



# Formative Evaluation at midterm of the Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar Initiative

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## Acronyms

AIT	Asia Institute of Technology
ALARM	Advancing Life And Regenerating Motherland
CDES	Center for Development & Ethnic Studies
CESD	Centre for Economic and Social Development
CMU	Chiang Mai University
EMReF	Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GDN	Global Development Network
GEN	Gender Equality Network
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
K4DM	Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar
McGill	McGill University
MDI	Myanmar Development Institute
MIGS	Myanmar Institute of Gender Studies
MIID	Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security
MIPS	Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development
NAC	National Advisory Committee
NLD	National League for Democracy
RI	Renaissance Institute
TTI	Think Tank Initiative
UBC	University of British Columbia
UoM	University of Mandalay
USC	University of Southern California
YUE	Yangon University of Economics

## I. INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the work that IDRC is undertaking through its Knowledge for Democracy Initiative, some understanding of the situation with respect to democracy and knowledge systems is useful.

Since Myanmar gained its independence from the British in 1948, it has had a chequered history. Despite an initial period of economic growth, the country saw a decline when internecine struggles broke out among the various ethnic groups that make up its population. The country has seen long standing internal strife and civil war, causing instability within its borders. Rebellions against the various military governments, including in the prestigious Rangoon University have been put down violently. Other unrest such as the 8888 Uprising, Saffron Uprising and the Kokang Incident, have also been also dealt with forcefully.<sup>1,2,3</sup> The Republic of the Union of Burma's first and the most liberal Constitution of 1947 has been replaced twice, first in 1974 and most recently in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

The country is dominated by the majority Bamar people (68%), while the several other ethnic groups have exerted their identities to a varying degree at periods of Myanmar's modern history. The Shan, Kayin, Rakhine, Chinese, and Mon are today among the most populous of the 135 different ethnic groups in the country.<sup>5</sup> The State Counselor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has remarked that the greatest strength of a democratic transition - the involvement of the people - is also its greatest challenge; and to weld together the will and purpose of millions into a whole that allows the wonderful diversity of a country to shine through, is a formidable undertaking.<sup>6</sup> Gender gaps in wage, work force participation, political participation etc. endure despite a much less patriarchal system in the country than among its neighbors.<sup>7</sup> But serious gaps in the full participation of women in the social, economic and political life of the country have been noted in Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Myanmar – A situation analysis (2016) published by several international agencies.<sup>8</sup> Social inclusion remains an important aspect of Myanmar's evolution into a modern economy. The World Bank reports that, "... stark variations in the overall degree and types of disadvantages among states and regions in Myanmar remain, according to the Multidimensional Welfare in Myanmar report, which constructed a multidimensional index of disadvantage consisting of 14 non-monetary indicators related to education, employment, health, water and sanitation, housing and assets."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Myint-U, Thant. (2006). *The River of Lost Footsteps—Histories of Burma*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux; US Envoy warns of Myanmar Crisis. 2007. Retrieved from Aljazeera: <https://web.archive.org/web/20080228090420/http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/4081D23F-F1A4-46AF-BA50-D47FA2B7A4AE.html>

<sup>2</sup> Szczepanski, Kallie. 2019. *The 8888 Uprising in Myanmar (Burma)*. ThoughtCo. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-8888-uprising-in-myanmar-burma-195177>

<sup>3</sup> Fuller, Thomas. (2009). *Refugees Flee to China as Fighting Breaks Out in Myanmar*. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/29/world/asia/29myanmar.html?ref=world&mtrref=undefined>

<sup>4</sup> *The World Factbook: Burma*. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html>

<sup>5</sup> *Ethnic Groups*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordburmaalliance.org/ethnic-groups.html> REFERENCE?

<sup>6</sup> H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. (2018). *Democratic Transition in Myanmar: Challenges and the Way Forward*. The 43rd Singapore Lecture Organized by ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/43rd-Singapore-Lecture-Speech-by-Aung-San-Suu-Kyi-Final-transcript.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> *Gender*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://mm.one.un.org/content/unct/myanmar/en/home/what-we-do/gender.html>

<sup>8</sup> *Asian Development Bank*. (2016). *Gender Equality And Women's Rights In Myanmar A Situation Analysis*. Retrieved from [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/unct/myanmar/docs/unct\\_mm\\_UNWomen\\_Report\\_Gender%20Situation%20Analysis.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/unct/myanmar/docs/unct_mm_UNWomen_Report_Gender%20Situation%20Analysis.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> *The World Bank*. (2019). *The World Bank in Myanmar: Overview*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/overview>

Economic growth in Myanmar was high with the country registering a 6.8% growth rate in 2017-18. The following year has seen a slide but recovery is predicted with the on-going reform process. Nonetheless, economic growth is a key concern in this low middle income country. Disturbingly, Myanmar also ranks 2 among a list of 187 countries in respect to vulnerability to climate change.<sup>10</sup>

## **Democratic Transition in Myanmar**

The Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018 - 2030)<sup>11</sup> can be seen as a roadmap for democratic transition, which identified 5 goals supported by 3 pillars:

- Goal 1: Peace, National Reconciliation, Security and Good Governance
- Goal 2: Economic Stability & Strengthened Macroeconomic Management supported by the pillar of Peace and Security
- Goal 3: Job Creation & Private Sector-led Growth held up by the pillar of Prosperity and Partnership
- Goal 4: Human Resources & Social Development for 21<sup>st</sup> century Society supported by the pillar of People and Planet
- Goal 5: Natural Resources & the Environment for Prosperity of the Nation.

Democratic transition is an oft-repeated phrase in Myanmar; it denotes more than it says. Dr. Sean Turnell, Director of Research at Myanmar Development Institute, a think tank in Nay Pyi Taw, describes the transition as having three broad streams: political, social, and economic.

Political reform began in 2011 when President U Thein Sein's government freed Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi from nearly 15 years of house arrest and emphasized the need to put aside differences and collaborate for the good of the country.<sup>12</sup> In 2012, the National League for Democracy (NLD) became a legally registered political party and in the bye-elections of April 2012, won 43 of 45 seats. In April 2016, the NLD led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi won the elections with a landslide victory, forming the national government. Even though the NLD won the majority of the seats in the 2016 election, the military occupies 25% of the seats in the Parliament as per the Constitution enacted in 2008. In addition, it appoints the powerful Ministers of Home, Border Affairs and Defense, and appoints one of the country's two Vice-Presidents. Due to a clause in the Constitution, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of NLD, is barred from being appointed the President. In all, there is an uneasy sharing of power in the country and the country's civilian leaders have little influence over the security establishment.<sup>13</sup>

Social reform also began during President U Thein Sein's government. Freedom of information was enabled by the lifting of restraints on about 30,000 blocked internet sites, allowing people to get access to political and social networking content for the first time. A dramatic change was the abolition of

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<sup>10</sup> World Bank. (2019). Accessed on 21 Sep 2019 at: <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/myanmar-burma>

<sup>11</sup> The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Ministry of Planning and Finance. (2018). Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan. Retrieved from [http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Core\\_Doc\\_Myanmar\\_Sustainable\\_Development\\_Plan\\_2018\\_-\\_2030\\_Aug2018.pdf](http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Core_Doc_Myanmar_Sustainable_Development_Plan_2018_-_2030_Aug2018.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> International Crisis Group. (2012). Reform in Myanmar, one year on. ICG Asia Briefing no, 136, Jakarta/Brussels, p.2; Thomas Fuller. (2013). Myanmar lifts pro-democracy ban. New York Times

<sup>13</sup> Barker, A. (2015). Why is Aung San Suu Kyi barred from becoming president of Myanmar? Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-10/myanmar-election-explained/6928542>

media censorship resulting in a flourishing of local private news journals and magazines.<sup>14</sup> Another significant change was in the communication sector where the lifting of restrictions to mobile phones and allowing foreign mobile phone providers into the country led to an outpouring of demand. Mobile phone penetration in Burma is now over to 90% of the population.<sup>15</sup>

Economic reform has resulted in increased foreign direct investment by making investment in Myanmar easier. The International Finance Corporation and World Bank Group; UKAid; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia; and the Japanese government have supported the reform of Myanmar Investment Law. The reform focuses on investor protection, market access, making entry procedures easier, and giving investment incentives. The government proposes to promote manufacturing, in particular labor-intensive manufacturing, as a priority. Succeeding priorities include infrastructure development and agriculture and food processing for foreign investment.<sup>16</sup>

Despite gains made, the Fund for Peace, a US based think tank that carries out a syndicated survey of the fragility of countries uses a conflict assessment system tool to determine the vulnerability of countries to internal and external pressures. Myanmar has been allocated an 'alert' status indicating its overall fragility using this Fragile States Index.<sup>17</sup>

The Rohingya crisis that erupted first in 2016, and subsequently recommenced in 2017 has colored Myanmar's return to the world stage. According to UN reports, over 700,000 Rohingya people have fled their native Rakhine state due to atrocities by the Myanmar Army and local Buddhists, with reports of wide scale killings, looting, gang rapes and other sexual atrocities on women and girls. Two Reuters journalists covering the outcomes of the Inn Dinn massacre were arrested and imprisoned in 2017.<sup>18</sup> Termed a 'genocide' and 'ethnic cleansing' by various world leaders, the Rohingya crisis has caused a slow down in the normalization of relations between Myanmar and several western countries. Notably, the Canadian Parliament voted in 2018 to dispossess Daw Aung San Suu Kyi of her honorary Canadian citizenship.<sup>19</sup>

### **Trajectory of Higher Education**

The education system in Myanmar, including the research capacity of academia, is widely acknowledged as having deteriorated under the various spells of military rule that the country has had. In the first period of military rule, all universities were shut down because university students were at the forefront of the mass protest that brought down in 1988, the Burmese Socialist Program Party. Although universities were later reopened, they were 'decentralized' to the outskirts of cities into small campuses without proper teaching facilities or support. As a result, the quality of the education system was

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<sup>14</sup> Australian Strategic Policy Institute. (2013). Special Report: On the path of change political, economic and social challenges for Myanmar

<sup>15</sup> Freedom House. (2017). Freedom on the Net 2017 – Myanmar. Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a547d1ea.html>

<sup>16</sup> UNESCAP. (2018). Positioning Myanmar as an attractive new investment destination in Southeast Asia, 8th Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Network United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand 25-26 September 2018

<sup>17</sup> Fund for Peace. (2019). Retrieved from <https://fragilestatesindex.org/2019/04/10/fragile-states-index-2019-released-venezuela-and-brazil-most-worsened-countries-in-2019/>

<sup>18</sup> Emont, J. (2019). Myanmar Frees Reuters Reporters Jailed Over Rohingya Coverage. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/myanmar-frees-reuters-reporters-who-were-jailed-over-rohingya-coverage-11557199180>

<sup>19</sup> Afp. (2018). Canada strips Aung San Suu Kyi of honorary citizenship. Retrieved from <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1379086/world>

seriously compromised.<sup>20</sup> The Burma Research Society, respected for the quality of its publications between 1911 and 1980 was another victim of the Government's suspicion of intellectual pursuit. The Society was abolished in 1980 for its perceived role in extending British influence and legacy by the then Socialist government.<sup>21</sup> The current year 2019 marks the 109<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment. Australia, EU and the UK are the largest supporters of higher education oriented funding other than Canada.

A word is perhaps necessary to describe the civil society movement in Myanmar, since much of the impetus for modern civil society efforts in Myanmar relate to student organization in the face of repressive regimes, and more recently, humanitarian crises.<sup>22,23</sup> An Asian Development Bank brief notes that local civil society groups have built strong connections with international development and rights based communities.<sup>24</sup> Significant funding has been provided to civil society organizations in the country from several international funders.

As recently as in 2014, new efforts to reignite educational excellence have been made. A watershed moment for education sector reform in Myanmar was the approval by Parliament of a National Education Law in September 2014 that focuses on strengthening the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the national education system. The complementary National Education Strategic Plan (2016 – 2021)<sup>25</sup> clearly indicates that one of the education sector reform priorities is to develop a world-class higher education system where universities have autonomy over their own curriculum and governance and the ability to conduct independent research. The National Education Policy Commission was established under the law as a statutory body comprising 21 academics and education experts who provide policy advice on education system. Preliminary exploration from an IDRC funded Doing Research Assessment<sup>26</sup> by Global Development Network and a local think tank, Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESD), offers the following information:

*Historical:* Socialist and military governments have undervalued research. There is today a remarkable inflow of foreign funding which has fuelled a large number of donor-funded, foreign expert-led research studies.

*Cultural:* Because of traditional hierarchical dynamics in society and an emphasis on rote learning, there is little independence among scholars in institutions of higher education. This is made worse by the poor collaboration among departments and among students.

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<sup>20</sup> Our Heads Are Bloody But Unbowed: Suppression of Educational Freedoms in Burma. (1992). Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4754182d0.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> On This Day: Revered Burma Research Society Founded 109 Years Ago. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.irrawaddy.com/specials/on-this-day/revered-burma-research-society-founded-109-years-ago.html>

<sup>22</sup> World Learning iPACE. (2017). The Civil Society in Myanmar's New Democracy Conference. World Learning. Retrieved from <https://www.worldlearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Civil-Society-Report-iPACE.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Asian Development Bank. (2015). Civil Society Briefs Myanmar. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/154554/csb-myanmar.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Asian Development Bank. (2015). Civil Society Briefs Myanmar. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/154554/csb-myanmar.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education. (2016). National Education Strategic Plan 2016-21 Summary. Retrieved from [http://www.moe-st.gov.mm/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/NESP\\_20Summary\\_20-20English\\_20-20Final\\_20-20Feb\\_2023.pdf](http://www.moe-st.gov.mm/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/NESP_20Summary_20-20English_20-20Final_20-20Feb_2023.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Doing Research Assessments are syndicated surveys by the Global Development Network that have been carried out in 11 countries, and is currently underway in Myanmar. The surveys make both an overall assessment of the context in which research is carried out as well as a mapping of national research producers and users.

*Political:* Data and information are not easy to access making for poor links between research and policy making. The high level of politicization of data in Myanmar often leads to suppression of findings where research has taken place. Nevertheless, there has been a recent emphasis on higher education including research, albeit with low trust levels being indicated towards researchers.

*Economic:* Education now receives 8% of budgetary allocations, mostly directed to primary education. The private sector especially the ICT sector would value research inputs. But public funding for research remains scarce. The emerging ICT sector supports the diffusion of research.

*International:* Foreign led studies make up the bulk of foreign funded research projects of size. This may be related to low research standards and quality, resulting in an overall lack of capacity and incentive structures that support quality local research capacity.

### **IDRC's Engagement in Myanmar**

The Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar Initiative is not IDRC's first engagement in Myanmar. IDRC has been supporting research and research capacity strengthening in Myanmar since 2011 through a portfolio of 15 projects with a total of CAD ~3.7 million. This portfolio can be seen to have had three phases, responding to the changing political landscape in the country:

*Phase I 2011 - 2015:* Research support to Myanmar through regional and Canadian platforms and networks including research fellowships and regional studies.

*Phase II 2015 - 2018:* After extensive scoping missions to better understand the landscape, IDRC began to work directly with Myanmar's emerging think tanks, civil society and government and through various levels of engagement with the private sector.

*Phase III 2017- ongoing:* This phase sought to scale the impact of IDRC's work through a partnership with DFATD to enable a Canadian contribution to strengthening democratic transition in Myanmar.

A key area of interest for Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is capacity strengthening around research especially in respect of the core fundamentals of research. It is an area that seems not to be addressed by many other countries engaging with Myanmar and is seen to be a core strength that could support democracy in Myanmar, moving forward.<sup>27</sup> Thus IDRC's work in the not only furthers its own previous efforts, but also those of other actors keen to support Myanmar's steps towards a democratic, modern nation-state. The correspondence of interest of the two organizations -GAC and IDRC- is an important basis for their collaboration.

The next general elections are to be held in 2020 in Myanmar. These elections are viewed as important as they come when the ruling NLD has not performed to the expectations of the people. "A third party is needed ..." say headlines in Yangon's popular newspaper the Myanmar Times.<sup>28</sup> With the prospect of another party assuming the seat of government, there are concerns about the future of educational reforms and of the portfolio of research work that has recently been put into place.

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<sup>27</sup> KII\_16

<sup>28</sup> Nan Yan Oo. (2017). Myanmar needs a third political party for 2020. Myanmar Times. Retrieved from <https://www.mmmtimes.com/opinion/24491-myanmar-needs-a-third-political-party-for-2020.html>

## Purpose of this report

The Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar (K4DM) is a five-year initiative funded by GAC and IDRC to redress the decades-long systematic underinvestment in research and higher education in Myanmar. The aim of the program of work funded through K4DM is to strengthen local evidence gathering and analysis in universities, think tanks, civil society organizations and government with a view to enhancing policy-relevant evidence generation. It is anticipated that this approach will support the political and economic empowerment of women and men in Myanmar. This goal is to be met through four outcomes, which rest upon six immediate outputs (see annex 1 for a detailed logframe).

