



# CRS MYANMAR: GENDER VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS STUDY

June 2019

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Author: Karine Lepillez, Sr. Gender Consultant, Inclusive Societies

Cover photo: Jen Hardy

#### **REVIEWERS:**

Dr. Marcia Croft, Program Coordinator, CRS Myanmar  
Gabriel Buttram, Agricultural Livelihoods Program Manager, CRS Myanmar  
Kerri Agee, Subregional Head of Programming, CRS Cambodia  
Nay Myo Linn, Sr. MEAL Officer, CRS Myanmar  
Augustine Billian, Project Manager, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity

#### **DATA COLLECTORS**

Anna, Field Agent, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity  
Augustine Billian, Project Manager, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity  
Bawi Do Thawng, Team Leader, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity  
Francis Thang Lin Lian, MEAL Officer, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity  
Frank Exodus, Nutrition Officer, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity  
Joseph Lian Sang, Field Agent, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity  
Margaret Kyi Kyi Aye, Independent Researcher  
Rung Thang, Field Agent, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity  
Tum Tum, Field Agent, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity

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#### **DISCLAIMER**

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# 1. Accronyms

<b>ADS</b>	Automated Directives System
<b>CP</b>	Country Program
<b>CRS</b>	Catholic Relief Services
<b>DSW</b>	Department of Social Welfare
<b>FDG</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GEMS</b>	Gender-Equitable Men Scale
<b>GoM</b>	Government of Myanmar HHs Households
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>KMSS</b>	Karuna Mission Social Solidarity
<b>LIFT</b>	Livelihoods Food Security Trust Fund
<b>MEAL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MSWRR</b>	Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NIC</b>	National Identification Card
<b>PACE</b>	Productive Agriculture through Community Engagement
<b>STA</b>	Short Term Assistance
<b>TA</b>	Technical Advisor
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development



## 2. Executive summary

### KEY FINDINGS

#### ✔ Value Chain Roles and Responsibilities

1. Unlike other studies that show women holding primary responsibility for agricultural labor, the gender value chain analysis found that women and men in Chin communities work side by side during labor-intensive activities such as ploughing, planting, composting, weeding, and harvesting of both staple and cash crops. However, **women tend to be involved in a broader range of activities across the value chain, especially for cash crops, and predominate in post-harvest work for both staple and cash crops.**

2. **Women's value chain roles are linked to their gendered household labor responsibilities and limited mobility.** Outside of harvesting periods, women are home-based and can more easily access cash crops as well as engage in sorting, grading, cutting, drying, and packaging of products.

3. **Women's limited mobility is a barrier to accessing larger markets, but has allowed them to gain valuable human capital and skills** in price negotiation, budgeting, hiring and people management. Traveling vendors negotiate with women, who are home during the day. Being home-based has also allowed



women to trade with other women, and to find and hire additional laborers - both women and men - when needed for agricultural work. They also tend to be more available than men for trainings during the day, although some training programs were said to only invite men.

4. **Where women are not engaged in the value chain, it is primarily due to barriers to access to 'masculine' farming equipment and tools, transportation, and financing.** Certain farming tools are said to be "men's tools," not used by women. Women also tend to lack driving skills, as well as the desire to learn driving skills. They rely on their children and male relatives to transport them and they use public buses when available. Seeking financing is seen as a male responsibility tied to the role of household head.

5. Women's work across the value chain is, on the whole, recognized and seen by men. **Where men may be unaware or under-aware of women's value addition, it includes activities performed when men are outside the house, such as sorting and grading of cash and staple crops; and cutting, drying, and packaging of staple crops. 'Invisible work' may be an indication of the devaluing of particular feminized value chain activities.**



#### Access To and Control Over Key Assets

6. Women generally have more access to key resources than they have control over them. **In some cases, women have more access and control over particular assets, such as seeds, labor, and market information.** Women have particular control over vegetable seeds, or seeds for home gardens. They are also primarily responsible for hiring additional labor when needed during planting and harvesting periods, and are seen as having greater access to market information because they are home when vendors travel through the village.

7. **Women have more limited access to and control over three assets necessary for their participation in key value chain activities: land, transportation, and**

**large equipment.** Land ownership in particular is seen as an intractable barrier. Customary inheritance laws makes it difficult for any woman to own and control land, and land ownership is considered an uncontroversially male domain and right.

8. Men and women feel they have relatively equal access to and control over many resources, including cell phones, income, small equipment, remittances, and livestock. **While livestock management is slightly dominated by men, especially for larger animals such as buffaloes, cows, pigs, and goats; women are said to have sole control over chickens and ducks and the income derived from them.**

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### Daily Time Use

9. During harvesting periods, **women** work in the fields with their male partners in addition to carrying out a **“second shift” at home, performing up to two more hours of unpaid domestic labor than men each day, for a total of 10-14 additional hours of unpaid labor per week.** Women also multitask, so even periods of rest become opportunities to carry out less strenuous labor such as shucking corn and sewing. Imbalances in division of labor and time use can hinder women’s ability to take advantage of opportunities for leadership, decision- making, entrepreneurship, program activities, rest, and leisure.

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### Household Decision-Making

10. **Decisions on what to plant year to year are made jointly by women and men,** although an understanding exists that as household head, men ultimately have the final say in all matters. **As money managers for their households, most women feel that they primarily decide how to use the money earned from selling crops, although most men would say it’s a joint decision.** A solid foundation for dialogue and negotiation seems to exist for many couples.

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### Women’s Advancement

11. **Women’s practical needs and burdens, those felt most keenly and which, if addressed, could substantially improve quality of life, included weeding, the lack of roads and transportation to carry crops from the fields, not having enough land for permanent crops, climate fluctuations, and lack of fencing.** Both women and men feel that they could address these burdens through agricultural tools and products, with road construction, and through increased earnings to purchase motorcycles and trucks, irrigation systems, and iron fencing.

12. **Women’s strategic needs, which hold the possibility for longer-term improvements in gender equality, include female inheritance and land ownership; more egalitarian divisions of labor, especially for household chores and child care; equal pay; and the ownership and sale of small animals.** Addressing land ownership rights will require the most caution, additional

advocacy, and male engagement work, given how closely the privilege is tied to male identity. Work on egalitarian divisions of unpaid labor can build on existing male engagement in household activities and child rearing. Women's responsibility for hiring labor creates an interesting opportunity for work on wage equality, but would need to engage men, who jointly make decisions on wage spending. Finally, women's unilateral control over chickens and ducks also provide an opportunity for investment in small livestock production and marketing, resulting in increased female asset control and income.



## Gender Equitable Beliefs and Attitudes

**13. Although men hold strong beliefs about their final decision-making power in the household, their beliefs about primary responsibility for childcare, household care, and decision-making on major purchases are more egalitarian.** Many men feel responsibility for home and child care is jointly held by women and men. However, the finding that 60% of men agreed or partially agreed that women should obey their husbands in all things will need to be addressed in trainings and sensitizations to increase women's decision-making power and promote an understanding of individual human rights, value, and dignity.

**14. A clear “protector” identity can be seen in the 79% of men who agree that women need to be protected by male kinsmen.** This belief impedes work to increase women's mobility, decision-making power, and control over assets as it reinforces male headship and the infantilization of women. **However, a surprising 79% of men also believe that politics should not be left to men.** This does not reflect the reality that only 5% of ministers nationally and only 0.25% of village and ward administrators locally are women, but it points to an opening for actions to engage men in efforts to increase women's leadership in the community.

**15. While a majority of men disagree that women deserved to be beaten at any time,** and do not think women should tolerate violence to maintain family unity, or that they have the right to hit their wives if they don't have sex with

them, **a majority of men do think it justified to beat women who are unfaithful to them.** The topic of domestic violence is taboo and seen as a private matter not to be discussed externally.

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### Positive Masculinities

16. **Opportunities exist to build on local definitions of masculinity that promote health, wellbeing, engaged fatherhood and partnership, and forms of caring and intimacy.** For example, strong social approval exists for men who are caring, gentle, kind, and loving with their families; for men who are educated and wise, accountable and dependable, brave and courageous, patient and perseverant. 'Real' men are also seen as respectful and righteous, or fair. And according to women in several focus groups, 'real' men are those who share in housework and give their wages to their wife to manage. Any of these values can be used in messaging to encourage male engagement in family nutrition and health, and values of righteousness and fairness can be appealed to in efforts to increase gender equality in households and at the community level.

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### Adaptations for Equitable Participation

17. **Several staff noted that women are often excluded from community meetings. Gendered norms such as the expectation that women not talk too much, and the elevation of men above women as primary decision-makers and leaders in the community, may create normative barriers** for women to begin attending, speaking, and ultimately taking decision-making and leadership roles in community meetings. To encourage equitable participation in program activities and decision-making, it will be important for program staff to engage community and religious leaders, as well as men in general, in dialogue to first identify the need for female engagement and leadership, and then secure their commitment to supporting women in community meetings.

18. **Gender equality in field offices** was also a topic of discussion with staff. In one office, although men and **women are meant to take turns cleaning the office and restroom spaces, women often end up carrying out these domestic tasks by default.** This dynamic, which reinforces women's domestic role and perpetuates sexist divisions of labor, creates an unprofessional and unequal environment for women. Hiring a janitor to clean the office daily would address this issue.

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### Protection Risks

19. In formal and informal conversations, staff mentioned **situations in which female staff had been harassed by male staff, or male staff were entering into sexual relationships with subordinate female staff** that ended in pregnancies, dismissals, or staff leaving their positions. Staff also described **informal policies mandating male staff to accompany female staff on field visits**, as many female staff do not know how to drive motorcycles. Without systems of accountability and third-party reporting, as well as clear and enforced policies



and consequences for sexual harassment and abuse of power, staff - and especially younger female staff - will continue to be placed at risk in program offices and in the field.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Opportunities exist to increase women's knowledge and skills at all levels of the value chain, and especially in post-harvest work, where they predominate. **Women are well-placed to take advantage of trainings on budgeting, marketing, and entrepreneurship, as well as investments to broaden and strengthen their trade networks and relationships.** However, any opportunities will need to target women in the context of their marital relationships, and ensure the support of husbands and community leaders to avoid any backlash against women.

