

EVALUATION

Formative Evaluation of Community-Led Water
Supply and Sanitation Interventions in Magway and
Ayeyarwady Regions Myanmar

Time Period Covered under Evaluation: February 2021– October 2024
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Submitted by: Niaz Ullah Khan
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Formative Evaluation of Community-Led Water Supply and Sanitation Interventions in Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions Myanmar (2021-2024)

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASWA	Accelerating Sanitation and Water for All
AWP	Annual Work Plan/Programme
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
BHS	Basic Human Services
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EAPRO	East Asia Pacific Regional Office
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEROS	Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HML-IRB	Health Medical Lab- Institutional Review Board
IPC	Infection Prevention Control
JMP	Joint Monitoring Programme
KII	Key Informant Interview
MHAA	Myanmar Health Assistant Association
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MIMU	Myanmar Information Management Unit
MMK	Myanmar Kyat
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODF	Open Defecation Free
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
PII	Personal Identifiable Information
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SBC	Social Behaviour Change
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPWS	Solar Powered Water Supply
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
TMO	Township Medical Officers
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction: Myanmar continues to face severe poverty, periodic droughts, and frequent flooding, especially in rural regions where water insecurity and open defecation pose serious health and social challenges. Women, children, and persons with disabilities often experience the greatest hardship. In February 2021, UNICEF launched community-driven water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions across selected townships of Magway (dry zone) and Ayeyarwady (delta region). These actions built on the foundations of Accelerated Sanitation and Water for All (ASWA-II), aiming to deliver sustainable, climate-resilient water services, promote safe sanitation, and foster local resilience against recurring hazards.

Scope and Objectives: This evaluation covers the programme implementation from February 2021 to October 2024, assessing progress in improving water supply, sanitation, and hygiene in vulnerable townships of Magway and Ayeyarwady. Although this evaluation was completed before the March 28, 2025 earthquake, certain findings and conclusions may still be relevant for informing the response. The specific objectives are to:

1. Inform programme scale-up by reviewing community-led, climate-smart water supply and sanitation models.
2. Provide evidence for UNICEF's approach to climate adaptation and risk mitigation in WASH.
3. Enhance community ownership through participatory governance, cost recovery, and inclusive planning.
4. Inform humanitarian–development programming, linking emergency preparedness with permanent, resilient WASH services.

Methodology: A theory-based, participatory methodology guided the evaluation. The team constructed a Theory of Change from UNICEF and partner documents, triangulating data through: 18 key Document Reviews of national WASH policies, UNICEF annual work plans, and programme reports; 14 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with UNICEF personnel, community leaders, local WASH committees, and private-sector actors; 15 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in 11 sampled villages, reflecting the views of women, older adults, and persons with disabilities; Field Observations in 11 villages using a checklist to assess infrastructure performance, resilience, and user satisfaction; 8 Case Studies highlighting specific local solutions for instance, flood-resistant latrines in low-lying Ayeyarwady areas and solar pumping in arid Magway townships.

Key Limitations: These included security restrictions that impeded direct access to certain sites, requiring remote data collection and reliance on local volunteers. Political uncertainty sometimes delayed field missions, and security check-ups also constrained in-person verification. Nevertheless, triangulation of multiple data sources supported coherent findings and contextual clarity.

Key Findings

Relevance

The programme targeted communities with pressing needs around water scarcity, open defecation, and frequent climate shocks. Villages were selected using vulnerability indicator such as under-five malnutrition, reliance on unsafe water sources, and high open defecation rate, ensuring alignment with Myanmar's National WASH Strategy (2016–2030), UNICEF climate resilient strategies and SDGs. Although solar pumping and flood-resistant latrines proved useful in mitigating droughts and floods, disaster preparedness remains limited, and further attention to inclusive design (e.g., ramps for older adults or persons with disabilities) is required.

Effectiveness

Water Supply: From 2021 to 2024, the programme's water supply initiatives reached 158,293 people across 200 communities, installing 24 solar-powered water systems in two regions. In Magway and Ayeyarwady specifically, 81,106 individuals benefitted from upgraded water sources, with an estimated 2.4 per cent coverage for persons with disabilities (compared to a 12 per cent national average).

Sanitation: A total of 253 villages achieved or maintained Open Defecation-Free (ODF) status between 2021 and 2024, while over 12,000 households constructed improved latrines (including flood-resistant designs). Despite infrastructure support by the programme, including technical guidance, a few households could not construct their latrines in flood-prone areas, reflecting cost barriers and weak follow-up support.

Hygiene: Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) sessions, school-led hygiene campaigns, menstrual hygiene management for adolescent and women, and volunteer outreach led to improvements in handwashing habits. Several communities reported a decline in diarrhoeal diseases and waterborne illnesses, though soap affordability and intermittent follow-up remain challenges that could undermine sustained hygiene practices.

Alongside these achievements, there were some challenges, such as the construction of some latrines halted due to affordability constraints and limited technical support. In some places, the boreholes occasionally ran dry in dry periods and inadequate drainage complicated flood-related sanitation concerns. Regular monitoring and refresher training were identified as essential for sustaining behaviours and maintaining infrastructure.

Sustainability

Water and Sanitation Committees typically collect small user fees for repairs, yet inconsistent payment and limited technical capacity undermine long-term maintenance. Travel costs for spare parts in remote areas add further strain. Private-sector engagement in desludging and supply-chain management remains uneven, leaving communities dependent on external interventions. Structured microfinance or community savings schemes could support households that are unable to afford latrine completion and consistent water supply, ensuring more resilient WASH systems overall.

Coherence

Local-level coordination among NGOs, volunteers, water user committees (WUCs) and village committees has been effective on many sites. However, collaboration with government agencies and donors has been less consistent, influenced by political instability and variable funding. Although the programme aligns with national guidelines and global targets (such as the SDGs), bridging humanitarian relief with stable, climate-resilient WASH interventions is still an evolving area. Broader integration of climate adaptation across health, education, and agriculture sectors could yield more comprehensive development benefits.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Women took on significant roles in tariff collection and committee administration, yet men continued to dominate technical tasks, such as borehole maintenance. The programme largely promoted inclusion but at some places, persons with disabilities and older individuals found it difficult to use raised latrines, calling for the need of universal design standards for these areas. The rights-based framing of WASH as a shared community responsibility helped foster ownership, but formal complaint mechanisms remain underutilized, limiting feedback loops on infrastructure problems or social inclusion. The mWater digital platform was initially used to track infrastructure performance and gather real-time community feedback, enhancing data accuracy largely by the health works of Ministry of Health. However, this was suspended after the military coup in 2021, and reporting reverted to manual methods, slowing verification and limiting timely identification of maintenance issues.

Conclusions

Community-Led WASH interventions in Magway and Ayeyarwady achieved significant headway in relieving the daily burden on women and children who previously spent long hours collecting water, lowering open defecation rates, and reinforcing core hygiene practices across a range of communities. The introduction of solar-powered systems in arid areas and flood-resistant facilities in delta regions addressed multiple climate-related vulnerabilities, yet seasonal droughts and floods continue to challenge both the immediate functionality and long-term resilience of newly established services. Overall, while these measures reduced health risks and promoted better living

conditions, the persistent threat of environmental extremes underpins the importance of maintaining and adapting these improvements to suit changing local contexts.

Learnings

Robust financial arrangements such as access to microfinance options and structured cost-sharing models are essential to ensuring that water and sanitation infrastructure remains both affordable and stable under varying climate pressures. Likewise, strengthened local governance and continuous technical support will empower community members to handle routine maintenance and repairs, protecting their investment. Moreover, inclusive facility designs that accommodate persons with reduced mobility, combined with proactive disaster preparedness and climate adaptation plans, will help sustain and expand the benefits for every vulnerable household.

Recommendations

1. Establish coordination platforms between emergency and development actors to support the transition from temporary WASH responses to sustainable, climate-resilient infrastructure. Develop clear post-emergency transition plans to maintain service continuity.
2. Develop village-level Water and Sanitation Safety Plans (WSSSPs) that incorporate climate risks, flood-resilient infrastructure, and emergency supply strategies. Train Water User Committees (WUC), Latrine Committee, etc. in DRR, climate adaptation, and contingency planning.
3. Build the capacity of Water User Committees (WUCs) and water entrepreneurs in service delivery, financial planning, and system maintenance. Clarify roles and responsibilities to enhance accountability and reliability.
4. Introduce sanitation credit schemes, tiered tariffs, and revolving maintenance funds. Improve access to microfinance for WASH entrepreneurs to scale operations and support service sustainability.
5. Expand regulated desludging services in flood-prone areas by providing mobile pit-emptying equipment and training local entrepreneurs to deliver safe, market-based sludge management.
6. Embed WASH services in schools, clinics, and maternal and child health centres. Expand hygiene promotion in early childhood development to support lasting behavioural change.
7. Promote water-saving measures such as rainwater harvesting, household tanks, and greywater reuse. Offer targeted subsidies or in-kind support in drought-prone areas to encourage uptake.
8. Roll out sustained behaviour change communication (BCC) strategies, including community hygiene reinforcement, school-led sanitation monitoring, and incentives linked to improved WASH practices.
9. Introduce offline-compatible tools for monitoring WASH infrastructure, tariffs, and service gaps. Strengthen data feedback loops between communities and local authorities for responsive action.
10. Enhance local availability of sanitation materials and spare parts. Support PPPs and business incubation for WASH entrepreneurs to expand service delivery and product access.
11. Expand technical training for women and youth in solar maintenance, system repairs, and WASH financial management. Ensure equitable involvement in governance and service delivery.

EVALUATION BACKGROUND

Introduction:

This report presents the background, methodology, results, learning and recommendations from an evaluation of community-led Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) interventions in Myanmar, specifically focusing on the Magway and Ayeyarwady regions. Commissioned by the United Nations Children’ Fund (UNICEF), this evaluation aims to assess the effectiveness of WASH initiatives implemented after 2021 and their role in fostering climate resilience and sustainable access to WASH services in these regions. The evaluation was conducted by Niaz Ullah Khan, international consultant supported by local national consultant Win Ei from October 2024 to March 2025.

Context

Geography of Myanmar

Myanmar, Southeast Asia’s second-largest country (676,578 sq. km), shares borders with Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, and Thailand and has a 2,800-km coastline along the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal, making it strategically significant for regional trade (UNDP, 2024). The country’s landscape ranges from fertile deltas in the south to Himalayan foothills in the north, with Lower Myanmar (coastal areas) contrasting Upper Myanmar (interior regions). Rich in arable land, forests, minerals, and natural gas, Myanmar’s agriculture sector is vital to its economy (UNDP, 2024).

Figure 2: Map of Myanmar



Myanmar hosts 135 ethnic groups, with a population ranging between 48–60 million (average 55 million). Two-thirds of the population is rural, with urban concentrations in Yangon and Mandalay. Nearly 24 per cent of the population

is below 14 years, while 7 per cent is over 65 years, with a fertility rate of 2.1 per cent (ADB, 2023). While the country exhibits low overall population density, its key cities demonstrate high urban density. Topographically, Myanmar features a horseshoe-shaped mountain range, with Hkakabo Razi (5,881m) as Southeast Asia's highest peak. The Arakan Yoma range divides the Rakhine coast from the rest of Myanmar, while the Shan Plateau (910m) extends from China. The Ayeyarwady-Sittoung Delta (46,620 sq. km) is Myanmar's agricultural and economic heartland (World Bank, 2022). Administratively, Myanmar is divided into seven states, seven regions, and one union territory (Nay Pyi Taw), with states housing ethnic minorities and regions being Bamar majority (MIMU, 2024).

Socio-Economic Profile

Myanmar's economic outlook for 2024-2025 is bleak, marked by domestic instability and global economic pressures. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth has declined from 4 per cent in 2022 to a projected 0.8 per cent in 2024, recovering slightly to 1.7 per cent in 2025, but remaining far below pre-2021 levels (ADB, 2024). Over 50 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, with 49.7 per cent surviving on less than USD 0.76 per day, while the urban middle class has halved since 2021 (UNDP, 2024). Agriculture and industry face severe setbacks due to conflict, disrupted supply chains, and adverse weather. Foreign investment has plummeted, with companies exiting over human rights concerns and unstable energy supplies. Inflation surged from 19.3 per cent in 2022 to 20.7 per cent in 2024, driven by currency depreciation, rising import costs, and trade restrictions (ADB, 2024; UNDP, 2024). The military's economic controls have weakened exports and border control losses since late 2023; which have resulted in reduced customs revenues (World Bank, 2024). Political stability, governance reforms, and re-engagement with international markets are essential for recovery, but worsening conflict, trade disruptions, and job shortages pose long-term risks (ADB, 2024; UNDP, 2024).

Humanitarian Situation

Since October 2023, Myanmar has seen 1.8 million displaced persons, with 5,350 civilian deaths recorded since 2021. Conscription fears have driven youth migration, while intense conflict in Kachin, Chin, and Rakhine States has led to large-scale displacements (UNHCR, 2024). Thailand hosts over 52,000 refugees, while border closures with India have caused severe shortages of food, fuel, and medicines. Floods, landslides, and disease outbreaks in conflict areas have worsened humanitarian needs, with malaria, typhoid, and diarrhoea increasing in displaced populations (UNOCHA, 2024). Military-imposed internet blackouts further isolate communities, restricting access to essential services (UNDP, 2024). Humanitarian aid remains restricted, exacerbating Myanmar's crisis (UNHCR, 2024; World Bank, 2024).

Climate Change

Myanmar is highly vulnerable to climate change, with natural disasters costing up to 3 per cent of the GDP annually. Flooding is the most frequent hazard, affecting 28 million people, particularly along the Ayeyarwady River and coastal areas. Severe cyclones, such as Cyclone Nargis (2008), which killed about 140,000 people, are increasing due to rising ocean temperatures (World Bank, 2022). Drought affects 4.6 million people in the Central Dry Zone (Magway, Ayeyarwady Delta, Northern Hilly Regions), while landslides threaten over 5 million people in Chin and Sagaing (ADB, 2024). Deforestation and mangrove loss have reduced natural storm defences, increasing exposure to storm surges and saltwater intrusion (UNDP, 2024). Myanmar's disaster risk management requires ecosystem restoration, climate-resilient agriculture, and improved infrastructure to mitigate worsening climate impacts.

Disability Profile

As of 2019, 5.9 million people (13 per cent of Myanmar's population) live with disabilities, with Chin (21 per cent) and Ayeyarwady (17 per cent) reporting the highest prevalence (UNDP, 2021). Children with disabilities face significant barriers to education, with only 36 per cent of children aged 5-9 being literate. In 2019, 600,000 children dropped out of school due to disability or illness, and 200,000 had never attended school (UNDP, 2021). Women with disabilities face higher marginalization, with only 14 per cent employed compared to 98 per cent of men with disabilities. Public assistance remains insufficient, with only 7 per cent receiving support, and just 0.4 per cent of

elderly persons getting disability allowances. Myanmar's 2015 Disability Rights Law lacks proper enforcement, leaving most disabled individuals without adequate social protection (UNDP, 2021).

Access to WASH in Myanmar

Access to WASH services in Myanmar reveals substantial disparities across different regions, with pronounced gaps between urban and rural areas. The country faces distinct challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for WASH, particularly in providing "safely managed" water and sanitation services. According to SDG definitions, "safely managed" drinking water require sources that are improved while being accessible within premises, available whenever needed, and free from contamination. Similarly, safely managed sanitation includes improved sanitation facilities that are not shared and have on-site or offsite treatment options before discharge into water bodies or reuse.

Access to Drinking Water

The 2019 Intercensal Survey highlights that 82 per cent of Myanmar's population uses drinking water from improved sources, but only 41 percent of households have access to "safely managed" water. Urban areas generally fare better, with 64 percent of households having access to safe drinking water, in contrast to only 33 percent in rural areas. Regions such as Ayeyarwady and Rakhine, which heavily rely on surface water, show particularly low levels of safe drinking water access, while urban centres like Yangon have higher rates. While reliance on surface water is falling, arsenic contamination is a threat to certain drinking water sources in some areas of Myanmar. Arsenic, a naturally occurring geological element, can be a threat to human health when it leaches into drinking water sources; chronic exposure to high concentrations of arsenic is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and neurological effects, particularly in children.

Ayeyarwady Region: As per the 2019 Intercensal survey, around 66 per cent of households use improved water sources, but safe drinking water access remains limited, particularly in rural areas. Approximately 29 percent of households in Ayeyarwady still rely on surface water for drinking, which is highly vulnerable to contamination and presents significant health risks. Continued reliance on unprotected water sources elevates the risk of waterborne diseases, including cholera, dysentery, and diarrhoea. The Ayeyarwady region reduced its use of surface water by 15 per cent from 2014 to 2019, yet it still faces challenges in establishing safe and sustainable water sources due to its low-lying, flood-prone landscape.

Magway Region: Water scarcity in Magway region is a key challenge due to its location in the Central Dry Zone, where seasonal water availability fluctuates significantly. While Magway has seen improvements in transitioning to improved water sources, droughts and prolonged dry seasons restrict year-round access to water. Unlike Ayeyarwady, the primary concern in Magway is not contamination but the sheer availability of water, which affects both drinking water access and agricultural productivity. Smallholder farmers, who depend on rainfall, are particularly impacted, struggling to meet water needs during the dry season (UNDP, 2021).

Access to Sanitation

The 2019 Intercensal Survey reports that 79.6 per cent of households in Myanmar use improved sanitation facilities, while 4.9 per cent still practise open defecation. However, Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) 2022 data shows 78 per cent of urban households have improved sanitation, whereas rural access is lower at 72 per cent (excluding limited sanitation). Nationally, 6.8 per cent of households practise open defecation, and 7.32 per cent rely on unimproved sanitation, with higher prevalence in specific regions. Safe sanitation, aligned with SDG standards, requires waste separation from human contact and proper treatment, a challenge in many rural areas where open defecation remains widespread. Sanitation facilities vary, from basic pit latrines to flush toilets connected to septic tanks or sewers. While 54 per cent of households use improved latrines, rural communities, especially in Ayeyarwady and Magway, still rely on unimproved latrines, including open pits and shared facilities that fail to meet safely managed sanitation standards. In rural Myanmar, 9.6 per cent of households practise open defecation, with Ayeyarwady particularly affected due to financial and infrastructure constraints. This increases the risk of faecal contamination in water sources, especially during floods. In Ayeyarwady, high open defecation rates and reliance on surface water create severe contamination risks, contributing to diarrhoeal diseases and public health concerns. In

Magway, limited water availability further hinders sanitation improvements, and poor sanitation continues to impact environmental health and community productivity. Unimproved latrines and open defecation contribute to soil pollution and long-term contamination, affecting overall public health and sanitation sustainability. Addressing these challenges requires investments in infrastructure, behaviour change initiatives, and financial support for improved sanitation access.

WASH and Gender

The provision and accessibility of water and sanitation services in Myanmar reveal substantial gender disparities, with a notable impact on women and girls, particularly in rural and vulnerable regions. In urban areas, improved water sources, such as piped and bottled water, have become more prevalent, whereas in rural regions, surface water remains a common source, posing heightened health risks due to contamination. Gender roles are a critical factor in water collection practices. In households without on-premises drinking water, women disproportionately bear the burden of water collection, especially in rural areas. Data from 2019 shows that in rural settings, females are solely responsible for water collection in 32 per cent of households, compared to 23 per cent for males (MIMU, UNDP 2024). This gendered responsibility places an additional physical and time burden on women, limiting their capacity to engage in other productive activities. In urban areas, males are more frequently responsible for water collection, suggesting a variance in gender roles based on locality. Female-headed households reportedly access improved water sources slightly more than male-headed households (82 per cent vs. 79 per cent) with lower reliance on surface water (MIMU, UNDP 2024). Nevertheless, the quality of bottled and piped water remains inconsistent across the country, and the safety of these sources is not assured without regular quality monitoring. In terms of sanitation, access to safely managed services remains limited, particularly in rural and poorer areas. Open defecation still exists in several regions, exposing communities to significant health risks and further affecting women and girls who face additional privacy and safety concerns.

The lack of gender-sensitive sanitation facilities, such as those catering for menstrual hygiene management (MHM), impacts women's and girls' ability to engage fully in education and other socio-economic activities. Without adequate facilities, girls are more likely to miss school, and women may face restrictions in public participation, perpetuating gender inequalities. Regional disparities are particularly evident in areas such as Rakhine and Ayeyarwady, where access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation services is notably low. Heavy reliance on surface water and inadequate infrastructure in these regions heightens vulnerability to climate change impacts, further exacerbating water scarcity and contamination issues. Women and girls in these regions are disproportionately affected due to their roles in water collection and household water management, placing them at the forefront of coping with climate-induced water challenges.

Achieving SDGs

By ensuring safe drinking water and improved sanitation in vulnerable communities, the programme directly supports SDG 6, focusing on equitable access to WASH services and sustainable practices. The initiative strengthens public health (SDG 3) by reducing waterborne diseases, particularly in rural and underserved areas where reliance on surface water is high. Improved hygiene practices and sanitation facilities mitigate health risks, benefiting women and children who are disproportionately affected by poor WASH conditions. Gender equality and social inclusion (SDG 5) are also key priorities. In rural Myanmar, women and girls bear the burden of water collection, limiting their opportunities for education and economic activities. The programme improves local water access, incorporates gender-sensitive sanitation facilities, and promotes women's participation in Water User Committees (WUCs) and decision-making processes, strengthening community resilience. The programme enhances climate resilience (SDG 13) and sustainable communities (SDG 11) by addressing water security challenges posed by climate change. With increased risks of floods and droughts, the initiative promotes climate-resilient infrastructure and community-led adaptation strategies through training and engagement. Finally, the programme promotes multi-stakeholder collaboration (SDG 17) by partnering with local governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and international organizations. By integrating capacity building, real-time monitoring, and systemic change, the

initiative embeds sustainable WASH practices within national and local frameworks, ensuring lasting impact and accountability.

Universal Instruments of Human Rights

The community-led WASH programme in Myanmar prioritizes rights-based access to water and sanitation, particularly in conflict-affected and rural areas, where essential services are severely compromised. Aligned with international human rights instruments, it upholds the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), recognizing safe water and sanitation as fundamental to human dignity. By providing clean, sustainable water sources, the programme addresses health risks linked to contamination and inadequate sanitation, exacerbated by Myanmar's instability and weak infrastructure. Gender equality and non-discrimination, guided by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), are central to the programme. In Myanmar, women and girls bear the burden of water collection, limiting their education and economic opportunities. The initiative reduces this burden by improving local water access and integrating gender-sensitive sanitation facilities, including MHM. Women's involvement in water management decisions strengthens their agency and participation in community development.

In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the programme ensures children's right to a healthy environment, reducing WASH-related health risks and improving educational outcomes. Poor sanitation and contaminated water are major threats to children's health and school attendance, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas. By prioritizing children and other vulnerable populations, the programme promotes safe, inclusive sanitation access. The programme also integrates climate resilience, reinforcing the emerging right to a healthy environment. Myanmar faces water scarcity and extreme weather risks, worsening infrastructure challenges. By developing climate-resilient WASH systems, the programme enables communities to adapt to climate pressures, safeguarding their right to a sustainable and safe environment, even amid instability.

WASH Related Policies and Plans

Myanmar's National WASH Strategy and Investment Plan (2016-2030) aims for universal WASH coverage by 2030, with a strong focus on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR). The plan prioritizes resilient infrastructure, including solar-powered water systems and decentralized wastewater treatment facilities, with specific funding for climate-adaptive WASH in rural and underserved areas. Ensuring long-term WASH service provision, particularly in schools and healthcare facilities, requires multi-stakeholder coordination and sustainable financing mechanisms.

UNICEF's global WASH strategy stresses the urgent need for climate resilience to protect vulnerable populations, especially children and marginalized groups. The approach integrates risk-informed interventions, including drought-resistant water systems, flood-resilient sanitation facilities, and sustainable infrastructure in schools and health centres. These efforts align with SDGs, ensuring universal, equitable WASH access while addressing climate vulnerabilities affecting women, girls, and persons with disabilities.

In spite of COVID-19 and political instability, UNICEF's 2020 WASH programme reached 231,000 people with safe water and supported 317 schools with climate-resilient WASH facilities, focusing on solar-powered systems. Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) helped declare communities open-defecation-free, improving public health outcomes. Capacity building, technical training, and real-time data monitoring have strengthened WASH sector governance. With significant gaps in financing and service delivery in humanitarian settings calls for climate-resilient WASH systems. Strengthening investment, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and innovation will be essential to achieving Myanmar's WASH targets and long-term sustainability.

Object of the Evaluation

Myanmar's WASH programme operates in a challenging climate and socio-political environment, where floods, droughts, and instability frequently disrupt implementation. This formative evaluation, aligned with UNEG

standards, examines whether interventions effectively integrate climate resilience, inclusivity, and equity, particularly for vulnerable communities, while ensuring sustainability and local ownership. The findings will provide evidence-based insights to optimize resources, strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration, and enhance scalability, particularly in disaster-prone and fragile regions.

The evaluation focuses on UNICEF's community-driven WASH interventions in Magway and Ayeyarwady, initiated in response to socio-political disruptions in 2021. These interventions aim to ensure equitable access to sustainable WASH services, empowering communities to manage water and sanitation facilities and enhancing resilience to climate change and external shocks. Key programme components include community-managed, climate-resilient water supply systems serving 28,755 people, climate-smart sanitation benefiting 43,786 people, and handwashing promotion reaching 499,024 individuals. Moreover, 190 communities have been certified open defecation-free (ODF), benefiting 116,195 people. The programme also promotes local ownership, with households contributing to sanitation infrastructure and local masons and sanitation entrepreneurs trained to ensure long-term sustainability.

The evaluation will assess the programme's relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and coherence, particularly in relation to UNICEF's climate resilience and community empowerment goals. Findings will inform future programme expansion, emergency WASH preparedness in Myanmar's dry and delta regions, and reinforce the humanitarian-development nexus, ensuring sustained impact in vulnerable communities.

Programme Areas

The Myanmar Community-led WASH programme primarily targets two regions: Magway and Ayeyarwady. These areas are particularly vulnerable to climate-related impacts such as droughts, flooding, and inadequate access to water and sanitation. In Magway, the programme focuses on rural communities in Chauk, Ngape, Pwintphyu, and Salin townships, where access to safe drinking water is limited, and sanitation services remain insufficient. In Ayeyarwady, the programme is implemented in Bogale Township, addressing water scarcity and improving climate-resilient sanitation facilities to support community health and well-being.

Key Partners

This programme is implemented in collaboration with several key partners:

UNICEF: Provides technical guidance, capacity building, and oversight.

Local NGO/CSOs like Myanmar Health Assistant Association (MHAA): Supports the delivery of gender-sensitive and climate-resilient WASH services in targeted communities, focusing on Magway and Ayeyarwady.

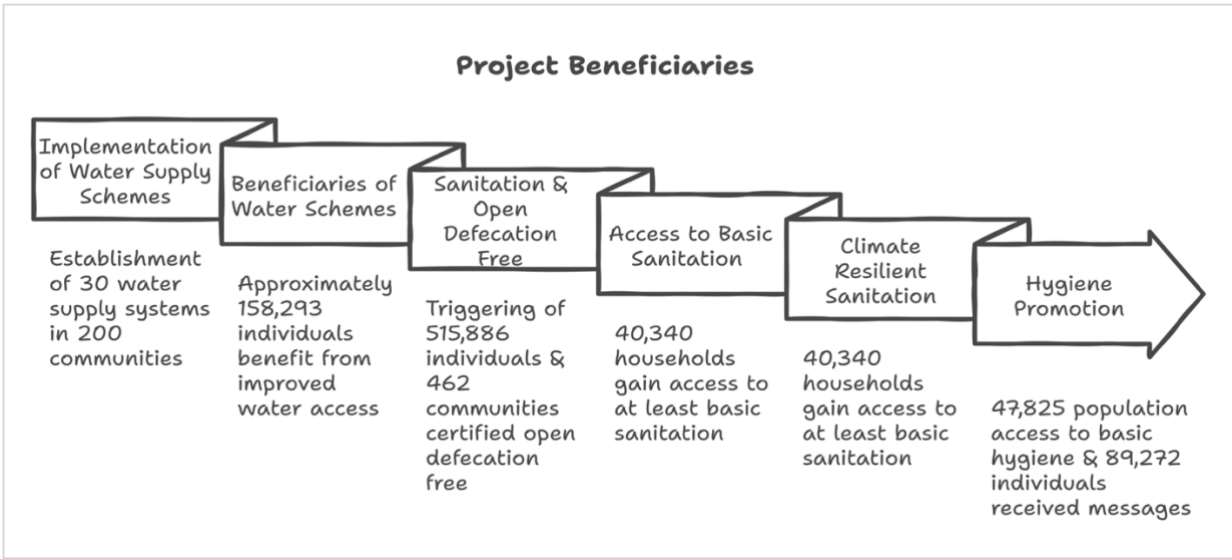
Community Organizations, Water Users Committees (WUCs), Volunteers, etc: Work directly with communities to mobilize local resources, promote hygiene practices, and support the maintenance of water and sanitation systems.

Local Governments & Authorities: Collaborate on policy support, localized monitoring, and emergency preparedness to sustain WASH interventions amidst Myanmar's socio-political challenges.

Private Sector Partners: Engage with local entrepreneurs and suppliers for sanitation products, maintenance services, and climate-resilient infrastructure, particularly in collaboration with local sanitation businesses.

Programme Beneficiaries

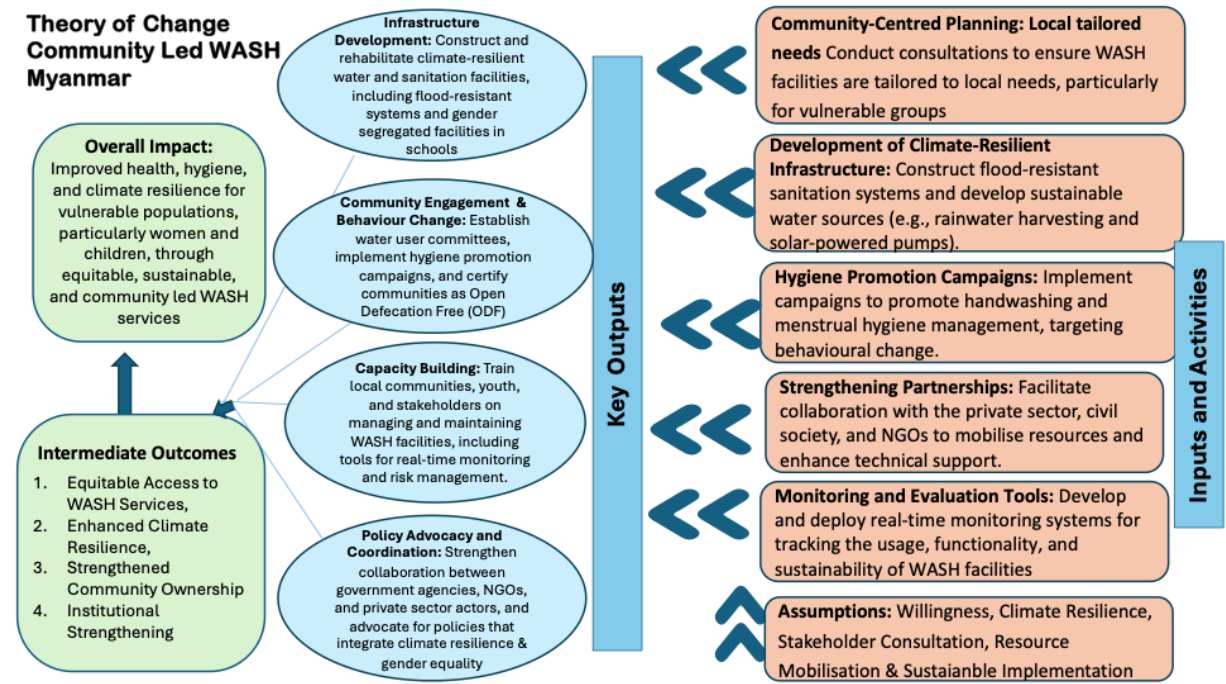
Figure 2: Programme Beneficiaries



Theory of Change/Logical Framework

UNICEF implemented ASWA-II from 2018 to 2022, and parts of this programme are being covered under this evaluation, especially initiatives from February 2021 onwards till 2022. A logical framework of the ASWA-II provided a good basis for constructing the theory of change (ToC) of the programme being evaluated). Similarly, UNICEF Myanmar Programme Strategy Note 2018-2022 has a ToC for the WASH programme of UNICEF. This has been further supplemented with UNICEF Annual Work Plans from 2021 to 2024 that has a strong focus on climate-resilient WASH services and sustainability of sanitation, drinking water and hygiene behaviours. By reviewing these documents, a revised version of the ToC for this evaluation has been developed that covers ASWA-II, as well as the WASH programme strategy component of UNICEF Myanmar. This has been used as a key instrument of the evaluation to understand the logical connection between different strategic actions.