This evaluation has been commissioned in order to take stock of the state of play at the midterm of the K4DM Initiative and inform its future course (see annex 2 for the evaluation design). Specifically, task is to:

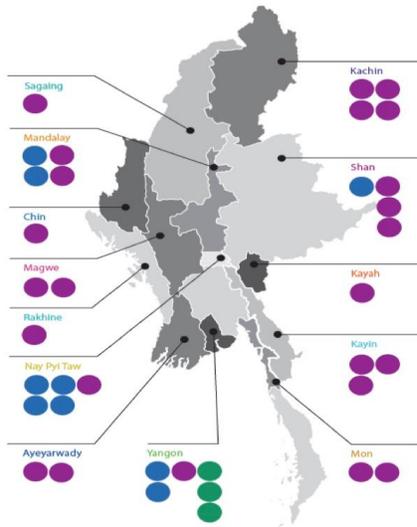
1. Review the implementation and operation of the initiative, including its modalities, and provide evidence of early, expected, or emerging results
2. Identify lessons learned and issues for consideration in the remaining 30 month implementation period (2019 - 2021) while assessing strategic opportunities to build on project momentum

IDRC and GAC expect the evaluation to be formative, to keep the focus on learning what has worked and what hasn't and the factors that could play a role in its future achievement. A qualitative, participatory approach to evaluation has been taken so that a granular understanding of the program might be achieved. (See annex 3 for list of interviewees). The evaluation looks back on the period between 2017-2019 to take stock and draw lessons from the work done so far, and consider options for strengthening the way forward.



From: Presentation by E. Rodriguez at ARO, May 2019

By the halfway point, K4DM has allocated 70% of its CAD 10.7 million budget towards ten capacity strengthening projects; three organizational development projects; and five gender research projects.



From: Presentation by E. Rodriguez at ARO, May 2019

The Initiative has also encouraged collaboration and engagement across projects and partners to communicate learning. The latest Annual Report (June 2109) of the Initiative provides both a listing of key achievements as well as an assessment of its progress in ‘numbers’ (see annex 3 for targets met).

In addition to the 18 active projects under the K4DM Initiative (see annex 5 for a list), IDRC also supports another 15 projects in Myanmar outside of the initiative (see annex 6 for the list). Another slide from the slide deck referenced above provides the distribution of projects in Myanmar.

## II. REVIEW OF THE INITIATIVE

Each of the Initiative’s four pillars - capacity strengthening projects, organizational strengthening projects, gender research projects, and cross-cutting collaboration and engagement - have been reviewed for what has worked well for each, and what has not worked as well.

### Capacity Strengthening Pillar

The capacity strengthening pillar of K4DM encompasses ten projects. In five of the projects, the primary grantee is a university that is based outside Myanmar, but works with a local organization: Asia Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok; Chiang Mai University (CMU), Thailand; McGill University (McGill), Canada; University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada; and University of Southern California (USC), United States. These partnerships have focused on strengthening capacity among university students and faculty, think tank researchers, and policymakers on key issues related to gender-responsive development, public policy fundamentals, and other social science training. K4DM allocated an average of CAD 231,220 per project.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the five partnerships with outside universities, the capacity strengthening pillar includes partnerships with the Fulbright University of Vietnam, the Parliamentary Centre of Canada, and Myanmar think tanks to conduct short-term trainings and workshops. Beneficiaries of these trainings include not only think tank researchers, but also policymakers from state legislatures. Finally, K4DM partnered with Kivu International, a consultancy that strengthens think tanks and research capabilities, to support eight Myanmar think tanks over a period of two years.

**Table 1: Capacity Strengthening projects**

Graduate Students & Faculty	Think Tanks & Research Institutions	Policymakers
Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar – (project with McGill, CMU, & MDI) (#108622-002)		
Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar – (AIT) (#108622-001)	Building Research Capacity for Inclusive Public Finance in Myanmar - (Fulbright University of Vietnam) (#108671)	
Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar - (CMU) (#108622-005)	Building parliamentary research capacity: the case of Shan State's sub-national parliament in Myanmar - (Parliamentary Centre of Canada & EMReF) (#108572)	
Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar - (UBC) (#108622-003)	Promoting gender equality through networks: Strengthening capacity and advocacy in Myanmar - (GEN) (#109029)	
Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar - (USC ) (#108622-004)		
Building Emerging Think Tank Leaders in Myanmar - (Kivu) (#108922)		
Assessing social science research systems in Myanmar’s transition to democracy - (GDN & CESD) (#109065)		

<sup>29</sup> IDRC Active Project List & Annual Report 2019

## What has worked well

*Utilizing direct forms of capacity strengthening* Direct forms of capacity strengthening are a particular strength in view of the fragile context of Myanmar. In this context, ‘direct forms’ refers to inputs in the form of training and mentorship. Preliminary findings on the Myanmar research environment found an education system based largely on rote learning, a low level of trust towards researchers, and organizational problems, such as an absence of Sociology as a discipline in Myanmar’s higher education ecosystem.<sup>30</sup> Our interviews reiterated that the deteriorated Myanmar education system has resulted in the need for training in fundamental components of research and its use, and for direct forms of capacity strengthening.<sup>31</sup> Each of the projects engaged participants in the development of specific and application-oriented skill sets, including research methodology, economics and econometrics, public finance policy, gender sensitivity and equality, and training in other relevant social sciences, often instituting a ‘learning by doing’ framework.<sup>32</sup> The Initiative focused not only on modern research methodology, but also the presentation and dissemination of such research.

Effects have been most evident in the Initiative’s long-term, in-person engagements: the student and faculty exchanges from Yangon University of Economics (YUE) to AIT and UBC; the in-depth mentorship of University of Mandalay faculty (UoM) by CMU; the series of workshops organized by USC and Myanmar Development Institute (MDI) in Nay Pyi Taw; and the series of trainings organized by the Parliamentary Centre and Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF) in training local civil society organizations and parliamentarians in legislative research. One beneficiary of the Initiative noted Myanmar as having “both [a] material gap and [an] idea gap in relation to other countries”.<sup>33</sup> To that end, the Initiative has used trainings, workshops, and mentorship to make strides across the research pipeline from research methodology to research presentation.

In the short-term, beneficiaries from universities, research institutions, and policy-making backgrounds received training and mentorship to improve their individual research capabilities. Through projects led by AIT and UBC, over 100 Myanmar graduate students and faculty received training and mentorship in public policy making.<sup>34</sup> The CMU-led project provided training on research methods in social sciences to 30 faculty members from the UoM, extending their involvement further to directly mentor 17 research projects. These research projects were presented at the K4DM Knowledge Forum. Thirty participants -14 of whom were researchers at MDI and the remaining 16 from various government departmental offices such as Central Statistical Office, Immigration, and Planning- attended a McGill-hosted workshop on time series analysis, econometrics, and use of STATA.<sup>35</sup> Over 140 participants, coming from both research and policy backgrounds, attended 42 person-days of training covering applied econometrics, matrix algebra and calculus, optimization methods, applied survey methods, microeconomics for policy, and poverty in Myanmar conducted by the University of Southern California.<sup>36</sup> Finally, 16 members of

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<sup>30</sup> Gevaudan, C. (2017). Doing Research Assessment: Understanding Research Systems in Developing Countries. <http://www.gdn.int/sites/default/files/Doing%20Research%20Assessment.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> KII\_28

<sup>32</sup> TR108622-001, TR108622-005, TR108622-002, TR108622-003, TR108622-004, TR108671, TR108922, TR108572, TR109029

<sup>33</sup> TR108622-002, KII\_8

<sup>34</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019

<sup>35</sup> TR 108622-002

<sup>36</sup> TR 108622-004

Shan State parliament received training on gender-sensitive analysis in legislative research, as well as four policy interest areas, and 25 parliamentary staff members received training on reliable data sources, micro-financing legislation, and research brief production.<sup>37</sup>

Program leads have spoken of the eager and earnest nature of beneficiaries in projects in their reports and interviews. A YUE participant noted that involvement with the K4DM program played a key role in his current research abilities, allowing him “to be[come] a proper researcher [and] gain confidence to analyze and report research”.<sup>38</sup> Finally, participants of projects led by university partners mention that the broadened network that resulted from such training helped to support research capacity of both individual researchers and their corresponding institutions.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to these short-term benefits, the Initiative has made strides in developing an enabling environment for evidence-based policy. One of the most lauded results of the Initiative has been relationship building with the Shan State legislature. The Parliamentary Centre of Canada built legislative research capacity among staff at the EMReF, who in turn organized training sessions for Shan State parliament members, developed a legislative research training manual in both Myanmar and English, and established a precedent for the practice of sustaining a relationship with appropriate policymakers.<sup>40</sup> Since this engagement, EMReF has worked to produce similar work with other state legislatures.<sup>41</sup> The Initiative convened appropriate stakeholders through other projects as well, such as through the collaboration between USC, McGill, and MDI. More than 150 civil servants received training on conducting quantitative research. Finally, the Fulbright University of Vietnam and the Renaissance Institute (RI) can also be credited with involving more than 30 officials from five different state governments in extended public finance and decentralization training through the Nay Pyi Taw summer school. Through convening Myanmar stakeholders -and connecting them to the material and knowledge resources of other universities- the Initiative has made progress in establishing an environment for evidence-based policy.

Long-term capacity strengthening took on other forms. The projects that partnered with AIT and UBC not only produced the short-term benefits of enhancing the skills and confidence of individual researchers, but also spurred the creation of Myanmar’s first gender-focused development course and certificate program, as well as development of a future Master Course in Public Policy program at YUE.<sup>42</sup> These programmatic level results show promise for a continued focus on gender issues and informed policymaking beyond the Initiative.

*Evidence of demand-driven and continuous engagement* Within the individual capacity strengthening pillar, some projects show evidence of demand-driven and continuous capacity development. Interviewees reflect that these outcomes were produced when lead partners committed to local interactions with beneficiaries.

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<sup>37</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019

<sup>38</sup> KII\_26, KII\_28

<sup>39</sup> KII\_6, KII\_8, KII\_9, KII\_12, KII\_14, KII\_15, KII\_27, KII\_28, KII\_34, KII\_35

<sup>40</sup> IDRC 2019 Annual Report

<sup>41</sup> KII\_38

<sup>42</sup> TR108622-003 & KII\_29

The project led by McGill in conjunction with CMU provide a case example of the benefits of local presence. Interviews with project leaders found that while the workshop trainings were led by McGill, much of the hard work was also done by CMU. The resultant effect was positive for UoM beneficiaries. Due to CMU's proximity to Myanmar, a team of two to three members were able to commit to three-day workshops and provide longstanding relationships with UoM faculty. Moreover, the preponderance of Thai female academics on the CMU team allowed for interesting, congruent perspectives to support and develop the research interests of Myanmar researchers. The culturally relevant collaboration has been cited as a strength by both beneficiaries and CMU project leads.<sup>43</sup> Thus, in the instances when Initiative partners were able to offer consistent, local, and frequent presence, the result was trusted and responsive partnership allowing for demand-driven training. The following K4DM partners were found to have offer such partnership: AIT, CMU, UBC, USC, and the Parliamentary Centre & EMReF.

*Broad range of stakeholders engaged* The Initiative engaged a broad array of key stakeholder groups. In addition to this, Initiative projects were modeled in unique ways. Some projects offered in-depth mentorship to a select group of homogeneous participants, such as the YUE exchange program at UBC. Others, on the other hand, convened together a large, heterogeneous group from universities, research institutions, and policy backgrounds, such as the McGill-CMU-MDI led project. Table 1 above reflects the breadth of beneficiaries reached by the projects, as well as the mix of participants per project.

The mix of project types produced two key results. First, the projects limited to university members alone allowed for in-depth mentorship and skills development. As an example, students who participated in research at the AIT student exchange are set to receive co-authorship on a study to be published in a peer-reviewed journal. The feedback from university personnel who benefitted from CMU and UBC mentorship was also very positive, citing exposure to new research topics, improved methodology and analysis abilities, and long-term informal mentorship as positive results of their involvement.<sup>44</sup> Second, projects with a heterogenous group of participants also created positive impact. One participant from a research background noted that after her involvement with the Initiative, she is now forced to think more strategically about research in the context of policy-making rather than research as a stand-alone entity.<sup>45</sup> Her comments, in conjunction with comments reported in Technical Reports, exemplify the Initiative's efforts to convene relevant actors and spur collaboration.

*Engaged a broad range of institutions* The Initiative recruited a wide range of organizations to aid in the reconstruction of Myanmar's research community. Given the fragile and uncertain political context of Myanmar, the Initiative appropriately leveraged a broad, varied network to lead projects to enable grassroots development of capacity.

Five of the ten projects in this pillar were led by universities from different parts of the globe. Universities played a key role in expanding the network of Myanmar university researchers and think tanks, provided resources and cross-learnings, and made efforts to institute long-standing relationships by connecting via Facebook and other means with beneficiaries. Outcomes of the work have been quite

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<sup>43</sup> KII\_8, KII\_9, KII\_14, KII\_15, KII\_23, KII\_27, KII\_34, KII\_35

<sup>44</sup> KII\_8, KII\_9, KII\_14, KII\_15, KII\_27, KII\_28, KII\_34, KII\_35

<sup>45</sup> KII\_19

successful, with examples such as Myanmar students' exposure to research and co-authorship on peer-reviewed research papers; development of undergraduate and graduate level courses in gender development and public policy; and the trainings disseminated to policymakers.

The Initiative also commissioned Kivu International for capacity development of Myanmar think tanks. Kivu works with eight institutions who range from being solely research-based to utilizing research for advocacy. The inclusion of this project within the pillar is reflective of the Initiative's aim to strengthen the base of research capacity and policy influence. Program leads have noted that in contrast to working with other partners, the IDRC's approach is especially adroit in creating lasting impact. Policy influence is based on proximity to power, and the set of actors who are most influential can change in the next coming years. Through ensuring mentorship and strategy advising for a host of institutions, the Initiative ensures an ability to keep momentum moving forward.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to a broad range of project leads, the Initiative was mindful to provide training to local actors who themselves provide training to others. GEN, EMReF, RI, and MDI have been identified as institutions that developed mutually beneficial relationships with the Initiative. By carrying out training and workshops and collaborating with lead partners, these Myanmar institutions were both able to benefit their own research staff through 'learning by doing', as well as develop capacity for participants of Initiative projects outside of their own organization.

### **What has worked less well**

*Inconsistent engagement from all grantees* Evidence of demand-driven and continuous engagement is cited as a strength of this pillar, which was created when Initiative partners engaged deeply with beneficiaries. Unfortunately, not all lead partners provided similar levels of engagement due to a host of reasons.

One of the clearest differentiating factors between successful and less successful projects was face-to-face, consistent engagement. In the USC-led project, six unique training sessions were held over the span of five months. In total, the project logged 3257 total training hours for participants, and feedback from sessions included comments such as, "The lecturer knows the context of Myanmar well and brings the international practices, too - linking both of them might make him unique from the pool of talented trainers."<sup>47</sup> Despite the host institution's distance from Myanmar, the project was structured in a way that allowed for consistent and responsive partnership. The trainings were rated above a 4 on a 5-point satisfaction scale on quality, method of delivery, and content of training.

Partnership by CMU provided similar levels of consistent engagement. According to the project leads, "Indeed, one lesson of the first year of the capacity program [was] that participants want to have the opportunity to do the research, discuss the methods in practice, and get feedback. This was found by both McGill and the CMU teams. CMU was able to develop this further by having several workshops over the period, changing the pedagogical interaction and give participants feedback. Because of

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<sup>46</sup> KII\_4, KII\_10

<sup>47</sup> TR108622-004

distance, McGill [could] not reproduce the same frequency of contacts [that] CMU [could].”<sup>48</sup> The case example points to two findings. First, as is true for USC-led example, periodic presence and responsive partnership ultimately led to the strongest positive results for Initiative projects. Second, even within one project among the portfolio, project leads could not offer the same level of engagement.

Where consistent engagement was lacking, projects were less successful. In their final training during the K4DM Knowledge Forum, only 5 participants attended out of 30 invited by Kivu International. Reasons for low attendance included a lack of follow-up after invitation roll-out; followed by selection criteria for participants that limited the overall selection pool; limited human resources among participating institutions that could not provide full day training commitment; and a reported lack of understanding of local context on part of Kivu trainers.<sup>49</sup> Another reported concern was curriculum that did not reflect the needs of participants present at the training. Training needs assessments were conducted online, and as such, those in attendance of the training had a different set of specialized needs compared to what was reported to Kivu beforehand. Had partner engagement been modeled more like that of CMU, USC, or UBC, beneficiary attendance might have been different.