2. Limited mobility in general tends to restrict women's opportunities, but in this case it has expanded women's access to market-based skills and assets. **Any economic empowerment or other activities resulting in women's decreased home-based presence during the day should consider and mitigate unintended consequences affecting their access to vendors and buyers, ability to find and hire labor, and availability for day-time trainings and workshops.**

3. **Explore opportunities to provide women with driving lessons or expanded access to public transportation services.** Having to rely on relatives or neighbors to transport them by motorcycle or truck limits opportunities for women to expand their market access and trade networks.

4. While informal financing may fall within the purview of men, women may have more access to financing through non-profit projects and group-based initiatives. **Women are well placed to save and invest funds given their role as household money managers.**

5. Post-harvest activities, which are broadly feminized for both cash and staple crops, may be devalued (because they are feminized) and thus de-emphasized, reducing opportunities for value addition in the marketing of agricultural products, particularly if women do not have access to larger markets where they might fetch higher prices with higher quality goods. Address this phenomenon in future market analyses, and **explore opportunities for post-harvest handling and marketing training for women as well as men, in tandem with efforts to increase women's access to transportation.**

6. **Women's land ownership can be a catalyst for increased household nutrition, health, and well-being; however, the topic should be approached cautiously and with an understanding of its deep linkage to male identity.** Explore this linkage in male engagement activities (men's discussion groups) and encourage critical thinking around the benefits and costs of masculine privileges such as land rights and inheritance. In community dialogues, seek local options for more equitable land ownership between women and men, including by providing equal inheritance for daughters and sons. **Consider working in partnership**

**with Landesa on efforts to promote joint titling** and training for communities on land law frameworks.

**7. Explore opportunities to invest in women’s production and marketing of small livestock, and notably chicken and ducks,** in parallel with the conduct of market studies to ensure viability and sustainability. Capitalize on women’s already acquired skills in budgeting, negotiating sales, hiring labor, and managing vendor and buyer relationships. Make sure to engage women’s male partners in planning and training activities, to avoid resentment, backlash, and appropriation of funds should women’s efforts prove successful.

8. Challenge gendered perceptions of certain tools and large equipment belonging solely to men by including **images of women using ‘masculine’ agricultural tools and equipment in all program materials, as well as on posters to stimulate group discussions. Visual materials and posters can also be used to promote healthy and egalitarian forms of masculinity** such as fathers caring for children, providing their daughters with land inheritance, or being engaged in family nutrition and health.

**9. Address issues of imbalanced household labor and child care responsibilities in couples’ dialogues and men’s groups.** Discuss with pastors for possible inclusion in sermons and bible study activities. If program activities are lacking female participants or leaders, time poverty may be a barrier that could be addressed by engaging men in solution finding. Solutions could include community or male childcare provision and meal provision, for example.

10. Consider working with women on solutions for their most burdensome tasks in addition to program priorities, which might be different. **Women’s priorities include solutions for weeding, access to transportation for carrying crops from the field, irrigation systems, and iron fencing<sup>1</sup> to keep animals from damaging their crops.**

11. To make progress on structural barriers to gender equality, address women’s strategic needs, which include equal pay, land rights, egalitarian division of unpaid labor, and female ownership and sale of small animals. In particular, **build on women’s desire for equal pay by advocating for and securing their commitment to paying female and male laborers equal wages, an action they have direct control over.** Accompany advocacy with male engagement in men’s groups, couples’ discussions, and community dialogues to ensure male and community support for equal pay.

**12. Challenge the male “breadwinner” and “protector” identities,** which directly impede efforts to increase gender equality through increased female decision-making, leadership, and control over assets. Promote, rather, an equal partnership approach to caring for and protecting each other and other family members as a mark of mature adulthood, whatever one’s gender might be.

**13. Plan to pair any women’s economic empowerment efforts with activities**

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*1. To note, iron fencing has been flagged by staff as an item typically provided by NGOs that might not be appropriate for program participants, many of whom already have fencing for their gardens. However, the request has come up repeatedly in focus groups, perhaps because of its visibility as a project benefit.*

**to prevent and respond to domestic violence**, which could be triggered by activities that directly challenge aspects of masculine identity tied to dominance, control, and decision-making power. Work with local women's rights organizations, which will have a better network of resources and services for referrals, and might be able to provide GBV training to staff members.

**14. Ensure that all gender sensitization trainings integrate a non-binary lens**, exposing participants to the wide diversity of human sexuality and gender identity, and encouraging respect and safety for all participants. This will lay the foundation for broader work on gender equality and help address issues of homophobia and transphobia. Make sure that facilitators receive sufficient training on how to manage difficult conversations and create safe spaces.

**15. Build on men's belief that politics should not solely be a male realm by engaging them, as well as village and religious leaders, in activities to support women's leadership and decision-making in the community.** This could take the form of community dialogues and male commitments to a series of "small doable actions": calling on women during meetings, not interrupting women when they speak, making sure women are not made to sit in the back of the room or on the floor, verbally encouraging women to put themselves forward for leadership positions, and providing political support for women seeking leadership positions.

**16. In all field offices, make sure janitors are hired to clean the office and restroom spaces, so that female staff don't end up doing the work.** This will help create a more professional and equal environment for female and male staff, and will ensure that sexist divisions of labor and women's domestic roles are not reinforced, which could otherwise act as an invisible deterrent to female professional advancement.

**17. Eliminate any formal or informal policies requiring female staff to travel to the field with a male companion.** Allow staff to travel in single-sex teams or in teams of three or four instead. **Mandate motorcycle riding, safety, and maintenance training for all current and incoming field staff**, and especially women to increase their mobility, decrease their reliance on male staff, and ensure their safety on the road. **Appoint or hire a third-party individual or firm to receive complaints of sexual harassment and abuse of power by staff**, and regularly report to leadership.

## 3. Background

CRS has supported programming in Myanmar for several decades, working in close collaboration with local partner and fellow Caritas Internationalis member, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS). Current CRS programs are in agricultural livelihoods, health and nutrition, and emergency response. In Chin State, CRS and its partner KMSS Hakha receive support from the Livelihoods Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT), a multi-donor consortium, to implement the 3-year Productive Agriculture through Community Engagement (PACE) project. The PACE project

has been ongoing since June 2016 and will be completed in Oct-Dec 2019. The project works with 60 villages supporting over 2,750 farmers and their communities, to increase agricultural production (maize, pulses and vegetables) and improve nutrition behaviors and practices around diet, consumption, sanitation and hygiene. The project does this through local trainings on cultivation practices, seed multiplication, seed and grain storage and adapted care groups focusing on mothers and the first 1000 days.

The current project focuses on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and has also investigated emerging value chains through a scoping mission (See Annex 1). As a result of program learning around Chin gender norms, together with a growing body of formative research in Chin, CRS has identified that there is little understanding of women's role in the production food chain and how this can be bolstered through CRS activities that ultimately result in increased production and overall value of women's roles. The intent of this analysis is to inform remaining project efforts, and to support future food security, poverty alleviation, and nutrition efforts in Chin State.

CRS Myanmar is committed to working with local partners including KMSS and national Government and Department of Social Welfare to address the underlying causes of food insecurity, poverty and undernutrition. CRS has a strategic focus on Chin State.

The PACE project is implemented in Falam, Thantlang, and Matupi Townships, which are located in central Chin State in Myanmar's northwest agro-ecological subzone. The townships cover mountainous terrain with most communities primarily depending on rain-fed subsistence shifting agriculture and forest resources. Poor roads limit access to markets and services. The core hunger period ranges from April through August, with over 40% of families in a 2014 study by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Karuna Mission for Social Solidarity (KMSS) reporting 83% of HHs experiencing at least some months without sufficient food over the past year. Chin State also has the highest rate of stunting in Myanmar, with 41% of children under the age of five estimated to be stunted (MoHS 2015).

## 4. Introduction

The Myanmar government is aware of the need to promote women's roles and rights. The National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013-2022 sets out to empower women through promoting women's rights, as well as to establish systems, structures and practices for the advancement of women, gender equality, and the realization of women's rights (JICA 2013). Yet, despite several national policies to promote equality between men and women, inequalities persist particularly in some ethnic groups.

In Chin State, where CRS is currently operational, significant gender imbalances remain particularly around women's voice and economic empowerment. A number of formative studies on gender have been conducted on beliefs and practices



around culture, health, nutrition and these highlight gender barriers connected to women's equity in the household (Save the Children 2016, MIID 2017, Faxon 2015, JICA 2013). Inequity is reflected in decision making, access to resources, land ownership, and general awareness of gender equity and its advantages to a woman, a family, community and ultimately society.

Within Chin State, conditions vary widely between and within townships. Over 50 different languages are spoken within Chin State and reflect the cultural diversity of the region. While road conditions are improving, the mountainous terrain makes communities isolated and highly heterogeneous. While certain townships have higher access to major markets in the lowlands by virtue of their proximity to main roads (e.g. Falam township), others cannot rely on lowland markets. Many villages lack access to inputs (seeds, consistent water supply) and extension support. These conditions make income generating potential very different between villages, even within PACE project. Women's empowerment opportunities in these locations differ as a result of these environmental, cultural, and geographic factors, but these differences have not yet been well explored.

Based on formative studies and CRS Myanmar programming, there has been a concerted effort of GoM, donors and NGOs to address Chin's underdevelopment through agriculture, maternal and child health, nutrition and gender awareness. Attention to women's roles have been chiefly addressed in the health and nutrition sectors. One of the gaps in the formative literature, emphasized in communities of practice, is women's empowerment through agricultural livelihoods. While women participate actively in agricultural production and sales, their work is often hidden, unpaid, and unrecognized. Making women's work valuable and visible at key points along agricultural production chain is crucial for sustainable agricultural development.

