Promoting Participation and Development in Times of Change

Mid-Term External Evaluation of the Regeneration Initiative of Metta Development Foundation

Commissioned and funded by Oxfam Novib

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All conclusions and recommendations presented here are those of the lead author (Michaela Raab) and do not necessarily represent Metta’s, Oxfam’s or any other stakeholders’ policies or opinions.

The photographs in this report were taken by the evaluators and are owned by Metta.

Note: The letters and figures in brackets – for example (E9) refer to the source of information, whose confidentiality is protected by the use of these interview codes. “I” refers to interviews held with Metta staff and volunteers, “FG” to group discussions with participants, “E” to interviews with external stakeholders such as donors and other NGOs (including those participating in RazaThitsa). The code numbers have been allocated in an arbitrary order (that of their appearance in the first draft report), which prevents easy “decoding”.

Executive Summary

In April 2009, the Metta Development Foundation (Metta), a major national player on Myanmar’s NGO scene, began its five-year Regeneration Initiative in six ethnic states and five regions. Since then, significant changes have occurred, both in the country and in development funding policies. Therefore, Metta and its long-standing donor Oxfam Novib have agreed to commission this external mid-term evaluation: The focus is on issues that are important to Metta’s strategies and organisational development at this time.

Overall, Metta’s multi-sector, participatory work, grounded in thorough knowledge of local conditions and close working relationships at community levels and with local power holders, is highly relevant to the participating communities and to development priorities in Myanmar. Despite difficult local conditions and sometimes challenging donor practice, the Regeneration Initiative has effectively generated most of the activities and outputs intended for the period under review. Metta strives to make the best possible use of its resources by using their largest share in Metta’s intervention regions, and has built comprehensive management systems that appear efficient. It is, however, unclear to what extent the desired impact on food security and social development can be achieved, as Metta has only started developing a comprehensive system to monitor its outcomes (i.e. the changes in people’s behaviour and lives Metta contributes to). Metta’s community-based approach, cooperation with other development actors and the emphasis on environmentally sound techniques are important conditions for sustainability. However, due the lack of public funding for basic services and local development, and the consequences of armed conflict, many of the initiatives launched by Metta will continue to depend on external support.

Key findings and recommendations on the evaluation questions as per TOR

On Results

Key questions (KQ) 2, 3, 4 and 11 refer to the results of Metta’s work.

| KQ 2: What outputs and broader results have been generated by Metta work funded by ON in 2010-2012? |
| KQ 3: To what extent does Metta ensure that women and men, girls and boys reap equal benefits […] ? |
| KQ 4: To what extent does Metta’s work foster social transformation so that women and members of minority groups can drive their own development processes? |
| KQ 11: To what extent is Metta’s community development approach likely to generate sustainable development, at community levels and beyond? |

According to Metta’s detailed monitoring records, Metta has achieved progress as planned, on the outputs listed in the appraisal document for Oxfam Novib’s April 2010 – December 2012 grant (see comparison of planned vs. achieved results in Chapter IV, Effectiveness). There are two major exceptions: (i) development work in Kachin State, where armed conflict has caused disruption and destruction; and (ii) reforestation in the Ayeyarwady Delta., where tree seedlings and saplings arrived too late for the planting season due to delays in grant processing. The lack of Metta monitoring data on broader development outcomes has made it difficult to determine to what extent Metta’s activities cause complex, long-term economic and social changes. We have found that Metta’s community and capacity development efforts do contribute to tangible improvements in living standards - also for women, even though gender-specific changes are not monitored (for instance shifts in rural women’s work load). But the communities visited are far from achieving full food security and stable incomes. The contribution by a single actor such as Metta would need a supportive environment – such as “pro-poor” national policies – to generate sustainable change. Since Metta’s main “entry points” into communities are local, predominantly male leaders, special efforts (beyond Metta’s >30% quota in women’s presence in committees) should be undertaken to ensure women and particularly vulnerable community members reap sufficient benefits. Finally, empowering children to contribute to development in a child-friendly way is a relatively new field in Southeast Asia; Metta’s focus on child protection and the introduction of child centred approaches appear appropriate at this time.
Recommendations

- To ensure women and particularly vulnerable community members can fully and gainfully participate in Metta’s initiatives, the practical obstacles that hamper their participation should be identified and removed. For instance, it is known that women contribute more to community meetings if those are held at safe places near their homes, at times convenient to women; and if the issues to be decided on are known before the meetings, so that women can “prepare the ground” with others.

- More systematic and participatory monitoring of outcomes is needed (i) to understand the factors that contribute to positive changes, such as higher yields and increased income; (ii) to recognise difficulties and find practical solutions within the affected communities; and (iii) to foster learning among participants, Metta staff and other development actors.

- In particular, activities that risk producing negative effects (for instance, exclusion of the most vulnerable groups or an increased debt burden for farmers) deserve to be monitored closely. Such close follow-up is also an imperative in humanitarian work carried out by local partners whose capacity is markedly less developed than Metta’s.

On Strategy

Key questions (KQ) 1, 5, and 9 address broad strategic issues.

| KQ 1: Should Metta limit its work to specific sectors of activity (e.g. farmer field schools)? |
| KQ 5: How can Metta expand (“upscale”) its work while safeguarding high quality? |
| KQ 9: What new approaches (i.e. types of engagement previously unused or little used by Metta) would be likely to enhance impact, in view of new opportunities offered by recent changes in Myanmar? |

Increased availability of international funding and donor policies that favour sector-specific project funding have generated new opportunities and pressures for Metta. Metta owes its growth to its capacity to process large and diverse donor grants, both within its “traditional” project regions, and “new” areas (such as relief and rehabilitation in the Ayeyarwady Delta). However, pressure to spend large amounts of funding within short periods limits Metta’s ability to tailor its interventions to each community, and to accompany local processes over time – necessary preconditions for impact and sustainability.

The concept of “scaling up” rests on the idea that there is “best practice” that can be transferred from one place to another, such as Metta’s highly developed agricultural extension methodology. However, a single-sector technical transfer approach would risk ignoring specific community needs and assets. Where Metta is the only or the major development actor, its multi-sector community-centred approach appears more appropriate. Participants’ choices and the chances for impact (which tends to depend on multiple factors and sectors) would shrink dramatically if Metta worked only in one sector.

In terms of new approaches, some donors would like to see Metta engage more in advocacy. High-profile forms of advocacy have not been Metta’s specialty and would seem risky in the unsettled country context, especially for an NGO with strong roots in ethnic states. But there may be scope for defining specific advocacy goals in fields that determine Metta’s programme impact, such as land use and forestry.

Recommendations

- It seems appropriate for Metta to maintain its focus on holistic community development, and to deepen its work in its priority regions, which need continued support.

- Metta could gain from more intensive exchange with local and international actors working on social and economic development in Myanmar, to (i) make other development interventions benefit from Metta’s knowledge and experience; (ii) coordinate activities (which could include referral of Metta project participants to services provided by other actors, e.g. on land issues); and (iii) engage in safe, appropriate forms of advocacy.
**Organisational development**

Key questions (KQ) 6, 7, and 10 focus on organisational development.

| KQ 6 | To what extent has Metta’s decentralisation of programme management improved the use of resources?  
KQ 7 | What extent do Metta’s monitoring systems safeguard the quality of Metta’s work and Metta’s accountability to project participants, funders and other stakeholders?  
KQ 10 | To what extent do Metta’s current leadership structures and decision-making processes enhance collective leadership and accountability? |

Metta has restructured its management structure and processes to promote collective leadership, and strong “upward” accountability to leaders and funders. While the management of financial and human resources appears highly comprehensive, there are gaps in knowledge management. Existing monitoring systems gather detailed “baseline” data on participating communities and keep close track of activities and their immediate outputs. But there is little or no systematic monitoring as to how people’s situations change over the project duration. Metta has appropriately started working on an overarching, user-based monitoring system wherein communities would play an active role (“downward” accountability).

Metta’s decentralisation and human resources policies are still being “rolled out”. This transition happens in a difficult context, with the humanitarian emergency in Kachin (among other factors) demanding substantive attention. Delays in decision making have occurred, and Metta staff appears markedly strained by endemic work after hours and on week-ends.

**Recommendation**

- To ensure Metta’s staff remain committed and perform well, it is recommended Metta increases its efforts to ensure all women and men who work with Metta (i) can work in safe, supportive conditions, and (ii) earn appropriate salaries and benefits.

**Donor policies and practice**

Key question 8 is: How can Metta’s partners and funders best support Metta’s work and goals?

Metta enjoys productive contacts with some 30 international donors, some of which have systematically contributed to developing Metta’s capacity. A diverse donor portfolio comes with constraints: in the fiscal year 2011-12 alone, Metta produced 74 different financial reports to its donors at different times and intervals, underwent 10 external audits, and received 47 visits by donor representatives from abroad. Metta devotes a sizeable share of its resources to donor relations, yet struggles to obtain viable levels of funding towards its “core costs”. Gaps between individual project grants make it difficult to retain project staff, whose salary has to be suspended – sometimes for months – until a new grant arrives.

**Recommendations**

- Donors who fund Metta on project basis should ensure budgets cover the full cost of Metta’s work (including “indirect” expenses linked to planning, monitoring and documentation; human resources development; and administration).
- Project funding periods should be sufficiently long to ensure effective implementation cycles and that seasonal calendars are respected. Metta’s should “streamline” internal procedures to eliminate any unnecessary delays that may occur on its side.
- Metta should strengthen its advocacy for better donor practice by teaming up with international partners to (i) find short-term, practical solutions to back-donor constraints (for example, back-donor allowances for administration could be shared among project partners); and (ii) jointly lobby for grant schemes that are more supportive of local civil society development.
Map of Intervention Areas - Metta's Regeneration Initiative (Metta 2012)
I. Background

Metta and its Regeneration Initiative

Metta Development Foundation (Metta) was created in 1997 and formally registered in 1998, following the ceasefires between armed ethnic nationality groups and the military government in Myanmar. Volunteers of diverse ethnic, religious and professional backgrounds initiated Metta’s first projects in Kachin State which supported recovery from the devastating consequences of armed conflict. Since then, internationally funded relief and rehabilitation after the Asian Tsunami (2004), cyclone Nargis (2008) and cyclone Giri (2010) hugely increased Metta’s intervention areas and its partnerships. The organisation has grown to become one of Myanmar’s largest NGOs in terms of coverage and resources, with 505 paid staff (June 2012) spread across six ethnic states and five regions.

Metta’s projects, developed in participatory processes led by Regional Branch Offices, have been brought together under the umbrella of the five-year Regeneration Initiative (RI, April 2009 – March 2014), which encompasses a rich set of activities presented under the six headings listed below. In 2011, the Nargis Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Programme (RRD), which ran in parallel to the RI from April 2008 to March 2011, was integrated into the RI Emergency and Development sector.

RI Programmes:

- **Agriculture and Forestry:** Metta is reputed for its Farmer Field Schools (FFS) that disseminate improved, environmentally sound agricultural techniques. Agro-forestry demonstration and training centres have been established in Alam, Kachin State (CARD Centre, since 2001) and in Nong Kham, Shan State (2003); a third centre is about to be completed in Bulaygwin, Bago Division.

- **Education:** Early childhood care and development (ECCD) centres, and promotion of a child-centred approach (CCA) in primary schools built with Metta support.

- **Health:** Metta’s emphasis is on community health and hygiene promotion, water and sanitation, and work with persons living with HIV and AIDS (PLHA).

- **Livelihoods:** Community-managed development, including basic savings-and-loan schemes, development of small infrastructure and other activities determined by local communities.1

- **Emergency and Development:** Disaster risk reduction (DRR) by reforestation in the Ayeyarwady Delta, DRR training, and humanitarian relief in programme areas.

- **Capacity Building for Development:** Metta’s internal development, as well as work to strengthen local partner organisations. As of early 2012, these partners are mainly local civil society and ceasefire civilian administrations.

In 2010, Metta completed a major step in its organisational development with the establishment of a Senior Management Team (SMT) and collective decision-making within the SMT. Another important internal change was the departure of Metta’s founder, Ms. Seng Raw, who formally stepped down in 2011, handing over her responsibilities to the new Executive Director, Mr. Sai Sam Kham.

International support to Metta

Oxfam Novib (ON) has funded Metta since 2001, contributing almost 12 million US$ up to March 2011. It is Metta’s largest funder in terms of grants disbursed. Oxfam Novib’s current 3-year grant (April 2010 – March 2013) of some 3.2mn US$, supports the following aspects of the Regeneration Initiative (ORA: 2-4):

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1 Metta’s division between “livelihood” and “agriculture” activities appears confusing, especially in a context where livelihoods are chiefly agriculture-based. For clearer communication, it is recommended Metta use other, possibly more accurate terms for the activities now subsumed under “livelihoods”, for example: community development initiatives, community infrastructure development, water and sanitation, micro-enterprise development, microcredit.
- Agricultural and Forestry extension (FFS) in Kachin, Kayah and Shan States
- Pre-school and primary education in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Shan States
- Income-generating activities in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Shan States
- Disaster preparedness and mitigation through reforestation in the Ayeyarwady Delta
- Humanitarian response (capacity building, Metta emergency reserve fund)

In addition to this “regular” grant, ON provided humanitarian funding for Metta’s initial relief work in Kachin (2011), and mobilised a grant by the Dutch Postal Code Lottery in 2011/12 for reforestation in Nargis-affected areas. Due to changes in Dutch development policy, ON has faced a massive reduction in its funding. ON’s income increasingly depends on project grants by institutional donors, which radically limits ON’s capacity to disburse large, non-earmarked grants.

Metta’s combined donor income peaked at 11mn US$ in 2008-2009, with cyclone Nargis relief absorbing more than 8.5mn during that year. In the fiscal years 2009-10 and 2010-11, 39 different funders supported Metta, with annual grants varying from some 2.4 million US$ (from ON) to 860 US$ (from a private association). In 2011–2012, Metta received a total of some 7.36 mn US$ in grants. Myanmar is one of the few countries to experience an increase in international development funding at this time.

Changes in Myanmar

“When I get back home from a week’s field trip and I look at the internet, I can’t believe how many changes have happened.” (E5)

“Every day, every night, something new happens in the country now.” (E9)

Metta designed the Regeneration Initiative in 2008. Since then, the government has made moves towards democracy (ICG 2012). High-level decision makers have become more accessible. (EWS, E8) National newspapers report more openly about difficult facts and fledgling popular movements. “Ordinary” people in Myanmar make use of recent changes in the political atmosphere. During the time we conducted field research, local media covered a nation-wide series of peaceful citizens’ vigils against frequent electricity cuts. (May 2012) Such rallies, which would have been violently repressed in earlier years, indicate that citizens have succeeded in creating spaces to express dissent. The suspension of EU and USA economic sanctions on Myanmar in early 2012 seems to intensify a rush on Myanmar’s natural resources (such as oil, gas and precious minerals). At the same time, UN agencies, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and former exile groups are starting and/or intensifying operations in Myanmar. International development organisations value Metta as a key partner (E1, 5, 7), but are also introducing a sense of competition between INGOs and Metta for “back-donor” funds (E1, 2, 4).

Despite encouraging changes, Myanmar still has a long way to go to improve conditions for those who live in poverty: UNDP’s human development index ranks Myanmar in 149th position out of 187 countries. (HDI 2011) An armed conflict in Kachin State (since June 2011), insecurity in adjacent states and inter-community violence in Rakhin State have caused civilian deaths, massive displacement and huge material damage. The effects of climate change and natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and cyclones continue to hit vastly unprepared populations.

It is in this complex and shifting context that ON and Metta have agreed to commission this external midterm evaluation, with a specific focus on strategic and organisational questions.

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2 Provisional figure pending formal audit by Metta’s external auditors.
3 The last national census was in 1983; subsequent population statistics are extrapolations of the 1983 data.
II. Methodology

Evaluation purpose and users
This mid-term evaluation has been commissioned jointly by Oxfam Novib (ON), a funder, and Metta, to (i) assess initial outcomes and likely impact of Metta’s Regeneration Initiative, and (ii) review strategic and organisational issues that are of particular importance to Metta and its partners. The key questions, defined by ON and Metta and inserted into an evaluation framework that follows the OECD DAC criteria, focus on strategic and organisational review aspects. The evaluation feeds into Metta’s strategic review process, which has started in parallel with the external evaluation. ON will use the results to develop its future funding strategy with Metta and any necessary advocacy with others, including ON’s main funder, the Dutch government.

