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GENDER PARTICIPATION IN THE EIA PROCESS IN MYANMAR



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Summary

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is still a relatively new concept in Myanmar. The national EIA procedures came out in late 2015 and the availability of the EIAs to the public remains quite restricted. Therefore, to study gender participation in the EIA process, selection of available research sites was quite difficult. The sites chosen were the Upper Paunglaung hydropower project, the Myitsone hydropower project, Letpadaung copper mine and Thilawa Special Economic Zone, because of access, information availability and team knowledge.

Four research questions guided the research:

1. How are women's needs, interests and voices incorporated in EIA deliberations at every step of the assessment?
2. What constraints women from participating in EIA deliberations? How do institutions constraint or enable women's participation?
3. What benefits can women receive by participating in EIA deliberations?
4. How will women's participation contribute to informed decision making in order to reduce or mitigate the social and environmental impacts of large-scale development projects?

Research was conducted through one field study, Upper Paunglaung Hydropower Dam and three desk studies, Letpadaung Copper Mine; Thilawa SEZ; and Myitsone Hydropower Dam. After learning that women in our field study site, (the Upper Paunglaung dam), were not very included in the EIA, we adjusted the research questions to also look at what they would recommend if they were included; their outlook for the future; and ways to simplify project technicalities to improve understanding for everyone.

Because EIA is a new concept in Myanmar the EIAs that were available for this research were done before the national procedures were established at the end of 2015. The findings showed that most of the time, women were not considered or taken into special consideration and that they were not very involved in the process. Social norms were often a constraint brought up, but the biggest constraint would be project practices under the former military government. The benefits that women get from participating in EIA processes were not clearly found, the EIA was too new, or the women were not involved. However, by exploring further in discussions with women, it was found that they would be calmer, would know more about what is happening, better able to prepare for the future, etc if they were included more. Considering overall community benefits, it was found that women considered more the entire community perspectives and not just their families, and they had more suggestions about where the school and market would be located to suit everybody's needs.

Some recommendations for the future would be to work more to raise awareness and inform people in all aspects of planning processes, including various ministry areas and levels about gender considerations, and gender sensitivity and why it is important to include women specifically in planning processes. Additionally, changing the perception that gender discrimination is not a feature in the Myanmar way of life is a critical starting point.

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Anna Wallström (Project Lead) and David Allan (Spectrum Director)

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CPI	China Power Investment Corporation
CPIYN	CPI Yunnan International Power Investment Company
CSD	Community and Social Development
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DHPI	Department of Hydropower Implementation
DOP	Department of Population
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ERI	EarthRights International
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GEN	Gender Equality Network
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KIA	Kachin Independent Army
KIO	Kachin Independent Organization
MJTD	Myanmar Japan Thilawa Development Limited
MOEP	Ministry of Electric Power
MOECAF	Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry
MWMCL	Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Limited
SEI	Stockholm Environment Institute
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
TSEZMC	Thilawa Special Economic Zone Management Committee
UACHC	Upstream Ayeyawady Confluence Basin Hydropower Co., LTD.
(U)MEHL	(Union of) Myanmar Economic Holding Limited
UPLHPD	Upper Paunglaung Hydro Power Dam
WB	World Bank

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

As is the case in most countries in the world, the Myanmar population consists of more women than men, about 24.8 million men vs 26.7 million women. Despite there being more women, they are often underrepresented in both public and private decision making processes, which leads to men making decisions on areas that affect women more.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a relatively new concept in Myanmar. It was just last year, 2015, that EIA became required by new procedures. It is therefore important to review and look at how to best include everyone in the EIA and not just men since there are more women and they are affected in ways different from men.

1.2 Research Objective

This research will look at how gender participation is regarded within the EIA process and what benefits there are for including women and other groups in development projects.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How are women's needs, interests and voices incorporated in EIA deliberations at every step of the assessment?
2. What constraints women from participating in EIA deliberations? How do institutions constraint or enable women's participation?
3. What benefits can women receive by participating in EIA deliberations?
4. How will women's participation contribute to informed decision making in order to reduce or mitigate the social and environmental impacts of large-scale development projects?

1.4 Methodological considerations

This research is based on one field study of the Upper Paunglaung Hydropower Project in Southern Shan state as well as desk study on three other development sites in Myanmar, Letpadaung Copper Mine in Sagaing region, Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) southwest of Yangon and Myitsone Hydropower Dam in Kachin state.

2. Background

This chapter presents how the view of women in Myanmar society in general is, and traditionally has been. It also looks more closely at Kachin, Kayin and Burman societies, which are the ethnicities that live in the different case study sites presented in this paper.

2.1 Union of Myanmar

The Union of Myanmar has about 51.5 million people (DOP, 2014). The country is 657,000km² and divided into seven states, seven regions and the capital Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. The people of Myanmar are very diverse and consist of hundreds of ethnic groups, the seven biggest groups being Burman (68%), Shan (9%), Kayin (Karen, 7%), Rakhine (4%), Chinese (3%), Indian (2%) and Mon (2%). The majority, 70% of the population, live in rural areas. This also shows in the country's GDP where agriculture, fishery and forestry count for almost 70%. The country also has an abundance of natural resources and biodiversity. The majority of the population, (87%) identify themselves as Buddhists and a minority as Christians, Muslims and traditional religions (CIA world fact book).

2.2 Women in Myanmar

In general, Myanmar women have a reputation to be more equal to their male counterparts than their Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) neighbours, but gender inequality is still present, especially in rural ethnic areas. (Belak, 2000)

There has been a lot of research done on gender issues in Myanmar lately, but not much on the different ethnicities, mostly a broad generalization to the major Burman ethnicity. One source that has done extensive research on the subject is *Raising the Curtain: Cultural Norms, Social Practices and Gender Equality in Myanmar* written by Gender Equality Network (GEN) in Myanmar. And also *Women's Participation in the Subnational Governance of Myanmar* by Paul Minoletti has written about gender issues within different sectors.

When it comes to the Kachin people, there is not much new research that has been done on gender in Kachin. The research that exists is often old, such as 'Aspects of Bridal Wealth and Marriage Stability among the Kachin and Lakher' from 1957 by E. R. Leach, and the same goes for Kayin.

Myanmar has a system that requires heads of the household to be registered. This is always automatically men except for widows, despite who in the household is the main financial contributor (Interview with Dr. Mie Mie Kyaw). Approximately 2.7% of the households in Myanmar are headed by a woman (DOP, 2014:1).

In Myanmar, culture is closely interlinked with religion which in turn gives the cultural norms of how one should act and which it is hard to deviate from. One also has to think about what represents equality for people in different contexts. What one person perceives as unequal might be equal for another person, and for many, gender inequality is seen as a non-issue and even if gender issues are acknowledged in the society, they are overlooked by using culture and religion as an excuse to disregard the issue. Another excuse is that women themselves

choose not to participate. The social norm for women is to put the man, family and country before yourself (GEN, 2015:17-18).

2.2.1 Burman

The Burman people are as previously presented, the majority of the population in Myanmar. It is often this culture that is considered when talking about traditional values of the Myanmar society.

In comparison to other countries in the region, women have had a high status in the society but there are still inequalities in Myanmar. And because of this notion, gender issues are often put aside and not taken as a priority. An example is sexual violence against women. Both domestic and social violence is forbidden in the religion and culture, but that does not prevent it from happening, but only sets up a barrier for women to be ashamed of the event and not report it to the authorities so there are believed to be a lot of unreported cases of sexual violence against women (GEN, 2015:20). In most Myanmar communities, there is a social stigma regarding rape or sexual violence, and in some, a raped single girl/woman is expected to marry her rapist. It is not illegal for a man to rape his wife. There is a lack of laws that address domestic violence in the country. That together with a taboo, makes it hard to find the correct statistics, but it is expected to be high. Domestic violence is perceived to be a private matter of the family and is therefore, according to some not an issue for the law (Minoletti, 2014:18f).

When talking about gender equality in Myanmar, many believe that there is none. They see women as powerful, in the household, but do not consider other spheres of the society such as politics and economics (GEN, 2015:24). Just the fact that women cannot be enlightened or be a Buddha gives a stronger sense that women are inferior to men since religion plays a big part in the cultural norm of the country.

It is the role of women to uphold traditional values such as modesty, politeness and tenderness, and in general, women have many more cultural norms and values that they need to uphold than men. This is also the case when it comes to the dress code. Men are mostly free to wear what they want while women are blamed and victims of victim-blaming if they are abused if they are not wearing the traditional clothes (GEN, 2015:30-32, 41). This is gradually changing in the bigger cities like Yangon, but still persists in the rural areas.

