



# ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IN EMERGING MYANMAR

Annual Report 2019

**GENDER EQUALITY NETWORK**



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Gender Equality Network  
99/1A - D, Lamai condo, Myay Nu Street,  
Sanchaung tsp, Yangon, Myanmar  
+95 9421144394  
genderequalitynetwork@genmyanmar.org  
www.genmyanmar.org

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Elisha Say

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# **GENDER EQUALITY NETWORK**

## **GOAL**

Myanmar is a society in which there is gender equality at all levels and in all sectors, and where human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

## **OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

To achieve gender equality and social justice by transforming discriminatory systems and structures, norms and practices.

## **SPECIFIC KEY OBJECTIVES**

The underlying objective on social practices and cultural norms, cuts across all areas of GEN's work. Addressing discriminatory social practices and cultural norms is essential in working towards GEN's overall objective of the transformation of systems, structures and practices towards gender equality building on the underlying principles of equality, non-discrimination and inclusiveness with the following strategic objectives:

### **Strategic Objective 1:**

Institutional mechanisms for gender equality are strengthened and are effectively contributing to gender issues being addressed across sectors.

### **Strategic Objective 2:**

GEN is a dynamic network of skilled and confident members who are able to work effectively for gender equality and social justice.

### **Strategic Objective 3 (underlying):**

Discriminatory cultural norms and social practices are changed and gender equal norms and practices are articulated and reinforced.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

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As Co-Chairs of this well established and well recognized network, we wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of GEN who have contributed significantly to the success of the network and special thanks are due to the dedicated and hardworking team of GEN Coordination Unit.

The year 2019 has been successful but a challenging year for GEN as new donors came on board as the network had grown tremendously resulting in more work for the coordination unit. However, GEN was able to undertake more nation-wide researches on topics of importance to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment.

With additional donors, GEN was able to expand its coverage beyond Yangon, to reach out to four states and divisions such as Kayah, Kachin, Mandalay and Shan State which enabled GEN to facilitate the implementation of Search Results Web results National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) to cover wider geographical areas.

GEN is truly a member-driven network where members are actively engaged in development of GEN's multi-year Strategic Plan and in implementing the Plan through a collective effort. While it is a good practice to give emphasis to members' needs and priorities, it comes with challenges as GEN's leadership, guided by the Steering Committee, have to ensure striking of a good balance between the network and the coordination unit. GEN has the intention to improve the network to become a more participatory and effective network hence, GEN had commissioned an external evaluator to assess the situation of the network to become a more functional and operational network.

We are honored to be serving as co-chairs of GEN and look forward to a more



Nwe Zin Win



Sanda Thant

Co-Chairs, Steering Committee of  
Gender Equality Network





## FOREWORD

May Sabe Phyu

Director of GEN-Coordination Unit

Gender Equality Network – GEN as it is widely known, now in its 12th year, is a very vibrant network of over 100 members representing local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Technical Resource Persons (TRPs) working on women's rights and gender equality.

The achievements, strength and success of GEN are attributed to the members of the Steering Committee who provide strategic guidance and are committed and passionate about gender-related and women's rights issues. The continuous contribution of GEN's members are also appreciated and valued as they actively participate to make GEN a strong and a member-led network with the collective belief that success is founded on partnership.

The year 2019 marks another milestone for GEN with the establishment of the Gender Resource Centre which had been a dream of GEN for many years and finally able to materialize the dream. Building upon a history of achievement and major accomplishment of GEN, this year marks another milestone where GEN entered into partnership with IDRC and UNFPA to undertake nationally representative researches that would provide the information and data needed on gender based violence and women participation in public life.

As in previous years, GEN had successfully organized the 16 Days of Activism using innovative approaches, one of which is utilizing the popular communication channel such as "Zat Pwe" and "Than Gyat" to disseminate information on gender-based violence.

GEN and its members had organized several trainings on NSPAW implementation, gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting for many government ministries and members of the parliaments at union and states and divisional levels. GEN continues to advocate donors and partners in development on the need to ensure sustainable funding to address gender issues as this sector remains underfunded on so many levels and a raised level of financing is essential to implement the ambitious gender agenda.

Despite this challenge, GEN is fortunate to receive substantial funding in 2019 which enabled GEN to undertake many activities with the aim to empower women and enhance gender equality. GEN wishes to thank LIFT, IDRC, European Union, Trocaire, Christian Aid and UNFPA for generous funding and the Steering Committee and the members for contributing to a fruitful and a successful year.