While the Kivu training is but one of many they offered (and there are success stories noted in Technical Reports of their individualized engagements with research institutions), the case example is emblematic of an issue with consistent engagement.

*Generic trainings impeded maximum benefit* Throughout the document review and interviews, Amaltas found a lack of congruence between Initiative trainings and participant needs as a persistent weakness.<sup>50</sup> The issue is one that was bound to occur: in attempting to draw in as many participants as possible from a region with a deteriorated education system, participant skill level was bound to be quite variable. Still, it cannot be ignored that both project leads and project beneficiaries have reported that non customized trainings are a weakness that needs to be addressed. A beneficiary from a think tank noted that what she gained from the Initiative varied by workshop. Some Initiative trainings, such as those on literature reviews and gender sensitivity, benefitted her as a researcher, while others, such as ‘research presentation’ trainings that lasted two days, felt less useful.<sup>51</sup>

Similar issues were raised by program leads regarding the McGill-led trainings for MDI researchers in Nay Pyi Taw. In contrast to the expectations of the leaders, 19 participants from office outside of the MDI attended the workshop due to broad-based advertising of the event. While participants were eager to learn across the board, it was clear that the additional participants were not well-trained in economics and STATA statistical software. The variance in foundational knowledge led to lesser benefit for the additional participants, as well as a less customized training for the MDI participants.<sup>52</sup>

*Inconsistent level of Asia-specific context* Although the broad range of institutions engaged with the Initiative has been cited as being a strength, its attendant weakness is an inconsistent level of Asia-

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<sup>48</sup> TR108622-002

<sup>49</sup> KII\_2

<sup>50</sup> TR108622-002, TR108622-003, TR108622-004, TR108671, TR108922, TR108572

<sup>51</sup> KII\_19

<sup>52</sup> TR 108622-002

specific context brought by each partner institution. Partners such as AIT, CMU, and even USC (whose project chair is of Myanmar descent) have been lauded by participants for their culturally congruent perspectives and insights on capacity development.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, other partners could not offer the same context and were consequently less successful in garnering participation from beneficiaries. This issue specifically came up in the work conducted by Kivu International.

To be sure, Kivu International works with eight separate research institutions, operating with a limited budget and time frame to devote to each partner. These constraints have been accounted for in the assessment of the performance of the consultancy, in addition to the Kivu technical reports relaying positive feedback by participants. Despite these ratings from reports, a lack of local context knowledge was a reason cited for poor participation at Kivu trainings during the Knowledge Forum. Additionally, although feedback through the technical reports provide highly positive ratings with regard to expertise on research methodology and dissemination, feedback ratings on staff members' expertise of the Myanmar context were not sought. According to the technical report, Kivu International reports having "tailored to the Myanmar realities wherever possible [including conducting] a political and economic assessment of the Myanmar context [and] listen[ing] to partners in [workshops]". Nevertheless, these measures fall short of the expectations of beneficiaries. Due to the longitudinal relationship of Kivu with the think tanks it works with, this weakness can be mitigated through a continued and concerted effort to understand context.

*Inadequate interaction* In contrast, GEN shouldered the responsibility of not just improving their own research capacity, but also leading an Initiative project to bolster research capacity of emerging leaders in public service. In interviews with GEN, staff reported that their own engagement with IDRC was limited to initial contact at the beginning and during the Knowledge Forum 2019 much later. Regular communication via email was not a substitute for consistent engagement by leadership. The staff relied heavily on their own expertise and their connections to universities, such as the AIT, to prepare for their role. As a result of a lack of adequate support, GEN staff noted such trainings were less-than-optimal for the beneficiaries they could have been.<sup>54</sup>

### **Organizational Strengthening**

The organizational strengthening pillar of the Initiative aims to bolster organizational processes and capacity to produce high quality research within three Think Tanks: Advancing Life And Regenerating Motherland (ALARM); CESD; and Center for Development & Ethnic Studies (CDES).

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<sup>53</sup> TR108622-001, TR108622-004; KII\_8, KII\_9, KII\_14, KII\_15, KII\_23, KII\_27, KII\_34, KII\_35

<sup>54</sup> KII\_6, KII\_12

**Table 2: Organizational Strengthening projects**

Graduate Students & Faculty	Think Tanks & Research Institutions	Policymakers
	Building Organizational Development – ALARM (#108703-001)	
	Building Organizational Development – CDES (#108703-002)	
	Building Organizational Development – CESD (#108703-003)	

### What has worked well

*Benefits of core-funding* The IDRC’s model of offering core funding has been successfully instituted for think tanks across South Asia. The known advantages that core funding confers were also experienced by the think tanks funded in Myanmar. Most significantly, the grants received helped all three think tanks to undertake organizational development, thus promoting long-term sustainability.

In the case of ALARM, key challenges the institution faced during its reporting period were exogenous influences. Outside factors inhibited project implementation from being the simple sequencing of planned activities to achieve a goal. As a result, project management became the ‘art’ of harmonizing planned activities to be strategically implemented within socioeconomic, political, and environmental changes in society. Moreover, successful policy advocacy required constant reminding of key issues and the urgency of proposed actions, rather than ad-hoc advocacy work. In order to conduct such work, secure funding was a key factor of success. Core funding ensured core staff -the “main engine of the organization”- were retained and able to achieve program targets, in addition to helping to procure office space, equipment and facilities for environmental monitoring, and a desktop computer.<sup>55</sup>

CDES echoed this. Its biggest reported challenge throughout the reporting period was an unanticipated funding shortage in November 2018, requiring the team to spend time searching for potential donors and writing proposals. The Initiative’s core funding offered the think tank ‘financial flexibility’ to allow sufficient time for fundraising.<sup>56</sup> The funds were used to retain staff, as well as review and revise organizational performance.<sup>57</sup>

CESD utilized its core funding to not only retain staff, but also to support in-house training and capacity strengthening programs, and hire experts to improve organizational capabilities.<sup>58</sup> Given the high turnover rates for individual researchers in Myanmar, CESD felt that one of the major successes of its relationship with the Initiative was its support to promote long-term sustainability of its organization. Otherwise, Myanmar-based research institutions suffer from high turnover rate of employees who move to work with international research organizations.<sup>59</sup> ALARM, CDES, and CESD all felt strongly that their funds were used to support key organizational development to promote long-term success.

<sup>55</sup> TR108703-001

<sup>56</sup> KII\_36

<sup>57</sup> TR108703-002

<sup>58</sup> TR108703-003

<sup>59</sup> KII\_13

*Supported research adds to knowledge base relevant to immediate policy needs* Another strength of the organizational pillar's body of work was that the institutions that were supported produced research aligned with Myanmar's policy needs. In 2018, IDRC carried out a policy community survey, which reported that data on education, gender issues, and the UN's sustainable development goals was easier to find than finding information on Myanmar's economy, poverty, natural resources, and foreign affairs data needs.<sup>60</sup> Key achievements by ALARM during the reporting period include research on technology to increase crop production (with findings published in an international journal) and, most notably, its report, 'The Urgent Need to Prepare for Climate Displacement in Myanmar: Establishing a Myanmar National Climate Land Bank'. A media launch in June 2018 was conducted to attract public interest and debates over establishing a land bank. Moreover, ALARM provided evidence to parliamentarians that suggested the idea of integrating a land bank into existing land use policy. Union Minister U Thaung Htun stated he would advocate for a land bank at the national level.<sup>61</sup> There is confusion on exact terms and logistics of such evidence-to-policy translation on part of the parliamentarians. Still, the work by ALARM exemplifies its contribution to policy needs regarding land use.

CDES produced similarly meaningful work in the realm of peace negotiations. The organization's most important achievement of the reporting period has been its research paper with suggestions of amendments, repeals, and needed additions to the 2008 Myanmar Constitution. The paper was produced in consultation with legal experts, top leaders from Ethnic Armed Organizations, activists, and CSO leaders. A partner working at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue commented, "If the 2008 Constitution is the Bible, [CDES's research paper] is like a Bible Commentary."<sup>62</sup> The comment reflects a reality in which CDES was able to disseminate copies of its research -in English and in Myanmar- to stakeholders across the peace process from civil society to negotiators.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, CESD's work covered a range of issues in the economy, including research with the Initiative's 'Doing Research Assessment', to evaluate the research landscape of Myanmar. CESD researchers participated in major policy consultations and built expertise in agricultural value chains and manufacturing. The funding the Initiative provided bolstered organizations working towards land reform, peace negotiations, and other aspects of the economy in Myanmar. Given the span of evidence produced, it is clear that funding has been allocated towards important and useful research.

*Range of institutions supported* A final strength of the pillar is in the Initiative's explicit practice to support a broad base of research institutions within Myanmar's fragile context. According to multiple interviews with research staff, the pathway from research to policy is often a matter of which research institutions are most proximal to government. At any point in time and particularly with the coming election, the institution with influence may change.<sup>64</sup> The Initiative has funded, partnered, and offered means to develop capacity with institutions across a spectrum of influence in both the organizational

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<sup>60</sup> International Development & Research Centre. (2018). Myanmar Policy Community Survey. Retrieved from [http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/sites/default/files/Draft%20IDRC\\_Think%20Tank%20Initiative%20PCS%202018\\_Myanmar%20Report\\_.pdf](http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/sites/default/files/Draft%20IDRC_Think%20Tank%20Initiative%20PCS%202018_Myanmar%20Report_.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> TR108703-001

<sup>62</sup> TR108703-002

<sup>63</sup> KII\_36

<sup>64</sup> KII\_4, KII\_10, KII\_13

and individual capacity strengthening pillars. Multiple interviews have corroborated that while nominally the Initiative was meant to solely fund the three core think tanks, the IDRC project officer was flexible and responsive to support other aspects, such as extending research networks to international universities.<sup>65</sup>

### **What has worked less well**

*Limited pool of potential organizations* A major obstacle in maximizing success of the organizational pillar has been the perception of risk that research institutions in Myanmar were perceived to carry. Relative to their South Asian neighbors that received funding through the IDRC’s Think Tank Initiative, Myanmar research institutions are seen to be in ‘nascent’ stages of capacity development and thus were deemed to be more risky.<sup>66</sup> The selection criteria of the Initiative thus limited the pool of Myanmar think tanks that could receive funding.

The issue of creating too high a bar for core funding is cyclical. International scholars dominate much of the research done in Myanmar and create a competitive landscape detrimental to the growth of Myanmar research institutions.<sup>67</sup> International bodies are able to produce high-quality research at a much quicker rate, which in part contributes to the high turnover rate for research staff in Myanmar think tanks.

Core funding played a key role in developing the organizational capacity and flexibility to changing political, economic, and social contexts for the three think tanks. But the same kind of funding was not available to other research institutions that also make up part of the Initiative – possibly denying the Initiative the opportunity to have a bigger impact on developing capacity of state and non state actors in Myanmar. Furthermore, think tank leaders from the core-funded institutions agree that developing the capacity of the range of Myanmar institutions will be important to combat the competition that they face from international research institutions.<sup>68</sup>

*Lack of other forms of formal support* The IDRC is aware of the fact that the larger Myanmar knowledge system continues to be underfunded, underdeveloped and fragile.<sup>69</sup> Supervision in an environment that is both fragile and complex (as in Myanmar) needs to be intensive, immediate and at hand, something that the Initiative has not been able to provide as of now.<sup>70</sup> IDRC does not have strong technical presence on the ground in Myanmar – support is limited to a local consultant who is not charged with this responsibility. Think tank support has been provided from the Asia Regional Office located close by in New Delhi. But even so, the technical officer responsible was not able to visit Myanmar frequently, making think tank support relatively patchy.

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<sup>65</sup> KII\_13

<sup>66</sup> KII\_5, KII\_21

<sup>67</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019, KII\_13

<sup>68</sup> KII\_13

<sup>69</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019

<sup>70</sup> KII\_16

CDES underscored this point:

*“K4DM has helped us by providing much needed core funding, allowing us to hire local and international staff to support capacity of the organization. But we also need technical support to build our capabilities writing good, winnable proposals and develop good business plans.”*

Due to the context of Myanmar’s research environment and fragile education system, core funding alone cannot strengthen think tanks in a sustainable manner. On the one hand, the Initiative’s core funding remains a key mechanism through which to bolster the research system, especially given many international donors continue to only offer project-based research grants. On the other, sustainable change requires it to support the quality of research as well as the strategies for advocacy of such organizations.

In its overall body of work, the Initiative has dichotomized its support: core funding was provided to three institutions (ALARM, CESD, and CDES), but these institutions did not receive direct forms of support in the form of training or mentorship. Mentorship for capacity development through the Kivu consultancy was offered to eight other think tanks, but they did not receive core funding. The asymmetrical aid to both cohorts inhibited optimal capacity development across these institutions.

To exemplify the point, CESD staff reported quality of research and research methodology as continued areas of weakness, even after the funding period. The institution benefitted from collaborating with stakeholders such as Canadian universities, but these engagements were created informally with IDRC officers rather than through a formal plan by the Initiative.<sup>71</sup> Additionally, utilizing appropriate forms of advocacy remains another weakness for the think tank. CESD noted that the lack of an established media source in Myanmar pushes people to rely upon Facebook as a form of mainstream media. As a result, fake news and hate speech sway the opinion of not only the general public, but even policymakers, without a form of trusted media to provide an evidence base or informed opinions to counter it. The CESD has stated they plan on hiring outside staff to bolster quality assurance and digital communications to ensure their quality of research and dissemination of research improves. While core funding may indirectly support research quality or communication, a blindspot of the Initiative has been in providing direct and necessary trainings to Myanmar research institutions, given Myanmar’s fragile context.

*Maintenance of independence* A final weakness of this pillar of work is the Initiative’s lack of direct engagement with civil society organizations. The work of think tanks requires independence and ‘distance from power’ to be useful. However, like other institutions, they need funding to be able to maintain their staff rosters and a research portfolio. This pushes them into the arms of the private sector which often commissions studies in order to monetize the data that results. In the absence of consistent backing from non partisan funders, the need for funds to continue operations promotes the ‘privatization of knowledge’. Think tanks resist this, but cited this as a concern.

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<sup>71</sup> KII\_13

, Each think tank collaborated or engaged with civil society groups to their own individual extent. To exemplify, the CDES organized monthly meetings with lawmakers, government officials, political parties, and army officials; with Ethnic Armed Organizations, civil society organizations, activists, researchers, and university professors; and with media, participating in televised debates and interview in Myanmar journals.<sup>72</sup> The CDES prioritized engaging with ‘people of all ages and different backgrounds’ to best understand the needs of various groups related to peace, democracy, and federalism. Through doing so, the organization wrote an informed report on necessary amendments to the 2008 Constitution and disseminated it with great success.

The credit of this achievement must be attributed to the efforts by the CDES staff, as there were no explicit metrics or expectations by the Initiative to conduct periodic engagements. Moreover, the work of ALARM and CESD did not reflect such a concerted effort to utilize civil society voices. In fact, ALARM technical reports relay a decreased perception of opportunities to engage with civil society members, from a ‘medium’ level of confidence at the start of the reporting period to a ‘very low level’ at the end of the year.<sup>73</sup> CESD engaged with civil society to a limited extent. The think tank reached a total of 250 students through its Saturday School of Federalism program, teaching issues related to democracy, federalism, and peace building since 2017.<sup>74</sup>

By not engaging civil society members through the organizational strengthening pillar, the Initiative risks ringfencing knowledge within the research community. To be sure, all three think tanks have engaged in dialogue regarding research and policy to various extents through workshops and trainings, reaching audiences ranging from students to policymakers. But unlike the portfolio of work under individual capacity strengthening, the three core-funded projects have not collaborated with stakeholders across the board to the same extent. Keeping in mind the weak education system already in place, the Initiative must be mindful of ensuring research communication to civil society members is an explicit priority when developing capacity in think tanks. Otherwise, the evidence that informs policy will not be inclusive and, down the line, will not be sustainable.

### **Gender Research Projects**

The knowledge generation pillar of the Initiative encompasses five research projects focusing on issues of gender equality. These are being implemented by think tanks i.e., GEN, EMReF, Myanmar Institute for Gender Studies (MIGS), Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security (MIPS), and Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development (MIID), and universities i.e., AIT, McMaster University, University of Essex, University of Amsterdam; and four local partners in Myanmar.

