

# LIFT ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS 2015



## Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the governments of Australia, Denmark, the European Union, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America for their kind contributions to improving the livelihoods and food security of rural poor people in Myanmar. Their support to the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) is gratefully acknowledged. We would also like to thank the Mitsubishi Corporation, as LIFT's first private sector donor.

## DISCLAIMER

This document is based on information from projects funded by LIFT in 2015 and supported with financial assistance from Australia, Denmark, the European Union, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the Mitsubishi Corporation. The views expressed herein should not be taken to reflect the official opinion of the LIFT donors.

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For further detail, please see the full version of the LIFT Annual Report 2015, available at [www.lift-fund.org](http://www.lift-fund.org)

# WORKING FOR INCLUSIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE



CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF FAMILIES REACHED BY LIFT 2010 - 2015

The multi-donor Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) started to help rural people in Myanmar reach their full economic potential in 2010, through improved nutrition, income diversification, and skills development.

We support the transformation of Myanmar’s rural economy by promoting inclusive growth, and increasing opportunities for smallholder farmers and landless people to take part in Myanmar’s development. LIFT provides new knowledge, new technologies and access to finance and markets. In addition, we generate evidence to back the development of policies that will improve the lives of rural poor people. LIFT support has already reached more than three and a half million people, or around ten per cent of the country’s rural population.

LIFT’s household surveys show that rural life in Myanmar is rapidly changing in line with policy reforms and new opportunities, and LIFT has adapted, updating its strategy at the end of 2014 to maximise its impact and relevance. In 2015, with substantial new funding, LIFT designed new programmes for the Ayeyarwady Delta, Dry Zone, Rakhine and the Uplands, the latter expanding LIFT’s activities into conflict-affected areas.

LIFT is focused on helping target beneficiary groups to ‘step up’ in to commercial value chains, ‘step out’ of marginalised farming and into more profitable agricultural and non-farm support jobs, and to ‘hang in’, gaining better nutrition and skills that will enable them to later ‘step up’ or ‘step out’.

LIFT is supported by Australia, Denmark, the European Union, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The Mitsubishi Corporation is LIFT’s first private-sector donor. Funds are pooled for aid effectiveness. Under UNOPS management, the Fund’s mandate has been extended twice at the request of donors, and activities are expected to continue to the end of 2018, at least.



# IMPACT

## LIFT CONTINUES TO DELIVER GOOD RESULTS

In 2015, its sixth year of operation, LIFT again met or exceeded the targets for its highest-level outcomes of improved rural incomes, resilience and nutrition.

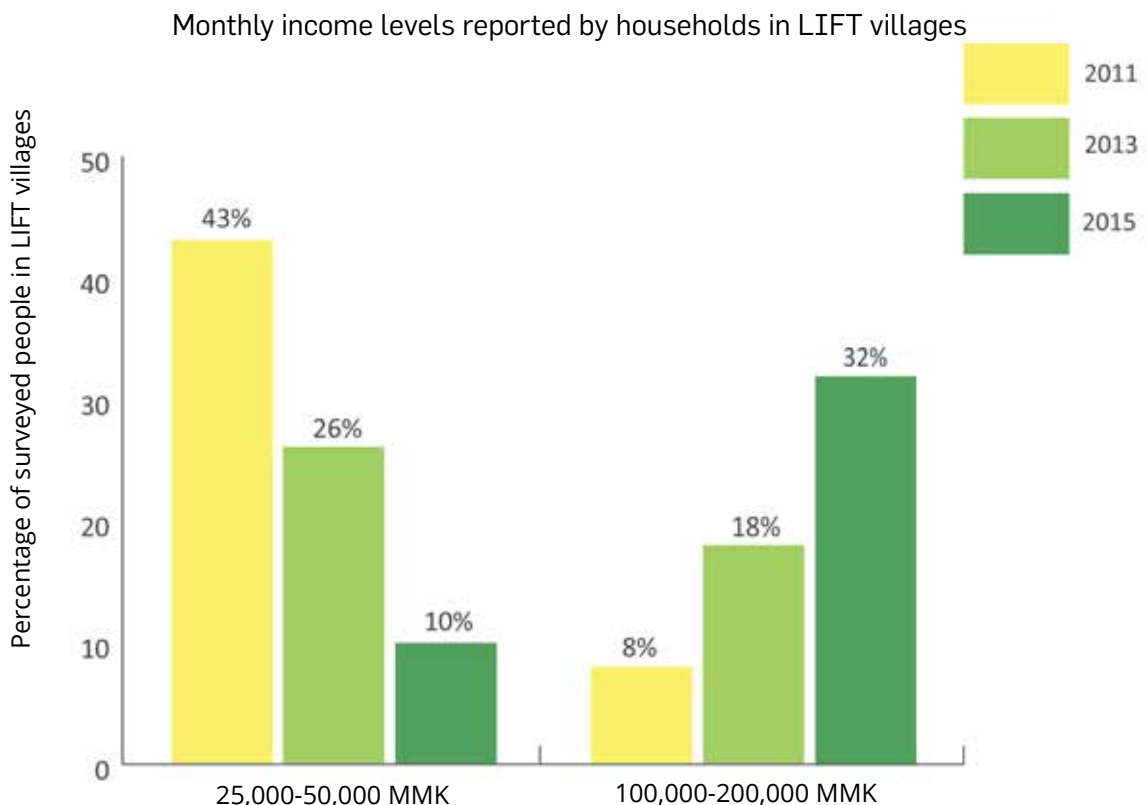
- Over two million people have achieved measurably improved food security
- 680,000 people live in households with increased incomes
- 880,000 people live in households with increased assets, an important measure of household resilience

Child stunting also showed a dramatic improvement with a nine per cent reduction in the prevalence of stunting in children under the age of five, although further analysis is required to better understand how this reduction was effected.