Figure 3: Reconstructed Theory of Change of Community Led WASH in Myanmar 2021-2024



The long-term vision and impact of this initiative is to improve health, hygiene, and climate resilience for vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, through equitable, sustainable, and community-led WASH services. Achieving this requires strengthening access, resilience, community ownership, and institutional capacity to ensure inclusive and adaptive WASH interventions. The intermediate outcomes focus on ensuring equitable access to WASH services for women, children, and persons with disabilities, while enhancing climate resilience through infrastructure designed to withstand droughts, floods, and extreme weather events. Strengthening community ownership empowers local WUCs and promotes inclusive decision-making, while institutional capacity-building ensures effective planning, monitoring, and long-term WASH sustainability.

Key outputs include the construction and rehabilitation of climate-resilient WASH infrastructure, including schools and public spaces. Community engagement is central for initiatives like hygiene promotion campaigns, establishing WUCs, and ODF certification. Conduct capacity-building to equip local stakeholders in WASH management, real-time monitoring, and risk mitigation, while policy advocacy and coordination strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration to integrate climate resilience and gender equity into WASH policies.

Core activities include community-centred planning to tailor WASH services to local needs, particularly for marginalized groups. Infrastructure development prioritizes flood-resistant sanitation systems and sustainable water sources such as rainwater harvesting and solar-powered pumps. Hygiene awareness campaigns promote behavioural change, while capacity-building efforts equip communities and local authorities with technical skills for WASH system operation and maintenance. Strategic partnerships with the private sector, NGOs, and civil society enhance resource mobilization and technical expertise, while real-time monitoring tools improve accountability and service delivery.

Assumptions, Risks, and Mitigation Strategies: The successful implementation of community-led WASH systems relies on key assumptions. It is expected that communities would actively participate in the planning and management of WASH infrastructure, ensuring long-term ownership and sustainability. Furthermore, financial and technical resources must be mobilized and sustained to support implementation. Effective coordination among government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector is also assumed to continue, despite socio-political challenges. The climate risks must be adequately mitigated to safeguard WASH infrastructure and ensure uninterrupted service delivery. However, several risks could threaten programme outcomes. Financial constraints, including insufficient or delayed funding, may hinder implementation. Socio-political instability poses another risk, potentially disrupting community and government engagement.

Validation of ToC: The constructed ToC serves as a foundational tool for evaluating the logical connection between inputs, outputs, and outcomes, ensuring the long-term vision of equitable, sustainable, and climate-resilient WASH services. The evaluation framework aligns with the ToC, integrating key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), case studies, and field observations to assess how effectively programme activities contribute to community led WASH in Myanmar. The validation process follows UNEG standards, ensuring a methodologically sound, participatory, and evidence-driven approach. This theory-based evaluation examines sector progress, key enablers, barriers, and risks, reinforcing the alignment between ToC and evaluation objectives. Findings will support WASH service refinement, local ownership, and community resilience to climate and socio-political challenges.

PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Purpose

This formative evaluation provides a systematic assessment of UNICEF's community-led, climate-resilient WASH interventions in Myanmar's Magway and Ayeyarwady regions, implemented in response to the socio-political disruptions following February 2021. The programme aims to enhance safe water access, promote sustainable sanitation, and strengthen community ownership and resilience, particularly in areas highly vulnerable to climate impacts. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness, relevance, sustainability, and coherence of these interventions, generating evidence-based insights to inform future WASH programming in Myanmar and similar contexts globally. It will identify best practices to refine emergency preparedness and enhance adaptive capacity in community-led WASH interventions, with a strong focus on gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches that address the needs of women, children, and persons with disabilities. Findings will support UNICEF management in making evidence-informed decisions for strengthening and scaling up climate-resilient WASH initiatives. The evaluation will also inform preparedness for emergency WASH response in Myanmar's dry zone and delta regions. NGO partners and local communities will use the insights to enhance programme ownership and sustainability, ensuring long-term impact and resilience in WASH service delivery.

Objectives

The evaluation has the following primary objectives as given in the ToRs:

1. To inform the next steps for scaling up the programme and evidence-based advocacy on community-based and climate resilient water supply and sanitation.
2. To provide evidence to support UNICEF's overall approach to climate-resilience programming, and related contributions to building community resilience.
3. To enhance community ownership of and demand generation for climate resilient WASH.
4. To inform humanitarian-development nexus programming, especially around emergency preparedness in vulnerable regions of the country.

The evaluation will cover UNICEF engagement in community-based and climate resilient water supply and sanitation interventions in the dry zone and delta regions (Magway and Ayeyarwady) since February 2021. The period prior to the military takeover and other ongoing emergency WASH interventions in other regions will be out of scope. The evaluation will only examine work under the following two outputs of UNICEF cooperation:

Water Supply: By 2023, deliver equitable, safe, gender sensitive and climate resilient drinking water supply services to vulnerable populations in targeted States and Regions at scale.

Sanitation and Hygiene: By 2023, end open defecation and promote demand for safe, climate smart and equitable sanitation and hygiene services among vulnerable communities in targeted areas.

Evaluation Usage:

The evaluation findings will support UNICEF Myanmar in scaling up, adapting, and optimizing WASH interventions, ensuring efficiency and sustainability in high-risk regions. Insights will strengthen advocacy for climate-resilient WASH policies and inform funding proposals by demonstrating programme impact and community needs. At a broader level, UNICEF's regional and global offices will integrate findings into WASH strategies and humanitarian frameworks, enhancing best practices for climate-resilient interventions. Magway and Ayeyarwady regional authorities will use the findings to inform policy, improve infrastructure, and align interventions with regional development objectives. For local communities, particularly women, children, and vulnerable groups, the evaluation will reinforce community ownership, fostering safer sanitation, hygiene, and water use practices. Local contractors and service providers will enhance construction quality, adopt resilient WASH designs, and meet infrastructure needs, ensuring sustainable service delivery. Findings will also drive investment in resilient infrastructure and create business opportunities, particularly in sanitation provision and maintenance. For NGOs involved in behavioural

change, such as the MHAA, the evaluation will refine engagement strategies and strengthen the long-term adoption of safe sanitation and hygiene practices, ensuring greater sustainability of WASH interventions across Myanmar.

Evaluation Scope

Thematic / Programmatic Scope: The evaluation will focus on assessing UNICEF’s WASH interventions in Magway and Ayeyarwady, with emphasis on community-led and climate-resilient approaches in WASH, including climate adaptation and emergency preparedness.

Geographic Scope: This evaluation covers the Magway and Ayeyarwady regions, chosen for their climate vulnerability and socio-political challenges, to provide insights applicable to similar contexts across Myanmar.

Temporal Scope: The evaluation will examine interventions implemented from 2021 onwards till October 2024, providing insights into both immediate and longer-term effects and sustainability of the WASH programme.

Evaluation Criteria: Guided by OECD/DAC criteria—Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability, and Coherence—the evaluation will assess the programme’s operational and strategic dimensions.

Climate Change Integration: The evaluation will examine the integration of climate resilience into WASH programming, assessing adaptation strategies and community resilience to climate impacts.

Gender and Human Rights Integration: The evaluation will assess how gender and human rights considerations are embedded in the programme, ensuring equitable access and responsiveness to the needs of women, children, and marginalized groups.

Evaluation framework and questions

The framework used in this evaluation is based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, supplemented and adjusted where necessary to ensure that the evaluation meets specific objectives. The criteria covered under this evaluation are relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and coherence. In addition, cross-cutting equity, gender equality and human rights considerations are also considered. Some key questions include:

Evaluation Questions

Table 1: Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Criterion	Evaluation Questions as per ToRs	Edits and Suggestions agreed during the inception phase
Relevance	To what extent is the programme relevant to the identified needs of target populations and their families? Are the programme and interventions customized enough to address the needs of the target population by age, gender, and other factors? Were relevant partners involved in the programme design and implementation, including target population, and their families? To what extent are community perceptions monitored and included in programme design, including through feedback and complaint mechanisms (under Accountability to Affected Populations)? Is the programme responsive to changing needs and circumstances, including climate change? Was it adjusted through the course of its implementation, including through adoption of climate-resilient approaches? To what extent has emergency preparedness been built into the design of the programme, in order to enhance	Add a focus on the quality of partnerships, transparency in decision-making, and the level of community influence. Specify “how” feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, complaints systems) were used to influence programme adjustments. Clarity required by specifying the types of adjustments made (e.g., redesign of infrastructure, policy alignment). Explicitly add examples such as “disaster risk reduction measures or contingency planning” to clarify scope.

	community resilience? How do existing programmes contribute to emergency preparedness in the target communities?	
Effectiveness	To what extent have the WASH programme objectives been achieved, particularly regarding improved access to safe drinking WASH practices, and enhanced climate resilience? What are the main barriers affecting access to WASH services for the target populations? Are there specific solutions or adjustments that could overcome these challenges? From the community perspective, what are the perceived benefits and challenges associated with the programme, and how have these influenced outcomes?	Reflection includes external challenges and their impact on programme implementation A strong qualitative question. Consider splitting it into two: one focusing on benefits and the other on challenges to ensure depth in responses.
Sustainability	To what extent has the programme built the capacity of local communities and other stakeholders to maintain WASH services sustainably, especially under climate-resilient frameworks? Are there any specific capacity gaps that need to be addressed and/or strengthened to further support community resilience? Are there adequate mechanisms, including funding, community engagement, and private-sector involvement, to support the long-term sustainability of the interventions? How effective have demand-generation activities been in fostering continued support and commitment for WASH services in target communities? Is there sufficient private sector engagement to support future sustainability	Skills training, resource availability, or institutional support” as examples of capacity-building aspects to explore. Clarity required on mechanisms: financial, operational, or governance”- which one we need to explore. This would be presented as “examples of successful or unsuccessful demand-generation efforts” and also examples around community campaigns, etc.
Coherence	To what extent are there synergies and interlinkages between the programme and other interventions carried out by partners? Do coordination mechanisms between key stakeholders exist, and if so, to what extent are they well designed, clear and active? Are there differences in coordination at national or sub-national levels? To what extent have partners’ and stakeholders’ perspectives been monitored and included into programme prioritization and adjustments?	Examples of synergies and interdependencies between WASH and other sectors, such as health and education or only within WASH. This would be more of stakeholders’ perception about coordination mechanisms rather their voices in need assessment and adjustments.
Cross-Cutting Themes: Climate Change, Gender, and Human Rights	Are there any difficulties in accessing water supply and sanitation services for women or persons with disabilities? Are there any special barriers or concerns from a gender or disability perspective What are the main concerns and/or barriers linked to the assessment of different age groups, particularly young children and the elderly? How well does the programme promote equitable access and uphold human rights principles, ensuring inclusion and responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable groups?	Add how these were addressed For young and elderly, it is important to know how they were involved in designing and implementation of WASH. Rephrasing this as “what specific actions taken to promote equity and inclusion?

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation adopted a participatory and contributory evaluation approach to assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and climate resilience of the WASH programme in the Magway and Ayeyarwady regions of Myanmar. This emphasizes the use of qualitative methods including literature review, FGDs, KIIs, field observations, and case studies, and explaining how they were applied to generate evidence-based findings and recommendations.

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation adopted a theory-based methodology, using a reconstructed ToC and a logic model, within a participatory analysis framework that emphasized active stakeholder engagement. This combined approach clarified how UNICEF, local authorities, NGOs, and private-sector actors contributed to WASH outcomes, while capturing community perspectives on programme interventions. By examining whether activities and outputs aligned with intended outcomes, the evaluation identified gaps hindering long-term impact.

In prioritizing stakeholder engagement, the evaluation team worked closely with community representatives, NGOs, and contractors to encourage local ownership of the findings. Qualitative data was initially coded in Excel, with further analysis conducted in NVivo for deeper thematic exploration. Robust triangulation was achieved by drawing on multiple data sources (policy documents, interviews, focus groups, field observations, and case studies), which enhanced the reliability of conclusions and ensured that recommendations remained practical, context-sensitive, and evidence-based.

Integrating Cross-Cutting Issues

Cross-cutting themes are crucial for understanding how WASH interventions affect different population segments and the environment, emphasizing the interlinked nature of gender equality, sustainability, social inclusion, environmental impact, and climate resilience. Specifically, the evaluation examined how interventions addressed the specific needs of women, marginalized communities, and persons with disabilities. It also assessed the environmental sustainability of WASH infrastructure in the face of climate risks. By embedding these themes throughout the analysis, the evaluation provides a comprehensive perspective on programme success, challenges, and long-term viability.

Evaluation Matrix

A structured Evaluation Matrix was developed to guide the design, planning, and implementation of the evaluation. This matrix aligns each evaluation question with the relevant data sources and collection methods, as specified in the Terms of Reference (ToR). It is provided as Annexure 1 of this report and served as the framework for gathering evidence to answer key evaluation questions.

Data Collection Methods

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach that integrated document reviews, qualitative consultations, and field-based observations. This approach was intentionally participatory, capturing a variety of stakeholder perspective, including from communities, implementing partners, and private-sector actors to build a well-rounded evidence base. Five main components structured the data collection process:

- a) Document Review
- b) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- c) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
- d) Field Observations
- e) Case studies

These components are described in detail below.

Document Review

A comprehensive desk review was conducted to examine key documents and policies related to community-led WASH interventions. The primary sources included national WASH strategies, UNICEF programme documents, and reports on sanitation, water supply, and climate adaptation. By analysing the design rationales and operational frameworks in these materials, the evaluation team contextualized the field data and identified initial gaps between policy intentions and on-ground realities.

The key documents informing this evaluation include UNICEF's internal records, namely the Project Documents of ASWA II extensions (2021–22, 2022–23), Annual Work Plans (2021–2024), the ASWA-II logical framework (log frame), a Risk Matrix, the WASH Disability and Gender Checklist, Knowledge Management Tracker Myanmar, a GESI Assessment Report, a Sanitation Market Survey, the UNICEF Myanmar 2020 Annual WASH Report, and the UNICEF Global Strategy for WASH (2016–2030). These are complemented by external references from organizations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). Collectively, these resources offer extensive insights into Myanmar's socio-economic and demographic context, including population distribution, climate change implications, and humanitarian needs. A list of all key documents is provided in Annexure 2.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

In total, 14 KIIs were completed with stakeholders possessing first-hand knowledge of WASH programming. These included UNICEF staff (regional and national WASH specialists), representatives from partner organizations (e.g., MHAA, WaterAid), private sanitation entrepreneurs, independent consultants, and community leaders. Through these interviews, the evaluation team gathered insights on implementation strategies, sustainability challenges, and local adaptations, which enriched the analysis of programme impact. The checklist of KIIs is attached as Annexure 3.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Fifteen FGDs were held across 11 sampled villages in Magway (7 villages) and Ayeyarwady (4 villages). In some instances, villages were replaced due to security concerns, following an agreed risk management strategy. The FGDs included 122 community members (70 females and 52 males) who shared experiences related to WASH adoption, service sustainability, and community ownership. Where appropriate, sessions were gender-segregated or designed to include specific groups (e.g. youth, persons with disabilities, older adults). This participatory engagement captured community-level nuances that might otherwise remain unseen. The checklist of FGDs is attached as Annexure 4.

Table 2: A Summary of FGD Distribution

Region/ Township	Name of Village with type of interventions	FGD Group	Sex	
			Male	Female
Ayeyarwady Region				
Bogale	Thon Dat (WASH)	Female		8
Bogale	Thon Dat (WASH)	Water User Committee	6	1
Bogale	Kokkosu (WASH)	Elderly, Persons with Disabilities	5	3
Bogale	Kokkosu (WASH)	General Community	5	5
Bogale	Asi Gyi (WASH)	Male	8	
Bogale	Asi Gyi (WASH)	Volunteer		9
Bogale	Kan Kone (Haing Si) Sanitation	Youth	5	5
Sub Total			29	31
Magway Region				
Magway	Pone Tat (Water)	Water User Committee	6	
Magway	Pone Tat (Water)	Female		6
Pwintphyu	Kyun Pin Sin (Sanitation)	Volunteer		10
Pwintphyu	Zaung Chan Khone (Sanitation)	Youth	3	5
Pwintphyu	Pauk Kone (WASH/Water)	Male	8	
Salin	Ku To (N) (Sanitation)	General Community	3	5
Salin	Ywar Mhat (Sanitation)	Female		8
Salin	Min Te (Sanitation)	Elderly, Persons with Disabilities	3	5
Sub Total			23	39
Grand Total			52	70

Field Observations

Field observations were conducted in 11 out of the 12 sampled villages. One village of Chauk Township could not be completed due to the security situation of the location. Evaluators used a three-point scoring sheet to assess the functionality, resilience, and inclusivity of WASH infrastructure and associated practices. Water sources, sanitation facilities, and handwashing stations were scrutinized for maintenance, accessibility, and climate-adaptive features. The observation checklist (attached as an annex) provided systematic indicators to gauge the performance of WASH facilities and community engagement. The checklist of field observation is attached as Annexure 5 A.

Case Studies

Eight case studies (four from each region) offered deeper, context-specific insights into WASH interventions. They illustrated how communities adapted services to local needs and described the role of community-led management structures in sustaining service delivery. Key lessons for future improvement and scaling were derived from these focused analyses. The checklist of field case studies is attached as Annexure 6.

Sampling and Data Analysis

Sampling

Owing to security constraints, a purposive sampling approach was adopted to gather qualitative data from 12 initial villages. Each location was chosen based on intervention type (water, sanitation, or combined), climate resilience features, and population characteristics. One village in Ayeyarwady and three villages in Magway were replaced due to active security risks, in line with pre-established mitigation procedures. This approach ensured representation of

diverse WASH service models while prioritizing participant safety. Sampled villages with second options of villages with recruitment criterion is provided in Annexure 8.

Data Analysis

A multi-layered qualitative analysis was used to capture, code, and interpret data from FGDs, KIIs, field observations, and case studies. Transcriptions and field notes were initially coded in Excel to detect recurring themes and frequency patterns. Where more granular examination was required, NVivo software aided in refining thematic analyses.

Triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing different data sources, ensuring that findings were corroborated from multiple perspectives. This approach incorporated insights from policy documents, field observations, and community experiences. An emphasis on gender, social inclusion, and climate resilience was maintained throughout the analysis to highlight interrelated factors influencing WASH outcomes.

Ethical Conduct and Compliance with UNEG/ UNICEF Evaluation Norms and Standards

The evaluation adhered strictly to the UNEG Ethical Guidelines (2020) and UNICEF's Ethical Standards for Research, Evaluation, and Data Collection (2015). Special attention was given to the sensitive security environment in Magway and Ayeeyarwady, ensuring participants' dignity, safety, and confidentiality.

Ethical Approval and Institutional Oversight

Ethical approval was secured through UNICEF's partnership with the Health Media Lab Institutional Review Board (HML IRB) in Washington, D.C. (Approval No. 1004MYAN24, dated 5 December 2024). This body reviewed protocols on informed consent, confidentiality, and risk management. The evaluation team also adhered to UNICEF's 'Do No Harm' principle, ensuring that data collection activities did not jeopardize participant safety or well-being. The ethical approval is attached as Annexure 7.

Orientation and Capacity Development of Data Collection Team

Enumerators, facilitators, and note-takers underwent structured training sessions on data collection ethics, gender-sensitive interviewing, and security protocols. These sessions began virtually on 25 November and 1 December 2024, followed by a pilot in Bogale on 6 December. In Magway, training occurred remotely on 14–15 December due to restricted movement. Continuous supervision and daily debriefings helped refine methods and maintain data integrity.

Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

All participants were clearly informed of the evaluation's purpose and how their data would be used. They were assured of their right to withdraw at any point without negative consequences. Consent forms were translated into Burmese and local dialects; verbal consent procedures were available for those with literacy challenges. Minors required both parental consent and their own assent. Additional consent was obtained for recordings, photos, and case study documentation. The consent forms are attached as Annexure 9.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups

A rights-based, inclusive approach guided the evaluation to ensure meaningful participation by women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. Separate FGDs were organized for women, and adjustments in interview techniques and venues were made to facilitate disabled participants. In contexts where village leaders' presence inhibited candid discussions, follow-up phone calls allowed more open dialogue.

Security Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Security volatility demanded regular risk assessments. When travel to original sites proved unsafe, alternative villages were used, and remote KIIs were conducted where feasible. The presence of military checkpoints in Magway and instances of gunfire in Bogale caused disruptions, extending timelines and sometimes reducing participant availability. Despite these obstacles, the evaluation team maintained ethical principles and adapted data collection methods to ensure a broad evidence base. A detailed note on data collection challenges in Bogale and Magway Region is attached Annexure 10.

Data Confidentiality and Anonymity

To protect privacy, personally identifiable information was omitted from transcripts, with unique coding replacing names and exact locations. All electronic data was encrypted, while hard copies were stored securely. Triangulation helped verify findings without revealing sensitive participant details. Only lead evaluators and designated UNICEF representatives accessed confidential materials.

Fair Representation and Avoidance of Bias

A balanced facilitation team (including women) was essential to reduce potential biases. Neutral questioning techniques also minimized leading responses. Non-beneficiaries were included in discussions to understand broader community experiences. Where security risks restricted on-site evaluation, local facilitators and remote interviews helped ensure that diverse perspectives were captured.

Ethical Compliance in Reporting and Use of Findings

In alignment with UNEG and UNICEF standards, this final report safeguards participant anonymity and acknowledges limitations posed by security. Preliminary findings were shared with UNICEF and partners to enable validation and ensure that recommendations remained contextually relevant, ethical, and feasible under prevailing conditions.

Quality Assurance, Limitations, Constraints, and Mitigation Strategies

Quality Assurance Measures

Quality assurance was prioritized at every stage, from tool development to data analysis. All data collection instruments (interview guides, FGD protocols, observation checklists) were peer-reviewed for clarity and contextual suitability. A pilot test in Bogale (Ayeyarwady) on 6 December 2024 informed final refinements. Virtual oversight in Magway, where in-person supervision was limited, ensured consistent adherence to protocols.

Limitations and Constraints

Several challenges affected the evaluation:

1. **Restricted International Travel and Remote Oversight:** A key limitation was the inability of the international team lead to travel to Myanmar due to ongoing security risks and access restrictions. This was mitigated through regular virtual coordination with local team members, ensuring that field activities remained aligned with the evaluation framework. While direct observation of field conditions was not possible, a strong collaboration was maintained with in-country teams for data quality assurance.
2. **Security and Access Constraints:** Military operations and checkpoints restricted access to several target villages, occasionally disrupting community participation and requiring field teams to revise travel plans at short notice. These restrictions led to delays and rescheduling of some field activities to ensure staff and participant safety. These challenges were equally applicable to the programme implementation team, however, the programme continued to deliver in these challenging circumstances and should be appreciated.

3. **Logistical and Geographic Challenges:** In Bogale, some field visits required 2.5 to 3 hours of boat travel, limiting time for discussions and, in some cases, resulting in shortened or incomplete sessions. These logistical issues affected the efficiency of data collection efforts.
4. **Local-Level Disruptions:** In Magway, local disturbances, such as interruptions from community members or gambling activities nearby, disrupted FGDs and affected the depth and flow of conversation. This highlighted the need for secure and neutral venues for effective community engagement.
5. **Delays Due to Security Conditions:** Ongoing security incidents caused unavoidable delays, extending the fieldwork timeline in several areas. Despite these disruptions, field teams prioritized safety and adapted plans to maintain the quality and integrity of the evaluation process.
6. **Limitations in Government Engagement:** In line with United Nations Country Team (UNCT) guidelines, the evaluation team did not engage directly with de facto authorities, except in purely technical areas. Consequently, the evaluation was limited to community-level programming delivered through non-governmental partners, with no assessment of national policy alignment or system strengthening, which was not feasible under the current context. This limitation also affected data verification processes; specifically, the evaluation team was unable to validate health-related data through government health centres. As a result, all reported health improvements are based solely on community perceptions and self-reported experiences, rather than triangulated with administrative or clinical health records.

Key Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Table below provided a summary of the major risks encountered, and the strategies implemented to address them.

Table 3: Summary of Major Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Key Risks	Impact on Evaluation	Mitigation Strategies Adopted
Security threats (military activity, checkpoints, and restricted movement)	Limited access to villages, travel delays, and participant hesitancy due to fear of surveillance.	Security monitoring in real-time, rescheduling, and use of alternative villages. Remote KIIs conducted where necessary.
Inability of team lead to travel to Myanmar	Limited onsite supervision and coordination	Continuous remote communication and oversight with local teams with virtual debriefings and regular guidance
Enumerator capacity in insecure or hard-to-reach areas	Risk of inconsistent data collection due to limited in-person oversight	Additional remote training and daily virtual debriefs and supervision support extended
Limited youth participation in FGDs	Lower engagement reduced representation in discussions.	Follow-up phone interviews and adaptation of engagement techniques to encourage participation.
Disruptions during FGDs (external interference, village leaders' presence, gambling activities)	Restricted openness and distracted participants affected discussion depth.	FGDs relocated to quieter settings, with private follow-up interviews where needed.
Difficult access to remote villages (long travel times in Bogale and roadblocks in Magway)	Increased travel time and risks of incomplete data collection.	Early departure scheduling and alternative data collection sites selected for security reasons.
Delays in fieldwork due to evolving security concerns	Extended timeline disrupted evaluation schedules.	Continuous risk assessments and adaptive scheduling prioritised safe locations.
Incomplete or sensitive data in high-risk areas	Hesitancy in discussing sensitive topics.	Confidential follow-up interviews and triangulation with case study and observation data.

Local enumerator capacity in high-risk areas	Field teams in Magway worked with limited supervision.	Additional remote training sessions and daily debriefings reinforced best practices.
Variations in village-level WASH implementation	Differences in intervention scope affected comparability of data.	Stratified sampling approach and detailed contextual analysis.

Overall, the evaluation team employed adaptive strategies, careful triangulation, and robust quality assurance to gather credible evidence on the effectiveness and sustainability of WASH interventions. This also demonstrates that the programme implementation teams have been operating in a highly volatile and challenging environment yet continue to deliver results effectively.

Evaluation Implementation

Evaluation Timeline

The evaluation was originally planned from Mid-October 2024 to Mid-March 2025, but this was extended to end of April 2025 due to the delays caused by the security situations and other factors as mentioned in the limitation section. An inception phase in October was followed by field data collection in December and early January. Analysis and reporting occurred from mid-January through March, culminating in a validation workshop and the final report in April 2025.

Evaluation Reference Group

An Evaluation Reference Group, comprising representatives from UNICEF and implementing partners, guided the process to ensure technical rigour and alignment with UNICEF's strategic priorities. The group reviewed the evaluation framework and data collection tools, facilitated stakeholder engagement, and provided feedback on draft findings.

Members of the Reference Group include:

- Peter Leth (Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF; Evaluation Manager)
- Pravin More (Chief of WASH, UNICEF Myanmar)
- Brooke Yamakoshi (Regional WASH Manager, UNICEF EAPRO)
- Than Kyaw Soe (WASH Specialist, UNICEF Myanmar – Sanitation Lead)
- Khin Aung Thein (WASH Officer, UNICEF Myanmar – Water Lead)

Role of the Reference Group: The Reference Group was pivotal in validating the evaluation design and methodology prior to fieldwork along with providing access to key documents and data from different sources. It reviewed data collection tools for relevance and consistency, introduced the evaluation team to key stakeholders, and provided technical insights during data collection. The group also commented on the draft findings, ensuring that recommendations were both actionable and in line with sectoral realities. Finally, it helped disseminate the results, promoting broader uptake of lessons learned.

Evaluation Team and Roles

An independent evaluation team led this process, composed of an international consultant, a national consultant, and field facilitators. Each member contributed unique skills in qualitative research, WASH expertise, and local contextual knowledge.

Table 4: Evaluation Team and Roles

Team Member	Role and Responsibilities
Niaz Ullah Khan	Lead Consultant – Responsible for evaluation design, methodology, data analysis, and report writing.
Win Ei Mon Khine	National Lead Consultant and Data Collection Coordinator – Manages field logistics, engages local stakeholders, and translation and ensures data quality.

Yu Wah Hlaing	Field Facilitator, Magway Region – Conducts FGDs and KIIs in Magway.
Kay Zin Oo	Field Facilitator, Ayeyarwady Region – Leads FGDs and KIIs in Bogale.
Kan Kaung	Field Facilitator, Bogale – Supports case studies and field observations.

Management and Logistic Support

UNICEF Myanmar managed the evaluation overall, with Mr Peter Leth (Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist) serving as the Evaluation Manager. The UNICEF WASH Unit provided essential documentation, introductions to government and NGO partners, and logistical support. These efforts ensured smooth coordination across diverse stakeholders, facilitated field visits, and promoted effective dissemination of findings.

UNICEF organized a validation workshop where the consultant presented conclusions and recommendations to the evaluation reference group to refine the final outcomes. This collaborative approach has enhanced the evaluation's credibility and relevance to the local context. The ToRs are attached as Annexure 11.

Dissemination of Evaluation Learning:

This formative evaluation has been conducted through a consultative, inclusive and participatory process, and highlighted many key learning and recommendations for the current and future programmes of UNICEF and other development partners. A dissemination plan has been agreed after the finalisation of report to the wide audience. For this purpose, a summary evaluation brief of titled Formative Evaluation the Community Led WASH in Myanmar- Insights from from Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions (2021-2024) has been developed and annexed with the report as 1b.

EVALUATION FINDINGS AS PER OECD/ DAC CRITERIA

Programme Progress

Access to Drinking Water

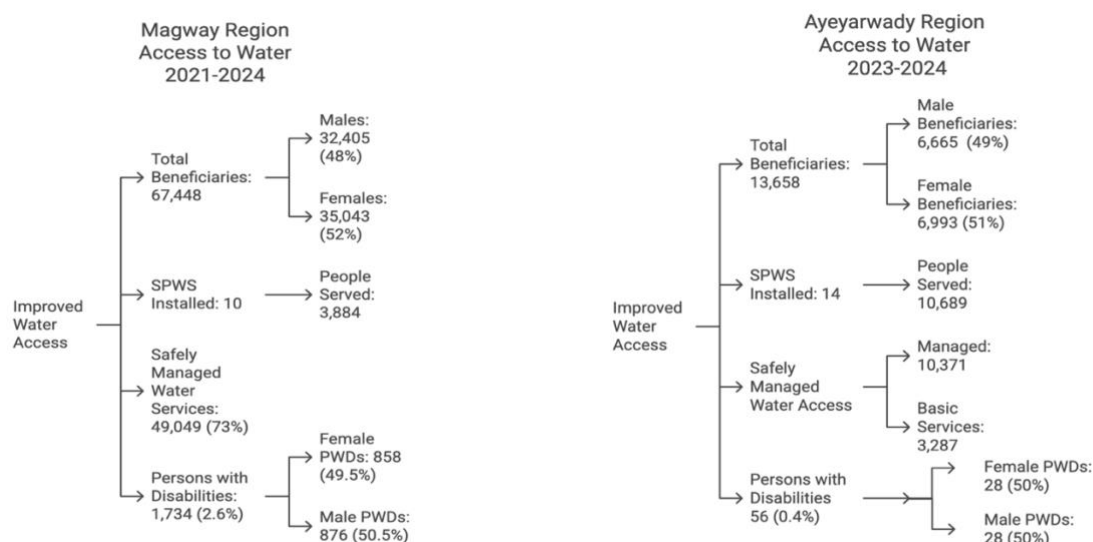
The programme interventions between 2021-2024 in five regions have significantly improved access to safe drinking water, expanded climate-resilient infrastructure, and increased solar-powered water systems (SPWS) coverage. Over the four-year period, the water supply component of the WASH programme reached 158,293 beneficiaries across 200 communities. The highest coverage increase was recorded in 2022, when 54,940 people gained access to safe drinking water, followed by 2023 with 52,561 beneficiaries. Below is a summary of yearly performance, and report of each year is independent of previous year.