Evaluation scope and approach
The evaluation refers chiefly to year 2 and 3 of Metta’s Regeneration Initiative, i.e. ON’s current funding period. Upon ON’s request, aspects of the Nargis Relief Rehabilitation, and Development Programme (4/2008 – 3/2011) and of Metta’s current humanitarian work in Kachin have been included. Since the TOR emphasise organisational and broad strategic aspects, this is not a programme evaluation in the narrow sense, but a utilisation-focused review tailored to specific purposes and questions. Our approach has been rigorous in that we provide detail on our methodology, data collection, as well as the difficulties we encountered (full description in annex), so that readers can form an opinion of the validity of the conclusions presented. Data were gathered using different methods, from sources internal and external to Metta. Our interview partners - some 262 persons met in individual and small group discussions – were selected in a purposive manner to provide a 360° range of perspectives on Metta’s interventions.

Difficulties and limitations
A few days of preparation in Europe and three weeks for a small team in Myanmar could only yield a sketchy picture of Metta’s vast programmes, designed to involve tens of thousands of participants across the country. Statistical data on Metta’s activities and easily quantifiable results are available from Metta’s annual reports and previous evaluations. We have used these quantitative data without verifying their accuracy in detail - that would have been a different, larger-scale exercise. Instead, we examined the processes intended to lead to Metta’s results at various sites. Similar patterns emerged across our research sites, allowing for reasonably well-informed answers to most evaluation questions.

Evaluation Team
Evaluation preparation and logistics in Myanmar were facilitated by Metta, whose staff proved thoroughly prepared for the visit, and were well-organised and accommodating. The evaluation was led by Ms. Michaela Raab, a senior international evaluation specialist. She is the main author of this report. Preparatory desk research and final reporting were supported by Ms. Raja Litwinoff, an international expert in rural development. In Myanmar, Ms. Eh Mwee Aye Wai (Eh Mwee), a Myanmar national development consultant, joined the evaluation in Yangon and the Ayeyarwady Delta, conducted interviews and direct observation in Kachin State, and contributed to the final report. Three external interpreters and Metta’s Ms. Cho Myint Naing, who also held organisational responsibilities, assisted with translation.

Fuller details on the methodology, the tools used and our itinerary are presented in annex.

4 See http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,3746,en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1_1,00.html on DAC criteria (retrieved on 10 July 2012)
III. Relevance

Relevance is the suitability of an activity to the priorities and policies of its participants.

III.1 What makes Metta’s work relevant to the communities it serves?
The communities targeted by Metta live in Myanmar’s ethnic states and the Nargis-affected regions of the Ayeyarwady Delta. Their experience of poverty has multiple, interrelated facets. Key aspects are:

- Food insecurity and loss of livelihoods linked to lack of access to land, assets, markets and off-farm occupations; low-yield agricultural techniques; insecure land tenure; environmental degradation; natural and man-made disasters.
- Malnutrition, morbidity and mortality caused by food insecurity, lack of safe drinking water, poor hygiene and sanitation, lack of health care facilities, endemic diseases, and armed conflict.
- Lack of education and skills linked to underdeveloped national educational systems and to the effects of armed conflict, which has disrupted children’s and adult formal education.

A clear mission and objectives that reflect local needs
Metta has an explicit mission that reflects the country’s needs after decades of armed conflict and unresponsive governance: “The evolution of self-reliant and peaceful societies through social and economic growth”. (10Y:4) Metta’s clearly stated values emphasise respect of diversity and local knowledge. Initiated by people of various ethnic backgrounds, Metta is deeply rooted in the regions where it works.

The specific objectives that guide the Regeneration Initiative could be summarised as follows:

- Increased food supply
- Increased forest cover
- More and better quality pre-school and primary education
- Better public health through safe drinking water and sanitation, and improved personal hygiene
- Improved food and income security through livelihood and community development
- Effective emergency preparedness and response

These objectives (reproduced fully in annex) appear coherent with Metta’s mission.

Activities that build on local priorities and resources
The Metta staff we interviewed consistently voiced a commitment to a community-based approach. Thus, the RI objectives were reportedly developed by Regional Branch Offices over a two year period, in participatory processes with communities involved in existing Metta projects. This approach guarantees a high degree of relevance to the participants. In project implementation, Metta Community Facilitators (CF, usually recruited within the programme regions), and local participants decide together how specific activities are carried out – rather than Metta delivering “standard packages” throughout the country.
III.2 What makes Metta’s work relevant to Oxfam and other funders?

Metta has proven its **capacity to deliver large-scale initiatives**, including humanitarian aid, to regions marginalised from national development. This position makes Metta an ideal partner for international development actors: Metta has attracted support from 38 institutional donors in 2009-10 and 2010-11, including all Oxfam affiliates working in Myanmar (OGB, OHK, ON).

Oxfam’s strategy for Myanmar focuses on strengthening civil society. The **Regeneration Initiative** contributes to at least four out of six of Oxfam’s strategic objectives (listed in annex) through its long-standing, participatory cooperation with community-based organisations and local NGOs, and its constructive engagement with formal power holders from village to national levels (see also Chapter VII, Sustainability).

III.3 What issues does Metta face regarding relevance?

**Dealing with power relations and exclusion**

“Communities” are never homogenous; they include formal and informal leaders, and people whose voices are seldom heard - for example because they are female, young, or living with HIV or a disability. It has been safe and effective for Metta to cooperate closely with local power holders, such as village chiefs. Traditions and government restrictions on social organising would make it difficult to start by approaching the most vulnerable people. But there are risks to working with existing local leaders:

- **Customary leaders tend to monopolise speaking time and decision-making.** Since leaders tend to be older males, women and young people may find it difficult to influence decision-making at meetings. Metta notes that some villages trained in PAR have not properly followed the participatory research process when designing their micro-project proposals (RIAR12:26). In the worst case, local leaders might privilege family and friends in distributing project benefits. Our field research did not reveal any fraud cases; the CFs’ local knowledge may offset that risk to some extent.

- In some activities, participants are expected to provide their own contribution - for example, organise the transport of saplings, or spend several unpaid weeks in training. Those who are unable to invest time or money – the poorest, and people who depend on day labour - may remain excluded, unless activities are adjusted to enable their participation.

- The perception by some community members to be unjustly excluded may generate or deepen conflicts within the community, or cause mistrust against Metta and other development actors. We detected such dissatisfaction at one microcredit project site (FG9 and 12).

The Metta Community Facilitators we met typically worked with 4-5 villages which they visited at least twice a month. That is a fair degree of intensity, which allows skilful CFs to influence local processes. It may be more difficult to deal with power relations where the CF has less time for the communities, as in the **Community-Initiated Livelihood Project** (where communities receive training in PAR and subsequently plan initiatives on their own). Metta has recognised the importance of closer support and monitoring, and increasingly places its CF in the participant villages over long stretches of time. (I14)

**Recommendation:** Metta could enhance participation of “the poorest”, for example by:

- **Systematically identifying** the most vulnerable (deeply indebted, ill…) or marginalised community members, finding out about existing support mechanisms to these groups, and exploring community-based and other sustainable ways of strengthening such support.

“...In the first 4-month long Farmer Field School training at Sadung in 2003, a couple of participants had no means to support their families during the training period, so the community collectively provided rice rations to their families. [...] We learned that we need to give more time and resources to listen sensitively to what women and men themselves see as the obstacles to take part in our training and you will be amazed at the power of the community to resolve their problems by themselves.”

Written communication by Metta Founder Seng Raw, July 2012
- **Organising meetings at times and in places** that make it easy for everyone – including women, day labourers, people with disabilities and others who may be marginalised - to participate.

- **Facilitating** meetings in a way that limits leaders’ speaking time and makes sure marginalised people are heard. **Non-verbal tools** should be systematically used, such as drawings, or proportional piling and matrix mapping with pebbles, to make participation easier for less literate people.

- **Monitoring** – maybe with the support of such an extra committee - how the lives of vulnerable groups improve or worsen in the context of local development or humanitarian activities, so that activities can be adjusted if needed.

**Silent women**

At community levels, women tend to participate “in numbers only” in the committees established to implement local initiatives (WS; field observations). It took us an extra effort to hear women’s voices in meetings involving both women and men. This is common in rural areas of Myanmar, where women’s and men’s gender roles are highly differentiated. But in the women-only group interviews we conducted, women of all age groups proved to be as articulate and informed as men.

**Recommendation:** Metta could overcome the “silent women syndrome” by:

- **Identifying the causes** of silence – the reference to “cultural traditions” often clouds more concrete obstacles to women’s participation, such as inconvenient meeting times or an excessive workload.

- **Planning meetings to enable consultation within families:** Female and younger participants may become more active in meetings if they get a chance to discuss the **agenda** and ideas with male family members beforehand. Furthermore, women who do not attend meetings might exert useful influence in private discussions with their husband or father – provided they know what will be discussed.

- Creating “women-only spaces” where women can plan together. For example, **women’s committees** could advise Metta on activities within their village, and play a role in monitoring these activities and their contribution to women’s advancement.

- Encouraging female Community Facilitators to become **role models** by demonstrating confident, well-informed decision making that is systematically and publicly supported by their leaders.

III.4 **How can Metta ensure relevance in changed contexts? (KQ 1, 5 & 9)**

**Single-sector vs. integrated approaches**

Metta has worked across several sectors of activity. Some donors, including Oxfam affiliates, favour a consolidation of Metta’s work in specific sectors (agro-forestry and livelihoods are frequently quoted). (E1, 5, 7) Focusing on a **single sector**, for example agro-forestry, might enable Metta to develop an easily recognisable “corporate brand” on Myanmar’s increasingly competitive development scene, and to spread its work to “new” regions. Yet, such specialisation would dramatically reduce local people’s choices for development, especially where Metta remains the major development actor. None of the programme participants and state-level officials we interviewed called for Metta to limit its activities; on the contrary, some (FG11, E14) called for further diversification. Metta’s **multi-sector, integrated** approach appears appropriate, especially in the ethnic states, where few other development actors work. This approach requires human resources with rich skills sets, and the quick transfer of information, for example where Area Coordinators need information on an unfamiliar field. It can be challenging to manage complex, **rich knowledge** where programmes expand rapidly and large numbers of staff are newly recruited.

**Recommendation:** It seems appropriate for Metta to maintain an integrated approach. This calls for: **strong knowledge management**. This could be achieved through **comprehensive induction** for all Metta staff taking up new positions, and simple **guidelines and checklists** on key types of Metta activity. Time should be factored in for continuous **learning** and experience exchange among staff.
Advocacy opportunities

Metta and its donors are discussing options to engage more resolutely on advocacy (for example on “land grabbing”, a threat to rural livelihoods throughout the country). (AHRC11) Some farmers we met had been exposed to rights awareness training by a different NGO. They showed a keen interest to learn more about their rights (FG5). In recent months, farmers won some law suits against militaries involved in land-grabbing (E9) - an encouraging development.

Metta has carried out types of non-confrontational advocacy that appear appropriate in a context where the freedoms of opinion and assembly have been severely limited:

- Public information on rights - for example, the Metta Deepa Lawka (“The Lighthouse”) project produced and distributed 2,500 booklets on the land registration process to community members and local partner organisations in Kachin and Shan States. (RIAR12: 36)
- Practical assistance to farmers in procedures for land titles and community forest registration.
- Field days at farmer field schools, where officials from government, ceasefire groups, military commanders and other local power holders can visit farmers’ experimental plots, and learn about the benefits of organic agriculture. (I13)
- Organisation of public forums on issues that correspond with government priorities, for instance the fight against HIV/AIDS. Metta’s 2011 public forums on HIV/AIDS in Kachin State mobilised some 1,000 people living with HIV, who shared their issues with thousands of participants.\(^5\)

“Our strategy is not confrontation; you won’t see Metta leading a protest. It is the people who must do the movement, not the NGOs.” (I13)

Metta appropriately prioritises the security of its 500-strong staff and of its programme participants. With its strong presence in Kachin (151 staff in June 2012) and close historical ties with ethnic power holders, high profile, confrontational advocacy on the national level could be construed as hostile. Metta’s current policy of refraining from openly challenging power holders seems appropriate. However, it may be useful to develop a more explicit strategy as to how Metta can constructively influence public debates and policies on issues that affect the communities supported by Metta. This could include linking up with global networks that work on farmer’s rights (e.g. Via Campesina), and civil society development (e.g. CIVICUS).

It is recommended Metta:

- Develop a deliberate strategy as to how to constructively influence public debates and policies on issues affecting the lives of communities supported by Metta.
- Continue informing project participants of their relevant rights; and consider intensifying the exchange of information with initiatives that foster rights awareness at the “grassroots”. This could include referral of participants to other actors who can support them on legal and other issues.
- Deepen activity within networks that address problems with an impact on its programmes, such as land policy, education policy, civil society development and humanitarian issues.

Main conclusions on relevance: Metta’s holistic, participatory and practical work with communities is highly relevant. Within communities, additional efforts could ensure women and other vulnerable community members can fully contribute to and benefit from, project activities.

\(^5\) Personal communication by Ms. Cho Myint Naing, July 2012. RIAR12:21 reports 10,078 persons reached.
IV. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is about the extent to which objectives are achieved. The amount and diversity of the outcomes produced by or linked to Metta’s work is far beyond what this evaluation could verify. We focus on the specific results that ON has supported with its grant, and rely on Metta reports for overall numbers. Field research has yielded an idea regarding the extent to which Metta’s activities are likely to bring about all expected results.

“Metta delivers enormous amounts of work that others don’t or can’t deliver in those regions.” (E21)

IV.1 Factors promoting effectiveness

Knowledgeable and skilled staff: Metta’s local knowledge rests on staff recruited from these regions and years of experience with the communities involved. In addition, Metta has been extremely successful at attracting skilled volunteers (including international supporters), as illustrated in the example below.

“A friend of mine was hired by Meta to build a community centre. He asked for high payment, but when he saw what they were doing he did it for free. He requested to be part of it and is now a peace negotiator.” (E9)

“Every other person in this country seems to have volunteered for Metta at some point”. (E7)

Relationships and contacts: Metta attaches importance to cultivating relationships of trust, which has been particularly important in view of Myanmar’s history of violence and oppression. Along with its community-based work, Metta cultivates contacts with power holders at all levels of Myanmar’s society (E4, 6, 9, 14, FG11). This has enabled Metta to foster local initiatives even in highly restrictive contexts, and engage in discrete lobby or persuasion work with decision makers.

Money: Non-earmarked funding by a core of committed donors including ON has enabled Metta to tailor its interventions to community needs (rather than donor priorities), and respond flexibly to new situations, for example humanitarian action before dedicated external funding arrives. (E5)

New opportunities have opened up with (i) growing responsiveness of national government actors, and (ii) increased international development funding relevant to Metta, such as the European (EC) Non-State Actor Programme and the multi-donor fund LIFT.

IV.2 Expected vs. actual outcomes (key question 2)

The Oxfam Novib grant appraisal document for the RI lists two pages of results (ORA:2-4) that the grant is expected to contribute to. The results are aggregated at high levels (“a total of 17,176 households in Kachin State, Shan State and Kayah State are food secure”), and partly difficult to verify or interpret (such as, “fathers and brothers are involved in care of young children”).

Metta’s progress against these indicators is summarised in the table below. Overall, progress has been “on track”, with two major exceptions linked to:

- Armed conflict: In Kachin State, armed conflict since June 2011 has caused massive displacement and security risks for farmers’ whose fields are away from their homes.
- Mismatch between seasonal calendars and availability of funding: In the Ayeyarwady Delta, most project sites “missed” an entire tree planting season because of late arrival of seedlings and saplings. These delays were linked to late approval of donor grants.

Some reported results massively exceed ON targets (e.g. households participating in Shan State CNCF). This is due to the fact that Metta’s RI reporting systems include all activities – not only those funded by ON. In some fields, such as CNCF, unanticipated extra donor funding has allowed intensification or extension of activities.
**Community Nursery and Community Forestry and Agriculture (CNCF)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of HH targeted</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kachin</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>4,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan</td>
<td>3,521</td>
<td>5,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayah</td>
<td>1,123</td>
<td>1,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,344</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,249</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- In Kachin lowland FFS, 248 participants planted a total of 211.25 acres where yield increases of 46.6% - 65.1% have been observed, amounting to, i.e. an average increase by 18.5 baskets/acre.
- Low survival rate of (average <50%) of fruit seedlings (RIAR11:9) in 2010/11; marked improvement in 2011/12 (60-84% survival rates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Community Forests</th>
<th>Mini Forests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kachin</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayah</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shan</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Shan</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Training for Metta staff:
  - 2010/11: 36F and 36M trained in FFS TOT
  - 2011/12: 27M and 3F trained in FLE

- No data available on trainees who are not Metta staff (individuals, members of local development organisations)
- Average yield increase of 50% (from 20 to 30 baskets per acre) among farmers having adopted improved techniques
- No data on % of farmers who adopt improved techniques

**Other livelihood activities and community development**

At least 90 remote communities targeting 3,219 poor and vulnerable households (population of estimated 9,485) in Kachin, Northern Shan, Southern Shan, Kayin and Kayah States are food secure and are able to increase their income by over 200 US$ annually through community rice bank, livestock breeding (buffalo, cattle, pig, goat breeding), income generation such as broom making, and cash for work through small social infrastructure building such as bridge and village water supply construction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Community-based initiatives (CDP, DMP, LBL)</th>
<th>Livelihood Women, Livelihood Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kachin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 248 villages in in the four states were part of Metta community development initiatives – CDP, DMP, Community Based Livelihood, Livelihood Women, Livelihood Education. Most community-led initiatives provided livestock and crops for income generation.
- No statistics are available on food security and increased incomes.