## PEACE AWARD

Daw May Sabe Phyu, Director of GEN was awarded “N-Peace Award” under the category of Untold Stories from United Nations Development Program in mid-December 2019. This is her third international award. In 2015, she received the International “Women of Courage Award” and in 2017, she was honoured with the “Global Trailblazer Award” for her outstanding contribution towards advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Myanmar.

N-Peace Award is an initiative of UNDP that aims to explore and honour activists, advocates and practitioners who are working in women, peace and security field in seven Asian countries. N-Peace Award is selected based on three categories; The Untold Stories, Campaigning for Action and Peace Generation.

The Untold Stories category that Daw May Sabe Phyu was honoured recognizes the work of women with demonstrated skills in conflict resolution, prevention, and peacebuilding in their local communities. She was honoured this award along with other activists from Afghanistan, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippine, and Sri Lanka.



On the N-Peace award honouring page of UNDP website stated as follows:

“ May Sabe Phyu is recognized for her multi-sectoral approach to build on the gains of women in Myanmar. Through her long-standing career in Women, Peace and Security she had continuously identified and advocated to address laws, policies, as well as cultural and social norms which impede the achievement of full gender equality.”

<https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/presscenter/articles/2019/announcing-the-winners-of-the-2019-n-peace-awards.html>

Also, one of our Donor organization, IDRC honoured her on their website:

“As director of the GEN, which aims to facilitate transformation toward gender equality and justice in Myanmar, May Sabe Phyu is a strong advocate for women in her country.”

<https://www.idrc.ca/en/news/idrc-supported-gender-expert-myanmar-wins-n-peace-award?fbclid=IwAR2kIdOM6flcT1SJSc5Pd1prwxc66lob1sSakP8sylvSizvXQDVYODfYUAo>

Additionally, N-Peace Network website mentioned her as:

“May Sabe Phyu has had a dynamic career advocating for women’s full realization of their human rights. Currently serving as Director of the GEN, her work utilizes intersectional approaches and engages multi-sectoral stakeholders as partners in achieving gender equality. She uses various platforms to build on the gains of women in Myanmar, and continuously identifies and works to address laws, policies, as well as cultural and social norms that work against the achievement of full gender equality.”

<http://n-peace.net/winner-2019/may-sabe-phyu-4/>

Such achievements and recognition need to be celebrated by GEN and the women in our country as we are very proud of her for her remarkable contribution and long-term commitment to promote gender equality and women’s rights in our society.

# ACTIVITIES IN **2019**

## Advocating for Policy Change

GEN conducted a series of policy advocacy through a comprehensive mechanism composed of four main components: implementation of the NSPAW (2013-2022); developing and disseminating policy documents; publishing research reports; and promoting public awareness through campaigns and Gender Resource Center.

## Supporting Implementation of National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women



To implement the NSPAW, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement (MSWRR) had assigned the Myanmar National Committee for Women (MNCW) for implementing the NSPAW through four technical working groups. GEN is not only a member of the MNCW but also serves as the co-chair of the two technical working groups: gender mainstreaming; and violence against women and

girls for which GEN provides technical and financial support. GEN actively participated in MNCW meetings at both national and sub-national level as well as in all the events organized by MNCW such as International Women's Day, Myanmar Women's Day, and 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence. As part of awareness raising on NSPAW, GEN had delivered trainings on NSPAW to CSOs, local authorities, government departments and parliamentarians in many states and regions, reaching over 1,000 participants. GEN also developed a service mapping report on implementation of priority areas of NSPAW in Rakhine State to be used for implementation of NSPAW in Rakhine State. Most importantly, GEN continues to advocate for passing of the "Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women Law" (PoVAW), and works closely with the government at all levels with the aim to affect policy changes to promote gender equality and women empowerment.



## Policy and Advocacy Initiatives

Analysis of the current NSPAW (2013-2022), focusing on Violence Against Women was undertaken using the references of the good practices from other countries and recommendations were provided. The current Labour Law was also analysed using the gender perspective. GEN and its members submitted comments on the draft “Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women Law” to the MSWRR. GEN also held consultation workshops on review of the Penal Code - 377, and the workshops were joined mainly from the LGBT rights network and discussed on the issues and negative consequences caused by the Penal Code-377, and conducted stakeholder mapping to figure out possible ways to amend the Penal Code. A policy brief was prepared and presented to some Members of Parliament (MPs) in Nay Pyi Taw. The MPs agreed to conduct parliamentary discussion on this issue next year, and they suggested holding advocacy campaigns or events in the meantime to raise awareness on this issue and attain public support on amending the Penal Code 377.



