



Kachin and Northern Shan Programme Framework

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Executive Summary

1. Background

The Kachin and northern Shan Programme was developed through a series of calls for proposals issued at different stages in late 2018 and 2019. The programme responds to LIFT Strategy 2019-2023 and the associated strategic shifts including: increased focus on inclusion and social cohesion; more concerted efforts on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; increased geographical focus on the ethnic/border states and conflict-affected areas; a greater focus on working with internally displaced persons and returnees; and deepened engagement with government at different levels on targeted policies and policy reforms.

2. Context

The context in Kachin and northern Shan States is profoundly shaped by the protracted conflict between ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and the Tatmadaw as well as inter-ethnic conflicts. Successive periods of conflict have led to a very uneven pattern of development, with high rates of vulnerability and undernutrition, limited employment opportunities, high rates of largely irregular and risky out-migration, degraded natural resources, restrictive gender norms, high prevalence of violence against women, and high rates of displacement. Kachin and northern Shan have a sizable population of internally displaced people residing in camps and camp-like settings spread across both government and non-government controlled areas (GCAs and NGCAs). The recent drive towards camps closures has increased the urgency of creating conditions for safe return in a manner that addresses the needs of both internally displaced people and host communities. Thus, in addition to developing interim and durable solutions to the specific problems faced by these groups in the context of camp closure, there is a pressing need to address the broader constraints to inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

3. Programme approach

The Kachin and northern Shan Programme responds to the specific challenges of the region through a series of integrated interventions working with relevant government and non-government service providers in both Government and Non-Government Controlled Areas, creating synergies with existing humanitarian and peace building



initiatives within a nexus¹ framework. It will do so in a manner that places particular emphasis on:

- Mainstreaming conflict sensitivity and social cohesion into all programme interventions;
- Supporting safe return, resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced people and those living in camps and camp-like conditions;
- Contributing to pro-poor and inclusive policy/legislative changes and implementation;
- Demonstrating sustainable and/or scalable models and approaches within the framework of the humanitarian-development-peace 'nexus' by working across conflict lines to secure rights, improve livelihoods and increase access to services;
- Enhancing the capacity of local institutions and service providers, including government and ethnic service providers (ESPs), to deliver inclusive services to vulnerable individuals, households and communities;
- Increasing technical networking, research, advocacy and organisational capacity and effectiveness of civil society organisations;
- Advancing social inclusion and empowerment agenda across all sectors, with a particular focus on gender equality, youth engagement and people with disabilities;
- Leveraging synergies and complementarities through enhanced coordination and joint planning/learning processes to achieve common objectives and lasting impact.

4. Programme results

Overall the programme is aligned with LIFT's overarching goal and high level outcomes: **enhanced resilience and sustainable livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable in Myanmar**, by **increasing incomes, improving nutritional status of women and children**, and **reducing vulnerability**. The programme aims to contribute to this through a series of programme-specific results:

- **Women empowerment:** Women are empowered and exert greater agency in their lives, ownership of land, livelihoods and control over decisions related to themselves, their children and their households; they are active participants and leaders in social change processes.
- **Secure land rights:** Women, men and internally displaced people gain secure individual and common land rights that expand their access to services and productive resources.
- **Inclusive livelihood systems:** Township livelihood and food systems become more inclusive and just, expanding the opportunities for secure and sustainable

¹ The term 'nexus' is increasingly being used to refer to 'the work needed to coherently address people's vulnerability before, during and after crises.' It is concerned with the intersection of humanitarian, peace and development initiatives, which have traditionally operated in a fragmented/uncoordinated manner, resulting in results that are widely recognised to be unsatisfactory. For further details refer to: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/dp-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-260619-en_0.pdf



livelihoods and for small and marginal producers to secure better access to markets and better prices.

- **Improved nutritional status:** Women, adolescent girls, children, and other vulnerable groups including internally displaced people secure improved nutritional outcomes through adoption of improved practices, access to nutritious food and improved nutrition-related services, with the support of family and community members.
- **Safer migration:** internally displaced people and host communities have safe and beneficial migration experiences, and trafficking survivors and vulnerable migrants are able to socially and economically reintegrate into their communities of origin.
- **Improved work opportunities:** internally displaced people and host communities secure increased incomes through access to decent jobs and self-employment in profitable small businesses in the local labour market, including for youth, women and people with disabilities.

5. Programme interventions

To achieve these results LIFT has developed a package of 14 interventions (see Annex 1 for further details) in Kachin and northern Shan spread across its four main programmatic areas: (1) Nutrition; (2) Decent Work and Labour Mobility; (3) Agriculture, Markets and Food Systems; and (4) Financial Inclusion. Five projects are primarily focused on nutrition, three are focused on decent work and labour mobility, three on agriculture markets and food systems (focusing in particular on land and township livelihood systems) and three are focused on financial inclusion. Almost all of the projects include elements from across multiple themes. The lead implementation partners of these projects have partnered with a total of 22 sub-partners, composed almost entirely of national and local level CSOs. The projects work with a wide range of stakeholders across both government and non-government controlled areas. Through these interventions and other LIFT-supported activities within Kachin and northern Shan States, the programme is expected to contribute to a series of specific policy, systemic change and learning objectives.

Nutrition

The nutrition efforts will be mainly shaped within the MS-NPAN framework to support its implementation in Kachin and northern Shan States. Emphasis will be given to expanding the reach of nutrition services to hard-to-reach areas, reducing barriers to access (especially for women), supporting the engagement of ethnic health organizations (EHOs) and CSOs in planning processes, enhancing transparency and coordination in ensuring resourcing and capacity, and supporting the roll out of the government led Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) with comprehensive nutrition social behaviour change communication (SBCC). It will also explore different modalities for expanding access to nutritious foods in remote areas and the creation of an enabling environment for the adoption of optimal nutrition, health, and hygiene behaviours.



Decent work and labour mobility

Under this thematic area, the programme will focus on harnessing the benefits of migration for development by strengthening subnational migration governance policies in Kachin State; expanding opportunities for safe and regular migration through progress toward a bilateral agreement between Myanmar and China on temporary labour migration; ensuring evidence-based policy development on human trafficking from Kachin and Northern Shan States; and increasing equitable access to market-oriented vocational training and certification for internally displaced persons, women and people with disabilities. The latter component will be achieved through working closely with job seekers, vocational training providers, and private sector companies. The programme will also include a focus on promoting safe migration through information and support services through government, CSOs, EAOs, community members and cross-border networks.

Agriculture, Markets and Food Systems

The focus of this thematic area is on land rights and creation of more just and inclusive township livelihood systems. The work on land rights is focused on securing tenure rights for women and smallholder farmers, including rights related to community-managed land resources, and ensuring that land tenure and land administration reform processes are informed by evidence and include all relevant stakeholders, including internally displaced persons, CSOs and EAOs. This work will include the establishment of innovative approaches to resolving land disputes and providing access to legal advisory services. The work on township livelihood systems will focus on increasing the voice of civil society in township governance processes. Linking with the work on nutrition, various options for expanding the production, marketing and consumption of nutritious foods will be explored.

Financial inclusion

Efforts under this theme focus on the expansion of financial services and products tailored to the needs of underserved communities, supporting the institutional development of financial cooperatives and expanding public access to formal financial services leading to enhanced client, household, and community well-being.

6. MEAL

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) will play an important role in supporting programmes by generating and sharing evidence on the effectiveness of innovative solutions and approaches that address the context-specific needs of specific groups, and conducting in-depth research to support more informed policy- and decision-making. The programme will also create spaces and platforms that facilitate the exchange of evidence/knowledge and ongoing coordination with a view to enabling collective learning, facilitating joint contribution to overarching objectives and strengthening synergies and complementarities.



Some of the key learning and innovation areas to which the programme will contribute include:

- Assessing the effectiveness of different approaches for addressing nutrition issues within and outside of camps, and for conflict affected populations;
- Deepening knowledge on migration patterns, drivers and impacts, and the opportunities for making migration safer and more rewarding, particularly for women, internally displaced people, youth and people with disabilities;
- Generating evidence on sustainable and scalable models of vocational training/skills development targeting key vulnerable groups and assessing their contribution to enhancing the resilience of vulnerable households;
- Testing innovative models of legal aid and multi-stakeholder dispute resolution on land issues, particularly with regard to internally displaced people and women;
- Innovative models for enhancing community and civil society engagement in the governance of local livelihood systems.

A mid-term review will be commissioned to assess the overall programme performance with respect to its various objectives and inform ongoing adaptive management. Particular attention will be given to LIFT Strategic Evaluation Questions focused on conflict sensitivity, gender and inclusion, sustainability and scalability, strengthened local capacity and programme synergies. The overall programme will be evaluated through a series of project and multi-project evaluations to be determined during the course of programme implementation.

Background

The Kachin and northern Shan Programme was developed through a series of calls for proposals issued at different stages in late 2018 and 2019. The programme responds to LIFT Strategy 2019-2023 and the associated strategic shifts including: increased focus on **inclusion and social cohesion**; more concerted efforts on promoting **gender equality and women's empowerment**; increased geographical focus on the ethnic/border states and **conflict-affected areas**; a greater focus on working with **internally displaced persons and returnees**; and increased work with government at different levels on targeted policies and policy reforms.

The programme comprises a package of integrated interventions which work in government and non-government controlled areas with relevant government and non-government service providers and creating synergies with existing humanitarian and peace building initiatives within the nexus space. Under this programme, LIFT together with partners will explore, identify and pursue opportunities for coordinated research and advocacy to support policy development and amplify civil society voices. As the relationship between vulnerability, nutrition, decent work and labour mobility, resilience, protection, food security and indebtedness is not linear, causes of vulnerability would be explored to inform an integrated programme, across implementing partners, that responds to the multiple pathways which lead to vulnerability, and in so doing also reduce the complex vulnerability risk factors. The programme will provide an overall framework for integration to guide the implementation of projects and ensure that synergies, complementarities and coordination between them are effectively leveraged to maximise impact on resilience of the target population.

An integrated programme will require greater coordination and closer working relationships between implementing partners to identify synergies and maximize impact. This will be underpinned by a programme MEAL framework that includes an integrated programme Theory of Change, a set of programme-level policy and learning objectives and associated plans, programme level indicators, and a structured approach to programme-level cross-learning and adaptation. The overall MEAL approach will be refined in collaboration with implementing partners and relevant stakeholders and will include opportunities for capacity support and guidance on MEAL where necessary.

The programme policy and learning objectives will build on the existing LIFT Strategic Evaluation Questions (SEQs) and will explore such topics as:

- Inclusion of internally displaced persons and returnees in development programmes;
- Gender equality and women empowerment;



- Social inclusion and specifically the inclusion of women, youth and people living with disabilities;
- Working in the ethnic/border states and conflict-affected areas, particularly on issues of conflict sensitivity;
- Working with governing authorities on targeted policies and policy reforms.

To support the above, LIFT will establish a partners coordination mechanism that will bring implementing partners together every three months to share information and address key issues. This will help to ensure that partners are able to keep updated on the rapidly changing conflict dynamics, including camp closure plans, and coordinate and adapt their activities accordingly. The coordination mechanism will maximise the collective impact of the programme partners through harmonisation of technical approaches, ensuring coherent policy and advocacy work, identifying areas of joint work and coordinating complementary interventions, strengthening relations with local counterparts and decision-makers, reducing fragmentation and exchanging knowledge, tools and approaches. The coordination mechanisms will place particular emphasis on conflict sensitive ways of working and the implementation of LIFT's conflict sensitivity principles.

Appropriate platforms and mechanisms for engaging with the government and ethnic service providers will also be sought out, giving due consideration to the ongoing conflict dynamics and their implications for inclusion and participation of all stakeholders.

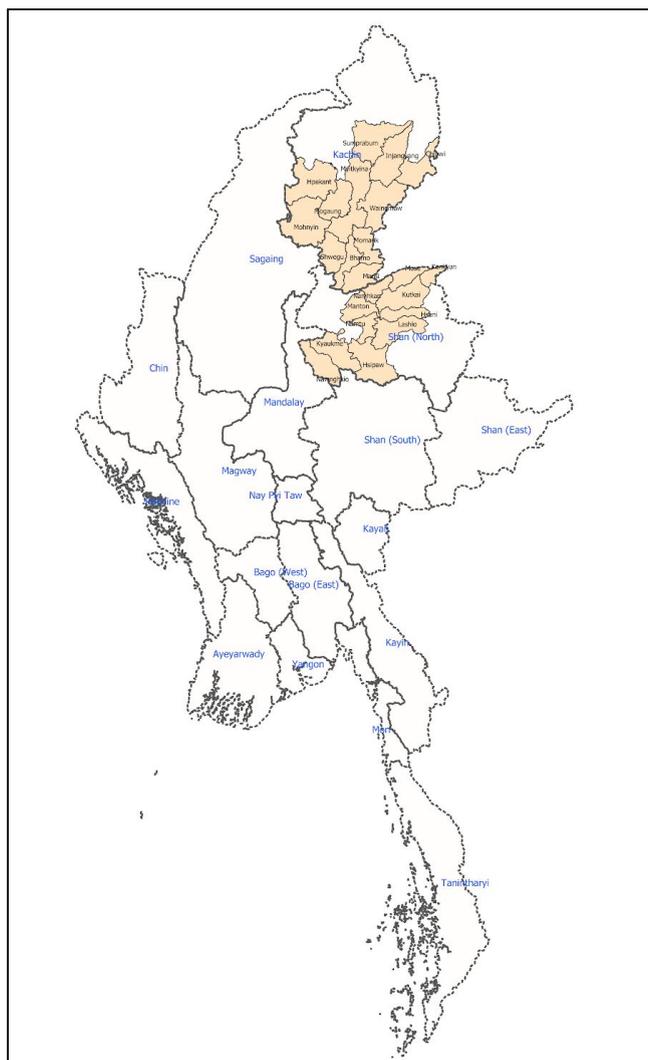


Context

Overview

Kachin and northern Shan States are rich in natural resources, including minerals, hydropower, and timber in addition to vast areas of productive agricultural and agro-forestry land. However, the history of intensive, long-standing conflict between the Government of Myanmar and Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs), as well as among EAOs and the presence of a multitude of militias, coupled with large scale illegal production of opium and heroin as well as other illegal activities (gambling, smuggling, etc.), have adversely affected socio-economic development in the states despite their tremendous potential. Kachin has a higher than average poverty level (28.6 per cent compared to the national level of 25.6 percent); and poverty in Shan State is even higher with 37.4 percent of the population categorised as living below the poverty line².

² MIMU website 2018



Protracted conflicts have impeded economic development and caused large displacement of populations. As of February 2020, there were 172 sites for internally displaced people in Kachin and northern Shan where almost 107,109 internally displaced people are living. Many of the displaced (about 40 per cent in Kachin State) were in areas outside of government control with limited humanitarian access³. Many experienced hardships due to displacements compounded by harsh weather in the hilly regions.

In addition to conflict, in recent years, land grabbing by agribusinesses to produce rubber and Chinese banana tissue culture plantations has created further displacement and is also taking a toll on the environment. Experiences of displacement are traumatic, often involving people fleeing into the jungle, losing livelihoods and property, and being subject to violence and discrimination.

Protracted displacement perpetuates existing trauma and hardship, and emerging issues exacerbate these realities, such as widespread fear among internally displaced people of losing their land of origin.⁴

Although northern Shan State shares a number of challenges that are found in other parts of Myanmar, several unique dynamics exist and the high level of complexity merits consideration of the area separately.