- See also section below, effects on food security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90 self-help groups or community committees have been created and mobilized to oversee community development initiatives; these are equipped with basic skills on community organizing, basic bookkeeping.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010: 86 training sessions in the four states</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At least 15 communities (100 households – HHs - per community) have access to potable water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010/11: 1,721 HHs benefit from 35 new water supply systems 2011/12: 15 more water supply projects for some 1,750 HHs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early Childhood Care and Development

| 42 ECCD centres will be established in ethnic minority communities in the most isolated and remote areas of Myanmar, Kachin and Kayah states | In 2010-12, 49 ECCD centres were established in for Kachin, Shan and Kayah States, for 1744 boys and 1589 girls |
| Facilitators & teachers acquire advanced skills on child centred approach. |
| Women exercise leadership in local committees |
| Fathers and brothers are involved in care of young children |
| Children are creative and active in expressing their opinion and feelings. |
| - 618 participants (257F) participated in ECCD-related training in Kachin, Shan, Kayah from April 2010 to March 2012 |
| - No statistics available on women's leadership in committees |
| - No reliable data available of fathers' and brothers' involvement in child care |
| - 2010 evaluation reports improved skills among parents and educators, and healthy progress among children. |

| 5 primary schools have been constructed using durable, strong and locally available materials such as gravel-brick and local hard wood. 280 students have access to good quality primary education in Kachin, Northern Shan, Southern Shan and Kayah States. | - 3 primary schools built in Northern Shan and Kachin States since April 2010 |
| - CCA training for 112 persons (64F) |

Humanitarian Response, Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation

| An emergency reserve fund is set up in order for Metta to mount a rapid disaster response | Emergency reserve fund has been established and used in Kachin emergency |
| A warning system mechanism and response is set up by communities with involvement of local groups, individuals, Metta's staff and volunteers. | - Effective Metta response to natural disasters reached 11,890 persons in 2010/11, and in 2011/12 including Kachin IDPs living in 58 IDP camps |
| See section below on humanitarian aid |
| 1200 acres of mangrove/forest plantation is managed by communities | - 127 acres protected by community forest conservation efforts |
| Low planting and survival rates due to late delivery of inputs |
| 2600 acres is rehabilitated and planted with mangrove | - Total 1492.3 acres in 2010/11 and 104.5 acres in 2011/12 were planted in Labutta, Ngapudaw, Mawlamyiengyun, Bogale, and Pyapon in the Ayeyarwady Delta |
| Community disaster risk mapping is completed in 12 villages | - DRR training completed in 12 villages with 386 participants |

IV.3 Agricultural productivity

Metta supports different types of agricultural production, but the focus is on rice which corresponds with local consumption patterns and can actually be sold, as other produce lack markets. Therefore this section “zooms in” on rice production only.

Massive increases in paddy (rice) production have been reported by farmers who adopted the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) which Metta promotes in its farmer field schools (FFS). SRI has proven effective in boosting paddy yields across South Asia, chiefly through early and careful transplantation of plant seedlings in a square grid pattern, the use of compost, and regular water and weed management. Metta reports an average increase by 1/3 compared to pre-SRI harvests; and 46-65% increases in lowland paddy productivity in Kachin State. (RIAR12:9110) Since additional labour is needed to transplant seedlings the SRI way, seasonal labourers find additional short-term job opportunities during the planting season. This generates benefits beyond target communities: it is common for labourers to travel long distances during the transplanting season. (FG5)

However, farmers do not necessarily adopt SRI. Farmers reportedly hesitate to hire more than the usual number of labourers, as that would increase their costs. (I5) In Kachin for example, wages for casual labour have risen by 25 to 400 per cent (the latter in conflict areas) since early 2011. Borrowing money is a
risky gamble, as rice prices fluctuate and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns may destroy crops. In Shan State for instance, we saw fields of pigeon pea (bean) stalks wiped out by exceptional frost. It is not the much-quoted lack of a “business-mind” among farmers that inhibits risk-taking, but economic calculation that weighs the expected benefit against the costs. SRI saves time later in the process, when fields can be weeded with simple tools. But weeding is traditionally carried out by household members, especially women and children, throughout the agricultural season, and therefore requires less cash expense for hired workers. This type of calculation omits gender-specific opportunity costs: if women did not have to spend 7-10 hours a day weeding the fields, they could pursue other economic activities, play a greater role in committees and take better care of their health – to quote but a few missed opportunities.

In upland paddy cultivation, more dependent on rainfall than lowland culture, yield increases are less easily achieved. Finally, national policies may limit farmers’ options. For example, the 1992 National Land Use Law obliges farmers in the Ayeyarwady Delta to grow two annual paddy crops, which is only possible with expensive chemical fertiliser, and which depletes soil quality.

Recommendation: Metta could draw more systematically on the experience of participating farmers to analyse the specific factors that prevent farmers in different contexts from adopting SRI and other sustainable productivity-enhancing techniques, and develop appropriate strategies to remove obstacles.

Photographs from the PaO Region, Shan State (Michaela Raab, June 2012): farmer field school, NKTC tree nurseries, tab stand (with interpreter That That), flasks displaying useful and harmful insects, latrine

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6 Two evaluations (CDPE:10 and KDP11:22) describe farmers as insufficiently “business-minded”.
7 One Delta farmer we met stated half of his revenue from paddy was spent on investment costs, the other half on loan repayments, and that this situation was common.
IV.4 Effects on specific target groups (key question 3)

Equality between women and men
Metta reports that 50% of the beneficiaries of its work are female, and promotes a 30% women’s quota in committees. However, one or two male members tended to dominate the conversation in all but one of the gender-mixed group interviews we led. This reflects traditional gender roles in Myanmar society. (Than Than New: 2003) Overall, women’s influence appears limited and largely informal. It would be irresponsible to expect Metta to redress deeply rooted imbalance within a few years; but Metta has made valuable efforts. Even though it is unclear whether women’s quotas as such increase women’s weight in decision-making, women’s physical presence in decision-making bodies makes them more visible. Yet, in villages where half of the population is female, a one-third quota for committee membership may reinforce the impression that women’s opinions count less than men’s.

Women do benefit from Metta’s activities, as participants and as beneficiaries, and they may experience sizeable positive changes. For instance, a water scheme we visited in the PaO region has saved up to 3 hours of time a day for women who used to fetch water from the faraway source. They can use these extra 3 hours for productive or educational activities - and for much-needed rest. Regrettably, such gains remain largely invisible in Metta’s documentation. Simple tools such as gendered activity profiles (see example below) are not part of Community Facilitators’ planning and reporting routines.

Example for a gendered activity profile: Tae Pin 1 Village, Ayeyarwady Delta
Profile generated by Eh Mwee, based on a group discussion with male and female participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Productive work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming (ploughing, harvesting, carrying bundle of paddy)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming (mending, carrying heavy load, winnowing, cleaning grass)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling goods (vendor)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding animals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get vegetable from city to sell in the village</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock breeding at home</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reproductive work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring children and elder</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household work</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of food</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting firewood</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fetching water</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in village meeting</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering in village development activity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering in village welfare activity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendations: Metta could increase the transformative potential of its interventions by:

- Systematically gathering information on women’s specific roles and needs (for example by including simple gender analysis tools into PAR processes and in the FFS curricula), and monitoring the effects of Metta-promoted activities on women.
- Promoting more meaningful participation of women in committees. This should be based on an analysis of the precise factors that inhibit women from full participation and of ways to overcome these obstacles in each specific context.
- Identifying and providing specific support to women who need special attention (for example widows, single mothers, and survivors of trafficking or other violence against women).
Children’s education

Metta is one of the few providers of early childhood education in Myanmar. According to a 2007 ASEAN report which features Metta as a key actor in ECCD, less than 16 per cent of Myanmar’s children benefit from ECCD centres. The three Early Childhood Development Centres and the school we visited (all located in the Ayeyarwady Delta) appeared sturdy, well-maintained and decorated in a child-friendly way, with drawings on the walls and appropriate toys. The 2010 evaluation of the ECCD-programme, which covered 16 villages throughout the country, found “significant positive changes in children, parents, ECCD teachers, primary school and the community as a whole”. In group discussions we conducted at four Ayeyarwady ECCD centres, parents stressed children’s improvements in “good clean habits”, cooperative behaviour, confidence (“no fear of other people”), and politeness (FG3, 4). Children learn while they grow up and each child does so in her or his own way, so it can be difficult to tell the difference between changes caused by “ordinary” growing-up and those caused by ECCD exposure. In any case, the ECCDs offer a protected, convivial space for children who might otherwise be left to themselves while their parents work. In ethnic states, pre-schools also can offer opportunities for children to familiarise themselves with the Burmese language, the main language in the national education system.

We visited only one primary school rebuilt by Metta. Brief interviews with two teachers suggested their understanding of child-centred approaches (CCA) was limited. Reassuringly, both teachers resolutely opposed “physical punishment” of children. Since the school was quite new compared to Metta-supported education ventures in Kachin and Shan States, it would be improper to use these observations as a basis for wider conclusions on Metta’s overall CCA programme.

IV.5 Disaster management

Disaster prevention and mitigation in the Ayeyarwady Delta

Metta’s current disaster management work in the Ayeyarwady Delta focuses on reforestation. A total of some 825 acres (335 hectares) has reportedly been replanted during the project period, with mangroves and other trees adapted to the Delta region. Tree nurseries are typically tended to by volunteers organised in “mangrove committees”, whose role is also to raise awareness for the need to restore mangrove forests.

“A good tree is better than a weak house”: Villagers in Paung Ta Chaung (Ayeyarwady Delta) report having survived cyclone Nargis because they had trees to cling on. Villages with poor forest coverage were virtually wiped out.

The villagers we met seemed highly motivated to plant and protect trees near their compounds. However, larger-scale reforestation has faced difficulties that are beyond Metta’s control:

- Climate change has brought about exceptionally strong tides carrying destructive debris, and unusually hot dry seasons that destroy young mangrove plants. (MAR11:5, I18,19)
- Insecure land tenure: Past incidents of land confiscation for conversion into natural reserves or for other purposes have made local farmers hesitant about replanting forests, and about planting mangroves on river banks near their own plots. (E11)

Internal challenges have been related to delays in the approval of programme funds and the purchase of seedlings and saplings. In some locations, an entire planting season was reportedly lost due to late arrival of these vital inputs. (RIAR12:31, 18, 9) Furthermore, it has proven difficult to mobilise community time and resources for mangrove protection and weeding tasks, important during the months after replanting. Metta uses well-conceived ways to promote reforestation, such as combining microfinance and tree planting activities, or involving children in tree nursery and care. But weeding is an onerous, sometimes dangerous exercise, as mangroves are best reached by boat.
We were in no position to verify the extent of the damage caused by these external and internal factors, as tree survival rates have not been documented.

**Humanitarian Aid**
During the project period, Metta provided humanitarian aid in the following emergencies:

- Assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kachin State, where at least 62,000 persons have been uprooted by the conflict between government and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).[^8]
- Food and non-food relief to 86,345 persons after Cyclone Giri in Rakhine State (10/2010).
- Support to 25,524 persons affected by natural disasters in Shan and Kachin States such as pest infestation, hail and wind storms, and the March 2011 earthquake.

Our evaluation only touched upon Metta’s current emergency aid in Kachin, an operation that has been funded by ten international donors, and specifically the work in five camps in Bhamo District. Metta’s Myitkyina Branch Office was among the first to deliver aid to IDPs. (RIAR12:29) Metta works both in government-controlled areas and areas controlled by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). The Metta-supported camps visited by Ms. Eh Mwee appeared cramped, but clean and well-supported.

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[^8]: Data from [http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4fd72cae2.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4fd72cae2.html), retrieved in July 2012

[^9]: The shelter shown on the photograph is not one of those constructed by Metta, which offer more space.
Metta has experienced difficulties in recruiting skilled staff for the Kachin emergency. As a result, Metta can only provide limited guidance and monitoring to the religious organisations that host the IDP camps. That explains some of the problems we noticed: for example, in one camp, latrine pits were left unlined. Local camp management, not directly controlled by Metta, has left gaps in women’s and child protection: for instance, not all washing spaces and latrines are gender-segregated. Representatives of church groups that run Bhamo camps appear unprepared to prevent and/or respond to cases of sexual violence. Such issues are fairly common in emergencies around the world. Closer involvement and monitoring by Metta staff, as well as cooperation with any other actors that are specialised in women’s and child protection, could help closing these gaps.

Rice Distribution at a KBC-run camp for IDPs in Kachin State (Eh Muwe, June 2012)

Metta participates in the coordination mechanisms of UN-OCHA, at national and at Myitkyina levels. Some expatriates we interviewed voiced a suspicion of Metta lacking impartiality in Kachin, as Metta has a long-standing relationship with the KIO, the civilian administration of the KIA. On the other hand, the necessary cooperation of international organisations with national government – a conflict party – has not been described as partial by these interviewees. (E2, 12) Such confusion may jeopardise Metta’s much-needed support to IDPs. All humanitarian actors in Kachin must negotiate with at least one of the conflict parties to gain access. The focus of all humanitarian actors and their donors should be on finding viable solutions that ensure aid reaches the civilians who need it in an equitable, conflict-sensitive way.

It is recommended Metta multiply efforts to hire additional staff for the Myitkyina Branch Office for:
- More intensive steering and monitoring of humanitarian efforts carried out by local partner organisations.
- More intensive guidance for staff and partner organisations working on the current emergency. This may include policies and practical guidelines and checklists for Metta staff that explicitly demonstrate how Metta, as a national actor, maintains high ethical standards (“do no harm”) and impartiality in the distribution of aid.

Main conclusions on effectiveness: Metta seems successful in generating sufficient and quality outputs, such as schools, tree saplings and latrines. Data collection at the level of outcomes is unsystematic, which makes it difficult to determine how effective Metta’s interventions are in terms of provoking changes in people’s behaviour and in their lives. It seems that additional efforts are needed to (i) achieve full food security among the target communities and (ii) respond more fully to women’s gender-specific needs.
V. Efficiency

Efficiency is about making the most of one’s resources. It is commonly measured as the ratio between costs and benefits, “outputs” and “inputs”, easy to calculate when producing tangible goods (a school building, a water supply scheme…), but hard to measure in work where “inputs” and “outputs” are influenced by multiple factors and actors. It is important to examine the costs and benefits for everyone involved. For example, an activity that saves donor money because participants spend substantive own resources (money, work force…) can be considered efficient only if the material or immaterial benefits the participants obtain outweigh their financial, economic, health or other costs.

It has not been the purpose of this review to measure the efficiency of each Metta activity. We have focused on reviewing the structures and processes Metta has put into place to carry out its work - programme management, human resources and financial systems – to assess how they contribute to efficient programme implementation.

V.1 Management structures and processes (key questions 6 and 10)

“Before, we were working like a family business. Now we have become more systematic.” (I11)

Management Structure

Metta is seen one of Myanmar’s most advanced NGOs in terms of management capacity (E1, 2, 4, 5, 6). This has been confirmed by our experience with Metta – most of our requests for information were met swiftly and precisely with well-structured documents. Metta’s revamped management system, introduced in 2011, has been designed to enhance efficiency, leadership and accountability at all levels. The Senior Management Team (SMT) encompasses: the Head Office Management Team (4 men); the Finance Controller (male), the Regional Branch Office Coordinators (1 women, 3 men), the National Livelihoods Sector Coordinator (female) and the Manager of the Naung Kham Training Centre (male).

Metta’s current senior management structure is visualised on the following page.

Impression from the Evaluation Workshop – Members of Metta’s Senior Management Team

Decision making

Decision making processes appear well-defined, and are formalised in standardised documentation.