## Evidence-Based Researches

In 2019, GEN put its efforts on conducting researches in order to build evidence into gender issues across the country. In collaboration with Department of Social Welfare (DSW), GEN has worked on the research on “Understanding Barriers and Pathways to Women’s Political Participation in Myanmar”. The research design and questionnaires were finalized, and approved by the ethical review board. The research is now in the data collection process, and final report will be released next year.



In addition, GEN developed a concept note on “Qualitative Study on Masculinity Identity Construction: Attitudes and Perceptions of Male Perpetrators on Sexual Violence against Women”, and initiated a connection with the Myanmar Prisons Department for conduct of the research activities in prisons. All the research findings are to build evidence in a way that promotes stakeholders’ understanding of gender issues in the country. Using this evidence, GEN will advocate policy makers to practice evidence-based policy making.



## Public Awareness Campaigns

GEN participated and organized many events that effectively promoted public understanding on gender issues, such as International Women's Day event organized by the Myanmar National Committee for Women in Nay Pyi Taw. GEN organized the public campaign event in Mahabandula Park, Yangon, with the theme "Balance for Better". The event was graced by the Union Minister of MSWRR and Social Affairs Minister of Yangon Region Government. GEN working group members organized educational booths which were largely visited by the public. The highlight of the event was the Film Director, Christina Kyi who gave an inspirational talk, followed by the announcement of the Champion for Gender Equality award. GEN actively participated in Myanmar Women's Day and May Day Campaigns organized by MNCW and Labour organizations respectively. At the events, GEN displayed booths and distributed IEC materials to promote participants' awareness of gender and women's rights. GEN representatives also participated in panel discussions in the events. In addition, GEN organized two events for 16 Days of Activism in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. Both events promoted awareness mainly through popular Myanmar traditional performances which provided the key messages on gender based violence. The events were participated by over 1,200 participants including government officials and members of parliament. As these events were broadcast live on television, the key messages reached a large number of public across the country. Holding such campaigns is one of the key strategies of GEN to promote public awareness.





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**Dr Win Myat Aye**  
**(Union Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement)**

“MNCW was formed to carry out the women-related activities in Myanmar. Government Ministries and women organizations, including Gender Equality Network are members of MNCW. GEN celebrates the 16 Days of Activism public campaigns every year aiming to increase public awareness on violence against women and gender discrimination.

On behalf of MNCW and women of Myanmar, I would like to thank GEN for organizing such events which highly contribute to achieving gender equality in Myanmar.”

## Opening of the Gender Resource Centre

In October, GEN held opening ceremony of Gender Resource Centre in Yangon. The resource centre serves as a library where interested individuals and organizations can find journals, articles, reports, and books related to gender and women's rights. It also serves as a meeting place for people to discuss gender related issues. During 2019, the centre hosted about 22 different trainings, meetings and dialogue on diverse gender and women's issues including Working Groups meetings on Engaging Men, 16 Days of Activism and Protection of Domestic Workers Work. Dialogue sessions were also organized with participation of the public and GEN's members to discuss the topics on "Are lives of women and children safe in Myanmar?". The Dialogue sessions are conducted by using Chatham House Rules so that they can openly discuss their views



and opinions regarding violence against women and children. The centre provides opportunity to everyone for both self-learning and learning from other people, and through this way, the centre raises public awareness of gender issues which will then lead to the elimination of discriminatory perceptions, attitudes, and traditions towards women in society.



“

**Daw Thuzar Tin**  
(Women's Federation for Peace - WFFP)

“To become a strong network, the contribution of each network member is required and collective voice will be evolved through the network.”

## Capacity Development



Organizations with stronger gender-related capacity do better work, resulting in a greater impact on gender inclusion in Myanmar. GEN has contributed to capacity development of organizations in both public and private sectors to broaden, deepen, and strengthen their capacities, enabling

them to carry out initiatives for gender issues in an effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable manner.

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## Strengthening Public Sector Institutions

In 2019, GEN organized multiple trainings or workshops aiming to promote participants' awareness and uplift their skills and capabilities to tackle gender issues. In February, Social Accountability and Governance workshops were conducted in Myitkyina, Hpa-an, Taung-gyi and Mandalay, and those were participated by the officials from the DSW, General Administration Department (GAD), Members of Parliament (MPs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in respective region. The workshops produced collective action plans between local authorities and CSOs that promote good governance and jointly address gender issues in the region. In May, a two-day workshop on "Gender, Workplace, and Labour", was conducted in Yangon, and staff from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, and Population participated in the workshop. The participants developed their future action plan to mainstream gender in labour and workplace. In June, GEN collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) to organize a three-days training on "Guidelines on Health Care Response for GBV survivors" in Yangon, and was participated by staff from MoHS including Medical Superintendents, Township Medical Officers, Health Assistants, Nurses and Medico-social Officers working in Eastern and Northern Districts of Yangon. This training raised awareness on the published guideline, and improve their skills to provide better health care services to survivors of gender-based violence in Myanmar. GEN held Gender Responsive Budgeting workshops from August to December in Nay Pyi Taw, Sittwe,