Northern Shan is characterised by its high level of ethnic diversity that includes Shan, Ta'ang, Bamar, Kachin, Chinese, Lahu, Lisu and Wa ethnic groups. Another feature is the high number of ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) operating within the area.

Northern Shan State sees a different displacement pattern than elsewhere in Myanmar. Compared to Kachin State the number of internally displaced people is relatively low (9,800 compared to approximately 100,000). However, this number is somewhat

³ OCHA, Kachin NNS Snapshot June 2020

⁴ Displaced and Dispossessed – conflict –affected communities and their land of origin in Kachin State, Durable Peace Programme, May 2018



misleading as most of the displacement is dynamic (i.e. multiple short duration displacements) rather than static.

The lack of livelihood opportunities is a major challenge for internally displaced people in camps and for host communities in government- and non-government-controlled areas. Several communities rely solely on humanitarian and development aid to survive. This perpetuates a lack of nutrition and food security and increased protection risks as internally displaced people take greater risks seeking work and access to food markets. Livelihood challenges are a significant problem in Kachin State and are closely related to many other social problems. These challenges can be a result of unemployment, underemployment, displacement or the struggle to earn sufficient income from farming or other traditional livelihoods. For many communities in Kachin State whose livelihoods are based on agriculture, livestock feeding, seasonal labour and charcoal selling, etc., armed conflict has meant reduced access to their farmlands and loss of their main sources of livelihoods.⁵

Kachin ranked fourth among all states in the vulnerability index developed following a countrywide review of census data by the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) and the Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme (HARP) in June 2018. An estimated 988,300 persons, or 60 per cent of the population in Kachin State, had some form of vulnerability in relation to housing materials, education/educational attainment, safe sanitation, drinking water, child dependency, availability of identification cards and/or direct exposure to conflict during the period analysed. Seven of 18 townships in Kachin State (39 per cent) fell in the top 20 per cent of townships in Myanmar with the highest maternal mortality rates. The HIV prevalence was also high. The disability prevalence rate in Kachin State was approximately 4 per cent (although not all populations in Kachin were enumerated in the census, and information collection on persons with disability was limited).⁶

Livelihoods

While many parts of Kachin State fare comparatively well in terms of development indicators, according to the Myanmar Living Conditions Survey, Kachin State is the second from worst state or region in terms of labour force participation/employment rates as a share of population and has the worst unemployment rates of all of Myanmar's states and regions. The most viable way to earn money for many people is either through illegal businesses including opium cultivation and narcotics trafficking, or through working in mines or trading areas where drug use is rampant.⁷ According to an

⁵ Exploring complexities: A Systemic Analysis of Social Cohesion in Kachin State, RAFT, November 2018

⁶ Humanitarian needs overview, humanitarian programme cycle 2020, Dec 2019, OCHA

⁷ Exploring complexities: A Systemic Analysis of Social Cohesion in Kachin State, RAFT, November 2018



assessment by the Center for Diversity and National Harmony (CDNH), 40 percent of the population in northern Shan State is involved in agriculture for their livelihoods. Patterns similar to Kachin are observed in Shan State in terms of engagement in illegal businesses and mining. Many people are also leaving because of the lack of economic opportunities, mainly migrating to China and Thailand.⁸

The employment and income opportunities for internally displaced people are dependent on where they are located, the economic situation of host communities, and resources available, especially land for agriculture. Prior to displacement, the majority of men and women conducted farming activities: cultivating crops, fruit trees, nuts and spices. Some men worked in pig and chicken farms in China and developed skills associated with intensive livestock production systems while the traditional farming systems were based on shifting cultivation especially in remote mountainous areas. In general, livelihoods in Kachin are characterised by seasonal casual employment. People from host villages are equally affected by the difficult labour market characteristics, although lower levels of economic vulnerability are experienced when they have land and productive assets to fall back on.

The lack and loss of livelihoods exacerbates broader social problems, specifically drug abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking and forced and early marriage. Without appropriate safe means to generate incomes, women are unable to meet their family's basic needs or protect themselves against shocks, illness, death, natural disaster or conflict.

Agriculture and land

A significant proportion (65%) of the population live in rural areas where according to the 2014 Population Census, there were just over one million rural inhabitants or about 200,000 farm households. This translates into an average farm size of four to five acres (1.6 – 2.0 ha), although a median farm size is closer to three acres (1.2 ha). Kachin's agriculture is significantly less intensively developed than in the Ayeyarwady basin regions, however, the state produces considerable quantities of rice, corn, pulses and beans, sugarcane, fruits and vegetables. The main crop in Kachin is rice paddy (180,000 hectares in 2017/18 according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI)). Other crops including corn (27,000 ha), and recently the introduction of groundnuts, fruits (i.e. banana plantations), vegetables and rubber are providing commercial opportunities for investment.

Northern Shan State comprises the districts of Lashio, Kyaukme, Mongmit, Muse, Launkaung, Hopang and Matman with over 2.5 million inhabitants and is more densely populated than Kachin. Rice and maize are the major cereals produced during the

⁸ RAFT Conflict assessment of NNS-Draft, 2019



monsoon season. Rice and maize are grown by nearly one in three households, vegetables by one in five, and pulses by one in ten households. Tea is also an important perennial crop and is grown by 9 per cent of the households.⁹

While traditional agriculture remains the mainstay of the rural economy of Kachin and northern Shan, there is a growing trend towards commercial development especially near townships, in areas in close proximity to Chinese markets and in contact with growing agribusiness estates. This process is viewed as a mixed blessing for smallholder farmers, due not only to access to relatively inexpensive imported agricultural inputs (sometimes of dubious quality) to increase yields, but also to land conflicts and high production costs, causing indebtedness, soil erosion through inappropriate land practices and the incorrect use of crop protection products. This is seen as a threat to the comparative advantage of these regions in providing a diversified diet and to supply markets with upland products which are nutritious, natural, healthy and ecologically safe.

There is still limited access to formal agricultural finance, and most agricultural value chains for smallholder cash crops are poorly developed, with limited capacities for storage and post-harvest value addition. In the context of accelerated incorporation into market economies, the competitiveness of smallholder farming remains limited, leading rural youth to seek alternatives to agricultural livelihoods. Combined with security challenges and the absence of secure or rewarding opportunities locally, young people are increasingly seeking employment outside of rural areas and in non-agricultural sectors.

Resource management and rights to natural resources including land, forests, fish stocks, and minerals are fundamental to rural livelihoods and food security, and to the economy of Kachin and Shan States. They are also a key aspect of the ongoing peace processes given the close links between local-level conflict tensions and natural resources in many conflict-affected parts of Myanmar. The vast majority of people from rural communities across Kachin engage in agriculture, including shifting cultivation and community forestry. While formal titling of farmland is progressing, much land, including that forcibly abandoned by internally displaced people, is not titled but under customary land tenure arrangements.

Safeguarding customary land rights is a critical issue in Kachin and northern Shan States, and land reallocation and appropriation are relevant contributors to grievance and conflict. In these regions, land is far more than an economic asset. Land has social and cultural significance and is a key source of identity¹⁰. There are many instances of internally displaced people's land of origin being appropriated for extraction of natural resources, small- and large-scale agriculture, civilian habitation and other purposes. Loss of land seems common, but the full extent of the problem is difficult to assess due to access restrictions preventing more thorough investigation.

⁹ 2014. Myanmar Population and Housing Census. <http://themimu.info/census-data>

¹⁰ Displaced and Dispossessed – conflict –affected communities and their land of origin in Kachin State, Durable Peace Programme, May 2018

Many stories of internally displaced women centre on the loss of their land, property and other assets they had before the conflict reignited in 2011.¹¹ Current customary and formal land laws, including government land registration procedures, do not consider sufficiently the rights of women to land: regressive attitudes towards land ownership and titling often mean that women do not share the same ownership over land or property as men, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities created by a deteriorating humanitarian context.

Migration

Migration is a prominent characteristic in Kachin and northern Shan, comprising both (predominantly) seasonal internal in-migration from other parts of Myanmar (most notably Rakhine), and international migration, particularly to China, Thailand and Malaysia. However, obtaining reliable data on migration patterns, particularly in non-government controlled areas, remains challenging.

The pursuit of better employment prospects is by far the primary driver of migration.¹² Migration is most commonly viewed as a way to access job opportunities that are unavailable in communities of origin and also to earn higher wages. Other motivations for migrating, such as limited educational opportunities, family pressures and the desire to get away from local conflict dynamics, are also contributing factors.

Various studies^{13,14} have found that the vast majority of international migration from the area is irregular. There is a lack of sufficient opportunities for low-skilled workers from Kachin and northern Shan states to migrate regularly to international destinations. Migration through the *jan ju jin* (stay or work permit) scheme in Dehong Prefecture, the MOU process in Thailand, and other channels to Malaysia and Singapore are available but tend to be expensive, complex and time consuming for aspirant migrants. As a result, most migrants from the area who travel to international destinations typically do so without the legal documentation necessary for stay and work - increasing the precarity and vulnerability of their situation.¹⁵

Migrants in Kachin and northern Shan currently rely almost entirely on social networks – their friends, relatives and other members of their community – for information and other forms of assistance relating to migration. Friends and family are the primary

¹¹ Life on hold Experiences of women displaced by conflict in Kachin State, Myanmar, Trocaire Oxfam, 2017

¹² IOM (2019) Capitalising Human Mobility for Poverty Alleviation and Inclusive Development in Myanmar

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ IOM (2020) SAFE project scoping study on migration among conflict-affected communities in Kachin and northern Shan states

¹⁵ *Ibid.*



source of information about employment opportunities abroad, acting as informal brokers to arrange documents and logistics. For the vast majority of migrants who go to China, more experienced migrants help to arrange employment. Migrants who already have jobs in China contact their friends and relatives at home to let them know when vacancies have opened up in their workplaces.¹⁶

There exists a proliferation of different routes for migrants to cross the border into China with or without documentation, though the majority of migrants make use of temporary border passes (which do not provide permission to work). Employment opportunities close to the border tend to be less lucrative - comprising low-skilled work in agriculture, retail, hospitality and construction - than those further afield (often in factories). For many migrants to China, opportunities close to the border serve as a stepping stone toward more remote destinations where better paying jobs are available.

Overall, the migration process remains riddled with risks and the outcomes for migrant households vary widely. The high costs involved often require migrants to borrow money to pay for international migration, putting them into debt before even leaving home. Travel across the border often involves spending days in cramped conditions on a series of trucks or vans, sometimes with days at a stretch stuck between different sections of the journey and without any information. At destination, some migrants experience hazardous working conditions, withholding of wages, forced labour, human trafficking, extortion or arrest.¹⁷

Such experiences notwithstanding, many migrant households do report that migration had a positive impact on their lives. Families who received remittances often emphasise being better able to support the aspirations of their children, pay off debts, repair their houses, invest in their businesses, pay for education and donate to community and religious events. Migrant-sending families also commonly report gaining new knowledge and skills from their time abroad that contribute new livelihood opportunities.¹⁸

Labour

Labour patterns and dynamics in Kachin and northern Shan are complex, shaped by long-standing conflict, widespread displacement, proximity to China and a variety of additional factors. In particular, significant rates of out-migration (particularly to China), low levels of education (compounded for youth faced with repeated displacement) and limited technical and soft skills amongst the remaining local population, combined with relatively high rates of in-migration of labourers from other parts of Myanmar who are

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ IOM (2019) Capitalising Human Mobility for Poverty Alleviation and Inclusive Development in Myanmar.



often willing to work for lower wages than their Kachin and northern Shan counterparts, contributes to high rates of unemployment.

While agriculture remains an important sector of the economy (almost 65% of the population in Shan and 38% in Kachin)¹⁹, labour market surveys^{20,21} and other studies have indicated that there is a growing demand for skilled workers in non-farm occupations, particularly in construction, hospitality, food processing, sewing, tailoring, electrical wiring, motorbike and vehicle repair, handicrafts and computers.

According to a recent report on the development of the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector in Kachin, the local economy in cities such as Myitkyina is burgeoning with a variety of small shops including car repair, beauty services, food and beverage and education services. The earning potential is also greater in cities in which more value-added products are made such as handicrafts and food production. Locally produced Kachin products are well known across the country and in export markets, particularly in textiles. Beyond the local economic activities in rural-based agriculture and smaller enterprise-based trade in cities, international trade across the Chinese border and local Chinese investments play a significant role in the local economy.

Moreover, northern Shan and Kachin are strategically located with respect to China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which is being implemented under the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor agreement. Within Kachin, the BRI is planning to develop the Myitkyina Economic Development Zone (MEDZ), covering approximately 4,700 acres of land along the historic Ledo Road. According to a recent report, the project is expected to entail investments of up to US\$400 million, which will include nearly 500 factories and 5,000 buildings.

While these investments could bring in significant job opportunities across sectors (construction, hospitality, and food & beverage), there are major concerns amongst local businesses and communities that projects related to the MEDZ will be contracted to Chinese companies who will not recruit a large portion of their workers from the local labour force due to skills shortages. There are also fears of land grabbing amongst local communities that are positioned within the development zones, which lack information and clarity from local leaders regarding the process.

Labour situation of internally displaced people

Currently, the primary livelihood sources in and around the camps includes agriculture activities, livestock raising, weaving, sewing, management in the camp committees, among other smaller activities. Casual unskilled daily labour is a main source of income amongst internally displaced people in both the government controlled areas (GCA) and

¹⁹ MOLIP (2018). Myanmar Labour Force Survey.

²⁰ ADRA (2019) Labour Market Survey for Vocational Education to Support IDPs and Host Communities (VESI) in Kachin and Northern Shan State

²¹ World Vision (2019) Labor Market Mapping for IDP Households and Vulnerable Communities in Kachin State



non-government controlled areas (NGCA). The majority of male youth and adult men earn around MMK 5,000 per day working in agriculture or construction industries. Livelihood opportunities do vary for internally displaced people in the NGCA, where internally displaced people do have more access to agricultural land as they are situated further from urban or village areas in comparison to GCAs. In particular, male youth are largely working outside of the camps on banana plantations, in mines (jade and amber) or migrating to China, all of which present significant risks in terms of physical safety, exploitation, exposure to drugs and other illicit activities, and exposure to hazardous chemicals (on plantations).

The majority of internally displaced people, despite often being educated to high school level and being proficient in Myanmar and sometimes even Chinese (at least for those in GCAs), are unemployed or under-employed and lack both relevant vocational skills and knowledge of labour market opportunities. Without access to farmland, some are able to work in agriculture activities requiring little to no land, livestock raising, as well as sewing and weaving amongst other smaller activities. However, it was found that these activities generate insufficient income and are of little interest to youth who often migrate in hope of finding better opportunities along the border or in China.

Internally displaced women are further limited in their access to earning opportunities as they are primarily responsible for performing unpaid household work inside the camps, including childcare. Young women often drop out of school early to take over management of the household, and wherever possible take on additional daily labour in agriculture and road repairs nearby the camp or village. Sewing, weaving and animal husbandry are the most common income generating activities amongst women and girls based in the camps and host communities with sufficient time to pursue remunerative work. Some additional livelihoods activities such as snack making, soap and handicrafts production and mushroom cultivation have also been observed.

Additionally, some internally displaced people lack the legal documentation (National Registration Card) to support mobility or obtain formal employment. For many, there are also language barriers in communicating Myanmar language, which further prevents internally displaced people from venturing outside of the camps. Internally displaced youth are also disadvantaged in comparison to those in host communities in terms of their skill level, employability and access to job opportunities.

