

Myanmar

Regulation for Disaster Resilience

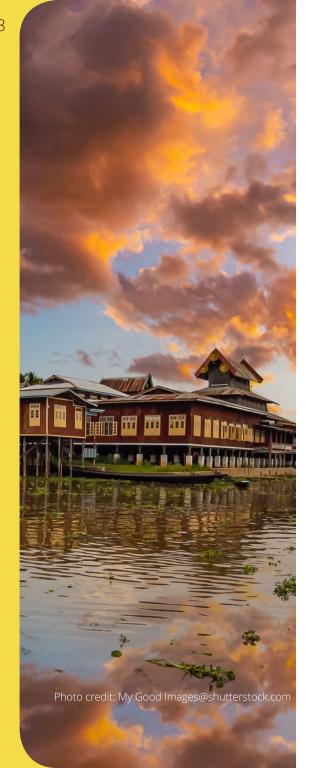
Updating CSO Contingency Plans for Effective **Humanitarian Response**

Contents

- 2 Disasters & Impact
- 4 The APProach
- 6 Taking the Initiative
- 8 Aligning with the Evolving Disaster Context
 10 Myanmar Preparedness Partnership
 12 MPP Milestones

- 14 Stakeholder interviews
- 22 Sources





Disasters & Impact

Cyclone Nargis forged a path of destruction for millions in Myanmar. The category three cyclone struck the nation on 2 - 3 May 2008 with winds of 215 kilometers per hour and 12-foot storm surges. It led to the loss of 140,000 lives while 800,000 people were displaced and an additional 2.4 million were severely affected. Ultimately, it exposed Myanmar's need to prioritize strategic planning for preparedness and response to disaster events.

Nargis became a turning point for Myanmar - the cyclone was the most devastating in the region since Cyclone 2b in 1991 which claimed 135,000 casualties in Bangladesh. The nation has since made strides in emergency warning systems and shelter provisions. Their prioritization of disaster preparedness limited the impact of Cyclone Sidr to 3,000 death in 2007. A neighboring nation to Myanmar, Bangladesh proved that preventative measures are the optimal approach.

Unfortunately, weak coordination and communication networks, coupled with a lack of public knowledge about the risks of cyclones, put Myanmar's coastline communities in a severely vulnerable and underprepared predicament. Local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) with links to these communities were cut out of the preparedness and response procedures, which further exacerbated the cyclone's harm.

The unprecedented impacts of disasters lead responders to evaluate, innovate, and enact. The magnitude of loss endured due to Nargis is undeniably difficult to fully comprehend, and the immediate priority of authorities and stakeholders in Myanmar was to prevent future calamities from having the same effects. It also became clear that unified and coordinated action would only progress through a systemic approach.





Average Annual Natural Hazard Occurrence 1980-2020





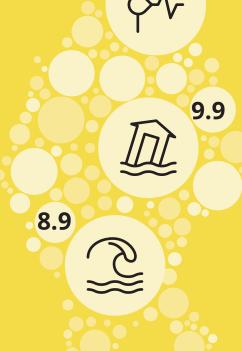
















Myanmar has an overall risk index of 6.3. The country's most common disaster events of floods (9.9), earthquakes (9.1), and tsunamis (8.9).



The APProach

The Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP), established by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), is a unique multi-stakeholder regional partnership that includes countries from South and Southeast Asia to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. Supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (the foundation) and the United States Agency for International Development Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID BHA), the partnership strives to improve stakeholder

coordination and dialogue between governments, local humanitarian organization networks, and the private sector for enhancing capacities through partnerships, knowledge resources, training, and networking opportunities.

APP's goal is to promote safer and well-prepared communities through locally-led disaster risk management (DRM) actions, so that disaster impacts on at-risk communities of Asia will be reduced.

APP on localization: "A process whereby local, sub-national and national humanitarian actors, namely governments, civil society and non-government organizations, the private sector, media, academia, etc., take a lead role, in a collaborative manner to plan and implement priority actions in disaster preparedness, humanitarian response, and recovery through mobilizing internal resources and external humanitarian funding."