Table 5: Summary of Yearly Performance in 2021-2024

Year	No of Communities added each year	Households (HH)	Beneficiaries			PWDs	SPWS Installed	SPWS-Served
			Male	Female	Total			
2021	57	9,591	21,369	22,995	44,364	781	8	2,959
2022	67	11,025	25,666	29,274	54,940	2,525	33	25,817
2023	62	11,333	24,608	27,953	52,561	818	22	20,248
2024	14	1,499	2,950	3,478	6,428	-	4	2,127
Total	200	33,448	74,593	83,700	158,293	4,124	67	51,151

The programme interventions for water supply benefitted 81,106 people (17,887 households) in 98 communities of Magway and Ayeyarwady regions. Across both regions, 59,420 people benefited from safely managed water (73 per cent of total beneficiaries). A total of 24 SPWS were installed in both regions. Overall coverage for person with disabilities (PWDs) is 2.4 percent against the national average of 12 per cent. Region-wise break up for access to water is given below:

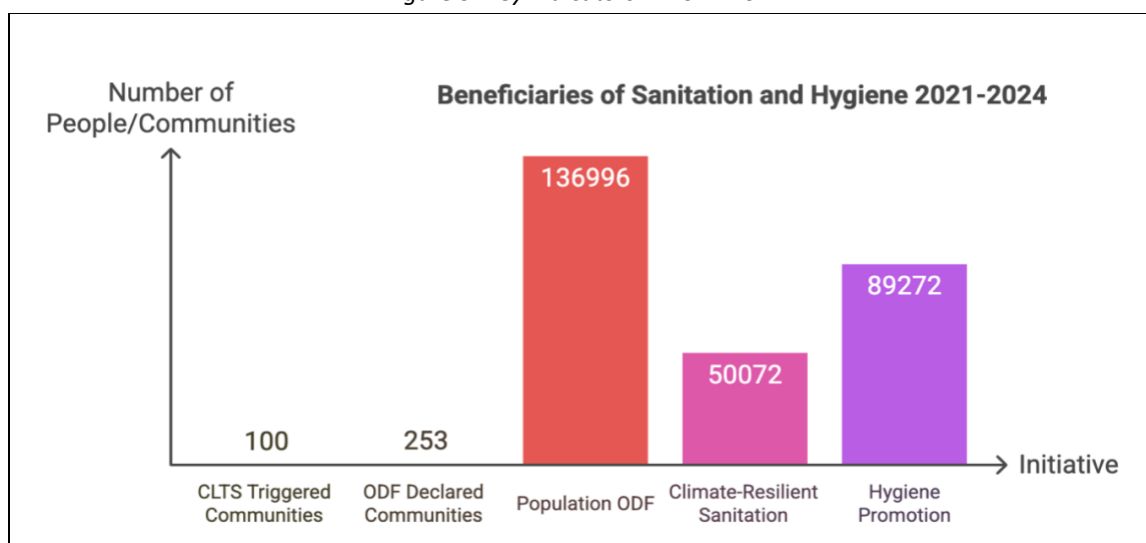
Figure 4: Region-wise Break up for Access to Water



Access to Sanitation and Hygiene

The programme for sanitation was a continuation of ASWA-II which adopted the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach. Below is a yearly summary of the key achievements. From 2021-2022, the focus was on the Magway region, while in 2023 and 2024 the main emphasis was in Ayeyarwady region where triggering was initiated. Please see the table on next page with yearly details for key indicators.

Figure 5: Key Indicators in 2021-2024



Since the start of Accelerated Sanitation and Water for All (ASWA)-II from 2017 to 2020, the programme triggered 746 communities under CLTS with an additional 100 communities from 2021-2024 making a cumulative 846 communities for improved sanitation. Though the yearly break up of gender is not available but ratios of female are 51 per cent in cumulative data, and disability is only 0.1 per cent in Magway and 2 per cent in Ayeyarwady. The low numbers of disability specific data indicated either under reporting or poor engagement of the persons with disabilities. Below is a year-wise summary

Table 6: Year-wise Summary Key Indicators by Regions

Sanitation and hygiene key indicators	Magway		Ayeyarwady			2020-2024	2021-2024
	2019-2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
Communities CLTS triggering and implementing sanitation and hygiene	746	-	-	50	50	846	100
Population living in CLTS triggered communities	474,664	-	-	24,179	17,043	515,886	41,222
Communities with Open Defecation Free - ODF	209	39	142	9	63	462	253
Population with ODF	78,697	30,185	82,998	3,012	20,801	215,693	136,996
Population accessed to at least basic sanitation	120,358	10,078	32,644	1,064	7,421	171,565	51,207
Population accessed to Safely managed sanitation				-	2,460	2,460	2,460
Population accessed to Climate resilient sanitation with UNICEF direct support			47,612	-	2,460	50,072	50,072
Population accessed to Basic hygiene	26,665	7,574	-	1,343	12,243	47,825	21,160
Population reached with hand washing message	-	29,755	-	24,179	35,338	89,272	89,272

Relevance of Theory of Change Community-Led WASH in Myanmar

UNICEF implemented ASWA-II from 2017 to 2021, and parts of this programme are being covered under this evaluation, especially initiatives taken from February 2021 onwards till 2022. A logical framework of the ASWA-II provided a good basis for constructing the ToC. Similarly, UNICEF Myanmar Programme Strategy Note 2018-2022 has a ToC for the WASH programme of UNICEF. This has been further supplemented with UNICEF Annual Work Plans from 2021 to 2024 that has a strong focus on climate-resilient WASH services and sustainability of sanitation, drinking water and hygiene behaviours. By reviewing these documents, a ToC for this evaluation was constructed that covered ASWA-II as well as the WASH programme strategy component of UNICEF Myanmar. The evaluation team found the constructed ToC largely very relevant and ongoing except for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools at the activities level, policy advocacy at outputs and institutional strengthening at outcome level as incomplete. These are shown in red in the ToC given below. More details are in subsequent figure and table.

Figure 6: Theory of Change for Community-Led WASH in Myanmar

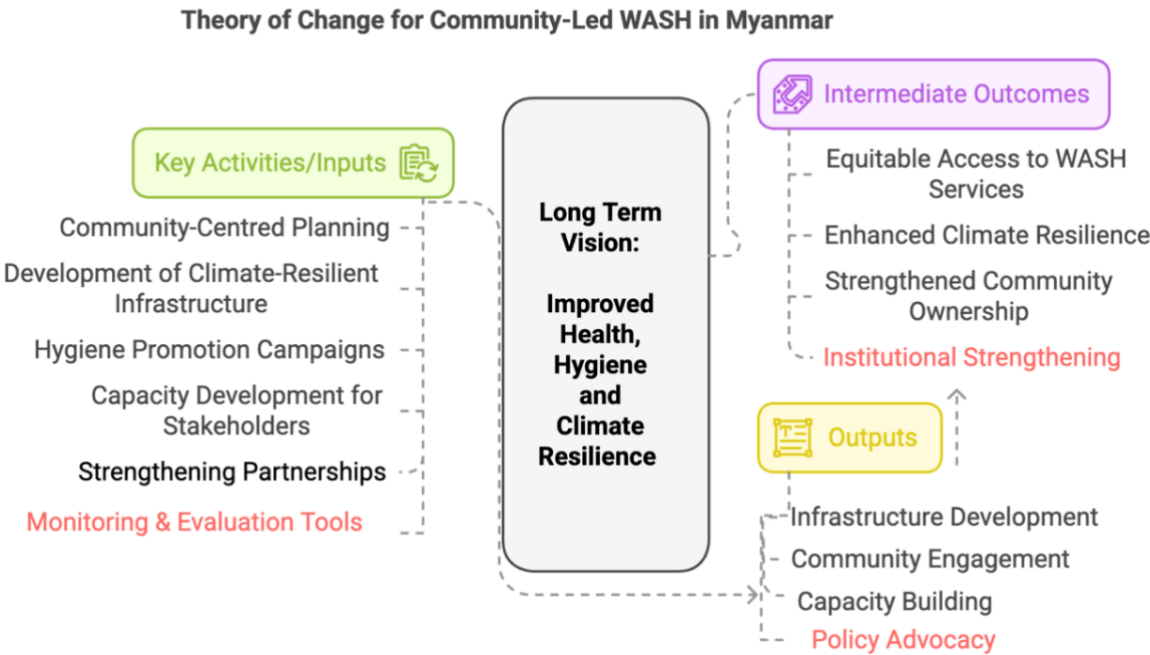


Table 7: Status of Theory of Change Elements

Theory of Change Elements & Description	Status (Ongoing / Incomplete)
Long term Vision: Improved health, hygiene, and climate resilience for vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, through equitable, sustainable, and community led WASH services- Ongoing and Valid	
Intermediate Outcomes	
2.1 Equitable Access to WASH Services: Ensure that vulnerable populations, including women, children, and disabled have sustained access to safe WASH.	Ongoing – Water access improved, but affordability was a major barrier for poverty-stricken households, limiting sanitation improvements.
2.2 Enhanced Climate Resilience: Design and maintain WASH facilities to adapt to and withstand climate risks (e.g., droughts, floods) while ensuring reliable service delivery during climate events.	Ongoing – Climate-adaptive infrastructure was introduced, but flood mitigation and emergency preparedness remain weak.
2.3 Strengthened Community Ownership and Capacity: Empower communities to plan, manage, and maintain WASH systems, with inclusive participation from all groups.	Ongoing – Water and Sanitation Committees were active, but inconsistent financial planning and weak maintenance skills threaten sustainability.
2.4 Institutional Strengthening: Ensure that government agencies and stakeholders have the capacity to implement, monitor, and sustain inclusive and climate-resilient WASH programmes effectively.	Incomplete – Political instability limited government involvement, affecting the long-term sustainability of WASH, though a limited engagement is maintained by community groups
Outputs	
3.1 Infrastructure Development: Construct and rehabilitate climate-resilient water and sanitation facilities, including flood-resistant systems and gender-segregated facilities in schools.	Ongoing – Most infrastructure was constructed, but some latrines were improperly sited or not climate resilient, increasing risks of contamination, and at few places school's engagements was missing.
3.2 Community Engagement and Behaviour Change: Establish WUCs, implement hygiene promotion campaigns, and certify communities as ODF.	Ongoing – Overall 462 communities declared ODF, of which 273 communities during 2021-24, but some communities regressed due to weak post-certification follow-ups and incentives.
3.3 Capacity Building: Train local communities, youth, and stakeholders on managing and maintaining WASH facilities, including tools for real-time monitoring and risk management.	Ongoing – Training provided, but financial and technical knowledge gaps remain, requiring continuous refresher training.
3.4 Policy Advocacy and Coordination: Strengthen collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and private sector, and advocating policies integrate climate resilience and gender equality into WASH.	Incomplete – Government engagement was weak due to political instability. Some coordination occurred with NGOs, but policy integration was minimal.
Key Activities/Inputs	
4.1 Community-Centred Planning: Conduct consultations to ensure WASH facilities are tailored to local needs, particularly for vulnerable groups.	Ongoing – Consultations were conducted, but structured feedback mechanisms were weak. Strengthening real-time feedback loops are needed.
4.2 Development of Climate-Resilient Infrastructure: Construct flood-resistant sanitation systems and develop sustainable water sources (e.g., Solar-powered pumps).	Ongoing – Solar-powered systems improved resilience, but boreholes dried up in some villages, and some latrines lacked proper flood-proofing.
4.3 Hygiene Promotion Campaigns: Implement community-led campaigns to promote handwashing and MHM, targeting behavioural change.	Ongoing – Behaviour changes improved hygiene adoption, but some communities reverted to previous hygiene practices due to weak reinforcement.
4.4 Capacity Development for Stakeholders: Provide training to local authorities, WUCs, and youth on the operation and maintenance of WASH systems.	Ongoing – WUCs were trained, but many lacked technical repair skills, requiring structured refresher training. Support to local authorities froze, affecting institutional sustainability
4.5 Strengthening Partnerships: Facilitate collaboration with the private sector, civil society, and NGOs mobilize resources and technical support.	Ongoing – Strong community participation, but weak private sector engagement in sanitation marketing and infrastructure maintenance.

4.6 Monitoring and Evaluation Tools: Develop and deploy real-time monitoring systems for tracking the usage, functionality, and sustainability of WASH facilities.	Incomplete – mWater system was discontinued due to military coup in 2021, and manual reporting caused delays and inconsistencies. Reintroducing digital tools is needed.
Risks and Assumptions	Mitigation Strategy
Financial Constraints: It was assumed that financial and technical resources would be mobilized and made available for sustained implementation.	The programme explored options such as sanitation marketing, innovative financing, and microfinance. While a fee-based model was introduced for solar and piped water supply systems, broader innovative financing mechanisms could not be fully established. Rising inflation and deteriorating economic conditions further constrained resource mobilization.
Socio-Political Instability and Implementation Challenges: It was assumed that stakeholder engagement would remain effective despite political challenges.	In response to the military takeover, the programme shifted from public sector system strengthening to community-led WASH governance. Adaptive mechanisms, including remote monitoring and decentralised decision-making, were introduced to maintain continuity. However, digital monitoring faced challenges due to reliance on government departments and inconsistent internet connectivity.
Climate and Environmental Risks: It was assumed that climate risks would be adequately mitigated to protect WASH infrastructure and services.	The programme integrated climate-resilient solutions in many areas, such as solar-powered water systems, provision of water containers, and elevated latrines. However, these measures were not uniformly applied, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) was not comprehensively linked with broader development initiatives.
Stakeholder Coordination: It was assumed that coordination among government, NGOs, and the private sector would remain effective.	Coordination platforms were strengthened at the community level, and flexible partnerships with NGOs and private sector supported service delivery. However, advocacy and engagement with government authorities ceased following the 2021 military coup, weakening overall coordination and limiting progress on system strengthening.

RELEVANCE

Alignment with Community Needs and Climate Resilience

E1 To what extent is the programme relevant to the identified needs of target populations and their families? Are the programme and interventions customized enough to address the needs of the target population by age, gender, and other factors?

The selection of target townships and districts in Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions including areas for ASW-II was based on a scoring system that prioritized high-need, underserved areas. Larger populations and more households were favoured to maximize impact, while townships with more schools and Rural Health Centres (RHCs) were selected to strengthen hygiene education and health services. Recognizing the link between education and WASH behaviour change, areas with lower women's literacy rates and weaker educational indicators were prioritized. Townships with poor access to improved water supply and high open defecation rates ranked higher, ensuring interventions targeted critical sanitation gaps. The townships with high under-five malnutrition rates were selected to address child health vulnerabilities through improved WASH. Village accessibility was key for efficient implementation, favouring areas where most villages were reachable. A composite score ranked townships based on WASH deprivation, ensuring resources were directed to high-need communities for maximum impact on health, education, and climate-resilient WASH services. This data-driven approach made the selection process responsive to local needs, ensuring the greatest possible impact on public health, education, and sustainable WASH services.

The programme was particularly relevant to the local context, where water insecurity, seasonal flooding, and poor sanitation were persistent challenges. In Magway, a region suffering from prolonged droughts, the installation of solar-powered water pumps and gravity-fed distribution systems significantly improved year-round access to drinking water, reducing dependency on seasonal sources.

“ There’s no need to fetch water anymore, which means farmers can focus more on farming. This contributes to social and economic development in our community.”

A participant of FGD, Magway

“ There is support for water purifiers, pipes, water pumps, and well digging from the program, which aligns well with the needs of the community. Living close to the Ayeyarwady Riverbank, the provision of wells ensures there is no need to worry about drinking water during floods. The water from the tube wells is free of impurities, which supports good health and hygiene, in contrast to the river water previously used, which was not safe or suitable for health.”

A participant of FGD, Magway

“ In the past, we relied on stream water. During the peak of the summer season, when water is salty, couldn’t use it, and much of our time was spent fetching water. After returning from work, had to fetch water. Took a boat to the pond in the fields to collect water. The availability of accessible water has now resolved all these difficulties. It perfectly meets the needs of our village. During the rice harvesting season, have to draw water from the water pond if there is no water available upon returning to work. Since water can only be collected once work resumes, there are instances when workers have to return to their tasks without taking a break, working until the scheduled time is reached.”

A participant of FGD, Bogale

However, maintenance concerns continued. In Pone Tat village in Magway, communities highlighted the lack of local expertise to repair solar-powered pumps, making them dependent on external support for maintenance. Further, reliability of boreholes varied, and in some villages, boreholes dried up during peak summer months, forcing people to fetch water from neighbouring areas.

“ In Magway and Ayeyarwady regions, where floods frequently damage sanitation infrastructure, the introduction of raised latrines and sealed septic systems was critical in preventing contamination of water sources.”

Local communities

These solutions were particularly effective, but drainage issues surfaced raising hygiene concerns. The risk assessments for climate change adaptation were conducted to ensure infrastructure resilience, but field observations indicate that not all sites received equal levels of adaptation measures. Some communities in Bogale noted that latrines were flood-resistant, but lacked desludging services, affecting their long-term functionality.

Inclusivity and Customization for Vulnerable Groups

The programme took targeted measures to support women, children, persons with disabilities, and low-income households. The facilities provided to the community must be materials/items that can be used more effectively through a vulnerable approach. In Kokosu, a village in Bogale township, programme efforts prioritized families with young children and female-headed households, ensuring that latrines and water supply systems were distributed equitably. Even with these efforts accessibility challenges continued for PWDs at some places.

"I am a disabled person, carrying water, even at home, was inconvenient for me. Those assisting me often had other commitments, making it difficult to access water when no one was around. Now, things have significantly improved: I can use water freely and abundantly without any limitations."

A participant of FGDs in Kokosu, Bogale

"For women, using water for washing clothes, dishes, cleaning, cooking, and other daily tasks has become much more convenient. Now, we can access water freely and in abundance. The water quality is better, cleaner, and more hygienic. As for the children, with the knowledge they've gained in school, they now properly dispose of waste in an improved manner."

A participant of FGDs, Bogale

"Because we have elderly family members, having a toilet attached to the house makes life much easier. It means they don't have to walk far and can access the facilities safely and conveniently at any time. Still, there is a need for further improvements in some villages, particularly to ensure that women, children, persons with disabilities, and low-income households can all benefit from accessible and suitable toilet facilities".

A participant of FGDs, Magway

Women's participation in WUCs was an important step toward gender-inclusive governance, ensuring that water management decisions reflected their needs. However, technical roles, such as borehole maintenance, remained male-dominated. The women's involvement mostly limited to hygiene promotion and administrative functions. Expanding technical training for women would further promote gender equality in WASH governance.

Community Participation and Feedback Mechanisms

E2 Were relevant partners involved in the programme design and implementation, including target population, and their families? To what extent are community perceptions monitored and included in programme design, including through feedback and complaint mechanisms (under Accountability to Affected Populations)?

"Previously, we had to fetch water from the stream, which took time and effort. Now, with piped water, it is much more convenient."

Male, FGDs, Bogale

The introduction of piped water and tube wells has transformed community access, making water collection easier and safer for all. The programme adopted a community-led model, ensuring that local stakeholders played an active role in planning, decision-making, and implementation. In Thon Dat, communities were consulted before water infrastructure installations, reinforcing local ownership. Similarly, in Pwintphyu, sanitation entrepreneurs were engaged to construct latrines, ensuring that interventions were tailored to local needs. However, feedback mechanisms were not consistently implemented across all villages. While some communities had clear reporting channels for water supply and sanitation issues through local partners and volunteers, others lacked structured grievance mechanisms, making it difficult to report infrastructure breakdowns or service disruptions. Similarly, hygiene promotion activities were not always sustained post-implementation. A key informant shared that initial behaviour change was successful, but in some areas, handwashing and latrine use declined over time due to a lack of follow-up support.

The WASH programme applied various community mobilization approaches, to involve local communities in planning and implementation, with differing effectiveness and sustainability. Some delivered immediate results,

while others fostered long-term behavioural change and ownership. The CLTS approach was effective in Salin and Pwintphyu of Magway region before the 2021 military takeover, relying on community-led action without incentives. However, post-coup economic instability and governance challenges weakened motivation, reducing sustainability. In Magway and Bogale, a direct service delivery model provided rapid improvements, but long-term maintenance remained dependent on external support. A more sustainable model was volunteer-based mobilization, where community members were trained as volunteers. These volunteers engaged the communities to manage and maintain infrastructure while underpinning behavioural change for health and hygiene practices. This approach was highly effective in stable areas but less viable in disadvantaged regions, where volunteers sought paid work. Stronger linkages with local leadership and schools improved retention. Similarly, the school-based engagement model proved effective and sustainable, as WASH education empowered children as change agents, reinforcing hygiene at home. This approach continued beyond the programme, especially where teachers and leaders were engaged. WASH interventions were also integrated into government structures through Township Medical Officers (TMOs) and Basic Health Staff (BHS), ensuring institutional continuity in stable areas. However, in politically unstable regions, governance disruptions affected sustainability. Overall, direct service delivery ensured rapid impact, while volunteer mobilization and school engagement offered long-term sustainability. Government integration had strong potential but depended on external stability. CLTS was effective pre-coup but struggled in weakened governance contexts. A multi-pronged approach combining education, community engagement, sanitation marketing, and institutional collaboration is essential for community engagement in planning, designing, implementation and sustainability of services.

Adaptability to Changing Needs and Climate Challenges

E3 Is the programme responsive to changing needs and circumstances, including climate change? Was it adjusted through the course of its implementation, including through adoption of climate-resilient approaches?

ASWA II has shown strong adaptability to evolving needs and circumstances, particularly in response to climate change. The programme introduced climate-resilient measures such as solar-powered water systems, deep boreholes, and elevated, flood-resistant latrines to tackle the dual challenges of drought and flooding in Magway and Ayeyarwady regions. These interventions have significantly improved water security and sanitation resilience, benefiting nearly 100,000 people by ensuring a reliable supply of clean water and reducing the risk of waterborne diseases.

Throughout its implementation, the programme has been adjusted to address emerging challenges. As community needs evolved, it shifted from emergency, short-term measure such as rapid borehole installation and temporary water distribution to more sustainable, community-managed solutions. This transition included moving away from unreliable surface water sources to solar-powered systems, which have lowered operational costs while reducing carbon emissions. In addition, ASWA II transition is well aligned with key national policies and frameworks, including the SDGs, Myanmar's National WASH Strategy, and the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), reinforcing its commitment to long-term sustainability. The programme clearly demonstrated the integration of SDG-6 of clean water and sanitation, SDG-5 of gender equality, and SDG-13 of climate action directly through enhancing access to WASH services, especially with inclusion of women and girls' participation, as well as adding climate resilient actions. Similarly, SDG-3 of health and well-being, SDG-11 of sustainable communities and SDG-17 of partnerships are relevant and adapted.

While emergency interventions were effective, some gaps exist in the transition to permanent infrastructure. In flood-prone areas, a few of the sanitation facilities were not climate-resilient, and drainage issues continue to affect service delivery. Additionally, efforts to provide climate adaptation training for local WUCs have been uneven, with some communities still lacking the technical skills needed to maintain and manage their infrastructure independently. Overall, ASWA II's implementation from 2021 to 2024 has been responsive to changing needs

brought about by climate variability, adopting innovative, climate-resilient solutions and adjusting its strategies over time. Strengthening technical training, improving maintenance systems, and addressing infrastructure gaps—particularly in flood-prone areas—will be key to embedding these adaptations and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Emergency Preparedness and Risk Reduction

E4: To what extent has emergency preparedness been built into the design of the programme, in order to enhance community resilience? How do existing programmes contribute to emergency preparedness in the target communities?

ASWA II and current results also highlighted partial integration of emergency preparedness and DRR, indicating the need for stronger partnerships and training. In Bogale, communities received water purification kits during floods, but formal DRR training was not systematically implemented.

“During the dry season, we still face water shortages, and the wells in the lower parts of the village get submerged when floods come.”

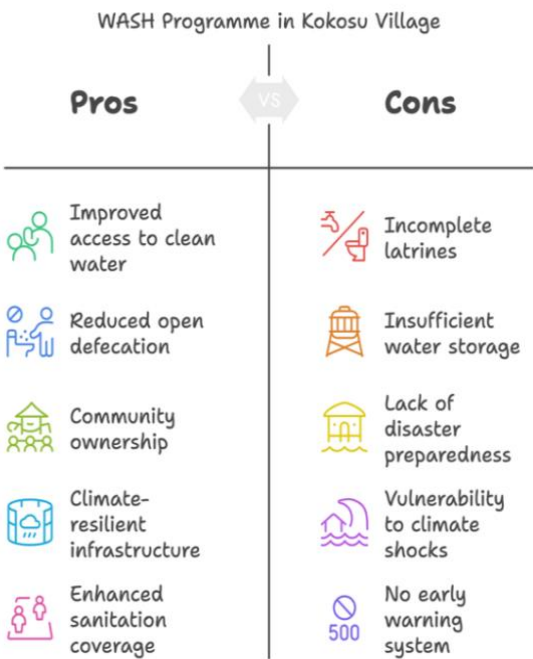
Male, FGDs, Magway

Community members in Magway region stated that while emergency response efforts helped, they had no structured resilience planning for future disasters. In Pone Tat, where drought is a recurring issue, community members reported a lack of formal contingency plans, resulting in water rationing during peak summer months. Expanding emergency preparedness training and pre-positioned WASH supplies would strengthen community resilience. Coordination with humanitarian actors varied, with some communities receiving strong NGO support like Save the Children, World Vision, etc, while others lacked external assistance. Strengthening partnerships with humanitarian organizations could improve long-term response mechanisms.

Box 1: Kokosu Ayeyarwady: A case study of Strengthening WASH Resilience

Overcoming Water and Sanitation Challenges: Kokosu village, home to 86 households and 328 people (177 males, 151 females), was struggling with unreliable water access, forcing families to rely on distant and unsafe sources. Open defecation contaminated ponds and streams, while existing pit latrines were inadequate. The WASH programme prioritized vulnerable households, including those with young children, persons with disabilities, and female-headed families, ensuring that safe water and sanitation reached those most in need. The introduction of fly-proof latrines reduced open defecation, and household water connections significantly cut health risks and water collection time.

Building Climate-Resilient WASH Infrastructure: Before the intervention, only 20 pit latrines served the village. Following the programme, 22 improved latrines were installed, with 16 fully operational, while some families built their own. However, six latrines remain incomplete due to flooding, highlighting ongoing challenges. Community ownership is key, with women and youth leading WASH governance. A water meter system ensures community contributions for maintenance, while support from the village monk strengthens self-reliance.



Addressing Disaster Preparedness Gaps: Despite improvements, Kokosu remains vulnerable to floods and droughts due to the absence of a disaster preparedness plan. Some latrines remain unfinished due to heavy rains, and water storage is inadequate for dry periods, raising concerns over future shortages. While some households practise water conservation, there is no coordinated response to sustain services during extreme weather events. Additionally, the lack of an early warning system leaves residents unprepared for sudden climate shocks.

Securing WASH Sustainability Through Preparedness: To ensure long-term WASH resilience, Kokosu must introduce a village-wide emergency plan for floods, droughts, and infrastructure failures. Strengthening household water storage, improving flood-proof latrines and drainage, and establishing an early warning system will help mitigate climate risks. Training village committees in disaster response will enable them to maintain WASH services during emergencies.

A Model for Resilient WASH Services: Kokosu's success in expanding safe water and sanitation shows that community-driven resilience is possible. However, without structured disaster preparedness, these gains remain at risk from climate shocks. By integrating emergency response mechanisms, Kokosu can protect its progress and serve as a model for sustainable and climate-resilient WASH services.

Key messages from Relevance:

1. Targeted interventions addressed high-need areas, ensuring alignment with Myanmar's WASH strategy and SDG 6.
2. Solar-powered boreholes and elevated latrines improved climate resilience, but drainage and desludging gaps remain.
3. Efforts to support vulnerable groups were effective, but accessibility challenges for persons with disabilities persist.
4. Community-led governance strengthened sustainability, yet post-implementation follow-up on hygiene behaviours was inconsistent.
5. Emergency preparedness was weak, with limited contingency plans, early warning systems, and disaster response strategies.
6. A balanced approach combining direct service delivery, volunteer engagement, and government collaboration is essential for long-term impact.

EFFECTIVENESS

Programme Objectives

E 5: To what extent have the WASH programme objectives been achieved, particularly regarding improved access to safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene practices, and enhanced climate resilience?

"Before, we struggled every day to fetch water, and our children fell sick often. Now, with clean water and proper latrines, life has changed for the better."

Female, FGDs, Magway

"There is a person with a disability in our household, receiving a fly-proof latrine has been extremely helpful."

A participant of FGDs, Magway

The programme successfully expanded access to clean drinking water through solar-powered boreholes, gravity-fed water systems, and improved storage facilities. The communities from Pouk Kone reported that households now had direct water connections, significantly reducing the time and effort previously required for water collection. In Magway and Ayeyarwady, the installation of 24 solar water supply schemes ensured consistent power for pumping water, which improved reliability in villages like Pone Tat and Thon Dat. However, seasonal water shortages remain

a challenge in almost all areas in Bogale, particularly in Asi Gyi and Pone Tat, where boreholes dry up during the summer, forcing residents to fetch water from neighbouring villages. In addition, water quality issues persist, particularly in KuTo and Zaung Chan Khone, where borehole water contains high mineral content, affecting taste and usability. Further investments in filtration and alternative water sources could help address these concerns.

The programme's impact on sanitation coverage has been substantial, with the introduction of fly-proof latrines significantly reducing open defecation rates across many villages. From 2021-2024, an additional 100 communities have been triggered while overall 253 villages were declared ODF during this period. Thus, the programme helped more than 51,000 individuals to have at least basic sanitation services, and nearly a population of 137,000 to have ODF status during 2021-2024. In some places like Kokosu, a small number of people could not complete their construction of latrines due to flooding. Similarly, in Thon Dat and Ymar Matt, some poverty-stricken households were unable to complete their latrines, leaving them reliant on shared or older facilities. A recurring concern in villages like KuTo was the quality of construction materials, with some latrine slabs cracking over time, reducing their durability and usability. Future programmes must ensure that stronger, long-lasting materials are used for sanitation infrastructure to maintain long-term functionality.

Hygiene behaviour change has also been a key success of the programme, particularly in handwashing with soap and MHM. Community engagement in schools has played a major role in sustaining behaviour change, with children adopting regular handwashing habits and women gaining improved access to menstrual hygiene materials. However, challenges remain in ensuring that hygiene practices are consistently followed. In Pouk Kone and Pone Tat, some households reported that soap remains unaffordable, making it difficult to sustain regular handwashing routines. Similarly, while MHM awareness has increased, limited access to affordable sanitary products has made it difficult for low-income women and adolescent girls to maintain proper hygiene. Addressing these affordability constraints will be essential in ensuring long-term adherence to hygiene practices.

MHAA played a central role in community engagement, hygiene promotion, and behaviour change interventions, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas. Through capacity building for local health workers, MHAA trained volunteers in sanitation promotion and hygiene education, creating local champions in villages who sustained hygiene awareness beyond programme implementation. In both regions, MHAA-led behaviour change communication (BCC) sessions were instrumental in improving household knowledge on latrine use, safe water handling, and handwashing. The organization also supported CLTS triggering, successfully mobilizing households to construct their own latrines, contributing to ODF status. There were inconsistencies in the quality of mobilization across regions. Some health workers lacked strong community engagement skills, leading to weaker sanitation adoption in certain villages. In some places, follow-up mechanisms were insufficient, with participants reporting a gradual decline in behaviour change adherence after initial awareness campaigns.

In one village, all households except one had built toilets. Despite multiple discussions, a mother refused to switch from using sticks or paper for sanitation, even as her son, influenced by school hygiene lessons, and her husband, encouraged by volunteers, adopted water-based sanitation. Community volunteers, committee members, and the programme manager of MHAA conducted house-to-house visits to reinforce hygiene awareness. When we reached her home, she was initially reluctant and even avoided the discussion. However, after a direct conversation using practical hygiene examples, she understood the benefits of water-based sanitation. A volunteer later shared, "She has changed! Now, she completely uses water." This small but impactful success reinforced the power of community engagement and behavioural change in improving sanitation practices.