While a number of research efforts in Chin have focused on agricultural production and livelihoods, it has not all been done with a specific gender focus. Additionally, projects aimed at increasing agricultural production can inadvertently add significantly to women's workload and time burden. With the rapid ongoing changes in Chin State, targeted interventions that better understand and respond to gender considerations can help prevent both current and future agricultural livelihoods from exacerbating gender inequality and may even be able to reduce these inequalities while also achieving increased impact.

CRS Myanmar recognizes that greater access to and control of resources and income, participation and empowerment of women in the development process is essential, not only to improve the situation of women, families and other vulnerable groups, but also to benefit society as a whole. CRS understands that a complicated set of social and gender dynamics affect agricultural livelihood outcomes and this requires a focused investigation to first identify gender barriers and then to recommend strategies for how best to address barriers.

## 5. Objectives of the gender analysis

**The objective of the gender analysis is to increase CRS' understanding of women's roles in the food production and value chain, and how CRS activities can both create value as well as contribute to women's advancement at all levels. This analysis aims to:**

1. Identify gendered barriers and opportunities related to decision-making, access, and control at all levels of the value chains for staple crops and cash crops;
2. Better understand gender roles and responsibilities in agricultural production of crops grown for income generation and home consumption;
3. Identify opportunities to engage men in women's economic empowerment efforts, including identifying local egalitarian forms of masculinity as well as attitudes related to violence against women, women's leadership, and women's political and economic power; and
4. Identify barriers to men's and women's participation in project activities to guide the development of culturally appropriate recommendations for promoting equitable participation.
5. Identify appropriate recommendations that aid CRS Myanmar in a) making the PACE project more gender-responsive, and b) designing gender-transformative programming for future projects in Chin.

**The gender analysis seeks to answer four key research questions, and related sub-topics:**

1. What are the roles and responsibilities traditionally taken on by women and men at all levels of the value chains for staple crops, cash crops, and garden crops?
  1. *What gendered differences exist in access and control over key assets, resources, and income?*
  2. *What gendered differences exist in daily time use?*
  3. *What gendered differences exist in decision-making practices and power?*
2. What barriers and opportunities exist for women's advancement across value chains targeted by CRS programming?
3. What opportunities exist for male engagement in women's economic empowerment efforts?
  1. *To what extent do men and boys hold gender equitable beliefs and attitudes?*
  2. *What local forms of positive masculinity exist?*
4. How might future CRS programming in the region be adapted to promote more equitable participation in targeted communities?
  1. *What protection risks exist, to be addressed in the program's 'Do No Harm' approach?*

The analysis used in this process will include the identification of gender gaps and differences in the division of labor; time spent on paid and unpaid labor; women's access to and control over food production assets and resources, including income from livelihoods activities as well as remittances; decision-making in the food production chain; and regional cultural differences within target areas of Chin State related to gender norms. The gender analysis will allow for a deeper understanding of the gender dimensions of poverty and community development that often hinder

the achievement of project outcomes. The gender analysis will recommend key actions to help address imbalances in men and women's agricultural workloads; break down barriers to gender equality; increase the value of women's role in agriculture, food security, and livelihoods; and address root causes of existing gender inequities in agriculture and livelihoods. The recommendations will consider protection risks and inform a 'do no harm' approach.

## 6. Methodology

The gender analysis was based on a mixed-method approach, grounded in three data collection methods: document review, focus groups, and key informant interviews. A desk review was conducted by an external consultant and complemented with a review of program documentation and literature informing gender-related theory of change linkages. The desk review informed the design of questions for focus groups with adult male and female small-holder farmers participating in the CRS PACE project, as well as questions for key informant interviews conducted with program staff.

### DATA COLLECTOR TRAINING AND TOOL TESTING

PACE project staff was included on the gender analysis data collection team and trained in qualitative research methods as well as basic gender concepts. Internal participation was prioritized to build internal capacity in gender-and research-related skills and methodologies, and also due to the necessity for data collectors to be able to communicate in English, Burmese, and languages spoken in targeted project sites, which include Falam, Hakha, and Lautu. Project staff participated in the testing and contextualization of research protocols and tools to ensure the relevance of language and questions used. Data collection tools remained in English, but key words were agreed upon and translated into Falam, Hakha, and Lautu. Research tools and protocol were tested in Hakha and revised. All final tools were printed with space for data collectors to record observations and notes.

### DESK REVIEW

A desk review was completed by an external consultant and organized based on ADS205 domains (Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices; Cultural Norms and Beliefs; Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use; Access and Control; and Patterns of Power and Decision Making), noting where information contributed to knowledge on practical and strategic needs, emerging or established good practices, lessons learned, descriptive sex-disaggregated statistics, donor priorities, Government of Myanmar priorities, and data gaps to explore. Desk review notes were used by the Gender Analysis Consultant to guide the design of research questions and tools. The following documents were reviewed:

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16. Save the Children International (2016) Situation Analysis of Nutrition, Food Security and Hygiene, Chin State, Myanmar.
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19. Tin Maung Shwe and Thida Chaw Hlaing (2011) Scoping Study on Food Security and Nutrition Information in Myanmar.
20. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) (2013) DFID Burma.
21. World Food Programme (2018) Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security in Myanmar: In Support of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 - Roadmap to 2030.

## FOCUS GROUPS

Single-sex focus groups were held separately with adult male and female small-holder farmers, chosen based on their participation in relevant PACE program



activities such as Producer Demonstration Groups and Mothers' Groups. Focus groups were separated by sex in an attempt to create safe spaces in which gender-related power differentials would be less present and less likely to silence women as they might in mixed-sex groups. Focus groups used a blend of discussion and participatory activities, and included the use of the following tools:

1. Value Chain Roles and Responsibilities Mapping

*Identify women and men's roles along the value chain, and places in which women continue to face difficulties and program assistance may be helpful.*

2. 24-Hour Calendar

*Hour-by-hour matrix to determine how women and men spend their time during the day, and what roles and responsibilities are divided between them.*

3. Access and Control Matrix

*Matrix comparing male and female understandings of what resources women and men have relative access to and control over.*

4. Man/Woman Box

*Exercise to identify the roles, responsibilities, and behaviors linked to masculinity and femininity in the broader culture and types of sanctions used to police non-normative gender behaviors and expressions.*

5. Gender Norms Attitudes Scale

*Contextualized measure of egalitarian beliefs about men and women in society, covering attitudes related to violence against women, women's leadership, and women's political and economic power.*

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Key informant interviews were conducted with program staff to triangulate information from the desk review and focus group participants on gendered barriers, opportunities, and experiences; and to provide insights on implementation challenges and good practices to inform inclusive design recommendations for future programming. Interviews consisted of semi-structured questions, and were conducted in-person by the international gender consultant.

## SAMPLING PLAN

Recent studies have shown that as few as 3-6 focus groups and 6-12 interviews, depending on the research and context, are enough to reach saturation, at which point little new information is added by additional interviews and focus groups<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, the data collection team conducted three single-sex focus groups in each of three targeted townships in central Chin State targeted by the PACE project, for a total of 18 focus groups (9 female-only groups; 9 male-only groups):

- Male and female smallholder farmers in C Zamual (2)
- Male and female smallholder farmers in Taisum(2)

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2. Greg Guest, Emily Namey, and Kevin McKenna. 2016. "How Many Focus Groups Are Enough? Building an Evidence Base for Nonprobability Sample Sizes," *Field Methods* 29, no. 1: 3-22; Emily Namey, Greg Guest, Kevin McKenna, and M. Chen. 2016. "Evaluating Bang for the Buck: A Cost-effectiveness Comparison between Individual Interviews and Focus Groups Based on Thematic Saturation Levels," *American Journal of Evaluation* 37, no. 3: 425-440.

- Male and female smallholder farmers in Laizo (2)
- Male and female small holder farmers in TlangruaAorB(2)
- Male and female smallholder farmers in Kuhchah (2)
- Male and female smallholder farmers in Phaikhua, or Zipi (2)
- Male and female smallholder farmers in Hnaring A or B (2)
- Male and female smallholder farmers in Khuahrang (2)
- Male and female smallholder farmers in Sate (2)

**TOTAL: 18 focus groups**

Key informant interviews were conducted in English with PACE project staff at the CRS office in Hakha, as well as project staff working in the villages targeted by the gender analysis.

Purposive sampling was used to identify participants for focus groups; in-depth interviewees were identified by the PACE program coordinator, based on their experience implementing the PACE project and their ability to speak in English. Communities were targeted to ensure regional and language representation.

