

LEARNING REVIEW

MYANMAR WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS MENTORING PILOT PROGRAM

AUGUST 2018

This report was written and designed by Newstone Global Consulting.

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GLOSSARY

ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANP	Arakan National Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIPD	Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy
EMILY's List	Australian not for profit organisation focusing on supporting Australian Labor Party progressive women candidates
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IWD	International Women's Day
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
KII	Key Informant Interview
MP	Members of Parliament
MSC	Most Significant Change
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NLD	National League for Democracy
PoVAW	Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women Bill
SNLD	Shan Nationalities League for Democracy
TNP	Ta'ang National Party
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WAVE	Women's Action for Voice and Empowerment
WLB	Women's League of Burma

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This learning brief reviews the pilot phase of International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) and Akhaya Women's Myanmar Women Parliamentarians Mentoring Program. Data were collected, during June and July 2018 from mentees, mentors, donors, staff from the implementing organisations, political parties and other organisations working on related topics in Myanmar. In the pilot program, six Myanmar women MPs across political parties at the Union level who demonstrated a commitment to advancing gender equality were matched with six experienced Australian women MPs and former MPs with similar commitments. The program is part of IWDA's Women's Action for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE) program which as one of its main objectives works to support women to achieve and retain influential political leadership positions. The pilot political mentoring program specifically aims to support the mentees to 1) have increased capacity to govern effectively, and 2) be influential advocates for laws and policies that promote gender equality.

EFFECTIVENESS IN ACHIEVING PLANNED RESULTS

The program has been effective in achieving results against both the main objectives. Self-reporting from mentees and observations from stakeholders evidenced a change in the MPs capacity to govern effectively. Whilst these women were already highly accomplished upon the commencement of the program, the experience has supported them to:

- Improve public speaking skills and confidence to engage in political debates
- Gain knowledge and insights into political strategies such as continuous campaigning
- Engage their electorates on women's issues.
- Expand their connections to the women's movement and become active supporters of gender equality.

The exchange trip to Australia was highly significant and valuable to the mentees, with the majority referring to elements of the trip in their most significant change stories. Two areas emerged as the most influential aspects of the visit: a) public speaking training and b) direct exposure to continuous campaigning in practice.

The mentees, who did not have strong ties to the women's movement, have become solid advocates for women's issues demonstrated by their actions in parliament and their constituencies.

- Mentees specifically requested support to carry out International Women's Day celebrations to

discuss women's rights and gendered needs in their constituencies.

- Interviewed political parties also noted that lately, in intra-party meetings, mentees have been promoting a gender equality agenda by for example emphasising affirmative action and sharing the strategies gained from the mentorship program.
- Some mentees have also put forward a number of motions in parliament relating to child rape.

Whilst increased advocacy effort is a positive outcome, with an inadequate culture of cooperation across parties, and in this complex parliamentary system, it has been challenging for mentees who are first-time members of parliament to garner political support for their proposed legislation.

UNEXPECTED POSITIVE OUTCOMES

As a result of the program, there is an increased understanding among MPs of the concept of mentoring, which at the outset was unknown in Myanmar with no word in Burmese to describe it. After completion of the program, not only do the mentees appreciate the mentoring concept, but they are ready to apply the model with other women interested in politics.



The MPs have also gained visibility both in their parties and constituencies, although the impact of this is too early to judge. They have been the focus of a number of media interviews and been able to engage with foreign dignitaries, something which was reported as an important marker of status and success in Myanmar.

The program has also strengthened the connection between Australia and Myanmar. The program has provided the Australian mentors with insights into Myanmar political life. These experiences have translated into public support expressed in parliamentary speeches. Additionally, the program has worked closely with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade who as well as providing financial support to the program, have facilitated a number of meetings between the mentees and Australian diplomats.

UNEXPECTED NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

The one evident negative outcome as a result of the program is that it is not able to share the benefits with all MPs. As mentoring requires a significant investment in management and maintenance of relationships the program can only work with small cohorts. Many of the MPs who applied to participate in the pilot and second cohort, planned for 2018, were not selected. This has the potential to create tensions between mentees and other MPs who may feel that those chosen are receiving an unfair advantage. Additionally, one political party noted that whilst the MPs have greater visibility the focus has been too centred on them as individuals and not members of a wider party. It is important that the program supports the women to grow within their parties thus careful consideration should be given to balancing the visibility of both party and individual.

LESSONS LEARNT

A number of important lessons emerged regarding best practice for running this type of mentoring program.

Whilst the pilot shows that a shared cultural context is not necessary for success, it is important that the mentors are experienced politicians. Given the vast difference in culture, language and the limited time for the mentoring relationship to grow into a deep connection, the pilot has shown that most mentoring support is psychosocial. With the greatest support being the solidarity of having women support other women even if they do not share the same cultural background or language. It was essential that the mentors themselves were seasoned politicians to ensure that they can act as role models who are respected and able to provide insights into managing a political career.

Stakeholders considered the program to be well managed by Akhaya and IWDA, however, some small adjustments could further increase the overall success.



Setting goals: none of the mentoring pairs stuck to the original goals they were asked to set at the beginning of the program. With no experience of the concept of mentoring and a lack of precedent for an inter-cultural model, it was hard for pairs to set realistic objectives for the relationship. It is recommended that mentor-mentee pairs are inducted into the program with the concepts of solidarity and women supporting women as the main inputs of the mentoring partnership and that goals are set which more closely correspond to such support.



More contextual information: it was suggested that having greater in-depth political contextual information at the start of the program would help mentors be able to identify the types of support they can provide to their mentees. Whilst a political briefing document and session was provided to mentors, given the feedback, it is recommended that both are expanded and include more specific details about parliamentary processes and information about constituencies.



Systematic monitoring and evaluation: currently monitoring data are more anecdotal than systematic. It is important that the program develops a robust monitoring system to be able to evidence impact and adjust the program to changing circumstances. Simple steps such as tracking media mentions, policy developments and reaching out to constituents will help strengthen the program.



Greater human resources are needed: the learning review found that a mentoring program requires extensive support and management to ensure the smooth relationships between mentors and mentees. Advisors based in Australia and Myanmar were considered vital by stakeholders; additionally, translation of correspondence requires time and resources and exchange trips are logistically intensive. All of these factors mean that the implementing organisations need to have a resourced team, with dedicated translators and external advisors.

Whilst the program was successful in building the capacity of mentees and has resulted in advocates for gender equality, the lack of resources and contextual challenges impede the effectiveness of MPs. For the program to have a lasting impact, it needs to explore how to work to address such issues as:

- An absence of support staff for MPs;
- Gendered barriers such as a lack of child care, greater security risks, and gendered norms about women's role in society;
- A lack of action and political will to implement measures to increase women's political participation and leadership.

In future iterations it is recommended that the program builds links with other organisations or includes additional elements to address these challenges to amplify the overall impact on women's political participation. Several programs in Myanmar are actively working on supporting formal political participation for women and could contribute to increased impact of the mentoring program. Additionally, if the program wants to support legislative change then it should include broader advocacy strategies in specific areas such as gender quotas and violence against women. The mentees may be allies but they need to be connected to broader coalitions if legislative change is to be successful. The program should build on existing links that Akhaya and IWDA have by exploring a specific advocacy strategy that runs alongside the mentoring program. Lastly, whilst the international element of the mentoring program has demonstrated many benefits, there are limits as to the technical support that Australian mentors can provide. It is recommended that one support mentor is provided for the whole program who is available to help the mentees with technical political analysis and proactive strategizing skills to seize political opportunities.

FUTURE PROGRAM MODELS

During the initial scoping for the pilot program, the possibility of having Myanmar mentors and mentees was explored. However, no suitable candidates were proposed as mentors and it was decided that the program would instead develop as an international mentoring program, which would later transition to a local model when sufficient mentors existed. The review finds that any local mentoring model must work to ensure that the benefits of the pilot are maintained. It could do this by, for example, keeping the exchange trip element and retaining the high level of support from the implementing partner. Additionally, a number of challenges will emerge in the transition to a local model such as:

- The lack of female MPs in opposition parties to

ensure a cross-party mentee cohort.

- The potential emergence of party politics and tribal lines being drawn within the cohort if mentees and mentors were from the same parties but part of a cross-party program.

These considerations highlight how different a localised model would be from the pilot and suggest that any such model would also have to be tested before it was rolled out.