Other major outcomes are significant increases in the use of regulated financial services and in crop production. LIFT continues to support women, particularly through improved maternal nutrition, increased financial literacy and access to credit - 93 per cent of LIFT-supported microfinance clients are women - and by requiring equal wages in cash-for-work activities.

People are moving out of poverty. Since 2013 there has been a 33 per cent decrease in households reporting to have earned less than MMK 50,000 per month, and a 24 per cent increase in those earning at least MMK 100,000 a month in villages where LIFT is active.

LIFT conducted its third large-scale household survey in 2015. Results show that the rural economy is improving almost everywhere, as people seize opportunities from the country's economic liberalisation.



# SELECTED RESULTS

2010-2015



LIFT has reached

**3.6 million**

people



**1 million**

people are served by LIFT-funded microfinance institutions. 93% of them are women



**2.1 million**

people have increased their food security by more than one month

**9%**



reduction in the prevalence of stunting in children under 5 years old (from 32% to 29%)



**154,000**

households reported increased incomes



**196,000**

households have improved diets



**357,000**

members of civil society took part in LIFT-funded training



**43,000**

households have benefitted from improved market information and linkages



**32,000**

households were supported through village revolving funds

# 2015

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

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### JANUARY

LIFT launches a call for proposals for its new Financial Inclusion Programme. This is the first of seven calls for proposals that LIFT launched for its new programmes during the year, amounting to USD 158 million.

### MARCH

The Mitsubishi Corporation joins LIFT as its first private sector donor. In September, Italy and Luxembourg also joined the donor consortium.



### MAY

With the National Nutrition Centre and nutrition partner LEARN, LIFT formally launches the 1,000 Days mother-child good nutrition video to the press. After translation into 11 ethnic languages, the video and radio message is broadcast across the country.



# JUNE

Members of the LIFT Fund Board visit the country's south east to inform the development of the new Uplands Programme.



# AUGUST

Much of the country suffers under heavy rainfall, causing floods and landslides. By the end of the year, LIFT has provided USD 4.3 million for livelihoods recovery for some 360,000 people.

# OCTOBER

The Fund Management Office finalises LIFT's overall theory of change and logframe for the new programmes.



Learn with



# NOVEMBER

LIFT's library of studies grows with sixteen new reports and studies delivered in 2015. These are used to improve programme design and to inform the development of pro-poor policies.

# WHERE WE WORK

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The main focus of 2015 was putting LIFT's updated strategy into action. Thirty-seven new projects were started and 28 closed, for a total of 54 on-going projects. Activities are designed to lift people out of poverty, with improved and diversified livelihoods, greater resilience, healthier diets and increased opportunities.

Projects are tailored to the local context, and there were successful interventions in each of the agro-ecological zones where LIFT operates. LIFT's financial inclusion, migration and research projects work across the country.

Some highlights:

## AYEYARWADY DELTA:

- In the Ayeyarwady Delta, interventions along the rice value chain made good progress: LIFT-supported extension services have now reached 57,000 farmers; 90 seed growers produced 7,700 baskets of certified seeds in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture; 18 new paddy storage facilities were constructed; new post-harvest technologies were tested, adapted and introduced; and 22 farmers groups signed contracts with eight millers and two inputs suppliers, thereby improving the terms on which farmers buy inputs and increasing the price they get for their harvest.

## DRY ZONE:

- In the Dry Zone, LIFT-supported microfinance providers reached 35,000 new clients in 305 villages and developed new financial products that are relevant for the area in its role as a trading hub and a source of domestic and international migration.

## UPLANDS:

- In the Uplands, LIFT partners supported the commercialisation of the high-value vegetable sector through the development of a new training curriculum on integrated pest management for garlic and potato. LIFT facilitated the formation of the Vegetable Sector Acceleration Task Force, a multi-stakeholder platform that brings public, private and civil society partners together to chart an inclusive strategy for the sector.

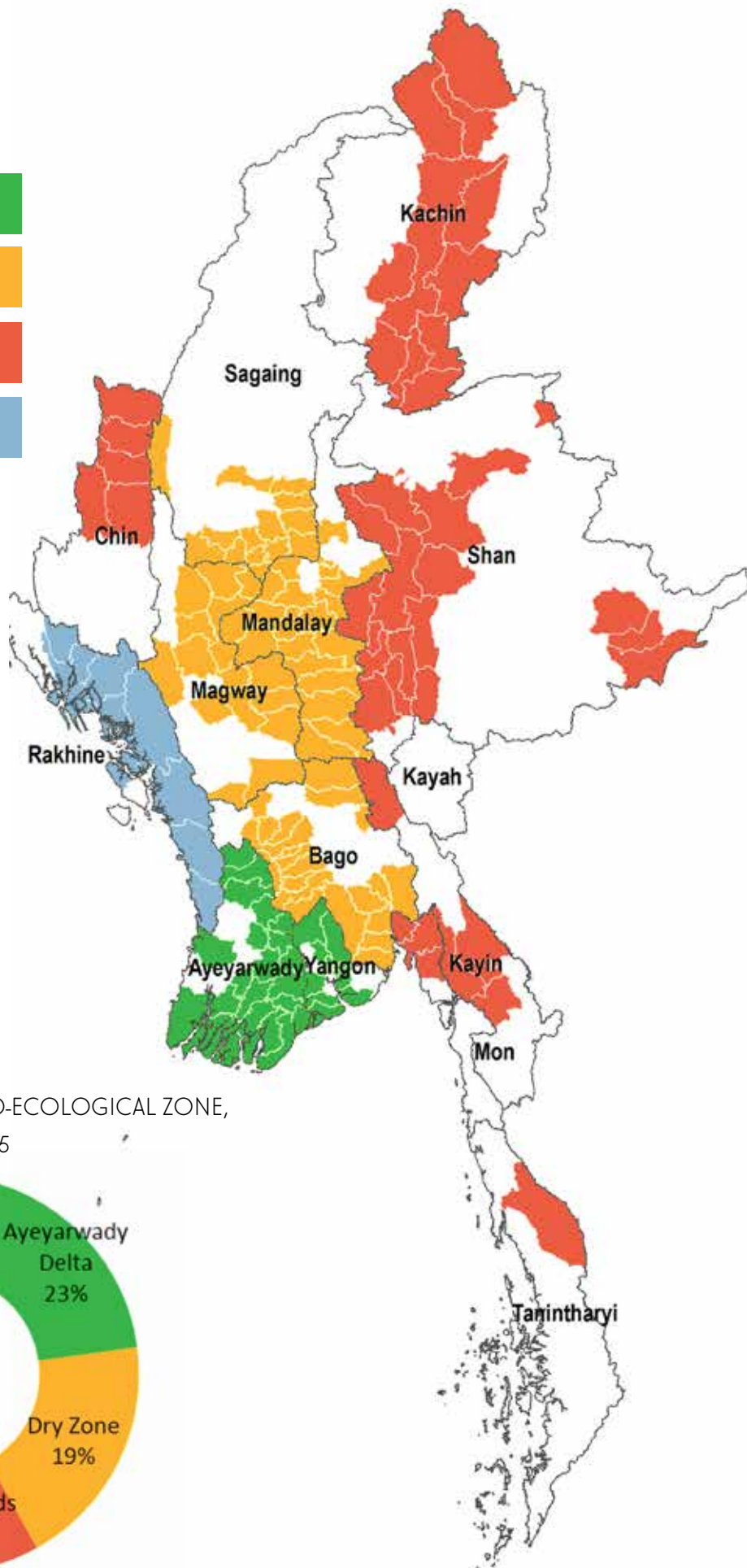
## RAKHINE:

- In Rakhine, 94 per cent of the 148 kilometres of embankments that LIFT partners constructed to protect paddy land withstood the destructive forces of Cyclone Komen. The embankments were built through cash-for-work, providing a basic income for 26,000 people while protecting 22,000 acres of agricultural land.

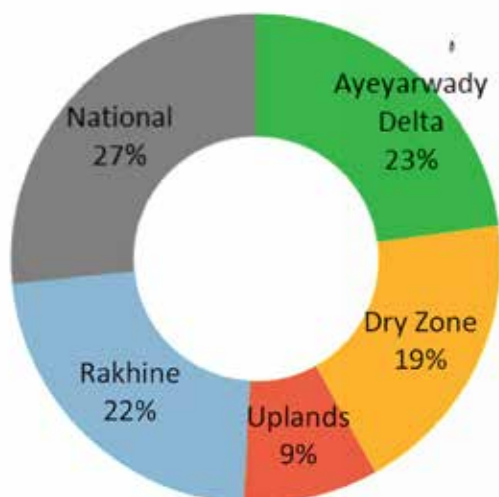
From 2010 to 2015, LIFT supported 130 projects. Our implementing partners are local and international non-government organisations, UN agencies, civil society actors, academic and research bodies, and the private sector. LIFT provides technical support and guidance to the government of Myanmar.



LEGEND



GRANT ALLOCATION BY AGRO-ECOLOGICAL ZONE, 2010-2015



# SIX NEW PROGRAMMES

The appraisal and selection process of the 184 proposals received for LIFT's new programmes dominated the Fund's work in 2015. But by the end of the year, programmes for the Ayeyarwady Delta, Dry Zone, Rakhine and Financial Inclusion had taken shape, with activities to commence in 2015 and continue to the end of 2018.



## THE RAKHINE PROGRAMME

Name of Organisation	Project title	Main activities
Better Life Organization	Tat Lan sustainable food security and livelihoods programme phase II	Community fisheries in Kyaukpyu Township
Care International in Myanmar	M&E and learning for Tat Lan Phase II	M&E for the Tat Lan Programme
Care International in Myanmar	Supporting the food security, resilience and social cohesion of households and communities in Rathedaung Township	Agriculture, forestry, hygiene, social inclusion, financial cohesion in Rathedaung Township
International Rescue Committee	Tat Lan sustainable food security and livelihoods programme phase II	Agriculture, infrastructure, financial inclusion, nutrition, WASH, village savings and loans associations, governance in Myebon and Minbya townships
Mercy Corps/ East West Seeds/ Swisscontact	Making vegetable markets work	Agricultural training, market access in Sittwe Township and Mrauk-U District
Oxfam GB	Tat Lan sustainable food security and livelihoods programme phase II	Governance in Kyaukpyu Township
Save the Children	Tat Lan sustainable food security and livelihoods programme phase II	Agriculture, infrastructure, financial inclusion, nutrition with maternal cash transfers, WASH, village savings and loans associations, governance in Pauktaw, Myebon and Minbya townships