Asian Preparedness Partnership

APP endorses policy enablers as frameworks to enhance







by bringing stakeholders together to







more comprehensive national and local plans for









Taking the Initiative

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) initiated the dialogue to collectively and systemically respond to natural disasters following Nargis. They utilized the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Interagency Plan Contingency Planning for Humanitarian Assistance to formulate their plan.

The organization began by establishing the Myanmar NGO Contingency Plan Working Group (MNGO-CPWG). It consisted of a steering committee, funding board, program committee, and cluster leads. The group sought to mitigate the impacts of disasters, saving lives as well as providing effective and timely humanitarian assistance and investing efforts in early recovery. Additionally, the LNGOs in Myanmar organized themselves to align their work with the government and local populations. Their objective was to collectively prepare and respond to any potential natural hazards and meet the immediate needs of disaster-affected communities and populaces, especially when a hypothetical disaster was not large enough to mobilize a sweeping national response.

Disasters are often a point of activation and adaptation for operations. CSOs have become more involved in emergency response after Cyclone Nargis, which is evident in their growing

numbers. However, better preparedness and a well-coordinated approach to emergency response call for the commitment of all stakeholders.

The CPWG took the lead in managing the progress of the NGO-led contingency plan with technical support from UNOCHA and some international NGOs. International NGOs provided financial and facilitation assistance through the Local Resource Center, which was collectively set up by the international community to coordinate aid allocation after Nargis. The CPWG consisted of 35 national NGOs engaged in disaster management. It was established to jointly prioritize the key objective of the plan. It endeavored to ensure effective and comprehensive emergency response in a future event of a disaster nationwide with a priority on the small-scale disasters that are primarily addressed by national NGOs.

The dialogue between these organizations established the next step and outline for the plan. A large consensus found that there should be a general plan in place to further delineate specific strategies for various hazards and situations at the district and township-administrative levels. These organizations primarily emphasized the importance of applying the current, more generic

CP to be of more practical use at the local level. Greater utilization at these levels would require decentralizing the plan and the decision-making process. The Myanmar NGO Contingency Plan (MNGO-CP) was adopted in 2010 after extensive consultation from national humanitarian organizations, the government, and United Nations (UN) organizations.

The impacts of disasters span multiple sectors and levels. It requires a multi-stakeholder approach with relevant expertise and tools to reduce their risks. With this consideration, seven working groups for education, health, food and nutrition, shelter, protection, agriculture, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) were further constituted during the workshop. A sector lead and co-lead were also chosen to supervise the review process and submit their recommendation to the CP Review and Update Committee.

The momentum of the plan was a challenging endeavor as these organizations simultaneously implemented response activities for relief and recovery in the Delta and Yangon regions.





Aligning with the Evolving **Disaster Context**

A constantly changing disaster landscape required the working group to revisit its official strategies. The initial plan was updated with support from and in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and the Relief and Resettlement Department from the Ministry. The MNGO-CPWG also focused on the practical application of response efforts.



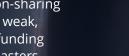


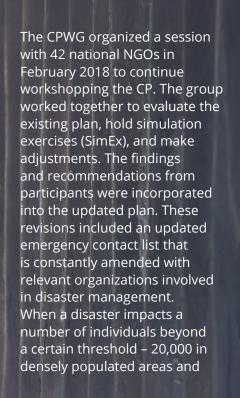












10,000 in less populated areas

- the CP activates and cluster
groups organized by sector
roll out response procedures.
The 2018 workshop served as
an opportunity to unite and
build the relationship between
governments, LNGOs, and
international humanitarian
organizations. It also provided
a platform to recognize the
role of LNGOs in emergency
response and connect these local
organizations to the international
humanitarian community.

Monthly NGO coordination meetings had been ongoing between INGOs, LNGOs, and UN agencies since 2002, but they suddenly dissolved when Nargis struck. INGOs and UN agencies continued to occasionally convene without LNGO involvement. At the same time, LNGOs started to meet with each other more frequently than before. The MNGO-CP and its update workshop in 2018 boosted LNGOs' abilities to meaningfully contribute to the disaster preparedness discourse.