Hpa-an, Mandalay, Patheingyi, and Myittha. The participants were MPs and staff from DSW. The objective of the workshop is to foster the participants' ability to use a gender lens in developing regional government's budgets. In August, a workshop on Gender and Media, was organized for the staff of the Ministry of Information and Myanmar Radio and Television



(MRTV). The workshop aimed to strengthen the role of media in promoting gender equality in Myanmar. In September and October, GEN organized Gender Mainstreaming Workshops in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon to raise their awareness on gender and gender mainstreaming in their works. As a result, GEN received commitment of participants from Ministry of Education (MOE) to include a gender perspective in their academic curriculum development process, and a commitment from Prisons Department to collaborate in our coming data-collection activities in prisons. In December, GEN collaborated with the Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) to conduct roll-out trainings on "Constitutional Assessment for Women's Equality" in Taunggyi and Mandalay. The workshop created a space for participants, such as MPs, CSOs, and representatives from political parties, to be able to apply a gender lens and conduct fruitful discussions on the current constitution of Myanmar in comparison with those of other countries.





## Connecting with Private Sector



At the end of October, a training was organized in Yangon for a coalition of companies, known as “Business Coalition for Gender Equality (BCGE)”. The participants are senior staff of private companies such as Victoria Hospital, Pinlon Hospital, Shwe Taung, IKBZ Insurance Co., Ltd., JCGV Cinema, Alpha Power, etc. The training was to provide basic gender-related concepts, gender discrimination, gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and to enable them to apply those concepts in their business activities or their policy development processes. As a significant portion of Myanmar labor force is employed by private companies, gender equality cannot be achieved without their participation. Therefore, involving business sector organizations is another milestone of GEN in its journey of achieving gender equality in Myanmar, and GEN will continue to expand connections with the private sector in the coming years.



## Improving Capacity of GEN Network

Throughout the year 2019, GEN boosted the capacity of the staff of GEN Coordination Unit (CU) and GEN's members both in and outside of the country. Among many of them, following four activities were the key highlights of last year. In May, a representative from GEN attended an International Training Program in Stockholm, Sweden. The training was an interesting learning space about gender statistics discussed from the different perspectives of the representatives from Cambodia, Liberia, Ethiopia, Zambia and Myanmar. In June, two-days Monitoring and Evaluation Framework workshop was held in Yangon by GEN's National Consultant. The workshop aimed to increase understanding of data collection tools, to identify the challenges, to recognize data flow and to develop Monitoring and Evaluation Plan based on GEN's current needs. In October, GEN conducted a three-days Advocacy Training facilitated by U Aung Myo Min (Director, Equality Myanmar) in Yangon, and it was participated by GEN members and CU staff. At the end of October, a CU staff from GEN attended the Asia Gender Trainers' Network Program held in South Korea. The five-day program is initiated by the Korea Institute for Gender Equality Promotion and Education (KIGEPE).





## GEN and DSW joined learning and exposure visits

From January to May, one DSW staff, two GEN members and two GEN-CU staff attended a five-month research certificate course on “Gender and Social Research Methods”, at Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok to learn about qualitative research methodologies. In September, a total of 10 participants including GEN Steering Committee members, CU staff and government officials from DSW visited Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in India for ten days to learn about the activities of SEWA in agriculture, livestock, green livelihood, trade facilitation and mobile digitalization.





## Strengthening Internal and External Networks

In 2019, GEN conducted several activities for strengthening its network both nationally and internationally.

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## Enhancing Network Members' Cohesion

In September, GEN held an Annual Member Assembly in Kyaik Hto, Mon State. Representatives from over 50 member organizations joined the event. The assembly served as an opportunity for the members to discuss issues related to network, share experiences and enhance networking and coordination. In December, the traditional year-end meeting was conducted in Yangon, to review the activities and to honour outstanding members who were awarded either regionally or internationally. This year, GEN awarded Daw Nang Pu (Htoi Gender and Development Foundation) and Daw Khin Ohmar Moe (Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs' Association) who received the international awards. This year active member awards were given to Marie Stopes International (MSI), Women's Federation for Peace (WFFP) and Daw Tyn Tyn Hla respectively. Both the Member Assembly and the year-end meeting are truly a crucial element of GEN's network strengthening because it can significantly promote collaboration, coordination, and mutual-understanding not only between GEN-Coordination Unit and the members but also among the members. Better collaboration and partnership among network members can finally lead to more effective and integrated implementation of their specific gender-related programmes.