## 7. Key findings and implications

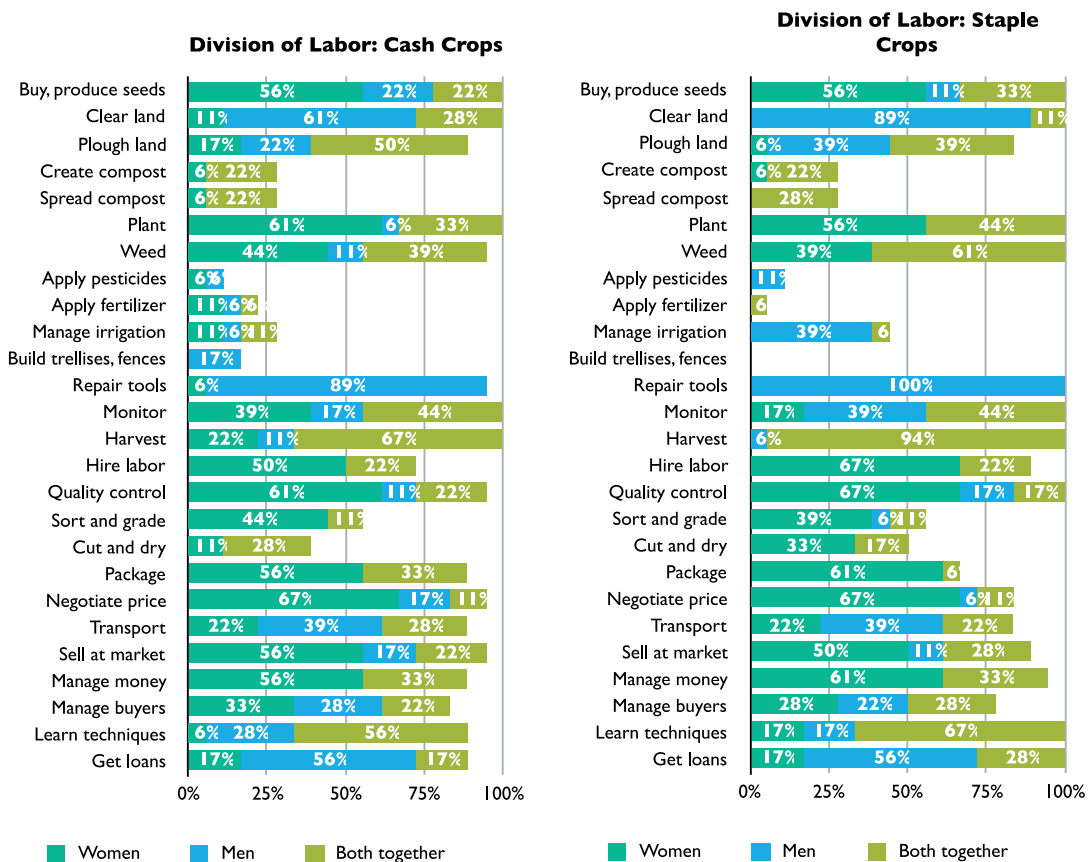
### VALUE CHAIN ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A Value Chain Analysis<sup>3</sup> conducted in May 2018 for the PACE project found that women hold primary responsibility for both household labor as well as agricultural labor, including land preparation, planting, weeding, and harvesting. Men were said to primarily be involved in the application of fertilizer and pesticides. However, in villages targeted by the gender analysis, a more partnership-like image emerged, with women and men working side by side during labor-intensive activities such as ploughing, planting, creating and spreading compost, weeding, and harvesting of both staple and cash crops<sup>4</sup>. Men noted that when they plough together, men dig the soil and women collect stones. Some are able to use buffaloes for ploughing. They both collect ash from home fires to apply as compost for maize, or use organic matter such as cow dung or dried leaves. During planting, a small hoe is used - the tool is gender-neutral and used by both women and men, unlike the larger knives seen as 'men's tools'. Men might carry the seedlings in baskets, and hand them to women, who plant them in the ground. The small hoe is also used by both women and men for weeding, to lift up the soil. During the harvest, women and men are both in the fields from dawn to dusk, with children often taking up cooking, cleaning, and washing responsibilities at home, in addition to helping their parents in the fields during summer holidays. Children's tasks during harvesting

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3. Krishna Mohan and Sarah Page. (2018) *Promising Value Chains in Three Townships of Chin State, Myanmar: Value Chain Analysis Report*. Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund.

4. Focus group participants examined the value chains for maize and rice (staple crops) as well as for onions, grapes, peas, bananas, garlic, mustard greens, elephant foot yam, potatoes, and chili (cash crops).



periods were said to be sex-specific. Girls primarily took over the cooking and cleaning responsibilities, and boys were said to fetch wood and water. Both girls and boys watered home gardens.

A closer look found women to be involved in a broader range of activities for cash crops and to predominate in post-harvest work for both staple and cash crops. In addition to being primarily responsible for buying or producing seeds for cash crops, women were principally the ones to plant, apply fertilizer, hire additional labor, perform quality control, sort and grade, package, negotiate pricing, sell at the market, and manage money made from selling the crop. For cash crops, men were primarily responsible for activities requiring assets women do not have easy access to compared to men, such as clearing the land, repairing agricultural tools, transporting crops to the market, and acquiring loans. They also built trellises for grapes and fencing for garlic and mustard leaves. Men tend to be more involved in the production of grapes and bananas; they graft grape vines and use large knives to cut branches and banana leaves, leaving them on the ground to enrich the soil. For staple crops, a similar pattern emerged with women taking on primary responsibility for the purchase or production of seeds, planting, hiring labor, and much of the post-harvest work such as maintaining quality control, sorting and grading, cutting and drying, packaging, negotiating prices, selling at the market, and managing money. For staple crops, men predominated in similar activities to cash crops, with the addition of managing irrigation.

### **Women's value chain roles linked to household labor and reduced mobility**

Women's household responsibilities and limited access to transportation - either from a lack of driving skills or limited access to motorcycles, cars, trucks, or public transportation - play a large role in the responsibilities they take on in value chains for both staple and cash crops. Outside of harvesting periods, women are at home for much of the day and have greater access to cash crops, which are often located closer to their home than maize and rice fields. Being home-based makes it easier for women to find and hire additional labor when needed for work in the fields - they hire both men and women for agricultural work, depending on the activity and who is available at that time of the day. Men might be hired to cut down trees for clearing land, and women for weeding. Hiring decisions are often made based on discussions with their husbands. Women can also do post-harvest activities from their homes, such as sorting, grading, cutting and drying, and packaging products for the market. Many homes are built on the side of the road, where traveling vendors and brokers can easily find them, which makes it easier for women to keep track of market prices, something they may also do through conversations with neighbors. It also makes it easier for women to sell their produce. Some men felt that women were naturally better at negotiating and getting discounts; others said their wives needed to discuss pricing with them before selling. Some crops were easier to sell in the village than others. For example, in Phaikhua, rice was sold in the village while mustard greens were sent to a high school in Thantlang; smaller quantities might be sold locally while larger amounts would be brought to larger and more distant markets. Women are given responsibility for managing money from the sale of crops as well as any money men made through casual labor. Men are expected to hand over any earnings to their wives at the end of the day, and women are expected to manage the funds to cover household expenses. Both women and men felt they were able to learn new agricultural techniques when trainings were held nearby. If trainings took place during the day when women were at home, they would attend. But several men described experiences with programs that invited men only to trainings; they were then expected to pass on the learnings to their wives. Limited mobility, in this situation, seems to have provided women with human capital opportunities to build market-based networks; practice negotiation, budgeting, and people management skills; and participate in trainings<sup>5</sup>.

### **Gendered restrictions to tools, transport, and financing**

Where women are not engaged in the value chain, it is primarily because of barriers to access to particular tools and assets, such as farming equipment, certain farming tools, transportation, and financing. Certain tools, such as larger knives and axes were said to be "men's tools," made by men and not to be used by women. With regard to transportation, many older women declared not wanting to learn to drive, and relying on younger or male family members to drive them. When women had access to transportation, outside of relying on family members, they tended to use public transport to bring goods to and from the market. Outside of this, walking

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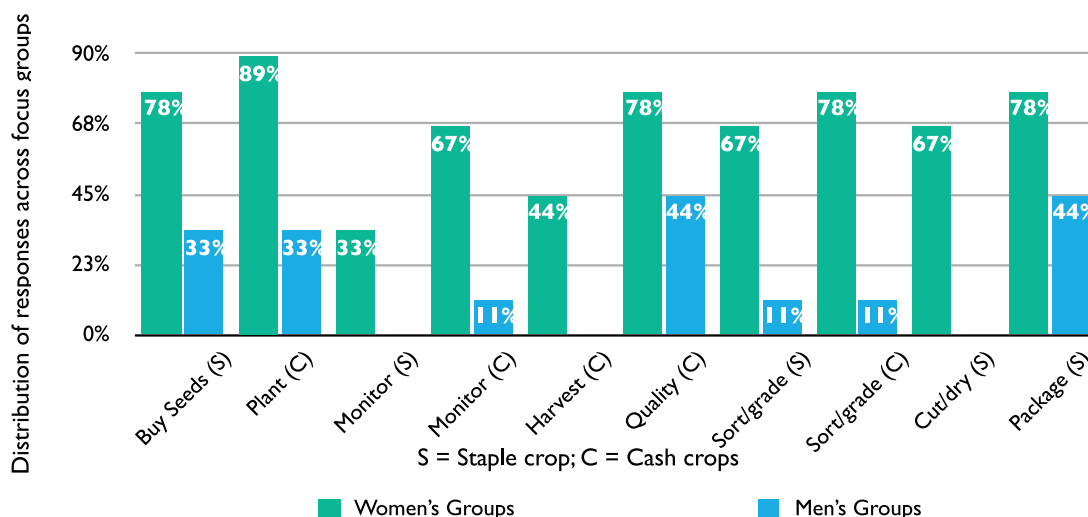
5. A similar phenomenon was described in Heba Gowayed's "Diverging By Gender: Syrian Refugees' Divisions of Labor and Formation of Human Capital in the United States" in *Gender & Society* (2019), which found that gendered expectations of women's part-time paid labor allowed them to gain human capital by attending English classes while their male partners, who were expected to take on the masculine "breadwinner" role, did not have the time for them.



was seen as women’s primary means of mobility. And for access to finance, men in several groups declared that it would only be proper for men to seek out and request loans, because they were the heads of households. Neighbors and family, from whom they would primarily seek financing, would not trust a woman to be accountable for paying back money, since she was not the household head, they said. Between men they have trust and respect, something that would not exist with a woman. Women agreed that seeking financing was a mostly male role, however several groups seemed unaware of these gendered restrictions, and indicated that they were more than willing to seek out financing, either from family, from financial institutions, or from NGOs.