The lack of support staff for mentees was mentioned frequently by all stakeholders in the review and the suggestion of an internship program to address these challenges was proposed. As noted above, there are many organisations who would be able to provide such interns, however, it is important that time is invested in elaborating and piloting a model as it would need to be fruitful for both parties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There are wider resourcing challenges faced by the MPs which mentoring alone cannot address. The program should expand the types of supports by establishing formal partnerships with other NGOs in Myanmar.
2. Invest more in political skills as part of the mentoring program. Towards this end, Akhaya must be better resourced to provide, with the adviser, higher levels of technical inputs. Efforts should be made to hold face-to-face meetings with the mentees over the course of one year in Naypyidaw to share information, strategize, and manoeuvre with the goal of carrying out legal and policy advocacy.
3. Consider arranging a staffer for each mentee for administrative, logistical and research support through an internship program.
4. In the next phase of the program, scoping research should be conducted to inform a long-term strategy which could include localisation if deemed suitable.
5. Hire a dedicated interpreter/translator for the mentoring program whose only role is to provide translation service for mentees and mentors.
6. Improve the monitoring and evaluation system. Specific tools which monitor the effectiveness and impact of the program are needed, including media monitoring and advocacy tracking.
7. Consider streamlining and coordinating among different portfolios of Akhaya. Where there is interest explore the possibility of holding a sexuality dialogue in each of the mentee's constituencies as a way of linking the potential women voters with representatives.

INTRODUCTION

Under the regional Women's Action for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE) program, in 2017, Akhaya Women and the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) jointly piloted the first structured women's political mentoring program in Myanmar.

While the number of women Members of Parliament (MPs) at the national level doubled in the 2015 Myanmar election, they still only make up 13.6% of all elected MPs. The election of more female MPs is an important step but many still face discrimination as gendered norms and stereotypes cast doubt on women's leadership capabilities. Therefore, there is a continuing need to support female MPs to navigate male-dominated spaces and to effectively advocate for legislative change in support of women's rights.

As part of the broader WAVE program's aim to support women to achieve and retain influential political leadership positions, the pilot mentoring program aims to support the mentees to 1) have increased capacity to govern effectively, and 2) be influential advocates for laws and policies that promote gender equality.

In the pilot program, six Myanmar women MPs across political parties at the Union level who demonstrated a commitment to advancing gender equality were matched with six experienced Australian female current and former parliamentarians with similar commitments.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

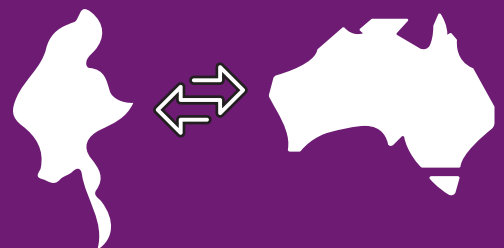
6 MENTORING PAIRS

MENTORS FROM
3 AUSTRALIAN
POLITICAL PARTIES

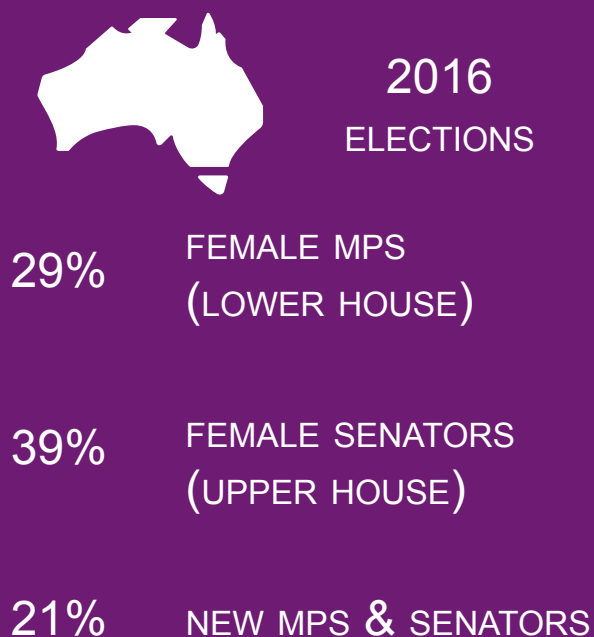
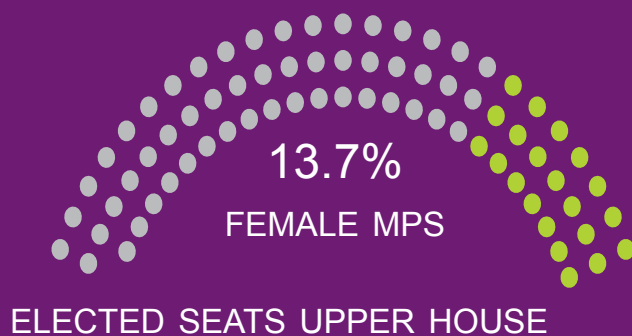
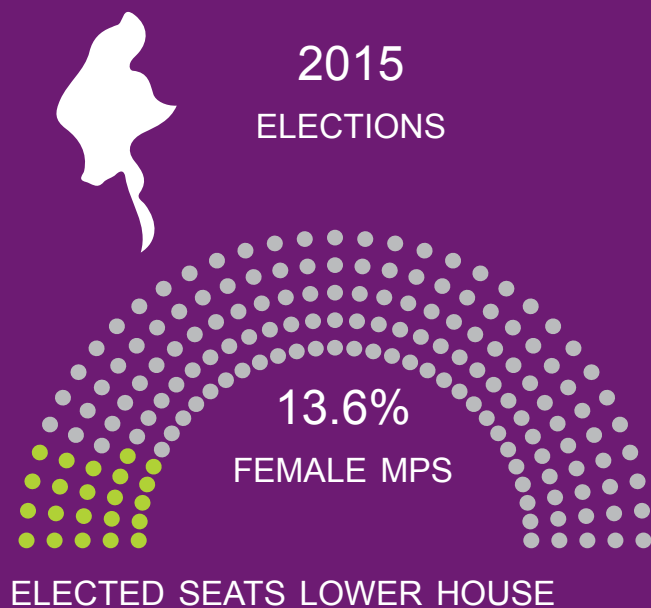
MENTEES FROM 4
MYANMAR POLITICAL
PARTIES

12 
MONTH
PROGRAM

EXCHANGE VISITS 2



POLITICAL CONTEXT



Data were taken from Myanmar Information Management Unit & the Australia Parliament

METHODOLOGY

This review is guided by IWDA's Feminist Research Framework (2017) and the Principles and Guidelines for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development (2016) developed by the Australian Council for International Development. Feminist methods are utilised in this study to help the consultants discover the structural and systemic barriers to women's ability to advocate for gender equality laws and policies. Guided by feminist values and evaluation principles, this review explores how the program is promoting 'vertical' accountability to the WAVE program, and 'horizontal' or social accountability to communities, mentees and mentors. As mentees and mentors have a firm understanding of the setting in which women MPs must operate, they have context-specific perceptions of reality. Thus, voice and representation of MPs' experiences are central in this approach to this review. This review also examined Myanmar context-specific challenges and needs that pose threats or opportunities for mentees.

This learning review evaluates the effectiveness of the Myanmar Women Parliamentarians Mentoring Pilot Program and provides recommendations for the program going forward into 2018 and beyond. This review draws on evidence collected throughout the pilot by IWDA and Akhaya as well as primary data from interviews with key stakeholders in Myanmar and Australia during June-July 2018.



Key Informant interviews (KIIs)

4 interviews with mentors,
5 interviews with external stakeholders,
5 interviews with a representative from political parties,
5 interviews with staff from Akhaya and IWDA,
2 interviews with the program's advisors,
5 interviews with mentees were conducted using an adaptation of the Most Significant Change (MSC) story approach.



Focus Group discussion (FGD)

1 FGD was conducted with 4 of the mentees.



Retrospective pre-then-post questionnaires

3 self-assessment surveys were completed by mentees through a digital questionnaire using Open Data Kit software.

IMPORTANT LESSONS FROM THE LITERATURE

There is significant literature on mentoring programs, but articles primarily focus on mentoring in the business or academic worlds. There is a dearth of literature on political mentoring programs and, whilst there are several programs supporting such mentoring schemes, there is a significant lack of evidence on what makes them a success or what types of models are most effective. However, the literature on mentoring from the business and academic worlds do provide useful lessons which can be tested on a political mentoring program.