The effectiveness of different implementation models also impacted results. Bogale's (Ayeyarwady) CLTS approach led to faster community engagement, while Magway's township-wide model took longer but provided stronger long-term sustainability. Collaboration with BHS at some places supported institutional integration, but frequent staff transfers disrupted continuity. Slow response times were a key issue, as service repairs in Bogale were delayed due to funding and logistical constraints, while centralized decision-making in Magway and Ayeyarwady slowed

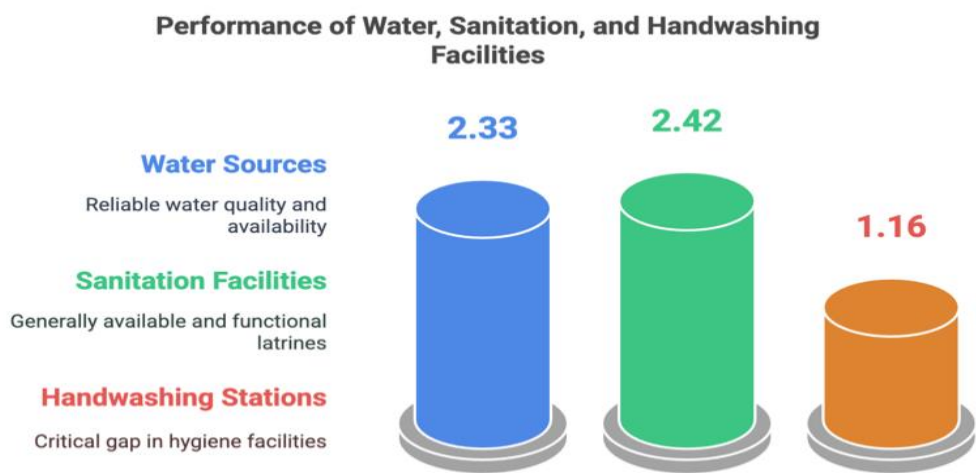
community-led improvements. Volunteer turnover further weakened monitoring consistency, affecting long-term sustainability. It is crucial to develop and install digital monitoring systems, local government capacities, and feedback mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery by timely informed decisions.

Site Observations

WASH Performance in Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions

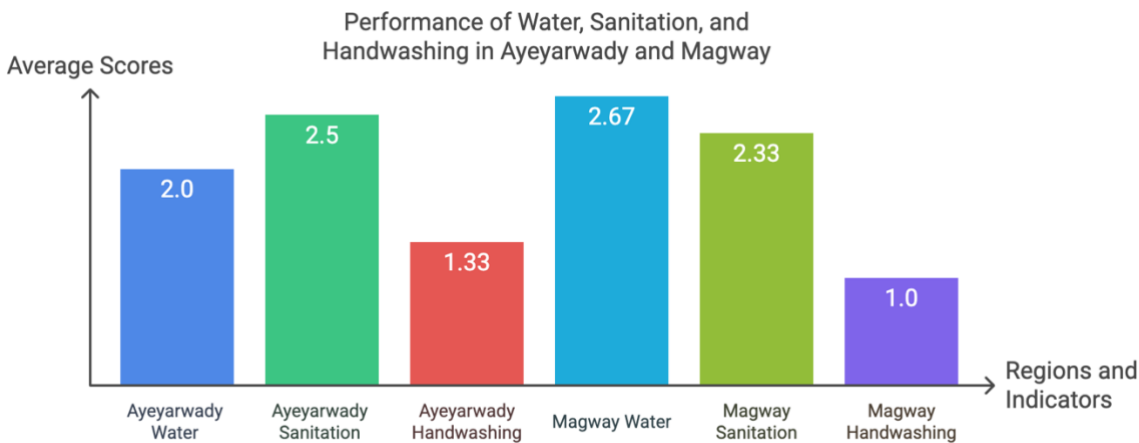
The field observations were conducted in 11 villages of Magway and Ayeyarwady regions by local enumerators to seek insights into the effectiveness and sustainability of WASH interventions. The evaluation utilizes a scoring grade where 3 represents good performance and 1 represents poor performance. Checklist of field observation attached as Annexure 5A, and score sheet is attached as Annexure 5B.

Figure 7: Performance of Water, Sanitation and Handwashing Facilities



Observations indicate that water source condition scored an overall average of 2.33, demonstrating that water quality and availability were reliable in most locations. The sanitation facilities averaged 2.42, suggesting that latrines were generally available and functional. The handwashing stations scored only 1.16 overall, signifying a critical gap in hygiene facilities. Many communities lacked designated handwashing stations, making it difficult to practice proper hygiene.

Figure 8: Performance of Water, Sanitation and Handwashing Facilities by Region



Ayeyarwady Region (Thon Dat, Kokosu, Asi Gyi, Kan Kone): In Ayeyarwady, water sources scored an average of 2.0, meaning that while water was generally available, some villages lacked proper safety measures to prevent contamination. The sanitation facilities averaged 2.5, indicating that most toilets were functional but required regular maintenance. However, handwashing stations scored only 1.33, exposing hygiene infrastructure gaps.

Magway Region (Pone Tat, Kyun Pin Sin, Zaung Chan Khone, Pauk Khone, Ku To, Ywar Mhat, Min Te) compared to Ayeyarwady, Magway performed slightly better in water source reliability, averaging 2.67. The sanitation facilities, however, scored slightly lower at 2.33, showing that while toilets were available, some communities lacked proper maintenance systems. Handwashing stations remained the lowest-performing indicator at 1.0, reinforcing the need for improved hygiene infrastructure.

Barriers Affecting Access to WASH Services and Potential Solutions

E6: *What are the main barriers affecting access to WASH services for the target populations? Are there specific solutions or adjustments that could overcome these challenges?*

The programme made a visible progress, but multiple barriers continue to affect access to WASH services. One of the primary challenges is financial constraints.

“ The main issue is financial constraints. We also want to secure a solar-powered water distribution system. Additionally, the water pump has leaks, so for now, we are valuing and maintaining the existing water system. ”

A participant FGDs in Asi Gyi, Bogale

“ There are financial difficulties in digging additional wells and want to improve the quality of water for drinking purposes.”

A participant FGDs in Thon Dat, Bogale

In Thon Dat village, the water accessibility has improved, but water quality still needs enhancement. Poor households with limited containers face challenges in obtaining and storing clean water.

“ The quality of water still needs improvement, but there has been success in the availability aspect. The quality of the water still appears yellowish, as it cannot be used immediately. Since water is collected overnight and stored in containers, it can only be used after being kept in pots. For households with many containers, the system works smoothly.”

A participant FGDs in Thon Dat, Bogale

“ There are still some challenges as the water tank and motor need repairs. The water tank is small, and the motor is not very efficient, requiring frequent maintenance.”

A participant FGDs in Asi Gyi, Bogale

In villages such as Thon Dat, poor households were unable to afford construction materials for latrines, even when partial subsidies were provided. In many cases, communities contributed especially for water supply and maintenance, but some communities also struggle to consistently collect water user fees, limiting their ability to maintain boreholes and repair infrastructure. Introducing microfinance or subsidized loan schemes could help vulnerable households access sanitation facilities and contribute to long-term WASH sustainability.

“ We helped transport materials and construct latrines together, but now, each household maintains its own latrine.”

Male FGDs, Magway

Another key challenge is technical maintenance and local capacity. While water committees and sanitation committees have played an active role in overseeing service delivery, many communities still lack the technical expertise needed to repair boreholes, solar-powered pumps, and latrines. In Pone Tat and Asi Gyi, locals lack the necessary training to carry out basic repairs, making them reliant on external actors when systems break down.

“ There is no formal water committee, so if a well breaks, we rely on whoever is available to fix it.”

Male FGDs, Bogale

Community members suggested that training local youth in borehole and sanitation system repairs would improve long-term sustainability and reduce reliance on external support. Emergency preparedness and climate resilience remain weak areas within the programme. Although the introduction of solar-powered boreholes and flood-resistant latrines demonstrates climate adaptation, communities remain vulnerable to seasonal droughts and extreme weather events. Not all villages received structured DRR training, leaving them vulnerable to flooding and water shortages.

“When floods come, wells in the lower part of the village become submerged, forcing people to fetch water from higher areas.”

Male FGDs, Magway

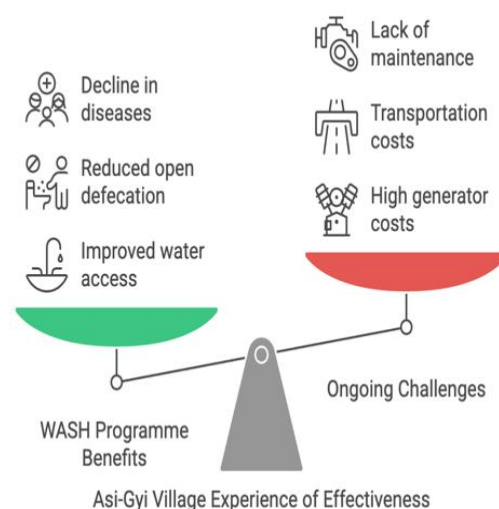
“We remove the roofs and walls of our latrines before flooding and reinstall them later to prevent damage.”

Females FGDs, Bogale

Moreover, in drought-prone villages, there is no formal plan for water conservation, which has led to seasonal shortages in some areas. Establishing pre-positioned emergency WASH supplies and integrating DRR training into the programme would strengthen community resilience and ensure service continuity during climate shocks.

Box 2: Asi Gyi Ayeyarwady- A case study of Bridging the Gaps

In Asi Gyi, fetching water was once a daily struggle, particularly for women, children, and the elderly. The village has 161 households with a population of 1006 individuals, with 402 males and 604 females. The WASH programme transformed this by introducing a water supply scheme, reducing the time spent collecting water. Improved sanitation facilities led to a decline in open defecation, while community health workers and midwives promoted better hygiene, lowering waterborne diseases. However, challenges remain. Although the programme provided latrine materials, high transportation costs meant that many families couldn't afford to build them. Some relied on local materials, which compromised sanitation standards. The water system improved distribution, but generator costs made it seasonal, forcing households to revert to traditional water sources for part of the year.



A WASH committee was established, but it has been ineffective, struggling to collect community contributions and manage maintenance, leaving long-term sustainability at risk. Without a structured financial mechanism or formal WASH maintenance training, sustainability remains uncertain. Progress in health and hygiene is clear, but to ensure lasting impact, the community needs affordable WASH solutions, financial management, and technical support.

The community leader said, “Initially, the community showed little interest, but once they received clean water, they deeply appreciated the intervention. However, challenges remain, including the weak performance of the water motor, fragile infrastructure, and a leaking water tank, making proper water storage difficult. Upgrading or maintaining the water motor and ensuring efficient water distribution to all homes would significantly reduce the burden of manual water collection.” Strengthening local governance, financial sustainability, and maintenance capacity will be key to securing and sustaining Asi Gyi’s WASH.

Table 8: Climate Adaptive Latrines and Water Supply Solutions in Programme Areas

Constructing Climate-Resilient Durable Latrines in Magway and Ayeyarwady	Building Climate-Resilient Water Supply in Magway and Ayeyarwady
The construction of durable, climate-resilient, and hygienic latrines starts with a detailed site assessment, considering soil stability, flood risks, and accessibility to ensure safe and sustainable placement. Priority is given to vulnerable households, including children under five, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities, ensuring equitable sanitation access. Community participation is key in selecting beneficiaries, developing ownership and long-term sustainability. The programme promotes reinforced dual-pit systems, preventing collapse and groundwater contamination, while gravel layers and perforated materials support effective drainage. Structural durability is prioritized with concrete slabs reinforced with iron bars, and superstructures made from bamboo, cement panels, or stabilized mud bricks. Ventilation pipes enhance airflow and odour control, while secure doors and locks ensure privacy, particularly for women and children. Handrails and ramps have been introduced in some locations, though accessibility for PWDs remains a challenge. To withstand harsh weather conditions, cement-lined foundations and reinforced walls protect against wind and rain damage, while drainage systems prevent water accumulation and structural deterioration. The sealed pit system ensures waste containment, reducing odours, pests, safety of the children, and the need for frequent emptying. In flood-prone areas, elevated platforms prevent waterlogging, while deep-buried pits and reinforced structures ensure stability during heavy rains and strong winds. However, field insights reveal unequal adaptation levels, with some communities lacking desludging services, affecting long-term functionality. Further integration of climate-resilient sanitation measures is needed, particularly in Pwintphyu and Bogale, where extreme weather has damaged latrines. Local masons and sanitation entrepreneurs have been trained in climate-resilient WASH construction, supporting latrine repairs and new installations. However, limited financial incentives and restricted access to sanitation credit schemes have hindered the scalability of private-sector engagement.	The programme identified sustainable water sources through hydrogeological assessments, leading to the installation of deep boreholes, infiltration galleries, and gravity-fed pipelines. In Pwintphyu and Kokosu, solar-powered boreholes ensured continuous water supply, reducing reliance on seasonal surface water. In flood-prone villages, raised storage tanks and reinforced pipelines protected infrastructure from monsoon damage, though some villages still struggle with flood-induced contamination. A community-led approach ensured local ownership and sustainability, with WUCs managing operations and maintenance. MHAA and UNICEF provided technical training, but limited expertise in some areas led to delayed repairs, particularly for solar-powered systems. To address this, hands-on training for local mechanics was introduced, though communities still face challenges in access to spare parts and technical support. Water safety measures included regular monitoring, chlorination, etc. Ywar Mhat and Zaung Chan Kone received sanitation support, but a lack of desludging services in several villages raises long-term contamination concerns. Additionally, risk management for water safety remains weak, with no structured plans for responding to contamination threats. Solar-powered systems lowered operational costs, but sustainability issues remain. In Pauk Kone, dust accumulation and shading reduced solar panel efficiency, leading to water shortages. Limited access to spare parts and financial constraints made maintenance difficult, especially for low-income households. Emergency repair funds and cost-sharing models were introduced to fund repairs and upgrades, though affordability remains a key challenge in lower-income areas. The programme has transformed access to safe drinking water, reducing health risks and improving livelihoods. However, challenges remain in maintenance, financial sustainability, and water safety.

Community Perceptions: Benefits and Challenges

E7: From the community perspective, what are the perceived benefits and challenges associated with the programme, and how have these influenced outcomes?

Perceived Benefits

Improved Water Access and Affordability: The programme significantly reduced the burden on women and children by improving water accessibility. In Thon Dat, transitioning from a costly generator to a solar-powered system provided a reliable and affordable supply, reducing dependence on unreliable sources. However, maintenance and technical training gaps remain.

Reduced Open Defecation and Improved Sanitation: The introduction of fly-proof latrines led to a sharp decline in open defecation, reducing waterborne diseases. Over 200 communities achieved ODF status, and nearly 12,000 households constructed climate-resilient latrines. In Asi Gyi and Bogale, improved waste disposal reduced disease outbreaks, while in Kokosu, families-built latrines independently, showing strong local commitment. However, desludging services remain limited, affecting sustained functionality.

Strengthened Hygiene and Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM): Hygiene promotion reinforced handwashing habits, particularly among children. In Kan Kone, handwashing became routine, and in Pone Tat, clean, private sanitation facilities improved safety for women and the elderly. MHM integration expanded access to sanitary materials in Ywar Mhatand Pwintphyu, but affordability remains a barrier for low-income women.

Enhanced Community Governance: WUCs and Sanitation Committees took on key management roles, including fee collection, maintenance, and repairs, ensuring sustainability. In Thon Dat and Pwintphyu, committees effectively monitored boreholes and latrines, while in Kokosu, a user-contribution water system, supported by a village monk, strengthened community ownership. However, some committees struggle with financial sustainability and technical skills, affecting long-term maintenance.

Perceived Challenges

Unfinished Latrines due to flooding and transport costs: In Kokosu, six out of 22 latrines remain incomplete due to flooding, while in other villages, low-income households were unable to cover additional costs despite subsidies. Raised latrines are essential, but accessibility for elderly and disabled residents remains a challenge. In Asi Gyi and Pone Tat, cement, toilet pans, and pipes are too expensive to transport, preventing latrine completion. Some families used low-quality local materials, affecting long-term durability. Communities suggest establishing local supply points and promoting sanitation microfinance options to reduce costs and improve affordability.

Seasonal Water Shortages and Poor Water Quality: Drought-prone villages like Pone Tat and Asi Gyi face severe seasonal shortages, forcing residents to fetch water from neighbouring villages. In Ku To, Thon Dat, and Zaung Chan Khone, borehole water quality is compromised in terms of taste and odour. Many women, children, and persons with disabilities still lack access to safe drinking water, reinforcing the need for better filtration and storage solutions.

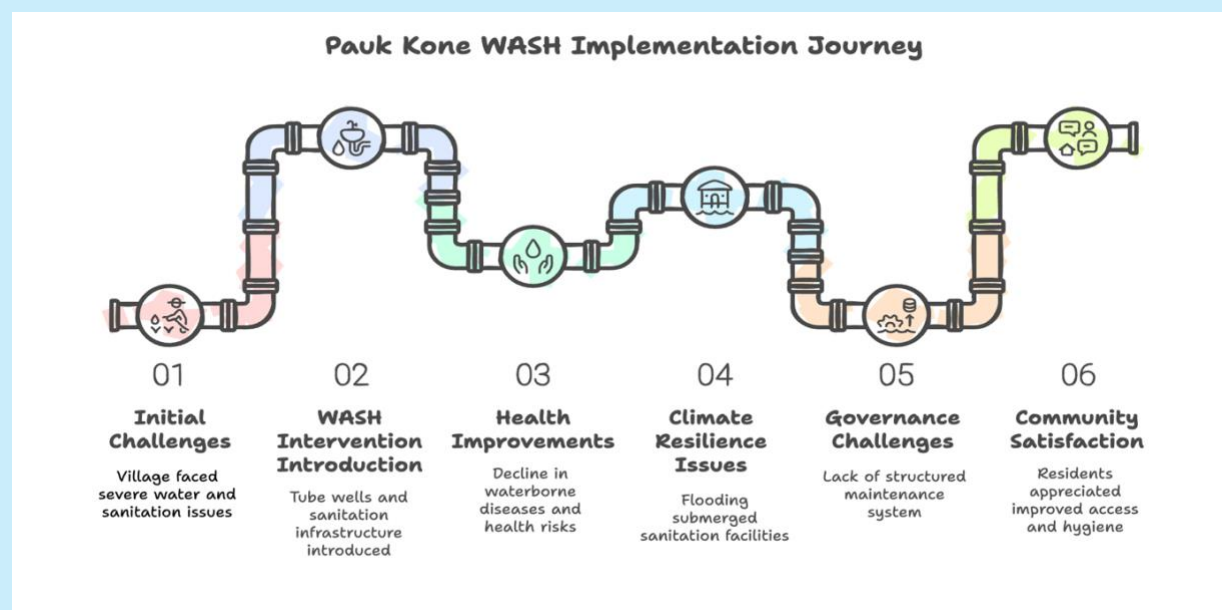
Weak Infrastructure Maintenance Capacity: While Water Committees manage WASH services, most villages lack trained technicians, causing delays in borehole, latrine, and solar pump repairs. In Pone Tat and Asi Gyi, reliance on external technicians led to temporary water shortages. Training local youth and masons in climate-resilient sanitation repairs would enhance long-term service reliability.

Limited Emergency Preparedness: Though flood-resistant latrines and solar-powered boreholes have constructed, disaster preparedness planning is inadequate. In Kokosu and Pwintphyu, communities lack structured guidance on

managing floods and droughts, relying on reactive measures. Integrating DRR training and pre-positioning emergency WASH supplies is essential to strengthen resilience.

Box 3: Pauk Kone Magway Region- A case study of Community-Led WASH Transformation

Challenge and interventions of Water and Sanitation: Pauk Kone Village in Magway, has 70 households with a population of 332 individuals (157 males and 175 females). This village used to face severe water and sanitation issues. Open-pit latrines near riverbanks posed health and safety risks, and the lack of reliable water sources meant families spent hours collecting water, impacting education, work, and daily responsibilities. The programme interventions of installing tube wells, improved sanitation infrastructure, and household water storage with containers transformed conditions, ensuring secure and accessible facilities for all families.



Improving Health Through Safe Water and Hygiene: Diarrhoea and dengue fever outbreaks were common due to contaminated water and poor sanitation. The construction of proper latrines and a safe drinking water system led to a notable decline in waterborne diseases. Local health workers conducted hygiene awareness sessions, particularly for school-aged children, reinforcing handwashing and sanitation practices. These efforts significantly improved public health and hygiene behaviours.

Addressing Climate Risks and Flood Challenges: Flooding remains a seasonal threat, submerging sanitation facilities during the monsoon season. Unlike other villages with flood-resistant latrines and high erected storage, Pauk Kone lacks climate-adaptive WASH infrastructure. Residents have developed coping strategies, such as removing latrine roofs during floods, but structured disaster preparedness training and resilient infrastructure are needed for long-term sustainability.

Strengthening Governance and Maintenance: A key challenge in Pauk Kone is the lack of a structured WASH maintenance system. Unlike villages with WUCs, Pauk Kone relies on community contributions for repairs, making sustainability uncertain. Strengthening the WASH committee to oversee maintenance, financial contributions, and service coordination would enhance long-term functionality.

Community Satisfaction and Infrastructure Gaps: Residents widely appreciate that families that once spent hours collecting water now have direct access at home, freeing time for education and employment. One female participant shared, “Before the WASH programme, my family of four struggled with hygiene, relying on a well owned by wealthier families and digging pits for waste, which attracted animals and posed health risks. Water scarcity meant children bathed infrequently, and menstrual hygiene was a constant challenge. Since receiving toilets and tube wells, our environment is much cleaner, and safe drinking water has significantly reduced waterborne diseases. Proper sanitation has eliminated open pit hazards, improving hygiene and overall health for our community.” However, two key gaps remain—the lack of a structured drainage system and the need for an additional water

pump. Household wastewater currently damages roads and accumulates, while a single water pump serves the entire village, creating risks of water shortages if it fails.

Pauk Kone - A Model for Effective WASH Programming: Community-led engagement has strengthened hygiene awareness, making handwashing and sanitation routine. Strengthening governance, climate-adaptive infrastructure, and sustainable financing will ensure Pauk Kone's WASH services remain functional and serve as a model for Myanmar.

Key Messages from Effectiveness

1. The programme expanded access to safe drinking water through solar-powered boreholes and gravity-fed systems, reducing the burden on women and children, but seasonal shortages and water quality issues remain in some areas.
2. Over 200 communities achieved ODF status, with 12,000 households constructing climate-resilient latrines, yet flooding, affordability, and infrastructure durability remain challenges.
3. Hygiene promotion improved handwashing and menstrual hygiene practices, especially in schools and public spaces, though affordability constraints limit sustained access to soap and sanitary products for low-income women.
4. WUCs and Sanitation Committees strengthened community governance, but financial sustainability and technical maintenance remain weak, requiring structured cost-recovery models and training for local technicians.
5. Flood-resistant latrines and solar-powered boreholes enhanced climate resilience, yet many communities lack structured disaster preparedness plans, leaving them vulnerable to extreme weather events.
6. Behaviour change interventions, including CLTS and community-led hygiene promotion, increased sanitation adoption, but follow-up mechanisms are needed to sustain long-term behaviour change.

SUSTAINABILITY

Strengthening Community Capacity for Long-Term WASH Management

E8: To what extent has the programme built the capacity of local communities and other stakeholders to maintain WASH services sustainably, especially under climate-resilient frameworks? Are there any specific capacity gaps that need to be addressed and/or strengthened to further support community resilience?

The WASH programme has enhanced community capacity to manage water and sanitation services. WUCs oversee tariff collection, construction, and repairs while coordinating with contractors. In some cases, dedicated latrine or sanitation committees have also been established. However, these groups were formed primarily to support programme-specific interventions rather than based on a collective prioritization of needs as determined by a community or village development plan. Consequently, these structures often exist in silos or overlap, leading to duplication of efforts and inefficient resource use. Establishing uniform community institutions is therefore critical for developing a unified vision and prioritizing the community's actual needs. Moreover, a more integrated approach would enable better resource sharing and streamlined decision-making, ultimately strengthening the sustainability of WASH services.

"We maintain our own wells and latrines, but if something major breaks, we don't know how to fix it."

Male FGDs, Magway

Sanitation sustainability is a critical concern, particularly in flood-prone areas where desludging services and waste disposal mechanisms are absent. Many households struggle to afford durable latrines, and sanitation credit schemes remain underdeveloped. In Bogale and Pwintphyu, frequent flooding damages latrines, underscoring the need for

climate-adaptive designs. In remote villages, limited local availability of latrine materials forces households to undertake long journeys to procure essential components. Expanding engagement with local suppliers could improve affordability and accessibility, strengthening long-term sanitation sustainability.

“Without external support, some families would struggle to repair their wells or latrines.”

Female FGDs, Bogale

Limited access to spare parts and trained technicians continues to hinder timely repairs, making maintenance unreliable. The absence of structured training further restricts knowledge transfer, increasing the risk of service deterioration. Community leaders in the Magway Region have highlighted the need for refresher training, as trained members frequently relocate or change roles, creating maintenance and governance gaps. Solar-powered water systems in Kokosu and Thon Dat have enhanced water reliability, particularly in dry seasons, but remain vulnerable to mechanical failures. Establishing local repair hubs and providing structured technical training would improve long-term functionality. Greater integration of WASH management into local governance structures is necessary to ensure sustainability and reduce reliance on external funding. As one participant from Ku To remarked, “the raised latrines are inconvenient for the elderly, who often require assistance,” which not only compromises their independence but also places additional pressure on caregivers. Furthermore, while some households have managed to modify their facilities with ramps and handrails, these improvements are not universally available, leaving many elderly residents at risk of falling or experiencing other injuries.

In addition, both young children and the elderly may struggle with maintaining personal hygiene under the current system. Although training sessions on handwashing and proper waste disposal have been implemented, some communities continue to report inconsistencies in following these practices. This indicates that while the training has had some success, there is still room for improvement in creating more tailored and accessible hygiene education that addresses the unique needs of these age groups. Overall, enhancing the inclusivity of WASH facilities for young children and the elderly requires specific design modifications such as child-sized fixtures and accessible latrine features—along with continuous, targeted hygiene education. Such improvements will ensure that the benefits of the programme are fully realized by all age groups, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes and enhanced quality of life.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System of Community-Led WASH Programme

Introduction: The Programme established an M&E system to track progress, assess sustainability, and ensure accountability. The system aimed to capture real-time data on service delivery, community participation, and infrastructure maintenance. While it provided valuable insights, certain gaps limited its overall effectiveness.

M&E Process: A multi-tiered M&E system developed and implemented involving project controllers, volunteers, and community representatives to collect and report data. The process included regular field monitoring, where project controllers and trained volunteers conducted visits every 10–15 days, tracking infrastructure functionality, hygiene behaviours, and service quality. Initially, the mWater digital system was used to provide real-time tracking of service delivery and infrastructure maintenance through government health workers. This was discontinued due to military coup in 2021, and monitoring shifted to manual reporting, leading to challenges in accuracy and timeliness. The WUCs and Sanitation Committees were actively involved in reporting sanitation progress and highlighting areas needing intervention. Institutional coordination with local health staff, NGOs, and education sector representatives further strengthened the data collection process.

What Worked Well: The M&E system successfully engaged communities, creating a strong sense of ownership and accountability in WASH governance. The use of mWater before its suspension enhanced real-time tracking, allowing for efficient data-driven decision-making. The collaboration with BHS and school hygiene promoters helped in monitoring and sustaining hygiene practices among children and improved sanitation conditions at the community level. The CLTS approach further encouraged peer-led monitoring and reinforced ODF achievements. The

community-to-community learning facilitated the adoption of best practices, enabling villages to improve their WASH service management.

Challenges and Gaps in M&E: The M&E system faced several limitations that affected its effectiveness. The suspension of mWater disrupted digital monitoring, forcing a reliance on manual data collection, which resulted in inconsistencies, reporting delays, and incomplete tracking. The absence of a structured grievance redressal system meant that service failures and infrastructure breakdowns often went unreported or took longer to address. Many volunteers lacked formal training in data collection, financial tracking, and reporting, leading to some inconsistencies. Political instability further weakened coordination with national WASH governance structures, affecting the continuity of monitoring efforts and policy integration.

Key Lessons Learned

1. **Hybrid Monitoring Systems Needed:** mWater improved tracking, but its suspension disrupted data collection. Future WASH programmes should integrate both digital tools and offline-compatible methods to ensure continuity.
2. **Grievance Redressal is Essential:** The absence of a formal complaint system weakened accountability. Establishing structured feedback channels will enable communities to report service failures and receive timely responses.
3. **Capacity-Building for M&E Teams:** Many volunteers lacked technical skills in data collection and financial monitoring. Training WASH committees and M&E officers will improve data accuracy and reporting consistency.
4. **Improved Coordination Between Stakeholders:** Weak institutional coordination impacted long-term M&E sustainability. Strengthening partnerships between communities, local governments, and NGOs will improve monitoring and accountability.

Community Ownership and Long-Term WASH Engagement

E9: Are there adequate mechanisms, including funding, community engagement, and private-sector involvement, to support the long-term sustainability of the interventions?

Community ownership is key to sustaining WASH services. In Pone Tat, Kokosu, and Asi Gyi, local committees oversee tariff collection, repairs, and infrastructure planning. Women and youth have taken leadership roles in sanitation and hygiene promotion, ensuring inclusive decision-making. In Kyun Pin Sin, women-led WASH groups actively monitor water safety and advocate for latrine improvements.

“In our village, UNICEF provided WASH facilities, but since it was the rainy season, couldn't complete the facilities within the planned timeframe.”

A participant FGDs, Bogale

One of the challenges faced was when the pipe connections process due to the lack of technical skills. However, handling and completing this work through coordination within the community.

“Actively participated in maintaining and repairing the buildings (well). However, there was no technical training provided for maintenance, and the well was dug solely based on the experience of the villagers.”

Male FGDs, Magway

“If organizations do not provide support, we will need to build and maintain the water tube wells ourselves. Households that receive the wells must take responsibility for their upkeep. Fortunately, there is mutual support among those who have access, which fosters cooperation and convenience. As for us, we plan to carry out maintenance every year.”

A Female FGDs, Magway

Co-financing models, where communities contribute to infrastructure maintenance, have fostered ownership and responsibility. In Bogale and Pwintphyu, communities have successfully raised funds for emergency repairs, demonstrating strong engagement. However, financial constraints remain a barrier, particularly for low-income households struggling to pay water tariffs or invest in latrines. In Bogale, Asi Gyi, and Zaung Chan Kone in Pwintphyu, some households rely on external support, and without structured microfinance options, durable sanitation solutions remain inaccessible. Inconsistent tariff collection in places like Kokosu limits maintenance funds, and the absence of structured financial planning weakens long-term sustainability. KIIs with WUC leaders indicate that many communities lack the financial management capacity to sustain infrastructure, leading to budget shortages.

With significant improvements in sanitation and hygiene practices, a slippage due to a lack of follow-up interventions has been reported in some areas. In Bogale, Thon Dat and Pone Tat, in Magway township some households have reverted to open defecation, highlighting the need for continuous behavioural reinforcement. In Asi Gyi, where sanitation infrastructure remains underdeveloped, households tend to prioritize immediate needs over long-term WASH improvements. Strengthening refresher training and behaviour-change initiatives could help sustain progress. School-based WASH programmes in Magway and Bogale have been effective in instilling hygiene practices among children, indicating that expanding such models could enhance long-term sustainability.

In Pwintphyu and Bogale, local sanitation entrepreneurs offer affordable latrines and basic repair services. However, private sector engagement in desludging services and infrastructure maintenance remains weak. Strengthening partnerships with businesses and promoting community-driven sanitation marketing could improve service availability and long-term functionality.

“ Women are actively involved in purchasing sample products, Mould, making concrete rings, crafting sturdy ceramic cups, and producing items similar to those developed by a sanitation market consultant.”

KIIs with a Sanitation Market Consultant

Box 4: Ku To (N) Village of Magway Region WASH Challenge- Why Access Alone Is Not Enough

In KuTo village of Magway region, a population of 607 individuals comprising of 262 males and 345 females live in 162 households. The WASH interventions in the village led to improved water and sanitation access, reduced open defecation, and increased hygiene awareness, leading to a decline in waterborne diseases. However, sustainability remains a challenge due to the lack of structured coordination and water management systems. There was no dedicated financial mechanism for maintenance, and households managed latrines and water facilities individually, resulting in unequal upkeep. The leader of 100 households informally oversaw WASH management, but no structured committee existed to ensure sustainable oversight. Women and youth were excluded from decision-making, limiting community ownership. Collaboration with local health and education sectors enhanced hygiene awareness, while Red Cross training at the township level supported some WASH practices. However, the absence of structured climate resilience training left infrastructure vulnerable. Without formal governance, financial planning, and inclusive participation, both water and sanitation systems face long-term risks of deterioration.

According to a local resident, “Local authorities, NGOs, and other sectors (such as health and education) have worked together to implement awareness-raising activities but still there many gaps. Basic latrines are not sufficient for women and disabled persons. For women and girls in households that cannot afford to build a proper toilet, personal safety and security are only minimally ensured. This calls for a collaborative approach though local community committee.”

Financial and Institutional Sustainability

E10: How effective have demand-generation activities been in fostering continued support and commitment for WASH services in target communities? Is there sufficient private sector engagement to support future sustainability

Demand-generation activities have spurred community support for WASH services. For instance, in Pone Tat a community-driven water fund has successfully facilitated borehole maintenance, while in Pwintphyu and Kokosu, community savings schemes have supported small-scale repairs—demonstrating a willingness among households to contribute financially. However, inconsistent fee collection and reliance on emergency fundraising, as observed in Thon Dat and Asi Gyi, suggest that these activities alone have not secured a sustained long-term financial support.