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<sup>72</sup> TR108703-002

<sup>73</sup> TR108703-001

<sup>74</sup> TR108703-003

**Table 3: Gender Research projects**

University (Ethnic Community) Partnerships	Think Tanks & Research Institutions	Policymakers
Barriers and pathways to women’s political participation in Myanmar- Gender Equality and Decentralization in Myanmar (GEN & AIT) (#108744)		
Engendering Women's Political Recruitment and Participation in Myanmar (EMReF & McMaster University) (#108738)		
Gender Budgeting: Preferences, Policies and Impact – Gender Equality and Decentralization (MIGS, Univ. of Essex & Univ. of Amsterdam) (#108740)		
Delivery of Public Services in Ethnic Minority States- Gender Equality and Decentralization in Myanmar (MIPS & Univ. of Toronto) (#108739)		
	Pathways to economic and political empowerment for ethnic minority women in South East Shan State, Myanmar- (MIID, Parami Development Network, & local community partners) (#108758)	

The ‘learning by doing’ model of this pillar resulted in research produced, capacity developed in research methodology, and communication among individual researchers, and collaboration between Myanmar research institutions and lead university partners. Although the MIID-partnered project did not involve university partners, it partnered with four different ethnic communities to carry out its research.

**What has worked well**

*Attempts to cover a range of topics* The knowledge generation pillar of the Initiative reflects an effort to evaluate a range of issues affecting gender equality in Myanmar. The range of work covers women’s political voice and agency in politics, the economy, and the household; the extent to which public service delivery are gender inclusive; and is inclusive of not only women’s voices concerning gender equality, but also considers men’s perceptions of gender equality in Myanmar. The body of work considers national, state-level, and community-level barriers felt by women; includes one project considering issues of intersectionality by evaluating the status of women from ethnic minority states; and covers sectors including public finance, politics, and sociocultural norms.

The range of issues covered is important for two reasons. First, the knowledge generated is itself beneficial and not overlapping among the five projects. Second, by conducting such research, Myanmar researchers have become more aware of their own biases related to gender equality. The ‘learning by doing’ approach has been cited as being key in improving researchers’ ability to conduct research across Initiative projects. With regard to the gender research projects, it was reported that the ‘learning by doing’ approach has caused researchers to realize “gender analysis begins with analyzing yourself.” The

following statement by a leader from the Mawk Kon Local Development Organization portrays how gender trainings and her research with the Initiative have influenced her thoughts on gender equality:<sup>75</sup>

*“In the matter of stereotyping, we need to change individually as a base, so that the whole country will change...Before the training, I did not know that the small things regarding gender are important, so I did not explain well in the community. Now...I will definitely educate my colleagues and the community by using the knowledge that I learned from this training.”*

A significant impact of the gender research program of work has been to contribute to a change in the way Myanmar research elevates and evaluates issues of gender equality. By ensuring that the body of research spans a range of issues affecting women -from gender budgeting to household leadership- the Initiative’s projects contribute to both the published literature and, importantly, the mindsets of researchers.

*Created synergies for Myanmar institutions and university partners* The Initiative provided opportunities for university partners, Myanmar research institutions, and other relevant actors to meet and thus maximize benefits.

One such benefit was the convening of Myanmar research institutions to collaborate and share learning with one another related to gender research. To exemplify, the five organizations that received Initiative funding to conduct gender research work -GEN, EMReF, MIGS, MIPS, and MIID- attend each others’ monthly meetings. Researchers offered creative solutions to one another in research methodology and other areas.<sup>76</sup> These collaborations show evidence of an improved quality of research, as well as efforts to build relationships among the research community in Myanmar. Moreover, by recruiting Asia Research News to write a cohesive article on the five projects, the interwoven threads of gender research under the Initiative were explicated, and audience of 57,000 Facebook users in Myanmar was reached.<sup>77</sup>

Myanmar research institutions have also noted that their collaborations with universities were beneficial. A researcher from MIPS noted that without the Initiative, their institution’s connection to the University of Toronto and subsequent knowledge sharing, networking, and conference invitations would have been non-existent.<sup>78</sup> EMReF researchers regard the Initiative’s efforts to connect them with resources as “above-and-beyond.” Examples include access to university journals, researchers, and other such resources that went beyond the original expectations of collaboration.<sup>79</sup> University partners also note their relationships with Myanmar research institutions as beneficial. To exemplify, through their relationship with GEN, AIT was able to create the Gender Certificate program to be created at YUE.<sup>80</sup>

*Contributing to a cultural change through research* In addition to covering a range of issues affecting

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<sup>75</sup> TR108578

<sup>76</sup> KII\_19

<sup>77</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019

<sup>78</sup> KII\_33

<sup>79</sup> KII\_19

<sup>80</sup> KII\_29

gender equality and expanding networks, the process of research engagement has led to cultural change. The research projects have used numerous methods including intra-household surveys, focus group discussions with women and men, and semi-structured interviews with community leaders and local governance bodies. The effect has been two-fold: equipping Myanmar researchers with practical skills to conduct research, as well as improving the confidence of researchers to directly address leaders in positions of authority.

The exposure to various methodologies has built capacity among research staff in their ability to collect data. For example, one researcher from EMReF noted that through working with the Initiative, she has gained experience considering relevant stakeholders, designing surveys, and utilizing more effective methods to collect data. In the future, she hopes to continue using a tablet and relevant technologies to best input and analyze data.<sup>81</sup> Another research assistant from MIGS likewise reported an increase in experience and confidence. Through conducting interviews in Chin State, he has gained skills in coordinating and communicating with local communities and overcoming logistical obstacles during research.<sup>82</sup>

The ‘learning by doing’ approach goes beyond increasing research capacity and contributes to important cultural shifts in the research community in Myanmar. The EMReF researcher mentioned did not simply gain experience using a tablet in research. While before the project, she could more easily separate research from policy, working with the Initiative has pushed her to contextualize research in terms of evidence-based policy, as well as equipped her with the skills and confidence to more directly address policymakers.

Myanmar researchers’ ability to conduct interviews within its fragile context has been improved in both interviewing government officials, as well as armed ethnic organizations. The MIPS project provides a case example for such improvements. In the conflict-sensitive area of Northern Shan state with multiple armed groups, militia, and Tatmadaw forces, the MIPS project lead felt concerned over two female researchers’ ability to approach militia for data collection. Yet, contrary to his fears, a researcher spent three hours and wrote over ten pages of transcripts in an interview with a militia group.<sup>83</sup> After the experience, the researcher is ready to continue such endeavors and research in future work. Not every project utilized such face-to-face involvement with armed ethnic organizations, but this case example highlights the potential positive impacts of normalizing such engagements.

The work of the knowledge-generating pillar has thus made an impact on multiple levels. Individual researchers have acquired skills and experience in conducting research over a range of issues, as well as learned about their own biases regarding gender. Through pairing of Myanmar research institutions with international universities, Myanmar researchers have expanded their network and enhanced the quality and reach of their research. Finally, through the body of research being conducted, the Initiative is contributing to not just research literature, but to a cultural change in a generation of researchers who feel equipped to interact with relevant stakeholders.

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<sup>81</sup> KII\_19

<sup>82</sup> TR108740-001

<sup>83</sup> TR108739-001

## What has worked less well

*Room to be more inclusive* While the gender research projects span a range of issues, the projects could improve their level of inclusivity. The issue is in part a function of the fragile context of Myanmar. On the one hand, issues concerning ethnic groups, LGBTQ+ rights, and members with other marginalized identities should be better represented in research and policy. On the other, political issues such as the intra-state conflict in Shan and Kachin states and the anti-Rohingya violence in Rakhine State increase risk for researchers and institutions to carry out such work. Some efforts have been made to conduct research in these risky environments on part of the Initiative. Nevertheless, given that the objective of the knowledge-generating pillar is, at least in part, to produce an evidence base for policy in Myanmar, the knowledge base produced could and should improve its consideration of gender in conjunction with geography, sexuality, and other such identifiers that define marginalization.

This position is substantiated by interviews with an NAC adviser who noted the role of the IDRC in Myanmar is to “utilize its unique position to strengthen civic engagement, representation, and benefit” to oppressed groups. Given the multiple international governments and agencies conducting work in Myanmar, the adviser noted that, “Anyone funding this country needs to keep in mind the bigger picture.”<sup>84</sup> Moreover, a majority of beneficiaries interviewed were hesitant to describe the Initiative’s research efforts as beneficial to ethnic groups. The “window of opportunity” to conduct work and effect change is closing, according to interviews with multiple project partners.<sup>85</sup> To that end, the research conducted must better include representation of ethnic minorities and other groups.

*Disseminating research back into communities* Another weakness of the pillar has been its limitation to adequately disseminate research back to Myanmar communities. The Asia Research News feature was a success in that a wide audience of people -ranging from Myanmar facebook users to non-Myanmar scientists- gained insight into gender research work in Myanmar. Yet, the article feature becomes less relevant when taking into account Myanmar women in ethnic minority states and other such actors who the research drew upon and is designed to impact. Other communication successes highlighted by the Initiative’s Annual Report are remiss. The Quarterly ‘Inclusive Myanmar’ newsletter is cited to reach 250 people and institutions, but the realized audience of these newsletters are not the households being targeted for data collection.

The same EMReF researcher who noted she is eager to continue using a tablet to collect and analyze household data mentioned that an additional goal of hers is to better communicate findings to the households from which she collects data.<sup>86</sup> While the production of newsletters and articles may be significant in terms of adding to the research literature of Myanmar, these methods of communication are not relevant or useful when addressing the unique needs of communities outside of Yangon, Mandalay, or international entities. More attention must be allotted towards ensuring research findings are brought both to the communities that the research is meant to benefit, as well as to academic and policy-oriented audiences.

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<sup>84</sup> KII\_7

<sup>85</sup> KII\_3, KII\_13

<sup>86</sup> KII\_19

Moreover, where research findings are to be communicated, this must be done in the language of the country. The 'Inclusive Myanmar' newsletter and Myanmar Lecture Series are both outcomes specifically highlighted in the Annual Report of the Initiative as evidence of efforts to engage grantees and partners. Yet, the newsletter is not written in Myanmar; the Lecture Series does not reach communities outside of educated research groups; and even the 2019 Knowledge Forum launch - midway through the program's life-span- received feedback from attendees that communication could have been better catered to a Myanmar audience.

*Ensuring that research influences policy* While the projects have struggled with communicating research findings to communities, the pathways of bringing research to policy have remained unexplored. There are few markers of success in the Initiative's annual or technical reports to note how the gender research projects can influence policy in the region. At least at the midpoint of the Initiative, markers of success have been limited to increased knowledge among researchers and grantees; engagement between Myanmar research institutions to share learnings; and workshops with international universities to compare cultural differences regarding gender issues.<sup>87</sup> None of these markers pair research directly with government officials, large-scale implementers, or practitioners who can then transform the research into changes in practice, program or policy.

In November 2018, the Initiative released Myanmar's first policy community survey and noted international agencies were the preferred organization by policymakers to search for information on social and economic policies.<sup>88</sup> Improving the quality of research and building up social media communications were noted as methods by which Myanmar think tanks could bolster their status to policymakers. Yet, Initiative actions within the knowledge generation pillar have seemingly only addressed the first issue.

The quality of research has been addressed through workshops, trainings, conferences, and other such efforts by the Initiative. As has been described, there is little evidence to show the same effort has been made to ensure these research findings are then translated to policy influence. NAC advisers, the most proximal stakeholder group to Myanmar policymakers of anyone in the Initiative, reiterate this sentiment: the research produced by the Initiative is not currently communicated to government officials in an optimal way.<sup>89</sup>

## **Collaboration & Engagement**

The collaboration and engagement pillar of the Initiative cuts across all eighteen projects with the intention to build trust and social capital within Myanmar. In recognition of fragility and fragmentation across Myanmar, the Initiative sought to increase opportunities for engagement and dialogue among state and non-state actors on key issues related to democratic transition, economic development, and gender equality. The assessment thus takes into account all eighteen projects and evaluates the

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<sup>87</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019

<sup>88</sup> International Development & Research Centre. (2018). Myanmar Policy Community Survey. Retrieved from [http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/sites/default/files/Draft%20IDRC\\_Think%20Tank%20Initiative%20PCS%202018\\_Myanmar%20Report\\_.pdf](http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/sites/default/files/Draft%20IDRC_Think%20Tank%20Initiative%20PCS%202018_Myanmar%20Report_.pdf)

<sup>89</sup> KII\_7

Initiative's work on both its ability to increase opportunity for dialogue and engagement, as well as translate such efforts into relevant evidence and policy.

### **What has worked well**

*Plugging Myanmar into the world* A major achievement of the Initiative has been its leveraging of the global IDRC network to plug Myanmar into the world. As a result of international partnerships and collaboration, Myanmar researchers built relationships and informed their perspectives on various policy fronts in Myanmar.

In the body of work within the Capacity Strengthening pillar, Myanmar researchers were paired with lead partners from universities across the globe. Myanmar researchers gained training in research methodology and the social sciences; cross-learnings from Western partners as well as South-South knowledge sharing; and long-standing relationships with university faculty for the purpose of continued mentorship. Beneficiaries from universities and think tanks relay that without the Initiative, these foreign partnerships and subsequent positive outcomes would not have formed.<sup>90</sup>

This statement is reiterated by international university partners as well, who note they have gained mutual benefit through their relationship with Myanmar institutions. For example, after beginning the student and faculty exchange programs, UBC students benefitted from class discussions that were informed and enriched by the Myanmar perspective. After the Initiative began, UBC later instituted a roundtable and lecture series on the Rohingya crisis, reflecting the influence the exchanges have had on foreign university's interest to understand political issues in Myanmar.<sup>91</sup> The mutual benefit is relevant to the Initiative's agenda, as the international relationship-building shows promise for networks to be sustainable into the future.

The body of work in the Organizational Capacity pillar provides an even stronger case for the Initiative's role in plugging Myanmar into the global stage. In early 2018, the three core-funded think tanks ALARM, CDES, and CESD attended the seventh annual South Asia regional meeting of the IDRC Think Tank Initiative in Bangladesh. At the forum they engaged with fourteen IDRC-supported think tanks spanning South Asia. Through this exchange, ALARM began its engagement with the Institute of Public Enterprises, an Indian think tank with experience and expertise in land use management research.<sup>92</sup> Later in November of 2018, the three think tanks again convened at a TTI exchange in Bangkok. They engaged with 250 representatives from think tanks, policymakers, and donor agencies spanning 25 countries.<sup>93</sup> As a result, ten young Myanmar leaders in the think tank space were paired with senior think tank officials for weekly mentoring and a week-long training in Geneva. For both university faculty and think tank staff, the Initiative has provided workshops, conferences, and in-depth mentorship as a means to expand the networks of Myanmar researchers.

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<sup>90</sup> KII\_6, KII\_28, KII\_31

<sup>91</sup> KII\_26

<sup>92</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2018

<sup>93</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019

Finally, as a case example, ALARM's work during the reporting period exemplifies how these global networks lead to more informed research and policy perspectives. In July of 2018, ALARM initiated a three-day workshop to bring together practitioners, experts and academics actively working in the field of indigenous land rights and customary land tenure. Practitioners from Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, Nepal, Australia and Africa presented case studies of best practice in land use management in their own respective contexts, as well as engaged in discussion on a model that would best suit Myanmar's political and economic context. The convention highlighted that it was extremely important for all ethnic groups of Myanmar to come together on a shared platform in order to reflect diversity within customary land tenure in policy discussion. As a result of the workshop, ALARM shared learnings, identified gaps in knowledge, and discussed effective decentralization and governance policies with international practitioners.<sup>94</sup>

*Forums and platforms for exchange created* As was demonstrated in the prior example with ALARM, the Initiative created forums and platforms for exchange. This was accomplished through two means: international collaboration, including the mentioned university partnerships for Myanmar researchers and conferences for the core-funded think tanks; and domestic collaboration among stakeholders in Myanmar.

A strength that is cited about the Capacity Strengthening pillar is its engagement with a breadth of stakeholders. Five of the ten projects in Table 1 actively engaged both research staff from think tanks and policymakers. Through projects led by USC, Fulbright University of Vietnam, and the Parliamentary Centre of Canada, policymakers were directly trained in quantitative research, public finance and decentralization, and gender-sensitive legislation. Moreover, through utilizing local actors to carry out the trainings -MDI, RI, and EMReF respectively- the Initiative encouraged platforms for exchange between Myanmar think tanks and policymakers.