“

**Dr. Moe Moe Aung**  
**(Marie Stopes Myanmar)**

Marie Stopes Myanmar is proud to be part of GEN, and its movement towards gender equality. During 2019, members were able to learn from and contributed to GEN's unwavering endeavor which focused on prevention and protection of violence against women while addressing network strengthening, and other ongoing and emerging issues related to women's rights and social justice.





## Expanding GEN Network Globally

GEN continues to extend connections internationally and globally. In April, GEN shared “Experiences in gender situations in Myanmar” at the Asian University for Women in Chittagong, Bangladesh. In May, GEN connected with Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand for attending the Research Questionnaires Development workshop, to plan for undertaking joint researches in Myanmar. GEN also participated in the event organized by the Better Peace Symposium in United Kingdom, through serving in a panel session to share about the progress on Myanmar’s peace building process. GEN attended as a panel at the Oslo Conference on Ending Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Humanitarian Crises, and discussed about “Enhancing the Capacities of Women-led and Women Rights Organizations as First-responders in Line with the Localization Agenda”. In November, GEN participated in the Beijing+25 Regional CSO Forum in Thailand. GEN participated in the 3rd. Annual Planning Workshop and Advisory Meeting Advisory on the “Listen Up” project and the “BLTG-Building Local, Thinking Global” project promoting women’s transformative leadership in gender based violence emergency preparedness and response in Entebbe, Uganda. All of these extended connections effectively enhanced global awareness of GEN’s activities and gender issues in Myanmar, and promoted the visibility of Myanmar internationally, thereby increasing the chances of receiving more international attention to address these issues.





“

**Daw Tyn Tyn Hla**  
**(Technical Resource Person - TRP)**

GEN has now entered its 12th year. GEN has spread out a lot as a network should and it has now about 140 members. In Myanmar where patriarchy, social norms and cultures are deep-rooted, GEN could overcome despite many challenges in making people change their point of views through policy advocacy, improving concerning laws and principles. Besides, it has conducted member strengthening where members' voices are listened to, and thus encouraged them to contribute more. It lets members participate and always shares its challenges and efforts to eliminate gender-based violence, drafting of PoVAW law, to bring out and make known about Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), so that members feel confident to be a part of such a Convention. It's really inspiring for me.



# 2019 Resources Highlight

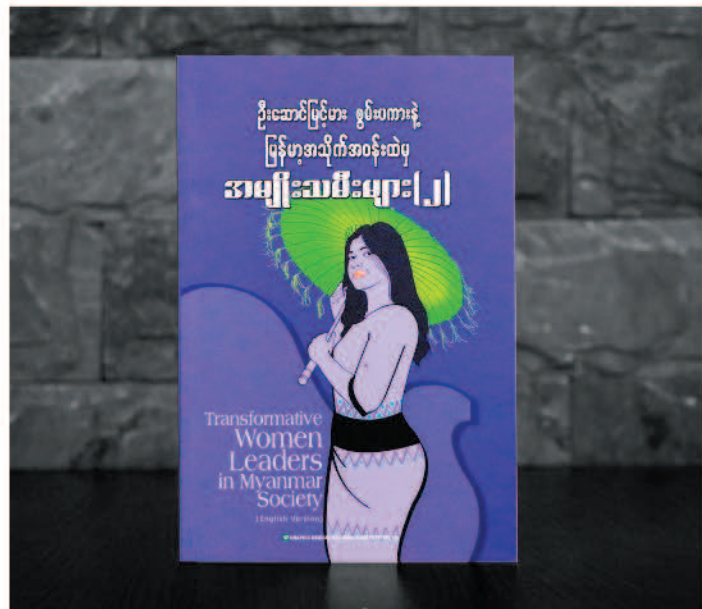


CEDAW Booklet -  
(Ethnic Languages)