A recent assessment of the Microfinance and Sanitation Marketing (MSM) approach further highlights potential for market-driven sanitation solutions. In Bogale and Salin Townships, households have shown a readiness to pay for improvements, yet high interest rates on sanitation loans and limited local supply chains continue to impede progress. Informal arrangements with private operators in Bogale have provided temporary water access, but the lack of regulatory oversight and structured private sector engagement compromises both service equity and affordability.

“There is still a need for financial and technical resources. Due to financial constraints, new wells cannot be dug, and a lack of technical expertise prevents households from constructing latrines. As a result, many rely on hiring skilled workers from nearby villages for construction.”

A community member

In terms of private sector involvement, there is currently insufficient engagement to support future sustainability. Private operators have played an ad hoc role, but their involvement remains fragmented. The absence of formal partnerships with local businesses and private investors means that critical areas, such as desludging services, supply chain development for latrine components, and technical support for solar-powered systems, are not adequately addressed. Strengthening these areas through clear regulatory frameworks, enhanced collaboration with private enterprises, and structured public–private partnerships is essential to bolster both service quality and lasting financial sustainability.

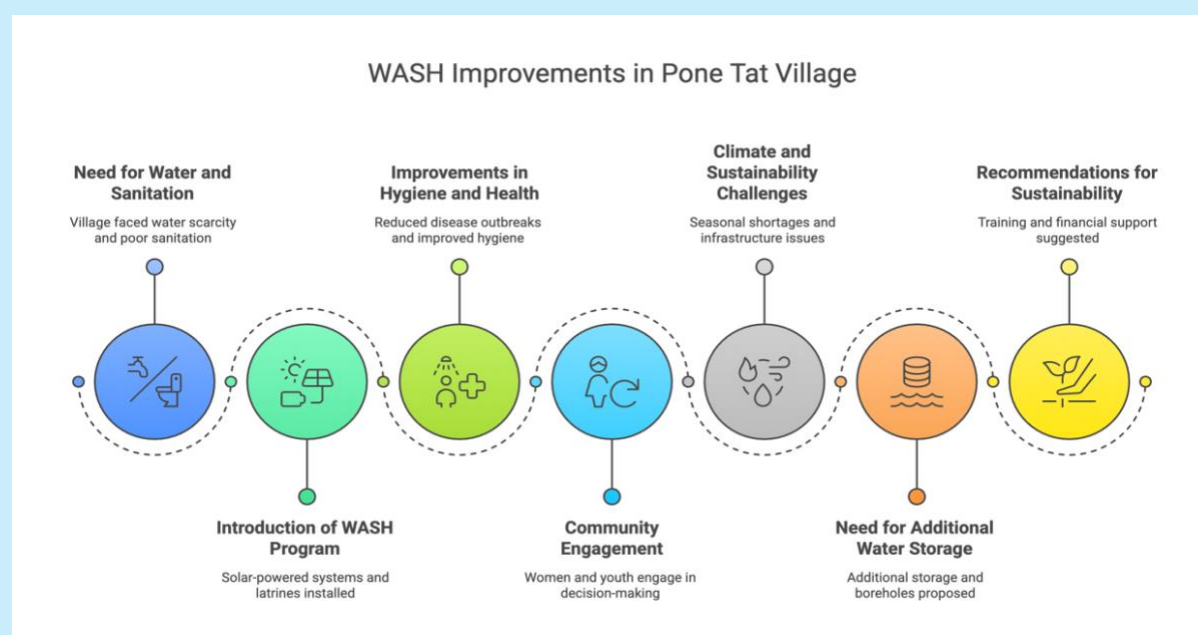
Institutional weaknesses also pose challenges. Many WUCs in Pwintphyu and Bogale lack direct communication channels with municipal water departments, leaving them dependent on NGOs for technical support. Moreover, the discontinuation of digital monitoring tools such as the mWater system has delayed the identification of infrastructure failures in Thon Dat and Asi Gyi. Without a structured exit strategy for donor support, communities in Magway and Ayeyarwady risk long-term deterioration of WASH services.

In summary, while demand-generation activities have promoted some community commitment, more robust financial planning, enhanced private sector engagement, and stronger institutional mechanisms are essential to secure the long-term sustainability of WASH services.

Box 5: Sustaining WASH Improvements in Pone Tat Village of Magway Region

Community Impact and Inclusivity: In Pone Tat Village of Magway region, home to 971 residents (576 males and 495 females) across 247 households, the WASH programme has transformed daily life by significantly reducing the burden of water collection and improving sanitation and hygiene for all. Previously, women and children spent countless hours fetching water, while many households relied on unsafe open defecation. The introduction of solar-powered water systems and piped connections has not only alleviated these challenges but also enhanced overall community health by reducing the incidence of diarrhoea and skin infections. Improved water access has eased

financial pressures—eliminating the need for expensive water barrels—and supported agricultural activities, while safe sanitation facilities have provided greater privacy and dignity to everyone, including women, girls, and PWDs.



Sustainability Challenges: Seasonal water shortages remain a significant concern in Pone Tat. During the dry months, water is available only every two days, and financial constraints have left some households struggling to complete latrine construction. Inadequate wastewater management has resulted in road damage, underscoring the urgent need for structured drainage solutions and additional water pumps to prevent service disruptions. The facilities were not originally designed to cope with extreme weather conditions, leaving the community reliant on temporary measures such as water rationing during droughts. These challenges highlight critical vulnerabilities that must be addressed to secure long-term sustainability.

Capacity and Technical Gaps: While the local water committee is committed to managing operations, there is a clear lack of structured technical training and access to spare parts, which hinders timely repairs and maintenance. This capacity gap means that even minor infrastructure failures can escalate, disrupting services indefinitely. Community leaders have noted that frequent staff turnover and limited technical expertise contribute to ongoing maintenance challenges. Addressing these gaps through structured training programmes, especially with a focus on empowering women and youth in technical roles, is essential for improving the sustained functionality of the WASH infrastructure.

Financial and Institutional Sustainability: Financial sustainability is further challenged by inconsistent fee collection and a heavy reliance on emergency fundraising. In some instances, community savings schemes and water funds have been initiated, as seen in Pone Tat, Pwintphyu, and Kokosu, which demonstrate households' willingness to contribute financially. However, these measures are not sufficient to cover major repairs or expansion needs. Informal arrangements with private operators have provided temporary water access, yet the absence of regulatory oversight and formal private sector engagement compromises service equity and affordability. Moreover, many WUCs lack direct communication channels with municipal authorities, resulting in a dependence on NGOs for technical support. This fragmented institutional support further jeopardizes the continued viability of WASH services.

Pathways to a Resilient and Inclusive Future: A gender-inclusive and integrated approach is essential to overcome these challenges. Key recommendations include strengthening climate resilience through the installation of elevated water storage systems and the adoption of improved sanitation infrastructure designed to withstand extreme weather. Structured technical training for local committees should be provided, with an emphasis on supporting women and youth in leadership roles. Financial support options, such as cost-sharing models and private sector engagement, must be explored to create robust funding mechanisms. The community members shared, "One of the main challenges is the lack of a proper drainage system to channel wastewater from households. Due to the absence of well-structured drainage channels, wastewater damages village roads. However, there are plans to gradually implement a proper drainage system to address this issue. A

key recommendation is to provide an additional water pump. Having an extra pump would eliminate the need to wait for repairs when the existing pump breaks down, ensuring a continuous water supply without disruptions.” By addressing these areas, Pone Tat can build a resilient and inclusive WASH system that empowers every community member and ensures sustainable improvements for the future.

Key messages from Sustainability

1. Strengthening community-led WASH governance is essential, with a need to transition from fragmented programme-specific committees to integrated and sustainable local institutions.
2. Financial sustainability remains a major challenge, as inconsistent tariff collection, lack of microfinance options, and weak financial management among WUCs limit long-term service maintenance.
3. Private sector engagement in sanitation and desludging services is insufficient, requiring structured partnerships, regulatory frameworks, and supply chain development to support sustainable service delivery.
4. Climate resilience must be prioritized, with investments in flood-resistant latrines, high erected water storage systems, and alternative water sources to mitigate seasonal shortages.
5. Technical training and capacity building for WUCs, with a focus on women and youth, are critical to ensure effective maintenance, timely repairs, and long-term functionality of WASH infrastructure.
6. Institutional integration with local governance structures is necessary to reduce dependency on external support, improve service coordination, and enhance future WASH sustainability.

COHERENCE

Alignment with National and International WASH Initiatives

E11. To what extent are there synergies and interlinkages between the programme and other interventions carried out by partners? Do coordination mechanisms between key stakeholders exist, and if so, to what extent are they well designed, clear and active? Are there differences in coordination at national or sub-national levels? To what extent have partners' and stakeholders' perspectives been monitored and included into programme prioritization and adjustments?

The Community Led WASH programme in Myanmar demonstrates strong synergies with national policies and international frameworks, notably aligning with Myanmar's National WASH Strategy (2016–2030) and the NAPA to Climate Change 2012. This alignment is evident in its adoption of climate-adaptive solutions, such as solar-powered water supply systems and aerobic septic tanks, which contribute to sustainable service delivery. Moreover, the programme follows UNICEF's Climate-Resilient WASH Framework by implementing CLTS in selected villages, thereby encouraging a transition to household-managed sanitation. However, while certain communities like Kokosu and Ywar Mhat benefit from reliable water sources year-round, others, such as Thon Dat, still face challenges with reliance on river water or uncovered storage ponds, exposing them to contamination risks and seasonal shortages.

In addition to aligning with development frameworks, the programme has successfully integrated humanitarian interventions with long-term development objectives. In conflict-affected and disaster-prone areas, such as Magway and Ayeyarwady, emergency measures, including rapid borehole installation, emergency water distribution, and provision of hygiene kits, have stabilized health conditions and reduced waterborne diseases. This transition from emergency relief to sustainable, community-managed services has been supported by the establishment of WUCs, which continue to operate beyond the initial emergency phase. Nevertheless, challenges remain, particularly in flood-prone areas where temporary sanitation solutions have not always been upgraded to permanent, climate-resilient infrastructure. Political instability has further limited municipal oversight and government engagement, impeding the full integration of these emergency interventions into local service delivery plans. Strengthening coordination between emergency response and long-term development programming will be essential to fully realize the synergies and ensure the sustainability of WASH services across all target communities. Field observations indicated that some water and sanitation interventions stalled due to seasonal challenges. In Kan Kone, only one latrine was constructed out of the planned 30 latrines, as the rainy season and agricultural workload prevented

construction. Such findings highlight the need for better planning and coordination between emergency response and long-term development efforts, ensuring that infrastructure initiatives account for seasonal constraints and community work cycles.

Box 6: Kan Kone of Ayeyarwady Region – The Significance of Community Organization in WASH Sustainability

In Kan Kone of Ayeyarwady, the WASH programme aimed to create access to sanitation, hygiene and water for all. However, only one was completed out of 30 allocated latrines, leaving most households without proper sanitation. Limited financial resources, high transportation costs, and lack of structured community engagement delayed construction, highlighting the critical role of community organization in programme success. One of the key weaknesses in Kan Kone was the absence of WASH committees to oversee infrastructure development and maintenance. Without a structured governance system, individual households were left to manage latrines independently, often struggling with financial and technical constraints. In contrast to villages with active WUCs and Sanitation Committees, Kan Kone lacked coordinated leadership, which impacted the programme's effectiveness. The case of Kan Kone highlights the importance of strong community organization in ensuring WASH sustainability. Without community-led governance and structured support mechanisms, even well-intentioned WASH interventions may fail to deliver lasting impact.

Multi-Sectoral Integration and Cross-Sectoral Linkages

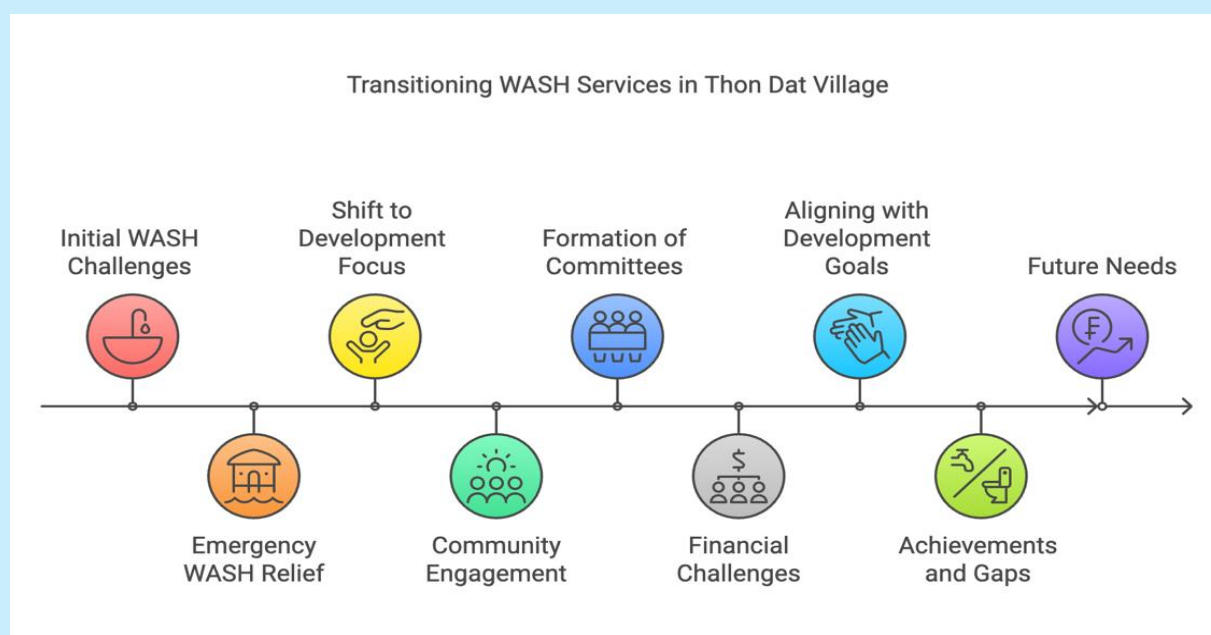
The programme has incorporated multi-sectoral linkages that recognize the interconnections between WASH, health, education, and climate resilience. For example, hygiene promotion has been successfully integrated into schools in villages such as Kyun Pin Sin and Pouk Kone, where regular hygiene education, the installation of handwashing stations, and access to safe drinking water have contributed to improved student health and reduced absenteeism. Similarly, partnerships with the MHAA have ensured that local health workers and hygiene promoters receive training to deliver continuous education on safe water handling and sanitation best practices. In addition, the local health department, through the BHS, inspects latrines and hygiene conditions, encouraging communities to construct hygienic latrines. However, in some villages, a lack of a sustained supply of hygiene materials, such as posters and pamphlets, has weakened long-term behavioural reinforcement.

At the community level, stakeholder coordination is strong. The establishment of water and sanitation committees has fostered active participation, enabling local members to contribute to the maintenance of services and infrastructure repairs, thereby creating a sense of ownership and accountability. Yet, this coordination is often confined to the community level; institutional coordination at sub-national and national levels remains fragmented. Political transitions have disrupted formal integration with national WASH governance structures, limiting the programme's ability to leverage government funding, technical expertise, and regulatory support. Engagement with large-scale private water service providers is also minimal, restricting opportunities for innovation in sanitation financing and infrastructure sustainability.

Mechanisms to capture and integrate partners' and stakeholders' perspectives exist through regular field feedback, NGO engagement, and BHS inspections, but their incorporation into overall programme prioritization is limited. For example, while the local health department's involvement has been instrumental in encouraging hygienic latrine construction, there is little evidence of structured mechanisms to monitor these perspectives and adjust programme strategies accordingly. This gap is particularly evident in the integration of climate adaptation and DRR efforts with WASH planning.

Overall, while coordination mechanisms between key stakeholders are well established at the community level, they are less clear and active at the institutional level. Enhanced coordination and integration across all levels—through formalized stakeholder feedback and better alignment between emergency response and long-term development interventions are essential to support sustainable service delivery.

Box 7: Transforming WASH Services with Coherence- The Case of Thon Dat Village of Ayeyarwady



Context and Challenges: Thon Dat village in Bogale Township of Ayeyarwady region, with 52 households and 265 residents (119 males and 146 females), has faced severe challenges in accessing safe water and sanitation, adversely affecting health and livelihoods. Women and children previously spent hours fetching water, while open defecation was common and led to frequent diarrhoeal outbreaks. Initially, emergency relief measures—such as temporary water distribution and basic sanitation facilities—provided short-term solutions.

Shift to Development-Focused Solutions: A shift from humanitarian response to development-focused solutions was required to ensure long-term sustainability. This shift depended on establishing strong partnerships with local leadership and governance structures, enabling the community to take ownership of service delivery and infrastructure management.

Community Engagement and Ownership: Key to sustainability was the community's active role. The village initially relied on an expensive, inefficient generator-powered water pump. Observing successful solar-powered systems in neighbouring areas, residents advocated for similar installations, which significantly reduced operational costs and ensured reliable year-round water access. To oversee these services, Thon Dat established both a WUC and a Sanitation Committee. Although these committees have improved local governance and facilitated repairs, they remain underfunded and dependent on informal knowledge-sharing rather than structured training in maintenance and financial planning. Collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) is present, but engagement with government agencies remains limited.

Integration with Broader Development Goals: The programme's evolution from emergency response to long-term development has also involved integrating WASH with health and education. Efforts have expanded to include hygiene promotion in schools, community participation in service management, and capacity-building initiatives. The elimination of open defecation has improved health outcomes, yet handwashing compliance remains inconsistent, especially among adults. While schools have reinforced hygiene practices, continuous engagement from health and education sectors is needed. Financial sustainability is also challenged, as community contributions—ranging from 15,000 MMK for higher-income households to 5,000 MMK for lower-income families—are insufficient to fund further infrastructure expansion.

Transition to Long-Term Sustainability: Ensuring a smooth transition from emergency aid to self-managed, long-term development is critical. Despite the community's shift towards managing its own infrastructure, gaps in disaster preparedness and climate resilience persist. Thon Dat lacks structured flood-prevention measures, leaving sanitation infrastructure vulnerable during the rainy season, and deteriorating roads hinder water access during extreme weather. Without adopting climate adaptation strategies—such as flood-resistant latrines and alternative water storage solutions—WASH services in Thon Dat remain fragile.

Evidence-Based Engagement for Advocacy

The WASH programme in Myanmar was initially developed under the ASWA-II framework, emphasizing system strengthening, institutional development, and evidence-based advocacy. It aimed to use programme data and community experiences to inform policy, enhance coordination mechanisms, and integrate WASH into formal government planning processes. However, following the 2021 military coup, the operating environment shifted dramatically. In line with revised UN Country Team (UNCT) engagement guidelines, direct collaboration with de facto authorities, both national and sub-national levels, became restricted to narrowly defined technical matters, prompting a fundamental reorientation of the programme's strategy.

In the absence of formal pathways for policy dialogue or institutional support, the programme adopted a locally embedded and context-sensitive approach. UNICEF and its partners invested in strengthening informal, community-based governance structures, such as WUCs, Sanitation/Latrine Committees, and Community Health Volunteers. These groups took on responsibilities including tariff collection, infrastructure maintenance, hygiene promotion, and household engagement. Over time, their roles evolved to support local accountability, decision-making, and service continuity, providing a foundation for community resilience amidst ongoing instability.

The programme also cultivated partnerships with local NGOs, most notably the Myanmar Health Assistant Association (MHAA), which served as both implementing partner and technical facilitator. MHAA played a crucial role in frontline delivery, conducting hygiene promotion, training volunteers, and overseeing maintenance efforts. It also helped translate community-level data into actionable insights, using non-confrontational technical channels to highlight service gaps and user feedback navigating political sensitivities while sustaining dialogue across the sector.

This adaptive strategy allowed UNICEF and its partners to continue achieving WASH outcomes despite political constraints. By embedding service delivery, monitoring, and accountability functions within community structures, the programme preserved operational continuity and supported bottom-up capacity building. While formal system strengthening was not feasible, these efforts have laid the groundwork for future re-engagement with national systems when conditions permit.

Key messages from Coherence

1. The programme aligns with national and international frameworks, such as Myanmar's National WASH Strategy, NAPA, SDGs and UNICEF strategies by adopting climate-adaptive solutions and community-led approaches.
2. It effectively transitions emergency interventions into sustainable, community-managed services through mechanisms like WUCs.
3. Multi-sectoral partnerships with health and education sectors have enhanced hygiene promotion and improved public health outcomes.
4. Coordination is strong at the community level but remains fragmented at sub-national and national levels, limiting government support and funding.
5. Feedback from partners and stakeholders is collected, yet not fully integrated into programme priorities, particularly in climate adaptation efforts.
6. Strengthening formalized coordination and feedback mechanisms is essential to further integrate emergency responses with long-term development interventions.

GENDER, INCLUSION, CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Gender and Social Inclusion in WASH Access

E 12. *Are there any difficulties in accessing water supply and sanitation services for women or persons with disabilities? Are there any special barriers or concerns from a gender or disability perspective?*

“Since there is no need to bathe in the river, women and girls can easily access water for personal hygiene and use the latrines without any barriers, ensuring safety and convenience.”

A participant in FGDs, Magway

The programme has taken deliberate steps to enhance access to water and sanitation for all, recognizing that women and persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable. Women and girls traditionally bear the burden of fetching water, often spending several hours daily, and this unpaid labour negatively impacts their educational, economic, and social opportunities. In response, the introduction of household-level water supply systems in regions such as Magway and Ayeyarwady have reduced the time burden and alleviated some of the physical and security risks associated with water collection.

“I used to give the children money to help carry water for me. Also, I didn't use a lot of water. Now, with the properly built latrines and water supply system, and with my children managing the water access, everything is much more convenient and easier for you to use.”

A person of 56 years old with disability, Magway

However, there are certain challenges. For instance, while many respondents noted that “there are no restrictions in place” that prevent vulnerable groups from accessing services, the design of the sanitation facilities themselves often creates obstacles. Latrines built with lifted levels to mitigate flood damage, though necessary in flood-prone areas, pose a significant challenge for persons with disabilities and the elderly, who may require assistance to use these facilities independently.

“Raised latrines can be difficult for disabled individuals and older people to use without help.”

A participant in FGDs, Bogale

Furthermore, while some communities have introduced basic modifications such as ramps and handrails, these adaptations are not consistently implemented across all target areas. This inconsistency means that many facilities do not fully adhere to universal design principles, thereby limiting the independence and dignity of PWDs. In addition, the physical infrastructure for water and sanitation in some areas remains suboptimal: many households continue to rely on river water or uncovered storage ponds, exposing them to contamination risks and seasonal shortages. Although the programme has reduced the burden on women through improved water access, there is still a need for further investment in facility upgrades and accessibility modifications to ensure that all vulnerable groups can benefit equitably.

“Fetching water is difficult due to the wooden bridge and the challenging water access point. Improvements should be made to ensure easier access, especially for women and children.”

A female in FGDs, Bogale

Overall, though a significant progress has been made, there remains an urgent need for consistent application of inclusive design principles and further technical and financial support. Strengthening these measures, by providing targeted training for facility maintenance, will enhance the long-term accessibility and sustainability of WASH services for women and persons with disabilities.

E13. What are the main concerns and/or barriers linked to the assessment of different age groups, particularly young children and the elderly?

“Everyone in the village, including children and women, can take turns using the facilities. If there is any damage, it is repaired immediately. Unlike before, when fetching water was time-consuming and required carrying it over long distances, we can now access water easily without such difficulties.”

A participant in FGDs, Bogale

The construction of the toilet meets the needs and requirements including women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Previously, the elderly would rely on children to fetch water for them, but now that is no longer necessary. Water is taken directly from the water pipe.

“My husband became disabled due to poor health. Our newly constructed toilet facility is very convenient because it is next to the house and easy to use by my husband.”

A community member

“When latrine materials were received, we hired a carpenter to construct it. Since the man in the household is elderly, he couldn’t build it himself.”

A community member in Min Tae, Salin

“For people with disabilities, it remains inconvenient. While children and the elderly can use the latrines easily if they are healthy, the latrines do not have special accommodations or support for individuals with disabilities, making it difficult for them to use.”

A participant of FGDs in Kyun Pin Sin, Pwintphyu

Young children and the elderly face distinct challenges in accessing clean water and sanitation services, despite overall improvements from the programme. For young children, the introduction of hygiene promotion in schools in villages such as Kyun Pin Sin and Pouk Kone has improved awareness of handwashing and sanitation practices, which has contributed to reduced absenteeism and better health outcomes. However, the physical design of many facilities is not specifically tailored to their needs. For example, many latrines and handwashing stations are built at a standard height, which may not be suitable for young children who require lower, more accessible installations. One respondent from a school in the area noted that “child-friendly features, like lower handwashing stations, are not always available,” which leaves children at a greater risk of contracting waterborne diseases.

“Although pathways and handrails have been provided for persons with disabilities and the elderly, families still need to assist them in using the toilets. If proper seated toilet facilities were available, they would likely be able to use the latrines independently.”

Female in FGDs, Magway

Elderly residents often experience significant barriers due to the design and placement of sanitation facilities. In many communities, latrines have been uplifted to protect against floods, a necessary adaptation in flood-prone regions. However, this design makes it difficult for older individuals with limited mobility to use them independently. Some households managed to modify their facilities with ramps and handrails, these improvements are not universally available, leaving many elderly residents at risk of falling or experiencing other injuries.

“ While some latrines had handrails and ramps, elevated latrines were not accessible for elderly or disabled individuals, requiring further modifications. ”

A community in Ywar Mhat, Salin

“ Some vulnerable groups face challenges in water storage due to limited water tanks and small reservoirs, as seen in Asi Gyi village. There is a need for additional storage facilities to ensure reliable access to clean water.”

A community volunteer in Asi Gyi, Bogale

In addition, both young children and the elderly may struggle with maintaining personal hygiene under the current system. Although training sessions on handwashing and proper waste disposal have been implemented, some communities continue to report inconsistencies in following these practices. This indicates that while the training has had some success, there is still room for improvement in creating more tailored and accessible hygiene education that addresses the unique needs of these age groups.

Overall, enhancing the inclusivity of WASH facilities for young children and the elderly requires specific design modifications—such as child-sized fixtures and accessible latrine features—along with continuous, targeted hygiene education. Such improvements will ensure that the benefits of the programme are fully realized by all age groups, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes and enhanced quality of life.

“ Ensuring good water quality is essential. There is a child with disability in the village who requires frequent hygiene care, leading to high water usage. Additionally, there is a need for more hygiene supplies, such as soap, to maintain cleanliness. ”

A female participant, Bogale

Human Rights and WASH Accountability Mechanisms

E14. How well does the programme promote equitable access and uphold human rights principles, ensuring inclusion and responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable groups?

The WASH programme was designed with a rights-based approach, ensuring that safe water and sanitation were recognized as fundamental human rights rather than privileges. It prioritized marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, elderly individuals, low-income households, and families with young children, to ensure that no one was left behind. To improve accessibility, subsidized materials for latrine construction—covering pit covers, flooring, and handwashing stations—were provided. Community cost-sharing models helped poverty-stricken households gain access to sanitation, but financial barriers remained, especially in flood-prone areas where hoisted latrines posed challenges for elderly residents and persons with disabilities. While handrails, ramps, and wider entrances were introduced in some locations, these modifications were not consistently applied, highlighting the need for uniform inclusive design.

For behaviour change and community ownership, the programme used CLTS, encouraging collective responsibility for sanitation improvements. Facilitated by MHAA and trained local volunteers and community members, CLTS

sessions enabled communities to assess sanitation gaps and take direct action. Despite the success of self-financed latrine construction, some households still faced financial challenges. In response, community-based financing mechanisms, including rotational savings groups and the use of locally sourced materials, were introduced to make sanitation more affordable. Sanitation Committees played a crucial role in monitoring progress, ensuring proper use and maintenance of facilities, and sustaining ODF status.

Community-led WASH governance was strengthened through the establishment of WUCs and Sanitation Committees, which worked closely with local facilitators to identify sanitation gaps, coordinate subsidies, and provide additional support to vulnerable households. Women played a key role in these committees, particularly in tariff collection and community engagement, improving inclusivity. However, technical roles in borehole maintenance and sanitation repairs remained male-dominated, underscoring the need for gender-equitable training and capacity-building. Despite strong community-led WASH governance, gaps remained in institutional accountability. Political instability weakened national WASH oversight, preventing community-managed WASH services from being integrated into government frameworks. Many local committees operated independently, with limited technical or financial support from government agencies. A critical issue was the lack of a structured grievance redressal mechanism, leaving communities without a formal way to report service failures, water shortages, or infrastructure breakdowns. Without a robust accountability framework, infrastructure deterioration and declining water quality risked being overlooked, threatening the long-term sustainability of services.

Financial sustainability also remained a major challenge, particularly for low-income households. While cost-sharing models were introduced for water supply and sanitation maintenance, many families struggled to afford water tariffs or invest in durable latrines. Without structured financial planning and long-term funding mechanisms, WASH services risked becoming inaccessible to the poorest communities, undermining the programme’s commitment to inclusion and equity.

Box 8: Ywar Mhat- A Story of Inclusion, Rights, and Resilient WASH Services

Breaking Barriers in Access to Water and Sanitation: In Ywar Mhatvillage, Magway, access to clean water and safe sanitation was a major challenge, particularly for women, children, persons with disabilities, and poverty-stricken households. Many families lacked proper toilets, relying on open defecation or makeshift latrines that offered little privacy and dignity. Women and girls faced safety risks when relieving themselves at night, further exposing them to health hazards. The WASH programme transformed sanitation access, ensuring that safe and dignified facilities became a right, not a privilege. A total of 17 latrines were constructed, prioritizing women, children, and persons with disabilities, improving both hygiene and personal security.



Ensuring Inclusion for the Most Marginalized: For PWDs and the elderly, sanitation access was a key challenge. Many could not use traditional latrines, which were built on uneven ground and lacked support structures. The programme introduced disability-friendly latrines, incorporating handrails and wider access points, though some facilities still fell short of full accessibility. Future interventions must ensure seated latrine options, slip-resistant flooring, and ramps, ensuring truly inclusive sanitation.

Empowering Women in WASH Leadership: Before the intervention, women and girls spent long hours collecting water, reducing their time for education and work. In some cases, they queued at shared water points, delaying household responsibilities and economic activities. The programme not only improved water access but also empowered women in WASH governance, allowing them to take active roles in managing resources and maintaining services. In a village where men traditionally controlled infrastructure decisions, this shift gave women greater agency over their well-being. However, technical maintenance roles remained male-dominated, emphasizing the need for training women in borehole repairs and sanitation system management.

Changing Hygiene Norms and Supporting the Poor: Improving sanitation is not just about building latrines but also about changing behaviours. Before the programme, handwashing and hygiene practices were inconsistent, with many households lacking soap or designated handwashing stations. The intervention promoted daily handwashing, with schools reinforcing these practices among children. Menstrual hygiene was also destigmatized, ensuring adolescent girls had access to clean, private spaces. For poorer families unable to afford latrines, the programme provided building materials and technical support, ensuring that no household was left behind in sanitation improvements.

Embedding a Rights-Based Approach: One of the programme's most significant achievements was instilling a sense of ownership within the community. Access to WASH services was recognized as a fundamental human right, not a charitable service. Local WASH committees took responsibility for maintaining water supply and sanitation infrastructure, with women, youth, and elders playing active roles. However, challenges remained in financial planning for long-term sustainability. Without structured cost-sharing models, the village risked future service disruptions. To prevent this, rights-based WASH services must be integrated into government planning, with sustainable financing and accountability frameworks ensuring their longevity.

Climate Resilience: Despite improvements, climate resilience remains a concern. Some latrines were built using lightweight materials, making them vulnerable to strong winds and heavy rains. Some collapsed during storms, requiring costly repairs beyond the means of many families. Droughts have also impacted water availability, with boreholes drying up during peak summer months. Unlike other villages where climate-adaptive infrastructure was incorporated from the start, Ywar Mhat lacks structured disaster preparedness measures, putting WASH services at risk in extreme weather conditions.

A Model for Inclusive, Sustainable WASH: The WASH programme in Ywar Mhat transformed sanitation and water access, ensuring that marginalized groups were not left behind. It successfully: Provided safe and accessible WASH facilities for women, children, and PWDs; Eliminated open defecation and improved hygiene practices across all households; Shifted social norms around menstrual hygiene and sanitation behaviours; Embedded a rights-based approach, making WASH services a public right, not a privilege; and strengthened local governance, ensuring community-led service management.