*South-South cooperation and learning instituted* An important form of collaboration created through the Initiative was that with other Asian institutes in the region. As mentioned, the mentoring and training by CMU and AIT faculty offered meaningful aid to Myanmar researchers due to not only their congruent perspectives, but also their physical proximity. USC also offered beneficial aid despite physical distance, due to its lead partner being of Myanmar descent and the trainings spanning five months. As a result of all three of these partners instituting periodic, physical, and meaningful presence, the projects found success. CMU developed seventeen research projects ready for presentation by the Initiative's 2019 Knowledge Forum, and AIT aided in the development of the gender certificate course and co-authorship for Myanmar student researchers on a to-be published research paper. Importantly, USC's project received high ratings for satisfaction on overall quality, delivery, and content of training. On a five-point scale, the project received scores of 4.04, 4.04, and 4.13, respectively. Participants rated the quality of instructor an average 4.43. The following quotes highlight the importance of contextualization in creating impact<sup>95</sup>:

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<sup>94</sup> TR108703-001

<sup>95</sup> TR108622-004

*“The most advantages of the instructor is his ability to use local language (Burmese) when he gives lectures and provides explanations. It is very helpful for all the participants since they all understand easily. Everyone can communicate easily with each other to share in-house experiences and group work. Almost all the participants from ministries told me that the program is very useful for them.”*

*“I do feel that we are lucky to have a chance to learn from him as he can give lectures by using his wide knowledge and applying those in the local contexts of Myanmar so that we can have a clear picture of how to apply those technical skills in the real world.”*

### **What has worked less well**

*Lack of support for an enabling research environment* Although the Initiative has leveraged its global network and offered services to a range of stakeholders, it has prioritized developing individual research institutions’ capacity.<sup>96</sup> Strengthening the environment within which independent and relevant research can take place -what GDN refers to as the “research system”- would greatly help to improve the quality of research and also ultimately the translation of research into policy.

In the reporting period, CESD felt project implementation was less favorable and the research environment was less enabling due to staff having to “manage multiple and often divergent pulls of donors and funders”.<sup>97</sup> A lack of coherence in strategy between the Initiative and other international bodies conducting work in Myanmar ultimately decreases capacity of institutions rather than enhances it. Due to international entities’ higher quality research production in Myanmar, institutions such as CESD rely on short-term research consultancies to develop expertise in topic areas and keep their institution progressing forward. Yet, CESD reported facing challenges related to quality assurance for these short-term, rapid-response outputs due to uncertainty over funding and, as cited, divergent donor interests. In order to enhance research quality, more than core funding or even individualized trainings are required. Instead, the Initiative will need to pay attention to the research environment. This includes factors external to Myanmar think tanks, such as the work of other donors and funders in Myanmar, and factors internal, such as the relationships Myanmar think tanks hold with one another.

To this second point on internal factors, one NAC adviser urges IDRC to evaluate its return on investment and opportunity cost in implementing the projects it has funded.<sup>98</sup> While sending university researchers abroad through semester exchanges or think tank staff to international conferences may develop the capacity of these individual researchers, it develops neither an enabling environment for research nor evidence-based policy in Myanmar. The country lost a robust research culture over many years under its military regime, exemplified by the abolition of the Burma Research Society in 1980. While the Initiative has surely begun the formation of forums and platforms for exchange, there is no evidence of long-term sustainability of these exchanges. In fact, many efforts have been directed outward of Myanmar through ensuring research is published in international, English journals. The Initiative must therefore give attention to sustaining a collaborative environment in research, which -in

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<sup>96</sup> KII\_16

<sup>97</sup> TR108703-003

<sup>98</sup> KII\_18

the opinion of NAC advisers- would be better done through reviving the research society than funding individual think tanks.

*Missing key stakeholders* The Initiative convened researchers jointly with policymakers on various projects but was not able to include the entire bandwidth of actors in government. Keeping in mind Myanmar's fragile context, the Initiative must recognize that there are other relevant actors at play who could benefit from an evidence base to inform the way they influence policy.

A key but controversial entity that has not been explicitly engaged is the military due to diplomatic reasons.<sup>99</sup> In their work to develop their report on amendments to the 2008 Constitution, the CDES ensured to meet regularly with representatives of the military in addition to other stakeholders. As a result of doing so, dozens of copies of the ultimate report were requested by the military once research results were disseminated. The CDES notes that in the current situation of Myanmar, "the most critical stakeholder in the peace process is the military institution. Without its consent, no change can be made to the Constitution."<sup>100</sup> Even outside of peace negotiations, it is of note that military influence is pervasive in the development and execution of policy in Myanmar. NAC advisers also advise the Initiative to not alienate actors who influence policy, but instead persuade these entities of the benefits they realize when advocating for evidence-based policy.<sup>101</sup> Other missing stakeholders cited by advisers of the Initiative include representatives of the NLD government and of the judiciary branch in Myanmar.

*Inconsistently orienting research efforts into policy* Across stakeholder groups, interviews relay that there is a missing link between the Initiative's actions towards improving research capacity and its goal of evidence-based policy implementation.

Research supported by the Initiative could be better oriented towards policy needs. For example, CESD cites strategic development of organizational research and identification of areas of policy influence as areas of weakness within its institution. CESD aims to hire more national staff in the future to aid in identifying policy-relevant research, as an example of how seriously they take the issue.<sup>102</sup> These comments exemplify a lack on the Initiative's part to directly ensure research resources are being oriented towards policy needs within CESD. As has been relayed earlier in the report, the Initiative must provide resources beyond core-funding for think tanks if the purpose is to improve research quality, and its subsequent influence over policy, within Myanmar's fragile context.

The gender research projects also serve as an example as to how the Initiative should better allocate attention towards the end goal of research capacity development. Table 3 of the report highlights the mix of stakeholders engaged within the gender research projects. Stakeholders include university faculty, think tank researchers, and local partners within ethnic group communities. Yet, this list does not include policymakers. Presentation of the research has been limited to a feature in Asia Research News and an event held at the Initiative Knowledge Forum. Multiple beneficiary interviews reveal a

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<sup>99</sup> IDRC clarifies that there is clear guidance on (non) engagement with the military or Government of Myanmar. Engagement under the Initiative takes place through its grantees.

<sup>100</sup> TR108703-002

<sup>101</sup> KII\_7

<sup>102</sup> TR108703-003

desire for the Initiative to better link research to policy agendas, commenting that presentation skills development were less useful to their needs.<sup>103</sup> The communications coaching received was focused on presenting elevator pitches of their work for the Knowledge Forum, rather than strategic advocacy to translate their research to policy. While some organizations, such as MIPS, did engage with policymakers, this was not equal across the board of think tanks involved. As part of the portfolio of work the Initiative conducts, it is evident that efforts must be allocated towards ensuring research is oriented towards policy.

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<sup>103</sup> KII\_19, KII\_33

### III. LESSONS LEARNED AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

K4DM is an important initiative in Myanmar, to develop evidence gathering and analysis in local research systems. The Initiative draws lessons from a research environment study and community policy survey to support research that is important for the country. In this, it joins initiatives by other donors to build and support research capacity within the university system, think tanks, civil society organizations and government to carry out policy-facing research work.

Reports on Myanmar by international funders indicate that important areas of the economy include primary and vocational education reform, climate change, agriculture, mining and gas, and innovation. These require evidence for decision making that (i) informs policy making; (ii) supports programming for development; and (iii) leads to changes in practice. In an environment where any research is scant, ensuring that high quality research findings speak to these three areas is critical.

Through its support for research, K4DM must commission content in a way that is intentional and immediately useful. A senior member of the advisory committee that guides the Initiative described the need to ‘re-position K4DM’ in a way that supports the knowledge priorities of the country. Others spoke of ‘using the space’ created by the Initiative to build for the future, and of ‘understanding existing local pathways’ for policy impact.

As the preceding section has described, the K4DM Initiative has a number of strengths that draw upon IDRC’s long engagement with Myanmar, its stellar innings as a research capacity development organization, and its uncommon experience in supporting fragile countries to transition to democracy. It is inevitable that an Initiative of this kind will have certain weaknesses; at least some of these are rooted in the fragile context in which the Initiative is being supported and a long history of neglect and suppression of the higher education system of the country. The evaluators present some concerns –big and small- at the midterm of the project as well as some opportunities that the Initiative could consider moving forward. This may be helpful in thinking about the remaining life of the project, as well as any follow up effort by IDRC and GAC.

#### Concerns

*Sustainability of benefits has to be nurtured* The Initiative connected the three core-funded think tanks to other South Asian think tanks and international universities and must continue to be mindful of plugging these think tanks into the Myanmar research environment, as well. Yet, the Initiative did not provide any formalized training to these three core think tanks to maintain their learning beyond the Initiative. CESD and other think tanks have developed explicit plans to continue to build research methodology and other fundamental level skills in the second half of the reporting period, giving credence to the threat that positive impact from core funding may not provide long-term gains. Thus, building key fundamental research practices and mentorship will be risk mitigation strategies to consider, moving forward.

*Think tank operations are highly person-based* As evidenced by the technical reports, strengthened leadership was a key development gained across all three think tanks, as a function of core funding.

Think tank operations, particularly in the Myanmar context, are highly dependent upon leadership. Due to uncertainty, flexible and reliable program management is required for a number of reasons: to advocate for research in a consistent periodic manner; to develop expertise in research areas and subsequently compete with international research bodies in Myanmar; and so on. Thus, given existing low capacity and the competitive landscape of research, a threat to sustainable impact will be the loss of staff members within think tanks. In fact, CDES noted staff loss as a key challenge during the reporting period.<sup>104</sup> CESD also cited loss of staff to international research institutions as a challenge they face in developing their institutions' research capacity.<sup>105</sup> To maintain long-term impact, an enabling research environment to retain key staff.

*Efficacy of think tanks highly vulnerable to change* Think tanks' ability to translate research into policy in Myanmar is highly dependent on their linkage to political institutions and is consequently highly vulnerable to change. As a result, the Initiative must be mindful not to solely 'select winners' among the range of institutions in Myanmar, but instead develop capacity more widely. This has in part been accomplished by Kivu International providing consultancy support for eight other think tanks, to build their research and advocacy skills. It was also a concern whether Kivu had the wherewithal to oversee and support multiple organizations – it might be that their core strength lay in supporting one organization at a time.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, the Initiative must be mindful of not solely relying on think tanks as the mechanism by which to influence policy. Instead, there should be investment in a number of mechanisms by which actors from universities and think tanks, as well as civil service organizations, are able to inform policy.

*What happens once IDRC leaves* Kivu International is a partner the Initiative has recruited in an effort to develop capacity among think tanks in the region. In order to create sustainable change, the Initiative must give attention to building up some local organizational capacity to conduct the same work beyond the program. A solution might be to emulate the 'training the trainer' model used to build relationships between EMReF and the Shan State legislature. The threat of not doing so would be developed capacity among eight think tanks, which will not last in the competitive and fragmented research environment of Myanmar after the Initiative.

*Deepen tensions if 'repositioning' strategy not carefully carried out* A risk that the Initiative would carry in actively engaging with the military, NLD government, and other powerful policy influencers (see *Engage a wider bandwidth of government actors* below) would be in alienating ethnic groups and those of persecuted identities. These collaborations would not be without recognition of the human rights violations that have plagued Myanmar's contemporary history. Mitigating these risks would be a matter of tactful engagement with political actors for the purpose of putting forward evidence-based and just policymaking. Beneficiaries of the program have experience in interacting with government bodies in neutral areas. Examples include CDES, MIPs, and other peace-oriented think tanks. The Initiative program leads would benefit from scaling up practices that think tanks have already put in place to

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<sup>104</sup> TR108703-001

<sup>105</sup> KII\_13

<sup>106</sup> KII\_16

collaborate with policymakers, as has happened with many think tanks, or CDES, the sole institution who has engaged with the military.<sup>107</sup>

*Underutilizing the NAC* Multiple interviews reveal two aspects about the NAC: while the NAC does to an extent, have strategic influence over the Initiative, its members are busy and do not have the time to convene for long-enough meetings to exert any reasonable operational influence.<sup>108</sup> The evaluators felt that the NAC is currently an underutilized resource. At present, NAC members lack clarity of their role and may need to be reminded off and on. Their participation must include a more intentional leveraging of their positions; both for policy take up as well as to identify policy needs. By creating opportunities for a public role at knowledge events such as was done at Myanmar Challenges conference, their active engagement with the Initiative can be re-emphasized and their good offices sought to build relationships and positioning for policy impact.

*Management arrangements need adjustment* The IDRC Senior Program Specialist responsible for the Initiative has an immediate and current understanding of the projects, is very familiar to project staff, and with the situation on the ground. He is able to make adjustments to the program both to adapt to challenges as they appear, as well as to take advantage of synergies and collaborations as they might present. This has meant that the results from the K4DM Initiative have been extraordinary in view of the thin staffing of the project on the ground in Myanmar. The presence on the ground is supplemented by a local part-time consultant.

The Project Implementation Unit consists of a Program Leader (part-time), Senior Program Specialist (full-time) and Program Management Officer (full-time). In addition, other IDRC staff are also engaged in project support, for example the Senior Program Specialist responsible for the Think Tank Initiative based at the Asia Regional Office in New Delhi. While the contours of the Unit are in line with the Grant Agreement that IDRC has signed with GAC for this project, the Senior Program Specialist is based in Ottawa and not in the Asia Regional Office in New Delhi as originally envisaged. GAC feels some discomfort in not having dedicated in-region (or in-country) IDRC staff, albeit that the induction of a local consultant has very much improved participation in training programs. They feel that it may be useful for the program to have more constant in-region IDRC presence to send a strong message of commitment to K4DM.<sup>109</sup> GAC also feels that registration of IDRC with the Government of Myanmar to provide support to country organizations or through inclusion in the MoU of the Government of Myanmar with Canada is becoming necessary.<sup>110</sup> As the Grant Agreement notes, the management arrangements can be “reviewed by DFATD<sup>111</sup> and IDRC to ensure that the project can be effectively managed...”. This formative evaluation at the midterm now provides the impulse for this discussion to be held.

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<sup>107</sup> IDRC clarifies that MIPS also engages the military regularly. The head of MIPS used to lead the Myanmar Peace Centre set up by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

<sup>108</sup> KII\_1, KII\_7, KII\_18, KII\_21

<sup>109</sup> KII\_2, KII\_16, KII\_22, KII\_25

<sup>110</sup> KII\_2, KII\_21, KII\_22, KII\_25,

<sup>111</sup> DFATD is now Global Affairs Canada or GAC.

It is also important that considered, pragmatic and proactive planning is carried out of the representational role that GAC could play in supporting the research effort through diplomatic means. This will help ensure that the Canadian narrative is strong and well defined (see *The Canada Narrative* below). There are many challenges for programming in Myanmar, and it may be worthwhile at this point, to hold a constructive dialogue exploring how management arrangements for K4DM in the region can be adjusted going forward.

*Risky environment* Myanmar continues to face contextual, institutional, and programmatic risk. The threat is exacerbated by upcoming elections in 2020, lingering intercommunal tensions between ethnic groups, and other contextual risks that increase uncertainty with respect to policy-facing research work. On the one hand, it is necessary for the Initiative to utilize its position to gather evidence highlighting the experiences of diverse groups. On the other, in an effort to build capacity among Myanmar researchers and simultaneously gather knowledge surrounding diverse issues, the Initiative may end up placing researchers in risky environments. The program already faced this issue in its scheduled fieldwork for the MIPS research projects, which ultimately had to redirect its research to other regions.<sup>112</sup> One risk mitigation strategy to consider in the future is utilizing digital communication and other technology to collect meaningful data, considering the rapid change in the prevalence of smartphone technology in Myanmar over the past decade.<sup>113</sup>

*Elections 2020* A threat to the sustainability of positive impact for projects across the board, including the ten major projects within the capacity strengthening pillar, are the approaching elections and potential change in government in 2020. The key successes of the capacity strengthening pillar have been relationship building with legislators; capacity built across a range of think tanks; and networks developed between Myanmar researchers and outward-facing with international university partnerships. Networks built among the research community can sustain the threat of a government change. However, the relationship building with parliament is at threat, which is currently the Initiative's only link to translating research built into policy. As a result, the Initiative must be mindful of other avenues by which to influence policy, particularly given the possibility of government change.

## **Opportunities**

*Replicate Shan State success with other research institutions* During the second half of the Initiative, there is an opportunity to build upon the success made with the Shan State legislature by replicating the model with other research institutions and legislators. The 'training the trainer' model instituted by the Parliamentary Centre by developing capacity within a think tank, EMReF, and subsequently utilizing that capacity to then train parliamentarians, has long-term merit. The results of this model were to not just build capacity and enhance research abilities for researchers and policymakers -as was created through other projects- but also develop a relationship developed between EMReF and Shan State parliamentarians. In the Myanmar context, proximity to power is a key mechanism through which to influence policy, and the efficacy of think tanks to provide an evidence base is thus dependent on

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<sup>112</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019

<sup>113</sup> Digital in Asia. (2017). Myanmar 33 Million Mobile Users, Smartphone Usage 80%. Retrieved from <https://digitalinasia.com/2017/01/09/myanmar-33-million-mobile-users-smartphone-usage-80/>

relationship building. The policy environment would benefit from the Initiative focusing on expanding the network of multiple research institutions. By doing so, the Initiative would enhance the base of research conducted in Myanmar and support evidence-based policy in the long-term.