For example, the Community Facilitators (CF) in the Ayeyarwady Region elaborate comprehensive proposals including some 30 types of household data, and detailed community maps that show present and past resources. These proposals are reviewed by the Area Coordinator (AC), who forwards them to the relevant Programme Coordinator (PC) for review. When funds are secured and the project started, the PC submits funding requests to the BOC; the BOC requests to the Head Office, where the ED approves the release of funds upon clearance by HO finance managers. In brief: CF > AC > PC > BOC > ED > release of funds

Metta staff members we met perceived this “chain of command” (longer than earlier processes) as slowing down decisions. CFs feel weighed down by the increased “paper work” and changing requirements. (I1) Community and area-level staff report difficulties in enforcing changes in Metta’s policies and procedures with programme participants: CFs and ACs feel they would need to know more about the reasons or purpose of new procedures to explain them compellingly. (I17, 22) While one SMT member stated that the clearer lines of responsibility prevented decisions from “bouncing back and forth”, BO staff noted that it has become more difficult to reverse problematic decisions. (I6, 10)
Central and BO control mechanisms appear well-developed in Metta’s management system. This corresponds with donors’ emphasis on such “upward” accountability. Further development of Metta’s systems may be needed to strengthen “downward” accountability, which would empower participants and junior level staff to express their suggestions, concerns and complaints in safe, productive ways.

**Decentralisation**
Metta has voiced a commitment to decentralising programme planning, implementation and management. (RIPR: 4) These responsibilities have been gradually spread more evenly across Metta’s structure, while the Head Office remains in charge of overall strategies, donor relations, financial management and the supervision of senior BO staff. Regular meetings of the Senior Management Team, which brings together HO and BO leadership, ensure BO views are heard by Head Office managers.

Greater responsibilities for BOs, coupled with the introduction of more formalised planning and reporting processes, have increased the workload for regional staff.

“We did a proposal and submitted it to HO. They told us, ‘this is not a full proposal; it is too activity-based’. So we needed to work on it again.” (18) This statement by a BO member is interesting, because it describes a situation that is common in donor-grantee relationships: communication based on written proposals risks generating a sense of distance and a perception that those who control the funds exert “power over” instead of “power with”.

One year into its renewed management system, it could be expected that Metta is still searching to find the perfect productive balance between locally-driven initiative and central control.
The organogram below shows the Taunggyi Branch Office (BO), a fairly typical BO structure. Metta’s front line workers, the Community Facilitators (CF), report to “their” Area Coordinators.

To make the most out of Metta’s new management structure, it is recommended:

- Metta monitor the balance of HO and BO power and workload, and ensure sufficient and sufficiently qualified personnel are there to shoulder increased BO responsibilities. For example, it could be a good idea to place dedicated, trained fundraising staff in regions where donors show much interest in funding local initiatives.

- Metta explore ways of creating safe mechanisms for participants and junior staff to express their suggestions, concerns and complaints (“downward” accountability).

V.2 Monitoring and evaluation systems (key question 7)

Planning and Monitoring

Metta’s current planning and monitoring systems are built chiefly around individual project and donor needs, and usually focus on inputs and immediate outputs. For instance, Community Facilitators supporting forestry projects count the seedlings and saplings that are distributed to communities; microcredit committees record interest and repayment rates and share those data with the CFs. Outcomes – such as the number of trees that actually survive, or the change in the incomes of borrowers – are not systematically recorded.

Metta’s reporting system follows the management chain. For instance, in the PaO region, the CFs report to the ACs in monthly meetings. The ACs produce semi-annual reports that are reviewed and compiled by the Nong Kham Training Centre (NKTC). In parallel, NKTC prepares reports on training conducted at the centre, and receives reports from its Farm Manager. At semi-annual intervals, the NKTC submits a consolidated report to the Branch Office, which integrates the information into their semi-annual and annual reports to Metta HO. The BO produces additional reports on specific projects as required by specific donors, such as LIFT. Typically, the reports provide information on the activities implemented during the reporting period and their immediate outputs. Less regular documentation appears to be devoted to outcomes and impact:
- **Outcomes** or **results** describe changes in the behaviour of participants and other relevant actors: for example whether farmers have adopted farming techniques promoted by Metta; or whether ceasefire civil administration departments use PAR in their development initiatives.

- **Impact** is about longer-term changes in participants’ lives that Metta contributes to, such as food security, more stable incomes, replanted forests that survive and the benefits they generate.

However, even though outcomes and impact may be inadequately documented, Metta’s staff appears well informed on local situations. Community Facilitators gather rich, detailed household and village data to determine eligibility for participation in Metta activities. This information, compiled in neat booklets, is referred to as a “baseline” (which is inaccurate, as progress against these indicators is not systematically measured). CFs visit villages at regular intervals and gather their own impressions of progress or obstacles. The degree to which they share relevant information with the ACs depends on the reporting format. Generally, written reports tend to yield less rich information than focused discussions with colleagues.

At Metta’s monthly area and quarterly BO meetings (which include one CF each from each sector of activity), progress and challenges are regularly discussed. Small adjustments in the agenda could be made so as to include the systematic discussion of outcomes. An attentive note-taker could transform these discussions into reporting tables for easy sharing with Head Office.

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**Example: Meeting routines at the Myitkyina Branch Office**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Meeting</td>
<td>Area office</td>
<td>Representatives from all sectors of activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly Meeting</td>
<td>Branch Office</td>
<td>1 CF from each sector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example: Monitoring of mangrove and tree Plantation in the Ayeyarwady Delta**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme Coordinator</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Coordinator</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Except in PKY: 2x every 3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery Supervisor</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community facilitator</td>
<td>At least twice a month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since early 2012, Metta has embarked on a pilot project to introduce a unified, results-oriented and utilisation-focused monitoring system for all Metta’s programmes (I21, E17).

**Recommendations for Metta’s unified monitoring system:**

- Types of data: Only data that are really needed should be collected. Data should be gathered on the most relevant **information on the changes in what people do and how they live**, especially related to food security and incomes. Both **quantitative and qualitative data** are necessary – numbers as well as descriptions of changes.

- In keeping with Metta’s participatory approach, **communities** could be encouraged to devise own ways to **observe and discuss changes** in their livelihoods and well-being. Indicators and data collection methods may differ from one community to another.

- Separate data should be gathered for men and women respectively (**gender disaggregated** data collection), so as to reveal any imbalances or unexpected positive outcomes.

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**Evaluation**

Most previous evaluations of Metta’s work focused on specific projects and their inputs and outputs, relying on Metta monitoring data, dedicated surveys administered by Metta staff, and direct observation at several project sites. The reports draw comprehensive pictures of the project activities and their outputs,
but yield only sketchy information on outcomes and impact. Arguably, such evaluations, important in accountability to donors, provide limited learning benefits to Metta.

Since 2010, Metta has hosted evaluations of its ECCD, Community Development (CDP) and Kayan (regional) Development (KDP) Programmes, as well as an overall evaluation covering its work from 2001-2009. In addition, Metta’s work with IDPs in Kachin was assessed as part of an Oxfam real-time evaluation, which was organised by Oxfam with minimal Metta participation.

In addition to these formal evaluations, a leading BO member used her international scholarship as an opportunity to conduct in-depth research on participatory processes in Metta’s community development in Southern Shan State. (San Wai, 2011) As could be expected from a well-trained “insider” with easy access to local communities, she presents insights and conclusions of greater depth than those found in external evaluations by international specialists.

Most evaluations were run by one or two consultants, within a month’s time and with extensive support from Metta staff in data collection. That is inadequate to prepare and implement a sufficiently rigorous research design that would yield new, deeper insights about the effects of Metta’s vast and complex operations, and the factors (many of which beyond Metta’s control) that contribute to ending poverty and injustice in the project regions. In view of the limited resources and the lack of time (especially for preparation), our evaluation, too, can only yield intelligent guesses on Metta’s outcomes and impact.

**Recommendation:** In view of the scope and complexity of Metta’s work, future evaluations should use sophisticated, multi-method designs and multidisciplinary teams that include national experts, so as to generate findings likely to yield new learning benefits to Metta and its partners. Co-operation with academic institutions and evaluation grant schemes, such as the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (www.3ieimpact.org), may yield the necessary extra resources.

### V.3 Human resources

A sophisticated human resources system

Metta has introduced a comprehensive human resources (HR) management system that is commensurate with its 505-strong staff (June 2012). The full HR system was launched in 2011 as an outcome of a two-year process supported by international experts in organisational development. The system is codified in thorough manuals for HR managers and staff respectively. Detailed guidelines and formats organise recruitment procedures, induction, salary and bonus payments, staff development and review (called “performance development commitment”, PDC), and disciplinary procedures, among other aspects. Junior staff has expressed satisfaction about clear procedures for staff loans, and systems for health and accident compensation. (I1, 17) As of June 2012, 60 types of job descriptions (JD), from “Security Guard” to “Executive Director” have been established. Metta’s HR systems include an HIV/AIDS workplace policy that responds to international standards.

“Roll-out” of the HR system is reportedly uneven (I1, 4, 6, 22), as the new procedures demand extra time, in a context of external emergencies and staff fluctuations. Due to its growing, changing programmes and because of staff departures, Metta continuously recruits new people. The HR system foresees induction for all newcomers, which has not yet become systematic for employees who shift jobs within Metta. (I4)

Training

Training is particularly important in Myanmar, where secondary and higher education systems are reportedly weak. Metta displays an enormous “appetite to learn” (E10), organising or facilitating staff participation in a rich array of training courses every year. According to its records for the fiscal year 2011-
12, Metta staff participated in 53 in-country training courses. Overall, 232 male and 198 female person-times were trained\(^{10}\) in a wide range of fields, including gender issues (6 courses), humanitarian standards and techniques (6), participatory approaches and facilitation (6), leadership (4), and financial management and auditing (3). During the same period, some 22 senior staff members were involved in exposure visits and training courses abroad.\(^{11}\)

The limits of this evaluation did not permit a full assessment of training quality. The PAR and FLE training manuals, key pieces in Metta’s community-based work, appear comprehensive and correct. A clear step-by-step structure makes it easy for CF to organise appropriate training. The manuals could be made more attractive and understandable with richer examples and clearer illustrations.

Metta staff members who have benefited from short-term training are sometimes called upon to serve as trainers with their colleagues or community members (E3). This can be highly effective if the person is familiar with training techniques and the training content. But it may be inefficient if the person has only little knowledge of the training content, or is unfamiliar with training techniques. In that case, more practice-oriented manuals or trainers’ guides could help. International trainers are not necessarily a guarantee of quality training. For example, Metta senior managers report that different international gender trainers appear to hold divergent, confusing ideas of gender and relevant gender training. (WS)

Training needs follow-up so as to ensure people translate learning into action. This has not happened systematically. Junior staff members in the Ayeyarwady Delta reported having enjoyed training courses on subjects that appear relevant - DRR, gender, dealing with trauma – but did not find opportunities to integrate new knowledge into their work. This may be partly due to training design (too theoretical?), but planning and post-training support in building knowledge into daily routines may also have been limited.

**Recommendations:** Staff training is an investment that should be used deliberately so as to make the most of the money and time invested.

- Training should be **practice-oriented** and followed up so that new skills and knowledge are gainfully applied in programme activities.
- Training by external partners and trainers should be prepared carefully, for example jointly elaborated **terms of reference** and a preliminary survey with prospective participants, to make sure it is **coherent** with the participants’ and Metta’s broader needs. When selecting trainers, Metta should systematically request CVs and sample training materials so as to make an informed choice.

**Women’s leadership in Metta**

For more than a decade, Metta was led by Ms. Lahpai Seng Raw, who “handed over” her responsibilities in 2011 to a predominantly male Mr. Sai Sam Kham, the new Executive Director who leads an 11-strong SMT (composed of 2 women and 9 men). Most Branch Office Coordinators are male, with the notable exception of Myitkyina, the largest BO. The Taunggyi and Lashio BOs boast women in Deputy BOC positions. As of June 2012, Metta has 283 female and 222 male staff members. 14 men and 5 women hold positions on the two highest levels of Metta’s salary scale. This seems a fair balance in the context of Myanmar. Metta managers say there is no discrimination against women in the recruitment process; this has been corroborated in interviews with junior female staff.

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\(^{10}\) That number is not identical with the actual number of women and men who have had training, as some staff members may have attended several training courses.

\(^{11}\) All data from Metta’s internal records, presented as EXCEL files in June 2012.
Despite this encouraging record, there is no formal gender policy: “we have no rules what to do on gender and what not”. (WS) Some managers – including women – claim women “do not want to learn English” (WS), or “don’t have enough capacity and confidence” (I1). “Cultural traditions” are quoted as the main culprit, preventing women from contradicting men and younger people from challenging the opinions of older people. In this type of context, it may take extra encouragement for young female colleagues to voice any dissent in the presence of a senior manager. Furthermore, women who juggle household responsibilities with a demanding job might simply be too strained to learn new skills or to argue with their colleagues.

Response to our written mini-survey with Metta senior managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes, 100%</th>
<th>Yes, mostly</th>
<th>Not completely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that all women working with Metta have the same opportunities as men?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel all women in Metta have as much influence on decisions in their team as men?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another obstacle for women’s advancement and leadership in Metta is the way in which much of Metta’s work is organised. Community Facilitators and Area Coordinators carry out several visits to “their” communities per week, travelling long distances by bike or boat. People who travel alone are obviously exposed to security risks (accident, robbery, rape, and kidnapping in areas of armed conflict). Female CF report having been verbally harassed by police and military personnel (I17). Even “mild” gender-based harassment increases stress and reduces confidence among women. In this context, is hardly surprising that all eight Area Coordinators in the Ayeyarwady Delta are men.

To ensure women and men can work safely and enjoy equal opportunities, it is recommended:

- Metta managers look beyond women’s alleged “shyness” and “reluctance” and identify and remove practical obstacles that prevent women from participating fully in decision-making.
- Metta consider developing a “diversity policy” that encourages all staff members to deploy their full potential, regardless of gender, creed, ethnicity, physical ability and other elements of their identity.
- Metta map the different levels and types of security risks male and female staff are exposed to, both in “ordinary” settings and in a context of armed conflict, and devise ways to reduce and manage these risks. This should include measures to prevent gender-based violence.

**Stretched to the limits?**

Metta continues to experience growth. For example, the Taunggyi BO has grown five-fold over three years, from seven staff members in 2009 to 35 in 2012. Metta reports difficulties in recruiting staff, as qualified candidates are few on Myanmar’s budding NGO scene. Some senior staff members combine several positions at different levels. For instance, as of June 2012, the Competence Centre Coordinator is also Acting Human Resources Manager. The Myitkyina BO Coordinator, apart from leading a 151-strong team, is also Emergency and Development Sector Coordinator, and acting Coordinator for Health and HIV/AIDS Programmes respectively. Some Metta staff members have appeared overstretched. People who juggle responsibilities for several jobs are in a difficult position to provide sufficient guidance to more junior and newly recruited staff. Furthermore, cumulating several functions could generate imbalance in decision-making and monitoring.

Rapid growth means that everyone who works in Metta needs to continually adjust to new responsibilities, new colleagues and new situations. That can be stressful, especially in the current situation where Metta staff at all levels appear to regularly work extra hours and on week-ends. Humanitarian emergencies, and even the necessary, useful training and adjustments in Metta’s procedures add extra tension. Likely
consequences are a lack of support to, and of cooperation with colleagues, impatience with local community representatives, stagnating creativity, and dissatisfaction at the workplace.

“...In the beginning, when there was something I didn’t understand, I didn’t know where to ask.” (I3) “We were asked to do livelihoods work even though we’re not experts. Sometimes the community teaches us, and not the other way round.” (I10) Incidentally, this openness to learning from “beneficiaries” indicates a highly participatory approach.

In Kachin, the Myitkyina BOC reshuffled jobs among regional team members so as to ensure a swift humanitarian response. As a result, human resources were temporarily removed from development initiatives such as the HIV/AIDS programme, whose trainer was reassigned to humanitarian coordination. The BOC has juggled her “regular” responsibilities with intensive co-ordinating, proposal- and report-writing and staff coaching tasks linked to the humanitarian emergency.