In the law, women and men are treated the same, but problems occur when the union law clashes with the traditional views of ethnic minorities such as for example Kachin and Chin, whose traditions often are seen as the laws to follow, especially in areas where the union does not uphold the political power. An example of this is divorce, where the union gives both parties the right to an equal amount of money, but in Kachin and Chin communities, the women get nothing (Minoletti, 2014:20).

2.2.2 Kachin

The view of women within the Kachin society is similar to the Burman one in regard to the fact that women are perceived as inferior to men, one quote found in Raising the Curtain was:

“Men ruled the world while women played assistant roles. There are only a few percent women in politics and administrative roles. Do you know why women are treated as inferior? Because women were made by the ribs of Adam, who was the first administrator in the world. It was also described in the Bible that women had to be dependent upon men.” -Kachin Christian women. (GEN, 2015: 29)

Another traditional Kachin proverb goes as follows “When men talk a lot they will bring more profit, when women talk a lot they will bring more damage.” (Minoletti, 2014:30)

Traditionally, many Kachin men are reluctant to do any type of household work and in recent times, many men are working away from the home leaving the women to take care of the family. The money that is sent back to the household is rarely enough which forces women to seek jobs that men usually did. Among the men that are left living at the home, many are addicted to heroin which often makes them unfit to work and puts more constraints on the women. Kachin is also the state in Myanmar with the second highest female-headed households, 25% which is believed to be a correlation to the number of absent men in the families. (Minoletti, 2014: 27)

2.2.3 Kayin

When it comes to Kayin, also called Karen, the view of women is similar to the Burman and Kachin: women should wear respectful clothes, take care of tradition, and do not need to get an education because it is the man who is going to take care of the family. It is also seen as safer for a woman to be dressed in traditional clothes, since then, men will not get sexual desires and will not harass the woman (GEN, 2015:38f). When it comes to menstruation, it is suggested that women stay away from the public (GEN, 2015: 115).

Traditionally, Kayin women keep inside the household and take care of the family, this has been changing lately with more educated young women that requires more space in the community. This has also been accepted by the other people in the community (Interview Kan Hla village, 26-27 November, 2016).

2.2.4 Changes in the Society

In recent years in relation to the democratization process, gender inequalities have received more attention both on a political and social level. Further, in 2012 the then current president, Thein Sein said “the union shall not discriminate against any citizen of Burma based on race, birth, religion, official position, status, culture, sex or wealth.” (Za Mang, Pum, 2015)

After the latest election in 2015, the numbers of women in the parliament rose by 3.9%, but in comparison to its neighbours and other ASEAN countries, the new number, 9.9% is still one of the lowest, just Thailand has a lower percent on 6.1%. (ipu.org) These numbers include the 25% held by the military, which lowers the number for Myanmar. Elected women to the parliament were 14.5% not including the military seats. (Ninh, 2016) There are not that many female representatives within the governmental sphere but more when it comes to civil society activism, NGO’s and community based organizations. Here the participation is higher for women, and can more easily be found in higher decision making positions than they are in political and governmental parties. (Minoletti, 2014:13) It should be noted that even though women have a higher participation rate on the local level, it doesn’t always mean that they

have any power in decisions, as it is often men who have the final say because it is often they who have the ownership over the things discussed, for example issues like agriculture, jobs and infrastructure. (Minoletti, 2014:14)

One problem that often occurs when the decision makers are mostly men, is that the needs of women, children and the household are often not considered. This becomes a problem when a big part of the community is not taken into consideration in big decisions such as when it comes to EIAs. Studies have found that the more female participation there is in a project, the higher is the success rate. (Lu Ja, 2014) One downside for female participation is often the lack of prior experiences and they might not have the skills for making the job successful. (Minoletti, 2014:22)

Women are often the ones who cultivate and use the land and get their livelihood from that area, this can then be lost if they are not part of the EIA process and only the men are. The men are often the ones that get employment out of the new projects and therefore an income, while often the woman does not get any benefits and is more at risk to be left in the household. The community then needs to change their economy from agricultural to cash based which means a lot of changes that can cause stress on the community. (Hill et.al, 2016)

2.3 Environmental Impact Assessment

An EIA is a report that shall be conducted before construction of activities that are believed to have a major impact on the environment and social life. One description can be found in *Environmental Impact Assessment in the Mekong Region* as: “The process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social, and other effects of development proposals (and other activities) prior to decisions being taken and commitments made.”

In Myanmar, there have been few EIAs done for big development projects, mainly because there were no previous national procedures that required EIA in Myanmar, and the ones that have been done are often lacking in information and do not uphold international standards. In the cases where EIAs were done, they are usually not publicly available. The procedure that requires projects that are going to have big impacts on the environment and society to do an EIA, was established in November 2015 and it is the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAAF) that is responsible for the implementation of the EIA in the country.

3. Methodology

3.1 Desk review approach

The action research project has been conducted in the form of a desktop study and fieldwork data collection methods. The desk review included various materials in order to understand the gender dimensions in different societies in Myanmar generally and the particularities of the case study sites more specifically. To gain this knowledge, the following list outlines the literature that has been referenced and what has been gained from using these sources:

- Reports, opinion pieces, consultation reports included in EIAs, media publications about EIA processes and gender issues, NGO reports that identify gender issues and women's interests
 - background information and context
 - how gender, equality, women are considered/ perceived in Myanmar (considering differences between ethnicity, religion, age and geography)
 - what women's roles are in society at the 4 case study areas (peri-urban Thilawa and rural Shan, Sagaing and Kachin)
 - how different publications (media, NGO reports, etc) represent gender issues in the country and in the case study sites
- EIA documents
 - how gender was considered/ incorporated in EIA design and implementation
 - data about women in subject communities
 - background about projects
 - potential impacts on women (and mediation of them)

3.2 Data collection methods

The literature review described above provides foundational knowledge of the gender dimensions relevant to EIA processes in Myanmar with particular focus on the case study sites. The approach adopted to review this literature was based on the Oxfam Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) in Hydropower methodology approach. This outlines six steps which is useful when conducting a GIA, step 1: Data collection, step 2: Understanding the context, step 3: Identifying issues, step 4: Understanding women's needs, step 5: Recommendations and step 6: Review and audit.

In addition, primary data was collected to validate cursory and background findings in the literature. Primary data collection methods include interviews in Yangon and visiting one of the field-work sites (Upper Paunglaung Dam). For various reasons, including logistics and costs constraints, the limited number of EIAs completed in Myanmar and some political sensitivities, only one field site visit was feasible for this study. To take the reliance away from the Upper Paunglaung Dam site visit as the only primary data collection opportunity, desk-based interviews were conducted via personal interviews with personnel from EIA consulting firms, NGOs involved in Thilawa SEZ. Data collected from these two interviews provided more depth and breadth to all four research questions. Due to lack of availability and security concerns, interviews with stakeholders from Letpadaung and Myitsone were not possible. Since the requirement of EIAs is new in Myanmar, the number of EIAs that could be reviewed in this report was limited. And in order to get a broad picture with several different types of sites and regions, we chose these four sites.

The field visit to the Upper Paunglaung Dam were supposed to explore how gender diversity and women's interests were or were not incorporated into EIA processes, how women were provided opportunities to participate (or not), how women benefited by participating, if women were involved, how this improved practice/ outcome of EIA (or how it could have if they had been more involved). After initial interviews, the research team discovered that there have barely been any consultations. In response, we changed some of the questions to better understand the differences between men and women's worries and decisions, what they would have changed if they had been consulted, how they would have liked to be consulted, the benefits and impacts of both men and women and constraints that deter women from participating. These changes were made after methodology discussions and consultation with Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) on 24 November 2016.

Upper Paunglaung Dam case study was chosen as the field visit site because as part of the research team, Dr. Mie Mie Kyaw has completed a comprehensive socio-economic survey of the 23 villages that were relocated as a result of the dam development. Building on Dr. Mie Mie Kyaw's comprehensive knowledge of the site and the communities, and given that access to the site would be logistically feasible (from cost, political willingness, safety and access perspectives), it was chosen as the case study field site. Data collection at the site relied on qualitative methods to gain in-depth knowledge of the EIA processes and gender considerations during the EIA and resettlement processes. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used during meetings with women and men in the villages, village leaders, township authorities, project implementers (government engineers) and monks.

3.3 Sampling strategies

The sampling approach was purposive and used snowballing techniques in order to gain sufficient knowledge and be able to answer the research questions. Sampling techniques were required for choosing the villages to focus on, and the women and men in the communities.