Situation of people with disabilities (PWDs)

Amongst people with disabilities, educational levels tend to be somewhat lower, with most completing middle school and a few reaching high school level. Many people with disabilities expressed that they are unable to find or get to work without help, and that they face difficulties in accessing training, or that they must incur additional costs to do so. Faced with multiple barriers and challenges, people with disabilities often experience low levels of motivation and self-confidence, which further undermine their ability to secure job opportunities. Due to prior experiences of discrimination in the workplace, people with disabilities generally prefer to pursue self-employment over employment.



Skills Development Training Facilities

There exist a variety of training facilities run by the government, private sector firms, faith-based and civil society organisations. Amongst the most prominent Government-run providers are Government Technical High Schools (GTHS) in Myitkyina, Bhamo, Lashio, which are managed by the Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. These centres offer a range of long and short courses, with three month courses being the most common length.

There are significant barriers in access to formal vocational training courses at the GTHS for internally displaced people. The courses are only open to youth ages 18 and older and they require that students have completed the 8th grade, which excludes many youth who have dropped out of school. Students are also required to have legal documentation in order to matriculate (National Registration Card). Furthermore, the training facilities are located in cities and are unable to provide sufficient support to rural youth to travel and/or live onsite during their studies. As a result, the most disadvantaged youth have typically been unable to access such training programs unless bridge programs or additional support is provided.

There are also limitations amongst GTHS providers that restrict their ability to offer practical and market-oriented vocational training to youth and internally displaced people, including overstretched teachers, inadequate space, lack of career counselling and job matching services, and insufficient internship opportunities. More generally, the teaching methodology at the schools is not student-centred or practice-oriented, focusing an inordinate amount of time on theoretical study through rote learning. The GTHS in Lashio also faces challenges in recruiting sufficient students to run its courses.

Many of the key challenges affecting the GTHS apply more broadly to vocational training providers in Kachin and northern Shan states, including weak market-relevance, insufficient post-training support, outdated pedagogical methods and tools, and lack of internship opportunities and quality on the job training opportunities. Issues related to the selection of motivated students and provision of housing/transportation support also require more attention to ensure that they are able to complete the courses once enrolled.



Nutrition

In Kachin State, 36 per cent²² of children under five years old are **stunted**, an indicator of chronic undernutrition, according to the 2015-2016 Myanmar Demographic Health Survey (DHS). The figure is considered to be high by the World Health Organization (WHO), and in northern Shan State, where the prevalence of stunting is 47.6²³ per cent,

²² Measured by height for age

²³ LIFT 2016



it is classified as an emergency. The rates of wasting, however, are relatively low in both government controlled areas and non-government controlled areas with only 4 per cent of children aged below five affected by wasting, or acute malnutrition in Kachin State. However, malnutrition is a clustered phenomenon and there may be pockets across both Kachin and northern Shan where communities are experiencing higher rates of malnutrition than the state-wide figure indicates. The Myanmar DHS, which was carried out in 2015-16, excluded many areas in NGCAs as they were not accessible due to security concerns. More comprehensive data is needed to give a more nuanced assessment of the situation.

It is worth noting that the government's Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) programme will be expanding to Shan with plans to subsequently expand to Kachin. However, It remains to be seen if/how those in remote and conflict areas will be effectively served.

Box 1: Gender and women's situation in camps

Gender norms and dynamics in Kachin and northern Shan systematically disadvantage women, with significant consequences for a wide range of development outcomes, including nutrition. The situation is particularly stark in the camps for internally displaced people and in host communities. A recent study²⁴ found limited programmes targeting women and girls' needs in camps. Gender barriers create wide-ranging restrictions on women and girls' ability to benefit from humanitarian action, the peace-building process and socio-economic development as well as participating in and influencing humanitarian decisions that affect their lives.²⁵ This results in inequitable access to humanitarian information, relief and services, as well as leadership and livelihoods opportunities, and women being unable to voice the specific relief and protection needs which they require for their basic survival, wellbeing and dignity.

Women face a wide range of health challenges, particularly related to maternal, sexual and reproductive health, all of which are compounded by the lack of access to health facilities, limited awareness, and low socio-cultural acceptance of contraceptives. Additionally, access to water and sanitation facilities, unsafe water, inappropriate sanitation facilities, lack of hygiene (including menstrual hygiene), and overcrowded camps are key health issues. Women often need to walk long distances to find water; bathing openly in nearby streams, which expose them to further risks.

Sexual violence against women has been found to be widespread in camps, but also affects girls, boys, men and transgender persons. Such violence is perpetrated mostly by 'uniformed soldiers', with rape being the most common form of sexual violence against women. Domestic violence most is also highly prevalent and is associated with the lack of livelihood opportunities, with drugs and alcohol as risk factors. Fear of sexual violence contributes to women's restricted mobility and generalised insecurity. Women have very limited access to justice, both formal and informal. Victim-blaming

²⁴ Gender in Humanitarian Action Workstream (March 2020) Gender Profile for Humanitarian Action: Rakhine, Kachin and Northern Shan, Myanmar

²⁵ ActionAid (2016). On the Frontline: Catalyzing Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Action

is prevalent in camp, with their male-dominated camp committees. Forced marriage to rapists is not uncommon.

In northern Shan, high levels of militarisation, creates fear and restricts mobility for women. Moreover, cases of human trafficking for the purposes of forced marriage and childbearing in China have been widely reported.²⁶ Despite the existence of some government systems for providing shelter and protection services to survivors, women generally reported being unaware of any support services.

Women also have limited representation in both formal and informal decision-making spaces. There are very few women representatives in government bodies and when present in camp management and village development committees they tend to have limited input into decision-making. There is limited existence of women's support groups and forums at the camp level and at the household level women also have limited involvement in household decision-making. This is despite the fact that men are increasingly leaving their traditional roles as breadwinners: men continue to dominate decision-making while women are expected to be obedient.

Conflict, poverty, lack of employment opportunities, discrimination, gender disparity and a lack of women's empowerment are factors that are known to contribute to the high prevalence of chronic malnutrition in children aged under five, and poor nutrition-related practices. While women frequently take on an increased workload both within and outside the home, many were found to experience a generalised sense of shame and failure at not being able to provide for their families.

Diet adequacy during the first 1000 days for pregnant and breastfeeding women, young children, adolescent girls and the wider population is challenging to achieve amongst internally displaced people and host communities in Kachin and northern Shan as a result of poverty, a lack of income, rapid price rises and limited access to markets. Only 20 per cent of children in Kachin aged 6-23 months received a diet that was adequate in both diversity and frequency²⁷. **Reducing meal size and frequency** is a coping strategy that is used by between 10-15 per cent of both internally displaced people and host communities households in Kachin.²⁸

An infant and young child feeding assessment carried out by Plan International in Kachin in 2015 identified **poor infant feeding practices** and **poor access to health and information services** as major drivers of the poor nutrition outcomes.²⁹ According to DHS data for Kachin and Shan States, only around 50 per cent of babies under 6 months were found to be exclusively breastfeeding, and only 21 per cent breastfed at 2 years as per the international recommendations. There are also anecdotal reports of increases in unregulated advertising of breastmilk substitutes from China, which

²⁶ Robinson, C. and Branchini, C. (2018). Estimating Trafficking of Myanmar Women for Forced Marriage and Childbearing in China.

²⁷ Durable Peace Programme, Myanmar, 2018

²⁸ Durable Peace Programme, Myanmar, 2018

²⁹ ProPAN Assessment of Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices in IDP Camps in Kachin State January 2015, Plan Myanmar



undermine efforts to promote and protect breastfeeding and violates the Myanmar *Order of Marketing of Formulated Food for Infant and Young Child*.

The **availability of health care services** is described as patchy, partial and insufficient³⁰ in a study conducted by the Gender Equality Network (GEN), with services delivered by CSOs, NGOs, Women's groups, and church groups. Access is reported to be more difficult among camp populations in NGCA as a result of geographical isolation, weakness in the health infrastructure and overall weakness of governance.³¹ The Access to Health Fund is supporting the MoHS and EHOs to increase coverage of, and access to, integrated nutrition, maternal, newborn and child health services in Kachin and northern Shan State; however there are still barriers to ensuring equitable access.

When women were asked to prioritise their concerns, nutritious food was listed as the third concern, after clean water and electricity³². In terms of the water, sanitation and hygiene, the greatest gaps in Kachin camps are related to hygiene promotion, access to handwashing stations and menstrual hygiene³³. There are still gaps in coverage of water points and access to latrines. There are still concerns of the risk of violence that women and girls face when using the facilities³⁴. The DHS survey found that 20 per cent of children under five in Kachin State had diarrhoea in the previous two weeks, which is double the national prevalence.

Box 2: COVID-19 Impacts on Kachin and northern Shan

Kachin and northern Shan States are among the most vulnerable regions to COVID-19 given their close proximity and heavy dependence on China for cross-border trade and employment. Before the travel restrictions and border closure, total bilateral trade through the Muse border checkpoint alone was worth USD 4.9 billion annually and it was estimated that approximately 20,000 Myanmar nationals crossed the border each day to work in China.³⁵ Tens of thousands of Myanmar migrants are also known to work with irregular legal status in China.

By the end of July 2020, 44,051 migrants had returned from China,³⁶ predominantly through Lweje, Chin Shwe Hawand and Muse border checkpoints. Metta Development Foundation initially described the return process as chaotic and poorly managed but substantial efforts coordinated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Joint Strategy Team led to improvements.

In early March, the Union Government with township authorities across the States requested suspension of all group activities. Measures were gradually increased, finally resulting in a ban on visiting public places, strong requests to stay at home, suspension of public transport and travel bans. Economic impacts of the bans were

³⁰ Women's needs assessment in IDP camps in Kachin State, GEN, 2013.

³¹ Multi-Sector Early Recovery Assessment of Kachin and northern Shan State, UNDP & KMSS, Dec 2015

³² Women's needs assessment in IDP camps in Kachin State, GEN, 2013.

³³ WaSH Cluster Dashboard, 2017

³⁴ Women's needs assessment in IDP camps in Kachin State, GEN, 2013.

³⁵ <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/myanmar-negotiates-china-sending-workers.html>

³⁶ IOM, Myanmar COVID19 Response Situation report 12, October 2020

immediate in the region that relies heavily on trade with China. Year to year comparisons demonstrate that the border trade plummeted from USD 479 million in 2019 to USD 270 million in 2020.³⁷

The Tatmadaw Commander in Chief announced a unilateral ceasefire throughout the country in May, exempting Rakhine State. The Brotherhood Alliance extended its unilateral ceasefire, explicitly citing the need to focus on the COVID-19 outbreak.³⁸ Large-scale conflicts did not occur during the first half of 2020 in Kachin.

Northern Shan remained insecure and characterised by unpredictable and apparently arbitrary violence. Tensions and mistrust between the Restoration Council of Shan States (RCSS) and the Tatmadaw continued, despite the COVID-19 outbreak. This bodes badly for any effective cooperation between the government and the RCSS on COVID-19 responses.³⁹

By June 2020, no cases of COVID-19 were reported in camps in Kachin and northern Shan State. However, internally displaced people are not equipped to cope with the consequences of the disease as they lack access to the necessary resources and health care. It is highly likely that if the virus entered camps it would spread rapidly and affect the entire population. Given the constraints that communities of internally displaced people already face, they are highly vulnerable to disruptions to market access, food shortages, restrictions of movement and reduced livelihood opportunities that are being seen, or expected, in response to COVID-19. Good nutrition and adequate diet for adolescent girls, mothers and their children, and the wider population is challenging because of poverty, lack of income, rapid price rises and limited access to markets. The greatest gaps in Kachin camps prior to the COVID-19 situation were related to hygiene promotion, access to handwashing stations and menstrual hygiene. People's psychological well-being is already vulnerable due to the lack of meaningful occupations, lack of privacy, and their prolonged stay in camps, and can be associated with an increase in gender-based violence (including sexual violence).⁴⁰

As the COVID-19 crisis escalates in Myanmar, the health system's limited capacity to address the issue is likely to result in insufficient efforts to reduce transmission and a high mortality rate; especially in areas where clashes between government forces and ethnic armed organisations do not allow for normal provision of services. Reports indicate that COVID-19 prevention in non-government controlled areas is particularly weak due to the lack of resources.

The recent *Rapid Assessment on COVID-19 & the Humanitarian Situation Connected with COVID-19 in KIO Controlled Areas (KCA)* conducted by the Joint Strategic Team⁴¹ in Kachin, highlights a dramatic deterioration of food security, with almost all households experiencing a decrease in income, insufficient access to WASH services,

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[https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-china-border-trade-drops-us200-m-amid-coronavirus-outbreak.html#:~:text=The%20value%20of%20border%20trade,and%](https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-china-border-trade-drops-us200-m-amid-coronavirus-outbreak.html#:~:text=The%20value%20of%20border%20trade,and%20)

³⁸<https://www.arakanarmy.net/post/emergency-press-release-of-the-three-brotherhood-alliance-in-the-time-of-the-spread-of-covid-19>

³⁹ RAFT monthly report to LIFT

⁴⁰ Multi-Sector Early Recovery Assessment of Kachin and NSS, UNDP & KMSS, Dec 2015

⁴¹ The Joint Strategic Team is a collaborative effort by nine local humanitarian agencies involved in the humanitarian response to internally displaced persons in Kachin State.

difficulties maintaining social distances in crowded camps, insufficient provision of hygiene items, increased domestic and gender-based violence and lack of livelihood opportunities, especially for returning migrants.

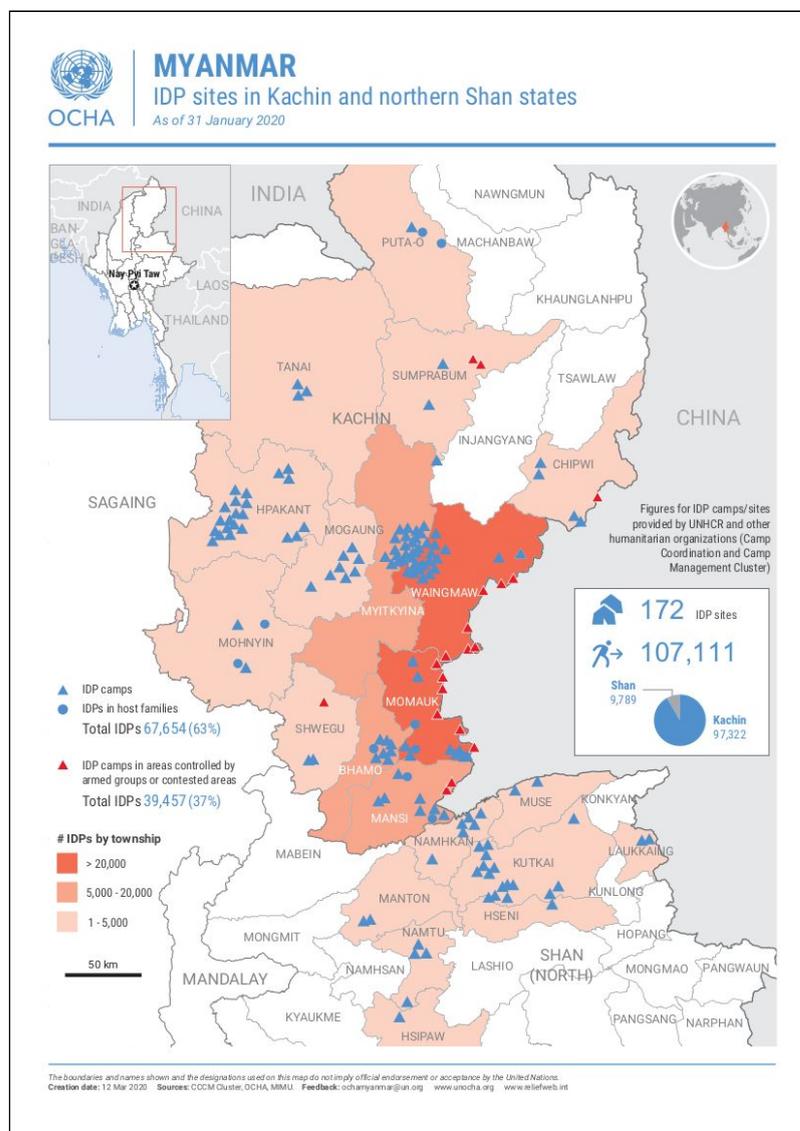
Conflict

Kachin State and northern Shan State (NSS) are in a state of protracted crisis, characterised by ongoing and **sporadic conflicts**, unresolved **political grievances** and an array of **competing interests over resources** ranging from logging and minerals to illicit drugs.