Staff retention

Although consultants working with Metta qualify its staff turnover rate as modest (E19), the Metta SMT is concerned, especially about the resignation of senior, well-trained staff. “Pull factors” surely play a big role. International organisations in Myanmar attract skilled people because they tend to offer salaries, benefits and working conditions that are hard to match by local NGOs. We have also identified “push” factors that may compel some staff to leave Metta:

- The project funding model imposed by most donors (see also chapter VIII below) obliges Metta to issue time-bound contracts to most staff. When a project ends, most related staff contracts end. When there is a gap between a project and its follow-up project, staff may remain without payment for several months. Some CF we met during our field research were in this situation, “volunteering” in their communities while Metta could only cover modest transport expenses.
- **Salaries** for junior staff barely cover their cost of living: “The money I get is enough for me, because I still live with my parents. But if I get married, I won’t be able to feed my family with it.” (I22) Allocations for local transport, food and accommodation (per diem) are calculated tightly, which makes it difficult for staff to respond to additional community needs. The situation is exacerbated by a recent surge in accommodation prices, and by endemic inflation. (E1, I9)
- Some staff members reported a lack of moral support from superiors, as illustrated in this quote from a group interview: “When I try to explain that I don’t know how to do something, [the superior] sometimes says, ‘can you not even do so much’ or ‘why don’t you want to do it’, instead of helping me to find a solution.” (I17)

Arguably, these challenges are typical for organisations that experience massive changes. Metta has no influence on the “pull” factors, but can improve conditions for its staff so that the “push” factors are minimised. Metta has appropriately undertaken a review of its salary system and is about to launch a new salary plan with increments at half-year intervals.  

**Recommendations:**

- To end endemic overwork, Metta should **consider recruiting additional** staff.
- Metta should explore ways of improving both "hard" factors (appropriate salaries, leave days) and "soft" aspects in its HR management. “Soft” factors include recognition and praise for good work; help (rather than blame) when problems occur; and other aspects of supportive work relationships.
- Work on **week-ends and extra hours should be exceptional, and limited to emergencies only.**
- Metta should explore the creation of mechanisms to encourage allow staff to talk about their concerns and grievances openly and safely (for example in a form of “works council”).

12 Communication by Cho Myint Naing, July 2012
V.4 Financial systems

This exercise has not included any audit, as Metta receives regular and project-based external audits.

Over its first decade, Metta kept a separate budget for each project. Starting in 2009, a unified, overarching budget structure was developed to bring together all income and expenses, accompanied by a comprehensive finance manual and standardised forms. The new system appears complete and includes appropriate “checks and balances” for financial accountability. It went “live” in 2011, with a four-day workshop to introduce it to its senior staff. (RIAR12:40) Metta uses the Tally accounting software, which reportedly meets the needs for Metta’s internal systems. However, diverging donor requirements mean that Metta still generates many of its financial reports to donors on separate EXCEL sheets.

A brief review of Metta’s external audit and management reports for 2010-11 and 2011-12, prepared by an external auditing firm, revealed only relatively minor issues, explained by gaps in the induction of the staff concerned. In 2011, a case of misappropriation (the equivalent of some US$ 31,000) in the Cyclone Giri Emergency Relief was detected by Metta and handled professionally, with a full investigation, legal action against the staff and others involved, and compensation for the affected communities.13

**Main conclusions on efficiency:** Metta has built management systems for high levels of accountability. Continuous efforts are needed to ensure proper staff conditions and a safe, supportive work environment, especially for women.

Metta has started a process to introduce a more comprehensive overall monitoring system, which should enhance participation at all levels and yield more information on outcomes and impact.

**Metta-supported ECCD Centre in Paung Ta Chaung Village, Ayeyarwady, with rain water collection scheme**

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13 RIAR11:34; mail exchange between Metta (Seng Raw), Oxfam Novib and other donors, 24/2 and 15/3/2011
VI. Impact

“Impact” refers to longer-term changes provoked by development interventions. Since this is a mid-term review, it is too early to measure impact (which would be difficult in the absence of an adequate “baseline”). However, our examination of Metta’s ways of working allow us to discuss the likely impact on positive social and economic change.

VI.1 Likely impact on food and income security (key question 2)

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

(1996 World Food Summit, quoted in FAO 2008)

In Myanmar, one in three children under five years of age is reportedly malnourished. More than two-thirds of all women and young children suffer from anaemia. These are indicators of extremely widespread food insecurity. In the predominantly rural and poor regions where Metta works, only a small fraction of the population is likely to live in food security as defined by FAO. Metta’s efforts to improve food security focus on increasing rice production and providing income-generating opportunities.

Patchy knowledge about outcomes and impact

Metta’s current monitoring systems do not systematically monitor food security or changes in people’s incomes. Hence, it is unclear to what extent the participants in Metta programmes have achieved food security or better incomes during the period under review.

Farmers we have met in the PaO Region (Shan State) report they still “don’t have enough to eat” for 2 months a year (FG1), which is hardly surprising in such a deeply impoverished, conflict-ridden country. Increased rice yields do not necessarily generate a profit (a large part of the revenue may be swallowed up by production costs). In Shan State, Metta offers appropriate agricultural loans that schedule interest and loan repayment at the end of the planting season. Even so, farmers who have outstanding loans with multiple creditors are unlikely to escape poverty as long as they must service and repay massive debts.

Recommendation: Metta has appropriately embarked on a process to strengthen the monitoring of project outcomes, with “better indicators of how projects impact on local people’s quality of life” (RIAR12:38). Effects on household food security, and incomes and participants’ debt burden should receive particular attention. Ideally, indicators and data collection methods should be participatory and easy to understand for project participants and Community Facilitators, so that they can use the information to spot risks and opportunities, and adjust activities as needed.

Wherever possible, Metta should coordinate outcome measurement other relevant actors, or obtain data from others, such as government services, NGOs and UN organisations.

Income generation through microcredit?

Metta has abstained from creating microfinance institutions, but does support rural savings-and-loan and microcredit projects. It could be argued that Metta credits are beneficial because interest rates are lower than that of local money lenders. “Cheaper” credit may indeed slow down the increase in a farmer’s debt burden. But a monthly interest rate of 3% means 36% per year; 5% per month translates into 60% per year. It is difficult to generate a profit against such high credit costs.

Examples from the Ayeyarwady Delta (FG5, 8):

Teacher “A” has borrowed 60,000 kyat for a sow. She, a school teacher, expects to sell piglets in four months. Each weaned piglet would fetch some 25,000 kyat, which would allow for a small profit. She uses her salary for the monthly interest payments.

LIFT, retrieved from lift-fund.net in July 2012
Farmer “B” has borrowed 60,000 kyat and added his savings to buy 50 ducks. He sells about 25 eggs a day at 50-75 kyat each, which covers monthly interest payments. However, 20% of the ducks die every year, and costly veterinary medicine must be administered regularly to keep the remaining ducks alive.

Farmer “C” has borrowed 60,000 kyat to buy a suckling pig for fattening. In half a year, he may be able to sell the pig for 80-100,000 kyat. Interest payments and the cost of pig feed rule out any profit.

Other farmers, participants in Metta’s “buffalo bank” scheme, report borrowing money from commercial money lenders to pay interest for the buffaloes, which they are keen to keep even though their debt increases. Farmers reportedly prefer to invest in assets—such as livestock—rather than keeping cash (I19). This is understandable in view of Myanmar’s endemic inflation.

The entire model of ending large-scale poverty through microcredit has been challenged. World-wide, doubts about microfinance as an effective means to end poverty have intensified. Development economists point out that microcredit increases household debt and often compels debtors to borrow money from other sources, or forces them to sell off productive assets, so that they can pay back interest and loans (Bateman and Chang 2012). This has been confirmed in the 2010 evaluation of Metta’s Community Development Programme which noted that the target households remained heavily indebted. (CDP10:48) Also, the exclusion of the poorest and most indebted community members, on the understandable grounds that they would not be able to generate a profit, increases injustice in contexts where microcredit is the only development intervention. That may create social tension and conflict, apart from the continued suffering of the poorest. Microcredit is not automatically empowering.

Our findings in one of the Ayeyarwady villages visited shows that Metta’s microcredit work faces similar challenges. In that village, the local committee found only a limited number of people who met their criteria for lending. After those took their loans, the committee drew lots to determine who would receive the remaining amount. By that means, a relatively well-off village leader obtained a loan from the revolving credit provided by Metta. Credit committee members recognize that their scheme excludes people who the committee considers to be unreliable or unable to repay on time. (FG7)

Recommendations
- Microcredit should be used with caution. Its effects (both positive and negative) on individual households and on social cohesion must be monitored carefully.
- Rather than multiplying microcredit activities, it may be wise for Metta to strengthen on-going micro-grant work in order to continue providing productive assets, skills training, small-scale infrastructure (bridges), rural enterprises, as well as other public goods.
- Metta could also explore options such as technical support, or cooperation with carefully chosen business partners to develop rural enterprises that create fair employment opportunities.

VI.2 Likely impact on social transformation (key question 4)
ON sees Metta as a key contributor to its model of change in Myanmar, described as follows:

“Myanmar society will change through purposive collective action at the bottom, where small, accumulative action by communities will add up to significant systemic patterns and changes over time, thus tilting the balance of power in favour of communities.

Myanmar [society will] change through transformed beliefs, ideas and values. […] Integral to this strategy is challenging power imbalances in different aspects of life: between men and women, between the old and the young, between the rich and the poor, between the majority and minority population.” (OAR4, highlighting by Michaela)

The logic of supporting active citizenship through external development support appears fruitful. For example, farmers in the Ayeyarwady Delta report they intensified contact with township authorities,
asserting that “NGO work” has made this possible by increasing people’s awareness of their rights and of being able to engage with authorities. (FG5) Metta fosters “purposive collective action” in villages through participatory action research (PAR), meant to empower communities to devise and implement their own plans for local development. Our field research suggests that the committees established by Metta do effectively plan and work together. Such work appears to be supported by power holders in ethnic states. The representatives of the PaO National Organisation (PNO) we met praised Metta’s work in the PaO region, and voiced a commitment to developing local people’s capacity to participate in policy-making. Since June 2011, Metta has partnered with the PNO in the Responsive Education Partnership (REP), an EC-funded three-year initiative to improve local governance in education.

In terms of “transformed beliefs”, our impression from field research is that perceptions on the respective places of women and men and other traditional social hierarchies remain largely unchallenged (see Chapter III, Relevance). This is understandable in a context where armed conflict and authoritarian governance have destroyed productive local initiative and creativity for decades.

**Main conclusions on impact:** The limits of this evaluation and of Metta’s monitoring systems rule out precise measurement of Metta’s contribution to people’s food security and social transformation. There are indications that Metta has substantively contributed to social development in target communities.

The use of microcredit as an instrument of poverty alleviation has been challenged internationally and deserves to be monitored closely so as to prevent negative impacts (for example on social cohesion).

### VII. Sustainability (key question 11)

*Sustainability is about the benefits of an initiative continuing after the withdrawal of donor funding. As with impact, a mid-term review can only make a prognosis about likely sustainability, based on an examination of factors that typically influence sustainability, such as local ownership, cooperation with others and economic viability.*

#### VII.1 Community ownership

“Change process cannot happen from outside” (RI Review Workshop 2012)

Metta is a Myanmar national organisation made up of Myanmar nationals. It defines itself as a facilitator of development – not as its administrator. The factors that enhance the relevance of Metta’s work - local staff, local knowledge, community-based and participatory approaches (see Chapter III above) - are also key determinants of sustainability. However, there are external factors that limit local ownership, such as unclear or uncongenial national policies. Past occurrences of land confiscation and forced displacement make it difficult to convince farmers to invest in longer-term crops and reforestation. (E11) If national policy continues to require farmers in the Ayeyarwady Delta to produce two paddy crops a year, organic farming cannot be pursued on those fields. Increased development aid has generated adverse effects on community ownership: “Rather than keeping projects going, some local communities now just wait for a new donor”. (I16) Large donors such as the UNODC routinely pay training attendance fees, which potentially undermines the efforts of local NGOs who cannot offer such compensation for trainees.

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15 Popular use of the term “NGO” appears to include any kind of international development actor, including UN agencies. Hence the inverted commas

16 According to Metta (written communication of July 2012), agricultural policies that allow farmers to decide which crops to plant are currently up for review and debate in Parliament.
A bad (non-Metta) example in the Ayeyarwady Delta

In one of the villages we visited in the Ayeyarwady Delta, we noticed a concrete structure next to an empty hall referred to as the “child friendly centre”. The structure turned out to be a rainwater collection scheme that had never been completed. The INGO logo on its side (“pixelised” in Michaela’s photograph to the right) revealed its origin. In a different part of the village, a Metta-built ECCD Centre boasted a well-maintained rainwater collection scheme. We did not have a chance to explore whether more deliberate co-ordination by local community leaders could have averted such waste of resources.

Natural catastrophes of unprecedented scope, the effects of climate change and continued armed conflict can destroy years of valuable development work. For example, villagers have started to abandon islands in the Ayeyarwady Delta that are virtually washed away by rising water levels and stronger tides, leading to devastation that cannot be reversed by Mangrove plantation. (E11, I18) The current armed conflict in Kachin has provoked the destruction of some 55 out 547 projects supported by Metta in conflict-affected areas; some 90 projects have suffered severe damage (RIAR12:6).

VII.2 Cooperation with other development actors

Involvement of duty holders

Metta has cultivated long-standing working relationships with ceasefire civilian administrations and regional powers, including the Kachin Independence Organisation (since 2000), the Kayan New Land Party (2007), New Democratic Army – Kachin (2000), Nyein Aye Mye (2002), PaO National Organisation (2003), and Shan State Nationalities People’s Liberation Organisation (2003). Impressed by Metta’s Forest Field School model, the KIO has initiated its own FFS. As some groups have turned into formal political parties and start to contribute to national governance, their role in development grows. For example, PNO leaders we met described the Nong Kham Training Centre (built on land provided by the PNO) as a key actor in developing young leaders in the PaO region (Southern Shan State).

Metta’s partnerships in land and community forestry issues (Mapping by Metta, May 2012)

Acronyms:

EU/EC= European Union
FES= Friedrich Ebert Foundation
FSWG= Food Sec. Working Group
KBV= Kachin Baptist Convention
KIO= Kachin Independence Organisation
MERN= Mangrove Environmental Rehabilitation Network
NPA= Norwegian People’s Aid
RECOFTC= Center for People and Forests
SEM= Spirit in Education Mvt.
SPERI= Social Policy Ecology Research Institute
Metta reportedly maintains friendly, regular contacts with senior officials in government (such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Forestry), ceasefire civilian administrations, and regional commanders. (WS, E9) These contacts place Metta in a good position to advocate for the integration of services established by Metta and other NGOs into national and regional development plans.

**Local NGOs**

It is Metta's strategy to strengthen the capacity of smaller local development organisations and faith-based groups. Increasingly, Metta works “through” these groups, for example by funding faith-based organisations in Kachin State that deliver aid to IDPs.

**Raza Thitsa** ("Spreading Pollen") – Multiplying Accountability in Local Initiatives, a three-year project Metta initiated in 2011, brings together three Yangon-based NGOs (Better Life Organisation, Link Emergency Aid & Development, and NGO Gender Group), and the Southern Shan Local Development Organisation (SSLDO), in a joint organisational development effort coordinated by Metta. All Raza Thitsa participants we interviewed reported progress in their capacity development plans. So far it has been unclear to what extent the project will enable local groups to take on greater roles in regional development, as the initial focus has been on organisational development.

Practical, formal or informal collaboration in development and humanitarian initiatives run by these organisations, and adequate funding to make sure these groups can develop their work at grassroots level, should complement capacity development. Useful new skills must be translated into work routines so as to ensure they yield tangible benefits for local communities.

**Metta's partnerships in civil society capacity building (mapped by Metta in May 2012)**

Acronyms (see also annex):
- BYC = Buddhist Youth Association
- CBI = Capacity Building Initiative
- CMU = Chiang Mai University
- EBO = Euro Burma Office
- Ed = Eduardo Queblatin, CNCF expert
- FNS = Fried. Naumann Foundation
- GDI = Gender & Dvpt. Initiative
- KBA = Kayah Baptipst Association
- KDSC = Kimmage Development Studies Centre (Ireland)
- KNLP = Kayan New Land Party
- KRDC = Kachin Relif and Dvpt. Ctee
- KWA = Kachin Women's Association
- MCC = Myanmar Council of Churches
- MODN = Myanmar Organisational Development Network
- SEARSOLIN = South East Asia Social Leadership Institute
- TdH = Terre des Hommes
VII.3 A key challenge: economic viability

A recent evaluation of Metta’s Kayan Development Programme includes a disheartening enumeration of activities that continue to need external support in the extremely impoverished Kayan region: ECCD centres, water supplies, basic health care, rice banks, and cultivation of long term crops. (KDP11:33) In the regions we visited, similar difficulties could be observed.

One should distinguish between livelihood activities – such as agriculture and value chain development – and social services. By definition, livelihoods interventions should generate income. The case is different with social services, which are difficult to create and to maintain in poverty-stricken communities with administrations that are unlikely to shoulder running costs. Even where Metta’s livelihood projects have yielded extra income, community-wide economic growth tends to exceed the typical project life-span, especially in the difficult conditions of rural Myanmar. Specific solidarity systems need to be developed to guarantee accessible social services to all.