- Kachin
- Kayah
- Kayin
- Chin
- Mon
- Rakhine
- Shan

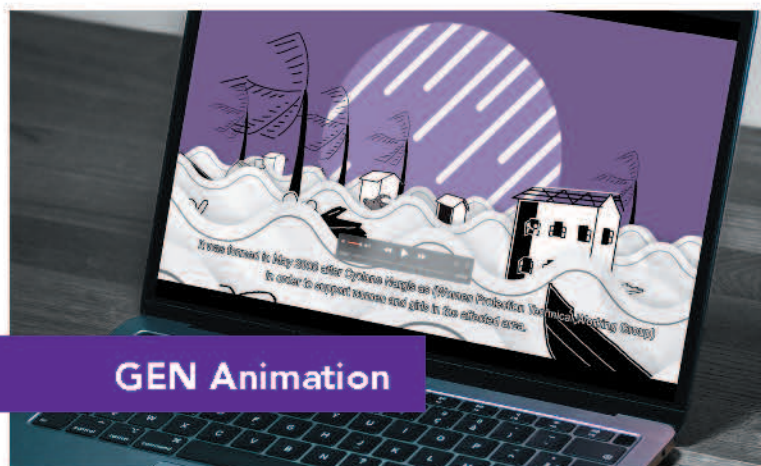
Transformative Women  
Leaders in Myanmar Society

- Myanmar Version
- English Version



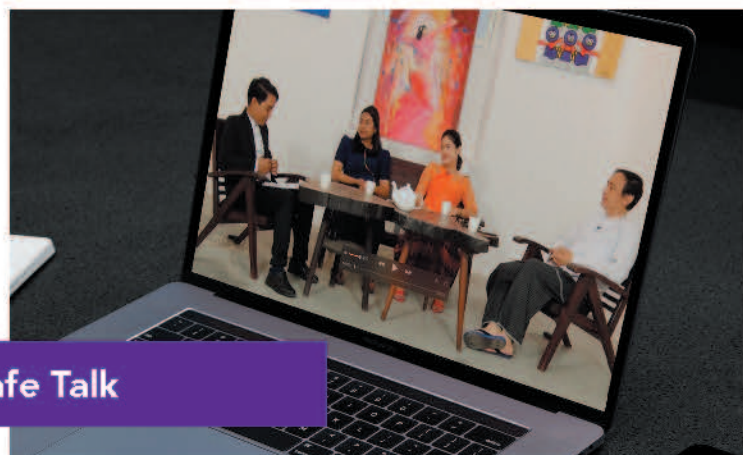
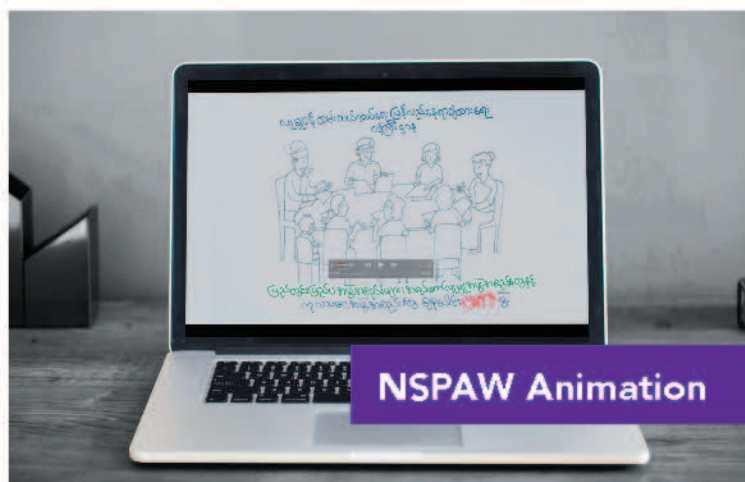
Prevention of Sexual Harassment,  
Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA)  
Policy

- Myanmar Version
- English Version



This is an animation about GEN that helps to understand about GEN in a few minutes.

This is a whiteboard animation which gives very creative and concise information about NSPAW (2013-2022). This animation is developed by GEN collaborated with Gender and Development Institute (GDI).