Kachin State

The conflict in Kachin State has been one of Myanmar's longest conflicts. The roots of the conflict between ethnic armed forces and government troops go back to grievances over control of the state's lucrative natural resources and the preservation of ethnic identity after the end of British colonial rule in 1948. At the 1947 Panglong conference, the Kachin along with Shan and Chin representatives agreed in negotiations led by General Aung San to the formation of a Union of Burma in return for promises of full autonomy in internal administration and an equal share in the country's wealth. However, the promised autonomy and wealth-sharing failed to materialize.

The Kachin Independence Army (KIA) was founded in 1961 and entered into armed conflict with the central military regime following General Ne Win's takeover of power in 1962. Although there were some attempts to broker ceasefires during the following decades, the fighting continued more or less without cessation until 1994, when an





agreement to retain arms but refrain from violence was eventually signed. The ceasefire, which granted political autonomy within a special region in Kachin State, was maintained from 1994 to 2011. In the leadup to the 2010 elections, the military junta backtracked on earlier promises to the KIA and other key ethnic armed groups, demanding they transform their armed units into “Border Guard Forces” under partial control of the military, or Tatmadaw. In June 2011, this ceasefire in turn collapsed after being in place for seventeen years and the conflict has since then remained stubbornly impervious to resolution. In May 2013, the KIO became the last large armed group to sign a tentative agreement, although it stopped short of a truce or ceasefire pact. While fighting largely subsided in most of the major ethnic areas from early 2012, tensions between the KIO’s armed wing, the KIA, and government troops continued to simmer, erupting in local-level conflicts in pockets of Kachin and Northern Shan States, and escalating again in early 2014. The May 2013 agreement signed by KIA leaders and the government’s peace negotiating team stopped far short of a ceasefire deal, and was essentially a seven-point pledge to “de-escalate” hostilities. Since resuming their old conflict with the government, KIA leaders have insisted on political dialogue in line with the aspirations of the Panglong Agreement.

One of the main drivers behind armed conflict in Kachin State is a political economy worth possibly billions of US dollars per year. Particularly focused on the jade trade (and also rare earths), the economies of this armed conflict are highly significant for both sides.

Despite the importance of these economic interests, the conflict in Kachin State is primarily political in nature. Kachin human rights grievances, and aspirations for political self-determination, have long been suppressed by a central government and military dominated by elites from the Bamar majority community. Before 2011, there was a continuum of opinion among self-identifying Kachin people, ranging from those who felt themselves to be ethnic nationality citizens of the Union to others espousing various types of federalism – and a few outright secessionists. The resumption of armed conflict since 2011 has undermined Kachin trust in the government and the peace process, and even in the idea of a ‘Union’ of Myanmar. As a result, there has been a surge in support for Kachin nationalism, aiming for complete autonomy or even independence for ‘Kachinland’.⁴²

In order to contextualise the recent escalation in violence in Kachin State, it is necessary to understand that the conflict consists of the militarised experiences of Kachin society, ever since the creation of the KIO in 1961, and the modern relationship with the Central government and Tatmadaw, as well as the added complexity of the layered makeup of Kachin identity.⁴³

Northern Shan State

⁴² Protecting civilians in the Kachin borderlands, Myanmar Key threats and local responses; Ashley South-December 2018

⁴³ Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2016



Armed conflicts in northern Shan State first erupted following Myanmar's independence and have involved **dozens of armed groups**. At the same time, militarized violence between the Tatmadaw and several ethno-nationalist and ideologically motivated organizations began in the late 1940s throughout Myanmar, and for the next several decades the Tatmadaw and these armed groups engaged in ongoing civil wars. In addition to the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), among the larger and most influential of the ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) operating in northern Shan State were the **Shan State Army/ Shan State Progress Party (SSA/SSPP)**, the **Kachin Independence Organization (KIO)**, and the **Palaung State Liberation Army (PSLA)**. There also existed an unknown number of largely Tatmadaw-allied militias. While the main axis of fighting was between the Tatmadaw and armed groups, instances of **conflict amongst EAOs occurred**, and alliances between EAOs were formed that waxed and waned in terms of strength and influence over the post-independence period.⁴⁴ After several decades of fighting, a series of arrangements between EAOs and the military government were concluded between 1989 and 1996, which led to a reduction in militarized conflicts in northern Shan State. Whilst armed violence subsided in the ceasefire period after 1996, core political issues revolving around demands by EAOs for greater autonomy and federalism remained unresolved.⁴⁵

Since 2009, many parts of northern Shan State have become zones of armed violence in which **multiple armed actors operate**. Namely, these are the **Tatmadaw, seven EAOs**, and **several Tatmadaw-allied militias**. The presence of so many ethnic armed groups distinguishes it from other areas of the country and in part reflects the high degree of ethnic heterogeneity in northern Shan State. This diversity of ethnic populations provides conditions useful for armed groups to mobilize ethnic identity as a basis for generating support. Of the seven EAOs present in northern Shan State⁴⁶, only the SSA/RCSS is a signatory to the NCA signed in October 2015 under the previous USDP government. Critically, three EAOs – the MNDAA, TNLA, and AA – are prevented from participating in the NCA, with the Tatmadaw insisting that they first sign bilateral ceasefires and disarm, terms they will not currently accept.

Moreover, in a significant development in April 2017 the Federal Political Negotiation Consultative Committee (FPNCC) was formed, which is a UWSA-led political alliance of northern EAOs in opposition to the NCA. The alliance is mainly political in nature, but together commands the most significant combined troop strength in Myanmar outside of the Tatmadaw, and has increasingly drawn China into the peace process.

⁴⁴ A Return to War: Militarized Conflicts in Northern Shan State, Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2018

⁴⁵ Yaw Bawm Mangshang, "Is the media biased against the ethnic armed organizations in Myanmar?" Tea Circles, July 31, 2017.

⁴⁶ EAOs in northern Shan State include the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Shan State Army/Shan State Progress Party (SSA/SSPP, also known as SSANorth), and the Shan State Army/Restoration Council of the Shan State (SSA/RCSS – also known as SSA-South). While not currently engaged in armed conflict with the Tatmadaw, the United Wa State Army (UWSA), founded in 1989, is the strongest militarily of the EAOs. Three other EAOs operate in northern Shan State: the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and the Arakan Army (AA). The latter two organizations were founded relatively recently, in 2009.



Another significant part of the conflict dynamics in the state is the connection between armed conflict and the drug trade. Several armed actors, including the Tatmadaw, militias/Border Guard Forces and the EAOs are all directly or indirectly involved in (facilitating) the drug trade.

The volatile and complex conflict dynamics in northern Shan, combined with the numerous actors and overlapping nature of their claims to territory, have all played a significant role in the reescalation of conflict that started in the aftermath of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signed in 2015. Conflict dynamics in northern Shan are not limited to the relationship between the EAOs and the Tatmadaw, since conflict between EAOs and smaller, mainly Tatmadaw-allied militias, as well as conflict between EAOs themselves, take place concurrently. The conflict is marked by sporadic and dispersed clashes, making it difficult to predict where and when future fighting will take place.

Meanwhile, **social tensions** in communities increase and become an integrated factor of the conflict. These societal tensions are largely seen as a **spillover effect of armed conflict** between the different EAOs and are thus seen as influencing, rather than originating, in community-level relationships. These spillover effects result from **human rights abuses** carried out by EAOs against members of other ethnic communities as well as people's suffering due to the armed conflict.



Stakeholders

The main stakeholders of LIFT programme include government departments at the State and township levels, EAOs and ethnic service providers (ESPs), the private sector, civil society organisations, community-based organisations, humanitarian and development organisations. The complex range of stakeholders involved in Kachin and northern Shan requires careful analysis and attention. It is important to note that there are shifting tensions between groups, including in some instances open conflict and armed clashes.

Government

The government is a major programme stakeholder with a crucial role to play in all aspects of the programme. The programme will work directly with government departments with mandates for health and nutrition, labour and migration, agriculture and land, and social protection services at union, state, district, township and community levels.

It is important to note here that the government has limited presence, if any, in NGCAs, which thus require different modalities of engagement to ensure that the rights and



access to services of populations in these areas are secured. Accurate maps of the division between GCA and NGCA are difficult to obtain.

Policy advocacy with Union Ministries will focus on:

- The Ministry of Education in relation to increased access to market-oriented vocational training for internally displaced people, women and people with disabilities;
- The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population on labour migration governance and the implementation of the Migrant Worker Resource Centres in Muse and Myitkyina;
- The Ministry of Health and Sport in relation to the implementation of the Multi-Sectoral National Plan of Action on Nutrition (MS-NPAN) at state level, to promote access to services in both GCA and NGCAs and to engage in multisector coordination across ministries for the achievement of improved nutritional outcomes;
- The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in relation of implementation of an inclusive Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) programme, evidence-based policy development and implementation on anti-trafficking and in relation to camp closure plans to ensure adherence to international standards and protection of human rights of internally displaced people;
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI), particularly the Department of Agriculture Land Management and Statistics (DALMS), and the Ministry of Forests (MoF) to promote secure land tenure rights for smallholder farmers and community-managed land resources as well for internally displaced people.

In addition to these specific ministries, the programme will interact with other government actors like Chief Ministers, the Ministers for Ethnic Affairs of Kachin and Shan, Ethnic Health Organisations, the Anti-Trafficking Task Force, Government Technical High Schools, representatives of the General Administration Department at State level, and representatives of political parties represented in the Shan and Kachin State Hluttaws.

Ethnic Armed Organisations

At present, there are at least **eleven non-state armed groups** operating in Kachin and northern Shan.⁴⁷ These groups have made significant progress at organising themselves into broader formations that can be more easily consulted with, and that present the entry point for LIFT consultation with EAOs in the area.

⁴⁷ The All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF), the Kachin Independence Organisation / Kachin Independence Army (KIO / KIA), the Kachin National Organisation (KNO), the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the National Democratic Alliance Army of Eastern Shan State (NDAA ESS), the Pa-Oh National Liberation Organisation (PNLO), the Palaung State Liberation Front / Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF / TNLA), the Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army (RCSS / SSA), the Shan State Progress Party / Shan State Army (SSPP / SSA), the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and the Wa National Organisation (WNO).



- **The Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC)** established in April 2017 extended the efforts undertaken to establish the Northern Alliance in 2016. The FPNCC is made up of the KIA, the MNDAA, the TNLA, the Arakan Army (AA), the UWSA, the NDAA and the SSA-North.
- **The United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC)** includes the Arakan National Council, the Karenni Army (KA) of the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), the Kachin National Organisation (KNO), the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU), the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the SSA-North. While most UNFC members are not based in Kachin and northern Shan the inclusion of the LDU in the UNFC and their role in the peace process suggests that it would be important to consult with this group. The Chin National Front (CNF) has also been invited to join the group.
- **The Restoration Council of Shan States (RCSS)** is an NCA signatory group that will also need to be involved initially in a separate consultation process in recognition of its key role, and to avoid the unintended negative consequences and mitigate the risk that could emerge from its exclusion.

Private sector

The private sector is a key stakeholder in Kachin and Northern Shan that plays an important and complex role, as has been outlined in the preceding sections on labour markets. The private sector is a major provider of employment, has a crucial role in the food system, and is closely linked with various investments in the region. At the same time, the private sector remains poorly regulated and is often implicated in conflicts over land, negative environmental impacts, and the violation of labour and other human rights.

The programme - across the different thematic areas - will engage a range of private sector entities mainly in relation to the demand and supply of nutritious food and agribusiness, the development of vocational skills through on-the-job training, apprenticeships and employer-trainer arrangements, and support job placement in decent working conditions regardless of gender or disability. Other engagements include work with Chinese-owned banana plantations in Kachin on access to sanitation facilities for workers and their families. While the programme does not have any direct partnerships with national or international private businesses and investors involved in major infrastructure development initiatives including the Myitsone Dam, and dams along the Maykha and Malikha Rivers in Kachin, it will seek to support engagement of civil society organisations in relevant advocacy processes to promote accountability and the protection of human rights where possible.

Key partners

Key programme partners include national and international development and humanitarian organisations, state level civil society networks and associations and civil society organisations that have a direct presence at the community level. Each type of partner is uniquely positioned to contribute to the programme objectives.



State-level civil society associations and networks play a crucial role in advocacy processes at the state and township levels and facilitate accountability, dialogue and coordination of development and humanitarian efforts, including across government and non government controlled areas. LIFT will engage both those associations that are directly involved in implementation as well as other groups that are recognised as having influence. Key examples of such civil society associations include the All Burma Ethnic Youth Alliance, Kachin State Women’s Network, the Shan Women’s Action Network, the Kachin Youth Movement, the Ta’ang Students and Youth Organisation, and additional youth and women’s groups identified by LIFT and its strategic partners.

Civil society organisations that have a direct presence at the community level are the cornerstone of LIFT’s programming in Kachin and northern Shan. These partners bring deep knowledge of the local context, strong networks and social ties amongst the communities they serve, high levels of motivation and an ability to work in areas that are inaccessible to international organisations and agencies. All projects have a strong focus on local CSOs, with a high number of prominent CSOs selected, including: Shalom, KMSS, KBC, Kokang Charity Alliance (KCA), Community Health and Development (CHAD), Namkyeo Parahita Foundation, Shan State Youth Capacity Building Centre (SSYCBC), Wunpawng Ninghtoi (WPN), Metta, Alinn Banmaw, Dai Fin Social Services, HTOI Gender and Development Foundation (HGDF), GRIP Hands Organization, and Ba Dei Da Mo.



Programme Objectives

In line with the refreshed LIFT 2019-23 strategy, the Kachin and Northern Shan Programme is focused on contributing to **enhanced resilience and sustainable livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable in Myanmar**. More specifically, it aims to lay the groundwork for and catalyse, where possible, inclusive, climate-resilient⁴⁸ and sustainable development in the region that addresses food, nutrition and livelihood security of the most vulnerable. This includes a specific focus on internally displaced people, returnees, women, migrants, people with disabilities, youth and those at risk of labour exploitation.

Cross-cutting strategic priorities

Cutting across the various thematic areas and results set out in the results framework below are a series of strategic priorities. These include:

⁴⁸ Climate resilience can be generally defined as the capacity for a socio-ecological system to: (1) absorb stresses and maintain function in the face of external stresses imposed upon it by climate change and (2) adapt, reorganize, and evolve into more desirable configurations that improve the sustainability of the system, leaving it better prepared for future climate change impacts.