*More concerted effort towards bringing gender research to policymakers and communities* Moving into its second phase, the Initiative has the opportunity to disseminate knowledge generated through research to policymakers and communities. As project leads and IDRC management have noted Myanmar researchers are eager to improve their quality of research, so too there is there similar excitement over communicating research findings. A quote from a beneficiary emphasizes this point:<sup>114</sup>

*“Right now there are only five organizations doing gender-based research work. Even though we collaborate with one another, it’s not enough - we have to share our findings and engage for collective voice for policy change.”*

The motivation to disseminate research is manifest, and relationship building with influencers of policy has already begun. The Initiative has been successful in leveraging its network to create platforms for exchange, as is noted within the section evaluating the collaboration and engagement pillar. Given these realities, the Initiative beneficiaries would benefit from responsiveness to their requirement by providing communications training relevant to policy advocacy rather than the generalized training they were provided during the Knowledge Forum, and curating spaces for researchers to collaborate with policymakers.

Furthermore, researchers are eager to share findings with the communities the research is meant to benefit. The Initiative can facilitate this by allocating funding for grassroots communications efforts. This includes training in digital media communication, which must be carried out by those familiar with local Myanmar context. One example of the pitfalls of neglecting local context in communication trainings was seen during the CommsConsult workshop. During the workshop, beneficiaries impressed on project leads, the importance of software programs containing Unicode text for Myanmar language translation. With software packages that lack this text format, researchers were unable to create digital presentations of their work.<sup>115</sup> Trifling issues like this highlight the incongruence between project leads and participants when South-South knowledge sharing is not instituted. These issues are important for the Initiative to consider moving forward, particularly due to ongoing efforts to build trust with Myanmar researchers while developing capacity.

*Cover issues outside present scope* Although the Initiative’s five gender projects make efforts to cover a range of issues, there are residual areas to explore in Myanmar. Conversations with NAC advisers have revealed that the Initiative’s window of opportunity to engage in meaningful research and translate that research into policy is closing. As a result, the Initiative can therefore take the remaining time it has to explore issues such as those relating to LGBTQ+ rights in Myanmar and more deeply explore the specific issues ethnic minority women might undergo.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, much of the Initiative’s efforts are based

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<sup>114</sup> KII\_19

<sup>115</sup> KII\_32, KII\_37

<sup>116</sup> KII\_7, KII\_18

out of and are disseminated back to Yangon and Mandalay. In the future, this concentration on just the two centres could be redressed through a wider distribution of projects.

*Direct resources towards neglected areas* In the second half of its lifespan, the Initiative has the opportunity to direct its resources and efforts towards certain neglected research areas. An interview with the UNDP revealed that gaps in research within Myanmar include media monitoring, hate speech, and fake news -research areas that could be used as a means to bolster the democratic transition in the country.<sup>117</sup> While one IDRC project external to the Initiative is directing efforts towards this issue, there is no evidence the Initiative itself has connected with it, or that it has leveraged its resources to build capacity for investigative journalism.<sup>118</sup> Efforts towards independent journalism are under-researched and have a direct link to influencing policy, which are factors the Initiative must consider moving forward in its effort to encourage dialogue for the purpose of evidence-based policy.

*Encourage think tanks to be both public-facing and government-facing entities* At the end of its core-funding, the Initiative should use the opportunity to enhance the capacity of the three think tanks to conduct, communicate, and disseminate their research in view of the achievements they have made even without formal ‘mentorship’ by the Initiative. These think tanks occupy a unique space to engage with both the public and the Myanmar government. CDES has already found success in engaging the public and government officials through publishing and distributing its report regarding amendments to the 2008 constitution and peace negotiations. CESD has mentioned its hopes to improve its research communication to the general public through hiring digital communications strategists, as well as hiring outside experts to identify research needs in policy development. ALARM, in contrast to the other two organizations, has decreased confidence in its ability to engage with civil society, but similar levels of engagement with policymakers. Thus, for the remainder of its time, the Initiative may like to allocate its efforts to ensuring these institutions are able to leverage their unique position to influence policy.

*Engagement with NLD more purposefully using evidence gathering* In addition to enhancing the base of research, the Initiative has the opportunity to engage with the NLD government and other political parties through the remainder of the program. Until this point, the one engagement with government has been conducted with members of the Shan State legislature and is deemed one of the success stories of the Initiative so far. It may be borne in mind that the only two state governments that do not have NLD presence in legislature are the Shan and Rakhine regions; yet the NLD government by and large, has the greatest influence on policy decisions besides the military.<sup>119</sup> It is therefore important for the Initiative to build on the success achieved in Shan state to train state parliamentarians outside of the current regions they have focused on, as well as in areas that have representation of NLD government. Ethnic group representation can and should remain a priority of the Initiative, but could be coupled with efforts to engage with legislators with significant power over the policy environment.

*Engage a wider bandwidth of government actors* The ‘window of opportunity’ to effect change in Myanmar is closing. Thus, in order to create substantive impact, the Initiative must recruit and

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<sup>117</sup> KII\_3

<sup>118</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019; also at Annex 3

<sup>119</sup> KII\_18

collaborate with political entities they have so far neglected. Linking with private and corporate sector such as Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other civil society partnership linkages should be explored to provide awareness of the importance of research in politics, policy and business.

To this point, another stakeholder group to consider involving is the military.<sup>120</sup> As noted with the example made by CDES, it is a widely held belief that decisions cannot be made or made to last without considering its effect on the military. While not ideal, the Initiative must keep in mind Myanmar's state of transition. By function of the fact that Myanmar is under a state of transition into democracy, the Initiative could create the most effective change by utilizing strategies it has done in other capacities: convening stakeholders from various groups to create platforms for exchange, build relationships, and ensure sustainability beyond the Initiative's lifespan. Moving forward, it is recommended professional and constructive relationships be furthered with the NLD government<sup>121</sup> and military representatives. To be able to engage with them professionally through awareness raising of human rights and democracy and conducting training on political research (not by directly supporting the military activities) will have greater positive impact on their conducts that have been accused of violation of human rights, gender issues and democracy. Because of the general sanctions against the military, they have not had external training on social science research, human rights and democracy. This is not an easy engagement and will need innovative approach to get the funding approval for its implementation.

*Improve the whole of the knowledge system* The IDRC learned after its full first year of project implementation in the region, that the larger education system remains fragile and underfunded, hindering the maximum benefits the Initiative could produce. The underdeveloped state of secondary and post-secondary education in Myanmar are significant constraints to developing the research capacity of local Myanmar think tanks.<sup>122</sup> Currently, the Initiative has partnered with Global Development Network (GDN) to produce a report on the state of knowledge systems in Myanmar. The Initiative would benefit from researching policy facing aspects of these, as well as partnering with stakeholders to influence these systems.

*Offer Canadian expertise in key areas of the economy* The Initiative also has the opportunity to offer Canadian value-added expertise to benefit evidence-based policy in Myanmar. NAC and UNDP partners believe the state would benefit from Canadian expertise in civil service reform; indigenous-related land reform and the agricultural economy; and fiscal federalism and decentralization policy. The benefits of engaging in these research areas are that the Initiative could use its partners to provide meaningful aid to Myanmar in relevant areas of need.

*Collaborate alongside other donors* There remains opportunity for the Initiative to collaborate alongside other donors to ensure an enabling environment for research is created. In the reporting period, CESD noted the Myanmar research environment was less enabling due to staff having to "manage multiple and often divergent pulls of donors and funders".<sup>123</sup> Linkages with other donor agencies such as

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<sup>120</sup> KII\_7

<sup>121</sup> There is a relationship through the Renaissance Institute.

<sup>122</sup> IDRC Annual Report 2019

<sup>123</sup> TR108703-003

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia and through them to the Australia Myanmar Institute and Australia National University may offer routes to sustainability for K4DM.

A lack of coherence in strategy on part of the Initiative and other international bodies conducting work in Myanmar ultimately decreases capacity of institutions rather than enhances it, at least in the long-term. While the 2019 Knowledge Forum MarketPlace, featured DFID, Australia and GIZ-funded organizations and projects, there was little representation of the international bodies that fund research. Representation was limited to international universities and local organizations showcasing research and published materials. In addition, the Initiative would benefit from working alongside other donors for example, DFID, USAID, and UNAIDS.<sup>124</sup> Another alternative way of supporting research capacity in Myanmar can be explored such as jointly revitalizing the Burma Research Society<sup>125</sup> which will have a nation-wide impact. Links with the Myanmar Academy of Arts and Science have been sought.<sup>126</sup>

*Utilize NAC as two-way bridge* In order to carry this out, the expectation is to better inform the NAC on significant knowledge-generating efforts by beneficiaries of the Initiative, as well as utilize the NAC as a means to identify opportunities to influence policy. A weakness of the Initiative at the midterm is weak engagement with policymakers, as also lacking of capacity to identify gaps in research. The project management of the Initiative has the opportunity to mitigate both of these issues by leveraging the NAC and their extensive networks.

The members of the council not only possess local contextual knowledge, but are also part of extensive networks including of influential lawmakers. They are also well-meaning and would like to utilize the resources of the Initiative which they see as valuable, for the betterment of the research system of Myanmar. Thus, in recognition of realities and constraints, the NAC could be better utilized by positioning it as a link between the Initiative's knowledge generating and policy influencing efforts.

*The Canada narrative* As of now, the Canadian narrative is not a cohesive one within the region. Evidence of this is seen in a lack of recall recognition among Knowledge Forum participants of when and how the IDRC is involved with organizations. The evaluators are of the strong opinion that it is important to visibilize Canada's presence in the knowledge systems space in Myanmar. This will gradually lead to greater trust and openness to discussion and debate.

The depth and strength of the Initiative and other Myanmar-facing projects stands out. However, because they are not woven into a coherent IDRC and Canada narrative, the power of the work being done to aid and assist the democratic transition process by Canada in Myanmar is somewhat obscured. It has been pointed out that a normalization of Canada - Myanmar relationship that recognizes that there is a genuine attempt to correct anomalies such as the Rohingya issue is an important message to convey, in order to ensure that the country has realistic choices available, and that diplomatic channels that could result in inordinate influence by some governments, are not closed.

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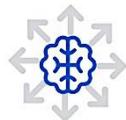
<sup>124</sup> Dugay, C. (2015). Top global development NGOs in Myanmar: A primer. Retrieved from <https://www.devex.com/news/top-global-development-ngos-in-myanmar-a-primer-85786>

<sup>125</sup> Referred to during the Myanmar Challenges opening sessions and in interviews with senior researchers.

<sup>126</sup> IDRC has provided this clarification.

In sum, the K4DM Initiative has done some outstanding work in building the nucleus of world-class research capacity in the fragile Myanmar context. An intentional narrative that celebrates the gains made through the Initiative and other Myanmar-facing projects, the robust donor relationships that are being forged, and the support that is providing to UN efforts would help to create a larger room for international cooperation that brings Myanmar fully into the fold of world's community of nations.

## Annex 1: Logframe of the Initiative

<b>Ultimate Outcomes</b>	<b>1000</b> Enhanced political and economic empowerment of women and men, in Myanmar			
<b>Intermediate Outcomes</b>	<b>1100</b> Improved collaboration among State and non-State actors on gender-responsive democratic transition and economic policy development.		<b>1200</b> Increased use of research by State and non-State actors for evidence-based gender-transformative economic and democratic policy development.	
				
<b>Immediate Outcomes</b>	<b>1110</b> Strengthened capacity among state and non-state actors for dialogue on key issues related to gender-responsive democratic transition, and economic development. ("Capacity Development for state and non-state actors")	<b>1120</b> Increased opportunities for engagement and dialogue among state and non-state actors on key issues related to democratic transition, economic development and gender equality.	<b>1210</b> Strengthened capacity of state and non-state think tanks and networks to build the evidence base for planning gender-responsive programs or policies in the areas of economic development, and/or democratic transition.	<b>1220</b> Increased knowledge of state and non-state research organizations on economic and democratic opportunities for women. ("Funding Research Projects")
	 	 	 	 
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Capacity Development for Individuals</b>	<b>Engagement and Collaboration</b>	<b>Capacity Development for Institutions</b>	<b>Funding Research Projects</b>
	<b>1111</b> Training Sessions/ Workshops provided to state and non-state actors on the supply and demand side of research in gender-responsive democratic transition and economic policy development	<b>1121</b> Networks/forums created between state and non-state actors through roundtable events and lecture series and/or seminars provided in Myanmar on gender-responsive democratic transition and	<b>1211</b> Training provided to Myanmar-based think tanks and networks on strategic planning, human resources, financial management, auditing	<b>1221</b> Research papers completed with technical and financial support from IDRC
	<b>1112</b> Mentor-mentee relationships formed and support provided		<b>1212</b> Training provided to think tanks on providing capacity building to sub-national parliaments in conducting gender-sensitive research.	<b>1222</b> Research Papers presented in network forums with technical and financial support from IDRC

## Annex 2: Evaluation design and workplan

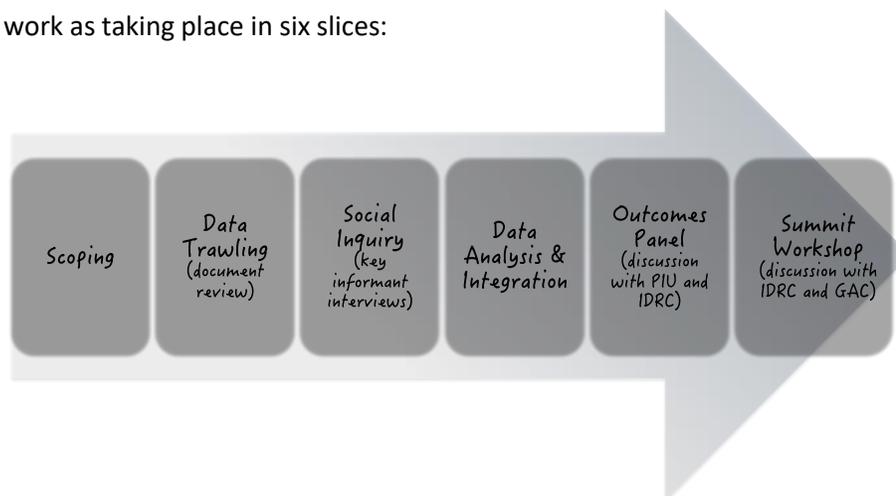
This formative evaluation will look back on the period between 2017-2019 to take stock and draw lessons from the work done so far, and consider options for strengthening the way forward. A qualitative, participatory approach to evaluation is proposed in order to develop a granular understanding of the program.

The initiative has an articulated Logic Model and Performance Monitoring framework which flow from its outcomes statements. This, along with initial data available from the program, have been used to articulate an Information Needs Matrix identifying key questions that will be investigated, methods that will be employed and sources of the data.

We propose to take an *adapted Collaborative Outcomes Reporting* approach to the evaluation. This approach incorporates a participatory approach based around a performance story that discusses the evidence of how a program has contributed to outcomes. Program stakeholders then have the opportunity to review the performance story, allowing them to not only review what has been done so far, but also to think about how outcomes might be facilitated moving forward.<sup>127</sup> We think that there is a good case for using this approach for the desired review: the approach is particularly good when a clear evidence-based story about the outcomes of a program is needed, especially where it is not possible to create a credible comparison group to provide a counterfactual; it is challenging to synthesize diverse evidence into an overall evaluative judgment; and the program is complex with several different outcomes that we are interested in finding out about.

We believe that the process would lay the foundation of the thinking for a future course of action, drawing lessons from the retrospective piece to inform the prospective piece of the task. The involvement of Amaltas, an independent, external team of evaluators, well versed with low and middle country contexts in Asia will add to the strength of the evaluation. Given the context in which the program of work is taking place in Myanmar, we believe that grantees and the program implementation unit must be involved in validating the results of the study through a workshop along with IDRC experts.

We see the work as taking place in six slices:



### Slice I & II

<sup>127</sup> Dart, J., & Roberts, M. (2014) *Collaborative Outcomes Reporting*. Better Evaluation. Retrieved from <http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/cort>

## Scoping the Program and Data Trawling

May/June 2019

*Inception meeting*

The assignment will begin with an on-line inception meeting led by the PIU along with the IDRC Policy and Evaluation Division staff. The evaluation design will flow from these discussions taking into account the situation on the ground and inputs from all concerned.

Data from the project would be provided to Amaltas by IDRC, so that it can begin to review the documents for a better understanding of the project, its components and course so far. Data will be trawled for relevant information, arranging the data in ways that permit patterns to be discerned, and construction of the tools for the next slice - Social Inquiry. Program documents will be intensively studied to identify quantitative results of the program and the key areas that require further exploration during the study.

### Slice III & IV

## Social Inquiry and Data analysis & Integration

July 2019

*Fieldwork in Myanmar*

This slice of the assignment will gather qualitative data, relying on in depth interviews of key informants (KII) to gather information. The purpose of this slice is to understand what and how much has happened in the program since 2017; who were involved; and what has worked well and less well in the opinion of those who have been part of the program.