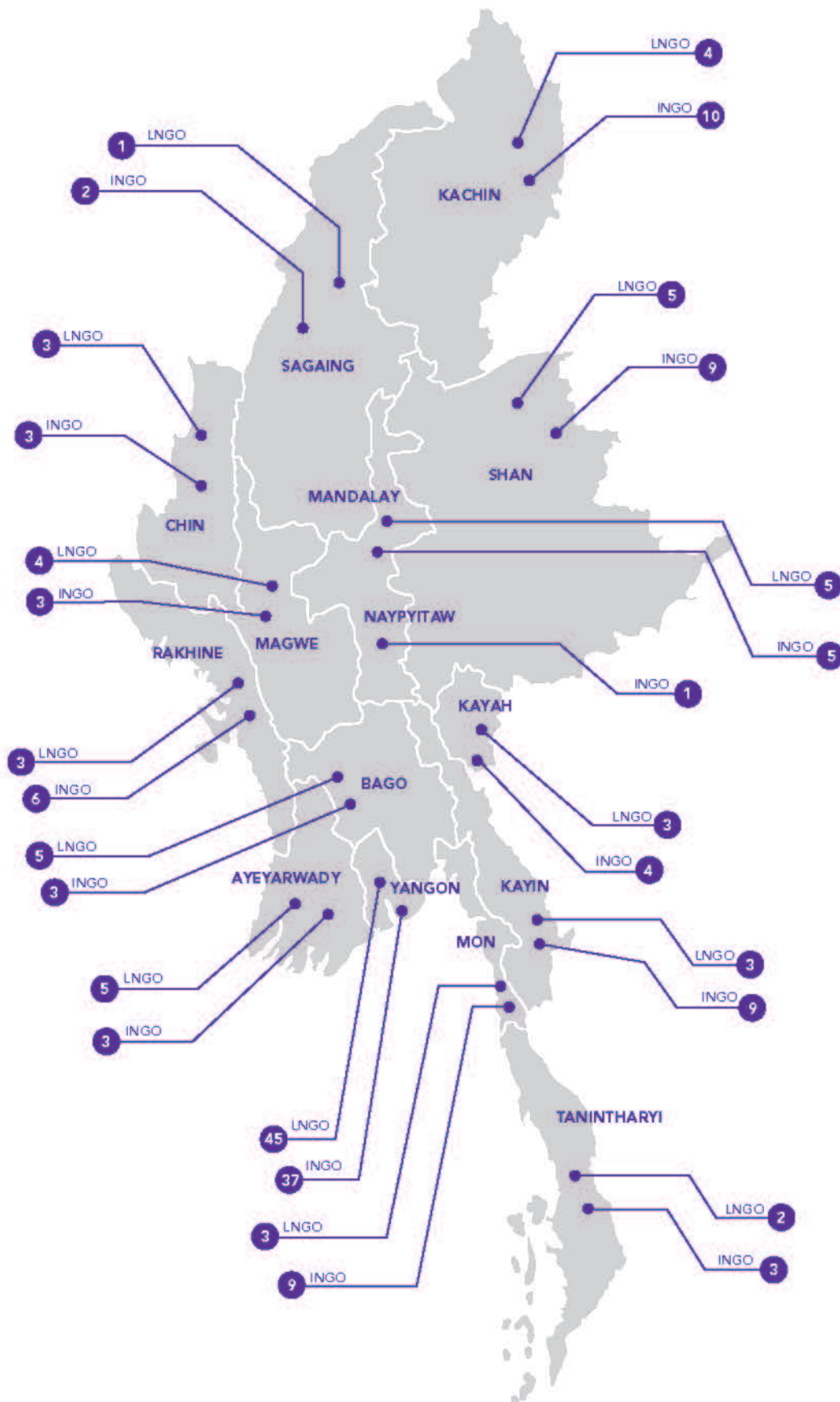


This is the first episode of Cafe Talk Series, which reveal and discuss about 'Gender Based Violence' was produced by the GEN partnership with the Mizzima Media Agency and have broadcasted via all Mizzima Media online channels.

## WHERE GEN MEMBER WORKS

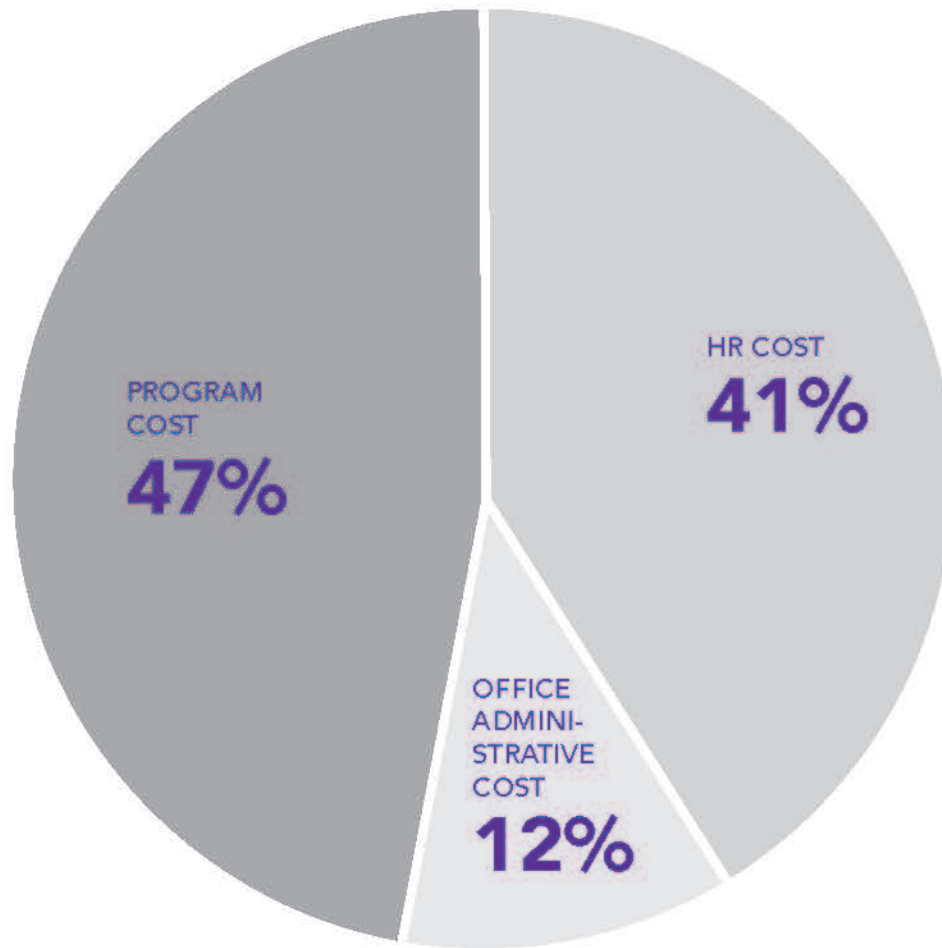
	LNGO	INGO
KACHIN	4	10
KAYAH	3	4
KAYIN	3	9
CHIN	3	3
MON	3	9
RAKHINE	3	6
SHAN	5	9
MANDALAY	5	5
SAGAING	1	2
MAGWAY	4	3
TANINTHARYI	2	3
BAGO	5	3
NAYPYITAW	0	1
AYEYARWADDY	5	3
YANGON	45	37