MENTORING TYPES

Studies show that there are different types of support which a mentoring relationship can provide. Kram (1985) proposed two categories **1) Career related support** and **2) Psychosocial support**. The former focuses on supporting the mentee's advancement within the organisation and is possible because of the mentor's experience, network and position. The latter addresses "those aspects of a relationship that enhance an individual's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role" (Kram 1985, 32).



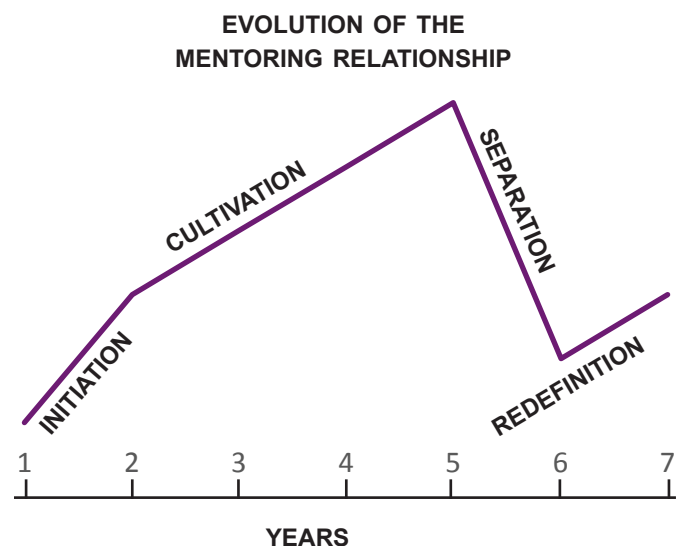
POSITIVE IMPACTS

Mentoring has consistently been shown to have a positive impact on career outcomes for mentees. In a meta-analysis of 43 studies mentees were found to have secured more promotions and received higher compensation than non-mentored individuals (Allen, et al. 2004). Not only were they objectively more successful but they were more likely to report being satisfied with their career and believe that they would continue to advance.



THE LIFESPAN

According to research a mentoring relationship generally progresses through well-defined phases. (Chao 1997, Kram 1985) The first period is the initiation lasting from inception to one year, then the second phase of cultivation is reached, which can be from two to five years; the third phase of separation happens after two to five years; lastly, a process of redefinition happens several years after the separation.



ACHIEVEMENT OF PROGRAM GOALS

The program had two specific goals 1) to increase the mentees' capacity to govern effectively, and 2) be influential advocates for laws that promote gender equality. The review finds that the program has been effective in achieving progress towards these goals.

OBJECTIVE 1 MENTEES HAVE INCREASED CAPACITY TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY

In the absence of baseline data, the review used a retrospective pre and post survey on capacity with the Myanmar mentees and additional data from stakeholder interviews to assess the program's contribution to this impact area.

Understanding capacity from a feminist perspective

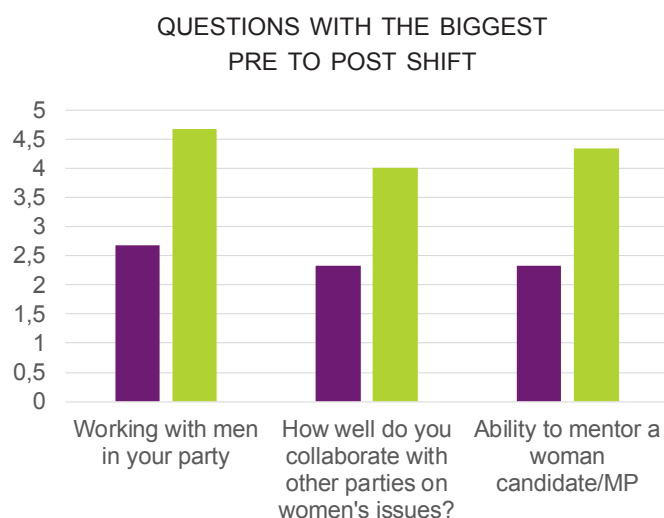
One of the most common reasons given for low levels of women's political participation is 'lack of capacity.' Capacity should be understood as not merely just knowledge or skill but within the broader framework of empowerment which is "about the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability" (Kabeer 2005). Capacity is thus the ability to make choices. According to Kabeer central to the empowerment process are three interrelated dimensions: Resources, Agency and Achievements. "Agency represents the processes by which choices are made and put into effect... Resources are the medium through which agency is exercised and achievements refer to the outcomes of agency" (ibid). These dimensions are interconnected, mutually constituted, and influential, and these interconnections structure women's experience of empowerment processes. Therefore, capacity requires both agency and resources and can be measured by achievements. Understanding capacity within this feminist lens is essential as it removes the misogynist undertones that can appear when women's inequality is considered to be partly due to their lack of capacity.

The review found that staff and advisors at Akhaya and IWDA recognise the high level of capacity that mentees already possessed to be elected as a female parliamentarian.

A 16-question retrospective pre-then-post questionnaire survey was conducted with 3 out of the 6 mentees. The survey covered their understanding and skills in:

- parliamentary skills, such as public speaking and debating in parliament;
- gender equality issues including gender quotas and Gender Based Violence (GBV);
- mentoring.

Mentees were asked to rank their skills, understanding or confidence in each area before and after the program on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest score and 5 the highest. Whilst the size of the sample is less than ideal it does provide insights into changes in capacity perceived by a selection of the mentees. The mean average score before the program was 2.79 and after 4.10 showing that overall the female MPs consider the mentoring program as having a positive effect on their capacity to govern.



Interestingly the biggest shift was in confidence to work with men in their party, which before the program had an average score of 2.33 and after 4.33. This question also had the lowest baseline figure. The only area where all MPs rated themselves as having a score of 5 after the program was in public speaking skills, suggesting that this was the area they felt they had developed to the highest capacity. The program invested heavily in public speaking skills by providing a workshop on the topic, facilitated by a former MP with specialist communication skills during the Australia visit. The results suggest that this investment was beneficial for the MPs.

Mentees in KIIs specifically discussed several ways they felt the program had supported their skill development including the ability to package key political messages in a given time, apply the concept of continuous campaigning effectively in their daily actions, and keep in close communication with their constituents. Paradoxically, it was noted by a few mentees that their confidence in their ability to perform, as elected women, increased even after seeing how well-resourced their mentors are and the level of support their mentors receive from their staffers. Despite their resource constraints and lack of experience in public service, after visiting Canberra, mentees realised that even under the current circumstances they are committed to work in the best interests of their constituents.

The changes in capacity were also noted by other stakeholders. One political party interviewed reflected that the party is impressed with the improved capacity of their MP, who is one of the mentees. *“Many of us recognised her improved public speaking skills, ability to deliver key messages within a given time, and being able to remain composed. She has raised issues about her constituents’ education, infrastructure, and social needs which are the issues she has prioritized as important to her constituency.”* [KII with a political party representative]

This change in capacity was also noted by external stakeholders. One international actor noted the difference in the way that the female MPs approached meetings with important stakeholders from the start of the program to the end. At first, they said that the MPs seemed very new to the job and lacked the presentation skills commensurate with pursuing a specific political agenda. However, as the program progressed they saw a big shift in their confidence, the way they presented their political points and their approach to pursuing political goals.

WHAT CAUSED THIS CHANGE IN CAPACITY?



Exchange visit to Australia

One of the most influential experiences in terms of capacity support was the trip to Canberra where Myanmar female parliamentarians received both formal and informal capacity inputs.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORY - DAW KHIN SAW WAI



Photo credit:
Jennifer Nagy

Daw Khin Saw Wai, a second term MP from the Yethihtuang Township in Rakhine State, joined the mentorship program to hone her understanding of gender sensitive health, education, and social welfare policies.

She was paired with Dr Lesley Clark from the ALP as her mentor. Her most significant change as a result of this program was the experience and learning she acquired from the Australian study trip. The tour included a visit to her mentor’s constituency in Barron River, Cairns. The geographic conditions of this constituency are similar to that of her state which is along the coastline with an abundance of natural resources. She gained ideas about various state revenue generation policies and preservation of natural resources, such as forests, beaches, and marine life. She also witnessed the flourishing ecotourism contributing to Cairns’ economy. Further, as a significant change in her perspective on the role of government in taking steps towards environmental sustainability, she learned how the local government has adopted many initiatives. Rakhine State has a long pristine beachline with a deep-sea port. If ecotourism could be established, the revenues could be utilised for the social development of the people of Rakhine and elsewhere. This policy learning opportunity enhanced her understanding of good governance in the area of resource sharing arrangements among the states and provinces.