### Women’s Invisible Work

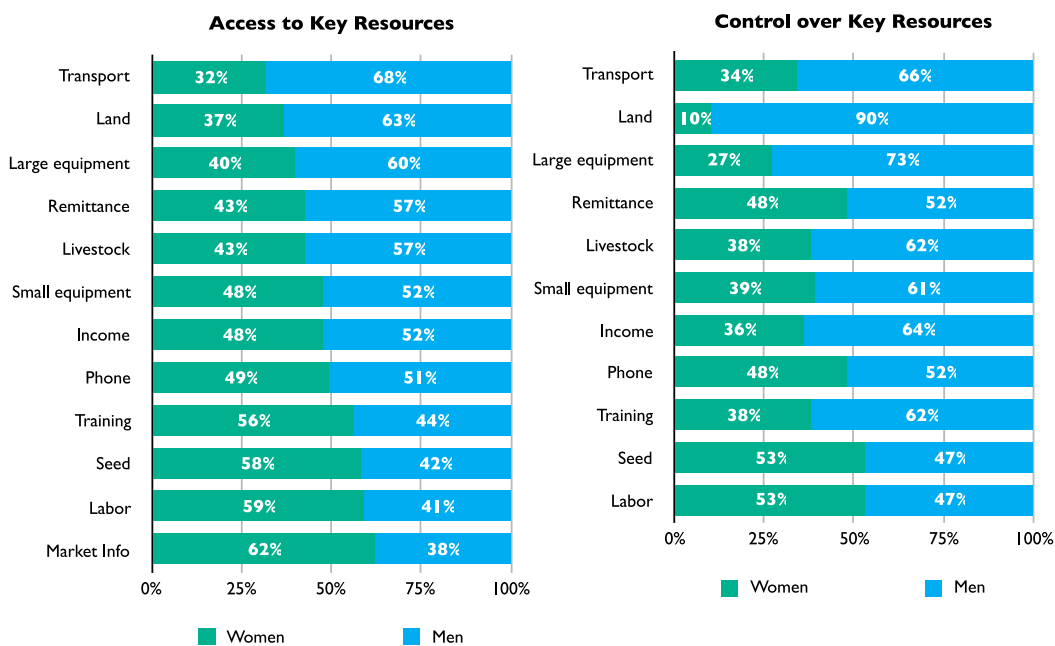
The work of women throughout the value chain is, on the whole, recognized and seen by men. However, there were activities for which men either were not aware of women’s role or were under-aware of the responsibilities women took on, and thus the amount of time they might be spending on it. These are activities that women noted as their sole responsibility, and which men noted as either their responsibility or a joint responsibility, or something that might not be done at all. Unseen or under-seen activities included buying seeds for staple crops, planting cash crops, monitoring staple crops, monitoring, harvesting, and controlling the quality of cash crops, sorting and grading staple and cash crops, and cutting, drying, and packaging staple crops.



## ➔ ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER KEY ASSETS

Women and men were asked about the relative access to and control over key assets, such as land, seeds, small and large equipment, income, remittances, labor, livestock, transportation, cell phones, training, and market information. Access was defined as the ability to use a resource but not unilaterally make decisions about it. Control was defined as the ability to use a resource and make the decision to sell it if they want to. Having control over a resource increases the likelihood that women

will benefit from the resource and activities that depend on the resource. For example, having access to land does not guarantee that women will benefit from the crops the land produces or the money from their sale, and means they cannot use the land as collateral for loans. Having control or ownership over land increases women’s control over crops and the proceeds of their sale. Control over land also increases women’s incentives to invest in agricultural inputs and technology to improve yields and has been tied to improvements in children’s nutrition<sup>6</sup>.



Women generally had more access to key resources than they had control over them. In some cases, women had more access and control over particular assets, such as seeds, labor, and market information. Women in Sate felt that men depend on women to take care of seeds, and in Tlangrua A, men noted that women have more control over vegetable seeds, or seeds for home gardens. As noted in the previous section, women are primarily responsible for hiring additional labor when needed during planting or harvesting periods, and so were seen as having both greater access to labor and greater control over labor than men. Women were also seen as having greater access to market information because of their home-based activities during the day, when brokers and vendors travel through the village. Men were in the fields or doing day labor, and did not have as much contact with buyers or sellers. Women were also seen as having relatively greater access to training because of their presence at home during training hours; after discussion with their husbands, they were sent to trainings during the day when men were usually outside the village in the fields or doing casual labor. But women noted that they were not usually the ones with control over decision-making as to who would attend trainings; the decision would be made by their male spouse.

6. Countries in which women lacked land ownership rights were found to have on average 60% more malnourished children than countries in which women had equal or some access to credit and land. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2010. *World Overview. In Atlas of Gender and Development: How Social Norms Affect Gender Equality in non-OECD Countries.*

Women had more limited access to and control over three assets necessary for their participation in key value chain activities: land, transportation, and large equipment. Although women work along-side men during land preparation, planting, and harvesting, they were seen as having less access to land during the off-season, when they might be more home-based. And customary inheritance law made it very difficult for any woman to own and control land. Women are limited to influencing their husbands and fathers to give land to their sons. Land ownership was seen as an uncontroversially male domain and right. Transportation also emerged as an asset to which women had little access to and control over. Women noted that they do not own motorcycles, cars, or trucks, and most did not know how to drive. In Phaikhua, women said that each family had a motorbike, but men were the ones who knew how to use it. When women had access to transport, it was through family or friends, or because a public bus came through their village regularly.

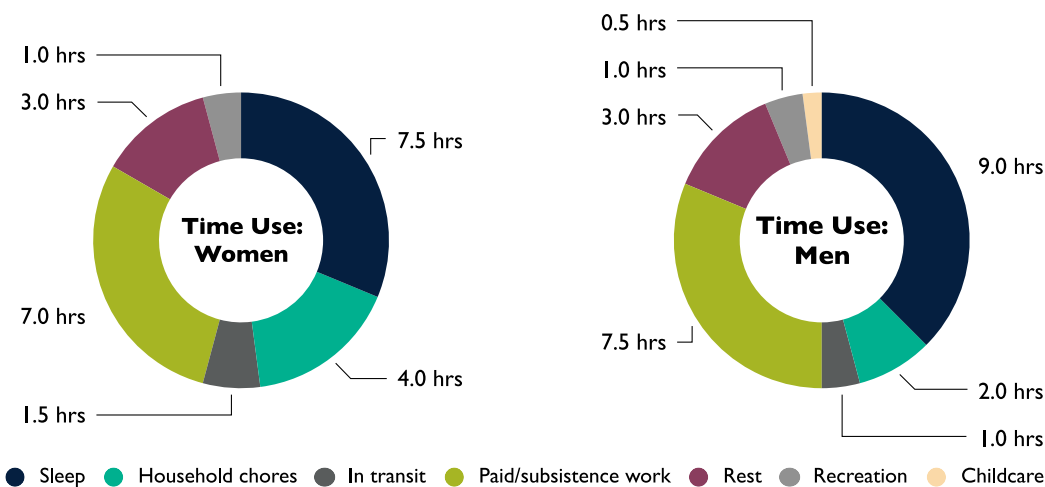
Men and women felt they had relatively equal access to and control over many resources, including cell phones, income, small equipment, remittances, and livestock. Most household indicated having multiple phones, so women could access and control their phones, as could men. Women might have less access in situations where the household only owned only one phone; in these cases, men would be primary owners. In other cases, however, women noted that men were in the field all day and had no need for phones; they relied on their wives to use them. Income could be earned by either women or men by selling agricultural produce or conducting casual labor. Women, as men, worked in road construction and stone cutting. The money would be given to the woman to manage, and both would decide on its use. Women and men also both received remittances from their children, and both were equally able to withdraw funds from the bank using their national identification card (NIC) number. However, remittances might be sent slightly more often to men, who could drive to the bank in larger, distant towns to retrieve the funds. Women would need to hire a driver. Small equipment was also equally used by women and men during labor-intensive agricultural periods and for cash crop production. Livestock was seen as dominated slightly by men, and especially larger animals such as buffaloes, cows, mithun, pigs, and goats. However, when it came to small livestock such as chickens or ducks, many women said they had sole control over the animals and the income derived from them.

## DAILY TIME USE

### **A Typical Day During Harvesting Season**

Women and men were asked to describe a typical day during harvesting seasons, hour by hour from the moment they wake up to the time they go to bed. During the harvest, both women and men spend most of their days in the field together, however women often carry out a “second shift” to ensure that household chores are done and that the family is fed and clean, tasks that are feminized and culturally assigned to women. Women typically wake up at 4:00am or 5:00am, one to two hours before the rest of the household to prepare food for the day, clean the house, wash clothing, feed livestock, and get the children ready for school; some leave the house to attend church. Men will typically wake up at 5:00am or 6:00am, bathe,

and make a fire and boil water to help their wives prepare food. They will also feed and take care of livestock, and take care of the children while their wives are cooking. Some also attend church in the early morning. The family eats at 7:00am or 8:00am. After breakfast, men prepare their tools and equipment and leave for the fields with their wives. By 8:00am or 9:00am women and men are on the road or working in the fields, which may take up to an hour to reach by foot. A typical working day ends between 5:00pm and 6:00pm, with an hour break for lunch at 12:00pm or 1:00pm. In some cases, women leave early at 4:00pm to start preparing dinner at home; but many work alongside men until the end of the day. Once at home in the evening, women bathe, prepare food for the family, feed and care for the livestock, clean the house, and wash clothes. Men return, bathe, and some will feed the livestock, take care of children and help their wives cook dinner by making the fire and boiling water. Others will watch TV, rest, and visit with friends and neighbors. The household typically eats at 7:00pm, after which men will watch TV, rest, visit with friends and neighbors, and help children with their studies. Women will also watch TV and rest, but will often conduct other chores simultaneously that can be done while sitting: shucking maize, folding and ironing clothes, or working on sewing projects - knitting, stitching, weaving, and designing pillow cases. Many will attend a church service in the evening. Most men are in bed by 9:00pm and women by 9:00pm or 10:00pm.