Five villages were selected out of a total 23 in the Upper Paunglaung Dam catchment. These were:

- Phoe Gone - Villages with highest proportion of women respondents to Dr. Mie Mie Kyaw's earlier research
- Gway Gone – The women were very vocal on Dr. Mie Mie Kyaw's earlier research
- Kan Hla - Kayin ethnic village, providing some difference
- Htein Pin - The largest village
- Hlel Pyin Gyi – We received a suggestion from the group village leader that more diverse answers could be expected compared to other villages.

Sampling women within villages began with a focus group discussion of women from that village and then individual interviewees were self-selected by the women attending the group meeting. All selected participants were long-term residents of the community and were old enough to remember the consultation processes of the EIA (about 10-12 years ago) and resettlement (3-10 years ago). All women were over 30 years old. Other determining factors included whether they:

- Are Between 30 and 50 years old
- Are older than 50 years old
- Self selected - Women selected themselves

- At least 6 women were selected for interview from each village
- In total 38 women were interviewed

Selecting men in the villages followed a similar set of criteria as described above for women.

Additional factors were:

- Selected via introduction from women interviewed (i.e. husbands)
- Selected on recommendation from village leader (indicating strong male leaders in the community)
 - At least 3-5 men were selected for interview from each village
 - In total 20 men were interviewed

In addition, other stakeholders were also interviewed and were selected based on their seniority and knowledge of the consultation and EIA processes. These stakeholders include:

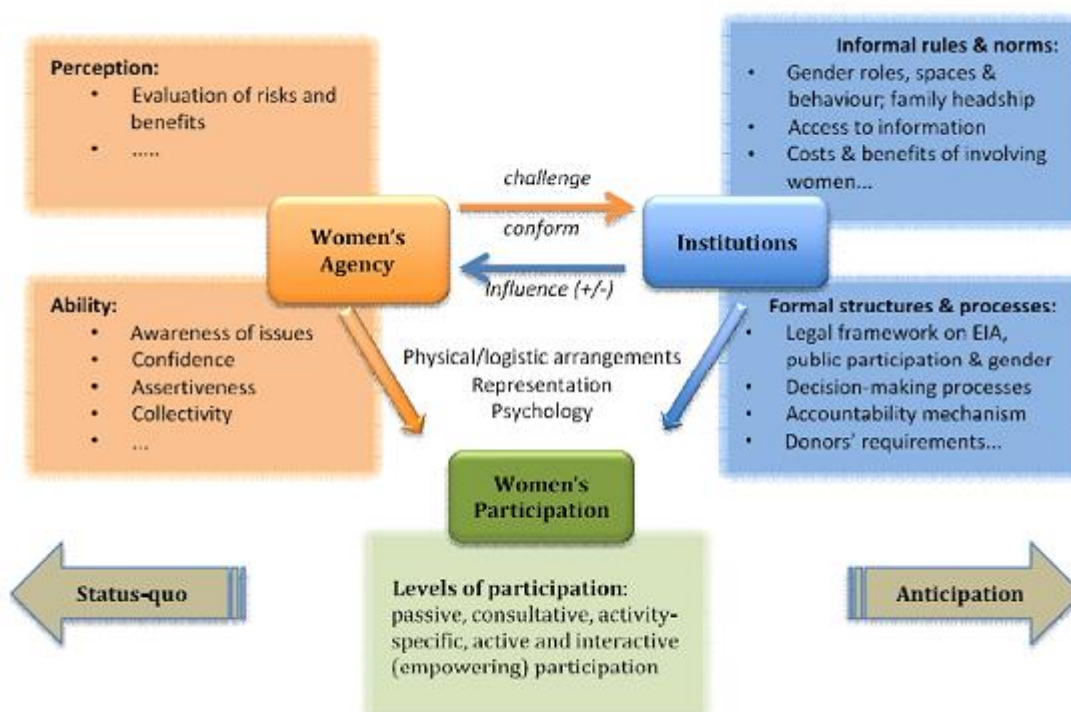
- Village leader = 1 per village = 5
- Monk = 1
- Government engineers or project implementers = 3 for the project
- Township Office = 1

The total number of interviews conducted were 66.

4. Analytical framework

The analytical framework was developed by SEI and has been modified to fit the Myanmar society. The framework consists of three main elements: Women's Agency; Institutions; and Women's Participation. Each category delves into more detailed information and is divided into subgroup considerations. The Women's Agency section includes how women are perceived and their ability to act, and if there are anything in those areas that prevents women from participating or enables them. In the institution section, it looks for elements related to the formal and informal institutions that enable women's participation. Depending on the outcome of these, the level of participation can be revealed.

Below is the original diagram, and underneath are modifications of additional factors we would like to add by category, as additions to the model:



Perceptions: Women worry more than men; Distrust in information

Ability: Limited formal education; Social networks used for information sharing; Female leaders are not the norm; Language

Informal rules & Norms: Social hierarchy; women not invited to meetings, mostly only head of household (mostly men); Access to information

Formal Structures and Procedures: Military regime; Village Leaders

5. Letpadaung Copper Mine

Regarding available resources for the EIA, the company has made all documents publicly available through Myanmar Wanbao website

5.1 About the Project

5.1.1 The Area

The Letpadaung copper mine is located within Salingyi township, south in the Sagaing region in north-western Myanmar, the largest of all regions in Myanmar, located between Kachin state in the east and Chin state in the west. The estimated population is about 5.3 million and consists of Burman, Kachin, Chin, Naga and Shan ethnicities. (DOP, 2015) In Salingyi township, there are four big copper deposits and the Letpadaung mine is situated on the largest of the deposits (Knight Piésold, 2015:1).

The mineral rich ground in Salingyi township was discovered by the British in the 1930s and has been investigated and explored by geologists from Myanmar, Yugoslavia and Japan (Knight Piésold, 2015:2).

The income around the mine site is around 100,000 kyat/month (approximately \$78 USD/month) for 70% of the households and among them are several below the international poverty line, 1.25USD/day. And in relation to the rest of Myanmar, there is a higher dependency on the household income and it is estimated that around 40% of the households need the income of their children younger than 6 years. Around 30 villages are being affected by the project and have had their land confiscated, all in all, 2.746ha and four villages have been relocated from the mine site. (Knight Piésold, 2015: viif)

5.1.2 The owners and EIA Consultants

The Letpadaung Copper Mine contract was signed in June 2010, during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to Myanmar (Harbinson, 2010). Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Limited (MWMCL), a subsidiary of the China North Industries Corporation, was founded in the following year. (Myanmar Wanbao, 26/9-16) that its investment in the mining project amounted to 997 million USD (Mizzima 2013). In the joint venture, the Government of Myanmar owns 51% of the shares of profits while MWMCL together with the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (UMEHL), the biggest state-owned company, controlled by the Myanmar military, shares the remaining 49% under a revised contract signed in 2013. (Hla Tun and Sawitta Lefevre, 2013) During the construction phase, the MWMCL will put 1 million USD into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects and when the mine is running, 2% of the net profit will go to CSR projects. (Myanmar Wanbao, 26/9-16)

The Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was not yet a mandatory procedure in Myanmar when the contract was signed in 2010. Knight Piésold, a global consulting firm that specialised in infrastructure, energy and extractive industries, was commissioned for the ESIA. The stakeholders' engagement began in March 2013, when the project was temporarily suspended in the face of vigorous social opposition (Knight Piésold, January 2015, p.191).

5.1.4 Project Operation

The Letpadaung copper mine is an open-pit copper mine which is going to have the capacity to process 92,000 tons/day. In addition to the mine itself, associated infrastructure will be built in order to take care of the extractions from the mine, and water abstraction from Chindwin river, the power supply system and a site to dump waste rocks.