This will involve a trip to Myanmar for the Delhi based member of the team at this stage, to join the Burmese member to conduct interviews. The timing of the trip will be adjusted to include the annual Knowledge Hub organized by the initiative. A research analyst working with the team will also be in Yangon at this time and will join the discussions as well as conduct a brief survey of a sample of persons at the Knowledge Hub. Follow on interviews identified during the trip will be carried out by the Myanmar based team member, or via skype from Delhi.

The Information Needs Matrix highlights the sources of information that will be used for the evaluation. The evaluation team will use the matrix to identify the Initiative's impacts on individual stakeholder groups, remaining cognizant of both (i) the reach of Initiative projects extending to multiple groups at a time and (ii) the network effects of the Initiative that produce impact on all stakeholders broadly. Evaluation questions have been broken down to capture retrospective findings and prospective insights in the Information Needs Matrix.

In order to preserve relevance and effectiveness of the evaluation, several categories of stakeholders: graduate students, university faculty, think tank staff, policymakers, PIU members and relevant IDRC and GAC staff have been identified as potential respondents of KIIs. Customized study tools framed as open-ended guides to optimize formative learning, have been created for the stakeholder groups. Specific attention has been paid to the possibility of triangulation of information from one stakeholder group with another, adding to the robustness of the data collected. The evaluation team will canvass the opinion of think tanks in Myanmar and their partner institutes in Canada, India, Thailand and elsewhere,

and external groups, as a proxy to direct feedback from policymakers due to their limited availability. External groups will include Embassy staff from Canada, Australia and the UK, as well as key actors from the following foundations: The Asia Foundation, the United Nations Development Program, and International IDEA.

Through document review and beneficiary interviews, the evaluation will accomplish the following:

- (i) Assess the effectiveness of the program through progress towards expected outcomes (including immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes) with reference to program design, including the linkage and contribution of outputs to outcomes under each of the projects approved up to December 2018.
- (ii) Evaluate coherence of strategy implementation. This will take into consideration the (fragile) context of the country and risks and expectations involved, in order to assess how well initiative-wide strategy has been implemented (choices made, and priorities set and/or evolved). It will gather insights to inform strategy adaptations to address challenges and exploit emerging opportunities. It will include an assessment of resource utilization in relation to the production of outputs and progress toward expected and unexpected outcomes.
- (iii) Discern relevance of the Initiative's projects. Each project will be assessed to determine the extent to which the Initiative has addressed an identified need and is responsive to the needs of relevant stakeholders in Myanmar.
- (iv) Assess linkages between the Initiative's objectives and IDRC priorities. Assessment of the adequacy of the Initiative's design or mix of activities or modalities to address the challenge of supporting knowledge systems to the service of an emerging inclusive democracy in Myanmar (what has worked well and what has not).

The field notes of KIIs and the findings of the document review will be the subject of data analysis. Data will be analyzed through recursive abstraction for KIIs. The team will use Excel to analyze the KII data and document review, constructing a codebook to unpack key observations.

#### **Slice V**

#### **Outcome Panel**

*September 2019*

*Draft Report*

This slice of the evaluation is an important process through which the data analysis must pass, in order to provide conclusions that are not only logical but also rational.

In the case of this project, the most informed stakeholders with respect to the evaluation are the PIU and IDRC officers with responsibility for the program. The Outcome Panel provides an opportunity for sense-checking. Accordingly, the Outcome Panel will function as an opportunity to run insights gained from program beneficiaries by program administrators in order to check for resonance and reason. A virtual meeting convened with the PIU and IDRC officers will discuss the evidence captured through Slice III & IV. After going through a presentation of key findings, a discussion facilitated by the Amaltas team will provide comments on (i) whether the evidence does in fact suggest the conclusions drawn; and (ii) what the implications are for the way forward.

Findings will be presented in the form of a slide deck which will be used to guide the discussion of the Outcome Panel. An important aspect that will be discussed will be the structure of the final report. The report structure will be discussed during the Outcome Panel, and would likely cover program context and aim, relating results to the Logic Model and Performance Monitoring Framework of the program and backed by empirical data collected during the review. Amaltas expects that comments received to the slide deck (Draft Report) would pave the way for development of the final report.

**Slice VI**

<b>Summit Workshop with IDRC &amp; GAC</b>		
<i>October 2019</i>		<i>Final Report</i>

Once comments are received to the Draft Report, Amaltas will present the results of the evaluation at a Summit Workshop to the secondary users of the evaluation – IDRC and GAC. This will provide the evaluation team the occasion to further ensure that the findings are usable by IDRC and GAC and can inform the future course of action.

Through use of Amaltas as an independent evaluation team; direct feedback from program beneficiaries; and triangulation of information with program administrators, the Final Report will reflect an objective, authentic, and informed evaluation of the program.

The overall timeframe of the assignment is expected to be 6 months. A brief timeline of tentative dates of key activities is as follows:

Scoping meeting with PIU/ IDRC	20 May 19
Data trawling	20 May - 30 June 19
Visit to Yangon + annual Knowledge Hub	3 - 13 July 2019
Review of data	15 July - 30 August 19
Draft Report submitted	15 September 19
Outcome Panel	20 September 19
Presentation to IDRC-GAC	15 October 19
Final report submitted	30 October 19

### Annex 3: Interviewees affiliation

Organization	Stakeholder Type
Advancing Life and Regenerating Motherland	Think Tank
Asia Institute of Technology	Grantee
Asia Research News	Media Outlet
Australian National University	Development Partner
Centre for Development and Ethnic Studies	Think Tank
Centre for Economic and Social Development	Think Tank
Chiang Mai University	Grantee
CommsConsult	Grantee
Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation	Think Tank
Gender Equality Network	Think Tank
Global Affairs Canada	Co-funding partner
Global Development Network	Grantee
International Development Research Centre	Co-funding partner
Kivu International	Grantee
Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security	Think Tank
National Advisory Council	Adviser
United Nations Development Program	Development Partner
University of British Columbia	Grantee
University of Mandalay	University Researcher
Yangon University of Economics	University Researcher

## Annex 4: K4DM in numbers

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Target	April 2018 – March 2019
<b>1110</b> Strengthened capacity among state and non-state actors for dialogue on key issues related to gender-responsive democratic transition, and economic development ("Capacity Development for state and non-state actors")	Level of confidence of trained/mentored men and women in their capacity for dialogue on key issues	Low	Medium	Low
	Number of K4DM supported actors that are actively applying new skills and knowledge in their work	NA	¾ of all actors are actively applying new skills and knowledge by end of 2021	10+
<b>1120</b> Increased opportunities for engagement and dialogue among state and non-state actors on key issues related to democratic transition, economic development and gender equality. ("Engagement and Collaboration")	Level of cross sector engagement and dialogue at K4DM hosted events, (between think tanks, networks, NGOs, research organizations, students, parliamentarians and policy makers)	Low	Low/Medium	High
	Participants' perception of opportunities for engagement and dialogue among civil society, policy makers, researchers and think tanks on key issues	Low	Medium	Medium/high
<b>1210</b> Strengthened capacity of state and non-state think tanks and networks to build the evidence base for planning gender-responsive programs or policies in the areas of economic development, and/or democratic transition. ("Organizational Development for Think tanks and networks")	Number of evidence- and research- based outputs informing key policy priorities at national/sub-national policy dialogues	0	5 by 2021	2
	Number of national/international collaborations including with networks on policy issues	0	2 – 3 by 2021	5
<b>1220</b> Increased knowledge of state and non-state research organizations on economic and democratic opportunities for women. ("Funding Research Projects")	Number of knowledge translation and dissemination activities to support uptake and use	0	2 per research project by 2021	3
	Level of thought leadership demonstrated by research teams in Myanmar.	Low	Medium	Medium/High
<b>Outputs</b>				
<b>1111</b> Training Sessions/ Workshops provided to state and non-state actors on the supply and demand side of research in gender-responsive democratic transition and economic policy development	Number of training sessions	0	25	10+
<b>1112</b> Mentor-mentee relationships formed and support provided	Number of participants mentored as follow up after training	0	50	50+
<b>1121</b> Networks/forums created between state and non-state actors through roundtable events and lecture series and/or seminars provided in Myanmar gender-responsive democratic transition and economic policy development.	Number of events	0	FY2-FY3: at least 2, including 1 with a gender focus. FY4-FY6: at least 3, including 1 with a gender focus	2, 1 with gender focus
<b>1211</b> Training provided to Myanmar-based think tanks and networks on strategic planning, human resources, financial management, auditing	Number of organizational strategies, mechanisms or manuals developed/improved	0	At least 2 per think tank- by end of 2021	1
	Number of members of think tanks and networks trained	0	At least 5 members of each Think Tanks trained annually, of which at least 2 are women	12
<b>1221</b> Research papers completed with technical and financial support from IDRC	Number and type of working paper	0	8 to 10 by end of 2021	0
<b>1222</b> Research Papers presented in network forums with technical and financial support from IDRC	Number of presentations of working papers directly targeted and communicated to intended research users.	0	Minimum of 4 presentations	5

## Annex 5: List of active projects of K4DM

Project	Duration and Funds (CAD)	Lead partner	Partners	Place in Myanmar	Abstract
<b>1. Building Research Capacity for Inclusive Public Finance in Myanmar</b> (#108671) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2020 \$434,700	Fulbright University of Vietnam Corporation (FUV)  Vu Thanh Tu Anh <a href="mailto:tuanh.vuthanh@gmail.com">tuanh.vuthanh@gmail.com</a>	Renaissance Institute	Nay Pyi Taw	Provide annual capacity building workshops on public finance for Burmese researchers and policy makers.  Conduct group research projects with the participants where groups will present their research findings and receive feedback from relevant stakeholders such as policy makers and government officials.  Develop policy briefs delivered to interested partners and shared publicly.
<b>2. Barriers and pathways to women's political participation in Myanmar- Gender Equality and Decentralization in Myanmar</b> (#108744) Alejandra Vargas	2017-2021 \$432,500	Gender Equality Network (GEN)  May Sabe Phyu <a href="mailto:gen.phyuphyu@gmail.com">gen.phyuphyu@gmail.com</a>	Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and McGill University	Kachin Kayin Mandalay Yangon Nay Pyi Taw	Analyze women's pathways to participation across multiple levels of governance: (1) national parliament, political parties, and social movements; (2) state/division parliaments, government offices; and (3) district, township, and village groups. It will study women's personal path to political power, to understand what can undermine at any point upward mobility in the political system and what can facilitate or provide entry points at different moments in a woman's life.  Also, conduct a small parallel study in Cambodia as a comparative case and build the internal research capacities of GEN through collaboration with AIT and McGill.
<b>3. Building Organizational Development among Myanmar think tanks – (project with ALARM)</b> (#108703-001) Samar Verma	2017-2021 \$413,000	Advancing Life and Regenerating Motherland (ALARM)  Win Myo Thu <a href="mailto:winmyothu@gmail.com">winmyothu@gmail.com</a>  Ko Lwin <a href="mailto:lmms2007@gmail.com">lmms2007@gmail.com</a>		Yangon	Following the annual plan, this project aims to (i) Strengthen organizational processes, including strategic planning, communications capacities, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, gender-sensitive human resource development, and sound financial management to build sustainable institutional practices and; (ii) Strengthen think tanks capacities to produce high quality research and evidence.
<b>4. Engendering Women's Political Recruitment and Participation in Myanmar</b> (#108738) Alejandra Vargas	2017-2021 \$412,400	Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF)  Myat Thet Thitsar <a href="mailto:myatthet.thitsar@emref.org">myatthet.thitsar@emref.org</a>  Daw Aye Lei Tun <a href="mailto:ayelei.tun@emref.org">ayelei.tun@emref.org</a>	McMaster University	Nay Pyi Taw Ayeeyarwady Yangon Mandalay Shan Kachin Mon Rakhine	Generate evidence on political parties' recruitment and selection methods for women. It will highlight what are the socio-cultural norms and attitudes towards women's political participation at the party, household and community levels and inform how norms and attitudes affect women's actual political participation in Myanmar and strengthen the analytical skills of Myanmar-based researchers in key areas including gender analysis, through collaboration between EMREF and McMaster University.
<b>5. Gender Budgeting: Preferences, Policies and Impact – Gender Equality and Decentralization</b> (#108740) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2021 \$407,000	Myanmar Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS)  Khin Ma Ma <a href="mailto:khinmamamayo@gmail.com">khinmamamayo@gmail.com</a>	University of Essex and University of Amsterdam	Mandalay Ayeeyarwady Chin Kayin Mon	Examine women's and men's preferences for how Union and State/Region design budgets, advise parliamentarians on how they could be incorporated into budget decision-making and improve MIGS capability on budget research by use of international advisors and new technologies.
<b>6. Building Organizational Development among Myanmar think tanks – (project with CDES)</b> (#108703-002) Samar Verma	2017-2021 \$406,000	Centre for Development and Ethnic Studies (CDES)  Ngun Lian Sang <a href="mailto:asang@cdes.org.mm">asang@cdes.org.mm</a>		Yangon	Based on annual work plan, the project seeks to (i) strengthen organizational processes, including strategic planning, communications capacities, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, gender-sensitive human resource development, and sound financial management to build sustainable institutional practices and; (ii) strengthen think tanks capacities to produce high quality research and evidence.
<b>7. Building Organizational Development among Myanmar think tanks – (project with CESD)</b> (#108703-003) Samar Verma	2017-2021 \$406,000	Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESD)  Zaw Oo <a href="mailto:zawoo.cesd@gmail.com">zawoo.cesd@gmail.com</a>  Seng Pin <a href="mailto:sengpin.cesd@gmail.com">sengpin.cesd@gmail.com</a>		Yangon	(i) Strengthen organizational processes, including strategic planning, communications capacities, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, gender-sensitive human resource development, and sound financial management to build sustainable institutional practices and; (ii) Strengthen think tanks capacities to produce high quality research and evidence.
<b>8. Delivery of Public Services in Ethnic Minority States – Gender Equality and Decentralization in Myanmar</b> (#108739) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2021 \$402,700	University of Toronto  Jacques Bertrand <a href="mailto:jacques.bertrand@utoronto.ca">jacques.bertrand@utoronto.ca</a>	Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security (MIPS)	Kayin Kachin Magway Chin	Examine the actors and processes affecting the delivery of public services in ethnic minority areas, identify areas of improvement to make the delivery of public services in three key areas (education, health and security) more gender sensitive, promote policies in key jurisdictional areas to strengthen local governance and gender equality and strengthen research and analytical capacity of MIPS and develop a more gender aware perspective in their research.
<b>9. Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar – (project with AIT)</b> (#108622-001) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2020 \$314,400	Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)  Kyoko Kusakabe <a href="mailto:kyokok@aitasia">kyokok@aitasia</a>	Yangon University of Economics (YUE)	Yangon	Develop and strengthen curriculum on gender and development studies at YUE for both undergraduate and graduate courses.  Develop and strengthen research capacity of YUE faculty members through formal training at AIT, short training and mentoring.  Strengthen the research capacity of graduate students at YUE with joint supervision by YUE and AIT faculty members.