### Women’s “Second Shift” and Time Poverty

Women’s “Second Shift,” or the amount of unpaid domestic labor they take on after they finish working to earn money, can significantly hinder their ability to take advantage of opportunities for leadership, decision-making and community building activities, entrepreneurship, rest, and leisure. In the Chin communities examined, women perform 2 more hours of unpaid domestic labor than men each day, and have 1.5 less hours of rest and sleep per day compared to men. Women tend to multi-task, so the hours of rest and recreation they do have are often also used to conduct less strenuous forms of household and subsistence labor, such as shucking corn and sewing. The graphic below shows men devoting half an hour a

day to child care, primarily while women are cooking and in the evening helping children with school work. Child care doesn't show up in women's daily clock, most likely because women may take care of children while conducting other primary activities. The following daily time use clocks, however, are likely to be starkly different during non-harvesting periods, when women are primarily home-based and have more opportunities to build their social and commercial networks as well as take part in community and learning activities,<sup>7</sup> per statements made during the Value Chain Mapping and Access and Control exercises.

## HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING

In patriarchal societies where men are expected to fulfill a “breadwinner” and “head of household” role, as is the case generally in Myanmar<sup>8</sup>, men often hold primary decision-making power, with women resorting to persuasion and negotiation tactics to ensure their voices are heard and needs are met. However in the Chin communities studied, just as much of the labor-intensive agricultural work is performed jointly by women and men, much of the decision-making around what to plant each year and how to use the money earned from selling crops is also done jointly. A majority women and men in focus groups declared that they decided together what to plant from year to year (although almost a quarter of women felt men were the ones primarily deciding, an indication of privilege given to male household heads). However, while 83% of men felt decisions on how to spend harvest income were made jointly, a majority of women (62%) felt they were the primary decision-makers. They claimed that they were the ones to manage money and make decisions on household purchases, although they would confer with their male partners for larger purchases. Men felt that although women managed the household budget, all monetary decisions were discussed and made together. Several men also felt that in the end, men were the ones to make final decisions. When asked what happens when women and men disagree on a decision, 44% of women's groups and 11% of men's groups indicated that men have the final say. Women also indicated that men only have the final say on big matters, and that they often end up jointly agreeing in the end. When men decide unilaterally, as women in Zathlir explained with laughter, they “eventually regret their ego.”

What to plant each year	WOMEN	MEN
Women primarily	13%	1%
Women primarily for certain crops	2%	5%
Man primarily	23%	13%
Jointly	62%	81%

7. Due to time constraints, the gender analysis did not ask participants to complete the 24-Hour Day exercise for non-harvesting periods, but it would be interesting for future gender studies to examine whether fewer barriers might exist to women's participation in program activities during these periods.

8. Ninu (2018). “Women as the Others: Chin Customary Laws & Practices from a Feminist Perspective.”



How to spend money from selling crops	WOMEN	MEN
Women primarily	62%	0%
Women primarily for certain crops	10%	2%
Man primarily	0%	14%
Jointly	29%	83%

## WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT: BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### PRACTICAL NEEDS

Women's practical needs are those they feel most keenly in their daily lives and which, if addressed, may not challenge unequal balances of power or improve gender equality but could drastically improve women's quality of life.

#### Across the Value Chain

During the Value Chain Mapping exercise, women and men were asked to identify activities that were particularly onerous, burdensome, or time-consuming for women, and think of what they might change to alleviate women's labor burden. The list of drudgeries included, ordered by the frequency with which the activity or issue was brought up by women's groups:

##### 1. Weeding

*Women were often weeding in standing water (for paddies), bitten by leeches and mosquitoes all day, and burnt by the sun.*

##### 2. Lack of land for permanent crops

Women felt burdened when they had to shift to fields located further away, and because there were no permanent structures to sleep in overnight when needed during the harvest.

##### 3. Climate fluctuations: droughts, rains

Difficulties were associated with mosquitoes and low harvests; some women noted that peas would spoil if rain came during the harvest, and that sometimes the river would overflow and keep them from being able to return home at night.

##### 4. Lack of fencing

When crops were not properly fenced in, women noted that animals could enter and eat or damage the crops as well as attack them during their work.

##### 5. Carrying crops long distances on their heads

Without access to transportation, women indicated that they carried crops on their heads, by foot from the fields to their homes, which caused fatigue and pain.

## 6. Lack of roads and transportation

When fields were located in remote areas only accessible by footpaths, women and men noted that they could not use transportation to reach them and had to walk there by foot.

Men's list of women's burdensome activities included transporting crops from the field, fetching water, harvesting, planting paddies, and pounding maize. Several men's groups noted that women had particular difficulties when they were pregnant and breastfeeding, and recognized that women often had extra work at home and heavy workloads.

To address some of women's most onerous practical needs across the value chain, women's top five solutions included:

1. Transportation during harvest to carry crops
2. Road construction
3. Iron fencing
4. Terracing
5. Irrigation system
6. Weed cutter and weed killer

Men also felt that access to transportation would greatly relieve women's work burden, and indicated that they could help women transport crops home. They also noted the need for road construction, farming equipment, maize grinders, and seeding machines. They felt that if they could make more money they might be able to hire more laborers so their wives would not need to labor in the fields as much.



## STRATEGIC NEEDS

Women's strategic needs, which unlike practical needs hold the possibility for longer-term improvements in gender equality and egalitarianism in households and communities, were discussed at different points during the focus groups. Four key opportunities emerged for transformative gender change, with varying levels of risk and feasibility in the short term.

### Land ownership

After completing the Access and Control activity, women and men were asked what they thought about the situation. Were they happy with the breakdown between the sexes? Did they think it was fair? More than two-thirds (78%) of focus groups with men declared the situation to be good or fine, notably with regard to control over land. Men are the ones who must inherit their parents' properties and it was only through male succession that land could be passed down from generation to generation and the 'fatherland' preserved. Some men felt that land could be controlled more equally between women and men in the future, but because of cultural traditions, it would be difficult to make any changes to the inheritance system now. A large number of women (33% of focus group with women) also agreed that the situation was fine, and that they would not seek to change it despite existing inequalities. However, most women felt that it was time for change - that women and girls should equally be able inherit property, and that parents should begin sharing inheritance between their sons and daughters. As

women in Zathlir explained, “when parents do not have a son, when they die [the family] still searches for a relative’s son before giving the property to their own daughter.” Women in C. Zamual added that men and women should also equally share property after divorce.

While the desire for change exists among women for more equitable control over land, equal land ownership was a topic on which men showed very little flexibility. Land ownership was seen as a defining feature of manhood, and threat to this control might provoke backlash against men and women advocating for change. Any activities seeking to encourage women’s land ownership and female inheritance will need to be accompanied by activities engaging men and community leaders on the issue and securing their support.

### **Division of labor**

After reflecting on the division of household, childcare, and agricultural labor, many women felt that household labor and childcare should more equally be divided between women and men, especially given women’s disproportionate work burden and time poverty. As women in Kutcha suggested “Men could share child care when they have free time and women could do housework better.” (To note, in this statement women’s unequal domestic responsibilities were both challenged and reinforced at the same time, showing how entrenched they are for both women and men.) Women in Khuahrang also reflected that parents should more equally distribute responsibilities and tasks between their daughters and sons: “no division or teaching girls’ job or boys’ jobs - equal sharing of responsibilities between wife and husband.”

Many men recognized and appreciated the additional work women carried out in the household as well as in the fields, and some expressed a willingness to take on additional work in order to alleviate their female partners’ burden. Some flexibility in household divisions of labor already exists, with men helping their wives cook in the morning and evening, taking care of children while their wives are busy, and feeding chickens, which usually fall within women’s purview. Through media presenting alternative images of masculinity and engaged fatherhood, paired with peer influence activities and couples dialogues, division of labor may be an area in which progress can be build on already existing egalitarian behaviors.

### **Equal pay**

Several women’s groups noted that despite their hard labor in the fields alongside men, they were paid substantially less than men. Women in Laizo indicated that they were paid 5,000 Kyat to the 6,000 Kyat men were paid for the same work; that is, sex discrimination resulted in a 16-17% income penalty for women working as agricultural laborers. This gap, while smaller than the 20-30% wage gap reported by the UNDP in 2012 for unskilled agricultural and off-farm work in rural Myanmar<sup>9</sup>, was nonetheless keenly felt. Women thought that this situation should change - they should receive an equal salary to men for the same work, whether in the fields or in casual labor.

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9. LIFT and UNOPS (2017). “The Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) Gender Strategy”

Pay equality is an area in which considerable opportunity exists for change, given women's primary responsibility for managing the household budget and hiring laborers for agricultural work. Women could choose to begin paying women equal wages to men. Barriers would likely exist for women seeking to save money at the household level, and any changes in wage amounts would likely need to be discussed and agreed upon with male partners, who may not share a commitment to equal pay for women. However, if accompanied by advocacy work with men, through men's groups, couples' discussions, or community dialogues, commitments by women to equal pay could directly translate into action upon each woman's new hire.

### **Ownership and sale of small animals**

Although men have primary access to and control over livestock, women were said to have unilateral control over small animals such as chickens and ducks and any income derived from their sale. Opportunities exist to increase women's economic power through increased asset control and income by investing in their production and marketing of small livestock. Women have the production and marketing skills necessary for success, given their current roles caring for and feeding livestock and their experience negotiating sales for produce and maintaining relationships with vendors and buyers. They also have the necessary skills for budgeting and financial planning, which they regularly use to manage household funds. Work would simultaneously need to be done with women's male partners to avoid resentment, backlash, and appropriation of funds should women's efforts prove successful.

## MALE ENGAGEMENT

### **GENDER EQUITABLE BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES**

A modified version of the Gender-Equitable Men Scale (GEMS), a tool developed by Horizons and Promundo<sup>10</sup>, was used to measure men's attitudes toward household decision-making, gender norms, and violence against women. Results point both to potential barriers and potential opportunities to engage men in women's empowerment and gender equality efforts.