- **Camp closure and internally displaced persons:** Supporting the safe return, resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced people and those living in camps through advancing gender-responsive and inclusive land-rights policies and frameworks and establishing mechanisms for ensuring these rights.
- **Contributing to policy change:** Contributing to pro-poor and inclusive policy/legislative changes and implementation, particularly related to land rights, climate resilience, nutrition, migration, anti-trafficking, skills development and access to services, including nutrition, health, WASH and education. Demonstrating sustainable and/or scalable models and approaches within the framework of the humanitarian-development-peace ‘nexus’⁴⁹ by working across conflict lines to secure rights, improve livelihoods and increase access to services for internally displaced persons returnees and conflict affected people.
- **Conflict sensitivity and social cohesion:** Rather than treating conflict sensitivity and social cohesion as a distinct sphere of activity, all LIFT’s interventions are expected to integrate relevant considerations in their design and implementation and thus (a) contribute to strengthening social cohesion; and (b) mitigate the risks of amplifying pre-existing tensions.
- **Strengthening local institutional capacity:** Enhancing the capacity of local institutions and service providers, including government and ethnic service providers, to provide inclusive employment, migration, skills development, anti-trafficking, nutrition and livelihoods related services to vulnerable individuals, households and communities. Increasing technical networking, research, advocacy and organisational capacity and effectiveness of civil society organisations in addressing issues related to livelihoods, nutrition and health, migration, anti-trafficking, employment, gender, land governance and rights, and market systems.
- **Gender equality, women empowerment and inclusion:** Advancing a social inclusion and empowerment agenda across all sectors, with a particular focus on gender equality, youth engagement and people with disabilities, including the strengthening of gender based violence response mechanisms within Kachin and northern Shan.
- **Leveraging synergies for collective impact:** In a context as complex as Kachin and northern Shan, sustainable solutions can only be achieved through the complementary and coordinated efforts of multiple actors working together toward common objectives across sectors (land, employment, nutrition, public services, etc.) and across traditional divides (government vs. non-government vs. private sector; government controlled areas and non-government controlled areas; and the humanitarian-development-peace sectors). In the case of nutrition in particular, it has been shown that intentionally seeking out and

⁴⁹ The term ‘nexus’ is increasingly being used to refer to ‘the work needed to coherently address people’s vulnerability before, during and after crises.’ It is concerned with the intersection of humanitarian, peace and development initiatives, which have traditionally operated in a fragmented/uncoordinated manner, resulting in results that are widely recognised to be unsatisfactory. For further details refer to: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/dp-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-260619-en_0.pdf



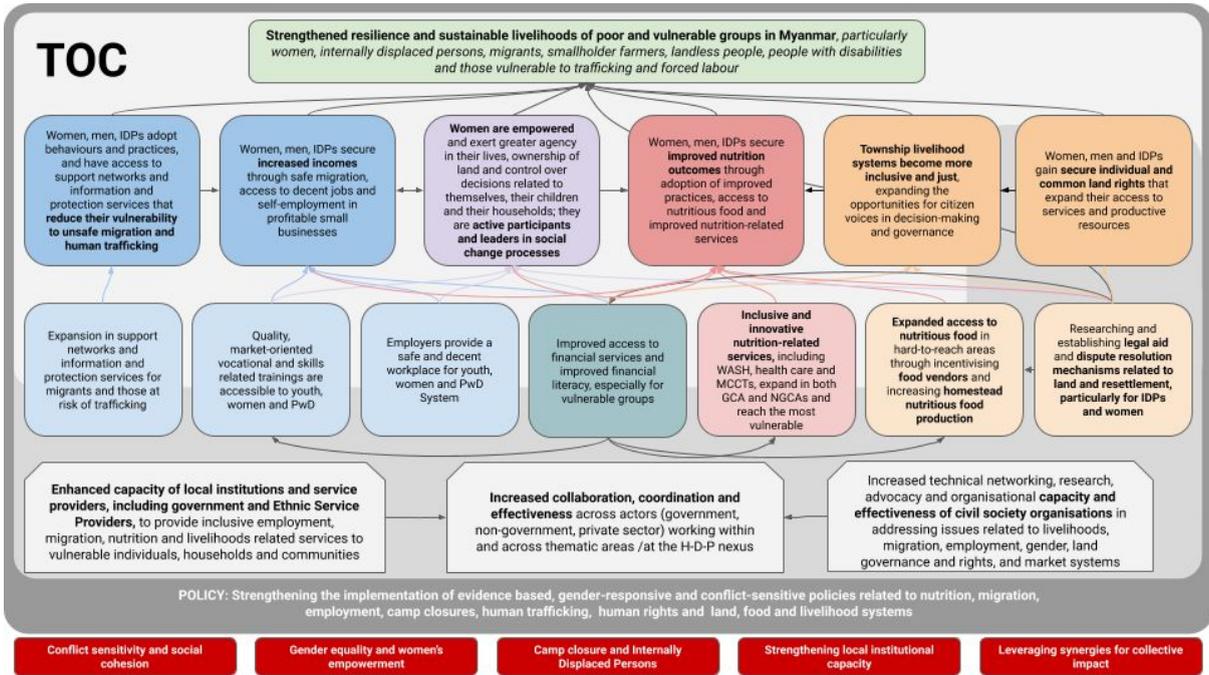
leveraging synergies both within LIFT's programme and with other actors operating in the area leads to greater impact.

Results framework

It aims to achieve this through interventions at the household, system and policy levels that will contribute to **increased income and assets, improved nutritional status and reduced vulnerability**. The programme results framework is presented in the diagram below. The box at the top represents the overall impact that the project aims to contribute to through the combined efforts of the various projects. The next row of boxes define the key programme outcomes that the programme aims to contribute to. These are:

- internally displaced people and host communities have safe and beneficial migration experiences, and trafficking survivors and vulnerable migrants are able to socially and economically reintegrate into their communities of origin. **[IOM]**
- internally displaced people and host communities secure increased incomes through access to decent jobs and self-employment in profitable small businesses in the local labour market, including for youth, women and people with disabilities. **[IOM, WV, ADRA, SHALOM, VF]**
- Women are empowered and exert greater agency in their lives, ownership of land, livelihoods and control over decisions related to themselves, their children and their households; they are active participants and leaders in social change processes. **[ALL]**
- Women, adolescent girls, children, and other vulnerable groups including internally displaced people secure improved nutrition outcomes through adoption of improved practices, access to nutritious food and improved nutrition-related services, with the support of family and community members. **[STC, HPA, WC, KMSS, SHALOM, WV]**
- Township livelihood and food systems become more inclusive and just, expanding the opportunities for secure and sustainable livelihoods and for small and marginal producers to secure better access to markets and better prices. **[UTF, UNCDF, VF, PGMF, BDM & METTA/GRET]**
- Women, men and internally displaced people gain secure individual and common land rights that expand their access to services and productive resources **[BDM & METTA/GRET]**

Below these are the set of programme outputs, with coloured boxes reflecting thematic outputs and those in grey boxes representing key changes in system actors and dynamics. Policy outputs are summarised below these and the key strategic priorities for the programme are presented in red boxes below these.



Description of the thematic programmes

LIFT's integrated programming in Kachin and northern Shan state comprises a variety of initiatives across LIFT's four interrelated thematic programmes (1) Nutrition; (2) Agriculture, Markets and Food systems (3) Decent Work and Labour Mobility; and (4) Financial inclusion.

Nutrition

LIFT's work on nutrition is spread across complementary nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions related to health, land, agriculture, markets, food systems, WASH, education and social protection, in line with the multisectorial approach promoted by the MS-NPAN. These interventions span the policy, system and community/beneficiary levels. Overall, LIFT's nutrition interventions and components aim to contribute to LIFT's high level nutrition outcome of **improved nutritional status particularly for women and children**. In the context of Kachin and northern Shan States, these interventions have an additional focus on internally displaced persons and those affected by conflicts. LIFT aims to achieve improved nutritional status for these target groups by developing context-appropriate and innovative models for achieving the intended outcomes and by contributing to policy and systemic changes.

Policy level objectives	System level objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To strengthen the MS-NPAN across Kachin and NSS to ensure active inclusion of EHOs and CSOs in the process of prioritisation of interventions and target groups; ● To promote coordination and transparency in ensuring adequate resourcing and capacity strengthening for the implementation of the MS-NPAN working with MOHS, MOALI, MoSWRR, MoE and MONREC; ● Supporting DSW, MOHS and ESPs in the promotion of equitable and universal MCCT roll out-mobile cash transfer closely linked with comprehensive nutrition SBCC; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To promote and support increased reach of nutrition services to hard to reach areas in sustainable ways which are reinforcing MOHS or EHO programmes; ● To reduce gender barriers which prevent positive nutrition outcomes/actions among women and children, specifically with regards to women's high workload, inadequate access to resources, limited decision making power and high child care burden, especially in low-income and migrant households; ● To enhance coordination mechanisms to allow for convergence of nutrition activities

	<p>across GCA and NGCA for both nutrition-specific and sensitive services, including the MCCT;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create an enabling environment for the adoption of optimal nutrition, health, and hygiene behaviours. This can be done by engaging key influencers to support mothers and caregivers, advancing nutrition and gender-responsive policies and creating a healthy, safe and clean environment for women and children.
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The main pathways to supporting positive nutrition outcomes in LIFT’s Kachin and Northern Shan Programme are as follows:

- **Knowledge and behaviour change pathway:** this focuses on working with communities and frontline health/nutrition outreach workers to provide context-appropriate nutrition, health and hygiene information and to facilitate behaviour change not only through individual actions, but also by fostering an enabling environment for the adoption of positive behaviours with supportive families, communities and government/EAO policies. This includes a focus on addressing gendered norms and empowering women so that they are able to make nutrition-related decisions (see women’s empowerment pathway below for further details). This component is closely linked with the various pathways described below, with activities oriented toward knowledge, attitudes and behaviour change ultimately underpinning successful outcomes associated with other pathways.
- **Production-consumption pathway:** This component focuses on supporting households with homestead production of nutrient rich food and/or production of nutritious foods for sale in local markets. Targeted support will include appropriate technical advice on production and access to inputs.
- **Production-income pathway:** Access to resources, particularly among women, to purchase those items critical to maintaining good health, hygiene and nutrition.
- **Women's empowerment pathway:** Women’s empowerment has been found both to serve as its own causal pathway, as well as to mediate a number of pathways to nutrition. Empowerment-related factors that can affect child nutrition include mental health (especially stress and perinatal depression), women's work load, women's access to resources, and women's education.
- **Market-consumption pathway:** this pathway is focused on improving access to nutritious food through local markets. It combines production elements (for increasing the supply of nutritious food in local markets) as well as distribution elements (by incentivising vegetable vendors to extend their coverage to more remote and inaccessible areas).



- **WASH-nutrient utilisation pathway:** this focuses on addressing the poor nutrition outcomes related to loss of nutrients through diseases related to consumption of contaminated food and water resulting from lack of access to clean water, absence of safe sanitation facilities and unclean environment⁵⁰.
- **Social protection pathway:** this focuses on supporting and strengthening the roll-out of the government's Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) Programme and nutrition-related health services in both government and non-government controlled areas. The programme will work closely with DSW, MOHS and ESPs in promoting equitable and universal MCCTs and mobile cash transfers closely linked with comprehensive SBCC alongside provision of health services.
- **Policy pathway:** this is focused on supporting the roll-out of the MS-NPAN in Kachin and northern Shan States, working closely with and across relevant government departments (MOHS, MOALI, MoSWRR, MoE and MONREC) to support the institutionalisation and delivery of nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions and services. The focus will be on (a) ensuring the active inclusion of EHOs and CSOs in the process of prioritisation of interventions and target groups and (b) promoting coordination and transparency in ensuring adequate resourcing and capacity strengthening for the implementation of the MS-NPAN.

Project name	Lead organisation	Themes (and additional components)
Improve nutrition status of the vulnerable population in conflict affected Kachin and Northern Shan	HPA	Nutrition, AMFS
Supporting Nutrition and Livelihoods through SGH in Kachin State, Myanmar	Shalom	Nutrition, FI
Improving the nutrition outcomes of conflict-affected people in Kachin State	World Concern	Nutrition, AMFS,
Building Resilience In Conflict affected areas of Kachin and Shan States	Save the Children	Nutrition, FI (child protection)
Supporting Conflict Affected Women and Infants for Nutrition (SAFEWAY WIN)	KMSS	Nutrition

⁵⁰ Chronic exposure to an unclean environment is particularly harmful to children. Key issues include transmission of zoonotic diseases, fecal-oral contamination (animal and human) of food, water sources and children's home/play areas, improper disposal of child feces, suboptimal caregiving or feeding behaviours (like prelacteal feeding), etc.



AMFS: Land, livelihood systems and access to nutritious food

LIFT's work on Agriculture, Markets and Food systems is primarily centred on three main areas of work: securing land rights for the most vulnerable, including internally displaced persons and women making township livelihood systems more just and inclusive and expanding access to nutritious food in support of nutrition objectives (covered under Nutrition interventions). AMFS interventions and components aim to contribute primarily to LIFT's high level outcomes of **increased income and assets, with greater control by women** and **reduced vulnerability of communities and households to shocks and stresses**. Nutrition-sensitive AMFS interventions are also expected to contribute to **improved nutritional status, especially of women and children**.

The AMFS component has identified the following policy and systemic change objectives:

Policy level	System level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote secure land tenure rights for smallholder farmers and community-managed land resources; ● Ensure that women have access to secure tenure rights; ● Promote transparent land management arrangements related to economic land concessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote transparent land management arrangements related to economic land concessions / Establish and strengthen land dispute resolution and mediation mechanisms; ● Work toward ensuring that land tenure and land administration reform processes are informed by evidence and include all relevant stakeholders, including internally displaced persons, CSOs and EAOs; ● Land governance arrangements secure and protect women's access to and control over land resources; ● Land administration officials are committed to making information about economic concessions available to the public.

LIFT aims to do this through a number of different pathways, developing context-appropriate and innovative models for achieving the intended outcomes. Strong linkages with pathways outlined under the nutrition component reflect the



significant potential of nutrition-sensitive agriculture in this programme approach⁵¹. The main pathways under this component are as follows:

- **Township livelihood systems pathway:** this focuses on setting up mechanisms that facilitate the systematic and meaningful inclusion/engagement of local Civil Society Organisations in township livelihood systems. Achieving this, ensures that the voices of their constituents - particularly those involved in agricultural production and marketing - are incorporated into local policy and governance processes involving both government and private sector players. This is intended to create an enabling environment that expands opportunities for those involved in agri-food systems to secure better livelihood outcomes while stimulating the local economy.
- **Homestead food production pathway:** See 'production-consumption pathway' under the nutrition component for more details.
- **Commercial vegetable production (food supply and agricultural income) pathway:** Small-scale vegetable producers will be supported to commercialise their production, from seeds through to marketing, thereby generating both a source of income for the farmers and increasing the availability of nutritious foods in local markets. The aim is to create a scalable model for contributing to both nutrition and income outcomes that can be readily replicated and/or scaled. Please also see 'market-consumption, 'market-income' and 'production -income' pathways under the nutrition component.
- **Establishing land dispute resolution mechanisms:** The complex dynamics surrounding land rights has meant that land disputes endure and contribute to increased tensions between concerned parties. By creating inclusive, transparent and fair dispute resolution mechanisms that engage all stakeholders, access to land for vulnerable groups can be enhanced while also strengthening social cohesion.
- **Legal support pathway:** legal support will be provided to assist people - especially women - with their land rights claims, covering both land tenure and broader issues of access to and use of natural resources. This will be achieved through the establishment of a paralegal support network and through mobile legal clinics
- **Knowledge and organisational support pathway:** training on rights and legal procedures for securing housing, land and property (HLP) rights will be promoted alongside the formation and strengthening of groups and networks that can work together to collectively address local HLP rights issues.