Key messages from Gender, Social Inclusion and Human Rights

1. Women and girls spend long hours collecting water, limiting their education and work. The programme reduced this burden, but challenges remain in sanitation access and decision-making.
2. Persons with disabilities and the elderly struggle to use latrines, especially in flood-prone areas. Some ramps and handrails exist, but they are not in all communities.
3. WASH facilities are not always suitable for children and the elderly. High latrines and handwashing stations make access difficult for them.
4. Women joined WASH committees and helped with hygiene promotion, but men still dominate technical roles. More training is needed to include women in maintenance and repairs.
5. Poverty-stricken households cannot afford latrines or repairs, even when materials are provided. Community cost-sharing and microfinance can help make sanitation accessible.
6. Climate-resilient water and sanitation systems have been introduced, but some communities lack disaster preparedness. Future programmes should improve climate adaptation training and infrastructure.

CONCLUSIONS AND LEARNINGS

Conclusions

The Community-Led WASH Programme in Myanmar has played a pivotal role in improving WASH services for rural and marginalized communities. Through a combination of participatory governance, infrastructure development, and targeted hygiene promotion, the programme has expanded safe water access, reduced open defecation, and enhanced resilience to climate shocks. However, while the programme has made significant progress, long-term sustainability requires strengthening financial mechanisms, deepening institutional integration, and ensuring climate-resilient and inclusive infrastructures. This conclusion reflects key findings based on relevance, alignment, effectiveness, sustainability, equity, coherence, and resilience, offering insights into opportunities for further strengthening WASH service delivery in Myanmar.

Relevance: The WASH programme was highly relevant to the needs of rural and vulnerable communities, addressing critical gaps in water access, sanitation, and hygiene. It aligned with Myanmar's National WASH Strategy (2016–2030), SDG 6, and the NAPA to Climate Change 2012. The targeting approach ensured that interventions prioritized high-need communities, particularly persons with disabilities, elderly individuals, low-income households, and families with young children. The introduction of climate-resilient WASH infrastructure, such as solar-powered boreholes and flood-resistant latrines, further strengthened programme relevance. However, gaps in emergency preparedness, inclusive design, and financing mechanisms for ultra-poor households remain. Strengthening adaptation measures and community-led financing models will be essential for ensuring long-term WASH sustainability.

Effectiveness: The programme achieved major improvements in safe drinking water access, open defecation reduction, and hygiene behaviour change. Between 2021–2024, over 158,000 individuals gained access to safe drinking water, and 253 communities achieved ODF status. The CLTS approach, participatory governance, and targeted infrastructure investments contributed to significant progress. The establishment of WUCs and Sanitation Committees empowered communities to manage their own WASH services. However, seasonal water shortages, inadequate desludging services, and weak maintenance capacity affected long-term outcomes. Future interventions must prioritize structured behaviour change reinforcement, expand local technical training, and integrate affordable desludging solutions to ensure continued impact.

Sustainability: While WUCs and community-led governance structures improved service sustainability, their effectiveness was uneven across regions. Weak financial planning, inconsistent tariff collection, and limited private sector engagement remain key risks. Political instability further limited institutional support and government integration, making long-term sustainability heavily dependent on NGO-led interventions. Strengthening public-private partnerships (PPPs), expanding microfinance options for sanitation improvements, and formalizing WASH integration within local government systems will be essential to ensure sustained impact beyond donor funding.

Coherence: The programme aligned well with Myanmar's National WASH Strategy (2016–2030), the SDGs, and the NAPA to Climate Change. It also integrated elements of climate resilience, community-led governance, and public health promotion. However, coordination between local, sub-national, and national-level institutions was weak, affecting financial and technical sustainability. Multi-sectoral partnerships between WASH, health, and education sectors improved hygiene promotion, but private sector engagement in desludging, supply chain development, and sanitation marketing remained limited. Strengthening coordination frameworks and aligning WASH efforts with broader DRR and climate adaptation strategies will enhance long-term service integration.

Inclusive WASH Services: The programme contributed to improving gender equity and social inclusion in WASH services, increasing women's participation in governance structures and prioritizing vulnerable households. However, gender disparities persisted in technical roles, with men dominating borehole maintenance and sanitation infrastructure repairs. PWDs and elderly individuals faced barriers in accessing elevated latrines, highlighting the

need for standardized accessibility features. Expanding universal design principles, structured technical training for women, and inclusive financing models will ensure more equitable WASH services for all.

Adapting to Climate Challenges: The introduction of solar-powered water systems, deep boreholes, and raised flood-resistant latrines contributed to climate adaptation. However, communities in flood-prone and drought-affected areas remain vulnerable due to limited emergency preparedness and weak maintenance capacity. The gaps in drainage system, lack of structured water storage solutions, and inadequate flood defences hinder long-term resilience. Future WASH programmes should integrate structured water and sanitation safety plans (WSSPs) and promote climate-resilient infrastructure solutions to safeguard services against climate shocks.

Advancing a Rights-Based Approach in WASH: The rights-based approach improved WASH access for marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and the elderly. Some latrines featured handrails, ramps, and wider entrances, but accessibility adaptations were not standardized across all programme sites. Future programming must ensure universal design features in all WASH infrastructure to achieve full inclusion. While community-led approaches reinforced WASH as a human right, institutional accountability remained weak. The lack of a structured grievance redressal system limited communities' ability to report service failures, water shortages, or sanitation breakdowns, affecting transparency and response times. Strengthening accountability frameworks, oversight mechanisms, and policy integration will be crucial for ensuring equitable, inclusive, and sustainable WASH services for all.

Learnings

Embedding Community-Led WASH Models into Local Systems and Institutions: For sustainability of WASH services, it is critical to integrate community-led models more effectively within local governance and institutional frameworks. In Myanmar's Dry Zone, many villages have independently developed and managed their own water systems. These community-driven models later informed UNICEF's approach to promoting locally owned WASH services and now serve as a foundation for broader scale-up. Embedding these practices into formal systems means regularizing Water User Committees (WUCs), improving local governance, financial oversight, and accountability mechanisms, and enhancing the technical and operational roles of the private sector. This includes supporting entrepreneurs to run utility-style water services, managing sanitation supply chains, desludging services, and providing routine system maintenance. The goal is not to replace existing community systems, but to strengthen and scale what already works with backing from local institutions and development partners.

Integrating Climate Resilience and Strengthening Institutional Linkages: Climate adaptation measures must be embedded into both infrastructure and service delivery to build resilience. This includes expanding flood-resistant sanitation, establishing structured drainage systems, and promoting water conservation practices in areas affected by seasonal disruptions. Though these measures have been piloted, there is a need to fully embed them into long-term community planning and behaviour. At the same time, institutional integration remains limited, with weak coordination between national, township, and community-level WASH actors. This fragmentation hampers consistent service delivery. Stronger linkages through joint planning, shared monitoring, and coordinated response mechanisms are essential to ensure that WASH services are both community-driven and institutionally supported.

Sustaining Behaviour Change Beyond Initial Interventions: Behaviour change requires continuous reinforcement. While hygiene promotion efforts were successful, long-term success depends on sustained school-based education, periodic community engagement, and behavioural reinforcement mechanisms. Ensuring sanitation compliance through additional incentives like improved water access, waste management, and community development funds can encourage households to sustain positive WASH behaviours.

Governance and Financial Mechanisms for Long-Term WASH Maintenance: Financial constraints hinder WASH access. Introducing flexible payment models, microfinance schemes for latrine construction, and community-led

sanitation funds will help address affordability challenges. Governance mechanisms should incorporate structured cost-sharing approaches and improve financial management within WUCs to enhance sustainability. Expanding market-based WASH solutions, including private sector involvement in supply chains and infrastructure maintenance, will strengthen long-term service delivery.

Enhancing Gender and Social Inclusion in WASH Governance: Women's inclusion in technical roles must be prioritized. Expanding training opportunities for women in borehole maintenance and sanitation repairs will ensure a more gender-equitable WASH sector. While women and youth played active roles in some villages, decision-making remained male-dominated in others. Increasing leadership opportunities and providing technical training will enhance representation. There are cases of barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities and elderly individuals, necessitating the expansion of universal design features.

Strengthening Monitoring and Accountability Systems: The evaluation highlights that reliable, locally managed monitoring systems are vital for improving accountability and responsiveness in WASH service delivery. The suspension of digital tools, such as mWater, due to the military coup in 2021 revealed a major gap in monitoring capacity and reinforced the need for low-tech, community-owned alternatives. These systems should be simple, consistent, and able to function without reliable internet, while still aligning with broader data and reporting frameworks. A key learning is the need to train local WASH actors, including Water User Committees and community volunteers, in data collection, analysis, and use for local decision-making. Embedding these monitoring systems into community structures and local planning processes will help ensure data is not only collected but also used to guide resource allocation, prioritise repairs, and support service improvements. Moreover, the evaluation stresses the importance of structured feedback loops between community-level monitoring and institutional actors, so that local challenges are reflected in policy responses, ultimately strengthening the accountability and responsiveness of the WASH system.

Transitioning from Emergency WASH Interventions to Long-Term Sustainability: It is essential to transition from externally driven emergency interventions to locally managed, community-driven WASH models. This means embedding systems where communities take full responsibility for operating and maintaining water and sanitation services, with appropriate technical and financial support. Temporary infrastructure established during crises must be upgraded into permanent, climate-resilient systems that can withstand future shocks and serve communities sustainably. To support this transition, stronger coordination must be established between humanitarian responders, development actors, and local governance structures, ensuring that emergency WASH investments are aligned with long-term development goals. The public-private partnerships (PPPs) should be expanded to support service delivery, maintenance, and local supply chains bridging short-term emergency solutions with longer-term sustainability strategies. This approach will help embed resilient, locally owned systems within communities, reducing dependence on external support over time.

PROPOSED MODEL – INCLUSIVE, SAFE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

The community-led WASH programme in Myanmar has expanded access to safe water and sanitation in climate-vulnerable and marginalized communities. However, persistent challenges remain around long-term sustainability, financial self-reliance, and preparedness for climate and disaster risks. As the programme moves into its next phase,

the focus will shift from short-term service delivery towards embedding sustainability through structured local utility management, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and integration with health and protection services.

A key shift will involve moving from informal, volunteer-based systems to more structured, utility-style models that are locally led and financially viable. This includes supporting trained water entrepreneurs to manage solar-powered water schemes, borehole maintenance, and desludging services under the oversight of WASH Committees. Entrepreneurship training, access to micro-finance, and stronger market linkages will be scaled up, alongside exploration of public-private partnerships to expand climate-resilient WASH services in remote areas.

To build resilience, Water and Sanitation Safety Security Planning (WSSSP) will be embedded at the village level. This includes regular water quality monitoring, promotion of climate-resilient infrastructure (such as flood-resistant boreholes and elevated tanks), and community-based emergency preparedness. WASH Committees will be trained in climate risk assessments and disaster response, while decentralised water treatment options will support continuity during emergencies.

The programme will also strengthen the integration of WASH with health, nutrition, and child protection. Safe water and sanitation in clinics, schools, and early childhood centres will help reduce diarrhoea and child malnutrition. Hygiene promotion, especially around handwashing and menstrual hygiene management (MHM), will be embedded in these spaces to reinforce healthy behaviours.

To ensure financial sustainability, the programme will expand community-based financial tools such as tariff collection systems, sanitation loans, and revolving funds. These mechanisms will enable communities to plan and fund routine maintenance and improve service continuity. Coordination between WASH Committees and local authorities will be strengthened to encourage formal recognition of community-run utilities. Access to microfinance for WASH entrepreneurs and strengthened local supply chains will also help maintain the affordability and availability of essential materials and technical support.

In summary, the next phase of WASH programming in Myanmar will focus on embedding sustainability and resilience by institutionalizing local water utilities, enhancing climate and disaster preparedness, integrating with health and protection sectors, and promoting market-based service delivery. This approach aims to sustain and scale WASH improvements in an inclusive and contextually relevant way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this formative evaluation have been formulated based on the extensive findings, conclusions, and insights garnered throughout the evaluation process. Preliminary recommendations were initially discussed during follow-up virtual calls on the initial findings, conclusions, and recommendations with members of the Reference Group of Project Evaluation including key WASH team members of UNICEF Myanmar Office on February 18, 2025 followed another final validation meeting on April 2, 2025. These recommendations have been meticulously finalized and are presented in the table below. They have been designed to enhance the operational and strategic context of existing and future interventions, fostering community led WASH initiatives and resilient communities in Myanmar and other regions where UNICEF is actively engaged.

Recommendation	Constraints	Priority	Responsibility	Link with Question and Sections
1. Develop transition pathways from humanitarian to permanent WASH; and establish joint planning forums between emergency responders and development actors. Strengthen coordination between emergency response teams, development actors, and local governance structures to ensure that emergency WASH interventions lead to permanent, climate-resilient infrastructure. Establish clear post-emergency transition plans for infrastructure continuity.	Fragmented coordination between humanitarian and development partners. Lack of resources to upgrade temporary facilities in stable periods.	High	Humanitarian Agencies, Local Authorities, NGOs, WASH Committees	Relevance (E4) & Coherence (E11): Shows short-term borehole installations or shelter latrines not always converted into permanent solutions. Conclusion Sustainability: Bridging humanitarian responses with development planning ensures durable WASH outcomes.
2. Water and Sanitation Safety and Security Plans (WSSSPs) with climate risk integration Facilitate the development of village-level WSSSPs integrating climate risk assessments, flood-resistant infrastructure, and emergency water supply planning. Train WASH Committees and Water User Groups/Committees in DRR strategies, including climate risk adaptation and infrastructure protection and emergency contingency plans.	Limited climate adaptation funding at local levels. Weak technical capacity for DRR in communities.	High	UNICEF, Department of Public Health and Department of Rural Development, Local Authorities, NGOs including MHAA, WUC and Sanitation Committees	Relevance (E3) & Emergency Preparedness (E4): Found partial climate-resilient measures-inadequate flood preparedness and no formal contingency plans. Case Studies (Kokosu, Pone Tat)
3. Empower WUCs and WASH committees towards locally managed utility models. Strengthen community WASH governance towards locally managed utility models, where trained water entrepreneurs and committees take responsibility for service provision and financial sustainability under the leadership of local community groups.	Lack of financial literacy among committees. Difficulty enforcing tariffs or fees.	High	UNICEF, Local NGOs and Community Groups, Private Sector	Sustainability (E8 & E9): Mentions WUCs formed primarily around programme goals; no unified community planning. Limited financial oversight leads to maintenance gaps

Provide financial training, formalize roles, introduce tiered tariffs, maintenance funds, cost recovery models and financial planning for long-term operations.					
4.	Introduce sanitation microfinance and revolving maintenance funds. Introduce structured financing models such as community-managed water tariffs, sanitation credit schemes, and revolving WASH maintenance funds. Strengthen microfinance options for water and sanitation entrepreneurs, enabling them to expand operations and reinvest in service maintenance.	Low repayment capacity among ultra-poor households. Limited local financial management skills.	High	Microfinance Institutions (MFIs), Private Sector, Local entrepreneurs, Community WASH Committees	Barriers (E6) & Sustainability (E9): Households cite unaffordability of latrine construction and repairs. Some water committees manage small fees, but no long-term fund to cover major infrastructural costs.
5.	Establish affordable desludging services using local entrepreneurs Introduce affordable desludging services in flood-prone and high-density areas to prevent septic overflow, contamination, and long-term sanitation breakdowns. Provide mobile pit-emptying equipment and build regulation for safe sludge disposal. Promote market-based desludging solutions through local entrepreneurs.	Low demand or willingness-to-pay for desludging. Lack of regulation or infrastructure for safe sludge disposal.	High	Private Sector, Local Authorities, Department of Public Health and Department of Rural Development, NGOs, WASH Committees and UNICEF	Sustainability (E8 & E9): Sludge management is a critical gap. Latrines eventually fill up with no pit-emptying options, undermining ODF gains. Effectiveness (E5): Full sanitation access cannot be guaranteed if no reliable method exists to empty pits or treat sludge.
6.	Strengthen integration between WASH and child health/nutrition and child protection programmes Integrate WASH services within schools, clinics, , and maternal and child health (MCH) clinics to strengthen disease prevention and child health outcomes. Expand hygiene behaviour change campaigns targeting early childhood development centres, reinforcing lifelong hygiene habits.	Weak intersectoral coordination across sectors (WASH, health, education). Funding gaps for cross-sector activities.	High	Department of Public Health, Department of Basic Education, Department of Rural Development, Department of Social Welfare, Local Authorities, NGOs and UNICEF	Effectiveness (E5 & E7): Notes that communities benefit when hygiene promotion links to health/nutrition—but synergy is inconsistent.
7.	Promote household water tanks, rainwater harvesting, and greywater reuse Offer subsidies or in-kind contributions to incentivise adoption especially in drought prone areas.	High upfront costs for household water storage systems. Limited local expertise or incentives for greywater reuse initiatives.	High	Local Authorities, Department of Rural Development, NGOs, WASH Committees	Effectiveness (E5) & Barriers (E6): Case Study (Asi Gyi, Kokosu)
8.	Institutionalizing and Sustaining Behaviour Change and Hygiene Promotion Implement long-term BCC strategies, including hygiene reinforcement campaigns, school-led sanitation monitoring, and	Risk of slippage back to old practices if no follow-up. Soap cost or availability can hamper handwashing adherence.	Medium	Schools, Local Authorities, Department of Public Health, NGOs, Volunteers and UNICEF	Effectiveness (E5 & E7): Evidence of slippage in ODF status and handwashing practices if not continuously reinforced.

linking sanitation compliance with community incentives such as improved water access and infrastructure development funds for villages.				Effectiveness (E7) Community perceptions about water and sanitation services
9. Community Led Monitoring and Accountability Systems	mWater was discontinued, leading to delayed/inconsistent reporting. Volunteer turnover affects data continuity.	Medium	Local Authorities, Community WASH Committees, UNICEF, NGOs	Monitoring & Evaluation (under Sustainability section): Discontinuation of mWater system led to delayed reporting and actions in some cases.
10. Expanding Private Sector Engagement in Sanitation Supply Chains	Weak incentives for private sector in rural areas. Fragmented supply chains, no structured regulation.	Medium	Private Sector, NGOs, Business Associations, Local authorities, and UNICEF	Sustainability (E9 & E10): Private sector involvement is sporadic, particularly for desludging or supply chain development Case Studies (Asi Gyi, Pone Tat):
11. Build Technical and Leadership skills among women and youth.	Traditional gender norms; men dominate technical spheres. Limited training resources for youth/women skill building.	Medium	UNICEF, Local Governments, NGOs, WASH Groups and Private Sector	Cross-Cutting Themes (Gender & Inclusion, E12): Women and youth rarely lead technical or financial maintenance roles, though they are heavily involved in hygiene or administrative tasks. Case Studies (Ywar Mhat, Pone Tat)

Special Considerations for UNICEF Myanmar WASH Programming

Given the evolving operational landscape in Myanmar since the military takeover in February 2021, UNICEF's engagement in WASH programming has been significantly shaped by the constraints outlined in the UN Country Team (UNCT) UCAT guidelines, which restrict formal cooperation with the de facto authorities. In this fragile and restricted environment, community-led WASH initiatives have demonstrated measurable success in enhancing access, building resilience, and building local ownership, despite facing limitations in institutional engagement and long-term policy influence. The evaluation findings reveals the strong dependency on non-governmental partners and civil society actors for service delivery, particularly in conflict-affected and politically sensitive regions such as Magway and Ayeyarwady. The discontinuation of national-level digital monitoring systems, gaps in government coordination, and lack of formal grievance redress mechanisms highlight a systemic disconnect that places the sustainability of community gains at risk. Therefore, to safeguard the continuity of WASH services and consolidate

the positive outcomes achieved through local structures, it is imperative to take following consideration in view for ensuring the bridging required for the implementation of recommendations and continuation of services:

1. Develop a structured exit and transition strategy in collaboration with local organisations, outlining capacity milestones, community ownership benchmarks, and stepwise handover protocols to ensure service continuity where UNICEF phases out direct support.
2. Expand partnerships with local civil society networks (e.g., CSOs, women's associations, faith-based groups) to deliver essential WASH functions such as infrastructure monitoring, hygiene promotion, and water safety planning particularly in contexts where formal government engagement is restricted.
3. Establish a technical helpdesk mechanism to support implementing partners with real-time guidance on inclusive WASH design, FSM operation, and sustainability. This service could be hosted by a technical NGO or academic institution with remote or rotational delivery.
4. Launch a national WASH learning and innovation hub via a trusted NGO or academic partner to document practices, facilitate peer learning, and support evidence-based adaptation for climate resilient, DRR and community driven WASH.
5. Pilot a low-literacy, community-led water safety planning toolkit, implemented through township NGOs and WASH Committees to build capacity in basic water risk assessment, treatment, and ongoing quality control.
6. Advocate through humanitarian coordination mechanisms (e.g., WASH Cluster, ICCG) for informal accommodation of WASH activities led by non-governmental actors, including development of standardised agreements with traditional leaders and protocols for local access and approvals.

Annexure 1: Evaluation Matrix

OECD Criteria Evaluation Question	Sub-Questions	Data Sources / Approach	Data Collection Methods	Indicators / Success Standards
Relevance				
To what extent are the WASH interventions aligned with the needs of target populations in Magway and Ayeyarwady, particularly in terms of climate resilience, gender inclusiveness, and response to local socio-political and environmental challenges?	How well do the interventions address community needs in terms of climate resilience and socio-political challenges? Are there specific strategies for vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and persons with disabilities? How adaptable are interventions to changing community needs and local contexts over time?	Document review, Logical Framework Analysis, KIIs with UNICEF staff, FGDs with community members, gender and social inclusion analysis	Logical framework analysis, Document Review, KIIs, FGDs, Case Studies and Field Observations	Alignment of programme objectives with community needs and UNICEF goals; Perceptions of programme relevance among community members; Evidence of community and stakeholder involvement in planning and implementation; Level of engagement and satisfaction among local stakeholders
How well do the programme's design and objectives correspond with the broader goals of UNICEF for community-led, sustainable WASH services, and the specific needs of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and people with disabilities?	Do the programme's objectives align with UNICEF's strategic priorities? Are the needs of vulnerable groups effectively addressed through tailored approaches? To what extent does the programme promote community-led approaches that empower local stakeholders?	UNICEF's strategic documents, programme reports, KIIs with UNICEF staff, FGDs with community members, gender and social inclusion analysis	Document review, KIIs, FGDs and Field Observations	Degree of alignment between programme objectives and UNICEF strategic goals; Proportion of interventions tailored for vulnerable groups; Level of satisfaction among women and vulnerable groups
Were local partners, including communities and relevant stakeholders, adequately involved in the design and implementation phases? How effectively were community perceptions and feedback integrated into programme adjustments?	Were local communities consulted during programme design? Were their insights effectively integrated into programme adjustments? How transparent and inclusive were the decision-making processes?	Programme design documents, KIIs with stakeholders, FGDs with community members	Document review, KIIs, FGDs	Evidence of community and stakeholder involvement in planning and implementation; Level of community satisfaction with engagement processes; Proportion of feedback incorporated
To what extent has emergency preparedness been built into the design of the programme, in order to enhance community resilience? How do existing programmes contribute to emergency preparedness	What specific emergency preparedness measures have been included in the programme design? How has the programme contributed to increasing community knowledge and	FGDs, KIIs and document reviews including programme records and data.	FGDs with community leaders, KIIs with local authorities and UNICEF and other implement	Documented emergency preparedness plans Community training sessions recorded

in the target communities?	skills in emergency preparedness? What resources and partnerships have been mobilized to support emergency preparedness within the community?		ing partners, document analysis	
Effectiveness				
To what extent have the WASH programme objectives been achieved, particularly regarding improved access to safe drinking WASH practices, and enhanced climate resilience?	What is the level of access to safe drinking WASH practices compared to baseline? Has the programme enhanced community resilience to climate impacts? Are programme activities contributing to long-term health and hygiene improvements?	Document Analysis: Reviewing project documents, such as reports, progress summaries, and log frames, to evaluate the major achievements and alignment with the Log frame Interviews and Discussions: Interviewing project staff, stakeholders, and experts to gather information on the project's effectiveness and any changes made to achieve the desired results.	Programme monitoring data analysis, FGDs, KIIs	Percentage increase in safe water access; Reduction in open defecation rates; Adoption of hygiene practices; Level of improvement in resilience indicators
What are the main barriers affecting access to WASH services for the target populations? Are there specific solutions or adjustments that could overcome these challenges?	What challenges were identified in accessing WASH services? How were these barriers addressed? Are there alternative strategies that could improve service access in the future?	Interviewing project staff, stakeholders, and experts to gather information on the project's effectiveness and any changes made to achieve the desired results.	FGDs, KIIs and documents review including progress reports and Case Studies	Identification of barriers; Documented solutions and adjustments made to address challenges
From the community perspective, what are the perceived benefits and challenges associated with the programme, and how have these influenced outcomes?	What are the community-reported benefits of the programme? What challenges have communities encountered? How have community attitudes and practices toward WASH changed over time?	Capacity-Building Assessment: Evaluating the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts through interviews and reviewing training materials and reports.	FGDs, KIIs, Case Studies and progress reports.	Level of community satisfaction with programme benefits; Community-reported challenges and effects on outcomes
Sustainability				
To what extent has the programme built the capacity of local communities and other stakeholders to maintain WASH services sustainably, especially under climate-resilient frameworks? Are there any specific capacity gaps that need to be addressed and/or strengthened to further support community resilience?	Have training and capacity-building initiatives led to sustainable community-led WASH practices? Is there evidence of community ownership and engagement in managing WASH services? Are there specific skills or knowledge gaps that may hinder sustainability?	Capacity assessment reports, sustainability plan, training logs, FGDs, KIIs	KIIs, FGDs, document review, site visits	Number of community members trained; Presence of local management structures for WASH sustainability; Evidence of community engagement and ownership in WASH maintenance; Identification of skills and knowledge gaps

Are there adequate mechanisms, including funding, community engagement, and private-sector involvement, to support the long-term sustainability of the interventions?	Are there clear plans for long-term financial sustainability? Is private-sector engagement supporting WASH infrastructure maintenance? Are there exit strategies in place for external support?	FGDs with community members, KIIs with stakeholders, document review	KIIs, FGDs, sustainability plans	Existence of funding strategies for WASH sustainability; Engagement level of private-sector partners in WASH maintenance; Community support for sustainability mechanisms; Presence of exit strategies for external support
How effective have demand-generation activities been in fostering continued support and commitment for WASH services in target communities? Is there sufficient private sector engagement to support future sustainability	What types of demand generation activities were implemented? How did these activities impact community commitment to WASH practices? Are there indications of sustained behaviour change in communities? What forms of engagement have been established with the private sector to support the programme? How is private sector engagement integrated into the programme's long-term sustainability strategy?	Programme reports, FGDs with community members, KIIs with local government, NGOs and private sector	FGDs, KIIs, document analysis and any financial or economic data from the private sector and local communities	Level of community commitment to WASH maintenance; Community feedback on demand-generation activities; Evidence of continued adoption of WASH practices; Indicators of sustained behaviour change
Coherence				
How well do the WASH interventions align with other UNICEF programmes, government initiatives, and activities by development partners in Myanmar? Are there synergies that enhance the programme's impact?	Are WASH interventions aligned with other UNICEF programmes? Do interventions complement government and partner initiatives? Are there opportunities for greater synergy and alignment in future programmes?	Document review, KIIs with UNICEF, review of government policies, partner FGDs	Document review, KIIs	Degree of alignment between WASH interventions and other UNICEF and government programmes; Identification of complementary actions and synergies with other stakeholders; Opportunities identified for future synergy
Are there clear and active coordination mechanisms among key stakeholders, and how effectively are these applied at national and sub-national levels?	How frequently do stakeholders coordinate on programme activities? Are there clear mechanisms for joint decision-making and implementation? Are any improvements needed in coordination approaches?	KIIs with UNICEF staff, local authorities, partner NGOs, coordination reports	KIIs, FGDs, document review	Existence of coordination platforms; Frequency and effectiveness of coordination meetings; Stakeholder satisfaction with coordination mechanisms; Recommendations for improved coordination

To what extent have partners' and stakeholders' perspectives been integrated into programme prioritization and adjustments?	Were partner perspectives actively sought in programme adjustments? How well were stakeholder insights reflected in programme adaptations? Do partners feel that their contributions are valued and integrated?	KIIs with partners, FGDs with community representatives	KIIs, FGDs	Evidence of stakeholder input in programme planning; Partner satisfaction with level of collaboration; Partner feedback on their perceived value in the programme
Cross-Cutting Themes: Climate Change, Gender, and Human Rights				
To what extent does the programme address the specific needs of women, children, and persons with disabilities? Are there additional barriers or considerations from a gender or disability perspective including adolescent and elderly that need to be addressed?	Does the programme ensure equitable access for women, children, and persons with disabilities? What barriers exist for these groups? Are there additional support mechanisms in place to address these barriers?	Gender and social inclusion analysis, FGDs, KIIs with community and UNICEF	FGDs, KIIs	Accessibility of facilities for women, children, and persons with disabilities; Satisfaction levels among vulnerable groups; Evidence of targeted support for vulnerable populations; Presence of mechanisms to address identified barriers
How well does the programme promote equitable access and uphold human rights principles, ensuring inclusion and responsiveness to vulnerable groups?	Does the programme uphold equity and inclusion standards in all its activities? How are human rights principles embedded within programme activities? What mechanisms exist to monitor and address inclusion gaps?	Document review, FGDs, KIIs with beneficiaries	FGDs, KIIs, site visits	Evidence of inclusive WASH practices; Perceptions of safety and equity among community members; Compliance with human rights principles in programme delivery; Presence of mechanisms to monitor and address inclusion gaps
How effectively has the programme integrated climate adaptation strategies to enhance resilience in WASH practices in addition to special measure for women, persons with disabilities, etc.?	Are climate-resilient infrastructure and practices in place? Have communities received training in climate adaptation? Is there evidence of improved resilience to climate risks?	Climate resilience assessment, programme reports, KIIs	Document review, KIIs, site observations	Presence of climate-resilient infrastructure; Community training on climate adaptation; Number of climate-resilient practices adopted by communities; Evidence of enhanced resilience

Annexure 2: List of Key Documents

- Project Documents of AWSA II extension 2021-22, and 2022-23,
- AWP 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024
- SWA-II logical framework (log frame),
- Risk Matrix,
- WASH Disability and Gender Checklist,
- Knowledge Management Tracker Myanmar
- GESI Assessment Report
- Sanitation Market Survey
- UNICEF Myanmar 2020 Annual WASH Report,
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Annexure 3: Checklist for KIIs

Common Questions for All KIIs

Relevance

- How well do the WASH interventions address the specific cultural and socio-economic needs of the community? Are there areas that could be better tailored to local contexts?
- In what ways has community feedback influenced the design and delivery of WASH services? What could be done to enhance this process in future programmes?
- Are the facilities and services aligned with local priorities, including the needs of marginalized groups? What adjustments would improve alignment?

Effectiveness

- What specific changes in community health and hygiene practices can you attribute to the WASH programme? Are there ongoing challenges that need to be addressed?
- How do community members perceive the reliability and quality of the WASH services? Are there areas where expectations were not met?
- How effectively has the programme addressed gender-specific needs, including menstrual hygiene management? Are there gaps that still need to be resolved?
- In what ways has the programme successfully coordinated with local authorities and NGOs? Are there opportunities to strengthen partnerships?
- What innovative practices or technologies introduced in the programme have worked well, and which could be improved?
- How the M&E of the programme intervention was conducted and reported. What is key learning and what should be done differently in future.

Sustainability

- Are the maintenance systems in place sufficient to keep the facilities functional over time? What additional measures or resources might be needed?
- How do community members feel about their ability to manage the facilities independently? Are there specific areas where they feel unprepared or unsupported?
- Are financial systems, such as user fees or community funding, effective in supporting ongoing maintenance? What improvements could ensure long-term viability?

Coherence

- How well do the WASH interventions align with national policies and local development priorities, such as climate resilience and gender equity? Please share the examples and suggestion for improvement.
- How effectively were partnerships with local authorities, NGOs, and other sectors (e.g., health, education) coordinated to ensure complementary efforts and avoid duplication? What additional linkages should be established?
- How well do the WASH interventions complement or build on other ongoing community development programmes and initiatives in the region?

Climate Resilience

- How well have the facilities adapted to climate challenges like droughts or floods? Are there examples of successful resilience strategies?
- In what ways has the programme supported the community to anticipate and adapt to climate-related risks? What additional resources or strategies are needed?