The inter-Agency working groups were available to support the CPWG; the SimEx created an opportunity to build positive relationships between LNGOs and the International humanitarian community. Information-sharing with donors/INGO was weak, creating challenges in funding mobilization during disasters.

Myanmar Preparedness Partnership (MPP)

Department of Disaster Management

Myanmar NGO Consortium for Preparedness and Response Network (MNGO CPR Network)

Myanmar Private Sector Disaster Management Network (MPD Network)

Engage, Expand & Empower a Multistakeholder System

Climate change has had a significant impact on Myanmar. It faces magnified disaster events and is susceptible to greater impacts from extreme disaster events. The changing disaster landscape has compelled all local stakeholders to update and consolidate their disaster policies and approach. The nation is one of five priority countries in Asia that are highly vulnerable to large-scale natural disasters. Many regions have experienced record rainfalls over the past decade; the Chin State encountering an increase of 30% and record 24-hour rainfall across other districts. The shifting forecast includes an increase in temperature by 1.3°C-2.7°C, up to 17 days of extreme heat every month, and rising sea levels of 20-41 centimeters (cm) along the coastline.

As climate change-induced disasters increase, the national community must constantly adapt old procedures by incorporating new solutions. The Myanmar Preparedness Partnership (MPP) organized a workshop to review, update, and implement relevant policies to address the transforming national disaster landscape in 2018. It organized a workshop to review the existing MNGO-CP to identify areas of improvement according to the changing context of Myanmar. A participatory approach was initiated under which local organizations would share their suggestions to improve the plan. This progression led to the formation of a Contingency Plan Review and Update Committee. The committee would ensure a functional plan, regroup relevant sectors for collaborative efforts, and engage working groups to respond to emergencies.

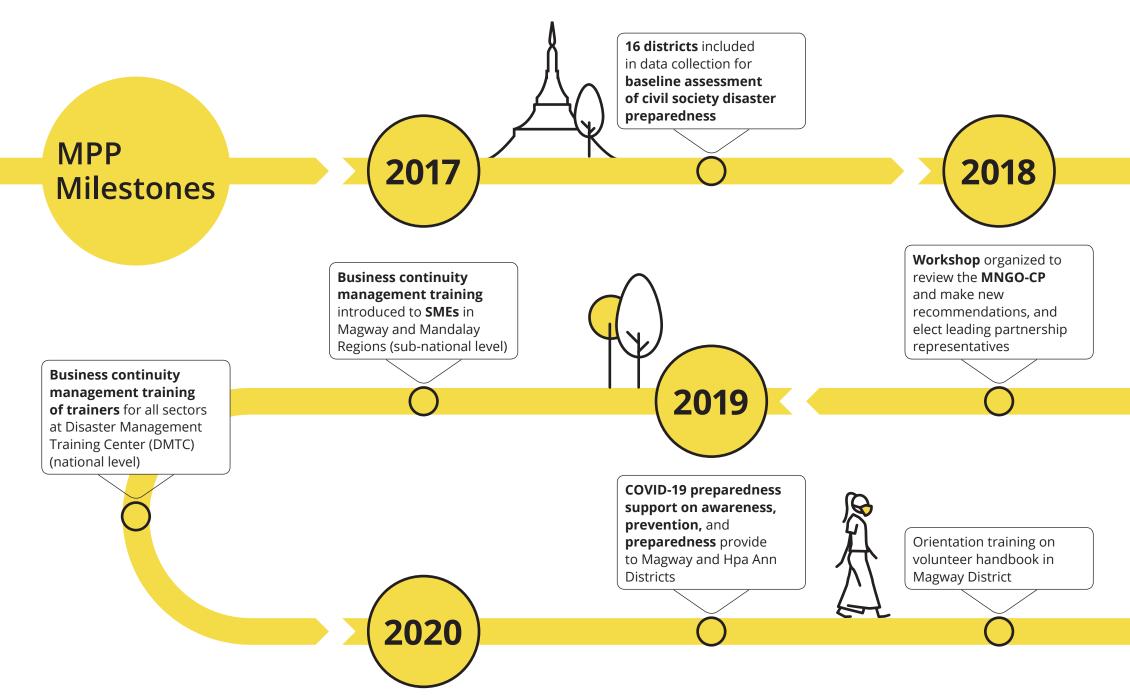












MPP was formally established to connect disaster preparedness stakeholders



MPP **Terms of Reference (TOR) signed** by co-chairs from the three key partnership stakeholders