⁵¹ Key pathways and sub-pathways for nutrition sensitive agriculture are: (1) Food production pathway, including, (a) food access from own-production; and (b) food prices from changes in supply and demand; (2) Agricultural income pathway, including (c) income from the sale of commodities produced; (3) women's empowerment pathway, including (d) women's social status and empowerment through increased access to and control over resources; (e) women's time through participation in agriculture, which can be either positive or negative for their own nutrition and that of their children; and (f) women's health and nutrition through engagement in agriculture. Source: Ruel, M., Quisumbing, A. & Balagamwala, M. October 2017. Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture: What Have We Learned and Where Do We Go From Here? Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

- Evidence-based policy advocacy pathway:** evidence will be drawn from across different interventions, combining focused research on land rights-related issues with MEAL evidence from different interventions to inform engagements with key stakeholders at the local, regional and national levels. A particular focus will be placed on issues pertaining to the National Land Law, issues of land access and ownership for women and internally displaced people, the VFV Law, This will help to strengthen coordination and build a shared understanding of key issues and challenges as well as their solutions. Where possible, these processes are expected to lead to increased mutual accountabilities and joint efforts to address emerging issues, for example securing more timely resolution of land disputes at the regional level or addressing key issues in national level policies related to land-grabbing and its impact on women.

Project name	Lead organisation	Themes (and additional components)
Ring Chying	Metta/GRET	AMFS land
UTF (Upland Township Fund)	Swiss aid and Metta.	Civil Society / Livelihood
Strengthening Legal Resilience of internally displaced people and their Original Communities in Kachin and northern Shan State	Badei Da Moe	AMFS land

Decent Work and Labour Mobility

LIFT’s work on Decent Work and Labour Mobility is primarily concerned with expanding opportunities for decent work, particularly for youth, women, people with disabilities and internally displaced people; increasing safe and beneficial experiences for migrant workers and their family members; and improving protection and reintegration for survivors of to human trafficking. DWLM interventions and components aim to contribute primarily to LIFT’s high level outcomes of **increased income and assets, with greater control by women and reduced vulnerability of communities and households to shocks and stresses**. DWLM interventions are also expected to contribute to **improved nutritional status, especially of women and children**, through increased income and training.

The DWLM component has identified the following policy and systemic change objectives:

Policy level	System level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To harness the benefits of migration for development by strengthening subnational migration governance policies in Kachin State; • To expand the opportunities for safe and regular migration through progress toward a bilateral agreement between Myanmar and China on temporary labour migration; • To ensure evidence-based policy development on human trafficking from Kachin and northern Shan States that does not restrict the agency of women to make decisions about marriage, migration and livelihoods; • To increase equitable access to market-oriented vocational training and certification for internally displaced persons, women and people with disabilities through the development of inclusive policies on skills development in Kachin and northern Shan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance the capacity of public and private sector vocational training providers to deliver accessible, high-quality and market-oriented skills development training in Kachin and northern Shan; • To expand the opportunities for women, youth and PWDs to improve their soft/life skills through vocational training providers in order to increase their employability and likelihood of succeeding in pursuing their chosen livelihoods; • To strengthen the linkages between job seekers and private sector companies, vocational training centers and other relevant stakeholders to increase labour market efficiency in Kachin and northern Shan; • To increase access to empowering community services, peer support groups and livelihood opportunities for internally displaced persons and host communities in Kachin and northern Shan, including for women and people with disabilities; • To enhance the quality and availability of safe migration information and support services for migrants and potential migrants in Kachin and northern Shan through government CSOs, EAOs, community members and cross-border networks.



LIFT aims to do this through a number of different pathways, developing context-appropriate and innovative models for achieving the intended outcomes. The main pathways are as follows:

- **Evidence-based migration and anti-trafficking policy pathway:** LIFT will support research that helps build an evidence base on regional migration dynamics, safe migration options, the relationship between migration and development and protection and reintegration for victims of trafficking in the region. Such evidence will feed into ongoing policy processes and dialogue with the government and other key stakeholders in the region with a view to shaping policies and programmes and creating a more enabling environment for safe migration and decent work in Kachin and northern Shan States.
- **Safe and beneficial migration pathway:** LIFT will support initiatives that enhance the quality and availability of safe migration information and support services for migrants, perspective migrants and internally displaced persons in Kachin and Northern Shan through government, CSOs, EAOs, community members and cross-border networks. This will include various community outreach services and establishment of Migrant Worker Resource Centres to help migrants make informed decisions about migration and reduce the risks and maximize the benefits for those choosing to work abroad.
- **Expanding access to sustainable, market-oriented vocational training pathway:** LIFT will support the establishment of accessible, high-quality and market-oriented skills development training, with a particular focus on internally displaced youth and youth from their host communities, including for women and people with disabilities. The design of training courses will be informed by labour market assessments to ensure that courses are demand driven. Moreover, to maximise accessibility and relevance to target trainees, particular emphasis will be placed on competency-based practical short-courses through Technological High Schools and private sector service providers that lead to skills certifications. CSOs will play a central role in expanding the reach of these services to conflict-affected areas.
- **Improving soft skills to ensure positive labour market outcomes pathway:** Vocational training courses will be coupled with soft-skills training to help trainees secure employment and ensure they are successful in the workplace. The training courses will include content on nutrition and financial literacy, with the aim of increasing the prioritization of household expenditures to improve nutritional status. It will also contribute to safe migration and increased knowledge of labour rights by integrating related content, adapting existing modules developed by LIFT partners.
- **Strengthening linkages with the private sector pathway:** Linkages between job seekers and the private sector are essential for ensuring both the market relevance and the sustainability of skills development initiatives. Emphasis will be placed on establishing partnerships with the private sector to ensure that training courses meet the skills requirements of employers, and to facilitate job matching, job fairs and internships for trainees. In addition to linkages with training institutions, engagements with the private sector will include changing employer practices on gender equality (for example through support for

childcare services to reduce barriers to labour force participation for women and create jobs) and inclusion of people with disabilities.

- Facilitating access to enterprise development training and credit for entrepreneurs pathway:** Self-employment through micro and small enterprises is a popular pathway for many young people in Kachin and northern Shan to earn an income and has the potential to contribute to additional job creation. To support this, people who have received skills training and want to start their own businesses will be supported with training and access to credit to invest in their businesses. They will also be provided with ongoing business support and mentoring services to help their businesses succeed, especially for internally displaced and host community youths.
- Protection of human trafficking survivors and vulnerable migrants pathway:** The programme will support CSO interventions to deliver individualized case management and reintegration services to human trafficking survivors and vulnerable migrants to ensure their social integration, psychosocial wellbeing and economic self-sufficiency. The returnees will also be provided with safe migration information, so that they are better prepared and can avoid the possibility of being re-trafficked should they decide to go abroad for work again.

Project name	Lead organisation	Themes (and additional components)
Vocational Education to Support internally displaced people and Host Communities (VESI) in Kachin and northern Shan States: Sustainably Enhancing decent work opportunities and bridging the gap between the youth from IDP and vulnerable host communities.	ADRA	DWLM, FI
Strengthening the resilience of conflict affected communities in Kachin and northern Shan states through increased safe and rewarding migration (SAFE)	IOM	DWLM
See, Hear, Empower (SHE): Supporting inclusive and transformative Livelihoods for IDP and Host Communities in Kachin	World Vision	DWLM, Nutrition & FI

Financial Inclusion

LIFT's Financial Inclusion Programme will support the programme by expanding the provision of financial services in the states, including customised financial services for underserved communities, particularly internally displaced people and People with Disabilities. Services delivered to internally displaced people will also be available to the host communities to ensure that trust is built and social cohesion fostered. Financial inclusion interventions are expected to contribute to all LIFT level outcomes: income,



vulnerability and nutrition. Particular emphasis is placed on women’s empowerment by expanding women’s access to financial services, providing loans that contribute to women’s economic empowerment, and strengthening women’s financial literacy.

While specific policy objectives have not been defined for the financial inclusion component, the following systemic change objectives have been identified:

System level
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expansion of financial services and products tailored to the needs of underserved communities.• Strengthened institutional development of financial cooperatives.• Expanded public access to formal financial services leading to enhanced client, household, and community well-being.

The programme aims to strengthen the contribution of financial services to other other outcomes (increasing income, reducing vulnerability and improving nutrition) through linkages with other components of the Kachin and northern Shan programme and through the following component-specific pathways.

- **Expanding service quality and scale through strengthened financial institution capacity pathway:** LIFT will support interventions that strengthen the capacity of financial institutions - particularly financial cooperatives - through improved financial and data management systems. Such initiatives will enable more efficient and modernised operations at a larger scale, so that a larger number of beneficiaries can be supported in a more reliable manner.
- **Making financial services more relevant through product diversification pathway:** LIFT will support financial institutions to develop a diversified portfolio of financial products and services (credit, saving facilities, etc.) tailored to the needs of specific target groups including women, women headed households, landless households, internally displaced people, conflict affected communities, people with disabilities, and vulnerable migrants. Financial products will cover a range of needs such as livelihood, education, health, and emergencies. This is expected to lead to increased financial security at the household level, while also directly contributing to enhanced income, reduced vulnerability and improved nutrition outcomes.
- **Supporting improved household/business financial management through financial literacy pathway:** All financial services provided by LIFT will be accompanied by financial literacy training in order to empower those accessing credit or accumulating savings to use these resources in a responsible and rewarding manner with adequate understanding of the options they have and their associated risks.

Project name	Lead organisation	Themes (and additional components)
Inclusive for Underserved Populations in Myanmar	Vision fund Myanmar	FI
Livelihood Improvement in Vulnerable Environment	PGMF	FI
Leaving No One Behind Initiatives in Kachin State	UNCDF	FI

Learning and innovation

Learning and innovation is of great importance to LIFT and particularly so in the challenging contexts of Kachin and northern Shan States, where innovative solutions to entrenched problems are in great need. In addition to directly improving the lives of target beneficiaries or contributing to policy and system changes that support these improvements, LIFT's investments also generate evidence and knowledge that can support programming and policy in the sector more widely. This evidence and knowledge may take various forms, ranging from research into the context to evidence about the effectiveness of innovation approaches and solutions to long-standing problems. This section provides an overview of the learning and innovation agenda of the Kachin and northern Shan programme and indicates the key areas where LIFT, together with Implementing Partners, expects to contribute valuable knowledge and evidence.

Nutrition

Under the nutrition theme, topics for learning and innovation include:

- **What is an effective service delivery package for Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP) by Basic Health Professionals?** This will involve exploring the combination of services that should be provided by Basic Health Professionals to ensure that Growth Monitoring and Promotion can effectively translate into better outcomes. More specifically, in a context where health workers' workloads are high and as a result the counselling component of growth monitoring is often skipped, it will focus on assessing the importance and contribution of IYCF counselling in addition to the standard growth monitoring activities.
- **What are the most effective approaches to support the adoption of optimal nutrition, health and hygiene behaviours in intervention areas?** This will involve conducting a barrier analysis in Kachin and N. Shan States to understand the barriers and facilitators to the adoption of positive behaviours among the nutrition target population.



- **What are the main determinants of undernutrition in intervention areas?** This will involve conducting research in Kachin and Northern Shan States to understand the context-specific drivers of malnutrition and identify appropriate responses to address them. Evidence will then be generated on the effectiveness of the identified solutions to inform the possibility of scale-up.
- **The effectiveness of WASH interventions alone compared to an integrated multi-sectoral approach on nutrition.** This will involve comparing the effectiveness of WASH interventions alone with integrated multi-sectoral interventions (food and nutrition security, WASH) to understand the role of WASH in contributing to improved nutrition outcomes in the IP's project area.
- **Effectiveness of the care group model in camps vs community settings.** The programme will aim to generate evidence about how the care group model, a specific type of mother support group, performs in camps and community settings and the key considerations that would must be taken into consideration for it to work well.

Decent Work and Labour Mobility

- **What is the relationship between migration and development within conflict-affected communities in Kachin and northern Shan States and what interventions are needed to maximize its benefits?** Research will be conducted to explore the patterns, drivers, dynamics and issues related to migration in Kachin and northern Shan States. The evidence generated is expected to fill important gaps in knowledge on migration in the region. It will also be used to strengthen migration governance policies in Kachin State to more fully harness the benefits of migration for development.
- **What support is needed by vulnerable migrants and survivors of human trafficking to successfully reintegrate into their communities of origin in conflict-affected areas?** There is a significant gap in understanding of how reintegration can be achieved in northern Myanmar for vulnerable migrants and trafficking survivors upon returning home. The programme will aim to build an evidence base through a variety of studies and data sources on how return migrants and victims of trafficking can be most effectively supported. Evidence generated will also be shared with key stakeholders with a view towards creating a more enabling environment for successful reintegration to take place.
- **What models of delivery for skills development training are most effective in supporting sustainable livelihoods for internally displaced people and host communities in conflict-affected areas?** The programme will apply multiple models of vocational and enterprise development training, including through engaging the private sector and government technical high schools. The results will be assessed and documented so that learning can be generated to inform future interventions aimed at establishing sustainable and effective models for supporting access to non-farm livelihoods in conflict-affected communities.



- **What types of sectoral training are most successful in creating employment opportunities and increasing income for internally displaced people and host communities?** Drawing upon the results of labour market assessments prior to delivery of training, as well as tracing studies and end-line surveys afterwards, the programme will be able to compare the results of the different types of sectoral training provided and determine which have been most effective in supporting beneficiaries to obtain employment and increase their incomes.
- **How effective is increasing the skills, employment opportunities and income of women, youth and people with disabilities in enhancing the resilience of very poor households?** This question will focus specifically on the extent to which efforts aimed at targeting non-farm livelihood interventions at women, youth and people with disabilities from the poorest households can be an effective way for building household resilience. It will be assessed using tools such as the Household Economy Analysis, Poverty Probability Index and others.

Internally displaced persons & Land

- **Are internally displaced people able to self-organize, build movements and advocate for their rights?** Most initiatives working with internally displaced people frame them as victims requiring assistance rather than as people with their own capacities, resourcefulness and agency. Through a rights-based approach to working with internally displaced persons on land-related issues, LIFT will seek to assess the extent to which they are able to become organised advocates for advancing/securing their own rights through appropriate organisational structures.
- **Legal aid platform and alternative multi-stakeholder land dispute resolution mechanism.** LIFT will pilot an alternative legal aid and multi-stakeholder dispute resolution mechanism to address long-standing and challenging barriers to resolving land-related grievances. The specific model developed will be studied and documented to generate learning on this innovative approach that can help to inform future work on these issues in the region and beyond.

Township livelihood systems

- **How can CSO engagement in township livelihood systems contribute to creating effective and inclusive collective livelihood systems?** This question will explore the extent to which innovative approaches to strengthening CSO engagement township livelihoods systems can transform the way these livelihood systems function. Particular focus will be placed on the Township Systems Engagement Planning (TSEP) model.
- **What new business sectors can be created/introduced in the target areas that could help catalyse a boom in small business creation?** Possible types of



viable small and micro-enterprise that can generate livelihood opportunities at the township level will be explored. This will combine an assessment of opportunities, the identification of businesses to be piloted and the piloting of selected businesses to gather a body of evidence that can be used to inform future initiatives.

- **Upgrading commercial vegetable production by forming vegetable producer groups in communities.** The potential for enabling small scale producers to expand and develop vegetable production as a means of simultaneously developing their own livelihoods and increasing the supply of nutritious foods to neighbouring communities will be explored. This will involve developing and testing a producer group model for upgraded commercial vegetable cultivation keeping in view the full value chain, from inputs to production and marketing. This aims to generate a replicable and/or scalable model tailored to the local context.

