward the gender agenda. So much of what you have read about in this review or in the yearly reports you may receive, is the result of the sometimes quiet, and sometimes loud, footwork of negotiation, discussion, and repetition.

As GEN moves forward to another 10 years of hard work, the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan commits GEN to:

- continue to advocate for the review and amendment of discriminatory laws and policies;
- undertake new research on Gender & Decentralization;
- advocate for Gender Responsive Budgeting;
- undertake new research on gender norms and practices in relation to the world of work; and
- continue to strengthen the network and support members to work effectively for women’s rights and gender equality;
- run informed advocacy initiatives; and
- seek options for enhanced financial sustainability
- continue to strengthen evidence base on Gender Based Violence, including exploring the evidence-base around masculinities, and to undertake new quantitative research on GBV;

Some of this work is neat and well defined from start to end, such as a research project. However much of the work of ongoing advocacy and support for institutional, legal, and policy change, takes great commitment to long term advocacy. It is change that happens in small incremental bursts, with often several steps back for each step forward.

GEN still has a great need for flexibility from its donors in order to be able to do this work. You can help GEN by coming on board with confidence in our past, and in our commitment to the future of GEN, and to a Myanmar of equality and inclusion.

Recommendations to Donors in support of GEN:

1

GEN is still a young Network, but has shown incredible determination, care, and wisdom in her growth to date. GEN needs stable support to move towards a more sustainable financial future.

Support the Institutional development of GEN, and in particular support GENs operational costs such as office rent, staffs salaries and other supplies proportionately

2

Transforming Systems, Structures, and Practices for Gender Equality takes time.

Support GEN with long term funding that recognises the slow and unpredictable nature of policy change and implementation by government. Recognising also the lengthy and complex nature of coordination between ministries, and the slow transfer of practices and policies from the national to the state and region level.

3

Strengthen Civil Society as a whole.

Consider the development of a consolidated strategy for enhanced donor coordination in funding CSOs to strengthen civil society as a whole, and reduce competition between CSO.



Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund



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