## THE DELTA PROGRAMME

Name of Organisation	Project Title	Main activities
International Organization for Migration	Migration as livelihood diversification strategy in the Delta (MILDAS)	Research on migration and development. Support for prospective migrants for safer migration and support to migrant-sending households to maximise benefits of migration.
Link Emergency Aid And Development	Supporting landless households' livelihoods and food security	Strengthening the livelihoods of landless families through support for income diversification, mainly in the rural non-farm economy.
Mercy Corps/ Swisscontact/ Ar Yone Oo	Linking Labutta to markets: increasing incomes through agriculture, skills and employment	Support to farmer producer enterprises for service delivery including inputs supply, extension services, equipment rental and hire purchase, access to credit and contract farming with millers. Support to landless households through vocational, business and life skills development and migration-related information and linkages to Yangon-based employers.
Metta Development Foundation	Promotion of farmer-managed schemes for inclusive growth and sustainable development	Increasing rice production, quality and value through farm advisory services, post-harvest management and collective storage and farmer organisation.
Radanar Ayar	Integrated agribusiness and rural development	Supporting seed production of local seed growers, post-harvest improvement; farmer-led extension services, collective marketing and contract farming with the private sector.
Save the Children	Bright SUN: Building resilience, synergy and unity for nutrition	Delivery of maternal cash transfers and behaviour change communication to mothers throughout a child's first 1,000 Days (from conception through to the child's second birthday).
Welthungerhilfe/ GRET	Delta RISE	Support to farmer producer groups, support for landless and vulnerable households and small-scale businesses for off-farm local livelihood activities. Promotion of improved nutrition and basic hygiene practices.
World Fish/ NAG, GRET, PACT, Department of Fisheries	Promoting sustainable growth of aquaculture	Engaging smallholder farmers in on-farm research and development, and scaling-up of small-scale homestead-based aquaculture (pond, cage and rice-field).
World Vision International-Myanmar	Growing livelihoods in Bogale	Support to landless and vulnerable households for the development and diversification of livelihood options as informed by market, labour and value chain assessment. Promoting access to savings and loans. Support to health stakeholders to change poor nutrition and hygiene practices. Support to community based organisation action plans, including disaster management plans.





## THE DRY ZONE PROGRAMME

Name of Organisation	Project Title	Main activities
ActionAid	Socio economic development network for regional development	Providing disadvantaged women with vocational training, jobs and access to social services.
FAO Livestock	Improving farmer livelihoods in the Dry Zone through improved livestock health, productivity and marketing	Policy level work and developing best practice manuals for livestock owners to promote environmentally and economically- sound livestock production.
Golden Plain	Improving soil to get sustainable yields by green manuring and a modified cropping system	Supporting sustainable agriculture production by using green manure. Trial sites will identify the additional costs, the required changes in the cropping pattern and the potential benefits of using green manure.
HelpAge	Dry Zone social protection project	Implementation of HelpAge's social protection components that support existing village-based social protection schemes, and supporting government programmes that are working to provide old- age social pensions and assistance for people with disabilities.
International Fertilizer Development Centre	Dry Zone agro-input and farm services project	Agricultural advisory services working with private sector and official extension service providers.
Lodestar Company Ltd./ SPPRG	Community-based social protection systems: efficacy and efficiency of a pilot project	Community based social protection initiatives including maternal cash transfers and village revolving funds.
Myanmar Professional Social Worker Association	Improved nutritional status of vulnerable communities through self-help potential	Providing behaviour change communication relating to nutrition.
Save the Children	LEGACY: learning, evidence generation, and advocacy for catalysing policy	A nutrition project looking at effective ways to deliver maternal cash transfers to mothers in the 1000 Days window - from a child's conception to its second birthday.
Terre des Hommes	Soilless horticulture and water-saving innovative technologies	Water-efficient technologies allow landless and marginalised farmers to grow nutrient-rich vegetables, improving incomes and nutrition in remote villages.
UN-HABITAT	A Short Step: from improved WASH to healthier communities	Improving access to water and sanitation. The goal is to achieve zero open defecation, mainly through behaviour change education.
UNESCAP	Integrated rural and economic social development programme	Training workshops on agricultural mechanisation, seed production and farming innovation.



# THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAMME

Name of Organisation	Project Title	Main activities
Cordaid Investments BV	Partial risk guarantee fund	Capacity development for MFIs. Access to funding for microfinance.
GRET	Creating a microfinance institution in the Dry Zone	Creating a microfinance institution and access to responsible financial services for low income people.
GRET	Chin MFI/ flood response in Chin	Reinforcing the institutionalisation of Chin MFI to ensure long term and sustainable provision of rural financial markets.
International Finance Corporation	Capacity building for an inclusive financial sector	Myanmar microfinance development in peri-urban and rural areas.
PACT (MARC)	Myanmar access to rural credit through institutional strengthening (MARC)	Building the technical capacity of local microfinance organisations to deliver quality microfinance services to targeted clients.
Pact Global Microfinance	Flood response	Loan write-off, disbursement of additional loans, cash transfers for livelihoods rehabilitation.
Pact Global Microfinance	Myanmar access to financial inclusion (MAFIN)	Pro-poor microfinance services.
Pact Global Microfinance	Rakhine Access to Financial Inclusion (RAFIN)	Pro-poor microfinance services including agricultural loans, small business loans, savings.
Proximity Designs	Financial inclusion—moving ahead	Crop, enterprise, migration and equipment loans.
UNCDF-MicroLead	Support to savings-led microfinance market leaders to enter Myanmar (MicroLead Expansion Programme)	Providing access to responsible financial services to low income people through greenfield financial service providers and through a savings-led model.
Vision Fund International	Flood impact and rehabilitation	Loan write-off and cash transfers for flood-affected farmers and clients.
World Vision Myanmar/ Vision Fund	Financial inclusion for the Uplands	Pro-poor microfinance services.
Yoma Bank	Yoma Bank agri-business finance programme (Yoma Bank AFP)	Hire purchase scheme, individual financial advice, loans.



## THE UPLANDS PROGRAMME

The Uplands Programme framework was designed based on a scoping report completed in January 2015. A call for concept notes was posted in July 2015, followed by a restricted call for proposals in October. In early 2016, six proposals were selected for funding, including three submitted by local NGOs.



## THE MIGRATION PROGRAMME

Recognising that internal and international migration are both important factors for rural development, in 2015 the LIFT Fund Board allocated USD 18 million for a new migration programme. Landlessness, climate change and low incomes, combined with economic opportunities in countries bordering Myanmar have increased out-migration. LIFT support aims to leverage the benefits of labour migration and mitigate the negatives.