Financial inclusion

- **A centralized data and cash information management system for cooperatives.** Financial cooperatives are constrained by their reliance on outdated technology and practices for managing their core operational information, both financial and otherwise. An appropriate information management system for cooperatives will be designed, tested and rolled-out to support growth and strengthening of financial cooperatives. Assessment and documentation will be carried out with a view to enabling wider spread/uptake of the platform beyond the life of the project.
- **Targeted pro-poor financial services aligned toward fostering development outcomes.** A variety of context-relevant financial services tailored to the needs of poor, low-income, and marginalized groups (e.g. people with disabilities, women and adolescent women, the very poor) will be developed and piloted. These products are intended to contribute to development outcomes such as poverty alleviation, improved education status, reduced vulnerability, strengthened livelihoods and women’s empowerment. Evidence will be generated on the design and effectiveness of these financial services in supporting target groups in addressing key development constraints.

List of studies	
Decent Work and Labour Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IOM - Scoping study on migration patterns in northern Shan and Kachin for IDPs and host communities ● IOM - Assessment of the migration profile, re/integration of trafficking survivors and outreach services to prospective migrants in N Shan and Kachin ● WV - Labour market mapping for Kachin

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WV - Household economy analysis for Kachin ● ADRA - Labour market survey for Kachin and northern Shan ● ADRA - COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessment for Kachin and northern Shan ● ADRA - knowledge products on lessons learned for delivery of TVET services in conflict-affected areas of Kachin and northern Shan
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WCM - multi-sectoral nutrition assessment ● STC - baseline and endline on nutrition status in northern Shan State. ● KMSS - baseline study ● KMSS - gender and nutrition context analysis ● KMSS - study in year 2 and 3 to understand the beliefs, norms, and practice related to nutrition of lactating and pregnant women in Kachin and Northern Shan State ● HPA - Baseline and endline on the project indicators ● HPA - Study to assess the most effective package of services ● LIFT/DSW - state-wide baseline survey for the roll-out of the MCCT in Kachin State
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Metta/GRET - 3 in-depth field research studies focusing on emerging priority issues (e.g. customary tenure in IDPs' villages of origin, IDP return and resettlement dynamics, impact of the VFV land management law, BPCA areas and risks of "green grabbing", social impact assessments of various types of investments including banana tissue culture plantations etc.) ● BDM - survey on access to legal protections for land tenure, particularly for women
Township livelihood and food systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UTF - Study on effectiveness of Area Fund Teams; Market assessment; Food seller survey; and Farmer survey. ● World Vision - Rapid Needs Assessment
Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All partners will be conducting context assessment and conflict analysis with support of RAFT. ● RAFT - In-depth research on selected topics TBD (e.g. on link between livelihoods and social cohesion, or on resettlement/camp closure).

Coordination, complementarities and synergies

Rather than comprising a set of standalone projects, the Kachin and northern Shan programme is expected to be integrated, developing synergies and complementarities



amongst projects and with other actors in the region. This has three critical dimensions: (1) synergies between LIFT projects working on the same thematic areas; (2) synergies across thematic areas; and (3) synergies between LIFT and non-LIFT initiatives (whether led by government, the private sector, or civil society).

Opportunities for complementarities and synergies

While there are numerous specific opportunities for synergies across projects and with other partners, they can be broadly categorised as follows:

- Identifying common target geographies and beneficiaries within and across thematic areas (e.g. linking skills development beneficiaries with access to credit to start and improve businesses)
- Linking with other actors in target geographies working on complementary activities (e.g. de-mining, gender based violence, nutrition, camp closures, land, anti-trafficking etc.)
- Supporting networking amongst local CSOs and between CSOs and other key stakeholders
- Sharing information and knowledge amongst partners, such as research studies, good practices, innovations
- Developing shared strategies for common policy and systemic change objectives.

Preliminary identification of such synergies has been carried out by partners through a programme framework workshop. The creation of platforms to support these efforts will be required to further develop these ideas.

Key coordination mechanisms

To facilitate efficient working across partners and tap into complementarities and synergies outlined above, a variety of coordination mechanisms are proposed. These include a combination of:

- **6 monthly programme-wide reviews:** To review progress after submission of the semi-annual and annual reports based on the SEQs. All programme partners, Yangon-based.
- **Partner-to-partner direct coordination:** For partners working towards joint objectives to coordinate their activities on a day-to-day basis, as relevant.
- **Quarterly coordination meetings (area-based):** To update on operational issues: progress, contextual changes, share operational information (LIFT-IPs, and IP-IPs), etc. state/region specific partners, led by LIFT programme coordinators.
- **Communities of Practice (CoP) / Technical Sub-working Groups:** To share experiences, knowledge, updates, case studies, and evidence related to specific thematic areas, cross-cutting issues and operational issues. Demand driven, interest-based membership, frequency to be decided.
- **Policy-oriented joint working groups:** Similar to CoPs but with a specific focus on shared policy engagement and potentially including membership beyond LIFT partners. Membership as relevant to policy objectives.



- **Annual key stakeholder meetings (w/ govt and others):** Events organised to strengthen engagement with government (and possibly other key stakeholders), sharing progress, discussing key issues, etc. All programme partners
- **Online platform for information and knowledge sharing:** A web-based platform in which key updates, sharing of knowledge products/outputs, questions, etc., can be readily shared amongst all programme partners.

In terms of COPs, MEAL and Policy related COPs have been identified by partners (through a survey) as a high priority for collaboration and learning.

Programme MEAL

Geographic programme level MEAL is relatively light-weight. It draws and builds on thematic and project level MEAL. It is primarily focused on synthesising the evidence produced through project MEAL and creating opportunities for learning, knowledge sharing and enabling the generation and use of evidence to contribute to programme level policy and systemic change objectives. As such, its main components are focused on:

- Programme level SEQs
- Programme level mid-term review
- Learning and adaptive management
- Knowledge management and policy contribution
- MEAL capacity support

Programme level SEQs

As part of its refreshed MEAL Framework, LIFT has defined a series of Strategic Evaluation Questions. These questions pertain at four levels: (1) the overall LIFT strategy; (2) LIFT's thematic programmes; (3) LIFT's geographic programmes; and (3) individual projects. In the context of the Kachin and northern Shan Programme, the focus will be at the level of the geographic programme and the individual projects.

Strategic Evaluation Question	Specific focus for Kachin and northern Shan
1. Progress toward impact: To what extent has LIFT helped target beneficiaries to become more resilient and improve their livelihood, nutrition and vulnerability status?	Same as the general one.

<p>2. Gender and inclusion: To what extent has LIFT contributed to furthering equity and empowerment for traditionally excluded and voiceless groups - particularly women, people with disabilities, and minorities?</p>	<p>Gender and inclusion: To what extent has the Kachin and northern Shan State programme contributed to furthering equity and empowerment for traditionally excluded and voiceless groups - particularly internally displaced people, conflict affected communities, landless people, victims of trafficking, migrants, women, people with disabilities, and minorities?</p>
<p>3. Strengthening CSO and local institutional capacity: To what extent has LIFT contributed to strengthening the capacity of civil society, Ethnic Service Providers and local government, to achieve impact, at the local, regional and national levels?</p>	<p>Strengthening CSO and local institutional capacity: To what extent has the Kachin and northern Shan States Programme contributed to strengthening the capacity of civil society (women and youth groups, networks, state and township CSOs), Ethnic Service Providers and local governments, to contribute to programme objectives at the community, township and state levels?</p>
<p>4. Conflict sensitivity: To what extent has LIFT proved to be effective and responsive to conflict dynamics when working in conflict affected areas (and on issues prone to conflict)?</p>	<p>Conflict sensitivity: To what extent has the Kachin and northern Shan States Programme proved to be effective and responsive to conflict dynamics when working in conflict affected areas (and on issues prone to conflict)?</p>
<p>5. Programme synergies: To what extent has the LIFT strategy been implemented in an integrated manner and tapped into synergies and complementarities across themes, geographies, actors and other ongoing investments and development interventions?</p>	<p>Programme synergies: To what extent has the Kachin and northern Shan States Programme been implemented in an integrated manner and tapped into synergies and complementarities across themes, geographies, actors and other ongoing investments and development interventions?</p>
<p>6. Knowledge and innovation: To what extent has LIFT generated new knowledge and developed innovative solutions (models, solutions, ways of working) that address persistent development</p>	<p>Knowledge and innovation: To what extent has the Kachin and northern Shan States Programme generated new knowledge and developed innovative solutions (models, solutions, ways of working) that address persistent</p>

challenges?	development challenges?
<p>7. Contributing to policy and systems change: To what extent has LIFT contributed to strengthening policy and systems change in Myanmar and how has it leveraged its work at project and programme to support this at national level?</p>	<p>Contributing to policy and systems change: To what extent has the Kachin and northern Shan States Programme contributed to strengthening policies and systems related to land rights, nutrition, resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced, access to inclusive financial services, safe migration, access to decent work and self-employment and inclusive governance of livelihoods and food systems? How has it leveraged its work at project and programme to support this at national level?</p>
<p>8. Sustainability and scalability: To what extent has LIFT identified and established sustainable and scalable models or approaches for achieving policy and programme outcomes after LIFT support ends?</p>	<p>Sustainability and scalability: To what extent has the Kachin and northern Shan States Programme identified and established sustainable and scalable models or approaches related to land rights, nutrition, resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced, access to inclusive financial services, safe migration, access to decent work and self-employment and inclusive governance of livelihoods and food systems after LIFT support ends?</p>
<p>9. Value for Money: To what extent have LIFT interventions demonstrated value for money where material / tangible benefits are measurable?</p>	<p>Value for Money: To what extent have LIFT interventions demonstrated value for money where material / tangible benefits are measurable?</p>

At the geographic programme level, these questions provide the opportunity to synthesise evidence of progress and lessons learned across individual projects. They provide a tool for aggregating achievements and reflecting on both what has worked well and what has not worked so well. In doing so, they are intended to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange and inform adaptive management toward enhancing LIFT's impact in relation to each of the SEQs.

As these questions are embedded in the semi-annual and annual reports by IPs at the project level, these documents become the primary source of evidence feeding into the synthesis at the programme level.



Programme level mid-term review

LIFT plans to conduct a mid-term review of the Kachin and Northern Shan Programme in 2021. The mid-term review is expected to contribute evidence that can support adaptive management at the level of the programme as a whole. As such, its primary focus will be on relevance, coherence, conflict sensitivity, gender and inclusion, contribution to policy and systemic change, evidence and knowledge management, programme synergies and sustainability and scalability. It will both build on and contribute to evidence generated in response to the programme SEQs through as detailed above. However, its primary focus will be on supporting adaptive programming and mid-course corrections.

Programme final evaluation

LIFT does not plan to conduct an end of programme evaluation since all LIFT projects will be going through their own final evaluations, a number of which are likely to be multi-project evaluations. Relevant SEQs will be incorporated into project final evaluations as needed. A light review may be commissioned following the final project evaluations if timing permits and if it is deemed to offer sufficient value for money..

Adaptive management

Adaptive management at the geographic programme level (rather than the project or thematic programme level) will focus primarily on ensuring that (1) the programme is responsive to changes in context and the emerging challenges and opportunities that they create, particularly at the policy and systems levels; (2) gaps related to implementation of key programme-wide strategic priorities are identified in a timely manner and that corrective actions are taken in a coordinated and effective manner; and (3) new knowledge, evidence and innovations are shared and incorporated into ongoing implementation wherever possible.

Adaptive management will be fostered through the various coordination mechanisms identified in the previous section of this report.

Knowledge management and policy contribution

As noted, MEAL evidence from projects is expected to contribute to strengthening the knowledge base on development challenges in the region and to inform efforts at systemic and policy change. While the greater part of these efforts will be carried out by implementing partners through their individual projects and joint initiatives, the LIFT team will contribute to these efforts and support the capture and sharing of knowledge that is generated and facilitate efforts at leveraging evidence to support systemic and policy change.



MEAL capacity support

MEAL capacity support will be provided on an as-needed basis in line with LIFT's overall MEAL capacity support plan.

Programme Risk Matrix

As part of LIFT's overall programme management approach, and with particular attention to LIFT's conflict sensitivity framework, LIFT has developed risk assessment matrices for both Kachin and northern Shan States. These risk matrices have the following headings:

- **Contextual Risks** – concerned with changes in the context, often related to the volatility of the context over which LIFT has little or no control.
- **Partner Risks** – related to the capacity of partners to operate in a conflict sensitive manner consistent with the needs of operating in a conflict affected area
- **Programme Risks** – associated with delays in programme implementation or the inability to access or remain active in areas affected by the shifting conflict dynamics
- **Political Risks** – connected to issues of access but also issues of authority and acceptance on the part of the controlling authority in the areas where LIFT partners are operating
- **Reputational Risks** – in line with how the LIFT programme is perceived by external stakeholders, magnified by high levels of tensions related to interpretation of the interim arrangements and concerns over encroachment of one authority into an area historically controlled by another authority
- **Security Risks** – The likelihood of increased clashes amongst EAOs and between EAOs and the Myanmar military may present security risks to LIFT personnel, partners and beneficiaries. LIFT needs to develop a strategy to mitigate and manage this potential
- **Fiduciary Risks** – Weak capacity and the unpredictable nature of operating in a volatile context will likely increase potential for risks in relation to the management and accounting of programme expenditure

The risk matrices will be periodically reviewed on a quarterly basis with area-based coordinators and on a six-monthly basis with partners at the programme level to take stock of changes in the context and shifting risk dynamics. LIFT's conflict resource agency RAFT will also be involved in this process. This will serve to ensure that changing risk profiles related to different domains of activity can be actively managed, to ensure an effective and responsive approach given the instability in the context.



Kachin State Risk Matrix

PROGRAMME RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX									
LIFT – KACHIN									
December 2019									
The matrix identifies the level of associated risk for each component of the programme within each of seven categories of risk. The risk categories speak to vulnerabilities for LIFT at a strategic level, but relate also to programme level vulnerabilities									
	PROGRAMME COMPONENTS							SHARED RISK OVERALL LIFT and IPs Strategic and Programme level	
	Nutrition	Agriculture Value Chain	Internally Displaced Persons and Camp Closure	Decent Work and Labour Mobility	Support to Civil Society	Land Policy Research and Advocacy	MCCT and SBCC (Govt)		
CONTEXTUAL RISKS	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	S	P
PARTNER CAPACITIES	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Orange	S	P
PROGRAMME DELAYS & ACCESS	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Orange	S	P
POLITICAL RISKS	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Orange	S	P
REPUTATIONAL	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Orange	Orange	S	P
SECURITY	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	S	P
FIDUCIARY	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	S	P
LEVEL OF ASSESSED RISK INDICATOR	HIGH RISK (Red)		MODERATE RISK (Orange)		MEDIUM RISK (Yellow)		LOW RISK (Green)		

Contextual risks: Risks related to volatility and the potential for rapid changes in the context in Kachin are considered **MODERATE** overall. While a relative stability still characterises the State the complexity of dynamics, and the uncertainty related to Internally Displaced Persons and the issues around Resettlement and Return, are a major factor in this assessment. The potential for clashes and the related SECURITY threats that persist could still result in contextual changes that would affect the programme. Land related issues linked to the Banana Plantations, and ongoing tensions around the unresolved Myitsone Dam which could erupt again add to the potential risk in this category.