In Paung Ta Chaung Village, the ECCD credit committee received a MMK 1,500,000 start-up grant from Metta, as a revolving fund for microcredit. Parents who fulfil the eligibility criteria for microcredit take out loans and pay a monthly fee of MMK 1,000, plus a monthly 5% interest on their loan. The monthly payments are used to cover the two teachers’ salaries (25,000 MMK/ month – a primary school teacher earns 50,000/ month). This model makes the survival of the ECCD dependent on the borrowers’ capacity to make a sufficient profit (or to borrow money from other lenders) to pay back interest and loan.

As discussed in Chapter VI above (Impact), microcredit may increase the participants’ debt rather than generating income, and risks excluding the neediest. According to the credit group members in Paung Ta Chaung, microcredit group membership dropped from 43 in 2011 to 25 in 2012. At the time of our visit, which was the 1st day of ECCD registration, only 20 children (compared to 28 in the previous year) had registered for ECCD attendance. The financing model for this ECCD Centre seems more fragile than the classical “private school” model whereby parents pay a monthly 1,000 MMK fee to the teachers. In both cases, the most vulnerable children risk being left out.

Recommendations:
- Metta should review its funding models for services (like ECCD Centres) and explore ways to include children who may currently be excluded because of their extreme vulnerability.
- Metta join efforts to advocate with power holders to secure public funding for social services. This should include the integration of Metta-initiated services in development initiatives supported by international donors.
- Metta should constantly monitor the effects of its work to prevent negative outcomes for participants.

Main conclusions on sustainability: Metta fosters community ownership, and has been cooperating with duty holders and development actors. These are major preconditions for sustainability. However, in view of long-standing deficiencies of public funding for social services, Metta and the participating communities need to continue mobilising local solidarity mechanisms, and find external funding to ensure the most vulnerable community members can fully benefit from Metta’s Regeneration Initiative.
VIII. Donor Relations (key question 8)

VIII.1 Complex funding conditions

Project funding vs. non-earmarked grants

Most of Metta’s current donors fund **specific projects in specific regions**, a phenomenon linked to the international Aid Effectiveness Agenda calling for “real and measurable impact”\(^7\). In recent years, bi- and multilateral donors have placed increased emphasis on “measurable”, but have confused “measurable” with “easily quantifiable”. That explains the widespread focus on countable short-term outputs versus lasting social change, which can hardly be achieved within the typical 1-3-year project periods. Because of its growing dependence on project-based funds, even ON, traditionally Metta’s major source of non-earmarked grants, increasingly ties its funding to specific activities.\(^8\)

Different donors favour different types of activities. Single-sector interventions, by definition, curtail the choices recipient communities can make and risk reducing “participation” to a management tool. Large funders such as LIFT devise regional programmes that bring together different grantees, each specialising in a different domain, with Metta focusing on agricultural extension. (WS, E1) This “mix and match” approach comes with a transaction cost for the grantees, who need to coordinate their activities and connect the separate components. If that does not happen, “you end up in a situation where the wells are in one community and the farmer field schools in another one”. (E4)

**Short project periods:** The duration of the grants Metta receives formally varies between 1 and 3 years. Actual implementation periods tend to be substantially shorter, as funds often arrive late.

“One donor offered a one-year grant to our Branch office, to cover the fiscal year (April to March). The money came only in August, so we had just 9 months instead of 12 to complete the project. […] A different donor promised us funding for a one-year project, but the money did not come through, so we had to go back to the farmers telling them we could not implement the project. In the end, we did receive some money, but we had only a few months to spend it and could not cover the full area.”

“In water and sanitation projects, one year is enough to build the schemes. But you need much more time for effective hygiene training. […] When a donor gives us a short-term grant, we try to follow up the hygiene work in our ‘own’ time. For example, when we go to the village for other work, we make sure to spend some time with the hygiene trainers.”

“The U/ACF Programme ended in March this year and we had to suspend all Community Facilitators and Area Coordinators working on this project, even though we had developed a new proposal. The CF and ACs received no pay in March, April and May. We hope that in June we have donor approval so that we can pay 40-50 CF and AC again.” (Taunggyi BO staff)

As illustrated above, Metta’s holistic community development approach and its Regional Branch Offices can bridge gaps between donor priorities and funding periods, **provided Metta receives sufficient non-earmarked funding** (referred to as “core fund” by Metta) to cover the costs.

**A jungle of reports and monitoring visits**

“Our biggest struggle is to produce all those reports to the donors.” (I11)

In the fiscal year 2011-2012, Metta produced **74 different financial reports**, at different moments of the year, for 20 institutional and a number of unspecified private donors. This includes Metta’s overall semi-annual and annual RI reports, which show in a highly legible, engaging format how the different projects come together. The Kachin emergency response is covered by 17 distinct financial reports for that year. The majority of Metta’s donors expect reports that follow “their” specific project period, which does not

\(^7\) Accra Agenda for Action (OECD 2012)

\(^8\) This is to a great extent due to constraints ON faces in the Netherlands, as ON has experienced a steep decrease in earmarked funding from its back donors.
necessarily correspond with the fiscal year. Only five donors systematically follow the Myanmar fiscal year, and one donor needs reports by calendar year. Since formal requirements differ significantly, Metta prepares financial reports to donors “manually”, on EXCEL tables. In addition to Metta’s routine overall audits at semi-annual and annual intervals, semi-annual audits are conducted at the Head Office and at all branches. Six projects have been audited separately: Nargis RRD (semi-annual), two projects funded by an INGO (semi-annual audits), one by a multi-donor fund (one-off expenditure verification), and one by a UN organisation (annual). That means 10 audits a year.

During the fiscal year 2011-2012, Metta received 47 visits by donor representatives from abroad – i.e., an average 4 visits per month, roughly one per week. 19 visits included trips to Metta’s regional Branch Offices and beyond. The 47 visits did not include a similar number of monitoring and other project-related trips undertaken by national donor staff and consultants. In view of the complications surrounding travel in Myanmar, this stream of visitors absorbs considerable staff time.

The struggle over overhead costs and “own” contributions

Regarding allowances for “core”/ “overhead”/ “administrative”/”institutional” costs, donors apply different rules, often enshrined in hard-to-change national law or multilateral regulations. INGOs have learned to navigate these systems, for example by integrating a maximum of “regular” staff and other management expenses into activity budgets, and by withholding “overhead” allowances granted by the back donor, forwarding only earmarked funding to “local” partners. “National NGOs don’t need any funding for overheads because they are there, anyway.” (E12) This quip by an INGO representative illustrates a widespread failure to recognise the precarious financial situation of national NGOs in Myanmar which cannot mobilise any substantive funding apart from international donor grants. Depriving national NGOs from their fair share of back donor institutional support threatens their sustainability. Such practice privileges INGO growth over the healthy development of local civil society. That seems particularly inappropriate in situations where national NGOs are responsible for a large part of the planning, monitoring, and proposal and report-writing.

Metta has understandably advocated higher contributions to local NGOs. Some of our interlocutors have expressed admiration for Metta’s principled insistence on a fixed percentage for “core costs” (E4, 6, 20). Others saw awkward communication, and an unwillingness to recognise donor constraints (E1, 2, 12).

Some international donors require grantees to pre-finance part of the activity, disbursing a portion of the grant only after “delivery” of the project. Others require sizeable cash contributions from the grantee. These conditions are near-impossible for Myanmar national NGOs to fulfil, as they depend on external, mostly project-bound grants that cannot be “borrowed” for other activities.

VIII.2 Metta and Oxfam

Substantive, non-earmarked funding flowing from Oxfam Novib (ON) has provided a stable basis to Metta and supported its organisational development for many years. On the other hand, Metta, ON’s first and largest partner organisation in Myanmar, is a key source of information and inspiration to ON. It features prominently in Oxfam fundraising campaigns in the Netherlands, and this cooperation draws substantive funding from back donors. ON Myanmar Programme Officer Clarita Benzon also stresses the weight that large, well-connected NGOs such as Metta can “throw around” in advocacy, and their potential contribution to international campaigns such as OI Food Justice Campaign.

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19 Purchase of more sophisticated financial management software may solve this problem – at a cost.
Oxfam Great Britain (OGB) and Oxfam Hong Kong (OHK) also value Metta as a highly capable partner in development and humanitarian work, but their relationship with Metta is different from ON’s. Although OGB and OHK work from the joint Oxfam office in Yangon, ON’s relationship with Metta – managed from The Hague – could be described as closer, due to the longer history of cooperation and ON’s support to Metta’s organisational development.

In 2012, communication problems involving Metta, OGB and ON have generated tensions around Metta’s humanitarian interventions in Kachin. It seems urgent to address these issues – not only to ensure Metta’s much-needed humanitarian work receives productive, coherent attention and support. This is also about developing the full potential of Oxfam’s partnership with one of Myanmar’s largest development actors whose efforts support tens of thousands of people in hard-to-reach areas across the country.

**Recommendations to Metta:**

- **Metta should strengthen relationships with international donors and learn more about donor policies and constraints.** Since bilateral and multilateral grants rules are hard to change, Metta should develop ways of **working with the rules** to ensure Metta’s real costs are covered.

- **Metta should “streamline” its internal processes to reduce delays** in fundraising and fund disbursement processes to the necessary minimum. This may include building BO-level fundraising units that could communicate directly with donors. When a donor grant arrives late, Metta should examine options to request an **extension of the grant period** so that projects can be carried out in accordance with implementation needs and seasonal cycles.

- **Metta should explore the possibility of harmonising donor visits,** for example by organising 1-2 joint project visits, so as to reduce the burden on Metta staff and foster coordination among donors. The effectiveness of **donor meetings** could be enhanced by building each annual meeting around a different cross-cutting theme (for instance, community-led development, women’s participation, inclusion of the most vulnerable community members…)

**Donors could support Metta more effectively with:**

- **Coordination** with others on **grant periods,** possibly to coincide with the Myanmar fiscal year; coordination on **reporting** requirements, using as much as possible unified reports; and coordination of monitoring and other **visits** to Metta programmes.

- **Longer grant periods** that respect seasonal calendars and implementation cycles which are crucial to project success.

- **Non-earmarked funding** and (creative) support to Metta’s “**core costs**” within project-based funding so as to ensure Metta can fill gaps between project grants, free up sufficient capacity for meaningful participation in activities that project grants don’t cover (such as participating in coordination meetings and networks - and accompanying visiting donors).

- **Advocacy with governments in donor countries and with multilateral agencies** for (i) a **“reality check”** regarding the confusion between “aid effectiveness” and output-oriented short-term programming, and for (ii) **funding mechanisms that support healthy civil society development** in recipient countries.

**Main conclusions on donor relations:** Metta devotes substantive resources to meeting divergent donor constraints and expectations, while struggling to obtain sufficient funding for its “core costs”. Donors should work with Metta to (i) find practical solutions to back donor constraints and devise funding modalities that strengthen rather than weaken Metta as a key development actor, and (ii) engage in joint advocacy with back donors for more development-friendly funding mechanisms.
## Annexes

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10Y</td>
<td>Ten Years Metta Jubilee Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Area Coordinator</td>
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<td>BO</td>
<td>(Metta) Branch Office</td>
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<td>BOC</td>
<td>Branch office Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARD</td>
<td>(Metta) Centre for Action Research and Demonstration (in Alam, Kachin State)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBI</td>
<td>Capacity Building Initiative (initiated and managed by the communities)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCA</td>
<td>Child-centred approach</td>
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<td>CD</td>
<td>Country Director</td>
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<td>CDP</td>
<td>Community development programme</td>
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<td>CDPE10</td>
<td>CDP evaluation (December 2010)</td>
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<td>CF</td>
<td>Community facilitator</td>
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<td>CIP</td>
<td>Community Initiative Project</td>
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<td>CMH</td>
<td>Community-managed Health Care Project</td>
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<td>CMP</td>
<td>Community Master Plan (since 2005, in former opium cultivation areas)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNCF</td>
<td>Upland Agriculture and Community Forestry</td>
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<td>CNCF9</td>
<td>Upland Agriculture and Community Forestry report 2008-2009</td>
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<td>Ctee.</td>
<td>Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)</td>
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<td>DRR</td>
<td>Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<td>Dwpt.</td>
<td>Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>E followed by a number = external interview (coded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECCD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care Centre</td>
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<td>ED</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>EDT</td>
<td>Early Diagnosis and Treatment</td>
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<td>EV11</td>
<td>2011 Overall Metta Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Female, woman or girl</td>
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<tr>
<td>FFD</td>
<td>Farmer Field Days</td>
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<td>FFS</td>
<td>Farmer Field School</td>
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<td>FLE</td>
<td>Farmer Led Extension</td>
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<td>FG</td>
<td>FG followed by a number = group discussion (coded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSWG</td>
<td>Food Security Working Group</td>
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<td>GEN</td>
<td>Gender Equality Network (formerly Women’s Protection Technical Working Group)</td>
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<td>HIV11</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS Annual report 2010-2011</td>
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<td>HO</td>
<td>(Metta) Head Office</td>
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<td>HRFW9</td>
<td>HR and Finance Workshop July 2009 documentation</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally displaced person(s)</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>KAP</td>
<td>Knowledge, attitude and practice</td>
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<td>KBA</td>
<td>Kayah Baptist Association</td>
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<td>KBC</td>
<td>Kachin Baptist Convention</td>
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<td>KDP</td>
<td>Kayan Development Project</td>
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<td>KDPE11</td>
<td>KDP Evaluation in 2011</td>
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<td>KIO</td>
<td>Kachin Independence Organisation</td>
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<td>KNLP</td>
<td>Kayan New Land Party</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
KQ   Key question
LAC  Local AIDS Committees (under Metta’s Community-Led HIV/AIDS Intervention)
LDO  Local development organisation
LEAD Link Emergency Aid and Development (a Myanmar NGO)
LIFT Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund
LLH Livelihoods programme (Metta’s)
M Male, man or boy
MAR Mangrove annual report (followed by year of publication)
MERT Myitkyina Emergency Relief Team (crisis relief coordination since 6/2011 in Kachin)
Metta Metta Development Foundation
MMK Myanmar Kyat
mn million
mvt. Movement
NGO Non-governmental organisation
NGO GG NGO Gender Group
NPA Norwegian People’s Aid
NR09 Nargis rehabilitation report 2008-2009
NR10 Nargis rehabilitation report 2009-2010
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGB Oxfam GB
OHK Oxfam Hong Kong
ON Oxfam Novib
PAR Participatory Action Research
PC Programme Coordinator
PD Programme Director
PLHA Persons living with HIV and AIDS
PMT Project Management Team
PNO PaO National Organisation
RI Regeneration Initiative
RIAR10 Regeneration Initiative Annual Report April 2010 – March 2011
RISR11 Regeneration Initiative Semi-Annual Report April – September 2011
RIAR12 Regeneration Initiative Annual Report April 2011 – March 2012
RIBR Regeneration initiative brochure (2009-2014)
RIPR Regeneration Initiative Proposal (2009-2014)
RRP Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Development Programme
RTJJ11 Raza Thitsa Progress Report January-July 2011
SEM Spirit in Education Movement
SMT Senior Management Team
SRI System of Rice Intensification
SSLDO Southern Shan Local Development Organisation
TNI Transnational Institute
TOR Terms of Reference
TOT Training of Trainers
UACF10 Upland Agriculture and Community Forestry report 2009-2010
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VHW Village Health Workers
WDP Women’s Development Programme
Metta’s Mission and Objectives

Mission
“The Metta Development Foundation is founded upon the concept of “Metta” or “loving kindness”. Metta’s work is with the most disadvantaged communities, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. Metta strives to respect the diversity of peoples - their different cultures, values, customs and traditions.

Metta relies on the potential of all people and communities. It thus builds on and conserves the resources that people and communities already have. Metta believes in the fundamental value of self-reliance and supports all initiatives which lead to increasing people’s abilities to develop their own resources and determine their own futures. These values are demonstrated through Metta’s commitment to teamwork with each other, with partners and other stakeholders, and with the host communities.” (10Y:8)

Objectives
Metta has phrased its objectives in a “SMART” (specific, measurable, realistic and time-bound) manner, specifying the types of activities and numbers of villages to be served by the RI.

Overall objectives
“To assist 1,500 communities in 45 townships of Myanmar to emerge from the devastating consequences of conflict and humanitarian emergencies, help communities move towards sustainable growth and development.

To move towards devolution of responsibility to branch offices with the aim of increasing organisational efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

Specific objectives
Agriculture and Forestry: To increase available food supply (increase rice yield, growing vegetables and fruit trees) building on previous environmentally friendly methods by developing and disseminating appropriate technology among lowland and upland farmers and communities via local Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Farmer-led Extension (FLE) services, short courses and crop-based water supply in at least 430 villages, plus annual Farmer Field Days. To assist in the process of establishing mini and community forests in 100 villages.