LIFT developed partnerships with two new bodies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), who will build an evidence base in support of policies on labour migration. IOM also provides technical support to LIFT's implementing partners to incorporate migration into their projects. Through a call for proposals in early 2016, LIFT will seek additional partnerships to implement specific migration-related activities on migration issues, such as awareness, skills development, financial literacy and services, and innovative job-matching services.





# RAPID RESPONSE TO THE SUMMER FLOODS

In late July and August 2015, much of the country suffered from extensive flooding and landslides in the wake of Cyclone Komen. Over nine million people were affected in 12 out of Myanmar's 14 States and Regions. At least 172 people lost their lives.

The government led the emergency response. With respect to livelihoods losses, over 1.4 million acres (527,000 hectares) of farmland were flooded, more than 841,000 acres (341,000 hectares) of crop land were destroyed, and around 242,000 livestock were killed.

LIFT was quick to respond, allocating USD 1 million of new funding to re-establish livelihoods and food security. Before the end of August, the funds were fully allocated to existing partners in order to:

- restart key livelihood activities
- minimise increases in household indebtedness
- minimise the impact of loan defaults on the long-term sustainability of LIFT's microfinance partners, and the future access of poor households to affordable financial services

More new funds for flood relief were released in October, and by the end of the year, LIFT had provided assistance to more than 360,000 flood-affected people at a cost of USD 4.3 million.







# WORKING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

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LIFT continues to apply its knowledge and experience to inform better sector policies, planning and investment. We demonstrate and communicate results to encourage ‘take up’ and ‘scale up’, while addressing systemic obstacles to rural growth. For example, in 2015, LIFT worked together with the government and the private sector to find an innovative approach to alleviate the impediments to foreign investment in the microfinance sector in Myanmar by hedging currency risks for both investors and microfinance providers. LIFT also worked with the National Economic Social Advisory Council, the Myanmar Agriculture Network and USAID on a working paper outlining key agriculture policy engagements, which will be discussed with the new government. In addition, LIFT continued to support the development and piloting of new systems to improve the land registration system. LIFT’s support on land reform was successful in helping policy makers include gender important issues in the National Land Use Policy.

LIFT continued to support the government’s National Strategic Framework for Rural Development and the ministry responsible for implementing it, the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development.

LIFT also continued to support the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development in a planning process for a National Action Plan for Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development through Agriculture (NAPA).

With the change of government in 2016, there will be new opportunities to use LIFT’s evidence and experience to leverage public and private capital for an inclusive rural transition.

LIFT is working in three ways to increase the sustainability of its interventions: LIFT is developing a portfolio of private sector partnerships based on principles of responsible investment. Secondly, LIFT’s support for local civil society strengthens independent voices for the rural poor. Thirdly, LIFT is supporting government capacity to implement an inclusive rural growth agenda.

## LIFT WORKS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE IN THESE AREAS:

1. Financial Inclusion
2. Inclusive value chains and market systems development
3. Nutrition
4. Land tenure security
5. Social protection
6. Gender equality
7. Climate change adaptation





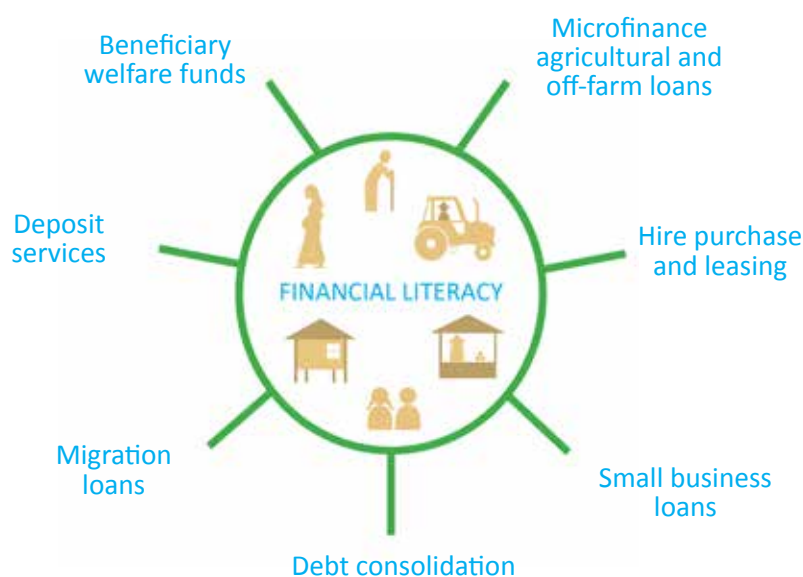
LIFT IS EXTENDING FINANCIAL SERVICES TO RURAL PEOPLE

# 1. FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Across all four agro-ecological zones, access to rural financial services plays a key role in LIFT's approach. The enormous gap in the supply and access to financial services remains one of Myanmar's most pressing development challenges and Financial Inclusion is now LIFT's largest programme. By the end of 2015, LIFT was supporting 41 microfinance partners that collectively reached nearly a million clients in 12,600 villages countrywide. This was 56 per cent of the total microfinance market in terms of clients served by all 168 microfinance institutions in Myanmar. Approximately 50 per cent of the loans disbursed were for agriculture. In 2015, LIFT microfinance partners provided close to USD 125 million of agricultural loans to more than 450,000 clients.

These services are enabling people to invest in better farm inputs, expand their businesses and smooth their income over the year, but larger loan sizes appear to be needed to enable real transformation of people's livelihood choices. Better access to regulated and sustainable financial services is the common element to all of LIFT's new programmes. LIFT will incentivise microfinance providers to loan larger amounts for longer periods to clients with the potential to start and grow new businesses. LIFT will also incentivise banks to do the same.