Project	Duration and Funds (CAD)	Lead partner	Partners	Place in Myanmar	Abstract
<b>10. Pathways to economic and political empowerment for ethnic minority women in South East Shan State, Myanmar-Gender Equality and Decentralization</b> (#108758) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2020 \$303,800	Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development (MIID)  Joern Kristensen <a href="mailto:jkristensen@mmiid.org">jkristensen@mmiid.org</a>  Whitney Huntley <a href="mailto:huntley750@gmail.com">huntley750@gmail.com</a>	1) Parami Development Network (Pa-O ethnic village) 2) Shwe Danu (Danu) 3) Shwe Inlay (Intha ethnic community) 4) Mawk Kon (Akha,Lahu,Palaung, Shan community)	Shan State	Equip four local partners to carry out evidence-based initiatives with activities to build gender research capacity.  Assess women's roles in decision making, in interpersonal relations, in community participation and in individual and collective forms of economic and political voice and agency. The data will come from mapping local women's empowerment initiatives, intra- household surveys, focus group discussions, semi structured interviews with women and men, with community groups, civil society leaders, religious institutions and leaders, elderly groups, government, politicians, businesses, associations, unions, and chambers of commerce.
<b>11. Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar - project with CMU</b> (#108622-005) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2020 \$282,600	Chiang Mai University Chayan Vaddhanaphuti <a href="mailto:ethnet@loxinfo.co.th">ethnet@loxinfo.co.th</a>  Elliot Lodge <a href="mailto:elliottlodge@hotmail.com">elliottlodge@hotmail.com</a>	University of Mandalay (UM)	Mandalay	Provide 5 main training and mentoring modules (1-capacity building for teaching staff on theories and concepts in social science and development; 2- research methodology and proposal development; 3-research proposal development;4- engaging in research; 5-writing academic report and article),  Fund small research projects and create a platform for international exchange and research dissemination.
<b>12. Building Emerging Think Tank Leaders in Myanmar</b> (#108922) Edgard Rodriguez	2018-2020 \$251,500	Kivu International  Will Paxton <a href="mailto:will.paxton@kivu-international.org">will.paxton@kivu-international.org</a>	Open Myanmar Institute, (OMI);  Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation, (EMReF);  Another Development, (AD);  Renaissance Institute (RI);  Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security (MIPS);  Institute for Strategy Policy;  Yangon Political Studies Association (YPSA);  Myanmar Development Institute (MDI)	Yangon	Increase the capacity of early career think tank researchers and communications professionals across a range of core think tank skills including: (i) advocacy skills and communications; (ii) research skills; (iii) policy analysis and development; and (iv) fundraising.  Support short-term policy influencing activities by partner think tanks, through the application of training to specific and live think tank projects.  Increase the capacity and confidence of think tank Executive Directors, including on (i) the strategic positioning of their institutions (i.e. having a clear account of how they are seeking to influence change); (ii) developing and implementing fundraising plans; and (iii) organisational development.  Support think tanks in developing influencing strategies around the 2020 elections.
<b>13. Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar – (project with McGill)</b> (#108622-002) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2020 \$250,500	McGill University  Franque Grimard <a href="mailto:franque.grimard@mcgill.ca">franque.grimard@mcgill.ca</a>	Myanmar Development Institute (MDI)/  University of Mandalay (UM)/ Chiang Mai University (CMU)	Mandalay Nay Pyi Taw	Deliver capacity development to professors and students at the University of Mandalay in quantitative social sciences. (Implemented with CMU).  Deliver capacity development in economics to MDI (quantitative economics, econometrics, impact evaluation, and research method and project evaluation).
<b>14. Building parliamentary research capacity: the case of Shan State's sub-national parliament in Myanmar</b> (#108572) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2019 \$246,900	Parliamentary Centre  Ivo Balinov <a href="mailto:ivo.balinov@parl.gc.ca">ivo.balinov@parl.gc.ca</a>	Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF)	Shan State	Train EMReF to build capacity for gender-sensitive parliamentary research in Shan state. EMReF to give training on gender-sensitive legislative research to Members and staff of the Shan State Hluttaw and provide parliamentary record management for Shan State Hluttaw.
<b>15. Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar - (project with UBC)</b> (#108622-003) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2020 \$213,900	The University of British Columbia (UBC)  Kai Ostwald <a href="mailto:kai.ostwald@ubc.ca">kai.ostwald@ubc.ca</a>	Yangon University of Economics (YUE)  Myanmar Development Institute (MDI)	Yangon Nay Pyi Taw	Annual Summer Program (on public policy) to be held at YUE, in which UBC faculty members deliver tailored courses to faculty members and graduate students and support YUE to create a new Master of Public Policy (MPP) program.
<b>16. Promoting gender equality through networks: Strengthening capacity and advocacy in Myanmar</b> (#109029) Alejandra Vargas	2018-2021 \$206,200	Gender Equality Network (GEN)  May Sabe Phyu <a href="mailto:gen.phyuphyu@gmail.com">gen.phyuphyu@gmail.com</a>	Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)	Yangon	Strengthen gender-analysis capacities by designing and conducting trainings of trainers for emerging leaders within public service in two critical areas: (i) integrating gender equality narratives in the school curriculum and (ii) scaling up gender sensitivity training to public servants in other Departments—including recently graduated Public Administration students entering the public sector.
<b>17. Assessing social science research systems in Myanmar's transition to democracy</b> (#109065) Edgard Rodriguez	2019-2021 \$188,700	Global Development Network (GDN)  Francesco Obino <a href="mailto:fbino@gdn.int">fbino@gdn.int</a>	Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESD)	Yangon	Examine a system-wide landscape of the social sciences research, using the "Doing Research Assessment" to understand, map and assess structural barriers and opportunities to strengthening policy relevant social research.  Conduct two separate assessments (2019 and 2021) collecting baseline data collection, analysis, validation and dissemination.
<b>18. Building Policy Research Capacity in Myanmar - project with USC</b> (#108622-004) Edgard Rodriguez	2017-2018 \$94,900	University of Southern California (USC)  Htay-Wah Saw <a href="mailto:sawhtaywah@gmail.com">sawhtaywah@gmail.com</a>	Myanmar Development Institute (MDI)	Nay Pyi Taw	Provide training on advanced quantitative analysis tools to MDI and government officials. Support MDI to examine the "Impact Evaluation of the National Community Driven Development Project (NCDDP)" of the Gov. of Myanmar, through mentorship, review of research, and technical advice. Support MDI in designing and implementing a Tax Compliance study.

## Annex 6: List of IDRC projects outside of K4DM

Project	Duration	Funds (CAD\$)	Lead partner	Partners in Myanmar	Area of Study	Project Objectives
<b>Program</b>						
<b>Networked Economies</b>						
<b>1. Building Emerging Leaders in Communications Policy in Africa and Asia</b> (#108520) <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Phet Sayo	2017-2019	522,000 (Approx. 50% for Myanmar)	LIRNEasia; Helani Galpaya; <a href="mailto:helani@lirneasia.net">helani@lirneasia.net</a>	Myanmar ICT for Development Organization (MIDO)	Yangon region	Contribute to developing information and communications technology policy expertise and future leaders in Asia and Africa, so that they may advance effective access to communications services for marginalized communities.
<b>2. Turning Evidence into Digital policy in Sri Lanka, India and Myanmar</b> (#108826) <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Phet Sayo	2018-2019	250,000 (Approx. 33% for Myanmar)	LIRNEasia; Helani Galpaya; <a href="mailto:helani@lirneasia.net">helani@lirneasia.net</a>	Myanmar ICT Development Organization (MIDO)	Yangon region	IDRC has completed 5 years of research engagements in Myanmar (#107970), aimed at improving the overall internet ecosystem. The research describes the progress made and the challenges remaining in the information and communications technology sector since market liberalization began in Myanmar. By means of this project, efforts will be made to further translate research results into policy actions in Myanmar.
<b>3. Globally Scaling Digital Solutions for Managing Misinformation</b> (#108928) <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Phet Sayo	2018-2020	80,000 (100% for Myanmar)	Sentinel Project for Genocide Prevention Christopher Tuckwood, ED <a href="mailto:chris@">chris@</a>	Smile Education and Development Foundation (SEDF)	Mandalay	The project will build upon the Peaceful Truth project in Myanmar that has built a social media-based audience in Mandalay which represents 1 in 25 residents of this city impacted by rumour-driven anti-Muslim rioting in 2014. Peaceful Truth engages a diverse group of beneficiaries to help reduce the risk of further intercommunal violence and has revealed the need for improving digital literacy in a country which has digitized more rapidly than almost any other. This project focuses on testing a brand-new concept of participatory misinformation management in Myanmar.
<b>4. Open Data for Development (OD4D) Phase II</b> (#108868) <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Fernando Perini	2018-2020	1,432,311 (Approx. 3% for Myanmar)	The East-West Management Institute (EWMi) Pyrong Chung <a href="mailto:pchung@ewmi-odi.org">pchung@ewmi-odi.org</a> The Sinar Project Khairil Yusof <a href="mailto:khairil.yusof@sinarproject.org">khairil.yusof@sinarproject.org</a>	Phandeeyar; Open Hluttaw initiative; Ananda Data (Myanmar)	Myanmar-wide	The Asia Hub of the Open Data for Development Network will create linkages between high and mid ranking countries with nascent open data sectors to strengthen public, civil society and private sector demand, publishing and reusing open data. The project will use the platform <a href="https://opendevelopmentmyanmar.net/">https://opendevelopmentmyanmar.net/</a> to increase public awareness, enable individual analysis, improve information sharing, and inform rigorous debate.
<b>Program</b>						
<b>Agriculture and Food Security</b>						
<b>5. Climate and Nutrition Smart Villages as Platforms to Address Food Insecurity in Myanmar</b> (#108748) <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Annie Wesley	2018-2021	713,500 (100% for Myanmar)	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR); Wilson Barbon; <a href="mailto:wilsonjohn.barbon@iirr.org">wilsonjohn.barbon@iirr.org</a>	Yezin Agricultural University; Food Security Working Group; Kalyana Mitta Development Foundation (KMF); Karuna Mission and Social Services (KMSS); Radanar Ayar Association (RDA); Community Development Association (CDA)	Ayeyarwaddy Region Mandalay Region Chin State Shan State	Test innovative ways to build the resilience of Myanmar smallholder farming households towards food security through action research. This research is expected to provide strategic support to the Myanmar Climate-Smart Agriculture Strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation as it develops and pursues programs to address climate change.
<b>6. Climate Adaptation and Innovation in Mekong Aquaculture - AQUADAPT Mekong.</b> (#108526) <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Charlotte MacAlister	2017-2020	1,759,500 (Approx. 20% for Myanmar)	Chiang Mai University. Dr. Louis Lebel, Director, Unit for Social and Environmental Research (USER) <a href="mailto:louis@sea-user.org">louis@sea-user.org</a>	WorldFish Myanmar. Project leader, Dr. Khin Maung Soe, <a href="mailto:m.khin@cglar.org">m.khin@cglar.org</a> Collaborators: University of Yangon Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.	Ayeyarwady Delta Upper Central Dry Zone Naypyidaw	Ensure that fish farmers in the Mekong Region have the capacity to manage climate-related risks and adapt to climate change through innovations; this will be done through: 1) communications and social media to provide information to all groups but specifically fish farmers; 2) innovative technology; 3) finance (through mutual schemes).  In Myanmar, the project partnered with a social enterprise to add an aquaculture module to the Green Way smart phone app for farmers.

Project	Duration	Funds (CAD\$)	Lead partner	Partners in Myanmar	Area of Study	Project Objectives
<b>7. Urban Climate Resilience in South East Asia Partnership</b> (#107776) <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> David O'Brien	2016-2019	1,200,000 (Approx 25% for Myanmar)	The Thailand Environment Institute:  Pakamas Thinphanga;  +662 503 3333; <a href="mailto:pthinphanga@hotmail.com">pthinphanga@hotmail.com</a>  University of Toronto – Amrita Daniere  <a href="mailto:amrita.daniere@utoronto.ca">amrita.daniere@utoronto.ca</a>  Collaborators:  Chiang Mai University (Dr. Chayan)	University of Yangon	Tanintharyi Yangon	Enhance the economic and social resiliency of cities in the South East Asia, recognizing the important connections between urbanization, the effects of climate change, public awareness, and societal well-being. The project will 1) conduct research; 2) implement educational outreach; 3) develop policy recommendations.
<b>8. David and Ruth Hopper and Ramesh and Pilar Bhatia Canada Fund Fellowships in the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Yangon</b>  (#108621-008)	2018-2020	20,000 (100% for Myanmar)	Simon Fraser University  Robert Anderson  <a href="mailto:robert_anderson@sfu.ca">robert_anderson@sfu.ca</a>	University of Yangon  Prof. Dr Aung Kyaw, Pro-Rector, UoY  <a href="mailto:aungkyawmgi@gmail.com">aungkyawmgi@gmail.com</a>	Yangon	To strengthen the curriculum and student competence in the 'gender, water, and environment' theme at the University of Yangon. Female students will be offered tuition scholarships on admission to the one-year program, and all may compete for special mid-term awards for high performance. Field-oriented training is also essential for women in the program, and costs will be significantly reduced for those in the Environmental Studies Program during the 18-month life of this grant. Curriculum development will occur, and individual awards and scholarships will be given over two cycles of the Environmental Studies Program, thus strengthening it for years to come.
<b>Program Employment &amp; Growth</b>						
<b>9. Reforming Labour Market in Burma (Myanmar): Achieving inclusive economic growth through better labour relations and improved enterprise development</b> (#107927)  <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Edgard Rodriguez	2015-2018	602,900 (100% for Myanmar)	Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESD)  Zaw Oo		Myanmar-wide	To produce comprehensive survey data and analyses on current constraints of the labour market; to contribute to evidence-based policy dialogue between key stakeholders, including the government, employers, and employees; to strengthen the capacity of researchers to analyse labour market constraints.
<b>10. Job Prospects in the Mekong</b> (#107988)  <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Gillian Dowie	2015-2019	1,029,000 (Approx. 25% for Myanmar)	The Cambodia Development Resource Institute:  Dr. Chhem Reay, Executive Director; <a href="mailto:exd@cdri.org.kh">exd@cdri.org.kh</a>	Same as lead  Collaborators:  Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD)	Yangon	To analyse labour markets in the six Greater Mekong countries, focusing on labour-market characteristics and policies that constrain or promote job creation for the youth
<b>11. Turning Value Chains into Social Gains in Southeast Asia</b> (#108295)  <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Bouba Housseini	2016-2019	1,707,390 (Approx. 20% for Myanmar)	NUS Business School: Alexander Capri; <a href="mailto:acapri@nus.edu.sg">acapri@nus.edu.sg</a>  JustJobs Network Inc: Sabina Dewan; <a href="mailto:sabinadewan@justjobsnetwork.org">sabinadewan@justjobsnetwork.org</a>  Grow Asia: Pranav Sethaputra; <a href="mailto:pranav@growasia.org">pranav@growasia.org</a>  UBC: Yves Tiberghien; <a href="mailto:yves.tiberghien@ubc.ca">yves.tiberghien@ubc.ca</a>	Philippine Institute for Development (PIDS);  Centre for Analysis and Forecasting (CAF);  Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESD)	Myanmar-wide	To support value chains in creating more and better employment, so that a greater number of people can benefit from an expanding economic growth in South-east Asia.
<b>12. Making Trade Work for Small Producers in Southeast Asia's Least Developed Countries</b> (#108465)  <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Bouba Housseini	2017-2019	708,181 (Approx. 25% for Myanmar)	Trade Facilitation Office: Canada:  Lidia Karamaoun; <a href="mailto:lidia.karamaoun@tfoCanada.ca">lidia.karamaoun@tfoCanada.ca</a>  613-233-3925; Mekong Institute:  Madhuriya Dutta;  <a href="mailto:dutta@mekonginstitute.org">dutta@mekonginstitute.org</a>	About 15 SMEs in Myanmar	Yangon Mandalay	Increase business expertise and export readiness for more than 120 small producers in least-developed countries in South-east Asia through market research, business training and advice.

Project	Duration	Funds (CAD\$)	Lead partner	Partners in Myanmar	Area of Study	Project Objectives
<b>13. Jobs at the Borders: What Policies Can Promote Gender Equality and Growth in ASEAN's Economic Zones</b> (#108161)  <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Edgard Rodriguez	2015-2019	382,600 (Approx. 30% in Myanmar)	Asian Institute of Technology:  Kyoko Kusakabe;  <a href="mailto:kyokok@ait.ac.th">kyokok@ait.ac.th</a>	Mekong Migration Network	Yangon	To investigate how women migrant workers manage their production and reproduction at the border and central industrial areas, how women migrant workers negotiate power and agency, how they are linked to the local communities and women in these communities, and how they shape each other's gender norms and practices; to raise awareness about working conditions in the borders, engage factory owners, community and regional policy stakeholders to develop recommendations on border special economic zone development policies to ensure the empowerment of women.
<b>Program Governance and Justice</b>						
<b>14. Monitoring Subnational Violence in Asia</b> (#108239)  <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Florencio Ceballos	2016-2019	848,100 (Approx. 7% for Myanmar)	The Asia Foundation:  Adrian Morel  <a href="mailto:adrian.morel@asiafoundation.org">adrian.morel@asiafoundation.org</a>	Center for Diversity and National Harmony (CDNH)  Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security (MIPS).	Myanmar-wide	Encourage governments, donors and researchers in Asia and globally to use data from violence monitoring systems (VMS) to understand the prevalence and dynamics of violence and to make development assistance more effective. The project supports the development of new VMS in Myanmar.
<b>15. A Roundtable on the Rohingya People Crisis</b> (#109098-001)  <b>IDRC Program Officer:</b> Navsharan Singh	2019	50,000	The Asian Justice and Rights Foundation (AJAR)  Indira Fernida  <a href="mailto:ifernida@asia-ajar.org">ifernida@asia-ajar.org</a>		TBA	To develop new, effective, and just approaches to local/ national, regional and international cooperation to contribute to resolving Rohingya people crisis. Project Specific Objectives: 1) Map and take stock of the multiple missions, reports, recommendations and actions proposed in the various international and national mechanisms set up to intervene in the Rohingya people crisis; 2) Assess the challenges in dealing with the Impact of Mass Human Rights Violations including sexual violence and 3) Assess the possibility of regional response.