219 participants in 8 districts participated in partnership workshops



298 participants in 8 districts attended business resilience forums

237 participants in 8 districts engaged in capacity-building training on disaster management

Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)

curriculum updated to include more practical group exercises

CBDRM orientation of new updates for **teaching staff** at the **(DMTC)**



2021

2022

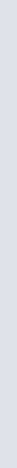


Ngwe Thein Executive Director, Capacity Building Initiative

Ngwe Thein's career largely focused on connecting humanitarian pedagogy into practice. He started as an educational trainer in farming communities with the Ministry of Cooperatives, Myanmar government. He expanded to international programs targeting indigenous and youth populations, "My experience with UN development projects in the Philippines and Lesotho made me realize that capacity building needs to engage marginalized communities and the future generations."



Leadership is the foundation for empowerment according to Ngwe. His interest in molding dynamic leaders pushed him to support other trainers. He returned to Myanmar when the Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) was an emerging organization. Ngwe managed workshops for skills and knowledge development professionals, "I was introduced to the Capacity Building Initiative as a resource person for an in-house training program for the NGOs and their staff. The opportunity aligned with my aspirations to strengthen the efficiency of local organizations."





Although he is the Executive Director, Ngwe maintains that he will always be a teacher and proponent of community development, "My main profession is to enhance the capacity of those who work in the development field." The director's ambitions motivated a partnership with MPP, "The partnership and CBI strive to localize humanitarian frameworks aligns with his perspective on disaster management. Disaster is everyone's business. I understood that collaboration and partnership with different stakeholders will enhance the disaster response."

Cyclone Nargis's havoc was instrumental in shaping Ngwe's views on synergistic strategies for disaster preparedness, "Our collective efforts are always stronger than individual responses. We are essentially all working to reduce the impacts of disaster events in our ways. I believe my involvement in Cyclone Nargis' response made me more interested in disaster preparedness and recovery." Myanmar's fractured response across districts underscored the need for a national plan. But as this plan came into focus, existing hierarchies prevented the DRM discourse from fully achieving the locally-driven collaboration that Ngwe envisioned.

Innovate and Adapt in the Aftermath

The international humanitarian community started paying closer attention and initiating a more proactive role in Myanmar's disaster landscape after Cyclone Nargis. These organizations subsequently assumed a more active role in crafting a comprehensive disaster framework - the MNGO-CP. Ngwe's analysis of the initial MNGO-CP draft identified the disconnect between INGOs and LNGOs in Myanmar. He determines this gap arose during the initial stages of connecting national and international stakeholders with LNGOs, "The UN had just started to outline the plan and introduced it to some of our local organizations. They wanted to ensure standardization by training CSOs and NGOs on how to develop a contingency plan."

The top-down structure of DRM implementation resulted in an ecosystem where CSOs and LNGOs with unique local expertise were excluded from the decision-making process. Ngwe observed that government policies similarly relegated CSOs, "Disaster Management Law had a very limited role for CSOs, which created a gap among the stakeholders. Although the CSOs or Local NGOs

usually are at the forefront of DRR at the local level, the government could not incorporate the role of CSOs in a significant way." Although strides were being made towards a comprehensive framework, the MNGO-CP had yet to unite CSOs with the government.

Cooperation for Policy Enablers

The MPP brought together stakeholders in a way that valued all opinions and insights a decade later. Ngwe views the partnership's ability to serve as an inclusive platform as its fundamental attribute, "MPP is a true partnership compared to previous collaborations and partnerships among CSOs and LNGOs." After representatives from the Foundation and ADPC met with members of the Contingency Plan Working Group (CPWG), the coalition developed more holistic strategies for engagement. "These actors prioritized inclusion. They brought the government, CSOs/LNGOs, and private sector to work on improving the capacity of local actors." MPP's method embodies practical cohesion between partners instead of disjointed and isolated goals. This creates an environment with less friction and more room for local actors to be elevated.