Education: To improve the access to and quality of education at the early childhood and primary school levels in at least 235 villages. Assisting in ensuring adequate school buildings, furniture and educational materials wherever possible.

Health: To improve early detection and prevention of endemic illnesses and promote personal hygiene knowledge at the community level, and increase and improve the quality of drinking water and sanitation in at least 300 villages.

Livelihoods20: To improve food security, quality of life and income by supporting small scale livelihood generation projects for women and men, and small scale community-based projects in at least 535 villages.

Emergencies and Development: To improve effectiveness of emergency response and the chances of survival by activating the response mechanism via capacity building of local groups, individuals, Metta staff and volunteers.

Capacity Building for Development: To maximise the impact and sustainability of Metta’s work by devolving responsibilities to branch offices and encouraging them to function independently, as well as developing and strengthening selected local partner organisations.” (RIPR:13-14)

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20 Metta does not include its agricultural and forestry extension work under the category “livelihoods”, which, in Metta documentation, designates projects that involve transfer of funds to communities through microfinance or micro-grants. This is misleading, as agricultural productivity can have a massive impact on rural livelihoods.
Objectives of the Oxfam Myanmar Country Strategy
For 2012-2016:

- Empowered communities which can claim and exercise their own rights, and influence the local policies and resource allocation of government, social organisations and international agencies.
- An accountable civil society which is able to drive pro-poor, equitable change.
- Responsive local government which can respond to the priorities of its people due to the increased capacity of local authorities and ‘ceasefire civilian administrations’.
- Engaged networks of communities, civil society and local government which are able to work with a wide range of civil society and state actors outside Myanmar.
- The participation of women, with poor women increasingly taking positions of leadership and participating in decision-making processes at all levels, and
- A pro-poor private sector to ensure the private sector and government adopt business practices and policies which benefit the poorest and most vulnerable.

Methodological notes

Evaluation purpose and users
This mid-term evaluation has been commissioned jointly by Oxfam Novib (ON), the funder, and Metta, to (i) assess initial outcomes and likely impact of Metta’s Regeneration Initiative, and (ii) review strategic and organisational issues that are of particular importance to Metta and its partners. The key questions defined by ON and Metta focus on strategic and organisational review aspects. The evaluation feeds into Metta’s strategic review process, which has started in parallel with the external evaluation. Oxfam Novib will use the results to build its future funding strategy with Metta and any necessary advocacy with others, including ON’s main funder, the Dutch government.

Key evaluation questions
Metta and Oxfam Novib determined 11 guiding questions for the review. The OECD-DAC criteria for evaluation helped to frame these questions in evaluative terms – see evaluation TOR, reproduced at the end of this annex.

Evaluation scope and approach
The evaluation focuses on Metta’s Regeneration Initiative, and specifically on April 2010- March 2012, i.e. ON’s most current funding period. Upon ON’s request, aspects of the Nargis Rehabilitation, Relief and Development Programme (4/2008 – 3/2011) have been included. During the first days of our field research in Myanmar, Oxfam Novib’s suggestion to include Metta’s current humanitarian work in Kachin was accepted by Metta; the evaluation itinerary in Kachin was modified to include visits to IDP camps.

The evaluation has been utilisation-focused, i.e. tailored to the purposes and questions specified above. Participatory approaches and tools have ensured a wide range of perspectives has been taken into account. It is rigorous in that it provides detail on data collection and on difficulties encountered, so that readers can form an informed opinion of the validity of the conclusions presented.

Data collection and analysis
Data were gathered from sources internal and external to Metta and its partnership with ON. We used purposive sampling to gather a 360° range of perspectives on Metta’s interventions.
We started with an overall orientation based on a wide range of reports (chiefly on the period 2009-2012), and a written mini-survey with senior staff. Upon arrival in Myanmar, a one-day workshop with the Senior Management Team (SMT) deepened this first view “from the top”.

Criteria for the selection of field sites to be visited included:

- Presence of thematic fields addressed in the Regeneration Initiative
- A mix between “older” and “newer” offices
- Ayeyarwady Delta region to be included
- Current humanitarian efforts in Kachin State to be included
- Availability of travel permits (for Michaela)

In each region, we conducted semi-structured individual and group interviews with a wide range of male and female programme staff, from the Branch Office Manager to volunteer hygiene promoters. This included representatives from the Myaungma, Taunggyi and Myitkyina Offices, and from the CARD and Nong Kham Training Centres. We also interviewed, at each site, male and female programme participants, including IDPs currently based at 5 camps in Bhamo (Kachin). Finally, we also spoke to “outsiders” who were not involved in Metta programmes, both in Yangon and in the villages visited. Interview records were coded. Apart from a quick presentation round with one group of school children in the Ayeyarwady Delta, no specific interviews or workshops were conducted with children participating in Metta programmes. Direct observation, such as visits to ECCD centres, tree nurseries and FFS training, completed our picture.

A debriefing with Branch Office staff concluded each regional case study. In a final debriefing for senior Metta staff, broad preliminary findings were reported and discussed. During the report-writing phase, Metta provided additional documentation and data as requested by the lead evaluator. A first draft of this report was reviewed by Metta; factual errors pointed out by Metta were corrected. This report reflects the lead evaluators’ view.

**Difficulties and limitations**

**Large scope, limited time:** A few days of preparation in Europe and three weeks for a small team in Myanmar could only yield a sketchy picture of Metta’s programmes, designed to involve tens of thousands of participants across the country. Since statistical data on Metta’s activities and some easily quantifiable results are available from Metta’s annual reports and previous evaluations, we have used these quantitative data without verifying their accuracy in detail. That would have taken a much larger scale exercise.

Our case study approach examined the processes intended to produce Metta’s results, and to which extent these processes do produce the desired results. Similar patterns emerged across our research sites, allowing for reasonably well-informed answers to most evaluation questions.

**Limits to representativeness in field research:** Site selection for the field research was purposive and pragmatic: we aimed at covering the widest possible range of Metta activities while spending sufficient time in each site for meaningful interviews with different stakeholders. In view of our limited time and resources, we refrained from representative or random sampling. This means that our findings from a

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21 Future evaluations focusing of Metta’s work with children (ECCD, CCA) should include children’s own views on the programme. Young children’s views can be elicited through games and role play. The brief time reserved to ECCD and school visits under this evaluation did not allow for such more thorough work.
handful of sites each in the Ayeyarwady Delta, Southern Shan and Kachin States are not necessarily representative for Metta as a whole.

**Issues related to social desirability and confidentiality:** In a long-isolated country where freedoms of opinion and speech have been severely restricted, it is unlikely anyone would talk freely to strangers – let alone international visitors. In such contexts, it is common for interviewees to give the answers they think the evaluator wants to hear (social desirability bias). To mitigate this risk, we did our best to reassure respondents: each field visit started with a brief community meeting where Metta staff introduced the evaluation and its purpose, and encouraged participants to speak without reserve. Subsequently, the evaluator(s) led individual or small group interviews, out of hearing range for others. We used gentle probing, drawings and simple games to compel all participants to contribute to the discussion. The presence of an emphatic national co-evaluator, Eh Mwee, greatly contributed to obtaining a relatively rich picture of the benefits and difficulties associated with Metta activities.

As the lead evaluator did not speak Burmese, translation was necessary. Professional interpreters were recruited for the task – a male Burmese speaker in the Ayeyarwady Delta and two female PaO speakers in Southern Shan State. In some meetings, Metta staff member Cho Myint Naing translated with great skill. Interpretation generally creates a more formal setting, and reduces confidentiality. Where we felt we could find out more with direct contact, the co-evaluator engaged respondents in informal conversations after the “formal” interview. This generally yielded useful additional data.

**Limited in-depth evaluation:** Four external evaluation reports that covered part of our review period were reviewed. They focused on the following programmes: Metta’s overall programme 2001-2009, Community Development 2006-2010 (CDP), Early Childhood Care and Development 2007-2010 (ECCD), and Self-help Promotion in the Kayan Region 2008-2011. All evaluations were directed by the same international community development specialist, who used statistical design to gather chiefly data on activities (e.g. number of training courses provided by Metta) and outputs (e.g. number of water supply schemes built). The surveys were administered by Metta staff and volunteers - useful for internal reflection but potentially distorting (social desirability bias).

While the evaluation reports yield rich data, they contain little analysis of development outcomes and impact. For example, the CDP evaluation report praises family labour on people’s own farms “employment generation”22 (p.39), but fails to report whether food security and incomes

**Evaluation Team**

The evaluation was led by the author of this report, a German evaluation specialist with 24 years of development experience, chiefly in Asia. The preparatory desk study and final reporting was supported by Raja Litwinoff, an international expert in rural development. In Myanmar, Naw Eh Mwee Aye Wai (Eh Mwee), a Burmese development consultant, joined the evaluation in Yangon and the Ayeyarwady Delta, and conducted field research in Kachin State.

Evaluation preparation and logistics in Myanmar were facilitated by Metta, whose staff proved extremely well-prepared for the visit, well-organised and highly accommodating. Three independent interpreters (Burmese, PaO language and English) and Metta’s Ms. Cho Myint Naing helped Michaela overcome language difficulties.

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22 This unusual confuses means and ends – most farmers who live in poverty do not need more work but more income.
## Field research itinerary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Led by Michaela</th>
<th>Led by Eh Mwee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yangon</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/5</td>
<td>Evaluators’ preparatory meeting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inception meeting with Metta ED, PD, Finance/HR/IT Director and Programme Secretary (3M, 1F)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion with Lucia Nass, Consultant for Metta</td>
<td>Desk study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/5</td>
<td>Inception workshop with Metta Senior Management Team (10M, 1F participating)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/5</td>
<td>Individual and group interviews with</td>
<td>Desk study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- John Prideaux-Brune, Oxfam CD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Harald Kreuscher, LIFT PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Andreas Indregard and Ta Tum Seng, NPA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Daw May May Pyone; U Kyaw Lwin, NGOGG</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Tom Kramer, TNI PO</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ayeyarwady Delta</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>25/5</td>
<td>Bogalay</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inception meeting with Delta PC, Bogalay Mangroves AC and Bogalay Livelihoods AC (3M)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tae Pin Village: Introductory community meeting, followed by</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Visit of school rebuilt by Metta</td>
<td>Agricultural loan committee (7M, 2F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Informal presentations by school children</td>
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<td>Group and individual interviews with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- School construction committee (6M)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Teachers (2F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Parents (8F, 2F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Metta ECCD Community Facilitator (F)</td>
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<td><strong>Ayeyarwady Delta</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>26/5</td>
<td>Paung Ta Chaung (2) Village: Introductory community meeting, followed by</td>
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<td>Group interviews with</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ECCD construction and maintenance committee (5M, 2F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Parents of ECCD Children (7F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Mangrove Committee (4M, 2F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Group and individual interviews with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ECCD CF (F)</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Savings and loan committee (5M, 3F)</td>
<td>- 1 individual (1 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Savings and loan participants (5F)</td>
<td>- Group of 4, followed by joint interview with</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Michaela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch with Metta staff including ECCD Advisor (Yangon Office), Delta PC, two CF and others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Group interview: savings and loan participants (4F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interview with U Khun Aung Than Htay, PC (M)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27/5</td>
<td>Aung Hlaing (1) Village: Introductory community meeting, followed by</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Group interviews with</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Livelihoods savings and loan committee (4M, 3F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Savings and loan participants (3F)</td>
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<td>Individual interviews with LLH AC</td>
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<td>Individual interview with FFS trainee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Group interviews with savings and loan participants (5M)</td>
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<td>Group interview with hygiene promoters (2 F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Visit of agro-silvo-fishery model farm in Auk Joc Phyw Village; interview with owner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Led by Michaela</td>
<td>Led by Eh Mwee</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/5</td>
<td>Bogalay Town</td>
<td>Group and individual interviews with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Debriefing and group interviews with</td>
<td>- Mangrove Services Network (4M)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Delta Office senior managers (2M, 1F)</td>
<td>- Khin May Lwin, Delta HR Manager (F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- AC (1M, 2F) and admin staff (1M)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yangon</td>
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<tr>
<td>29/5</td>
<td>Data analysis, rest</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shan State</td>
<td>Kachin State</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel to Taunggyi</td>
<td>Travel to Myitkyina</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction with Metta Taunggyi Branch Office</td>
<td>Introduction and interviews with Metta Branch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interview with PNO representatives (7M)</td>
<td>Office: BOC (F), Emergency Response (F) and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dinner with BO staff (2F)</td>
<td>WD Coordinators (F), HR Manager (F)</td>
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<td>30/5</td>
<td>Sann Zaut Village</td>
<td>Visit to Taunggyi</td>
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<td>Group interviews with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Upland Agriculture and Community Forestry</td>
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<td>AC and CF (3M)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Female participants in UACF (7F)</td>
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<td>- UACF Committee (2M, 1F)</td>
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<td>Taunggyi</td>
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<td>Interview with U Khun San Lwin, Chairman of</td>
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<td>PaO Self Administered Zone (SAZ)</td>
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<td>San Sote Village</td>
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<td>- Visit to water system and latrines</td>
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<td>- Discussion with water system user and Metta</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CF (2F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>31/5</td>
<td>Nong Kham Training Centre</td>
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<td>Discussion with UACF Programme Manager</td>
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<td>Pin Sone Village</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Observation of FFS class funded by LIFT;</td>
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<td>discussion with:</td>
<td>Metta CF for emergency response (1F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Metta AC and CF (2M)</td>
<td>Yoe Gyi Ywa Ma Monastery camp</td>
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<td>- FFS participants (2F, 2M)</td>
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<td>- FFS trainer/ CF (1F)</td>
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<td>Nyaung Kine Village</td>
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<td>Discussions with livelihood committee:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Monk leading the committee (1M)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Male microcredit participants (2M)</td>
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<td>- Female microcredit participants (2F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Jun</td>
<td>Bhamo</td>
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<td>Metta CF for emergency response (1F)</td>
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<td>Yoe Gyi Ywa Ma Monastery camp</td>
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<td>- Camp Management Committee (3M, 2F)</td>
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<td>- IDPs – individual interviews with 2F, 1M</td>
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<td>KBSS – AD 2000 camp</td>
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<td>- Camp Management Committee (4M, 1F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- UNICEF WASH Officers (2M)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Moe Mauk: IDP camps</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 June</td>
<td>Nong Kham Training Centre (NKTC)</td>
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<td>Visit to NKTC farm and forestry grounds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Debriefing and group interview with:</td>
<td>KBC – Moe Mauk Baptist Church camp</td>
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<td>o NKTC programme managers (4M)</td>
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<td>o Finance and HR managers (2F)</td>
<td>- Camp Management Ctee (2M)</td>
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<td>- Hygiene Promoters (3F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Women’s group (some 10F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- IDP (1M)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>KBSS – Moe Mauk St. Patrick’s Church camp</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Camp Management Ctee (3M, 3F)</td>
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<td>Bhamo: Visit to IDP camps</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Return to Taunggyi

Taunggyi

KBC – Robert Church camp:
- Camp Management Ctee (1M, 1F)
- Hygiene Promoter (M)

3 June
Debriefing and discussion with BO senior staff (3M, 1F)
Return to Yangon

4 June
Group interviews with:
- SSLDO (2F, 2M)
- Taunggyi BO junior professional staff (3F)
Analysis and report writing
Return to Yangon

Date | Led by Michaela | Led by Eh Mwée
--- | --- | ---
**Yangon**
5 June | Interviews with:
- Bron Ives, Gender Empowerment Network
- Tobias Jackson, Oxfam Hong Kong
- Jessica Chaix, Oxfam Humanitarian Officer
- U Kyaw Thu, Paung Ku | Analysis and report writing

6 June | Interviews with
- Metta Fi and HR Managers (2M)
- Metta ED and PD (2M)
- Raza Thitsa Coordinator (1M) | Analysis and report writing
Analysis of Myitkyina findings

7 June | Preparation of debriefing session | Analysis and report writing
Interviews with:
- Dave McClintock, Consultant
- Seng Raw, Founder of Metta

8 June | Debriefing with Metta Senior Management Team and founder Seng Raw | Return to Europe

In addition to the interviewees listed above, a phone interview was held with Corinna Broeckmann, Misereor Programme Officer for Myanmar, on 16 July. As an important first step in review preparation, Sai Sam Kham and Clarita Benzon made themselves available for discussion and refinement of the TOR in Venlo, Netherlands, on 13 May 2012. Karin Luke, Welthungerhilfe Officer in Myanmar, provided informal orientation on working in Myanmar before Michaela’s departure.