### **Domestic Chores and Daily Life**

Although strong beliefs existed about men's final decision-making power in the household more generally, beliefs about women's primary responsibility for childcare, household care, and decision-making on the purchase of major household items are more egalitarian. Many men felt that childcare and the responsibility to care for home and family were jointly shared between women and men, and not solely a woman's role. This result echoed previous findings about men caring for their children and assisting in meal preparation, and comments about joint decision-making and women's role managing household funds. It points to possible openings

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10. <https://c-changeprogram.org/content/gender-scales-compendium/index.html>

to address unequal divisions of labor in future programming. However, the finding that 60% of men either agreed or partially agreed that women should obey their husbands in all things, while likely a reflection of biblical teachings, could impede a full understanding of individual human rights (it assumes male supremacy over women, placing women in the same category as children, who are also charged with obedience) and thus personal transformation and progress toward gender equal relationships.

<b>Domestic Chores and Daily Life</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Partially Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Changing diapers, giving a bath, and feeding children is the mother's responsibility	52%	3%	45%
A woman's role is taking care of her home and family	33%	18%	48%
The husband should decide to buy the major household items	33%	24%	42%
A man should have the final word about decisions in his home	76%	6%	18%
A woman should obey her husband in all things	45%	15%	36%

### **Rights and Privileges of Men**

A strong “protector” identity can be seen in the 79% of men who agree that women must be protected by a male kinsman. While partially tied to attitudes of caring, the “protector” identity also makes it difficult for men to see women as equals and reinforces their male head of household and primary decision-making role. A more constructive message would be that both women and men are “protectors” for each other and their families as equal partners. In other areas, such as girls’ education, a majority of men emerged as champions for the educational rights of their daughters, disagreeing with statements that boys’ education should be prioritized, or that housework was more important than education for girls. This aligns with statements made by men in focus groups about the importance of education for girls, given that they do not inherit land. Boys, they said, could afford to do poorly in school because they knew they would own land in the future. However, 51% of men either agreed or partially agreed that tutoring money should be spent on boys first, an indication that male preference still exists beyond basic educational services. Finally, an opportunity to promote women’s leadership could be seen in the 79% of men who believed that politics should not be left to men. This was surprising given that at the national level only 10.2% of parliamentarians and 5% of ministers are women,<sup>11</sup> and at the village level, only 0.25%, or 42 out of 16,785, of village and ward administrators are women. While conversations with PACE field

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11. World Economic Forum (2018) *The Global Gender Gap Report 2018*. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2018/data-explorer/#economy=MMR>



staff indicate that women are not actively engaged in community meetings and decision-making, an opportunity exists to build on men's belief that politics should not solely be a male space, to help them put their beliefs in action by encouraging their female partners, daughters, friends, and neighbors to become engaged in community leadership and decision-making. Activities demonstrating how to create safe spaces and actively encourage women's participation in meetings would also help men translate their beliefs into action and allyship.

<b>Rights and Privileges of Men</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Partially Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
It is important that sons have more education than daughters	24%	12%	64%
Daughters should be sent to school only if they are not needed to help at home	15%	0%	85%
The most important reason that boys should be more educated than girls is so they can better look after parents	30%	12%	58%
If there is a limited amount of money to pay for tutoring, it should be spent on sons first	45%	6%	48%
A woman should take good care of her own children and not worry about other people's affairs	52%	12%	36%
Women should leave politics to men	12%	9%	79%
Women have to have a husband or sons or some other male kinsman to protect them	79%	12%	9%
The only thing a woman can rely on in her old age is her sons	55%	15%	30%
A good woman never questions her husband's opinions, even if she is not sure she agrees with them	33%	6%	58%
When it is a question of children's health, it is best to do whatever the father wants	36%	3%	55%

## **Violence Against Women**

While a majority of men disagreed that women deserved to be beaten at any time, and did not think women should tolerate violence to maintain family unity, or that they had the right to hit their wives if they didn't have sex with them, a majority of men did think it justified to beat women who are unfaithful to them. This aligns with beliefs about the dominance and authority of men over women that demands women's obedience and respect. The incongruity in men's belief that there are never times when a woman deserves to be beaten and their exceptions for unfaithfulness may be a place to encourage critical thinking to challenge violence against women in general. Also concerning are beliefs that domestic violence is a private matter

that should not be discussed outside the couple. Any prevention and response efforts will need to challenge this belief and sensitize men and women to the fact that violence is a criminal offense no matter where it takes place. Violence also seems to be tied to masculinity, with 57% of men believing that an insult to their person is deserving of violence. This raises a red flag for future women’s economic empowerment activities, in which women’s increased wages, work outside the home, and decision-making power might challenge men’s role as “breadwinner” and “head of household,” as well as assumptions that “real” men dominate and are in control. When closely held masculine identities are challenged by women, men can turn to violence as a means of maintaining dominance and control, especially if there are no alternative positive masculinities accepted or being modeled by the community.

<b>Violence Against Women</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Partially Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	36%	3%	55%
A woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together	27%	3%	70%
It is alright for a man to beat his wife if she’s unfaithful	58%	0%	42%
A man can hit his wife if she won’t have sex with him	27%	9%	64%
If someone insults a man, he should defend his reputation with force if he has to	42%	15%	42%
A man using violence against his wife is a private matter that should not be discussed outside the couple	48%	6%	45%

## POSITIVE MASCULINITIES

### **Men and women inside the box**

Women and men were asked to describe the characteristics and behaviors that defined a good woman and a good man in Chin State. Men were primarily seen as leaders, authoritative, with the responsibility to take care of their communities and families. They also had a strong identity as workers and breadwinners, laboring long hours in sacrifice for the well-being of their families. Good men were also seen as caring and loving, especially towards their spouse and children. And good men needed to be intelligent and educated, broad-minded, wise, and with a long vision and plan for the future. A good Chin woman was primarily assigned value through her household and caring duties - she manages household work and is a good cook; she is neat and clean. A good woman is also caring, gentle, kind, and loving, and provides care for both children and the elderly. She is respectful, and also religious.

## Men and Women Outside the Box

Primary non-normative behavior and identity for men aligned with a male identity as leader, worker, and breadwinner. Men were not accepted by society, or looked down upon if they were alcoholics, lazy, could not provide for the basic needs of their family, if they were easily angered and uneducated, with no vision for the future. Men were also not seen as 'real' or 'good' men when they beat their wives, were careless, showed fear, gossiped, were unfaithful, or were too mobile ('roamed' too much). For women, socially unacceptable behavior and characteristics included laziness (women who made children do their work), gossiping and criticizing, disrespectfulness, mobility or "roaming too much" away from home, drug and alcohol addiction, talking too much, and arguing or fighting. Women were also not seen as 'real' or 'good' women when they could not cook, were disobedient, did not care for their families, or were useless and burdens to their families.

## Unhealthy and Damaging Masculinities

While many norms are universally positive and promote healthy behavior and relationships, some norms can lead to bias, exclusion, persecution, and violence when they are strongly tied to identity and power. Masculine norms can be particularly harmful when they are built in opposition to femininity or subordinated or marginalized masculinities. The presence of alternative masculinities can become a threat and a challenge to maintaining masculinities based on domination, control, and heterosexuality.

For the Chin men in this study, a couple norms stood out as especially worrisome: the idea that men could not be gay, poor, disabled, not religious, or influenced by their wives. Homophobia is a barrier to understanding and promoting gender equality, and can be addressed in gender trainings with men and couples that expose them to understandings of gender beyond the binary male and female, man or woman. The idea that poverty is negatively linked with male identity can also be a barrier in identifying and targeting the most marginalized or poor households for interventions, as these may be seen as underserving by others in the community. Men with disability may similarly be marginalized by the community as "non-men" and will require additional effort on the part of project staff to identify and engage. Similar biases appear to exist against men of different religious backgrounds: non-Catholics or non-Christians. Staff should consider targeting men of all backgrounds and experiences, including socio-economic class, age, religion, and disability status for male peer activities, which would increase exposure to alternative masculinities and may minimize bias over time. Finally, and perhaps most worrisome for efforts to encourage joint household decision-making, men are stigmatized when it is felt that their wives have influence over them. This belief can be addressed in



men's groups or couples dialogues in which men and women are painted as equal partners and what might be called influence can be recast as negotiation and the desire to care for and be fair with each other. The concept must be unlinked from implications of male weakness; it could alternatively be presented as an example of male love, care, and fairness, for instance.

### **Healthy and Positive Masculinities**

Masculinities are constructed, like any other gender-related norms, and are constantly changing and open to challenge by men and women with different experiences tied to age, race, ethnicity, disability, geography, and other life histories, backgrounds, and physicalities. Opportunities exist to build on local definitions of masculinity that promote health, wellbeing, engaged fatherhood and partnership, and forms of caring and intimacy. For example, strong social approval exists for men who are caring, gentle, kind, and loving with their families; for men who are educated and wise, accountable and dependable, brave and courageous, patient and perseverant. 'Real' men are also seen as respectful and righteous, or fair. And according to women in several focus groups, 'real' men are those who share in housework and give their wages to their wife to manage. Any of these values can be used in messaging to encourage male engagement in family nutrition and health, and values of righteousness and fairness can be appealed to in efforts to increase gender equality in households and at the community level.

## ADAPTATIONS FOR EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

Interviews were held with PACE Project field staff to explore their experiences and seek out their opinions on ways to improve program activities in order to engage women more equitably and create safer spaces for their engagement.

### **Community-level leadership and decision-making**

Several staff noted that women were often excluded from community meetings; they did not recall seeing them in attendance, even as passive listeners. Gendered norms explored above, such as the expectation that women should not talk too much, and the elevation of men above women as primary decision-makers and leaders in the community, may create normative barriers for women to begin attending, speaking, and ultimately taking decision-making and leadership roles in community meetings. To encourage equitable participation in program activities and decision-making, it will be important for program staff to engage community and religious leaders, as well as men in general, in dialogue to first identify the need for female engagement and leadership, and then secure their commitment to supporting women in community meetings. This can be done through quotas, as a blunt instrument, but also through practical actions like calling on women to speak, not interrupting women when they talk, making sure women are not made to sit in the back of the room or on the floor, and verbally encouraging women to put themselves forward for leadership positions.