Agency is not only dependent on ability or opportunities but is crucially informed by the horizons of possibility. To be able to make transformational changes, one must be able to envision a future in which these achievements are a possibility, no easy feat for women MPs in Myanmar whose choices are constrained by structural inequalities, a lack of previous democratic experience and limited financial resources. One mentor noted that the mere experience of being in the Australian parliament “*opened up ideas about what was possible and what they could achieve*”. [KII with mentor]. Whilst the physical experience of seeing a long-established democratic parliament functioning was important to open the horizons of possibility, there were several specific events which were reported to have a direct impact on their overall capacity:

a) Public speaking training

One of the most frequently mentioned supports was the public speaking training. This training provided mentees with concrete insights into how to compose their interventions in parliament. The fact that the session was specifically tailored to parliamentary speaking and not just a general public speaking workshop appears to be crucial to its overall impact on the MPs capacity.

b) Learning about continuous campaigning

All MPs interviewed repeatedly reported that they consider learning about continuous campaigning as a highlight of the mentorship program. They have been applying this strategy in their visits with their constituents and during the last International Women’s Day (IWD), demonstrated they are already campaigning for the 2020 elections. One of the concepts that they really value from this mentorship is understanding that throughout the electoral cycle, politicians must work hard to connect with the electorates. At the constituency level, mentees have been making greater efforts to get in touch with their constituents and listen to their concerns. As part of their efforts towards continuous campaigning, they have been providing campaign messages through their social media updates and letting the constituents know about their attempts to raise their issues in parliament and providing feedback. One thing that emerged from the KIIs with mentees is that whilst there are creative ways of doing continuous campaigning, it does require sizeable resources (time, finance and energy). It was their assessment that to maximize the full potential of continuous campaigning, it is important to adequately allocate resources for MPs. Some mentees recognise that there are creative and less

resource intensive ways to carry out continuous campaigning which they have learnt from their mentors. In future programs, it could be useful to run targeted sessions supporting MPs to develop continuous campaigning strategies, which can be used with limited resources and help them develop social media outreach plans. This will ensure they are able to put into practice what they learn from their mentors, who operate in a very different resource context.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORY- DAW NAN MOE



As a result of this program, over the last year, Daw Nan Moe identified the two most significant changes in her career.

Photo- Judith Graley MP & Daw Nan Moe MP.
Photo credit: Jen Clark.

As a naturally fast paced speaker with a tendency to become emotional when speaking about the lack of human rights in her electorate, her first public speaking occasion at the Parliament did not go smoothly. Knowing there were over 400 representatives who could question her motion, she was nervous. This experience was discussed with her mentor who provided her with practical public speaking steps such as breathing before speaking, sipping water, and building her message content for a powerful delivery. Whilst these things might be simple suggestions for some people, for her it was reassuring to know that many things in politics can be learned and mastered. Getting these practical tips from her mentor Judith Graley MP, a seasoned politician with many years of experience, instilled confidence that she could succeed. After practicing these speaking tips, her performance at parliament was noted by other representatives as showing a marked improvement.

The other significant change due to this program was the importance of continuous campaigning. Her mentor showed her that as a legislator there is no down time. She must seize every opportunity to listen to constituents, get to know their issues and be in touch with the community. This is not only a good feedback mechanism, but it also sharpens the policy and mission directions of the representative. Now when she goes back to her constituency, during parliamentary recess, she will make every effort to listen to her constituents to more effectively represent their voices and concerns.

OBJECTIVE 2 MENTEES ARE INFLUENTIAL ADVOCATES FOR LAWS THAT PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

The program specifically chose to work with female MPs that did not have strong ties to the women's movement. The implicit theory of change is that through the program the women will gain insights into the importance of legislation to promote gender equality and become advocates for the women's movement as is shown in the following quote:

"What the mentoring program represents is that organic and embryonic changes in the mentees' lives as a result of the program will lead to the point where women's movements could count on them as strong advocates on gender equality laws within the legislature." [KII with Akhaya staff member]

During the pilot, the mentors and stakeholders noticed a marked shift in the female MPs commitment to gender equality. Before entering the mentoring program, only one had previously put a motion forward related to gender equality, in the form of instituting a gender quota. Whereas at the time of the review a clear commitment to pursuing issues which promote gender equality was expressed by all the mentees interviewed. This was considered to relate to their experiences as women and not tied to party politics as the following quote shows:

"Potential difficulties of working cross parties were quickly overcome on the principle that everyone is committed and working towards women's empowerment, therefore it does not matter which party we represent, we shared the same agenda." [KII with an MP]

This commitment to gender equality can also be demonstrated through IWD celebrations. Mentees specifically requested support to carry out IWD celebrations to discuss women's rights and gendered needs in their constituencies. The mentees considered these events to be well received by their communities. One MP held the event in the Rakhine State Parliament noting that they could have picked a different venue, but recognising the need to highlight IWD, they decided to hold the event in the State Parliament where they had more than 100 participants. There were high-level officials, community-based women's organisations, and individuals all in attendance. Under the theme of women's participation in politics, the event enabled the exchange of views on women's rights, women's roles in politics, and challenges women continue to face.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORY DAW KHIN SWE LWIN

The most significant change resulting from the mentoring program for Daw Khin Swe Lwin was the opportunity to hold the IWD event in her constituency, in Chin State. As part of the mentoring program, Akhaya provided support for printing a booklet about her role in Parliament. This was a way to inform the constituents about their representative and her role. Given the low-level of understanding about representative democracy in her constituency, it was necessary to inform them about what she does and whose agenda she represents. This promoted the role of MPs and highlighted the responsibility that they bear in representing the community. She felt that the increased demand for her booklet was clear evidence that through this event the participants had an increased understanding of what she is doing in Naypyidaw. Having a large number of participants enabled people to discuss women's rights in their community, the role women play, and the multiple burdens women have to bear. There were some male participants who reflected on the continual discrimination and marginalisation of women and girls in their community. Some of them stated that gender equality is not only the work of women but men also have to join in to address the historical marginalisation of women. Traditional cultural dances and music were performed by women and that was one of the highlights of the event.



Photo- Senator Claire Moore & Daw Khin Swe Lin MP.
Photo credit: Shwe Wutt Hmon

Political parties also interviewed noted that lately, within the intra-party meetings, mentees have been promoting a gender equality agenda by emphasising the importance of affirmative action, sharing the strategies gained from the mentorship program, and highlighting the importance of women's participation in politics through organising events such as IWD. This clear commitment to gender equality is an important success of the program. According to the political parties interviewed after joining this pilot program, there was an increase in advocacy on women's and children's issues from the mentees. On this matter, political parties consider it a positive development that their mentees appear to have become more vocal on issues concerning their constituents.

There have also been two motions raised in parliament relating to child rape. In 2017, shortly after the mentors' visit was concluded, one mentee put forth a motion to amend Article 376 of Burma's Penal Code, which was endorsed by another of the mentees. The proposal included a call for harsher penalties for those convicted of child rape (under 16). This motion was rejected by the House Speaker on the grounds the proposal was in Burmese not English whereas the actual Penal Code 376 was written in English during the British rule of the country, and was thus contrary to parliamentary procedure. On June 19, 2018, the same mentee put a motion in the Phyithu Hluttaw/ House of Representatives that highlighted the increased incidence of child rape in Myanmar. As a legal measure to deter this growing problem, she called for the enactment of an effective special law to prevent the rape of minors. This motion did not gather sufficient votes and was thus not passed.

Despite the increased advocacy efforts, so far none of the women's efforts has led to a change in legislation. Whilst increased advocacy effort is a positive outcome, with an inadequate culture of cooperation across parties, and in this complex parliamentary system, it has been challenging for mentees who are first-time members of parliament to garner political support for their proposed legislation. Currently, for an MP from a minority party to pass legislation, any proposed motion must have the support of the Government. Of course, it can be politically meaningful to bring an issue onto the parliamentary record even if one knows it will not pass, but all the mentees noted that they would appreciate more support in understanding how to garner cross-party support to achieve legislation change.

UNEXPECTED POSITIVE OUTCOMES

POTENTIAL FUTURE MENTORS

"We have come a long way..." [Mentees FGD]

The mentees' confidence in their ability to mentor other interested women in politics has also increased since the inception of the program. This is an important achievement especially as at the onset of this program, there literally was no word in Burmese to describe 'mentoring'. After completion of the program, not only do the mentees appreciate the concept, but they are ready to apply the model with other women interested in politics.

