



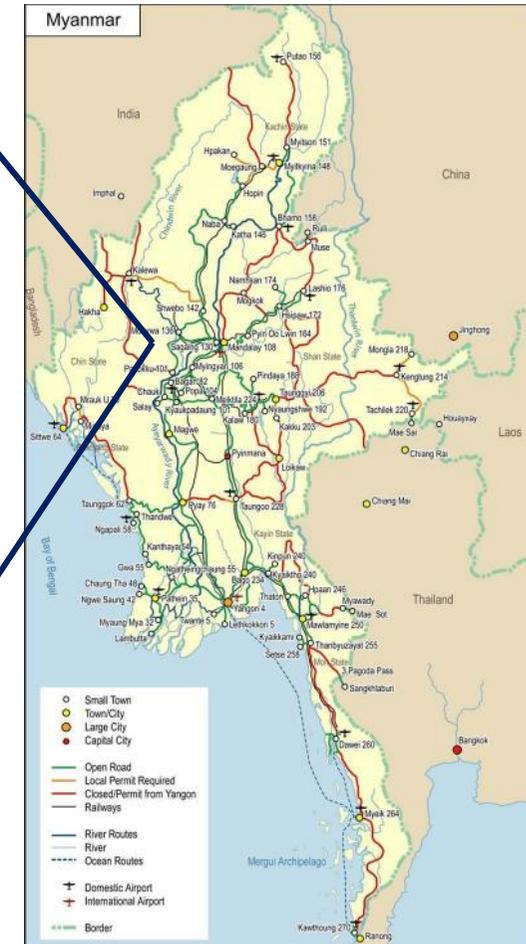
Civil Society WASH Fund

Myanmar

**Women's participation in WASH
committees and activities**

Project Summary

Strengthening Community-based WASH Governance Kani Township, Sagaing Division, Myanmar



- An integrated approach to WASH activities to maximise health impacts in villages
- A tract-wide approach to achieve more than 90% access to improved water supply and hygienic latrines for 40 villages in 10 tracts
- Focus on gender and social inclusion

Alignment with Government WASH Strategy (2016-30)

7.2 Sanitation

- Outcome 7.2.1.1:
- People live in open-defecation-free communities and households, and buy, construct and use hygienic toilets.

Actions

- Develop microfinance products and loans, and make these available for households to buy latrines themselves
- Develop subsidy arrangement to enable the poorest to buy latrines
- Apply verification and certification procedures in all villages that claim ODF status

Village sanitation funds successfully established in target villages,
with women's active engagement

Women's participation in project area (before project)

- Barriers to women's representation and leadership include the unequal gender division of labour for childcare, water collection and domestic chores, as well as cultural norms that encourage men to have a voice and women to be self-effacing.
- Menstrual hygiene has not been addressed formally in previous WASH programs in Kani, although female Save the Children WASH Program Assistants have provided informal advice on menstrual hygiene to mothers' groups. Sanitary napkins are available in Kani, however appropriate disposal has not been systematically addressed.

Formation of WASH committee members

Women in VWC

Affirmative action is used to make sure committees have at least 50% representation of women

Chairpersons

Communities initially selected male village leaders but later more women began to take on chairing duties during the implementation period

Women's roles in VWC

Selected committee members divided the duties in a mass community meeting, with women members taking on secretary, treasurer and accounting roles.



Community mass meeting



Village WASH Committee

Capacity building: Training and awareness meetings

- Gender training
- O&M training



Township level gender (TOT) training

- Financial management training



Women in Hygiene Promotion Activities

- Women are major change agents in Hygiene Promotion Activities
- Peer mothers, health staff (HA and AMW), education staff (teachers) and women in VWC's are leading to change hygiene behaviors, mainly focusing on hand washing and menstrual hygiene



Women in Water Supply Activities

- Leading role in village committees
- Water fund management



- Actively involved in O&M

Women in Sanitation Activities

- Actively participated to change their village status OD to ODF
- Good mobilisers in establishing sanitation funds
- Financial management in procuring construction materials
 - Highly involved in opening bank accounts
 - Keep records and meeting minutes
 - Control the quality with reasonable prize
- Actively participate in household latrine construction process, including making concrete rings
- Good organisers in fund repayment
 - Bottom-up approach with friendly style
 - Leading role models



Achievement

- Gender trainings and awareness are making women increasingly influential in decisions about their roles on WASH Committees.
- Affirmative action is making sure committees comprise at least 50% of women as members including key decision making role.
- Most women in WASH committees are leading and participating in the WASH activities in their villages (pipeline connection, water meter fixing, collection of funds for sanitation, supervision and monitoring of construction of water storage tanks and school latrines, and actively joining trainings and meetings).
- Women who had traditionally had to collect water for their houses now have tap stands in each household and can use the time gained for their other business. Women in WASH committees are also motivating other women in hygiene promotion activities.

Lessons Learnt

- Women leading VWC's are also effective like men leading VWC's
 - _ transparency
 - _ accountability
- A project is more successful as more women participate in WASH activities
- Women's leadership in village WASH committees produces strong results
 - Women show good organization skills
 - They lead as role models
- Women need to be given the opportunity to participate
- As more women participate, benefits increase for women and the community
- Need to trust and respect women
- Gender training and awareness-raising with community-based local authorities is essential
- Functioning of government policies is important relative to gender



Thank you