- Have water sources been safeguarded against contamination or depletion due to climate events? What measures could enhance water security?
- What types of measures have been adopted for climate resilient sanitation interventions? What are success and barriers and suggest for innovation?

Inclusivity and Community Engagement

- How accessible are the facilities for vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, women, children, and the elderly? Are there specific barriers that still exist?
- How has the programme encouraged the participation of women and youth in decision-making processes? Are there examples of successes or missed opportunities?
- What methods were used to mobilize the community for WASH activities? Which methods were most effective, and what could be improved?

Specific Questions for Each KII Group

UNICEF Staff (WASH Programme Manager, M&E Specialist, etc.)

- How well do the WASH interventions address community needs and UNICEF's objectives for climate-resilient WASH services? What has worked, and where do gaps remain?
- Were resources, including funds and staff, allocated effectively across programme components? What were the successes, and were there any inefficiencies?
- How the elements of climate resilience for WASH were identified? Any risk assessment conducted and were communities involved?
- What steps are in place to ensure the long-term functionality of WASH facilities, especially during extreme climate conditions? Are there potential challenges in maintaining sustainability?
- How was the experience of digitalized M&E and record keeping worked? What were key challenges on online data collection and collation? How this should be improved in the future?

Local Government Officials (Public Health, Water and Sanitation Departments)

- How does the WASH programme align with local government priorities for public health and climate resilience? What aspects align well, and are there areas where alignment could improve?
- What role does the government play in supporting the long-term sustainability of these services? Are there successes, or are there areas where government involvement could be strengthened?
- How prepared is the local government to manage WASH facilities independently during extreme weather events? What support would enhance this readiness?

Local NGO Implementing Partners

- How effective has the programme's training and support been for health assistants and NGO workers in promoting climate-resilient and inclusive WASH practices? What aspects have been beneficial, and where is there room for improvement?
- How responsive have communities been to the programme's training and capacity-building activities? What successes have you seen in community engagement, and what challenges remain?
- How well does the WASH programme align with other health and climate resilience initiatives in the area? Are there synergies that have enhanced impact, or are there gaps that need addressing?

Private Sector Contractors and Sanitation Entrepreneurs

- What challenges and successes have you encountered in constructing climate-resilient and inclusive WASH infrastructure? How well do you feel the infrastructure meets community needs?
- Are the materials used for WASH facilities durable and appropriate for the local climate? What has worked well in terms of material choice, and where could improvements be made?

- How effectively do partnerships with NGOs, government bodies, and local communities support the maintenance and sustainability of WASH facilities? What has strengthened these partnerships, and what could enhance them further?

Community Leaders and Water User Association

- How actively involved are community leaders and elders in managing WASH facilities? Are there successes in fostering community ownership, and are there challenges in ensuring full engagement?
- What plans are in place to support the long-term maintenance and sustainability of WASH facilities? How effective are these plans, and what potential gaps might hinder sustainability?
- How well do you think the WASH facilities handle climate-related challenges, such as seasonal floods or water shortages? What aspects of the facilities have proven resilient, and where could they be strengthened?

Annexure 4: Checklist for FGDs

Common Questions for All FGDs.

Relevance

- Do the WASH facilities meet your community's water and sanitation needs? What aspects of the facilities work well? What improvements are still needed?
- Were community members involved in planning and deciding where the facilities should be built? Do you think the involvement was enough? How could the planning process be improved?
- Do the facilities meet the needs of everyone, including women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities? Are there any groups whose needs were not fully considered?

Effectiveness

- How well are the water and sanitation facilities working? What aspects of the service in quantity and quality are successful, and what problems or limitations do you see?
- Have hygiene practices, like handwashing, and personal hygiene improved since the programme started? Are these improvements consistent, or are there still challenges?
- How has access to clean water and sanitation improved health and safety in your community? Are there specific health benefits, or are there areas where more support is needed?

Sustainability

- How were you involved in the planning and implementation of climate resilient WASH services. What were innovations and what are demerits?
- How are community members involved in maintaining the facilities? Have you or others received any training or support? Do you think this is enough for long-term sustainability, or are there gaps?
- What systems or funding are in place to keep the facilities running? Are these effective, or do you see potential problems in the future?
- Are essential items like soap and sanitation materials always available? Where are they usually located? If not, what challenges cause this, and what could improve the situation?

Climate Resilience

- How well do the facilities perform during extreme weather events, like floods or droughts? What measures have been successful in maintaining functionality, and what problems remain?
- Has the programme helped your community prepare for climate-related challenges, such as water scarcity or contamination after floods? Are there areas where you feel more support or resources needed?
- Have the communities equipped with emergency preparedness plans especially for climate induced hazards? What types of local emergency plan and early warning systems exist. What improvements noted after UNICEF intervention.

Community Involvement

- How would you describe your sense of ownership over the WASH facilities? Are there community-led initiatives to manage or maintain these facilities, and do they seem effective or in need of improvement?
- How often communities meet to discuss climate resilient WASH issues and services in their communities. What type of record keeping or documentation maintained?

Additional Questions for Each FGD Group

Community Members (Men, Women, and General Community)

- How prepared do you think the community is to maintain these facilities on its own if external support were to end? Are there strengths that can support this independence, or are there challenges that might prevent it?
- What types of training or knowledge have you received to help protect water sources, sanitation facilities or adapt hygiene practices during extreme weather conditions? Has this training been useful, or are there areas where more guidance is needed?
- Are there any specific barriers preventing certain groups, like women, children, or the elderly, from fully benefiting from the WASH facilities? What efforts have been made to address these barriers, and where do you see room for improvement?
- What was the role of volunteers in your communities. What changes are required in their role in future interventions.
- What type of knowledge and services for Menstrual Hygiene Management have been contributed by the programme. What were weak areas and how these could be improved?

Youth and Children

- How well do these facilities meet the specific needs of young people, especially in places like schools or community centres? Are there successes you would highlight, as well as any problems that still need addressing?
- What have you learned about hygiene practices, like handwashing, through this programme? Have these lessons made a difference, and are there any challenges to following these practices regularly?
- What do you know about climate change in the context of WASH, and which areas you would like to learn about climate change.
- How do young people contribute to keeping these facilities clean and well-maintained? Are these contributions effective, or could young people play a bigger role in upkeep?

Vulnerable Groups (Elderly and Persons with Disabilities)

- How accessible and easy to use are the facilities for elderly individuals and people with disabilities? What features are particularly helpful, and what difficulties do you encounter?
- How has your ability to access clean water and sanitation been affected by extreme weather conditions? Have any adaptations been made for these circumstances, or are there ongoing barriers?
- What additional changes would make these facilities safer and more accessible for you or others with similar needs? Have past improvements addressed your needs, or are further modifications necessary?

Water User Committees and Local Leaders

- How do community contributions, like fees or volunteer hours, support the maintenance of these facilities? Are these contributions effective, or do you face any issues in collecting or managing them?
- How prepared do committee members feel to manage and repair the WASH facilities? What types of training have been successful, and are there additional resources needed?
- What steps have been taken to make the facilities resilient to extreme weather? Are these measures proving successful, or are there other improvements needed?

Volunteers

- What challenges have you encountered in promoting hygiene practices and climate awareness in the community? Are there successes in these efforts, and what barriers still exist?
- How well do you think the programme addresses the community's climate-related health risks, such as waterborne diseases during floods? Are there particular strengths or weaknesses in this approach?
- How has the programme improved access to WASH facilities for vulnerable groups? What further support do you think is needed to make these services more inclusive and accessible?

Annexure 5 A: Checklist for Field Observation

Field Observation Checklist with a Scoring Sheet designed to evaluate various aspects of community WASH interventions in Myanmar. Each item is scored on a 3-point scale, with 3 = Fully Meets Criteria, 2 = Partially Meets Criteria, and 1 = Does Not Meet Criteria. The scoring sheet provides a quick, quantifiable assessment, helping evaluators identify strengths and areas needing improvement.

Observation Area	Criteria	Score (1 - 3)
1. WASH Infrastructure and Facilities		
1.1 Water Source	Type and condition of water source (e.g., clean, well-maintained, safe from contamination)	
	Accessibility for all community members, including people with disabilities	
	Consistency of water availability and reliability	
1.2 Sanitation Facilities	Condition and cleanliness of toilets/latrines	
	Presence of separate, private facilities for men and women	
	Adaptations for people with disabilities (e.g., ramps, handrails)	
1.3 Handwashing Stations	Availability and location of handwashing stations near latrines and other high-use areas	
	Presence of soap or ash for handwashing	
	Cleanliness and usability of handwashing facilities	
2. Community Engagement and Ownership		
2.1 Local Involvement	Evidence of community-led committees or groups managing WASH facilities	
	Visible signs of community ownership, such as local maintenance efforts	
2.2 Maintenance Practices	Regular maintenance routines observed (e.g., scheduled cleaning, repairs)	
	Availability of maintenance tools and materials on-site	
3. Climate Resilience		
3.1 Adaptations for Extreme Weather	Presence of structural adaptations to protect against floods, droughts, or extreme weather	
	Energy efficient, solarization, gravity led, filtration, etc.	
3.2 Location and Site Conditions	WASH facilities are located away from flood-prone areas or other climate risks	
3.3 Community Preparedness	Visible resources or signs for emergency use during climate events	
4. Inclusivity and Accessibility		
4.1 Facility Design	Facilities designed for inclusivity, accommodating all community members	
	Access pathways and ramps for people with mobility challenges	
4.2 Signage and Privacy	Presence of signage indicating separate facilities for men, women, and children	
	Private and secure areas for vulnerable groups, especially women and girls	
5. Functionality and Usability		
5.1 Reliability of Water Supply and Sanitation	Consistent water availability and quality indicators (e.g., clarity, Odor)	
	Suitability of sanitation facilities for regular use by the community	
5.2 Availability of Hygiene Materials	Presence of soap, hand sanitiser, or ash at handwashing stations	
	Availability of menstrual hygiene products in facilities for women and girls	
6. Hygiene and Behavioural Change		
6.1 Hygiene Promotion Materials	Presence of posters or materials promoting hygiene practices	
6.2 Behavioural Observations	Evidence of community members practicing handwashing after using sanitation facilities	

Annexure 5 B: Scored Field Observation

1. WASH Infrastructure and Facilities		Thon Dat	Kokkosu	Asi Gyi	Kan Kone	Pone Tat	Kyun Pin Sin	Pauk Khone	Ku To (N)	Ywar Mhyat	Min Te
1.1 Water Source	Type and condition of water source (e.g., clean, well-maintained, safe from contamination)					2	3	3	2	3	3
	Accessibility for all community members, including people with disabilities					3	2	3	1	3	3
	Consistency of water availability and reliability	1	3	2	1	3	3	3	1	3	3
1.2 Sanitation Facilities	Condition and cleanliness of toilets/latrines					2	2	3	1	2	2
	Presence of separate, private facilities for men and women					1	1	1	1	1	1
	Adaptations for people with disabilities (e.g., ramps, handrails)		3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
1.3 Handwashing Stations	Availability and location of handwashing stations near latrines and other high-use areas	1				1	1	1	1	1	1
	Presence of soap or ash for handwashing	2				3	3	3	2	2	2
	Cleanliness and usability of handwashing facilities	1	2	1	2	2	3		2		2
2. Community Engagement and Ownership											
2.1 Local Involvement	Evidence of community-led committees or groups managing WASH facilities	2		1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
	Visible signs of community ownership, such as local maintenance efforts	1	2			2	2	2	1	2	1
2.2 Maintenance Practices	Regular maintenance routines observed (e.g., scheduled cleaning, repairs)	1	2	2		2	1	2	1	1	1
	Availability of maintenance tools and materials on-site	1				1	1	2		1	1
3. Climate Resilience											
3.1 Adaptations for Extreme Weather	Presence or structural adaptations to protect against floods, droughts, or extreme	1	3	1		1	2	2	1	2	2
	Energy efficient, solarisation, gravity fed, filtration, etc.	2	3		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.2 Location and Site Conditions	WASH facilities are located away from flood-prone areas or other climate risks	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.3 Community Preparedness	Visible resources or signs for emergency use during climate	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4. Inclusivity and Accessibility											
4.1 Facility Design	Facilities designed for inclusivity, accommodating all community members	1	3	1		2	1	1	1	1	1
	Access pathways and ramps for people with mobility challenges	1	2		2	1	1	1	1	1	1
4.2 Signage and Privacy	Presence of signage indicating separate facilities for men, women, and children	1	1	2		1	1	1	1	1	1
	Private and secure areas for vulnerable groups, especially women and girls	1	3		2	2	2	2	2	2	2
5. Functionality and Usability											
5.1 Reliability of Water Supply and Sanitation	Consistent water availability and quality indicators (e.g., clarity, Odor)	1	3	2		3	3	3	2	3	3
	Suitability of sanitation facilities for regular use by the community		1		1	2	2	3	2	2	2
5.2 Availability of Hygiene Materials	Presence of soap, hand sanitizer, or ash at handwashing stations	1				3	3	3	1	2	2
	Availability of menstrual hygiene products in facilities for women and girls	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1
6. Hygiene and Behavioural Change											
6.1 Hygiene Promotion Materials	Presence of posters or materials promoting hygiene practices	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6.2 Behavioural Observations	Evidence of community members practicing handwashing after using sanitation facilities	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Annexure 6: Checklist for Case Studies

Key Areas	Description
1.Meeting Community Needs	Needs Alignment: How well do WASH interventions address community-specific needs, including those of vulnerable groups? Was community input considered in the planning and prioritization of WASH services? Accessibility and Inclusivity: Are WASH facilities accessible for all, including women, children, and people with disabilities? Do the facilities provide privacy and safety for women and girls? Local Adaptation: How well do interventions fit the local environmental and socio-political context?
2. Resilience	Climate Resilience: Are WASH facilities designed to withstand local climate challenges (e.g., floods, droughts)? Are community members trained to adapt WASH practices during extreme weather events? Adaptability: How adaptable are WASH services to changing climate conditions and community needs?
3. Sustainability	Community Ownership: To what extent have community members been trained to manage and maintain WASH facilities? Are there established community committees to oversee WASH services? Maintenance and Funding: Are financial mechanisms in place to support ongoing maintenance? Is there local or private sector involvement in sustaining WASH infrastructure? Exit Strategy: Is there a clear plan for communities to continue managing WASH services independently?
4. Impact	Health and Hygiene: What improvements in health and hygiene practices are observed since the programme began? Has there been a reduction in waterborne diseases or open defecation? Community Empowerment: How has the programme influenced community attitudes and roles, especially for women and youth, in WASH management? Economic and Environmental Impact: Has the programme reduced time spent on water collection or improved economic conditions? Are there positive environmental changes, such as reduced contamination of water sources? Equity: Has the programme ensured equitable access for all community members, especially vulnerable groups?
5.Community Feedback and Perceptions	Satisfaction and Benefits: How do community members perceive the benefits of the WASH interventions? Challenges and Suggestions: What challenges remain, and what improvements do community members suggest? Personal Stories: Gather testimonials or narratives illustrating the impact of the WASH programme on individuals and households.
6.Documentation and Visual Evidence	Photographs: Capture images of WASH facilities, climate-resilient features, and inclusive adaptations. Contextual Documentation: Provide visual context of the surrounding environment to highlight the integration of WASH facilities with local climate challenges

Annexure 7: Ethical Clearance Letter



Research Ethics Approval

5 December 2024

Niaz Ullah Khan, MSc
Consultant, Team Leader
AWF Pvt Ltd. Office 21-22
Third Floor, Rehmat Mall G-11 Markaz
Islamabad Pakistan 44000

RE: Ethics Review Board findings for: *Formative Evaluation of Community Led Water and Sanitation Interventions in Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions Myanmar* (HML IRB Review 1004MYAN24)

Dear Niaz Ullah Khan,

Protocols for the protection of human subjects in the above study were assessed through a research ethics review by HML Institutional Review Board (IRB) on 25 November – 05 December 2024. This study's human subjects' protection protocols, as stated in the materials submitted, received **ethics review approval**.

You and your project staff remain responsible for ensuring compliance with HML IRB's determinations. Those responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring prompt reporting to HML IRB of proposed changes in this study's design, risks, consent, or other human protection protocols and providing copies of any revised materials;
- conducting the research activity in accordance with the terms of the IRB approval until any proposed changes have been reviewed and approved by the IRB, except when necessary to mitigate hazards to subjects;
- promptly reporting any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others in the course of this study;
- notifying HML IRB when your study is completed.

HML IRB is authorized by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Research Protections (IRB #1211, IORG #850, FWA #1102).

Sincerely,

D. Michael Anderson, Ph.D., MPH
Chair & Human Subjects Protections Director, HML IRB

cc: Peter Leth, Penelope Lantz, JD

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Annexure 8: Sampled Villages and Recruitment of Participants

Section 1: List of Sampled Villages and Replacement Options

Region	First Option				Second Option	
	Village Tract	Village	Rationale	Total	Village Tract	Village
Magway	Min Ywa	Pon Tat	SPWS -Health & School	1	Kun Ohn	Kun Ohn (N)
Chauk	Ywar Ma	Ywar Ma	SPWS- health, etc	1	Than Bo	Kan Ye Gyi(S)
Pwintphyu	Kywe Ta Ga	Pya Pin	Water Only	1		
	Kywe Ta Kar	Kywe Ta Kar	Sanitation	1	Ah Nauk Kaing	San Pya
	Meza Li	Htu Pauk	Sanitation	1		
Salin	Lin Zin (Nyaung)	Tha Yet Kone	Sanitation	1	Lin Zin (Nyaung)	Shan Su
	Gway Pin Zin	Lay	Sanitation	1	Gway Pin Zin	Gway Pin Zin
	Tha Yet Taw	War Yon Su	Sanitation	1	Tha Yet Taw	Lel Thar
Bogalay	Set San	Asi Gyi	SPWS Water and Sanitation	1	Thon Dat	Thon Dat
	Thon Dat	Kokkosu	Both	1		
	Su Kyun	La Waing Kyun (W)	Water Only	1	Chaung Bye' Gyi	Pauk Sein Kya
	Haing Si	Kan Kone (Haing Si)	Sanitation	1	Haing Si	Phoe Shwe Lone
Total				12		

Section 2: Recruitment Criterion for Participants of FGDs and Case Studies

Recruitment Process: To maintain confidentiality, initial contact with potential participants should be conducted through trusted community representatives or other indirect means to prevent public identification. Communication should be done privately, using secure channels such as one-on-one meetings or discreet messaging, to ensure participants are not exposed within their communities. Additionally, participants should be informed that their involvement is voluntary, and their personal information will be handled confidentially at all stages of the evaluation. Field teams should receive targeted training on maintaining confidentiality during recruitment and engaging participants discreetly.

Participant Categories and Distribution	Selection Criterion
Community Members	
Men FGDs	Adult men from various socioeconomic backgrounds, including those who use the WASH facilities and those involved in their maintenance
Women 2 FGDs	Adult women, ensuring representation of different age groups and economic statuses, including those responsible for household water and sanitation management
Vulnerable Groups	
Persons with Disabilities 1-2 FGDs	Individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities to understand their specific challenges and needs related to WASH services
Elderly 1-2 FGDs	Elderly community members to capture their experiences and any age-related challenges in accessing WASH services
Youth and Children 2 FGDs	School-aged children and adolescents who use the WASH facilities, ensuring a mix of boys and girls- not less than 14 years

Total Sample Size for Case Studies 3-5 case studies of selected communities:

<i>Selection Criteria</i>	<i>Key Consideration</i>
<i>Geographic Diversity</i>	Select communities from both urban and rural areas in the Magway and Ayeyarwady regions.
<i>Intervention Variability</i>	Choose communities with varying levels of intervention complexity (e.g., different types of water supply systems, sanitation facilities, and hygiene promotion activities).
<i>Performance Outcomes</i>	Include communities with both high and low performance outcomes to identify best practices and areas needing improvement.

Annexure 9: Consent Form*

Consent Form for FGDs

*These will be translated into Burmese language

NOTE FOR FACILITATOR

REMEMBER!

- **CONFIDENTIALITY** – 1) tell participants they are NOT being asked to share information about individual issues/cases; 2) try to find a quiet/private place to have the discussion
- **INFORMED CONSENT** – 1) explain the purpose of the activity; 2) participation is in group and voluntary
- **SAFETY** – if you feel any staff conducting this activity or participants may be at risk, do not proceed with the activity. When probing, no information linking to individual survivors should be asked.
- **Conclusion:** At the end of this discussion, thank the participants for their participation. Remind them to contact relevant agencies if they have any concerns.

Date: _____ Location of FGD: _____

Facilitator: _____ Note Taker: _____ Translator (if applicable): _____

Time FGD started: _____ Time FGD ended: _____

Translation used: Yes/ No

If yes, the translation was from _____ to _____

Sex of FGD participants: Female/ Male

Age of FGD participants: 18-19 years/ 20-30 years/ 30-40 years/ Over 40 years

List Other Key Demographics (caretakers, participants with physical or intellectual disabilities, etc.)

CONSENT FORM

Hello, my name is _____, and I am working as team member of Formative Evaluation of Community Led Water and Sanitation Interventions in Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions supported by UNICEF. We would very much appreciate your participation in this evaluation. Your participation involves a Focus Group Discussion about your experiences and learning about access to water, sanitation and hygiene services, including the resilience, maintenance and management of services in collaboration with local authorities, NGOs and private entities in your areas. This discussion would last for approximately 45 minutes or less. Please understand that your participation is voluntary, and you can choose to not to answer any question or not to participate at any time. You can also withdraw from the discussion at any time, without any consequences. Your decision about whether to participate in this study or to answer any specific questions will in no way affect any services that you receive. If you do choose to participate, please answer the questions honestly and openly, so that we can understand your experience and find out what you really think and have experienced.

The information you provide will be strictly confidential and never connected to you. Other people will not know if you are in this study or what you have said. We will put information we learn from you together with information we learn from other people in the evaluation. No one will be able to tell what information came from you. Please do not share what is discussed here with anyone. When we tell other people about this evaluation, we will never use your name, and no one will ever know what answers you gave. Only a few researchers will have access to this information, and all information will be stored safely and destroyed under the care of the lead evaluator. The discussions will be recorded in written form with your consent for record-keeping purposes but will be discarded later. The information provided by you will not be misused in any form or way. As a participant in this focus group discussion, we ask you to respect the privacy of others and keep all information shared here confidential. Please do not share what you hear in this discussion with anyone outside the group

With your consent, pictures may be taken during the discussion to visually document key aspects of the evaluation. These pictures may be included in the final evaluation report or related presentations to provide evidence of community participation and infrastructure context. However, any pictures taken will be handled with the utmost care to ensure privacy and will not include identifiable images of participants without explicit consent. If pictures

are used, they will be anonymized, and no personal or sensitive information will be linked to them. Pictures that are not used for reporting purposes will be securely stored and destroyed upon completion of the evaluation.

Please be assured that the provided information (such as pictures, written recordings, etc.) will not be misused in any way and is being collected only for record-keeping and evidence purposes. Your participation in this discussion will not involve any monetary or other form of compensation, and there will be no associated risks.

This evaluation is funded by UNICEF. This means that the team is being paid by the sponsor for doing the evaluation. The researchers do not, however, have a direct financial interest in the sponsor or in the final results of the evaluation. This evaluation process is being reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact: Ms. Win Ei Mon Khine on 09798 482 259 or by email to: winei07@gmail.com

Before you say yes or no to being in this study, we will answer any questions you have.

I understand the purpose of this Focus Group Discussion. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost:

- If you consent to the written recording of the Focus Group Discussion, please V the box.
- If you consent to sharing of the Focus Group Discussion to UNICEF, please V the box.
- If you consent to taking and using your pictures (for Evaluation Report) during the Focus Group Discussion, please V the box.

Signature:

Date:

CONSENT FORM

(To be signed by the parents/ guardians of the participants under the age of 18 years)

Hello, my name is _____, and I am working as team member of Formative Evaluation of Community Led Water and Sanitation Interventions in Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions supported by UNICEF. We would very much appreciate the participation of your child in this evaluation. This participation involves a Focus Group Discussion about child's experiences and learning about access to water, sanitation and hygiene services, including the resilience, maintenance and management of services in collaboration with local authorities, NGOs and private entities in your areas. This discussion would last for approximately 45 minutes or less. We would like to obtain your consent for the participation of your child(s) in this discussion. Please understand that their participation is voluntary, and they can choose not to answer any question or not to participate at any time. They can also withdraw from the discussion at any time, without any consequences. Their decision about whether to participate in this study or to answer any specific questions will in no way affect any services that you receive.

The information they provide will be strictly confidential. We will put information we learn from your child together with information we learn from other people in the evaluation. No one will be able to tell what information came from them. Please do not ask from them what was discussed in the discussion. When we tell other people about this evaluation, we will never use names, and no one will ever know what answers your child(s) gave. Only a few researchers will have access to this information, and all information will be stored safely and destroyed under the care of the lead evaluator. The discussions will be recorded in written form with you and your child(s) consent for record-keeping purposes but will be discarded later. The information provided by your child will not be misused in any form or way. The information provided by you will not be misused in any form or way. As a participant in this focus group discussion, we ask you to respect the privacy of others and keep all information shared here confidential. Please do not share what you hear in this discussion with anyone outside the group

With your consent, pictures may be taken during the discussion to visually document key aspects of the evaluation. These pictures may be included in the final evaluation report or related presentations to provide evidence of community participation and infrastructure context. However, any pictures taken will be handled with the utmost care to ensure privacy and will not include identifiable images of participants without explicit consent. If pictures are used, they will be anonymized, and no personal or sensitive information will be linked to them. Pictures that are not used for reporting purposes will be securely stored and destroyed upon completion of the evaluation.

Please be assured that the provided information (such as pictures, written recordings, etc.) will not be misused in any way and is being collected only for record-keeping and evidence purposes. Your participation in this discussion will not involve any monetary or other form of compensation, and there will be no associated risks.

This evaluation is funded by UNICEF. This means that the team is being paid by the sponsor for doing the evaluation. The researchers do not, however, have a direct financial interest in the sponsor or in the final results of the evaluation. This evaluation process is being reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact: Ms. Win Ei Mon Khine on 09798 482 259 or by email to: winei07@gmail.com

Before you say yes or no to being in this study, we will answer any questions you have.

I understand the purpose of this Focus Group Discussion. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost:

- If you consent to the written recording of the Focus Group Discussion, please V the box. ☐
- If you consent to sharing of the Focus Group Discussion to UNICEF, please V the box. ☐
- If you consent to taking and using pictures of your child (for Evaluation Report) during the Focus Group Discussion, please V the box. ☐

Signature:

Date:

Please provide the initial of your child's name:

ASSENT FORM

(To be signed by participants under the age of 18 years)

Hello, my name is _____, and I am working as team member of Formative Evaluation of Community Led Water and Sanitation Interventions in Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions supported by UNICEF. We would very much appreciate your participation in this evaluation. Your participation involves a Focus Group Discussion about your experiences and learning about access to water, sanitation and hygiene services, including the resilience, maintenance and management of services in collaboration with local authorities, NGOs and private entities in your areas. This discussion would last for approximately 45 minutes or less. Please understand that your participation is voluntary, and you can choose to not to answer any question or not to participate at any time. You can also withdraw from the discussion at any time, without any consequences. Your decision about whether to participate in this study or to answer any specific questions will in no way affect any services that you receive. If you do choose to participate, please answer the questions honestly and openly, so that we can understand your experience and find out what you really think and have experienced.

The information you provide will be strictly confidential and never connected to you. Other people will not know if you are in this study or what you have said. We will put information we learn from you together with information we learn from other people in the evaluation. No one will be able to tell what information came from you. When we tell other people about this evaluation, we will never use your name, and no one will ever know what answers

you gave. Only a few researchers will have access to this information, and all information will be stored safely and destroyed under the care of the lead evaluator. The discussions will be recorded in written form with your consent for record-keeping purposes but will be discarded later. The information provided by you will not be misused in any form or way. As a participant in this focus group discussion, we ask you to respect the privacy of others and keep all information shared here confidential. Please do not share what you hear in this discussion with anyone outside the group

With your consent, pictures may be taken during the discussion to visually document key aspects of the evaluation. These pictures may be included in the final evaluation report or related presentations to provide evidence of community participation and infrastructure context. However, any pictures taken will be handled with the utmost care to ensure privacy and will not include identifiable images of participants without explicit consent. If pictures are used, they will be anonymized, and no personal or sensitive information will be linked to them. Pictures that are not used for reporting purposes will be securely stored and destroyed upon completion of the evaluation. Please be assured that the provided information (such as pictures, written recordings etc.) will not be misused in any way and is only being collected for record keeping and evidence purposes. With your consent, your pictures might be used in the Evaluation Report. Your participation in this discussion will not involve any monetary or other form of compensation, and there will be no associated risks. Please be assured that your parent/ guardian has also signed a consent form on your behalf. However, you can still refuse to participate in this study.

This evaluation is funded by UNICEF. This means that the team is being paid by the sponsor for doing the evaluation. The researchers do not, however, have a direct financial interest in the sponsor or in the final results of the evaluation. This evaluation process is being reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact: Ms. Win Ei Mon Khine on 09798 482 259 or by email to: winei07@gmail.com

Before you say yes or no to being in this study, we will answer any questions you have.

I understand the purpose of this Focus Group Discussion. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost:

- If you consent to the written recording of the Focus Group Discussion, please ✓ the box. ☐
- If you consent to sharing of the Focus Group Discussion with UNICEF, please ✓ the box. ☐
- If you consent to taking and sharing your pictures (for Evaluation Report) during the Focus Group Discussion, please ✓ the box. ☐

Signature:

Date:

CONTACT CARD

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact:

Name: Ms Win Ei Mon Khine

Organization: Local Consultant

Phone Number: 09798 482 259

Email: winei07@gmail.com

Consent Form Acknowledgment:

I, Ms Win Ei Mon Khine, acknowledge that the information provided above is accurate and complete. I understand that this contact card will be used for official communication related to the evaluation project and will be kept confidential.

Evaluator's Signature: _____. Date: _____

Consent Form – Key Informant Interview (KII)

*These will be translated into Burmese language

Hello, my name is _____, and I am part of the team conducting the formative evaluation of Community-Led WASH interventions in the Magway and Ayeyarwady regions, supported by UNICEF.

We would appreciate your participation in this evaluation. The purpose of this interview is to gather insights and information on your experiences, perspectives, and knowledge regarding the implementation, accessibility, and sustainability of WASH services in your area. The interview is expected to last approximately 45 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the interview at any time without any consequences. Your decision to participate or withdraw will not affect any current or future services or opportunities.

With your consent, Your designation may be mentioned in the evaluation report when quoting your inputs. The interview will be recorded to ensure accuracy and for analysis purposes only. If you do not wish to be recorded, please let us know, and we will rely solely on notes. The data collected will be kept strictly confidential. No names or personally identifiable information (PII) will be linked to your responses without your explicit consent. The collected information will be combined with data from other participants to ensure anonymity.

The findings of this evaluation will contribute to improving WASH interventions and may be shared in reports or publications. No identifiable data will be disclosed. Any recordings, pictures, or notes will be securely stored and destroyed upon completion of the evaluation. With your explicit consent, pictures may be used in the evaluation report. This evaluation is funded by UNICEF and is being conducted by an iUNICEF hired Consultant Niaz Ullah Khan with a local team. The evaluation process has been reviewed by a committee that ensures the rights and welfare of participants are protected.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, or if you would like more information, please contact:

Ms. Win Ei Mon Khine

Phone: 09798 482 259

Email: winei07@gmail.com

Before we begin, do you have any questions about the process?

Consent Declaration:

By proceeding with the interview, you confirm your understanding and agreement with the terms of participation.

Please tick (✓) the boxes below to indicate your consent:

- I agree to participate in the Key Informant Interview.
- I agree to have the interview recorded for accuracy.
- I agree to the use of my information for research purposes.
- I agree to the use of my designation in the evaluation report.
- I consent to taking and using my pictures (for the evaluation report).

Participant's Name: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this evaluation.

Consent Form – Field Observation

***These will be translated into Burmese language**

Hello, my name is _____, and I am part of the team conducting the formative evaluation of Community-Led WASH interventions in the Magway and Ayeyarwady regions, supported by UNICEF.

As part of this evaluation, we would like to conduct observations of WASH-related activities, facilities, and practices in your community. The purpose of these field observations is to better understand how WASH interventions are being utilized, their impact on daily life, and how they contribute to improving community health, hygiene, and resilience. Observations will focus on public activities and general practices and will not intrude upon private spaces or personal activities. The observations are expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Your decision to participate or withdraw will not affect any current or future services or opportunities available to you.