During the construction of the mine, it is estimated that 2000 employees are needed and 2500 employees are needed during the operating phase. 90% of the workforce will come from Myanmar, and foremost from the neighbouring area, the other 10% will be Chinese. (Knight Piésold, 2015:2). MWMCL writes in its CSR Report 2015-2016 that women make up 27% of the total workforce. (Myanmar Wanbao, 2016: 60)

5.2 Women in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report

During the community consultation, the EIA consultant company went out in teams of two with one female and one male in each team together with two Myanmar people to translate and take notes during the meetings, also one female and one male. The EIA consultants have identified restriction to the availability for the people. For example, there were time restrictions set by the authorities when they could come; the consultation occurred during the crop season; there was limited access to certain stakeholders etc. It was also recorded that there were police dressed in civilian clothes and other unidentified people in the meeting taking pictures and video without introducing themselves and what they did. (Knight Piésold, 2014:5-7)

Another restriction for the consultation was that consultants were only allowed to conduct consultation in registered villages, hence, the four villages that were being relocated were not included in the consultation process. They were also restricted with time since they had to leave the villages at 5pm which meant that some villagers out working did not have time to attend the consultation. (Knight Piésold, 2014:18-19)

The terms of reference for the ESIA was done by MWMCL and their Community and Social Development (CSD) leaders in March to September 2013 but was conducted in two instances since the consultation was interrupted by events like civil disorder in the area. (Knight Piésold, 2014: 2)

During the community consultations, data on number and data on the participants was recorded. During stage one, there were 1297 participants, and out of them, 482 were females and during stage two, there were 314 women out of 846 in total this means that in total, approximately 37% of the participants were women. (Knight Piésold, 2014:19-23)

The consultants also recognize the importance with women participating in the EIA process, for example they write that, the more women attending the meeting, the more spread will the information have in the village and therefore, more people will know what is happening. (Knight Piésold, 2014:24)

5.3 Protests and Complaints

The Letpadaung Copper Mine has been widely covered in both local and national media. One example on a report that has been conducted on the mine site is one from Lawyers Network and Justice Trust, with evidence of neglect of the rule of law in the country, for example, during peaceful demonstrations the police sprayed the protestors with water and after with white phosphorous. (Lawyers Network, 2013: 11)

It was in December 2010 that the community was first informed about the mine project through a public meeting held by the Monywa district governor and Sarlingyi township administrator. The villagers were informed that they would get paid 530,000 kyat/acre for the 7000 acres that the mine needed and that their land would only be used as a passage for the mine's machines and that after three years it was ready to be cultivated again. During the meeting, the villagers had no chance to speak or raise their concerns about the mine and photos were taken of the ones who did talk. (Lawyers Network, 2013: 11) After having experience with another mine, the S&K mine which were developed in the same area in 1978 and are part of the Monywa Project, which also includes Letpadaung mine. (Amnesty International, 2015: 4) The community was afraid of losing their livelihood which consisted of farming. (Lawyers Network, 2013: 11)

Prior to the regime change in 2016, challengers of the mining projects were repressed. There were five village leaders that opposed the project and did not want to accept the offer made. These village leaders were then replaced with people supporting the project. (Lawyers Network, 2013: 13)

In the first months of 2011, MWMCL started large-scale construction on the land before many villagers had consented to the project and use of their land. There have also been reports of unlawful arrests, which led to villagers being intimidated into signing the contracts of the lands. And when they signed, the text of the document was covered so they did not know what they signed and were not compensated enough. (Lawyers Network, 2013: 13)

On the 2 December 2011, four villages were told that they had to be relocated to other existing villages. Many villagers were reluctant to this move and were called in to the Sarlingyi township office where they were told that this project was important for the country's democracy and relations with China. They were also threatened that if they didn't move, they would not get compensation. (Lawyers Network, 2013: 13) These facts indicated that public meetings never aimed to consult the villagers.

When political opportunities were opening under the Thein Sein administration, villagers began to stand up for their rights. From 2012 onwards, villagers began to protest against the mining projects. According to the parliamentary commission led by Aung San Suu Kyi, there were over a hundred cases of demonstrations and mining obstruction from March 2012 to November 2012 (Letpadaung Taung Investigation Commission. 2013, para. 93)[: Letpadaung Taung Investigation Commission. 2013. Final Report into the Letpadaung Taung Copper Mine Project, SarlingyiI Township, Monywa District, Sagaing Region. Chinese language report version only available]. The government cracked down on peaceful protesters with

phosphorous bombs on 29 November 2012 (Letpadaung Taung Investigation Commission. 2013, para. 90). The attack on protesters triggered more protests afterwards.

In the anti-Letpadaung movement, women play a large role. There are for example Ma Thwet Thwet Win who was one of the leading characters of the anti-mine movement. (Lawyers Network, 2013: 16) Other women who played large parts of the anti-Letpadaung movement got the nickname “The Iron Ladies”, are two cousins and daughters of local farmers. They have led thousands of people, monks, environmentalists, pro-democracy groups etc. in protests what they believed to be, unlawful seize of their land. They have, together with neighbours, refused to resettle to a new village and are not demanding more in compensation, but for the mine to come to a complete stop. (Ash, 2013). In the fullness of time its is expected that more research will be done on the stories of these “iron ladies”, and in particular about how there protests were a focal outlet for gender issues to be raised and for improving consultation processes, in a high conflict situation.

5.4 Analysis Letpadaung

The EIA consultants did some work in trying to incorporate women to participate by having female EIA consultants and translators, which is a good way to get the women to feel included. And it is also good that the limitations to public participation is addressed. Two of the main issues that restricted everyone from participating in the consultations were: the consultants were only allowed to the area at a specific time which did not always fit with the workers’ schedule, and there were no consultations done in the villages that were being relocated because they technically were not considered “villages” any more. The restrictions set by the government enable the EIA consultants to fully conduct the ESIA which has led to the consultations to be inadequate and since it is not possible to know how the result would have been if these limitations would not have been there, but it is hard to know if the end result perhaps would have resulted in less violent demonstrations. Even though the approximate percentage of how many women attended the consultations is 37%, there is no record in how active they were or if their considerations made any difference. In general, women consider their whole community’s needs more than their male counterparts. Even though there were more women participating than expected, when reading the EIA report, it is not clearly stated how gender participation was incorporated in every step of the EIA process and the effort was inadequate. It was first during the consultations when women were considered, and at this stage, it is many times too late to change something in the development.

A constraint for the women in the community might be that there is no specific explanation in how information about the consultations was directed to reach both men and women. The information about the consultations was given to the village leaders who then informed the villagers. With this method, there is a large chance that only the head of the household would attend the meeting if nothing else is mentioned, and since men automatically registered as the head of the household, women have a harder time to get the information they need to make informed decisions. The major constraint for public participation for all, both men and women, was the former military government who were in charge of the country during this process. The people were afraid of the government and were threatened and put in prison if

they did not cooperate and village leaders who resisted were being substituted to other that were more pro the development of the mine.

Villagers have been persistently opposed to the Letpadaung Copper Mine project since 2010. An absence of the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) showed that the investors had little commitment to solicit endorsement from the local community. In spite of efforts by Knight Piésold to engage with villagers in March 2013, a remedial SIA failed to obtain consent from the locals prior to the start of the project. That said, villagers could not opt for maintaining their original living style on their original land. Knight Piésold also stress for a more comprehensive EIA to be conducted before going ahead with the project.

Acknowledging the structural constrained that the project was launched without community endorsement, there could still be measures that could mitigate the undesirable environmental and social impacts on the community, including women. Even though women make up 27% of the workforce of the mining project, there is little information about the change of living standard of the women and their families. More importantly, how many women who lost their farmland could be expected to find new means of livelihood remains a puzzling phenomena.

Since no personal interview was possible for this site, it is hard to know how the women and community have benefitted by participating in the EIA. One thing that is certain though, is that the mine failed in receiving the social licence to operate and in that respect, also failed to meet the people's needs and desires during the consultations. One way that this have been expressed, is through demonstrations. In the demonstrations, women have taken on a leadership role, for example, the "Iron Ladies" have led thousands of people in demonstrations against the mine. The demonstrations have sometimes resulted in the use of force from the government side by the use of white phosphorus, deadly force and imprisonment.

6. Thilawa Special Economic Zone

In Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) there have been three EIA reports made, one for zone A and two for zone B.

6.1 About the Project

6.1.1 The Area

Thilawa SEZ is situated 20km southeast of Yangon between the two townships, Kyauktan and Thanlyin. (Nippon Koei, 2013: 3-1) The population in 2015 was about 268,000 in Thanlyin and 133,000 in Kyauktan. The ethnic division in the two townships is mainly Bamar, but also Kayin, Rakhine and Indian people and 90% identifies as Buddhists. The main source of income is agriculture and official employment is in the township offices. Many people in the area also seek employment in Yangon. (Nippon Koei, 2016: 11)

There are 1088 households that will be affected by the construction of the SEZ and out of them, 141 households need relocation. The other affected households are for example those with farmlands inside the SEZ zone, but do not live there or have farmland or live on the boundary to the SEZ. (Nippon Koei, 2016: 7-63)

6.1.2 The Owners

For the entire SEZ, Thilawa Special Economic Zone Management Committee (TSEZMC) is in charge, but for the development of the industrial zones, A and B, the project proponent is Myanmar Japan Thilawa Development Limited (MJTD). The EIA consultant is the same for both zones, Nippon Koei Co. (Nippon Koei, 2013: 1-1)

The Myanmar and Japanese governments each own 10% of the stakes, Myanmar through TSEZMC and Japan through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The rest of the stakes are owned by Myanmar private consortium (41%) and Japanese private consortium (29%) (Thilawa Special Economic Zone Management Committee, 2015)