Myanmar is made up of

15 states

73

330 townships

Local NGOs and Myanmar NGOs had never heard of the contingency plan or disaster preparedness before Cyclone Nargis and the MNGO Contingency Plan. NGOs are now systematically organized alongside government and private sector stakeholders because of MPP's intervention and the adoption of the plan."

The 2018 workshop renewed the emphasis on CSO involvement in disaster management. The workshop revitalized the CP by reflecting the inputs and expertise of civil society and the private sector. In addition to refreshing stakeholders' memories of the framework, Ngwe notes that the session institutionalized localization into DRM in Myanmar, "The workshop was a kind of reminder for the organizations about the CP since it was last updated in 2011. The focus was also adjusted from the national to the local level, meaning that the plan should be more locally driven."

MPP's role in building stakeholder relationships bolstered its effects on the capacities of each partner. Ngwe identifies capacity-building as a key outcome, "The coordination meeting organized by MPP with various stakeholders was an eye-opener for the partners to understand their roles and capacity for future collaborations." MPP directly enabled new policy and strengthened DRM capacity by facilitating these kinds of discussions. Ngwe applauded the partnership for efforts to localize DRM perspectives through the efficient integration of CSOs and the private sector, "We understood the value to helped in developing

focal hubs. These hubs have activated recovery networks that the Nargis response lacked."

Ngwe acknowledges that pre-Nargis disaster response plans overtly excluded non-state actors, "Local NGOs and Myanmar NGOs had never heard of the contingency plan or disaster preparedness before Cyclone Nargis and the MNGO Contingency Plan. NGOs are now systematically organized alongside government and private sector stakeholders because of MPP's intervention and the adoption of the plan." Ngwe sees this development as a breakthrough, "CSOs now know what a contingency plan is. They have gained valuable insights from simulation exercises about the need to prepare for disasters. They also clearly understand their roles as the cluster members and cluster leads."

Local voices come from within the community and can immediately respond to disasters with the best understanding of their community's needs. Emergency operations are more efficient when these perspectives are incorporated from broader frameworks into specific approaches needed for unique national contexts.







Kyaw Than TunFounder and Director, Ratna Mahal Education Care Group

Kyaw Than Thun believes that a better future is within the generation that will take it forward, "I left my government job as a geologist for the Ministry of Mine after Cyclone Nargis. I founded Ratna Mahal Education Care Group in 2012 because learning is every child's right. Our work centers on community-based child protection." He wanted to remodel a system that he often found to be inflexible and misguided - "I realized that I disliked the objectives and practical activities of some of the organizations operating in the humanitarian space. There was a clear lack of transparency in how they used their funding. I felt that the best option was to set up a well-disciplined organization that worked around the needs of the changing times."

Ratna Mahal began its local outreach by advancing projects on literacy development and non-formal education. It then shifted its scope to encompass other areas, "We started mainstreaming DRR initiatives

into our programs, in addition to anti-trafficking initiatives and community-based protection. With international humanitarian partners, we also implemented safety programs for migrant workers."

The role of disaster management in community protection and education continuity became clear to Kyaw through field experience. He made a deliberate effort to expand his DRR knowledge so he set the most effective and relevant interventions. He transferred his learning experiences to create community classrooms, "I received DRR training and Education in Emergency (EiE) training from UNICEF and Save the Children. I realized that training village heads and school teachers in Nargis-affected townships would build informed communities. The success of these sessions opened the opportunity to hold trainings in Yangon and three other cities."