## Gender-equal field offices and policies

Gender equality in field offices was also a topic of discussion, both in formal interviews as well as informal conversations with staff. In one office, although men and women were meant to take turns cleaning the office and restroom spaces, women often ended up carrying out these tasks by default. This dynamic, which reinforces women's domestic role and perpetuates sexist divisions of labor, creates an unprofessional and unequal environment for women. Hiring a janitor to clean the office daily would address this issue.

## PROTECTION RISKS

Field staff were unaware of gender-based violence cases or insecurities experienced by women or men in their programs, and in line with norms about domestic violence being a private matter, expressed the conviction that it was not a problem in the communities in which they worked. However, in formal and informal conversations, staff mentioned situations in which female staff were being sexually harassed by male staff, or male staff were entering into sexual relationships with subordinate female staff that ended in pregnancies, dismissals, or staff leaving their positions. Staff also described informal policies mandating male staff to accompany female staff on field visits, as many female staff did not know how to drive motorcycles (although several did). To protect all field staff, and particularly female staff, the project should eliminate formal and informal policies restricting field visits to male/female teams of two, in which there is no built-in system of accountability, and allow staff to conduct field visit in single-sex teams and teams of three rather than two. Incoming and current female staff should also be mandated to take a series of motorcycle riding, safety, and maintenance training classes to increase their mobility and ensure their safety on the road during field visits. Finally, a third party individual or firm should be appointed or hired to receive complaints of sexual harassment and abuse of power by staff, and regularly report to leadership. Attempts to use human resources departments for this work will not serve the best interest of those harmed, as internal departments are incentivized to protect organizations, not individuals.

# 8. Recommendations

1. Opportunities exist to increase women's knowledge and skills at all levels of the value chain, and especially in post-harvest work, where they predominate. **Women are well-placed to take advantage of trainings on budgeting, marketing, and entrepreneurship, as well as investments to broaden and strengthen their trade networks and relationships.** However, any opportunities will need to target women in the context of their marital relationships, and ensure the support of husbands and community leaders to avoid any backlash against women.

2. Limited mobility in general tends to restrict women's opportunities, but in this case it has expanded women's access to market-based skills and assets. **Any economic empowerment or other activities resulting in women's decreased home-based presence during the day should consider and mitigate unintended**



**consequences affecting their access to vendors and buyers, ability to find and hire labor, and availability for day-time trainings and workshops.**

**3. Explore opportunities to provide women with driving lessons or expanded access to public transportation services.** Having to rely on relatives or neighbors to transport them by motorcycle or truck limits opportunities for women to expand their market access and trade networks.

4. While informal financing may fall within the purview of men, women may have more access to financing through non-profit projects and group-based initiatives. **Women are well placed to save and invest funds given their role as household money managers.**

5. Post-harvest activities, which are broadly feminized for both cash and staple crops, may be devalued (because they are feminized) and thus de-emphasized, reducing opportunities for value addition in the marketing of agricultural products, particularly if women do not have access to larger markets where they might fetch higher prices with higher quality goods. Address this phenomenon in future market analyses, and **explore opportunities for post-harvest handling and marketing training for women as well as men, in tandem with efforts to increase women's access to transportation.**

**6. Women's land ownership can be a catalyst for increased household nutrition, health, and well-being; however, the topic should be approach cautiously and with an understanding of its deep linkage to male identity.** Explore this linkage in male engagement activities (men's discussion groups) and encourage critical thinking around the benefits and costs of masculine privileges such as land rights and inheritance. In community dialogues, seek local options for more equitable land ownership between women and men, including by providing equal inheritance for daughters and sons. **Consider working in partnership with Landesa on efforts to promote joint titling** and training for communities on land law frameworks.

**7. Explore opportunities to invest in women's production and marketing of small livestock, and notably chicken and ducks,** in parallel with the conduct of market studies to ensure viability and sustainability. Capitalize on women's already acquired skills in budgeting, negotiating sales, hiring labor, and managing vendor and buyer relationships. Make sure to engage women's male partners in planning and training activities, to avoid resentment, backlash, and appropriation of funds should women's efforts prove successful.

8. Challenge gendered perceptions of certain tools and large equipment belonging solely to men by including **images of women using 'masculine' agricultural tools and equipment in all program materials, as well as on posters to stimulate group discussions. Visual materials and posters can also be used to promote healthy and egalitarian forms of masculinity** such as fathers caring for children, providing their daughters with land inheritance, or being engaged in family nutrition and health.

**9. Address issues of imbalanced household labor and child care responsibilities in couples' dialogues and men's groups.** Discuss with pastors for possible inclusion

in sermons and bible study activities. If program activities are lacking female participants or leaders, time poverty may be a barrier that could be addressed by engaging men in solution finding. Solutions could include community or male childcare provision and meal provision, for example.

10. Consider working with women on solutions for their most burdensome tasks in addition to program priorities, which might be different. **Women’s priorities include solutions for weeding, access to transportation for carrying crops from the field, irrigation systems, and iron fencing to keep animals from damaging their crops.**

11. To make progress on structural barriers to gender equality, address women’s strategic needs, which include equal pay, land rights, egalitarian division of unpaid labor, and female ownership and sale of small animals. In particular, **build on women’s desire for equal pay by advocating for and securing their commitment to paying female and male laborers equal wages, an action they have direct control over.** Accompany advocacy with male engagement in men’s groups, couples’ discussions, and community dialogues to ensure male and community support for equal pay.

12. **Challenge the male “breadwinner” and “protector” identities,** which directly impede efforts to increase gender equality through increased female decision-making, leadership, and control over assets. Promote, rather, an equal partnership approach to caring for and protecting each other and other family members as a mark of mature adulthood, whatever one’s gender might be.

13. **Plan to pair any women’s economic empowerment efforts with activities to prevent and respond to domestic violence,** which could be triggered by activities that directly challenge aspects of masculine identity tied to dominance, control, and decision-making power. Work with local women’s rights organizations, which will have a better network of resources and services for referrals, and might be able to provide GBV training to staff members.

14. **Ensure that all gender sensitization trainings integrate a non-binary lens,** exposing participants to the wide diversity of human sexuality and gender identity, and encouraging respect and safety for all participants. This will lay the foundation for broader work on gender equality and help address issues of homophobia and transphobia. Make sure that facilitators receive sufficient training on how to manage difficult conversations and create safe spaces.

15. **Build on men’s belief that politics should not solely be a male realm by engaging them, as well as village and religious leaders, in activities to support women’s leadership and decision-making in the community.** This could take the form of community dialogues and male commitments to a series of “small doable actions”: calling on women during meetings, not interrupting women when they speak, making sure women are not made to sit in the back of the room or on the floor, verbally encouraging women to put themselves forward for leadership positions, and providing political support for women seeking leadership positions.

16. **In all field offices, make sure janitors are hired to clean the office and restroom spaces, so that female staff don't end up doing the work.** This will help create a more professional and equal environment for female and male staff, and will ensure that sexist divisions of labor and women's domestic roles are not reinforced, which could otherwise act as an invisible deterrent to female professional advancement.

17. **Eliminate any formal or informal policies requiring female staff to travel to the field with a male companion.** Allow staff to travel in single-sex teams or in teams of three or four instead. **Mandate motorcycle riding, safety, and maintenance training for all current and incoming field staff, and especially women to increase their mobility, decrease their reliance on male staff,** and ensure their safety on the road. **Appoint or hire a third-party individual or firm to receive complaints of sexual harassment and abuse of power by staff,** and regularly report to leadership.

## 9. Annex I: Demographics

	FG Women	FG Men	Survey Men
<b>AGE GROUP</b>			
20-24 years	11%	0%	0%
25-29 years	15%	2%	3%
30-39 years	24%	12%	6%
40-49 years	29%	23%	24%
50-59 years	20%	36%	18%
60+ years	1%	27%	30%
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>			
Married	86%	99%	100%
Never married	5%	0%	0%
Divorced	4%	1%	0%
Separated	0%	0%	0%
Widowed	5%	0%	0%
<b>EDUCATION AND LITERACY</b>			
Can read	100%	99%	94%
Can write	100%	99%	94%
Can calculate	100%	99%	82%
No formal schooling	4%	1%	0%
Some primary	20%	5%	6%
Completed primary	13%	31%	24%
Some middle school	4%	11%	15%
Completed middle school	24%	30%	18%
Some high school	4%	0%	9%
Completed high school	27%	23%	27%
Some university	0%	0%	0%
Completed university	2%	1%	0%

	FG Women	FG Men	Survey Men
<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</b>			
0	3%	1%	0%
1	15%	7%	9%
2	16%	10%	6%
3	11%	11%	6%
4	13%	14%	18%
5+	31%	55%	61%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>19</b>

## 10. Annex II: Translation of key terms

### FALAM

- Manbox: Mipa pawl sinak
- Womanbox: Nunau pawl sinak
- Access: Hman theih mi
- Control: Thu nei tu
- Small equipment: Thil ri tate mi pawl
- Large equipment: Thil ri a tum mi pawl
- Resource or asset: A tul mi thil ri pawl

### HAKHA

- Manbox: Pa pawl sining
- Womanbox: Nu pawl sining
- Access: Hman khawh nak
- Control: Nawl ngei nak
- Small equipment: Thilri a fa mi tete
- Large equipment: Thilri a ngan mi pawl
- Resource or asset: A herh mi thilri

### LAUTU

- Manbox: CapaaCuona
- Womanbox: CanungCuona
- Access: Hmuokhuna
- Control: Nawhnyina
- Smallequipment: Cehre taata
- Largeequipment: Cehre puvpa
- Resource or asset: Ahupa Hmangbya



228 West Lexington Street,  
Baltimore, MD 21201-3443  
[crs.org](http://crs.org)

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