6.1.3 Project Operation

In recent years, the Myanmar government has made an effort to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and one way of doing that has been through the development of SEZ. (Nippon Koei, 2013: 1) A SEZ is an area in a country where the economic laws are different from the rest of the country in order to attract investments. (Investopedia) In Myanmar, this is regulated through the Myanmar Special Economic Zone Law which was enacted by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Assembly of the Union) in 2014 and further specifies the objectives as ways of improving the country's economic development through investments and jobs (Myanmar Special Economic Zone Law, 2014: 4f)

For the construction of Thilawa SEZ, an area of 2400ha has been cleared and the people living in the area have been relocated (EarthRights, 2014: 2). Within these 2,400ha land, 400ha were used for zone A (Nippon Koei, 2013: 3-3) and 700ha were used for zone B (Nippon Koei, 2016: 4)

In 1996-1997, the Myanmar military government forcibly relocated people living in the area where the new Thilawa SEZ is constructed. It was an area of 1,230ha where they were planning on building the Thanlyin-Kyauktan Industrial Zone, today there are no clear records of any compensation given out to the people living there. When this project was scrapped, people that had been relocated, moved back and started to cultivate the land again. (EarthRights, no date: 1)

6.2 Women in the EIA report

Two stakeholder meetings were arranged for zone A's EIA. At the first meeting, there were 31 participants, but none of the local residents participated in the meeting and at the second stakeholder meeting, there was one local resident out of 31 participants. For both stakeholder meetings, there are records of the represented stakeholders, but no statistics on gender ratio in the meetings. (Nippon Koei, 2013: 10-2f) The first meeting was scheduled for 40 minutes, from 11:20 till 12pm. And here it is still unclear how much time was given to answer questions from the stakeholders. The questions and answers are included in the EIA but there is no report on whether the person asking the questions was male or female. The second meeting was longer, from 10 till 11:25am. (Nippon Koei, 2013: appendix 5-6)

There is a subchapter in the EIA report for zone B that has taken vulnerable groups into consideration. There is no official definition on vulnerable groups in Myanmar, so the EIA used the World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank's (ADB) definition, households headed by women, a disabled, elderly person or a household with a disabled member or living under the poverty line. With this definition, the EIA identified 36 vulnerable households, out of them 20 were headed by women. Through identifying these groups, they will be given priority in finding jobs and will be provided additional assistance during the resettlement. (Nippon Koei, 2016: 7-67f)

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been implemented. During its scoping stage, four community consultation meetings were planned spread over two days, one on a weekday and one on the weekend. At the meetings, special consideration was given to vulnerable groups. There were forms that the ones that didn't want to speak out in public could fill in, assistance to the ones that couldn't read and female assistants were at their disposal. In total 430 people attended the meetings, and around 30% were women. In the feedback forms that also are presented in the EIA, it is documented if the person asking the question is a man or a woman, and in general, women ask more questions regarding the environment and society in general, while the men in general asked more about jobs and specific issues. (Nippon Koei, 2016: 11-2-9)

Another public consultation meeting was conducted during the EIA draft stage. During these three meetings, female attendance was around 40%. (Nippon Koei, 2016: 11-13) There is a list of the attendees at these meetings, but the person's name has been crossed out and no gender is visible, only the village name (Nippon Koei, 2016: Annex 11-8)

It was after Myanmar and Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in December 2012, that the public first became aware of the upcoming plans on creating a SEZ in that area, and in disregard of the existing law, the residents only had 14 days to move after they got the

eviction notice in January 2013. This was however prevented after the Japanese government called on Myanmar to uphold an international standard and conduct a community consultation beforehand. Despite this, no real community consultation was conducted (EarthRights, no date: 2)

To conclude, the EIA report is lacking information about the SIA, the only place in the report where social aspects are noticed is in the resettlement process. Women are not specifically targeted and even though the EIA reports a pretty high percentage of women attending, there is no clear structure in getting women to speak up.

6.3 NGO Guidance for Local Community

There has been a lot of media cover of the Thilawa SEZ and other organizations such as EarthRights International (ERI) have helped the local people with knowledge about their rights as citizens and explaining the EIA report etc. ERI is a NGO that works to combine law with the people to prevent abuses on Human Rights and the Environment. Their work consists of training community and grassroots leaders, advocacy campaigns and legal actions against perpetrators. They have offices in Southeast Asia, Amazonas and in the US. (Earthrights, no date, ii)

ERI started to assist the local people after the first EIA report for zone A was uploaded to the MJTD website. At this time, the local population was not aware of the EIA report. The community was given the EIA report to read, but the language was very technical and hard to understand. ERI arranged workshops in order to explain the EIA process and when the public consultations should have taken place. (Interview with ERI, 2016)

Men are more active in EIA, but it affects women more by often receiving less benefits from the project. Men are more likely to benefit through employment opportunities. When there were community consultations, they came with short notice to mostly information meetings. These meetings were not arranged by the EIA consultants but by the housing department. The questions and answers that are showed in the EIA report under public consultations, were questions that the community already had asked in a meeting with the housing department or MJTD so the community did not know it was for the EIA. Even though there are more men active in the consultations and workshops, there are some women who are very vocal and feel safe to express their concerns. (Interview with ERI, 2016)

Since the beginning of the project, the community has become more organized and has created Thilawa Social Development Group. They went to Japan in September to talk to JICA about halting the construction of zone B until the community, MJTD and government have reached an agreement about the relocation and compensation. One thing that complicates the compensation process is the fact that the government says that the people living in the soon to be developed area, got compensation in the 90's for the then planned industrial zone, but moved back when the development stopped. There is a lack of knowledge about how the compensation happened in the 90's and if they got compensation at all. (Interview with ERI, 2016)

The community testifies about force and threats when signing the compensation papers, many are illiterate and when asked for someone to read the paper to them, they were refused or they said something else. (Interview with ERI, 2016)

6.4 EIA Consultants

The consultations for the EIA was not the first time the villagers heard about the development of the SEZ as there had been several research studies done prior. In December 2012 the planning and scoping process for the EIA started for zone B. It was the TSEZMC that explained the project to the villagers and Nippon Koei assisted with guidelines. The project has to meet JICA's guidelines and even though they do not specify women's involvement, they always ask for how many number of women attended and the questions asked. Therefore, these issues are stated in the EIA by Nippon Koei. During the consultations, information was handed out in Myanmar language, but sometimes the information was too technical and hard to understand. Nippon Koei used local people to explain the information on a more basic level.

The EIA consultants did not notice any specific discrimination or constraints for women, other than they sat separately. Both men and women asked questions and participated, and there was a perception that maybe the men were more active. The perception was voiced that there are many strong women in Myanmar that are able to express their views and concerns – this implying that specific groups did not need additional support in the situation. At the same time, some cultures and norms constrains women from participating. So therefore, it would be good to codify or specify further women's participation in international procedures for EIA.

There were no specific efforts made to have the women attending, this because previously in this area, they have not had a difficulty in getting the women to attend the meetings. One suggestions that the EIA consultants got were not to have the meetings in the afternoon, because then women might not be able to attend. Thilawa SEZ might be different from other case studies reviewed as they already have been the consultations for zone A. Since they have many meetings, they are aware of the procedures and get empowered and free to attend. In other places, where the people are not as used to consultations, women are very quiet.

6.5 Analysis Thilawa

When reading the EIA report and talking with the EIA consultants, one would get a sense that the EIA process followed a strong consultation program with strong consideration of gender issues. Yet, after an interview with ERI, one sees inadequacies in the consultation process where the people did not know what the purpose of the meeting was, and had no knowledge about the EIA report. It is understood that no public consultations or information had reached the local population or at least not consultations which explained the EIA process. There have not been any special considerations towards women or gender in the EIA report for Thilawa, due to previous experience where many women attended. Since the development is cofounded by JICA, they have to report female attendance and write up whether male or female asked which questions. There was no clear consultation before the EIA report was finished. There were some information meetings, but they were not held by the EIA consultants, but by the TSEZMC with guidance by the EIA consultants. The first meeting with the company for zone

A came first after JICA demanded that international procedures were to be followed in the process by conducting consultations. But no adequate effort to promote and encourage women to participate existed. Since the women (and people in general) in Thilawa are used to meetings and consultations, we noticed that they were more talkative than the other case studies researched in this report.