In the pre-then-post survey, ability to mentor others was one of the biggest areas of capacity growth. Due to socio-cultural norms in Myanmar, women MPs reported that people view women's place as not in politics, and they feel that they have disproven that belief. The mentees noted that their personal journeys demonstrate what women are capable of when given an opportunity to enter politics. They consider themselves as good examples for other women and want to be able to support aspiring leaders.



INCREASED VISIBILITY

Political parties and mentees noted a change in their visibility within the party and their constituencies since they became involved in the pilot mentoring program. Evidence on media coverage shows that the focus of the media is increasingly on individual politicians over political parties (Kruikemeier, Gattermann and Vliegenthart 2018). Voter recognition of individual electoral candidates due to their visibility on media channels, be it social or traditional, increases the chance of such exposure contributing to positive electoral outcomes (ibid).

The mentoring program has helped raise the visibility of mentees although the impact of this is too early to judge. The six mentees were interviewed by the media in connection with the mentoring program. They were interviewed by Myanmar Radio and Television about their trip to Australia and their experiences. Further, IWDA and Akhaya both shared key updates of the program on their websites and via social media through which the mentees' visibility was again elevated. One stakeholder claimed that the increased visibility has led to the three mentees from NLD being chosen to represent the party at the recent Union Peace Conference. Whilst it is not possible to know if this is the case it will be important to track the ongoing careers of the mentees as future cohorts participate in the program. One MP's visibility has increased due to the support she received from the mentoring program to celebrate IWD in her constituency. The extent of this support and increased visibility was such that it raised some questions for her party if she was already campaigning for the next election and not celebrating IWD.

The IWD events were considered by mentees as particularly important in increasing their profile. As one mentee said:

"some people in my electorate had no clue about what I did in the Parliament, they probably think, I am nodding my head there. After communicating to them about the huge responsibility that I carry in representing my constituents' agenda at the Union Parliament, they seemed to realise that I could deliver positive outcomes for my community and country at large..." [KII with mentee]

One MP highlighted the positive effect of pamphlets that brought her closer to her constituents. After the IWD event and distribution of promotional materials, she received calls from some constituents for the first time. Some asked about her role as an MP and some called to raise issues.

Another MP used a PowerPoint presentation of her Australian trip to her respective electorate, raising public interest that their representative had formed networks with a foreign country, met with the foreign minister, and gave a public speech. Her ability to build a foreign relationship as an elected woman MP was reported to be positively recognised and elevated her status. Parties interviewed noted, that for the Myanmar context, having a foreign relationship is particularly important for an emerging democracy coming out of five decades of isolation.

Photo- Meeting with Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, Julie Bishop, 2017. Photo credit: Jennifer Nagy.



STRENGTHENED CONNECTIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND MYANMAR

The pilot program has provided new opportunities for co-operation between Myanmar and Australia and provided greater visibility in the Australian Parliament to issues that female MPs face in Myanmar, as well as the work of IWDA and Akhaya. Speeches were made in both the Senate and Parliament of Victoria by mentors about their experience in the program. For example, Ann Sudmalis, MP for Gilmore, spoke passionately about her experience as a mentor to contribute to the debate about Myanmar and Australia's ongoing relationship. *"I am proud of the actions of this young woman [Chris Htun MP] in her resolve to remedy some fundamental national issues...with women such as those involved in this program, there is a degree of optimism"* (HR Deb March 2017). Additionally, one mentor, Lisa Chesters, raised the issue of the needs of Karen refugees in an Australian parliamentary debate on citizenship and a video of her presentation was watched by 9.5 thousand people on Facebook (14th August 2017). Additionally, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has facilitated several meetings between the mentees and Australian diplomats. The department supported the MPs with funds for the IWD celebrations and will partly fund the next round of the mentoring program based on the experience of the pilot.

UNEXPECTED NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

SHARING BENEFITS WITH ALL MPS

It was reported that the program has become popular and there was significant interest from other Myanmar MPs to join the second round, as is evidenced by the 26 applications received. Since the program cannot accommodate all the applicants, the review noted that this might have created some tension between the mentees selected and unsuccessful applicants. It is important that in future programs this potential issue is managed sensitively which could potentially be achieved by providing some outreach opportunities which non-mentees can attend, or through learning and sharing sessions where mentees can pass on their experiences to others. The issue is not limited to other female MPs. During a KII, one of the mentees noted that some male MPs half-jokingly say they wish they were female so they could to get support from women's organisations and benefit from women's international solidarity.

It also emerged in an interview with one political party that it was felt that the program had created too much visibility for the individual women MPs and not their parties. It is important that the program supports the women to grow within their parties and careful consideration should be given to balancing visibility of both the party and individual.

Photo- Ann Sudmalis MP and Daw Chris Htun MP. Photo credit: Jen Clark



LESSONS LEARNT

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT RATHER THAN CAREER-RELATED SUPPORT

Given the vast difference in culture, language and the limited time for the mentoring relationship to grow into a deep connection, the pilot has shown what types of support are to be expected in such a model. The learning review finds that the support provided by the mentors has largely been psychosocial. The mentors felt the most important support that they had been able to provide was solidarity. Bringing women together to support other women was perceived to be incredibly important, as it provided the Myanmar MPs with an external ally who understood the experience of being a politician. As one mentor put it *“politics is a tough game it is important to have someone by your side.”* [KII with mentor]

IT WAS CRUCIAL THAT THE MENTORS WERE POLITICIANS

It is important to note that role modelling has been vital to the psychosocial support. Mentors, mentees and stakeholders said that the trip to Canberra was essential because the Myanmar MPs were able to understand exactly who their mentors were and thus better able to respect that their advice came from a place of authority and experience. The mentees reported considering the mentors as role models precisely because they understand some of the pressures of being a politician. *“I understand her angst and concerns. I don’t know if anyone outside of the political system would get this”* [KII with mentor]. Given the vast cultural differences it is important that the mentors are considered as role models otherwise the psychosocial support may not be as meaningful. If the program is to transition into a local program it will be important that mentors are considered to have experience, which the mentees can learn from.

GOALS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE PERIODICALLY REVIEWED

None of the mentoring pairs interviewed stuck to the initial goals they set during the pairing meeting. These goals tended to be focused on very specific career support such as developing economic investment or overhauling the education facilities in the MPs’ constituencies. The language and contextual barriers made it very difficult for mentors to provide such concrete insights, and many spent valuable time researching issues and sending documents which their mentees found difficult to apply to their contexts. Whilst some mentors and

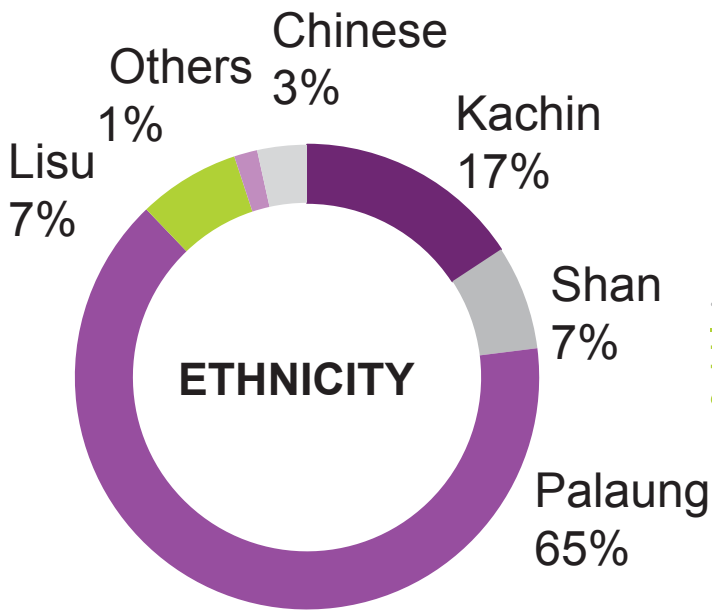
mentees had not expected to stick to these initial goals, others felt that the lack of progress towards them was a sign of failure. For example, one mentee noted that EMILY’s List stands for Early Money is Like Yeast thus she was hoping to acquire some insight on how to conduct effective resource mobilisation. In her experience, that goal was not achieved despite having probed this aspect with her mentor.

It is recommended that mentor-mentee pairs are inducted into the program with a focus on solidarity and women supporting women as the main inputs of the mentoring partnership and that goals are set which more closely correspond to such support. Additionally, pairs should be encouraged to review the goals periodically to see if they need adjustment.