Kyaw noticed a generally disjointed framework in the collective approach to rebuilding post-Nargis. He cites integrated knowledge sharing as a particular bottleneck, "Although the DRR stakeholders met regularly immediately after Nargis, they met less frequently after the







I witness a more integrated approach among the three main stakeholder groups once we implemented MPP activities at the district level. We became better equipped to receive suggestions from different parties, which made us more aware of local DRR needs."

initial project period ended. There was a lack of engagement between local and national stakeholders. Only a few townships actively collaborated with the government." Kyaw's experience of learning and teaching strategies for inclusive DRR contributed to his perspective on best practices for disaster preparedness:

8 districts

"I learned that effective preparation must take local contexts into account. For example, after Nargis overwhelmed many water wells and ponds with salt water and water-borne diseases. we constructed a concrete water tank more resilient to flooding."

MNGO Contingency Plan

Kyaw piloted trainings and exercises at the local level after the MNGO-CP was formally adopted to more effectively introduce the CP to the populations it was intended to protect. However, Kyaw observed that the CP was still unable to fill in the gaps that allowed Nargis to be so devastating, "Stakeholders in some areas were not able to activate the CP when disaster struck. The group's review and update activities became inactive after some time." These activities were revived through MPP initiatives.

Common visions connect actors striving for favorable prospects. Kyaw's perspective on disaster preparedness aligns with the APP. He was elected as an official CSO representative when the MPP was conceived, "I found MPP's foundation offered a more holistic and comprehensive DRM framework that I was looking for."

Evidence of Change: Stakeholder Coordination and Policy Enabler

MPP prioritized strengthening

in MPP activities across Myanmar's disaster management through sectoral cooperation. Kyaw concludes the partnership's work as pioneering collaborations with the government and private sector, "I witness a more integrated approach among the three main stakeholder groups once we implemented MPP activities at the district level. We became better equipped to receive suggestions from different parties, which made us more aware of local DRR needs." Kyaw also added that Ratna Mahal and other CSOs expanded their prospective efforts, "We had not worked with the private sector prior to MPP's engagement. The sector offered a window into community-level capacity building."Policy becomes the archetype

that links plans with actions. MPP organized the 2018 workshop to enforce and update the MNGO-CP. Kyaw was positioned to act as an intermediary between national planning and local action, "The stakeholders in the districts gained knowledge on preparedness and response through MPP-supported capacity building programs. I think coordination between all parties has improved at both the national and district level." As the discussion leader in the education and protection workshop, Kyaw actively contributed to reshaping how the disaster management ecosystem to include non-traditional stakeholders - civil society and the private sector – in national policymaking. LNGOs committed their perspective and expertise to the contingency plan because of MPP's inclusive practices. Kyaw affirms that these local advocates ensured a Myanmar-specific plan, "These organizations have knowledge through practical experience. They were able to apply this understanding to at least three particular sectors that needed more extensive plans. It proved that many CSOs and NGOs had enhanced their capacities after Nargis."

Local leaders like Kyaw contribute to illustrating the complete blueprint of MPP's effort to reframe national and sub-national approaches to DRR.





Myint Ngwe Chairman, Ashoka Social Development Association

Myint Ngwe began his career by instilling knowledge the traditional way as a high school teacher and administrator. His own childhood inspired the need to equip communities access to clean water, "My hometown is in a dry zone and clean water was not readily available. I founded Ashoka Social Development Association (ASDA) in 2010 to streamline access to clean water." Myint describe his pivot to the development sector as a natural progression, "Access to clean water is a basic right. Unfortunately, this became a significant challenge during the post Cyclone Nargis recovery."

ASDA's progress confirms the potential of local collaboration in Myanmar. Myint recalls how the organization's early development leveraged the support of community partnerships, "Community-based organizations (CBOs) spearheaded the concept of ASDA in the O Yinn village tracts of Mandalay Region. Village donors enabled the organization to provide water supplies to people in need." Since then, ASDA has worked on a variety of development projects with partners from around the globe. Myint has a clear understanding of how DRR initiatives strengthen communities through his involvement in multiple national groups, "As a member of the Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group and the Myanmar Consortium for Capacity Development on Disaster Management, ASDA is a primary civil society partner for disaster preparedness. Some of our other activities include data collection on vocational training initiatives with Columbia University and serving as Church World Services's implementing partner." Community-based resilience has always been at the core of ASDA's programs, and it brings this perspective into DRR dialogues.