Some constraints that exist in the society and which discourage women from participating are for example that parts of this land were taken by the government in the 1990s, but when the project did not happen, people moved back and started to farm the lands, and paid taxes. But since the government later claimed that these people had already got compensation, the question of compensation today is twisted and can be seen as a constraint. Another constraint is that culturally, men have more rights than women to make decisions, but it is the women who are affected more when large scale development projects are being implemented. The women are less likely to receive the same benefits as the men, like employment opportunities, but otherwise, Thilawa is otherwise pretty equal between men and women.

In regards to benefits for women, it is too soon to tell. But both Nippon Koei and ERI believe that by having women involved, the outcome will be better for the whole community. This should contribute to new views, considerations and aspects that men might not think about, like the location of the market and school. For women, these questions can be really important when they, for example, have to spend a whole day walking to the market and back because they do not have any other transportation. But for the men who most often drive the motorcycle, a trip to the market is not that long. There was also a difference observed in what the women were asking questions about versus the men. The women's questions were more focused on the environment and social issues, whereas the men more asked about jobs.

7. Myitsone Hydropower Dam

7.1 About the Project

7.1.1 The Area

The Myitsone Hydropower Dam, centrepiece of a seven-dam cascade, is planned to be built in Kachin State in the most northern part of Myanmar. The area is where the two rivers, N'Mai and Mali come together and create the Ayeyarwady river. The dam site is located 37km north of the capital of Kachin state, Myitkyina. The area is famous for its biodiversity, and is counted as one of the eight places in the world with highest biodiversity. (International Rivers, 2011)

This region is also largely controlled by the Kachin Independent Organization (KIO) and their army Kachin Independent Army (KIA). For them, the dam was an advancement on the Myanmar government's side and after not reaching agreement, the ceasefire of 17 years was broken in June 2011. (International Rivers, 2011)

7.1.2 The Owners and EIA Consultants

During the visit of then (current) Chinese President Xi Jinping to Myanmar, the contract of the Myitsone Dam was signed in December 2009 (Moe, 2011). A joint venture named the Upstream Ayeyarwady Confluence Basin Hydropower Co. Ltd. (UACHC) was established subsequently. The China Power Investment (CPI), the Ministry of Electric Power No.1 (MOEP-1) and Myanmar's Asia World hold 80%, 15% and 5% of shares respectively. (UACHC)

The Chinese state-owned CPI is one of the biggest power producers in China with focus on nuclear, hydropower, coal and thermal assets. Asia World Company's owner and chairman has been classified as a drug warlord and been linked to money laundering by the US government. (International Rivers, 2011)

The Chinese company, Changjiang Institute of Survey, Planning, Design and Research (CISPDR) joined together with the Myanmar Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA). The report was finalized in March 2010. (International Rivers, 2011) This signifies the signing of the contract and the construction of the dam started in December 2009 before the completion of the EIA report. (The New Light of Myanmar, 2009)

7.1.3 Project Operation

The Myitsone Hydropower Dam is one of the most contested and controversial hydropower dams in Myanmar. The dam was planned to be finished in 2019 and would then generate 6000 MW and would be the 15th biggest hydropower station in the world. The budget for the project is expected to be 3.6 billion USD. 90% of the electricity will go to China and the remaining 10%, will stay in Myanmar. (International Rivers, 2011)

There is no clear number in how many villages and people that are going to be resettled in the EIA report. Some sources say 51 villages, other 47, or 30 etc. (BANCA, 2009: 34f) And the populations is not clear either some sources say 20,000 people will be resettled because of the

dam, around 12,000 already have been resettled without compensation while another 5 villages will be moved to newly built villages with all their infrastructure. (International Rivers, 2011). The ambiguity around these figures demonstrates that the transparency around the project and affected people leaves room for improvement.

The project was temporarily stopped by the Myanmar government in the autumn of 2011 and was to be a decision of the next government (the current government) on whether or not to restart the construction of the dam. The new government has not yet decided, but is waiting on a special commission to finish their report. (Chellaney, 2016)

7.2 Women in the Environmental Impact Assessment

The EIA conducted for the Myitsone hydropower dam is not sufficient enough to calculate the social impact that the dam would bring and therefore also lacking in taking women and gender into consideration. The EIA almost solely assesses the impact the dam would have on the environment and not the social aspect.

Even though the EIA barely mentions social impacts, the recommendation from the report is not to build the dam at Myitsone, but to build two smaller dams a little bit further up the river which would have less impact on the environment. The report also suggests further research to make an SIA. (BANCA, 2009: 25)

7.3 Reports and Complaints

Since the dam construction first became public knowledge, protests against it have appeared throughout the country. Since Myitsone is the start of the Ayeyarwady river which runs through the whole country, millions of people depend on the river for their daily living and the area around Myitsone is often called the birthplace of Myanmar because of the river. (Aung, 2014: 45)

One of the reasons for the protests from the local people is their dependency on nature and the forest, especially women who pick food from the forest such as mushrooms, leaves, roots etc. (Aung, 2014:36) The villages that already have been relocated lost their source of income and many have moved away to find jobs in other parts of the country or abroad. (Aung, 2014: 45)

In the beginning of the project, around 2009, men were more active than women in participating in the opposition, one reason for this was that women were busy with their household works and often another job to earn money. One group of women that did participate in the opposition and who were active were the women from one of the villages that was being relocated, Tanghpri. (Aung, 2014: 49f)

Even though the communities complained from the start of their knowledge about the project in 2006, their voices and opinions did not reach the government until the election in 2011 and the beginning of the democratization process in Myanmar. It was the churches that first started to oppose the project and informed and explained to the people, what the building of the dam would mean to them. Through the churches' network, the information quickly spread through the state. By spreading the information and having gatherings in churches, they got

around the politics of public gatherings which were restricted in Myanmar at the time. (Aung, 2014: 49f)

As mentioned earlier in the “Women in Myanmar” chapter, as is the case in many other rural areas where development projects have resulted in loss of livelihood, many of the men from the affected villages have gone away to seek jobs in other parts of the country as well as abroad, in for example, China or Thailand. This leaves women in charge of the household, and many times, the money that is sent back home, is not enough to cover the costs, which makes women take other jobs at the same time as taking care of the household and family. The men that are still in the area, but are unemployed, have a big risk of being caught in alcohol and narcotics addiction, which also makes the women take on a more decision-making role, earn money for the household as well as taking care of the family. (Minoletti, 2014: 27)

7.4 Analysis Myitsone

The EIA report done for Myitsone includes just a small part of SIA, and the report itself recommends a more thorough SIA to be made before going ahead with the project. The EIA itself does not mention women and that they have different needs from men. So even though people’s needs were barely mentioned in the EIA, women’s needs were even less incorporated. Since the EIA does not cover much information about consultations, it is impossible to know if women were involved.

Lack of consultations for either men or women and a restriction to public gatherings outside religious places and the civil war in Kachin where Myitsone are an important stronghold of the KIA puts a constraint on the people to participate in consultation activities. And because of this, it is hard to know how the outcome would have been if the people were consulted or free to express their concerns. Thus, this is one of the biggest constraints that both men and women face in this area.

Since this was a desk study on the Myitsone hydropower dam, only speculation can be made on how women and the community would have benefitted from being a part of the consultations. But if public participation, for both men and women had happened, then there might not have been as many protests, the people would have known more about the effects of the dam, and compensation would have been more satisfying. The fact is that this dam intensified the conflict in Kachin state and KIA broke the ceasefire.

Since this is a sensitive project in Myanmar at the moment, getting access to stakeholder has been hard and therefore, no interviews have been made.

8. Upper Paunglaung Hydropower Dam

8.1 About the Project

8.1.1 The Area

Upper Paunglaung Hydro Power Dam (UPLHPD) is located on the Paunglaung river in the southwest parts of Shan state, around 26 miles east of Pyinmana in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. A total of 23 villages were affected and relocated from the dam area. (DHPI, no date: 6-11)

Shan state is located in north east Myanmar and covers an area of 155,802km². The population is around 5.3 million people, 2.5 million men and 2.8 million women. There are around 27 different ethnic groups in the area, among them, Burman, Shan and Kayin. (DOP, 2014: 12)

8.1.2 The Owners and EIA consultants

The dam is owned by the Myanmar government and was implemented by the Department of Hydropower Implementation (DHPI) under MOEP. The feasibility study was started by Japanese engineers from Kansai Electric Power Co. and Department of Hydropower and finished by Swiss experts from Colenco Power Engineering. (DHPI, no date:7)

8.1.3 The Project

In 1964, UNDP did a reconnaissance on the Paunglaung river and recommended the implementation of hydropower dams in the area to contribute to the country's development. (EIA report 2-8) DHPI started the implementation of the project in 2005 through the conduction of a feasibility study. In 2014, the hydropower dam started transmitting electricity to the national grid. Directly from the hydropower dam, a portion of the power does not go out on to the national grid, but are allocated to the 23 villages in Paunglaung township that were relocated. (Engineers)

All the village leaders were new and had only been at their posts for less than a year and were therefore not that involved in the resettlement and EIA process. Village leaders are chosen by the government and their role is to implement decisions from the government. Some of the village leaders thought that the government should have made a cost and benefit analysis before the implementation of the project, the research on the social costs was not enough. The township officer has only been in his position for 9 months and is the first township officer in Paunglaung township since it is the newest in Myanmar but some departments are still under the Pinglaung township. The main reason why the agricultural land has not been distributed among the villagers is because there is no land use department and development office in Paunglaung township and those questions have to go through Pinglaung township who are busy with their own township. The township officer is working on getting those departments to Paunglaung. When new information is going to be distributed among the township he calls the village leaders in normal cases and in special cases, he also calls 10 household leaders per village.

