

# RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT

## WHERE WE WORK



Oxfam works across Myanmar to improve how investment is benefitting communities. This includes improving the enabling environment for responsible investment at national to local levels with Government/Ethnic Administrations and private sector actors. Together with our partners, we also work with specific communities whose lives and livelihoods are expected to be heavily impacted by the development of investments such as cement plants in Kayah and Kayin States, coal power plant development in Shan State, land acquisition in Magwe and the Special Economic Zone in Kyauk Phyu in Rakhine State.

## THE CHALLENGE WE ARE FACING

The private sector has an ever-increasing importance in the lives of Myanmar people as the country is quickly moving from a closed to a market driven economy – bringing with it both opportunities and threats. Myanmar is said to be the largest undeveloped market in the world, with abundant natural resources and cheap labour making it highly attractive to foreign investment. Yet the conditions for enabling more responsible investment are still weak and where good conditions do exist, there is limited capacity to regulate, enforce and implement them.

Without stronger governance and laws that establish and protect peoples' rights, economic gains may be captured by rich and powerful domestic and international elites resulting in deepening inequality. This could undermine the fragile peace and threaten democratic reform and economic growth and development. Progress on new policy and laws to improve investment conditions is being made, but some key areas of policy making are progressing with very limited transparency and accountability. Unchecked and unregulated investments into extractive industries, manufacturing and agriculture sectors have seen increasing protest from the public, including frequent strikes by newly formed labour unions, demonstrations by people who have lost their land, and strong resistance from communities to major foreign-backed economic projects that threaten their livelihoods and ways of life. Women are among those who are likely to be affected by investments, which are likely to bring social as well as economic changes.



Woman Farmer in Kyauk Phyu, Rakhine State  
Photo by: Soe Win Nyein/ Oxfam

## THE CHANGE WE WANT

Work on the Responsible Investment programme is part of Oxfam's wider Economic Justice programme in Myanmar. At the national level, we want to see an improved enabling environment for investment. This means improved policies and legislation to guide investors and companies that are in line with international best practice – and are effectively implemented at all levels. We also want to see improved practices from investors and companies themselves – with frontrunners leading the way on how investment could look if it goes beyond profit and helps uphold rights of communities and contributes to equitable and sustainable growth for all.

We want to see more transparency around investment, communities fully consulted on investments that will affect their lives and people fairly compensated for any social or environmental impact brought by investment projects. We also want to see communities and the local economy better placed to benefit from the investment – with linkages made to local and regional economic planning and support for skills development so women and men can take advantage of new opportunities including decent work.

**THE POWER OF PEOPLE  
AGAINST POVERTY**



**OXFAM**





Woman carrying gravel for construction, Kyauk Phyu, Photo by: Soe Win Nyein/Oxfam

## THE PEOPLE WE WANT TO REACH

At a local level, we reach communities and CSOs that work closely with them. At the national and State/Region level, we reach decision makers in the Government / Ethnic Administrations, and the Private Sector to help them improve their understanding of an commitment to make responsible investment a reality. Where possible we also work with representatives from local government departments and State/Region MPs.

## WHAT WE DO

Through engagement with communities, CSOs, companies, government actors and ethnic administrations, we support the development of accountability mechanisms for communities that enable people to better understand their rights and the issues and affect them, and be better equipped to voice their views. Decades of unaccountable and non-transparent investments have fostered mistrust and suspicion, which is why Oxfam is working with affected community members, authorities and investors to create opportunities to build trust and open up dialogue for meaningful engagement.

At the national level we are working with national partners and allies to call for improved policies and legislation to help ensure that the investments coming into Myanmar are more responsible and able to contribute to equitable, sustainable growth for the many - not just the few.

## OUR PARTNERS

Scholar Institute and the Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability (MATA).

## OUR DONORS

We currently have three responsible investment projects: GRAISEA (Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in South East Asia) funded by the Government of Sweden; Responsible and Inclusive Investments for Sustainable Development (RAIISD) in Kyauk Phyu funded by Oxfam Hong Kong, and Towards Conflict Sensitive and Inclusive Investments in Myanmar funded through the Dutch government supported Strategic Partnership with Oxfam Novib.