Forward-thinking social development is equal parts policy and implementation. Well-designed policy and effective implementation complement each other as stakeholders look to achieve social change. National directives on a disaster contingency plan did not guarantee actionable change in Myanmar, according to Myint, "CSOs in Myanmar did not work very closely with the government when the original CP was drafted." Ground-level disaster preparedness in Myanmar required a more complete implementation framework that captured the capacity of local CSOs. Myint witnessed a positive shift in this dynamic once MPP initiated coordination meetings, "There were improvements in stakeholder coordination as we started interacting more with UN agencies and the government for disaster response planning. Our relationship with the government became much better." The inclusion of MSMEs in the conversation also had lasting impacts on preparedness strategies, "In addition to building the capacity of all partners, the new, diverse stakeholder network facilitated the addition of DRR into business resilience plans."

MPP Task Force members oversaw the creation of three specialized working groups – Implementation, Fund Management, and Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E) – as part of its goal to build sustainable outcomes in disaster management. Each of the working groups relayed their findings during monthly and quarterly Task Force meetings. Myint's experience in his working group offered opportunities for capacity building and personal reflection, "I was a member of the M & E Working Group, and ASDA was able to organize monitoring trips to several project districts. Our findings on these trips made the MPP Task Force become more aware of the need for an LNGO network that could coordinate efforts across Myanmar."

Monitoring trips are necessary for understanding what information is being integrated in disaster preparedness planning and what areas need more emphasis. Because MPP coordinates a wide range of activities targeting different sectors, including capacity-building trainings for NGOs, business resilience forums for MSMEs, and partnership and coordination workshops for all parties, data collection is essential for these programs to be implemented effectively. Myint contends that ground-level visits are the most responsible method of gathering accurate data, "Field visits are instrumental for understanding multi-level perspectives on coordination efforts. They give us a clear picture of what the local CSO participants are taking away from our trainings and how they are aligning their activities with MPP objectives. During these sessions, we also ask for insights on what parts of the activities are most beneficial and what can be improved."

MPP partners have the agency to make choices that support the sustainable development of DRM policies. Leaders like Myint provide localized support for policies to succeed from conception through implementation.

I was a member of the M & E
Working Group, and ASDA was
able to organize monitoring
trips to several project
districts. Our findings on these
trips made the MPP Task Force
become more aware of the
need for an LNGO network
that could coordinate efforts
across Myanmar."

Water access in Myanmar



22.5 million people do not have access to clean drinking water at home

1 in 5 people do not have access to soap and water at home

214 million people don't have access to sanitation facilities at home



Sources

https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/13108/758470PUB0EPI0001300PUBDATE02028013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (p1)

https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/yangon-rangoon-skyline-myanmar-this-illustration-1246407055 (p1)

https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/myanmar/vulnerability (p1)

https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk (p1)

https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/yangon-rangoon-skyline-myanmar-this-illustration-1246407055 (p1)

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/disaster-mgmt-ref-hdbk-burma_0.pdf (p5)

http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/mm (p9)

https://app.adpc.net/resources/impacts-and-opportunities-perspectives-of-small-enterprises-on-the-covid-19-pandemic/ (p10)

https://www.wateraid.org/mm/ (p11)

This case study is based on research funded by (or in part by) the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

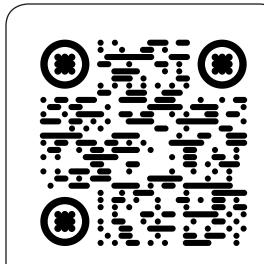






BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation





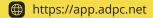
Learn more about the Myanmar Preparedness Partnership



Asian Disaster Preparedness Center SM Tower, 24th Floor, 979/66-70 Phahonyothin Road, Phayathai, Phayathai, Bangkok 10400 Thailand Tel: +66 2 298 0681-92

Fax: +66 2 298 0012 Email: adpc@adpc.net







(1) Asian Preparedness Partnership