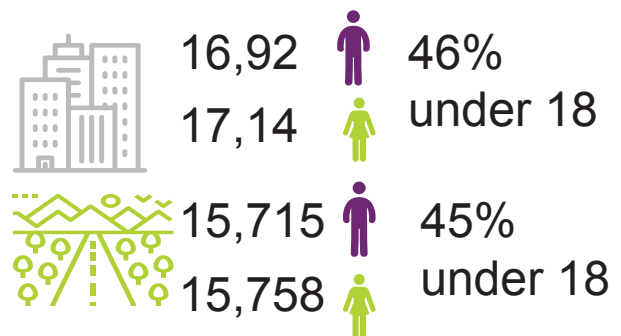
GREATER CONTEXT AT THE START COULD ENSURE MORE TAILORED MENTORING SUPPORT

One thing which could help the mentors to understand the context better would be deeper contextual information about the working of the parliament in Myanmar. Some mentors reported having to do their own research and felt that there would have been a value in either a more in-depth briefing or papers which provided such information. Some stakeholders also suggested having a briefing session prior to the mentors’ matching visit to Myanmar organised by Akhaya and IWDA which provides inputs from knowledgeable political actors and a key essential reading list. The mentors come from a different political context and thus were not sure exactly how things worked in Myanmar or what areas the women might want potential soft-skills support in. As one noted, *“it would have helped us know what was relevant to them and if you know you can be sensitive and targeted”* [KII with mentor]. Whilst a political briefing document and session were provided to mentors given the feedback it is recommended that both are expanded and include details about the parliamentary structure, how legislation is progressed through parliament, different committees, spending for constituencies, the link between national and regional parliaments etc. The Myanmar Information Management Unit has prepared constituency profiles in Burmese which provide useful facts and figures that could be used to create infographics for mentors. The following is a potential prototype.

CONSTITUENCY PROFILE: MANTONG, SHAN STATE



RURAL & URBAN

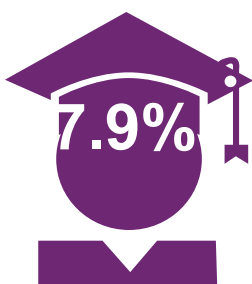


LITERACY RATE



TOTAL NO. OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS

23277



7.9%

passed the university entrance exams

DOCTOR TO PATIENT RATIO



1: 17,330 Mantong
1:1,639 Myanmar



No train station



No bus station



No airport



MATERNAL MORTALITY

160: 100,000 Mantong
178:100,000 Myanmar

MORE SYSTEMATIC MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) IS NEEDED TO BE ABLE TO SHOW THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM

During the pilot no formal M&E system was developed therefore there is no baseline data making it difficult to measure the overall effectiveness of the program in achieving its goals. Stakeholders also noted that the evidence they are provided with tends to be anecdotal rather than systematic. Akhaya and IWDA are already working to develop M&E tools and have created a short self-assessment tool for mentees for the next phase of the program. This will provide baseline figures for capacity. As the program focuses on deep qualitative change, with a small cohort of women, specific M&E tools need to be designed that respond to the dynamics of the program. The following tools could be useful for future iterations of the program.

A. Timeline and advocacy journals

A program journal/log is a written record of program activities, events or processes that occur during the life of a program. In lobby and advocacy programs, keeping a journal can serve as a tool to reflect on progress and contributions against objectives. When kept in conjunction with a timeline (see below) it can demonstrate, for example, campaign peaks and policy changes, providing a tool for contribution analysis on outcomes and results during evaluation. A critical incident timeline offers a simple and quick way to illustrate the relationship in time between a program's activities and its outcomes or achievements. The timeline outlines actions or critical events associated with a program or strategy alongside important results or outcomes. It also notes contextual or historical factors that might have affected those outcomes. Such a journal would normally be kept by the organisation managing the program, updates would come from conversations with MPs or from press monitoring.

A journal can take an electronic or paper format – there is no standard rule for this. However, it would be important to at least have included the following:

- Description of the context/situation/encounter/experience that includes some attention to feelings at the time.
- Intervention / Activity – what was implemented by whom, for whom, when and with what purpose.
- Observation – What did you observe during the implementation of activities. Were there any changes?
- Reflection – going back to the experiences.
- Assessment or Evaluation – the process of reflection may well lead to the need to look again at a situation or to explore some further area. It may highlight the need to take some concrete actions.

Date	Context	Action	Expected result	Description of change	Impact	Causal factors	Reflection
Jun 2018	Child rape legislation reform	Motion put forward	Move to change the penalty for child rape	Motion not passed as lacked support	More work on cross-party support is needed	Lack of support from NLD as they have their own reform planned	MPs need help on building cross-party support for motions

B. Regular monitoring visits with mentees

The MPs expressed a desire for greater interaction with Akhaya. It is recommended that a formal monitoring system is established. Short reflection sheets can be designed to ensure that the meeting and any necessary follow up is recorded. This can not only help the mentoring relationship but also provide time for Akhaya to update the mentees about any developments related to the women's movement's efforts on advocacy for gender equality legislation.

C. Rapid research at events in constituencies such as IWD

Having data from constituents will provide evidence on the impacts of the program. Events such as IWD provide an opportunity for such information to be gathered without putting an excessive burden on Akhaya. At these events, a vox pop (short interview with members of the public), could be undertaken either through a very short digital survey or several informal FGDs.

D. Tracking of media mentions

Many online tools are available to track media associated with a person or a topic. Setting up a formal media tracking system would ensure the program captures evidence about coverage related to MPs. Also using available social media tracking tools would be another way to measure the reach and visibility of the MPs. There are many free tools available that track social media mentions and measure social media outreach such as SocialBakers, Hootsuite or Brand24.

WHEN MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS ARE DYSFUNCTIONAL CAREFUL MONITORING OF A NEW PAIRING IS NEEDED

One of the pairings was problematic. The review found the issue was quickly addressed by the team at Akhaya and IWDA. They re-articulated the role of mentors and what a mentee should expect from their mentor, clarifying the misunderstanding between the mentor and mentee involved. The same mentee was matched with another mentor at a later time. According to the mentee, the gap in time of not having a mentor was a missed opportunity to capitalise on the mentorship program and the new relationship has been slow to develop. This experience suggests that in the future any new pairings should be closely supported with extra investment in the initial stages.

MENTORING IS NOT ENOUGH TO ADDRESS THE WIDER RESOURCE CHALLENGES FACED BY MPS

The pilot has shown the potential value of the mentoring for women's political participation and empowerment. However, at the end of the pilot, the female MPs still report facing many challenges which impede their active participation as a parliamentarian.

POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Whilst the political parties interviewed claimed that they support and welcome women's participation in political processes and in decision-making positions, the dearth of women in such roles is explained by those interviewed in political parties as disinterest on the part of women with little analysis of the gendered barriers which prevent women from participating. As an example of this interviewees were hesitant about gender quotas with the common rationale being *"why cap the percentage of women's participation to 30% if we have qualified women candidates and party members, they could occupy more than 30% of winnable seats, even 50%."* This response demonstrates a lack of understanding of the root causes of women's marginalisation within leadership positions and impedes support for measures to address barriers.

GENDER SPECIFIC NEEDS

There are also structural and contextual challenges faced by women MPs that are not likely to be shared by their male counterparts due to current gender norms. These include security risks and family responsibilities. One of the MPs interviewed shared about the challenges she faced in her last campaign while having a nursing infant. Others have very young children and they must rely heavily on their family members for assistance.

Some women MPs also underscored that they face gender specific risks for being women MPs, such as verbal attacks targeting their personal integrity. This kind of abuse is not experienced by their male counterparts. The review learned that one female MP interviewed had spoken out against unethical business practices in her community. When she then had to travel for work with male colleagues, her integrity and morals were called into question.

GENDER NORMS

One commonality highlighted by all mentees interviewed was that the mentoring program only targets female MPs. They see this aspect of the mentoring program as unique and innovative. As the quote below says *‘Whether we like it or not when there is a man in the room, the dynamics change...’* [Interview with a mentee]. All the mentees interviewed acknowledged the philosophy and motto of EMILY’s List: “when women support women, women win.” They suggested this motto needs to be socialised and practiced in Myanmar as well. Mentees noted that not only do they have to prove their leadership capabilities to their male counterparts, but they also have to prove themselves to women MPs as well. Some reflected that women MPs are some of the stronger critics of mentees.