How the meetings looked like and who attended the meetings varied between villages. Village leaders were requested by the engineers to call to a meeting in their village to share information about the proposed dam development. Because the meetings were organized by the village leaders, the number of women invited to meetings varied from village to village. Some village leaders restricted women from participating, and only if their husbands were sick were they able to go, and even then, they were restricted from actively voicing their opinions. In some villages, women were more free to go to the meetings but usually the men talked more and took the decisions. In other villages, the interviews conducted for this research were the first time there were an only women meeting.

When the women were not able to participate, it often created an information gap, their husbands did not always tell them everything, or neglected to tell them at all, or simply just forgot information on their way home. There is a variation in time for when the villagers found out about the dam development. One lady found out in the 1990s when she was relocated from her land in current Phoe Gone because her land was going to be used as a resettlement village. Another woman found out in 2001 because her husband was a driver for the engineers, but most people found out in 2005-2007 through the village meetings and visits by the engineers.

Most people that we interviewed said that they did not believe that there is any constraint that enables women from participating except for maybe the former military government that threatened the villager from complaining. Other constraints found during the interviews were the hierarchal social structures that exists in the Myanmar society. For example, one former village leader said that he had received complaints from the villagers but he had not forwarded the complaints to higher authorities because the fact that they were in a more senior position to him. Women's roles in the community are mostly taking care of social events such as festivals, weddings, funerals etc. Men are most times the decision makers, but women take care of the household. The role of the women has started to change and now women want to know more, for example of what their husbands do and about the community affairs. Most men are welcoming these changes and say that they can see women making more decisions in the future, especially when women get more educated and young women have taken on a bigger role than the older women had.

Benefits from the relocation have been for example electricity, infrastructure, education, communication and for some villages also water and sanitation and health that has been improved. These benefits do not outweigh the impacts where the biggest impact is the loss of livelihoods and income. Loss of livelihood has resulted in many men moving away to other towns in Myanmar or abroad for example Thailand and China to work. In Hlel Pyin Gyi, women said that they also wanted to move, but were going to wait until the children were older. Most people, especially the women, except one believed that if they would have had the opportunity to participate and put forward their concerns, their lives today would be better. Examples on what they would recommend if the consultation would be today were job security, better compensation, start to cultivate the land before the move etc. The woman who did not believe this said that since they were not educated, they believe that the educated people building the dam know best. Depression was high among the people interviewed, some

older people had died from heart attack after knowing about the relocation so some people chose not to tell older people everything, but to gradually mention the relocation. Men in general thought that men and women experienced the same kind of impacts from the dam and in general they believed that women worried more than men. This was the case in all villages except one, where the men said that they worried more than the women. Both men and women tended to worry about similar things, like loss of livelihood and the future. The reason most believed that women worried more were because women have more responsibility at home, take care of the children and an overall worry for the community as well.

There was a slight difference in what men and what women complained about and recommended. Men were for example more interested in sports fields, while women were more interested in local cultivation like gardening and education. Also by including women, they get a better understanding and knowledge about the project. The villagers were able to forward their complaints to the Assistant Director from the DHPI both during the resettlement process and one year after. When he left, the township administrators took over that role. When the township officer receives complaints from the villagers he either tries to solve them himself, or transfers them further to the regional and Pao government in Tangyi, who then can transfer the complaints to the government in Naw Pyi Taw if they cannot solve it themselves. The monk was leader of all 18 monasteries in the Paunglaung area. He had received some complaints from villagers about things like the loss of land and lack of jobs. He had later brought up these complaints with the monk association but not the government. For him, this was the best possible outcome of the project and had no complaints.

Some of the villages would have felt more comfortable with an only women group to discuss and put forward their complaints during consultations, other villages wanted a mix of men and women in order to get everyone's point of view.

Since there were no EIA guidelines when this project was developed, it was hard to implement the best possible procedures. Traditionally men in Myanmar are the leaders of the household and the household might automatically associate an invitation to a meeting as being directed to the head of the household. This also shows in the meetings where women do attend, they are often more reserved while the men speak more freely.

8.2 Women in the Environmental Impact Assessment

When this project was implemented, there were no national procedures that required an EIA to be conducted, and there are no publicly available EIA reports for the Upper Paunglaung Hydropower Dam.

8.3 Analysis Upper Paunglaung

In the construction of the Upper Paunglaung Hydropower Dam, there were no community consultations that guaranteed women the right to speak their mind or an EIA that were publicly available. There were meetings where the village leader invited the community, hence, depending on who he was and the trust the villagers had, the villagers showing up to the consultations and the outcome were different. In the meetings, the villagers were informed about what was happening, but there was no possibility of complaining and there were mostly

men participating, although in a few villages, more women than men participated. This resulted in most women getting the information in second or third hand, either through their husband, who sometimes didn't give them all information, or sometimes the husband said nothing, so the woman found out through her neighbours and friends. But even through women sometimes attended meetings, there is no record in how they were perceived and listened to. One comment that was constant was that the communities couldn't believe that their area could ever be flooded. There was a lack of understanding of the project and what kind of consequences that it would bring. In most villages we went to, every village, except one said that women were not welcome and were unable to attend the meeting. In Phoe Gone for example, the women said that the authorized person from the government didn't want to invite the women because they talked and complained too much, and when their husbands started to raise the women's complaints in the meetings, they were not invited to the next meeting. Another women gave a similar statement, that even though they had gotten their husbands authorization to attend a meeting instead of him, the village leader had said that they had nothing to do there and should stay quiet.

When it comes to constraints, men often said that there were no constraints for women participating in the consultations. But there are constraints on women from several parts of the society. For example, as explained earlier, women were not encouraged to raise their voices in the meetings if they were invited. There is also a constraint from women participating when only the household leader attends meetings, which normally is the man in the family. Also the lack of education for many women can be seen as a constraint, usually, because men are the ones in the families who get education before the women. Lack of education also makes women more insecure. Another constraint for women was also when they were left out of information sharing and it became harder for them to plan the future and organize when they did not know what was going to happen. Also, the former military regime was seen as a constraint, not only for women, but also for men. One example of this is that the villagers were told that if the women complained, their husbands would end up in prison. Also, a lack of trust in the former government made people refrain from complaining. The major reason of constraints, which also includes all other constraints is the hierarchal society in Myanmar. The hierarchal system includes gender, rank and ethnicity. There was for example one old village leader who said that he received complaints from the villagers, but he did not transfer the complaints to higher officials because of the fact that they were higher officials.

In general, both men and women believed that women worried more, this because they worry a lot over the children and their future, and even though the men do that as well, it is considered not to the same extent. This because women's main responsibility is mainly to take care of the household, while the men's are to provide for an income for the family so their worries are mostly caused by the lack of income. And women also have an overall worry for the community in general, which is a trait that makes them important to include in the EIA process. The resettlement have changed the way of life for many villagers, the lack of agricultural land and jobs have made many men seek employment in other places in Myanmar or abroad (for example Thailand and China). When this happen, women are left alone to take care of the household and sometimes get another job since often, the money sent back home is not enough to cover all the costs. Usually, men are the decision maker in the household,

women sometimes manage the money. But when the men away, women take over the decision maker role in the household. Most women we talked to liked being the decision maker, but at the same time missed the support of their husbands that were away. There is a risk that this area will be drained of youth if they find that there is no future for them there, and the people who moves away for higher educations might chose to go somewhere else to work. This can be expected to will create a knowledge drain and prevent further development of this area.

When talking to both men and women, all parties believed that the EIA and development process would be better if they were to be consulted and listened to. There were some smaller differences in what they would recommend. Men said more jobs while women also said jobs, but included better compensation etc. But in general, there was not that much difference in what men and women believed they would have recommended.