## LIFT-FUNDED FINANCIAL SERVICES IN 2015







LIFT SUPPORTS THE INTEGRATION  
OF SMALLHOLDER FARMERS AND  
BUSINESSES INTO COMMERCIAL  
VALUE CHAINS



## 2. INCLUSIVE VALUE CHAINS

In all four agro-ecological zones, LIFT's work on inclusive value chains focused on the development of private sector partnerships that stimulate direct and indirect investments in smallholder agriculture. LIFT's private sector partnerships, which are guided by its private sector engagement principles, focus on two key areas of investment: financial inclusion and contract farming.

In terms of financial inclusion, in 2015 LIFT developed two new partnerships, with Yoma Bank and The Currency Exchange, which together will attract USD 200-250 million in private investment to create sustainable market linkages and support services for smallholder farmers.

LIFT also started two new projects with private agri-food firms, PrimeAgri and Heineken, which together will give 6,000 smallholder farmers access to extension services and reliable markets through contract farming models.





LIFT SUPPORTS MATERNAL  
CASH TRANSFERS FOR  
IMPROVED MOTHER/CHILD  
NUTRITION

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# 3. NUTRITION

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In 2015, the number of implementing partners including nutrition in their projects rose dramatically. Twelve LIFT grants awarded were nutrition-specific or sensitive. Twelve organisations included nutrition objectives in their projects. Ten new projects included nutrition promotion or education activities.

LIFT has designed programmes to reduce stunting (or being very small for your age as a result of poor nutrition) through multiple approaches. A significant intervention is the introduction of maternal cash transfers (MCT) in Rakhine, the Delta and the Dry Zone. Starting in Rakhine in 2014, mothers were given a monthly stipend of MMK 13,000 kyats, or about USD 11, to buy nutritious food and access health services over the course of the first 1,000 days of a child's life (conception until their second birthday). In addition to cash, pregnant women and mothers learned about the importance of a varied and nutritious diet.

The Rakhine pilot was remarkably successful. Mothers in the project delivered heavier babies than mothers in the control group. In addition, exclusive breastfeeding amongst mothers in the intervention group doubled and stunting rates decreased by five per cent. Similar projects are being introduced in the Delta and the Dry Zone.

Starting in 2016, maternal cash transfer projects of USD 14.5 million are to be implemented by LIFT, targeting 54,000 mothers and children. Randomised control trials have been designed to measure the impact of the projects with the objective of determining the most cost-effective way to deliver the transfers and accompanying nutrition and health messages.

In 2015, new nutrition indicators were integrated into the LIFT logical framework to allow comprehensive measuring of nutrition achievements.







LIFT SUPPORTS LAND TENURE  
SECURITY FOR SMALLHOLDER  
FARMERS

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# 4. LAND TENURE SECURITY

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Strong investment interest and the poor regulatory environment in Myanmar is leading to uneven growth and rapid increases in land prices. For many people, especially farmers, their land title will be the most valuable asset they will ever own and that needs to be protected.

LIFT's Land Administration and Management Project (LAMP), implemented by UN Habitat worked to support the government's land office, the Department of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics (DALMS) to upgrade its land records and build new systems to update land registration. The new systems and processes will be rolled out in a future national programme designed to build the capacity of DALMS.

In 2015, LAMP worked in two pilot townships in Thayarwaddy and Myingyan, installing mapping technology in the township offices and training department staff to use it. DALMS staff updated 10 cadastral maps (known as kwins) that show the extent, value, and ownership of land in each of the two townships. They used new procedures set up by LAMP, including:

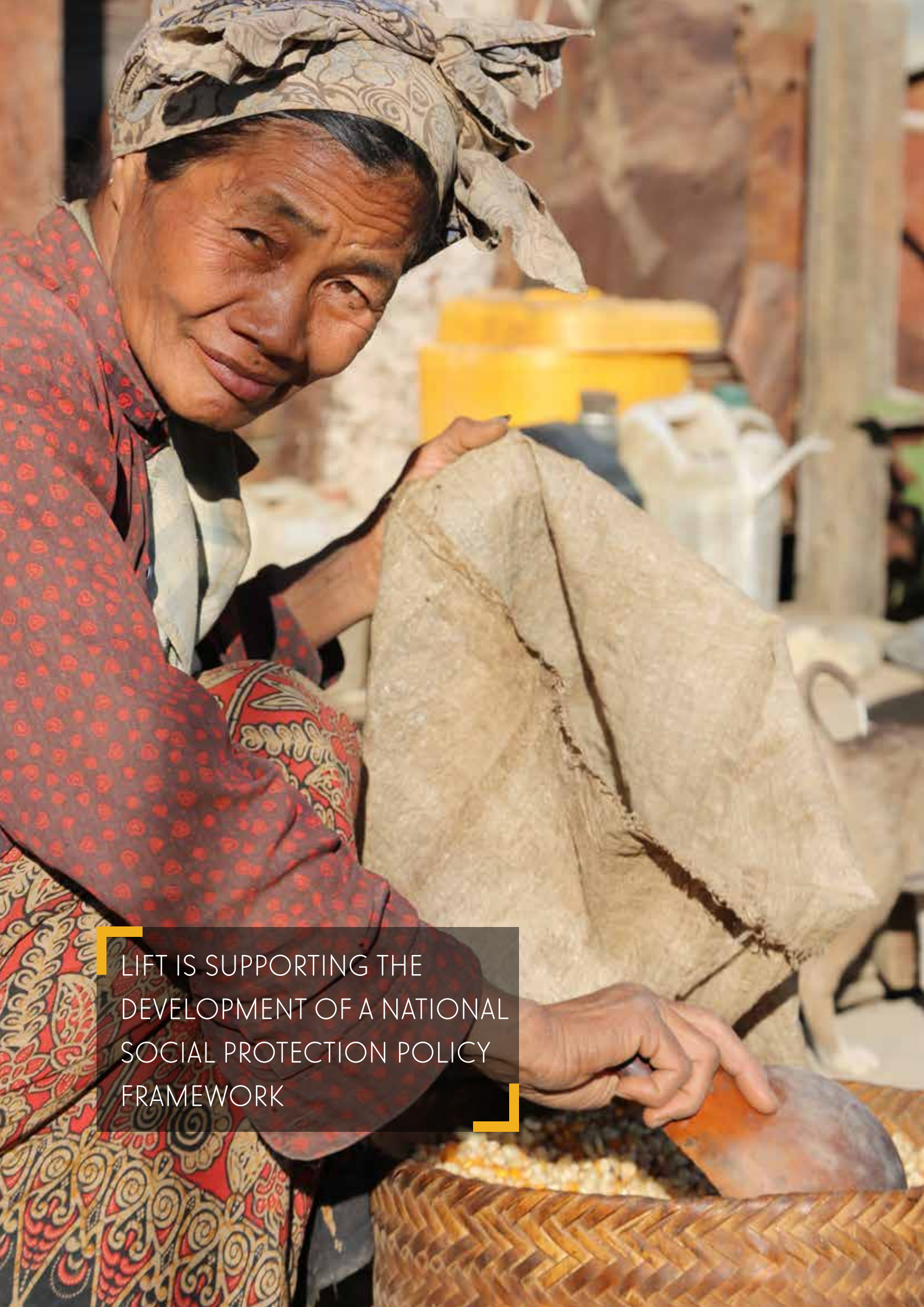
- document scanning and encoding of case files and farmland title registrations
- kwin map scanning and image enhancements
- digitising of the maps to form the land parcels in the geographic information system (GIS)
- updated ground-based surveys
- an information and education programme for both men and women in the mapped areas