With your consent, No names or personal information will be collected during the observation unless explicitly required and agreed upon. Photos or videos may be taken of facilities, general practices, or public spaces to support the evaluation. These will only be used in reports or publications if you explicitly agree. No identifiable images of individuals will be included without prior consent. All collected data will be kept strictly confidential and securely stored. Information will be used solely for evaluation purposes and reported in a way that ensures your privacy.

The findings of this evaluation will contribute to improving WASH services and may be shared in reports or publications to enhance the programme's impact and sustainability. All data, including photos and notes, will be securely stored and destroyed upon completion of the evaluation. This evaluation is conducted by UNICEF's consultant, Niaz Ullah Khan, with a local team. If you have any questions or concerns about your participation or the evaluation process, please contact:

Ms. Win Ei Mon Khine
Phone: 09798 482 259
Email: winei07@gmail.com

Before proceeding with the observation, do you have any questions about this process?

Consent Declaration

By agreeing to the observation, you confirm your understanding of the terms outlined above. Please tick (✓) the following to indicate your consent:

- I agree to allow field observations of WASH-related activities and practices in my community.
- I agree to the use of pictures/videos, provided no identifiable images of me or others are included without explicit permission.
- I understand that no personal information or identifiable data will be disclosed without my consent.

Name of Community Representative: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this evaluation.

Consent Form – Case Study

*These will be translated into Burmese language

Hello, my name is _____, and I am part of the team conducting the formative evaluation of Community-Led WASH interventions in the Magway and Ayeyarwady regions, supported by UNICEF.

We would like to include your story as part of a case study to better understand the experiences and impact of the WASH programme on individuals and communities. The purpose of this case study is to gather in-depth insights about your journey, challenges, and successes related to accessing water, sanitation, and hygiene services and how these interventions have influenced your life or community. This interview is expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes. Your participation in this case study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse to participate or answer any questions, as well as withdraw at any point without any consequences. Your decision to participate or withdraw will not affect any current or future services or opportunities available to you.

With your consent, your name and personal details will not be linked to the case study unless explicitly agreed. If you prefer anonymity, we will use a pseudonym. Pictures may be taken to highlight the context of your experience or illustrate your environment. These materials will only be used in evaluation reports or related publications with your explicit permission. The collected information will remain strictly confidential, and identifiable personal information will not be shared without your consent. Data collected will only be used for evaluation purposes.

The findings of this evaluation will contribute to improving WASH interventions and may be shared in reports or publications. Any recordings, pictures, or notes will be securely stored and destroyed upon completion of the evaluation. The evaluation is supported by UNICEF and conducted by the consultant Niaz Ullah Khan along with a local team. The evaluation process has been reviewed by a committee to ensure the rights and welfare of participants are protected.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, or if you would like more information, you may contact:

Ms. Win Ei Mon Khine
Phone: 09798 482 259
Email: winei07@gmail.com

Before we begin, do you have any questions about the process?

Consent Declaration

By participating in the case study, you confirm your understanding and agreement with the terms outlined above. Please tick (✓) the following to indicate your consent:

- I agree to participate in the case study.
- I agree to share my personal experiences for research purposes.
- I agree to have my pictures taken and used in the evaluation report or related materials.
- I understand that my personal details will not be disclosed without explicit permission.

Participant's Name: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this evaluation.

Annexure 10: Data Collection Challenges in Bogale and Magway Regions

Bogale Township in Ayeyarwady Region

Originally, four villages were selected for data collection in Bogale Township. However, one village (La Waing Kyun (W))—located far from Bogale and near the coast—posed significant travel difficulties. In consultation with UNICEF, a similar village with comparable characteristics was chosen instead. As a result, Thon Dat, Kokkosu, Asi Gyi, and Kan Kone (Haing Si) became the final four villages for fieldwork. Except for Kan Kone, the other three villages lie along riverbanks and require a motorboat journey of roughly two-and-a-half to three hours from Bogale town.

Once the final selection was confirmed, Local national consultant coordinated with local volunteers to explain the criteria for participant selection and arrange participant contact details. A local field team, comprising a team leader, a facilitator, and two note-takers, was mobilized in Bogale. They received two days of data collection training via Teams on 25 November and 1 December 2024, followed by further discussions to ensure everyone understood the questionnaires. On 6 December, a pilot test took place in a nearby village, with a subsequent debriefing to refine the approach, address any issues, and clarify points in the guideline questionnaires.

On 8 December 2024, a researcher from Yangon arrived in Bogale and met the local field team to review data collection procedures in detail. The first round of data collection began on 9 December in Thon Dat village, led by this visiting researcher in collaboration with the local team. After that initial effort, the Bogale-based facilitator took the lead in the remaining three villages. Overall, respondents in these villages were highly engaged, except in Kan Kone, where youth participants had limited prior awareness of FGDs. Nonetheless, interactions between local leaders and villagers indicated a strong sense of community cohesion and open dialogue.

On the evening of 10 December, reports of gunfire in Bogale raised immediate concerns. Two days later, while the researcher was returning to Yangon on 12 December, heightened security measures were evident, including multiple checkpoints and strict inspections.

Magway Region

Data collection in Magway proved considerably more challenging because of intensified security risks. Frequent military operations, sudden checkpoints, and strict travel restrictions made both coordination and logistics exceptionally difficult. The Yangon team could not safely travel to these areas, so data gathering depended entirely on local residents. Moreover, finding a qualified local facilitator was not straightforward due to limited availability.

Several villages initially targeted for fieldwork were inaccessible because of high security risks. Under such volatile conditions, the original plan had to be discarded, and fieldwork in Chauk Township was deemed unworkable. With assistance from the Myanmar Health Assistant Association (MHAA), alternative villages were identified, and local volunteers were recruited. Given the fluid security situation and tight timelines, we monitored conditions daily to decide whether data collection could proceed.

After careful deliberation, seven villages across three townships were chosen as replacements: Pon Tat (Magway Township); Kyun Pin Sin, Zaung Chan Kone, and Pauk Kone (Pwintphyu Township); and Ku To, Ywar Mhyat, and Min Te (Salin Township). Security-related delays meant extending data collection beyond the original schedule. A facilitator and a note-taker from Magway were identified and received brief online training on 14 and 15 December 2024.

Data collection in Pon Tat village on 21 December was particularly arduous. The team passed through six military checkpoints, causing significant delays. As both facilitator and note-taker were young men in their mid-twenties, they faced additional scrutiny. Thankfully, a volunteer from Pon Tat village assisted them in navigating these hurdles, allowing the collection process to conclude successfully.

The facilitator and note-taker then travelled to Pwintphyu Township on 25 December, conducting interviews in Kyun Pin Sin and Zaung Chan Kone villages, followed by Pauk Kone on 26 December. Although security concerns lingered, the sessions ran relatively smoothly. En route from Magway to Salin, however, they encountered an unexpected military operation, forcing them to wait over an hour by the roadside before being allowed to continue.

Upon arriving in Ku To and Ywar Mhyat villages, the team held FGDs, KIIs, and case studies. In Ku To, a village leader interrupted discussion, raised unrelated issues, and even attempted to cancel the session while bargaining with the volunteer. Additionally, the general military presence nearby influenced how freely participants felt they could speak, often reducing the depth of conversation.

In Min Te, the final village, additional disruptions came from gambling groups and large crowds, further complicating the data collection process and affecting participants' focus. Across the region, limited travel options, stringent security measures, and external disruptions made it difficult to gather complete, candid information, leading to gaps in certain discussions.

As a result, some data remained partial or incomplete. To address this, follow-up interviews—particularly phone calls—were conducted where possible. Although these measures helped fill in critical details, the combination of security threats, logistical difficulties, community dynamics, and leadership interference inevitably affected the overall depth and breadth of data gathered.

With all these challenges, the fieldwork was ultimately completed in both Bogale and Magway regions. These experiences underscore the importance of adaptive planning, real-time security assessments, and a flexible approach to engaging with communities under shifting and often unpredictable conditions.

Annexure 11: TERMS OF REFERENCE

International consultant for formative evaluation of community-led water supply and sanitation interventions (remote/home-based)

Context:

Since the latest round of conflict and displacement in Myanmar was initiated with the 1 February 2021 military takeover, UNICEF and other UN agencies have developed engagement guidelines that prioritize implementing partnerships with civil society organizations. In the WASH sector, this has translated into community-based and community-led interventions for water supply and sanitation, whereby UNICEF provides direct support to local communities, NGO partners and private sector for the design, procurement, installation and maintenance of water supply and sanitation systems. This evaluation will aim to assess and learn from UNICEF's engagement with this work in Magway and Ayeyarwady regions.

In 2023, 28,755 people (14,934 females) gained access to basic drinking water services through UNICEF direct support. This support for community managed water supply reached 6,621 households in 36 communities in Chauk (Magway region) and Bogale (Ayeyarwady region) Townships. Profile survey, gravity-fed pipe network design, uPVC pipes and Solar Powered Water Systems were provided for installation of the piped water system with metered system with nominal cost recovery for operation and maintenance. The cost for transportation from temporary depot to the target communities, pipe fittings, water meter, digging trenches, plumbing and refilling trenches was covered by the community themselves. Young professionals were trained to provide Climate Resilient Water Systems. The training includes construction of bed-mounted collector wells near the perennial streams, rivers and construction of infiltration gallery wells with long intake pipes in sandy, non-perennial streams.

Communities have shown their commitment to gaining access to clean drinking water by actively contributing to the project's capital investment and service delivery cost. The capital contribution includes the construction of overhead water storage tanks, installation of water meters, and digging trenches for water mains. Water user committees have taken responsibility for maintaining these facilities and ensuring regular service delivery, while households pay designated tariffs based on their water consumption.

Community participation and leadership is the key to achieving sustainable water service delivery. The ongoing conflict in other regions of the country poses significant challenges in achieving planned targets for community water supply. In this challenging context, the importance of community participation in all stages of project planning, implementation, and management, as well as the necessity of maintaining technical engagement with counterpart departments, became evident.

In sanitation, according to baseline and endline assessments in the project area, an additional 43,786 people (comprising 22,068 females and 21,718 males, including pe) from Ngape, Pwintphyu, Salin (Magway region) and Bogale townships (Ayeyarwady region) gained access to basic sanitation services since 2021. Climate-resilient sanitation facilities (where risk analysis was carried out, preventive measures included, the services are reliable at all times, resilient to seasonal variability and extreme weather events; service delivery models are robust and ensure longer term sustainability) were provided to 11,800 vulnerable households in Pwintphyu, Salin, and Bogale townships, through cooperation with local sanitation entrepreneurs. 190 communities have been certified as open defecation-free (ODF) after a self- and external ODF verification process. Thus, an additional 116,195 people are now living in an ODF community since 2021.

A handwashing behaviour change programme was implemented in 796 communities of Ngape, Pwintphyu, Salin and Bogale townships, reaching 499,024 people (male: 247,516, female: 251,508), since 2021. Community volunteers delivered the seven key hygiene messages around water, sanitation, handwashing behaviour, food, waste, menstrual hygiene, and personal hygiene, to the communities through the interpersonal communication (IPC) approach.

Achievements have fallen short of planned targets due to limited funding for the sanitation and hygiene programme, with priority being given to emergency WASH response and life-saving activities in other regions of the country. Travel restrictions in project implementation areas have also necessitated a reduction in activities, primarily focusing on community mobilization. Additionally, rising inflation has affected household willingness to invest in renovating existing toilets and constructing new ones.

Previously, health messages were transmitted through group education sessions. However, the group sessions became impractical due to restrictions on community gatherings and travel. To address this challenge, UNICEF introduced the WASH-IPC (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Interpersonal Communication) approach to promote improved hygiene practices.

This approach is primarily carried out by community volunteers at the local level. In this context, these volunteers have adapted IPC methods, including one-on-one, group, and mass communication. They consistently conducted WASH-IPC activities for 10 days each month. Since these sessions originate within the community itself, they are highly effective in engaging with local residents and promoting positive hygiene behaviours.

A UNICEF WASH Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) workplan review identified standardized messages for seven hygiene behaviours. Cartoons and graphic illustrations were designed, and these messages were organized on a flip chart. Community volunteers utilize these flip charts during hygiene education sessions. Furthermore, the graphic illustrations and standard key messages are promoted on social media channels during WASH events and campaigns.

Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

This evaluation will be carried out to assess and learn from the implementation of community-based climate-resilient water and sanitation programmes in Magway and Ayeyarwady regions.

The primary audience of the evaluation will be UNICEF management, which will use the evaluation to make evidence-informed decisions regarding future enhancement of community-based and climate-resilient water and sanitation programmes in Myanmar. The evaluation will also inform UNICEF programming on preparedness for WASH sector emergency response in the dry zone and delta regions. The secondary audience of the evaluation will be NGO implementing partners and local communities, who will use the evaluation results and process to learn from and build their ownership of programme approaches.

Scope of Work:

1. Objectives, and scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will have the following primary objectives:

1. To inform next steps for programme scale-up and evidence-based advocacy on community-based and climate resilient water supply and sanitation.
2. To provide evidence to support UNICEF's overall approach to climate-resilience programming, and related contributions to building community resilience.
3. To enhance community ownership of and demand generation for climate resilient WASH.
4. To inform humanitarian-development nexus programming, especially around emergency preparedness in vulnerable regions of the country.

The scope of the evaluation will cover UNICEF engagement in community-based and climate resilient water supply and sanitation interventions in the dry zone and delta regions (Magway and Ayeyarwady) since February 2021. The period prior to the military takeover and other ongoing emergency WASH interventions in other regions will be out of scope.

The evaluation will only examine work under the following two outputs of UNICEF cooperation:

- Water Supply: By 2023, deliver equitable, safe, gender sensitive and climate resilient drinking water supply services to vulnerable populations in targeted States and Regions at scale.
- Sanitation and Hygiene: By 2023, end open defecation and promote demand for safe, climate smart and equitable sanitation and hygiene services among vulnerable communities in targeted areas.

2. Evaluation framework and questions

The framework to be used in this evaluation is based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria supplemented and adjusted where necessary to ensure that the evaluation meets specific objectives. The criteria covered under this evaluation are relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and coherence. In addition, cross-cutting equity, gender equality and human rights considerations are also considered. Some key questions include:

Relevance of the programme:

1. To what extent is the programme relevant to the identified needs of target populations and their families?

- Are the programme and interventions customized enough to address the needs of the target population by age, gender, and other factors?
- 2. Were relevant partners involved in the programme design and implementation, including target population, and their families? To what extent are community perceptions monitored and included in programme design, including through feedback and complaint mechanisms (under Accountability to Affected Populations)?
- 3. Is the project responsive to changing needs and circumstances, including climate change? Was it adjusted through the course of its implementation, including through adoption of climate-resilient approaches?
- 4. To what extent has emergency preparedness been built into the design of the programme, in order to enhance community resilience? How do existing programmes contribute to emergency preparedness in the target communities?

Effectiveness of the programme:

- 5. To what extent have the objectives of the programme been realized? Has climate resilience been built into the programme enough to allow for seasonal variation?
- 6. What are the main barriers in accessing water supply and sanitation services for populations in the target regions? What are some of the solutions that could be applied to overcome them?
- 7. What are the (perceived) advantages and challenges of the programme, from the community perspective?

Sustainability of the programme:

- 8. To what degree does the programme build capacities of local communities for climate resilient implementation? Are there any specific capacity gaps that need to be addressed and/or strengthened to further support community resilience?
- 9. Are there sufficient resources allocated to sustain the programme in the future? Is the current budget allocation approach sustainable?
- 10. To what extent are demand generation activities contributing to future sustainability of the programme? Is there sufficient private-sector engagement to support future sustainability?

Coherence of the programme:

- 11. To what extent are there synergies and interlinkages between the programme and other interventions carried out by partners?
 - Do coordination mechanisms between key stakeholders exist, and if so, to what extent are they well designed, clear and active? Are there differences in coordination at national or sub-national levels?
 - To what extent are stakeholder perceptions (among partners) monitored and included in programme prioritization?

Cross-cutting dimensions:

- 12. Are there any difficulties in accessing water supply and sanitation services for women or persons with disabilities? Are there any special barriers or concerns from a gender or disability perspective?
- 13. What are the main concerns and/or barriers linked to the assessment of different age groups, particularly young children and the elderly?

Gender equality, equity and human rights considerations must also be used as a lens when responding to all evaluation questions and not be limited to the cross-cutting questions posed above. Reference and use of rights-based frameworks such as CRC, CCC, CRPD, CEDAW and/or other rights related benchmarks are expected in the design of the evaluation and analysis and presentation of findings.

The above evaluation questions are indicative. Through a consultative process, the evaluator is expected to review the feasibility of answering the existing evaluation questions and propose changes if needed during the inception phase ensuring that all questions can be answered. As agreed, evaluation questions will need to be answered in the final report and will guide the findings of the evaluation.

3. Evaluation approach and methodology

Based on the objectives of the evaluation, this section indicates a possible approach, methods, and processes for the evaluation. Methodological rigor will be given significant consideration in the assessment of proposals. Hence consultants are invited to interrogate the approach and methodology proffered in the ToR and improve on it, or propose an approach they deem more appropriate, which should be guided by the UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy (2023)¹, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016)², Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator³, UNEG Guidance on

¹ UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy: <https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/18416/file/2023-27-Revised-evaluation-policy-EN-ODS.pdf>

² UNEG Norms: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>, UNEG Standards: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22>

³ <https://unevaluation.org/document/detail/3050>

Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (2014)⁴, UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020)⁵, UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards and Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis (2015)⁶ and UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards (2017).⁷ Moreover, the evaluation should consider throughout issues of equity, gender equality and human rights. In their proposal, consultants should clearly refer to triangulation, sampling plan, ethical considerations (including ethical clearance) and methodological limitations and mitigation measures. They are encouraged to also demonstrate methodological expertise in evaluating similar initiatives.

It is expected that the evaluation will employ non-experimental, mixed methods approach drawing on key project documents, the constructed Theory of Change and the monitoring framework for guidance.

The evaluation takes a formative approach with the purpose of informing potential adjustments in the programme design and its delivery system.

At minimum, the evaluation will draw on the following methods:

- Desk review of project documents and other relevant data;
- Review and analysis of secondary quantitative data;
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs);
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs);
- Observation of programme processes;

The data collected should be disaggregated by sex, age, disability etc. where relevant.

Sampling of KIIs and FGDs should be done in consultation with UNICEF. The evaluation sample should reconsider a balance of criteria such as socioeconomic indicators, remoteness, ethnicities, age groups, etc.

To enrich the analysis, the evaluation will use, to the extent possible, any quantitative data gathered and reported by implementing partners on a regular basis. The evaluation will also make use of any partnership reviews that have been conducted with implementing partners.

Conventional ethical guidelines are to be followed during the evaluation. Specific reference is made to the revised UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System and UNEG Ethical Guidelines as well as to UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy, and the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis and UNICEF's Evaluation Reporting Standards.⁸ In case children or vulnerable populations are expected to be included under the data collection, ethical review from an IRB will be required and will be responsibility of the evaluation team upon approval of the inception report. Good practices not covered therein are also to be followed. Any sensitive issues or concerns should be raised with UNICEF as soon as they are identified.

There are several limitations to the evaluation which can hinder the process, notably: (i) disaggregated data may not be available at the local level, or the quality of available data may not be satisfactory; (ii) engagement with government partners will be limited, as per UNCT engagement guidelines under the current Myanmar context. Applicants should discuss the above or other potential limitations (including limitations of proposed methodologies and sampling) in their proposal and further identify them during the inception phase. The limitations that could lead to changes in evaluation questions and scope of analysis and mitigation measures should be clearly identified at the inception phase before initiation of data collection.

4. Evaluation management and coordination

The evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluator to be recruited by UNICEF Myanmar. The evaluator will operate under the direct supervision of the UNICEF Evaluation Specialist, which will coordinate management with other relevant stakeholders. This evaluation management team will be responsible for the day-to-day oversight and management of the evaluation and for the management of the evaluation budget; will assure the quality and independence of the evaluation and guarantee its alignment with UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines; will provide quality assurance checking that the evaluation findings and conclusions are relevant and recommendations are implementable, and; will contribute to the dissemination of the evaluation findings and follow-up on the management response. The final report will also be approved by the Country Representative at UNICEF Myanmar.

⁴ <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

⁵ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

⁶ https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF

⁷ [https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/UNICEF_adapted_reporting_standards_updated_June_2017_FINAL\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/UNICEF_adapted_reporting_standards_updated_June_2017_FINAL(1).pdf)

⁸ Please refer to: <http://www.unicef.org/evaluation>

Additional stakeholders including NGO implementing partners will be engaged to support management of the evaluation. These stakeholders will contribute to preparation and design of the evaluation, including providing feedback and comments on the inception report and on the technical quality of the work of the consultants; provide comments and substantive feedback to ensure the quality – from a technical point of view – of the draft and final evaluation reports; assist in identifying internal and external stakeholders to be consulted during the evaluation process; participate in review meetings organized by the evaluation management team and with the evaluation team as required; play a key role in learning and knowledge sharing from the evaluation results, contributing to disseminating the findings of the evaluation and follow-up on implementation of the management response.

The consultant will work in close collaboration with NGO implementing partners, local communities and private sector entities⁹ throughout the evaluation, under the supervision of UNICEF. Some of these parties will be convened by UNICEF as an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG).

5. Evaluation team profile

The evaluation will be conducted by engaging a qualified individual consultant (Team Leader). The proposed consultant may be supported by an additional assistant (Team Member/Technical Expert).

The Team Leader will sign the contract and be responsible for undertaking the evaluation from start to finish, for managing the evaluation, for the bulk of data collection, analysis and consultations, as well as for report drafting and communication of the evaluation results.

The Team Member will play a major role in data collection, analysis and presentation, and preparation of the debriefings and will make significant contributions to analysis and writing of the main evaluation report. The Team Member may also be responsible for providing back-office support for logistics and administrative matters.

The evaluation team should be balanced with respect to gender, if possible, to ensure accessibility of both male and female informants during the data collection process. It is vital that the same individuals that develop the methodology for the proposal will be involved in conducting the evaluation. In review of proposals, while adequate consideration will be given to the technical methodology, significant weighting will be given to the quality, experience (based on CVs and written samples) and relevance of individuals who will be involved in the evaluation.

Expected travel for the Team Member/Technical Expert

The Team Member will be required to travel to towns in the Magway and Ayeyarwady regions. An estimated number of travel days and frequency should be included in the proposal.

Please see qualification requirements section for more details.

⁹ Such as local sanitation entrepreneurs, sanitation product sellers, and maintenance companies. Water supply has less private sector engagement as products are mostly procured by UNICEF from offshore.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline	Estimated Budget
Inception phase 1. Inception meeting (online) 2. All relevant documents are reviewed, explanatory discussions held, and inception report submitted compliant with UNICEF requirements 3. Second and final draft of the inception report presented to UNICEF/ERG	Inception report	31/08/24	20%
Data collection phase 1. Pilot data collection tools and conduct field-based data collection based on the methodology described in the Inception Report 2. Relevant methods applied to analyse primary and secondary data and prepare preliminary evaluation findings report and presentation. During this time, the draft final report will begin to be drafted as analysis takes place.	Initial findings presentation and report	31/10/24	40%
Final phase 1. Prepare and submit first draft of evaluation report 2. Revise the first draft and submit second draft final evaluation report to UNICEF and other stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder workshop and prepare presentation and other materials 3. Present evaluation findings, conclusions and draft recommendations at the multi-stakeholder validation workshop	Final report, presentation and brief	15/12/24	40%

4. In addition to the feedback from workshops, receive written feedback to second draft of the report 5. Final evaluation report, executive summary, evaluation brief and other materials finalized. The brief should be in both English and Burmese.			
Full details of expected deliverables are outlined in Annex 1.			
Minimum Qualifications required*: ☐ Bachelors ☒ Masters ☐ PhD ☐ Other Team Leader: - Holding an advanced university degree (Masters or higher) in international development, public policy, evaluation or similar research field; qualifications in the WASH or climate sectors are an advantage. National Team Member/Technical Expert (if required): - Holding advanced university degrees (Masters-level) in international development, public policy or similar; qualifications in the WASH or climate sectors are an advantage.	Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required *: Team Leader: - Having extensive evaluation experience (at least 5 years) with an excellent understanding of evaluation principles and methodologies, including capacity in an array of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, and UNEG Norms and Standards. Experience leading evaluations of climate-resilient WASH programmes is essential. - A minimum of 2 evaluations led at the programme and/or outcome levels with international organizations. - Bringing a strong commitment to delivering timely and high-quality results, i.e., credible evaluations that are used for improving strategic decisions. - Having in-depth knowledge of the UN's human rights, disability inclusion, gender equality and equity agendas. - Having a strong team leadership and management track record, as well as excellent interpersonal and communication skills to help ensure that the evaluation is understood and used. - Previous experience of working in a Southeast Asian context is desirable, together with understanding of the Myanmar context and political/cultural dynamics. - The Team Leader must be committed and willing to work independently, with limited regular supervision; s/he must demonstrate adaptability and flexibility, client orientation, proven ethical practice, initiative, concern for accuracy and quality. - S/he must have the ability to concisely and clearly express ideas and concepts in written and oral form as well as the ability to communicate with various stakeholders in English. Team Member (if required): - Hands-on experience in collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data, but this is secondary to solid expertise in climate-resilient WASH programming in Myanmar. - Strong expertise in equity, gender equality and human rights-based approaches to evaluation and expertise in data presentation and visualization. - Be committed and willing to work in a complex environment and able to produce quality work under limited guidance and supervision. - Having good communication, advocacy and people skills and the ability to communicate with various stakeholders and to express concisely and clearly ideas and concepts in written and oral form. - Experience of conducting evaluations of Myanmar and/or UN programmes is an asset. - Excellent Burmese and English communication and report writing skills.		
Submission of applications: Letter of Interest (cover letter)			

*Minimum requirements to consider candidates for competitive process

*Listed requirements will be used for technical evaluation in the competitive process

- CV of proposed team (team leader, plus team member, if any)
- Performance evaluation reports or references of similar consultancy assignments
- Technical proposal: The written technical proposal will be submitted in electronic (PDF) format and include the following elements, at a minimum:
 - a) Narrative description of the team leader's experience and capacity in the following areas:
 - Evaluation of climate-resilient or community-based WASH interventions;
 - Previous assignments in developing countries in general, and related to WASH or climate programmes, preferably in South-East Asia; and
 - Previous and current evaluation assignments using UNEG Norms and Standards.
 - b) Relevant references of the team leader (past and on-going assignments) in the past five years. UNICEF will contact reference persons for feedback on services provided by the team leader.
 - c) Samples or links to samples of previous relevant work listed as reference of the proposer (at least two), on which the team leader directly and actively contributed or authored.
 - d) Methodology proposed, with minimum repetition of this ToR. There is no minimum or maximum length. If in doubt, ensure sufficient detail.
 - e) Work plan, which will include as a minimum requirement the following:
 - General work plan based on the one proposed in the ToR, with comments and proposed adjustments, if any; and
 - Detailed timetable by activity (must be consistent with the general work plan and the financial proposal).

Please note that the duration of the assignment will be from August to December 2024, and it is foreseen that the Team Leader will devote roughly 70% of their time to the evaluation. The presence of a conflict of interest of any kind (e.g., having worked for or partnered with UNICEF on the design or implementation of the community-based WASH programme will automatically disqualify prospective candidates from consideration).

Evaluation Criteria

A) Technical Evaluation (points out of 75)

- Educational background: 5 points
- Relevant experience: 15 points
- Technical proposal: 55 points

B) Financial Proposal (points out of 25)

The maximum number of points shall be allotted to the lowest Financial Proposal that is opened /evaluated and compared among those technical qualified candidates who have attained a minimum (50) points score in the technical evaluation. Other Financial Proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price.

The Contract shall be awarded to candidate obtaining the highest combined technical and financial scores, subject to satisfactory results from a verification interview and reference checks.

1 Costs indicated are estimated. Final rate shall follow the "best value for money" principle, i.e., achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee. Consultants will be asked to stipulate all-inclusive fees, including lump sum travel and subsistence costs, as applicable.

Payment of professional fees will be based on submission of agreed deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.

Text to be added to all TORs:

Individuals engaged under a consultancy will not be considered "staff members" under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF's policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants. Consultants are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.

The selected consultant is solely responsible to ensure that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected consultant are subject to confirmation of fully-vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. The vaccine mandate, does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.

UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.

Annex 1: Evaluation deliverables and timeline

Evaluation products expected for this exercise are:

- a) An inception report (in English), in an agreed format, in preparation for data collection, and a PowerPoint presentation of the inception report (in English) to present to the ERG;
- b) A report of the initial evaluation findings from primary data collection (in English), including a desk review analysis and a PowerPoint presentation of the initial findings (in English) to facilitate a stakeholder consultation exercise.
- c) A draft report (in English) and final report (in English) that will be written in accordance to the requirements of the Global Evaluation Report Oversight System¹ and revised until approved (incl. a complete first draft to be reviewed by the ERG and UNICEF; a second draft to be reviewed by the ERG, and a final draft);
- d) A PowerPoint presentation of the final report (in English) to be used to share findings with the ERG and for use in subsequent dissemination events.
- e) A four-page evaluation brief (in both English and Burmese) that is distinct from the executive summary in the evaluation report and is intended for a broader, non-technical and non-UNICEF audience.

Outlines and descriptions of each evaluation product are meant to be indicative, and include:

- Inception report: The inception report (of maximum 20 pages, excluding annexes) will be key in confirming a common understanding of what is to be evaluated, including additional insights into executing the evaluation. At this stage the evaluation team will refine and confirm evaluation questions, confirm the scope of the evaluation, further improve on the methodology proposed in the ToR and their own evaluation proposal to improve its rigor, as well as develop and validate evaluation instruments. The report will include, among other elements: i) evaluation purpose and scope, confirmation of objectives and the main themes of the evaluation; ii) evaluation criteria and questions, final set of evaluation questions, and evaluation criteria for assessing performance; iii) evaluation methodology (i.e., sampling criteria), a description of data collection methods and data sources (incl. a rationale for their selection), draft data collection instruments, for example questionnaires, with a data collection toolkit as an annex, an evaluation matrix that identifies descriptive and normative questions and criteria for evaluating evidence, a data analysis plan, a discussion on how to enhance the reliability and validity of evaluation conclusions, the field visit approach, a description of the quality review process and a discussion on the limitations of the methodology; iv) proposed structure of the final report; v) evaluation work plan and timeline, including a revised work and travel plan; vi) resources requirements (i.e., detailed budget allocations, tied to evaluation activities, work plan, deliverables); v) annexes (i.e., organizing matrix for evaluation questions, data collection toolkit, data analysis framework); and vi) format of an evaluation briefing note for external communication purposes. The inception report will be presented at a formal meeting of the ERG.

- Initial evaluation findings: This report will present the initial evaluation findings from primary data collection, comprising the desk-based document review and analysis of the programme. The report developed prior to the first drafts of the final report should be 10 pages, or about 6,000 words in length (excluding annexes, if any), and should be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation that can be used for validation with key stakeholders.
- Final evaluation report: The report will not exceed 50 pages, excluding the executive summary and annexes.
- PowerPoint presentation: Initially prepared and used by the evaluation team in their presentation to the ERG, a standalone PowerPoint will be submitted as part of the evaluation deliverables.
- An evaluation brief of four pages (distinct from the executive summary, both in English and Burmese) for external users will be submitted to the ERG as part of the evaluation deliverables.
- Reports will be prepared according to the UNICEF Style Guide and UNICEF Brand Toolkit (to be shared with the winning bidder) and UNICEF standards for evaluation reports as per Geros guidelines (referenced before).

Quality assurance of evaluation key reports: The first draft of the final report (in English) will be received by the ERG and UNICEF who will revert with comments within 5 working days, and work with the team leader on necessary revisions. The second draft will be sent to the ERG, which will consolidate all comments on a response matrix and request the evaluators to indicate actions taken against each comment in the production of the final draft. The evaluators need to revert with revised reports within one week of receipt of comments. All final deliverables are to be developed with attention to disability accessibility features and to maximise its utility and accessibility.¹

The documents produced during the period of this consultancy will be treated strictly confidential and the rights of distribution and/or publication shall solely reside with UNICEF (as per standard terms and conditions). Some of the documents (see where indicated in the deliverables above) should be developed in both English and Burmese. The translation costs are to be covered by the consultants and clearly budgeted in the financial proposal. Any costs regarding disability accessibility features are to be clearly budgeted in the financial proposal as well (if any).