Gender norms and stereotypes in Myanmar undermine women’s full potential to participate in leadership positions and the public sphere. The mentees interviewed suggested that the way to prove their capabilities is through their actions and for that they need continued support from CSOs and their own parties. When they exhibit their capabilities and skills over time they feel they garner respect and admiration from both men and women in their communities as well as from their families.

A LACK OF RESOURCES

Political parties interviewed were confident that some of these MPs will stand again and that they have a realistic chance of winning. However, when asked if they would stand for the elections in 2020, some interviewed women MPs said that they will not unless they have better campaign, administrative and logistical support. Currently, interviewed women MPs do not have the budgets to hire support and thus have no staff in their constituencies to be able to maintain a presence and support constituents when parliament is in session in Naypyidaw.

In future iterations of the mentoring program, it is recommended that the program builds links with other organisations or includes additional elements to address these challenges so the overall impact on women’s political participation can be amplified. Several programs in Myanmar are actively working on supporting formal political participation for women. Whilst the pilot identified these groups formal links have yet to be established. Highlighted below are the stakeholders who were contacted during the review as examples of the types of collaboration which could exist. It is important to note that not all the issues raised by the women MPs can be addressed by NGOs alone, there is also a need to support the MPs to access resources from their parties.

Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD)



A female political mentoring program is being piloted.

Mentees were chosen by the five political parties involved in the program and DIPD hopes that the mentees will become candidates in future parliamentary elections. The mentors are a mixture of female MPs and leaders in CSOs. Currently, the mentoring program is also in the pilot phase, having started in November 2017, however, there are lots of potential areas in which the two mentoring programs could collaborate.

One of the mentees from the Akhaya/IWDA program has become a mentor for DIPD, this shows the potential links that could be further explored. Additionally, as part of the program DIPD run quarterly capacity sessions. If a formal partnership was established Akhaya and DIPD could collaborate on these, and they could even draw on the Australian mentors through a video link. In another program, DIPD is also looking to start a youth project which will include an internship scheme where young people can both learn from and support MPs. Given that female MPs lack resources, especially human resources for research and planning this could be another potential area for collaboration.

Women’s League of Burma (WLB)



Currently, WLB runs a political empowerment school with a 6 month course. WLB is looking to build on this by including an internship program. They are hoping to start this program in 2019 and want to provide technical assistance to MPs through the graduates of their political empowerment school. Again, this program could provide interesting avenues for coordination.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)



A learning centre has been established since 2014 at the parliament. As well as IT support and resources, it offers master classes, seminars and drop-in sessions. The attendees for master classes and seminars are chosen by the Speaker.

UNDP will be undertaking an analysis of the learning centre which will provide figures on the use of different services. The long-term plan for the sustainability of this centre is to transfer it to local ownership, therefore, it is important it is best serving the needs of those it was designed to help, the MPs. The female MPs involved in the pilot mentoring program have not been using the available services. One barrier to access they mentioned was that the centre closes at five o'clock which is inconvenient for them; however, it is noted that to extend opening hours would require negotiating with the Parliament, which may be challenging. It is suggested that Akhaya Women discusses the reasons why the female MPs have not been using these facilities and brings this information to UNDP, to inform the knowledge product being created about the centre. This could hopefully lead to greater use of the centre by the mentees.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)



DFAT has a program which supports participants from Myanmar government offices and CSOs to

study in Australia. On their return, they form part of an alumni network. These alumni could potentially be recruited for an internship program with the female MPs.

Akhaya Women



At the time of the review, Akhaya was in the process of restructuring to find ways to integrate the political mentoring program as one of its key areas.

Akhaya has programs such as the long-standing Women's Empowerment Through Sexuality Dialogue. In future programs, it will be important to build inter-program relationships and linkages amongst Akhaya's projects. In the pilot Akhaya invited mentees to their sexuality dialogue. This type of linkage should be expanded by for example, where there was interest, undertaking these activities in the mentees' constituencies.

THE MENTORING PROGRAM REQUIRES INTENSIVE HUMAN RESOURCE SUPPORT

One of the factors that both mentors and mentees noted as important for the success of the pilot was the existence of a support person who was able to address concerns or doubts. Any mentoring pairing is an intense interpersonal relationship which can, like all relationships, be positive and negative.

The existence of the advisors who were located in both Australia and Myanmar has proven to be highly valuable. In fact, some mentees noted that further formalised, frequent meetings would be likely to improve the effectiveness of the mentoring. *"We hope that Akhaya will make their trips up to NPT more frequent, at least once a month to strategize ways to work with women MPs. They are an important bridge between the CSOs/women movement and us..."* [KII with mentee]. In the DIPD mentoring model the program manager has monthly face-to-face checks with the mentors and mentees. This might be a model worth exploring for mentees in future iterations.

The review noticed a healthy trust was built among Akhaya Women and mentees. This was demonstrated by the mentees calling on Akhaya for technical input in terms of data, statistics and fact-checking on the issues that were going to put in their motions. Mentees interviewed shared that whilst there exist some parliamentarian strengthening organisations in Naypyidaw, due to confidentiality and sensitivity of issues they work on, they preferred seeking support from Cherry Foundation and Akhaya staff. It is significant that mentees not only see Akhaya as a logistical and administrative support organisation but as an organisation they can rely on for technical inputs.

In the mentorship agreement, the contact between the two parties is scheduled to be once every month. In reality, that has not been feasible owing to the time difference for a Skype meeting, the language barrier, and the busy schedules of both parties. Some mentors and mentees interviewed, given their hectic schedules, had not had a chance to talk since the Australian trip. Organising the logistics around regular communication requires more time and resources than was originally envisaged.

The language barrier means translation assistance must be acquired through Akhaya's staff. Since there is no dedicated translator/interpreter for the mentorship program, it means all five mentees, who required translation, relied on one staff member who became overburdened with having to meet so many translation needs. Greater translation services are recommended for future cohorts to help resolve this problem.

Given that intensive support from staff has been highlighted as a factor in supporting the success of the pilot, for future programs, it is important that greater resources are dedicated to the management of the program. It was reported that burdens on staff in Akhaya have led to an issue of staff turnover. Although this program is resource intensive in both time and money, it is important for success in the future phase that adequate resources are allocated to Akhaya to service the program more effectively.

MENTORING IS NOT ENOUGH TO CREATE LEGISLATION PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

Global evidence shows us that successful campaigns to introduce legislation which promotes gender equality require broad-based coalitions (Cagna and Rao 2016). If the program wants to be able to support the women to become influential advocates and contribute to the wider WAVE program's goal to have 'Normative frameworks that support women and gender equality,' the program should include broader advocacy strategies on set areas of legislation, for example, the Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women Bill (PoVAW) and gender quotas.

PoVAW

Akhaya is well placed for effective advocacy regarding VAW. They are Co-Chair for the Technical Working Group on VAW and have access to CSOs and the mentees. With the PoVAW law waiting in the Attorney-General's Department, when the time comes for the bill to be submitted to the Parliament, bolstering support from gender equality-oriented MPs will be a critical step. Whilst there is evidence of Akhaya drawing on the mentees informally, a specific advocacy campaign has not been developed. As part of the learning brief launch, Akhaya could hold a public event to bring together CSOs and past and future mentees to discuss next steps.

Quotas

The issue of adopting some form of temporary special measure to increase women's representation in the Union Parliament, such as a quota, arose in interviews with stakeholders. There are many actors in Myanmar advocating for a quota for women parliamentarians however, the review found that these efforts are not co-ordinated. Whilst several policy papers have been written on the subject, there is not even agreement about which type of quota system should be adopted. This disagreement extends to mentees, some believed within their parties there exist de-facto practices to promote women's candidacy whilst others were categorical that having an institutionalised quota system is the best policy instrument. Daw Khin Saw Wai is very committed to supporting gender quotas and reports being further inspired by the Australian exchange. It is recommended that the program develops strategies to further link the women to organisations advocating on gender quotas and broadens the program to include support to advocacy campaigns on such issues as quotas.