In addition, a kwin map survey was completed in a previously unsurveyed area and was used as a basis for issuing land titles.

The identification of mistakes and correcting the land records is a large part of the LAMP challenge. A special purpose programme has been designed and prototyped for identifying errors and allowing corrections. The project is also preparing DALMS for urban cadastral surveys, which have not been done in 50 years.

The 6th and final draft of the National Land Use Policy (NLUP) was endorsed by the cabinet in January 2016. Another LIFT partner, the Land Core Group (LCG) played a pivotal role with civil society groups to coordinate their feedback on the draft policy. This included working with national parliamentary members in February 2015.





LIFT IS SUPPORTING THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL  
SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY  
FRAMEWORK



# 5. SOCIAL PROTECTION

LIFT achieves social protection both by specific, targeted activities such as cash transfers, as well as by ensuring that wider livelihood initiatives promote inclusion and equality.

HelpAge International is working to strengthen the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement's leadership role to effect the National Social Protection Strategic Plan. In 2015, the project supported the ministry to draft a new cash transfer initiative for the elderly. Two policy briefs on social pension costing scenarios and a costing model were produced. The project supported the development of a database of eligible people. Payments were made to 24,000 people.

Guidelines for cash transfers to people affected by the flooding in 2015 were developed, as were training materials for the care of older people. Additionally, the draft Law for Older People received technical and financial input.

Help Age and the Ministry of Social Welfare conducted a one-year pilot cash transfer project with LIFT funding in two townships for children, pregnant women, the disabled and the elderly. If the nationwide plan is implemented in the future the pilot experience will be applicable.

Another approach to cash transfers was piloted through the Social Policy and Poverty Research Group (SPPRG) project, which provided funding for a pilot based on village-based social protection mechanisms (including maternal cash transfers) in six villages in Sagaing Region. The project is expected to generate policy-relevant knowledge and capacity for future implementation models.

Finally, 14 of the 41 LIFT microfinance partners have introduced a beneficiary welfare fund for clients, which is available to clients in case of death or natural disaster. During 2015, nearly 40,000 women received cash transfers, totalling USD 1.6 million.

## The government's National Social Protection Strategic Plan flagship programmes:

1. Cash allowance for pregnant mothers and children up to the age of two
2. Cash allowance for children
3. Disability allowance (until age 65)
4. School feeding for all children
5. Public employment, vocational education and training
6. Social pension for individuals aged 65 and above
7. Older people's self-help groups
8. Integrated social protection services



LIFT PARTNERS LOBBIED TO  
INCLUDE A GENDER LENS  
IN THE NATIONAL LAND  
USE POLICY

# 6. GENDER EQUALITY

Notable policy success this year was achieved by LIFT partner the Gender Equality Network (GEN) who, in hand with other organisations, lobbied National Land Use Policy policymakers to include a gender sensitive lens in the policy. The GEN study, *Behind the Silence: Violence against Women and their Resilience* also provided valuable evidence to support the drafting of the Protection of Violence against Women Law (for approval in 2016).

Women continue to face challenges in Myanmar. GEN's report, *Raising the Curtain*, documents that unequal wages for men and women's work were recorded in all of their study areas, despite the equal pay for equal work guaranteed in the 2008 constitution. Barriers also exist for women wanting loans and credit, especially for unmarried or widowed women, and the lack of women's rights to inheritance in some communities poses serious problems for women.

At programme level, LIFT continues to support women with access to credit, with 93 per cent of LIFT's microfinance clients being women. The situation with unequal pay for agricultural labour continues. LIFT requires that cash-for-work is paid equally, despite some reports of resistance at local level. In Chin State, after the summer flooding and landslides, LIFT worked with other development partners to decide a raised rate of MMK 5,000 per person per day, to help families get back on their feet. In the Tat Lan Programme, cash-for-work is paid at MMK 3,000 for both men and women.

LIFT's new work in migration is also designed to assist women, both those migrating and those who remain. LIFT's new work on nutrition is also specifically designed for women, as women often act as the 'shock absorbers' when there is insufficient food, feeding their family before themselves. LIFT's maternal cash transfers will be given to women who are pregnant or have children under the age of two, to spend on nutritious food.