# 2019

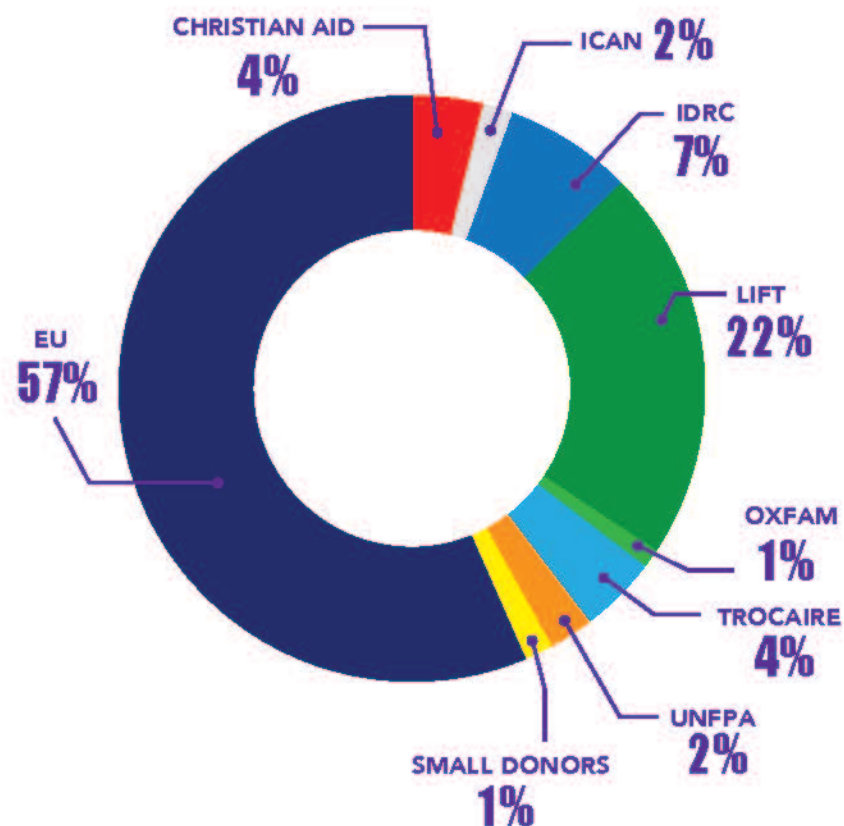
## EXPENDITURE SUMMARY



DESCRIPTION	TOTAL (USD)
HR COST	492822.85
OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE COST	141089.98
PROGRAM COST	562641.82
GRAND TOTAL	1196554.75

# DONOR CONTRIBUTION

(FUND RECEIVED BY 2019)



DONOR	AMOUNT (USD)
CHRISTIAN AID	67550.02
EU	976635.81
ICAN	27926.02
IDRC	121162.35
LIFT	380000
OXFAM	9582.21
TROCAIRE	74679.88
UNFPA	42780.5
SMALL DONORS	16834.38
GRAND TOTAL	1717151.17

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