**Preparatory e-mail survey form and quantitative analysis**

The form has been reformatted so as to minimise space in this report.

*All 12 members of the SMT received the questionnaire; 10 returned their response. Aggregated answers to “quantitative” questions have been inserted and highlighted in the survey form below.*

**Invitation:** You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire. It will probably take you at least one hour. Many thanks in advance for taking the time!

**Purpose:** This questionnaire is a small part of a mid-term review commissioned by Metta and Oxfam Novib (ON). The purpose of the review is to (1) assess the results of Metta’s on-going programme and (2) review strategic and organisational questions that are important to Metta and its partners. Metta and ON will use the results for their future plans. This questionnaire is mainly about organisational questions. There will be other opportunities to discuss organisational questions later.

**Time limit:** You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire in English by 22 May 2012.
Confidentiality: This questionnaire is only for the lead evaluator, Michaela Raab. Please do not share it with anybody else. After filling it in, please or save it under a different name and/ or print it out and return it in one of the following ways: (1) by e-mail to michaela.raab@gmail.com (do not copy to anyone else); (2) personally, if you meet Michaela in Yangon on 22 and 23 May; or (3) by using a sealed envelope that you give to a colleague who will meet Michaela in Yangon on 22 or 23 May.

Your answers will be used in an anonymous way: if Michaela quotes any of your answers in her final report, she will not name the person who made the quote.

Your position and history in Metta

1. Where is your place of work? Please tick off the correct answer.
   □ Metta national office (Yangon) □ Branch office □ other, please explain: __________________________

2. For how long have you worked with Metta? Please tick off the correct answer.
   □ 0-2 years □ 3-5 years □ 6-10 years □ 11-15 years □ 16-20 years □ >20 years
   n=2  n=6  no answer: n=2

3. What training have you had while working with Metta?

   Please list all training courses and studies Metta has organized/ funded for you. If this space is too small, please start a new page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Subject/ Topic of training</th>
<th>Duration of training (in days, weeks, months or years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. How many Metta staff work in the team or teams you are leading?

   Please write down the number(s) as of March 2012: ____________________________________

   Since when do you lead your team?
   Please write down the month and the year: ____________________________________

   If it is more than one team, please list the teams below. You can add as many lines as you need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team (for example, “Branch Office”, “Education Programme”)</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>I am team leader since month/year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. What did the Metta reorganization (for example, decentralization, matrix management) change for you?

   Please explain. If the space below is not enough, please add lines.
   What is different from before?
   What has improved?
   What has become more difficult? n=4 state procedures take more time, quoted as the first (n=3) or 2nd difficulty (n=1)

Staff performance

6. Overall, do you feel that the people working with Metta are doing their best? This question is about Metta as a whole, not only about your team.

   □ Yes, 100% □ Yes, mostly □ Not completely □ Not at all □ Don’t know
   N=6  n=2  no answer: n=1

   Please explain your answer to question (6) and give suggestions. You can add space.
   Explanation of your answer:
   How could Metta improve the performance of its staff? Please give suggestions:
   Intensified capacity building was quoted in the first or second place by 5 respondents.
Opportunities for women

7. Do you feel that all women working with Metta have the same opportunities as men?

- Yes, 100%  □ Yes, mostly  □ Not completely  □ Not at all  □ Don’t know

n=1  n=7  no answer: n=2

Explanation of your answer:
How could Metta improve opportunities for women? Please give suggestions:

8. Do you feel that all women in Metta have as much influence on decisions in their teams as men?

- Yes, 100%  □ Yes, mostly  □ Not completely  □ Not at all  □ Don’t know

n=3  n=4  n=1  no answer: n=1

Please explain your answer to question (8) and give suggestions. You can add space.
Explanation of your answer:
How could Metta make sure women play an equal role in decision-making? Your suggestions:

Metta’s strategies

10. In your opinion, what is Metta really good at? Please list up to 3 aspects and explain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metta is good at…</th>
<th>Why?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>n=9 list community-based approaches in the 1st place</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

11. In your opinion, what are the aspects of Metta’s work that need to be improved? List up to 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metta needs improvement in…</th>
<th>How?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Overall, do you feel that Metta is making the best possible use of its money?

- Yes, 100%  □ Yes, mostly  □ Not completely  □ Not at all  □ Don’t know

n=7  n=1  no answer: n=2

Please explain your answer. If the space below is not enough, please add lines.

n=7 state in the first place that the fact that most of Metta’s funding goes directly to the communities makes that Metta is making the best possible use of its money

13. What could be done to make sure Metta makes better use of its money?

Please give your suggestions. If the space below is not enough, please add lines.

Other comments and suggestions

Would you like to add any other comments or suggestions? Please use the space below.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR KIND COLLABORATION!
Literature List
This list includes chiefly documents that are referred to in the report. The list is non-exhaustive; overall, more than 200 documents – chiefly “grey literature” provided by Metta and ON - were consulted.

Key External Literature
- System of Rice Intensification (SRI) Network ONLINE, retrieved in July 2012 from http://sri.ciifad.cornell.edu/
- Transnational Institute (TNI) – various publications on Myanmar retrieved in May-July 2012 from http://www.tni.org/search/apachesolr_search/burma

Key Documentation provided by Metta and Oxfam Novib
Metta Proposals
- Metta Proposal 01 April 2009 – 31 March 2014
- Regeneration Initiative 5 Year Budget 2009-2014
- Regeneration Initiative Financing Status

Metta Reports
- CNCF Annual Report 2008-2009
- Upland Agriculture and CF Annual Report 2009 – 2010
- Mangrove Report April – July 2011
- Mangrove Report Year 2 (2009-2010)
- Metta Nargis RRD Annual Report 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 A 308-02
- Metta Nargis RRD Annual Report 1 August 2008- 31 March 2009
- Metta Nargis RRD Annual Report April 2009-March 2010
- Raza Thitsa Progress Report, March – July 2011
- Raza Thitsa Accounts, January – July 2011
- Regeneration Initiative April 2010 – March 2011
- Regeneration Initiative April – September 2011
- RI Draft Report April 2011 – March 2012
- Financial Report 2009-2010
- Financial Report 2010-2011

*External Evaluations of Metta’s Work*
- 2010 Metta ECCD Evaluation Report (2008-2010) facilitated by Dr. Thein Lwin and Daw Ohnmar Tin
- 2011 Evaluation Report of the Community Development Programme by Luz Seno-Ani

*Metta Workshop and Meeting reports*
- Gender Analysis Tools Workshop Minutes (January 2012)
- Metta Review and Planning Workshop Summary June 2011
- Metta RI review workshop output May 2011: “Develop a procedure in written on how to work with partners on capacity building”
- Metta Strategic Review Workshop, May 2012 (facilitator’s plan)
- Metta Donor Meeting Reports 2010 (London) and 2011(The Hague)

*Other documents provided by Metta*
- 10 Years Metta jubilee booklet
- Financial Procedures Manual
- Human Resources Procedures and Staff Manuals
- HR and Finance Workshop Metta July 2009 Documentation
- Investigation report on financial issues linked to the Rakhine Emergency, 2010
- LIFT monitoring reports to Metta project sites in the Ayeyarwady Delta and Kachin State
- Metta HIV Workplace Policy
- Metta Humanitarian Workshop January 2010
- Participatory Action Research Manual (in Burmese)
- Letter to UNHCR on Recruitment of CSO staff by international organisations (May 2012)
- Upland Agriculture and CF (Phase 2) Extension Proposal, May 2012 – March 2015
**Oxfam documents**
- Oxfam International Myanmar Country Strategy 2012-2016
- Oxfam monitoring reports (2012), Bhamo and Laiza Camps
- IMPACT Alliance Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool: Report Metta 2011
- Oxfam Novib Myanmar Country Strategy
- Oxfam Novib Counterpart and Project Description format
- Oxfam Novib world-wide programme indicators, Programme 1-5
- Various ON correspondences on the approval of Oxfam’s current funding to Metta

**Inception workshop guide**

*The guide has been shortened for reproduction in this report.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong> Presentation of participants, language issues, purpose, agenda, briefing on facilitation method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>External and internal context analysis</strong> (small group visualisation and plenary discussion): “The Wave” - What is on the horizon, what emerges, what is established and what is fading?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3 | **What does this mean for Metta and its partnerships?** (small group work and plenary discussion)  
  - **Opportunities** – Those which provide access or opening to better achieve your goals  
  - **Threats / Challenges** – Those which make it more difficult to reach your goals  
  - To **encourage** and strengthen within Metta and with its partners  
  - To **discourage** and reduce within Metta and with its partners |
| 4 | Focused discussion (each participant must speak at least once and can speak up to twice on each topic)  
  - What does this mean for “holistic, community-led work” vs. “sector specialisation”?  
  - What does this mean regarding advocacy opportunities?  
  - What does this mean in terms of women's leadership and participation? |
| 5 | **Quick feedback** – Is there anything we should do differently in the afternoon? |
| 6 | **Lunch Break** ➔ Please form new groups! ➔ Energiser (by Metta) |
| 7 | **How can donors best support our work?**  
  Large group work: Metta’s advice to donors on new opportunities, promoting gender equality, and procedures. |
| 8 | **Feed-back round** (ball to all – what did you find useful, what difficult, what surprising?) |
| 9 | **Thanks and closure** |
Sample Interview Guide – Community-level project participants

This is a generic guide which will be adjusted to the time available, and the specific responsibilities of the interlocutor in the project. Probing questions will be added during the interview.

Introduction

Thank you for making time for this interview! I am a development specialist based in Berlin; Metta and one of its funders, Oxfam Novib, have asked me to visit the Metta programmes, especially the Regeneration Initiative. They have asked me because I do not normally work inside Metta or Oxfam, so I can give more independent advice. Purpose: To learn what is going well and what can be changed to make things better, so that Metta and its funders can plan their future work. I would like to hear from your own, personal perspective. Process: Confidential. I have prepared some broad questions, and will ask more in-between. Is it OK if I write/type during the interview? The notes will be used only by me and the co-evaluator; we will not share them with Metta colleagues or Oxfam. I have planned about 1½-2 hours for this, is that OK? Product: Information will flow into evaluation process and report. Any quotes will be used in an anonymous form; if a quote can be traced I’ll ask the author for clearance before using the quote.

Do you have any question for me before we start?

Questions

(Write down number of participants, M/F)

1. Since when have you been part of Metta activities? How did you learn about Metta?
2. What Metta activities have you participated in, in the last 2 years?
3. How were these activities organised? Who decided what would be done, and how were the decisions made? Who was there? Was there anyone missing? (Probe: women, disabled…)
4. Do you feel everyone could really decide freely what they wanted to do with the resources available? What or who limits your possibilities? (Probe: do you know how much funding is available?)
5. Did anyone come to find out what was decided at those meetings was actually carried out? (Probe: Any records available? M/W?)
6. Do you report to Metta, on progress in your work or if there are any problems? If you are unhappy about anything what Metta is doing, where do you go for help?
7. What has improved in your, your family’s and your community’s life in the last 2 years?
8. Why have these improvements come about? Has Metta played any role in that, how?
9. Do you feel women’s and girls’ situations have improved as much as men’s and boys, or is life more difficult for women and girls? Please explain.
10. Has anything become worse in your, your family’s and your community’s life in the last 2 years? (Probe: Health? Debt? Time available? Sector-specific questions below-)
11. Why these bad changes? Has Metta played any role in that, how?
12. How can you improve your situation and your community in the coming years?
13. How can Metta support you, even in case they cannot bring extra money or materials?
14. What other organisations work here, small local ones or bigger ones? Do you participate in any of their activities, or get any benefit from them? What is their difference with Metta?

THANK YOU FOR THIS USEFUL INTERVIEW!

Note: In addition to this basic guide, some 10 generic questions for each major Metta sector of activity—agriculture, forestry, microcredit, education, health and hygiene—were kept ready for discussion of specific activities.
Evaluation TOR

Background: Metta was created in 1998, in the aftermath of the ceasefire agreement between the Kachin Independence Organization and the government of Myanmar. As of 2011, Metta has become the biggest national NGO in Myanmar. In 2009, under a difficult operating environment, Metta worked in six ethnic States and five Divisions, thus covering 2,044 villages in 56 townships, and benefiting over 629,000 people (with Cyclone Nargis response accounting for nearly 40%). Its budget had increased from some US$30,000 in 1998 to US$19 m in 2009. The increase in program coverage and budget was complemented by an increase in staff, from 47 in 1998 to 663 in 2009. Metta’s humanitarian response to cyclone Nargis (2008) was supported by 62 mostly international funding organisations.

The bulk of Metta’s activities is currently organised around two programmes:
- Rehabilitation, Relief and Development Programme (April 2008 – March 2011)
- Regeneration Initiative (April 2009 – March 2014)

Oxfam Novib (ON), Metta’s largest funder, has commissioned this review. On has funded Metta since 2001; its current 3-year grant to Metta (April 2010 – March 2012) amounts to more than €2.4 million. It supports mainly the following aspects of Metta’s work (ORA:2-4):
- Community Nursery, Community Forestry (CNCF) and Agriculture via Farmer field schools to achieve food security for some 88,800 persons and Kachin State, Shan State and Kayah State
- Livelihood and community development activities – income generation activities and facilitation of self help groups in Kachin, Northern Shan, Southern Shan, Kayin and Kayah
- Early Childhood Care and Development – establishment of ECCD centres in 42 ethnic minority communities in Kachin and Kayah states
- Primary Education
- Humanitarian capacity and disaster preparedness – in at least 4 townships of the Ayeyarwaddy Delta through reforestation and community disaster risk mapping

Sizable context changes have occurred since Metta designed its current programme. The Burmese government has moved towards more inclusive democracy and reduced travel restrictions; the EU has temporarily lifted its embargo on Myanmar. In the Netherlands, new government policies have considerably reduced non-earmarked funds available to development NGOs such as ON; it is expected that in the future, only project-specific funding will be made available. These developments have prompted reflection processes within Metta and its funders which this review, initially conceived as a mid-term evaluation of the 3-year grant provided by ON, is expected to support.

Purpose of the review: The review is expected to (1) assess initial outcomes and likely impact of the current programme and (2) review strategic and organisational issues that are of particular importance to Metta and its partners at this historic junction. Metta will use the results to inform its future plans, and ON to build its funding strategy with Metta and any necessary advocacy with its funder, the Dutch government.

Key questions
Relevance
1. Should Metta limit its work to specific sectors of activity (e.g. farmer field schools)?

Effectiveness
2. What outputs and broader results have been generated by the Metta programmes currently funded by ON (April 2010 – March 2012)?
3. To what extent does Metta ensure that women and men, girls and boys reap equal and equal benefits from its programmes?
4. To what extent does Metta’s work foster social transformation so that women and members of minority groups can drive their own development processes?
5. How can Metta expand (“upscale”) its work while safeguarding high quality?
Efficiency

6. To what extent has Metta’s decentralisation of programme management improved the use of Metta’s resources?
7. To what extent do Metta’s monitoring systems safeguard the quality of Metta’s work and Metta’s accountability to project participants, funders and other stakeholders?
8. How can Metta’s partners and funders best support Metta’s work and goals?

Impact

9. What new approaches (i.e. types of engagement previously unused or little used by Metta) would be likely to enhance impact, in view of new opportunities offered by recent changes in Myanmar?

Sustainability

10. To what extent do Metta’s current leadership structures and decision-making processes enhance collective leadership and accountability?
11. To what extent is Metta’s community development approach likely to generate sustainable development, at community levels and beyond?

Review approach and methodology

The review should be utilisation-focused, “realist” and tailored to the purposes and questions specified above. Participatory approaches and tools should ensure a wide range of stakeholders contribute to the review process and products. Data should be gathered from different sources and through different methods (“triangulation”), including desk research, written survey, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, activity-based workshops and direct observation.

Review team

The review team will be led by an international consultant. It may include a short-term international consultant specialised in rural community development, and a Burmese consultant with suitable background and English languages skills. Up to two interpreters will be recruited by Metta to support the review process in Myanmar.

Tentative Plan

*Note: Week 18 is the week beginning on 30 April.*

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Week 18</th>
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<td>TOR and contracting process (Metta and Oxfam Novib)</td>
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<td><strong>11 May</strong> planning meeting with Metta staff in Venlo</td>
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<td>Review inception in Myanmar, interviews with external stakeholders (min. 3 days)</td>
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<td>Joint review research in 1st site</td>
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<td>Review research in up to 2 sites</td>
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<td>Yangon: joint analysis</td>
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<td>Additional external interviews</td>
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<td>Draft report writing, Report review by Metta</td>
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<td>Final report presented to Metta and ON</td>
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