**WOMEN REPRESENT**

- 64% of LIFT-funded beneficiaries
- 93% of people who took out LIFT-funded loans
- 81% of people who established small businesses using microfinance
- 60% of people participating in LIFT-funded training
- 89% of members of savings and loan groups in the Tat Lan Programme





LIFT SUPPORTS INTERVENTIONS THAT HELP FARMERS TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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# 7. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

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Building the resilience of people and communities features strongly in the LIFT strategy, and resilience to climate change is a core component of this. LIFT continues to align with the Government of Myanmar's National Climate Change Adaptation Programme of Action 2012, and many of its agricultural, forestry and fisheries programmes are run on the principles of climate smart agriculture.

LIFT promotes community approaches to reducing vulnerabilities. For example, in the Delta, World Vision is strengthening existing disaster management committees at community level, and the development of disaster preparedness plans that feed township plans to address climate change. The project will build community and institutional understanding of climate risk, drive increased responsiveness, and promote scale-up and replication of resilient practices in the face of climate extremes. Also in the Delta, Mercy Corps is doing a Strategic Resilience Assessment (STRESS) based on methodologies used for a similar Dry Zone STRESS conducted in 2014.

In 2015, LIFT's work focused on:

1

supporting farmers to develop resilient agriculture systems through developing resilient seeds, providing climate-sensitive advisory services, and reducing post-harvest losses

2

diversifying household income through non-farm and off-farm small businesses

3

improving natural resource management through agroforestry, community forestry and better water management

4

supporting village action plans and disaster risk preparedness

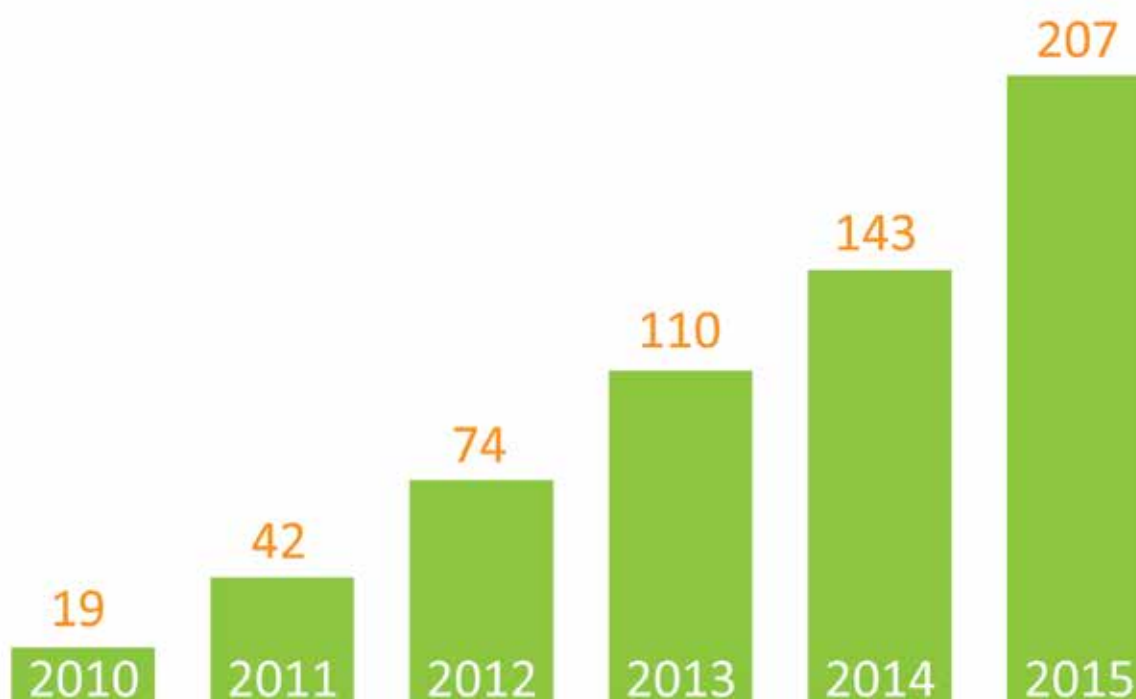
# LIFT'S GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

LIFT mobilised significant new financial contributions to implement its new programmes. The Fund welcomed Italy and Luxembourg to the Donor Consortium, and its first private sector donor, the Mitsubishi Corporation, bringing the total number of donors to 14. Significant new contributions were also received from the United Kingdom, the European Union, Switzerland and the USA. At the end of the year, total signed commitments from donors reached USD 428 million.

LIFT continued to adapt its governance structure as the context evolved. In order to increase the role of government and other stakeholders in the governance of LIFT, a government-chaired Senior Consultation Group was established. The first meeting was chaired by the Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development and was attended by high level delegates from five other ministries including Finance, National Planning and Economic Development, Environmental Conservation and Forestry, and Social Welfare. Representatives from local and international civil society organisations also participated.

In early 2016, the donors to LIFT agreed to go a step further in increasing government involvement in LIFT's governance by inviting the government to join the LIFT Fund Board. This is particularly timely given the strong alignment between LIFT's strategy and the stated priorities of the new NLD-led government, which includes a strong emphasis on rural economic growth that benefits smallholder farmers and landless households.

Cumulative LIFT expenditure in USD (millions) 2010 - 2015





## IN MEMORY OF STEVE DOWALL



Steve Dowall was LIFT's Lead Technical Officer from 2013 until his untimely death in a mountaineering accident in November 2015. During 2015 he led the team through the launch of seven calls for proposals, also guiding the team in the appraisal process. His professionalism and good nature were noted by all: "Steve always made time for us," says U Thura Aung of partner Radanar Ayar, "He was knowledgeable, thorough, considerate and an admirable person." Steve is sorely missed by his colleagues, who thank him for his high standards, hard work and dedication, and for his laughter and exceptional kindness.

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## THE LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY TRUST FUND

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