Since almost everyone we talked to said that they could not believe that the water could rise that much, there should be a simpler way of explaining how a hydropower dam works and how the water level would rise. Everyone we spoke to suggested video as the best solution because that would make it easy for everyone, from young to old, to understand.

Most people believed that the future for their communities were good, and that the young would be more educated and that women would take over more decision making power. They expected to receive more jobs in the community and some men wanted to attract factories to the area, as a source of local employment.

9. Conclusion

In general, public participation in Myanmar is a pretty new concept since the former military government enabled public participation. Also since the concept of EIA in Myanmar is new, and the procedures requiring an EIA for big development projects and the structure on what an EIA should include came last year, November 2015. All the EIAs that are included in this report were done before this and all lack different things. The access to already finished EIA reports in Myanmar is limited and is one of the reasons why this report chose the ones that it did.

In the Letpadaung Copper Mine and Thilawa SEZ, the number of participants are recorded and the number of female participants as well, but what we don't know from reading the EIA reports from these two places is whether or not women were able to express their concerns and inputs freely, or if it was as in Upper Paunglaung's case, they were there but not able to talk and give input and in Myitsone, there were no consultations at all.

One constraint that we believe influences all the other constraints is the fact that all these large scale projects were created during the previous military government. Other informal institutions that constrained women from participating and complaining included the hierarchal system of Myanmar. The fact is that you do not complain to higher authorities. Even if the community complained to the village leader, he in his turn would not complain to higher authorities because of the fact that they had higher authority. The social norm in Myanmar is that you show respect to people with higher authority or age than you, including gender. This might also be the reason why the government people attending the meetings said that women were too noisy, or the fact that if they weren't aware of problems and complaints from the villagers, then they wouldn't have had to do anything about it. The lack of knowledge and understanding information are also big constraints for women and the community in general.

Women become more active and vocal during the process in for example Upper Paunglaung, and Letpadaung. One reason for this might be because many of the men have left the area in search of jobs, so it's mostly women left to protest. But it can also be from other factors such as being tired of the structures in the society and being angry for not being listened to. Since few women were involved in the EIA process, it is too soon to tell whether women's input actually helped women and the community in general, making definitive conclusions difficult on some of the research questions. However, when asking people, everyone believes that by including women in the process, the whole community would benefit from it. This is by raising different issues that the men might not always think about, issues more related to women's daily work. This showed some intuitive understanding of the benefits of more inclusive gender processing.

Many people have had difficulty understanding what the development of the project and possible resettlement would mean for them. One suggestion to better communicate with people might be to have a video explaining the process and functions of a hydropower plant or to have local people who have visited other projects present to explain the technical details in an easier way so everyone can understand.

10. Recommendations

10.1 Next Step

1. The next steps in improving the EIA process and gender inclusion in Myanmar would be to further specify women in the national and international guidelines so that there is no getting around the inclusion and participation of women during the EIA process. When doing this, it is also important to inform different ministries on why gender matters and that there is gender inequality in Myanmar. This is because many people, both men and some women believe that there are no gender inequalities in Myanmar. And therefore, in order to change procedures to include women, it is important for everyone to know that there are gender inequalities in Myanmar. It is important to remember to also spread the information about EIAs to the local communities. Otherwise, it is hard for them to fully comprehend the chance they have to change the outcome of the project to more fill their needs, for example, by making the information meetings simpler, show a video explaining the procedures and impacts the project will have on the community and its surroundings. As it is today, many people have a hard time believing that they really have to resettle, and with for example hydropower dams, that the water in the river actually can rise that high.

2. To improve the EIA and the knowledge among the EIA consultants, it is important to have Social Scientists in the project development and planning with focus on women and other vulnerable groups like elderly and disabled. This is because otherwise, these groups are more likely to be excluded throughout the process, while a social scientists see the outcome and possible impacts in a different way than scientists and engineers do.

3. Improve transparency in the whole of Myanmar is also something that needs to happen in order to fully develop the country and inspire confidence in the government. And by making more effort in making all the EIAs publicly available, transparency in the country will be on a good way. In here it would also be good to change the appointment procedures of the village leaders and to hold local elections in order to elect the new village leaders.

4. As it is today, the Grievance Mechanism is often not sufficient or easy enough to understand for the communities, and they end up with not knowing who to turn to or mix people or offices together. For example, in Thilawa, the community new that they were supposed to complain to a Japanese company. But they often just went to an office that had Japanese working there to give their complaints. In that way, the complaints might not receive the right owner and end up not being helped.

10.2 End Goals

1. With more women participating in the EIA process the outcome itself will be better. But it is not enough to just get more women to attend the meetings, there has to be more efforts directed towards transferring the information and complaints that the people talk about during the meetings to higher authorities so they just do not stay in the meeting. So with a more comprehensive grievance mechanism, there will be more steps for the communities to get their voices heard and change the outcome of the development. By having more women being in decision making power, and in the same time inform ministries and people in power why

gender matters, together with social scientist during the EIA, the end result would get the best possible outcome for everyone. This by taking everyone's best interest into consideration. This will empower women to be more active in other sectors of the society as well.

3. With a broader understanding of the EIA process among the public, the public will also push more on companies to make the EIAs publicly available. This will most likely also improve transparency and accountability in the whole of Myanmar. As well as further inspire change and public participation in the whole country.

4. Locally elected village leaders so that the villagers feel comfortable to come to the village leader with their worries and complaints in the future. As the system is now, in some villages, the villagers do not trust the village leader to do the right thing. Corruption and taking extra money is something that lessens the confidence in the village leader.

5. With an improved grievance mechanism, a burden of worries will probably ease up and there will be more transparency between the government/company and the citizens and in the long run, the relationships between developer and citizens will be improved.

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Upper Paunglaung Dam

Department of Hydropower Implementation (DHPI) (no date) Upper Paunglaung Hydropower Project – Activities on Resettlement of Villages in Reservoir Area. Ministry of Electric Power (MOEP)

Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

1. How women were incorporated?
 - Were women incorporated?
 - When were you informed? How?
 - How to access information?
 - Do you share information with your wife?
 - Did men feel included/informed?
 - What information from village leader?
 - How many meetings in 2006-2013?
2. Constraints and Endorsements
 - How constrained / stopped from participating?
 - How women constrained / stopped from participating?
 - Support wife to voice opinion?
 - Decision-maker in house?
 - Who manage money / budget?
 - Do you represent your wife opinion in meetings?
3. Benefits/Impacts to women
 - Noticed more or less confidence in wife?
 - You prepared to move?
 - Access to enough information?
 - Same information as wife?
 - Depression for you of life?
 - Impacts to wife same as you?
 - Benefits same as wife?
4. EIA benefits/ if women were decision makes, same outcomes?
 - Worries- same as wife or different, example?
 - Worry about self?
 - Family and community?
 - Should women make decisions? Why?

Appendix 2 – Participants in Interviews

Thilawa

EarthRights International

- Than Than Aye
- Katherine McDonnell

Nippon Koei

- Ms. Naoko Katashima
- Mr. Tomoaki Tanabe
- Mr. Minami Atsushi

Upper Paunglaung

Women

Age

1.		(60)
2.		(51)
3.		(50)
4.		(40)
5.		(40)
6.		(36)
7.		(32)
8.		(60)
9.		(57)
10.		(45)
11.		(42)
12.		(36)
13.		(31)
14.		(53)
15.		(52)
16.		(64)
17.		(57)
18.		(56)
19.		(50)
20.		(40)
21.		(40)
22.		(40)
23.		(38)
24.		(54)
25.		(54)
26.		(44)
27.		(53)
28.		(50)
29.		(36)
30.		(34)
31.		(32)
32.		(67)
33.		(66)
34.		(56)

35.		(53)
36.		(35)
37.		(39)
38.		(35)
39.		(30)

Men

1.		(59)
2.		(49)
3.		(47)
4.		(63)
5.		(47)
6.		(45)
7.		(56)
8.		(68)
9.		(50)
10.		(44)
11.		(31)
12.		(68)
13.		(60)
14.		(39)
15.		(33)
16.		(72)
17.		(55)
18.		(42)
19.		(36)
20.		(50)

Village Leader

1.	U Aung Moe	(38)	Phoe Gone
2.	U Thar Maung	(57)	Gway Gone
3.	U Thar Htoo	(53)	Hlel Pyin Gyi
4.	U Pye Toe	(46)	Kan Hla
5.	U Thar Myint	(51)	Htein Pin

Township Officer

- U Thet Htoo Aung

Monk

- U Khin Mar Thiri, (59)

Engineers DHPI Construction 1

- Nay Lin Director
- U Zaw Min San Deputy Director
- U Win Naing Assistant Director