Partner capacities risks: The overall risk in this area is considered **MEDIUM**. The roll out of the RAFT training processes and the attention paid to the importance of conflict sensitivity in the call for proposals and in the selection process will go some way to mitigating risk in this area. Some concerns around the ability of IPs to operate sensitively in non-government controlled areas remain, particularly while the KIO remains on the list of unlawful associations. Concerns related to the ability of partners to navigate the sensitivities around Internally Displaced Persons are also of some concern.

Programme delays and access risks: The overall risk in this area is considered **HIGH**. However, in light of the recent COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar, delays have intensified greatly and accessibility has become a significant issue, particularly where activities involve mass gatherings. More generally, however, the roll out of MCCT across the entire population in the state presents the highest risk. This is particularly because of concerns related to access in KIO controlled areas and in the Special Administrative Region controlled by the New Democratic Army – Kachin. Programme roll-out may be delayed in these areas as relationships of sufficient trust and confidence are built. Risk to LIFT is higher than for IPs given that it is the overall programme in Kachin that is more likely to be delayed than the specific components of any single IP.

Political risks: Risk in this area is considered **MODERATE** as a result when assessed across the entire State, because of the potential for the NDA-K to play the role of spoiler if IPs are perceived as being close to the KIO or the relationship between the KIO and Government deteriorates. The complexity of lines of authority in the State and the sensitivity around land advocacy and land policy add to the level of risk. Levels of political sensitivity in relation to Internally Displaced Persons and Camp closure also remain high, particularly because of the release of the government National Strategy on Internally Displaced Persons and the differences in the positions of Internally Displaced Persons themselves, civil society groups working on the issues and the government.

Reputational risks: Generally, the level of reputational risk to LIFT and IPs is considered **MEDIUM**. The risk to LIFT is considered MODERATE because of the sensitivity of issues related to IDP Camp Closures, and the potential for land related policy and advocacy work to escalate tensions between LIFT and the Government of Myanmar or between LIFT and civil society. Concerns around not being able to build a relationship with the KIO add to the potential for LIFT reputational risks in this category. The well organised Kachin diaspora and the close attention paid by this group to developments in Kachin add to the levels of sensitivity that LIFT will need to observe. Plans to accelerate the development of the Myitkyina Economic Development Zone along the Ledo Road and the planned Economic Cooperation Zone in Kanpiketi in Special Region 1 controlled by NDA-K add to the potential for reputational risk given concerns amongst civil society groups over the role China plays in the State.

Security risks: Despite indications of the potential for KIO to sign a bilateral ceasefire agreement, and relative stability in most parts of the State, risk in this category remains



MEDIUM. Sporadic clashes between the Myanmar military and the KIA continued in the second half of 2019, with clashes reported in Mohnyin and Namtu Townships. The uncertainty regarding the future relationship and the potential for further clashes remains a concern. The high stakes in the state, given the simmering tensions over resource control and the extent of jade production, add to the potential for volatility in this regard.

Fiduciary risks: The risk in this area is generally considered to be **MEDIUM**. In most areas care is being taken by IPs to manage this risk effectively. As the MCCT programme is rolled out there will be generally higher risk associated with the need for effective mechanisms to deal with roll out to Internally Displaced Persons, and uncertainty over how this will be done effectively with Internally Displaced Persons in non-government controlled areas, especially those along the China border.

Northern Shan State Risk Matrix

PROGRAMME RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX									
LIFT - NORTHERN SHAN STATE									
January 2020									
The matrix identifies the level of associated risk for each component of the programme within each of seven categories of risk. The risk categories speak to vulnerabilities for LIFT at a strategic level, but relate also to programme level vulnerabilities									
	PROGRAMME COMPONENTS							SHARED RISK OVERALL	
	Nutrition	Agriculture Value Chain	Internally Displaced Persons and Camp Closure	Decent Work and Labour Mobility	Support to Civil Society	Land Policy Research and Advocacy	MCCT and SBCC (Govt)	LIFT and IPs Strategic and Programme	
CONTEXTUAL RISKS	Orange	Orange	Red	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red	S	P
Ongoing potential for clashes between the Tatmadaw, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA). Uneasy unilateral ceasefires expiring in March 2020. KIA and ALP also active in the area.									
PARTNER CAPACITIES	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	S	P
Operating in northern Shan requires heightened attention to conflict sensitivity. Ethnic tensions are high and most of the violent clashes are linked to control over resources, including land. Development activities are under intense scrutiny.									
PROGRAMME DELAYS & ACCESS	Orange	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	S	P
Highly volatile context, unpredictable shifts in the dynamics of conflict and high risk of being denied access to areas where violent clashes erupt.									



POLITICAL RISKS								S	P
Careful selection of local civil society groups will be essential to add legitimacy and trust to any effort to operate in northern Shan. The highly polarised context will affect perceptions of all development efforts.									
REPUTATIONAL								S	P
Operating in a context of ongoing war presents serious risks related to the LIFT Conflict Sensitivity Principles around resource diversion and the substitution effect.									
SECURITY								S	P
The likelihood of increased clashes amongst EAOs and between EAOs and the Myanmar military. Clashes with government over policy and practice in sensitive areas may also draw attention to the programme, thus increasing the risks to LIFT in other areas.									
FIDUCIARY								S	P
Weak capacity and the unpredictable nature of operating in a volatile context will increase potential for risks in relation to the management and accounting of programme expenditure. The effort to apply universal MCCT in northern Shan will incur further risk for LIFT.									
LEVEL OF ASSESSED RISK INDICATOR	HIGH RISK			MODERATE RISK		MEDIUM RISK		LOW RISK	

Contextual risks: Risks related to volatility and the potential for rapid changes in the context in Northern Shan are considered **HIGH** overall. Ongoing escalating clashes between the Tatmadaw, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), heightened tensions in the run up to the election, escalating violent confrontation between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army (AA), tensions between Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army and the TNLA, complex illicit economy linked to drug trading, weapons and the use of militias, high presence of militias and border guard forces, ongoing displacement and unpredictable access especially along the border. The extension of the unilateral ceasefire by the Brotherhood Alliance (TNLA, MNDAA, AA) to the end of February provides some possibility for rapprochement.

Partner capacities risks: The overall risk in this area is considered **MODERATE**. Some concerns around the ability of IPs to operate sensitively in non-government controlled areas remain, particularly while the Brotherhood Alliance EAOs remain on the list of unlawful associations. Concerns related to the ability of partners to navigate the sensitivities around Internally Displaced Persons are also of some concern. The roll out of the RAFT training processes and the importance given to conflict sensitivity by LIFT may go some way to mitigating risk in this area.



Programme delays and access risks: The overall risk in this area is considered **HIGH**. In light of the recent COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar, delays have intensified greatly and accessibility has become a significant issue, particularly where activities involve mass gatherings. More generally, however, it is primarily in the roll out of MCCT across the entire population in the state that the highest risk lies. This is particularly because of concerns related to access in areas affected by violence and under the control of EAOs. Programme roll-out may be delayed in these areas as relationships of sufficient trust and confidence are built. Risk to LIFT is higher than for IPs given that it is the overall programme in northern Shan that is more likely to be delayed than the specific components of any single IP.

Political risks: Risk in this area is considered **MODERATE** as a result when assessed across the entire State. Careful selection of local civil society groups will be essential to add legitimacy and trust to any effort to operate in Northern Shan. The highly polarised context will affect perceptions of all development efforts. The associated need for extensive consultation and local ownership runs the risk of being negatively perceived by competing political interests. Levels of political sensitivity in relation to Internally Displaced Persons and Camp closure also remain high, particularly because of the release of the government National Strategy on Internally Displaced Persons and the differences in the positions of Internally Displaced Persons themselves, civil society groups working on the issues and the government.

Reputational risks: Generally, the level of reputational risk to LIFT and IPs is considered **MODERATE**. The risk to LIFT is considered MODERATE because of the high level of tensions in the context, and the effect this will have on issues related to IDP Camp Closures, and the potential for land related policy and advocacy work to escalate tensions between LIFT and the Government of Myanmar or between LIFT and civil society. In territories under the control of non-NCA Signatories it will be challenging for LIFT and its IP's to establish strong relations with non-government controlling authorities. Operating in a context of ongoing war presents serious risks related to the LIFT Conflict Sensitivity Principles around resource diversion and the substitution effect.

Security risks: Security risks are considered to be **HIGH**. The likelihood of increased clashes amongst EAOs and between EAOs and the Myanmar military will present security risks to LIFT personnel and those of their partners. LIFT needs to develop a strategy to mitigate and manage this potential. Clashes with government over policy and practice in sensitive areas may also draw attention to the programme, thus increasing the risks to LIFT in other areas. The uncertainty regarding the future relationship and the potential for further clashes remains a concern. The illicit economy and the use of militias to control territories linked to income streams adds to security concerns.

Fiduciary risks: The risk in this area is generally considered to be **MODERATE**. The volatility of the context, access related issues, and the risk of armed conflict will make it difficult for IPs to manage Fiduciary risk effectively. As the MCCT programme is rolled out there will be generally higher risk associated with the need for effective



mechanisms to deal with roll out to Internally Displaced Persons, and uncertainty over how this will be done effectively with Internally Displaced Persons.

Annexes

Annex 1: Overview of programme portfolio

	Project name	Lead organisation	Sub-partners	Themes (and additional components)	Budget	Start/End dates
1	Improve nutrition status of the vulnerable population in conflict affected Kachin and northern Shan	HPA	Kokang Charity Alliance (KCA)	Nutrition, AMFS	USD 1,300,000	January 2020/December 2022
2	Supporting Nutrition and Livelihoods through SGH in Kachin State, Myanmar	Shalom	NA	Nutrition, FI	USD 500,000	January 2020/December 2021
3	Improving the nutrition outcomes of conflict-affected people in Kachin State	World Concern	CHAD, KBC, Namkyeo Parahita foundation	Nutrition, AMFS,	USD 1,888,702	January 2020/December 2022
4	Building Resilience In Conflict affected areas of Kachin and Shan States	Save the Children	SSYCBC (Shan State Youth capacity Building centre) WPN (Wunpawng Ninghtoi (WPN))	Nutrition, FI (child protection)	USD 3,500,000	July 2019/June 2022
5	Supporting Conflict Affected Women and Infants for Nutrition (SAFEWAY WIN)	KMSS	NA	Nutrition	USD 2,000,000	July 2019-June 2022
6	Inclusive for Underserved Populations in Myanmar	Vision fund Myanmar	N/A	FI	USD 3,250,000	July 2019 - June 2022

7	Livelihood Improvement in Vulnerable Environment ⁵²	PGMF	NA	FI	USD 1,160,000	11-Oct-19 30-Jun-22	-
8	Leaving No One Behind Initiatives in Kachin State ⁵³	UNCDF	MIFIDA	FI	USD 2,500,000	13-Dec-19 31-Dec-22	-
9	Ring Chying	Metta/ GRET		AMFS land	500,000 USD	June 2020 - July 2022	
10	UTF (Upland Township Fund)	Swiss aid and Metta.	CSOs	Civil Society / Liveliho od	3,900,000 USD	November 2019/September 2022	
11	Strengthening Legal Resilience of internally displaced people and their Original Communities in Kachin and northern Shan State	Badei Da Moe CSO		AMFS land	499,92 5 USD	July 2020 - March 2023	
12	Vocational Education to Support internally displaced people and Host Communities (VESI) in Kachin and northern Shan State: Sustainably Enhancing decent work opportunities and bridging the gap between the youth from IDP and vulnerable host communities.	ADRA	Associazione Volontari Servizio Internazionale (AVSI), GRIP hands Organization, Finish Refugee Council, HTOI Gender and Development Foundation	DWLM, FI	USD 2,200,000	July 2019 - June 2022	
13	Strengthening the resilience of conflict affected communities in Kachin and northern Shan states through increased safe and rewarding migration (SAFE)	IOM	Metta Development Foundation, Kachin Women's Association, Kachin Women's Union, Htoi Ning Hkawng Foundation, Justice Society, Ta'ang Student and Youth Union, Tai Youth Network	DWLM	USD 1,182,313	July 2019 - June 2022	

⁵² The stated project budget covers work in 8 townships across Southern Shan, Northern Shan and Kayin

⁵³ This national project includes sub-IPs working in Kachin State.

			Northern Shan State, Nyein Than Lwin.			
14	See, Hear, Empower (SHE): Supporting inclusive and transformative Livelihoods for IDP and Host Communities in Kachin	World Vision	Alinn Banmaw Local Development Organization, Dai Fin Social Services	DWLM, Nutrition & FI	USD 2,584,741	July 2019 - June 2022

Annex 2: Policy and learning objectives (worksheets)

This section contains links to a series of worksheets developed during the Kachin and northern Shan Programme Partners' Workshop held in August 2020. The workshop provided an opportunity for partners to engage with the full set of policy and systemic change objectives for Kachin and northern Shan identified by the LIFT FMO and to reflect on these in relation to their own projects, with a view to identifying opportunities for synergies and coordinated action. The worksheets were further used to identify learning and innovation objectives and identify shared interests as well as to unpack the role of MEAL in supporting policy/systemic change and learning objectives. The worksheets have been converted into living documents to be used to foster coordination amongst partners. Each worksheet is owned by the concerned LIFT Programme Officer, who will be responsible for using, maintaining and developing their worksheet as needed.

Links to the worksheets are provided below:

- [Nutrition worksheet](#)
- [Land worksheet](#)
- [Decent Work and Labour Mobility worksheet](#)
- [Township food and livelihood systems worksheet](#)

Annex 3: Opportunities for synergies

Summary of the opportunities for synergies identified by partners (by component):

Township livelihood and food systems

1. Common target and geographies - Migrant issue, Youth, IDP camps, host community (Knowledge sharing, information sharing by coordination meeting);
2. Learning platform (existing and new);
3. Financing could support the livelihoods system.



Nutrition

1. MCCT - Financial literacy (incl. digital) and payment platforms-- link to MCCT (and social pensions) through committee; SBCC work;
2. Common target beneficiaries, such as with A2H (M2MSG, SAM referrals), HPA, SCI;
3. Mechanisms:
 - a. SUN CSA - opportunity to share information between partners, linkages to policy-advocacy, networking between partners;
 - b. Community of Practice to share information/resources/build capacity-- nutrition?
 - c. LEARN Project for capacity building;
 - d. UN Cluster meetings, esp. for operational issues and monitoring data/needs assessments @ regional or state level (nexus of humanitarian and development work) - Nutrition (UNICEF), Food Security (WFP), WASH (UNICEF), Protection (UNFPA).
4. MS-NPAN - sub-national implementation (Kachin);
5. Similar targeting - First 1,000 days (esp. Within vulnerable populations, such as migrants);
6. Protection/GBV with other humanitarian actors.

DWLM

1. Networking between IOM and WVM in Kachin (CSO or township level network from WVM) (Strengthen the activity regarding capacity building of Women networks to access up-to-date information eg. migration (to link with IOM));
2. Coordination between World Vision/ADRA and Vision Fund to support access to tailored financial products for enterprise development trainees;
3. Knowledge sharing between IPs regarding labour market or vocational training eg. Refer survivors of trafficking from IOM to get vocational training or link with private sector companies (Job matching activity, opportunity);
4. Coordination meeting for employment pathway (currently led by WVM, localized within township);
5. Linkages between ADRA/WVM and Save the Children to support inclusion of nutrition training content for vocational trainees.

Land

1. Able to collect more collective voices from Ethnic Communities;
2. Able to gain more experiences from the targeted communities or the community itself;
3. Able to collect the real perspectives of communities