WOMEN NEED MORE SUPPORT ON POLITICAL MANOEUVRING

Whilst the international element of the mentoring program has demonstrated many benefits there are limits as to the technical support that Australian mentors can provide. All but one of the mentees are serving their first terms and lack experience of political manoeuvring. This is something that they reported they were struggling with. New politicians globally need information about the functioning of parliament. As one of the mentors noted, in Australia there is a formal induction process for new senators. Whilst the Myanmar MPs received an induction from UNDP this alone is insufficient to equip them with all the necessary information about the inner workings of parliament. The program did hire an adviser in Myanmar with substantial political knowledge, but her role was not designed to specifically provide such technical support to the mentees. This role should be expanded to act as a political guide to the mentees. It is recommended that one technical support mentor is provided for the whole program who is available to help the mentees with technical political analysis. This person would have to possess significant insights into politics in Myanmar to ensure they were respected by mentees.

FUTURE PROGRAM MODELS

LOCALISATION

During the initial scoping for the pilot program, the possibility of having Myanmar mentors and mentees was explored however no suitable candidates were proposed as mentors. It was decided that the program would instead develop as an international mentoring program which would later transition to a local model when sufficient mentors existed. As the review has shown this model has been successful, with one staff member noting *“the benefits of the international model are beyond what we expected, in terms of supporting MPs skills, knowledge and confidence, we are not sure that we should definitely transition to a local model.”* However, the model does have several challenges and is costly and therefore in thinking about future options the option of localising the program must be considered. The two main questions are:

- How could the positive outcomes of the existing model be conserved in a local program?
- What would the model look like?

Drawing from the review findings, we can conclude that there have been a number of positive outcomes which have made the pilot successful:

- Role models that are respected and provide insights into managing a political career
- The exchange trip which served to broaden horizons and presented new possibilities
- Women supporting women
- Support from the advisors and staff at Akhaya and IWDA

In any mentoring program which was localised, it would be important to maintain as many of these good practices as possible. This suggests several important factors should be considered in a localised model.



Even if there was not a formal connection to another country, an exchange trip would be important. This was one of the most influential aspects of the program and provided the women with inspiration and ideas.



Significant investment is needed to staff the program effectively. Currently, there are two advisers who support the program. It would be important to maintain a high level of support to ensure the smooth functioning of the mentoring pairs.



The mentors would have to understand the experiences of the female MPs, and therefore should themselves have been parliamentarians. The women who have been through the mentee process may be able to themselves become mentors, but this would most likely have to be within political parties, and in the long term may limit the number of mentors available in some of the smaller ethnic parties. Given the pilot program's commitment to cross-party working, this is a consideration which must be addressed through a long-term strategy.



As the pilot matched Myanmar MPs, from a range of political parties, with Australian mentors it fostered the idea of women supporting women, beyond party lines. However, if the model was to be localised and continued as a cross-party program but matched mentors with mentees from the same party then party politics may create tribal divisions within the cohort of mentees, which did not emerge as a major issue in the pilot.



The pilot is based on the EMILY's List model from Australia. This model supports ALP endorsed women candidates through finance, training and mentoring. This could be a potential model for a localised Myanmar based program. However, the EMILY's List model, where candidates are supported during their campaign for election, is very different from the pilot. Implementing the EMILY's List approach requires the existence of a sufficient cohort of experienced former or current MPs to act as mentors. According to the Australian mentors interviewed who have also engaged with EMILY's List any MPs acting as a mentor in such a model require security in their own seats, as they need to be able to take time away from their own re-election to engage with the mentee's campaign. The security of MPs seats is something which in a fledgling democracy is unlikely to be clear until several election cycles have passed. This could impact the available pool of suitable mentors.

These many considerations highlight how different a localised model would be from the pilot and suggest that any such model would also have to be tested before it was rolled out. As one staff member noted a local model depends on the number of women willing to be mentors. Whilst this is true it is recommended that the different models for a local program are explored and a scoping of their potential is undertaken during the next phase, to allow evidence-based decisions to be taken about the right time to localise and what model to adopt.

THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT STAFF THROUGH AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

As highlighted throughout the report the Myanmar MPs face substantial resourcing problems and do not have any staff to support their administration and research needs. Whilst the mentoring has been very valuable to the mentees the lack of resources limits their ability to put some of the advice their mentors have given them into practice and limits the time they have available to communicate with mentors. IWDA has proposed integrating an internship program for aspiring female leaders into future models. As noted above there are many organisations who would be able to provide such interns, however, it is important that time is invested in elaborating and piloting a model given that one of the stakeholders already noted that previous attempts to create such a program by other organisations have been unsuccessful.

As mentioned above MPs struggle to manage their constituency demands with the parliamentary schedule in Naypyidaw. There are thus support staff needs in both locations, which could be partly addressed by an internship program. Any internship model would need to ensure that it provided both support to MPs but also capacity development for aspiring female leaders. Whilst a mentoring style relationship could be established the MPs would ultimately be in a manager–staff relationship with the interns, which is a very different relationship to the mentor-mentee one between Australian and Myanmar MPs. The program would need to consider the power dynamics that such an arrangement would bring and manage these accordingly. Locating the interns in the constituencies could help MPs maintain contact with local issues but given the communication and distance challenges, this could impact on the amount of support which the interns could receive. Interns would have to be self-reliant and need minimal inputs if they were to be based in the constituencies.

Additionally, writing political briefs, talking points and other political documents is itself a skill which requires time to be acquired. If the MPs had to spend too much time supporting the interns this may create unnecessary burdens which will be counterintuitive to the intentions of providing staffing support. Some form of capacity building would be needed to ensure that the internship was fruitful for both parties. A few options could include:

- A mentoring program between the staff of the Australian MPs and the interns.
- Ongoing capacity development support from an experienced campaigner, civil servant or someone with practical experience of providing assistance to MPs.
- An induction program where interns practice the technical skills needed to provide assistance to MPs.



Photo- Myanmar and Australian MPs, Myanmar, 2017. Photo credit: Shwe Wutt Hmon

RECOMMENDATIONS

ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

1

There are wider resourcing challenges faced by the MPs which mentoring alone cannot address. The program should expand the types of supports by establishing formal partnerships with other NGOs in Myanmar.

2

Invest more in political skills as part of the mentoring program. Towards this end, Akhaya must be better resourced to provide, with the advisor, higher levels of technical inputs. Efforts should be made to hold face-to-face meetings with the mentees over the course of one year in Naypyidaw to share information, strategise, and manoeuvre with the goal of carrying out legal and policy advocacy.

3

Consider arranging a staffer for each mentee for administrative, logistical and research support. This could be done in a number of ways namely:

a. Introduce WLB, DIPD or alumni from the DFAT program to work as administration, research and support staff for mentees through an internship program in Naypyidaw.

b. Explore the possibility of a program to recruit young staffers in mentee's constituencies who might be interested in joining political parties in the future.

Each of these options would need to be piloted as they require management and logistical support and need to ensure that both the intern and mentee are gaining from the process rather than just filling a resourcing need.

4

In the next phase of the program, it is important to research the feasibility of a localised mentoring model. Scoping research should be conducted to inform a long-term strategy which could include localisation if deemed suitable.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

5

Hire a dedicated interpreter/translator for the mentoring program whose only role is to provide translation service for mentees and mentors. That person should not be doing coordination, logistics, and programmatic work.

6

Improve the M&E system. Specific tools which monitor the effectiveness and impact of the program are needed including media monitoring and advocacy tracking.

7

Consider streamlining and coordinating among different portfolios of Akhaya. Where there is interest explore the possibility of holding a sexuality dialogue in each of the mentee's constituencies as a way of linking the potential women voters with representatives.

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INTERVIEW LIST

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2	Leonie Morgan AM	Advisor to the Political Mentoring Program
3	Swe Wint Paing	National Democratic Institute
4	U Aung Min	Ta' ang National Party (TNP)
5	U Thar Htun Hla	Arakhan National Party (ANP)
6	Sai Nyunt Lwin	Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD)
7	Daw Htar Htar	Director/Founder, Akhaya
8	Nann Sandi Moon	Project Coordinator, Akhaya
9	Khaing Lay	Finance Officer, Akhaya
10	Khin Thazin Myint	DIPD
11	Anouska Charles	DFAT
12	Nang Khin Saw	SNLD
13	Daw Nan Htwe Thu	NLD
14	Daw Nan Moe	TNP
15	Daw Khin Swe Lwin	NLD
16	Daw Khin Saw Wai	ANP
17	Philipp Annawitt	UNDP
18	Day Myar	WLB
19	Jen Clark	IWDA
20	Judith Graley MP	ALP
21	Senator Claire Moore	ALP
22	Dr Lesley Clarke	ALP
23	(Former Senator) Penny Wright	Australian Greens
24	Ann Sudmalis MP	Liberal Party of Australia

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