Parliamentary Centre
Le Centre parlementaire

EMReF
Enlightened Myanmar
Research Foundation

Parliamentary Research Training Manual

Parliamentary Research
Training Manual

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This publication was carried out with the aid of a grant from **Global Affairs Canada (GAC)** and **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)**.

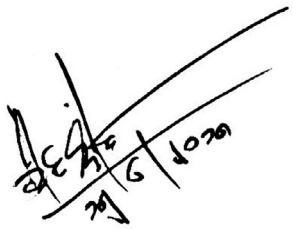
Foreword

Parliamentarians need access to credible and reliable information in order to make informed decisions. In Myanmar, with sub-national legislatures playing an increasingly important role in the governance of the country, research support to parliamentarians is becoming particularly needed and important.

It gives me therefore great pleasure to launch this Manual on Parliamentary Research Training, jointly developed by the Parliamentary Centre and the Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF) under the project "Building Parliamentary Research Capacity: The Case of Shan State's Sub-National Parliament in Myanmar."

This publication provides valuable information not only for the Shan State Hluttaw and other legislatures in Myanmar, but also for Myanmar organizations, such as the EMReF, providing support to the Hluttaws. It contains practical and useful insights on the topic of parliamentary research, including how to go about building the relevant capacity of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff.

I would like to thank the Parliamentary Centre and the Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation for their work in preparing this Manual, as well as Global Affairs Canada and the International Development Research Centre for the grant that made this project possible.



Sai Lone Seng
Speaker
Shan State Hluttaw

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Introduction

From July 2017- June 2018, the Parliamentary Centre in partnership with the Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF), implemented the project "Building Parliamentary Research Capacity: The case of Shan State's Sub-National Parliament in Myanmar" funded through a grant from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). This project focused on strengthening the parliamentary research capacity of the Shan State Hluttaw to build an evidence base for gender-sensitive policy and law-making, particularly in the areas of economic development and democratic transition.

The project had three logically connected components. The first focused on building the capacity and practical knowledge of a local Myanmar based think-tank, the Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF), on how to provide sustainable support in the building of gender-sensitive parliamentary research capacity for sub-national parliaments. Under the second component, the Parliamentary Centre partnered with EMReF for the implementation of practical initiatives directed at enhancing the parliamentary research capacity of the Shan State Hluttaw. The third component provided support to EMReF in the development and testing of a methodology for measuring the performance of research support services in sub-national parliaments in Myanmar.

This training manual focuses on the key concepts of parliamentary research, as well as on how to design, implement, and evaluate projects and trainings aimed at building the research capacity of parliaments in Myanmar. The material was developed by the Parliamentary Centre with inputs from EMReF. The Centre contributed lessons learned from its extensive experience in strengthening the research capacity of parliaments around the world while EMReF had an important role in assuring these insights are connected and relevant to the Myanmar context.

The manual is comprised of three (3) chapters:

Chapter 1: Nature and Value of Parliamentary Research
This chapter provides the reader with a brief introduction to the topic of parliamentary research followed by an in-depth look at how parliamentary research is conducted and how findings can be presented in the form of an analytical report.

Chapter 2: Gender-Sensitive Parliamentary Research
The second chapter contains information to help the reader understand gender-sensitive parliamentary research, while providing concrete examples on how gender analysis can be incorporated into analytical reports.

Chapter 3: Design and Delivery of Parliamentary Research Trainings
The final chapter of the training manual provides guidance for Myanmar organisations aspiring to design and implement project and/or trainings focused on building parliamentary research capacity. It focuses first on the process of assessing needs and designing and implementing projects and trainings. It also provides guidance on how to evaluate results.

Implementing Organisations

Parliamentary Centre
The Parliamentary Centre is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organisation celebrating 50 years in 2018 as one of the leading and longest serving organisations dedicated to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy in Canada and around the world. Its assessment, strategic planning, and training programs, combined with research products and networking channels, help legislatures and related stakeholders measure their performance, build capacity, tackle key issues and promote mutual learning in a gender-sensitive manner. In short – the Centre's goal is to help parliaments serve better the people they represent. The Centre provides support that respects the historical, cultural and political uniqueness of countries, while fostering greater participation, transparency and accountability in government. The Parliamentary Centre has been working in Myanmar since 2013 under a series of projects in support of the Union Parliament, sub-national legislatures and the peace process.

Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF)
The Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation is a non-for-profit research organisation that places a particular focus on supporting the strengthening of state legislatures in Myanmar. EMeRF has focused on Performance Analysis of Local Legislatures (2010-2015), and currently distributes data on local legislatures through the MyPILAR website (www.mypilar.org) and by issuing bi-weekly news bulletins on the work of state legislatures. The organisation is also working on developing the capacity to act as trainer for sub-national parliaments in various areas, including parliamentary research.

Acknowledgements

This Manual is the result of a collaborative effort involving a number of members of the Parliamentary Centre and EMReF's teams. Parliamentary Centre: John Karalis, Senior Project Officer; Ivo Balinov, Director, Partnerships and Program Development; Lola Giraldo, Director of Operations; Sylvester Kaonga, Intern. EMReF: Myat Thet Thitsar, CEO; Myat The Thitsar, Director cum Strategic Advisor; Thawng Za Pum, Project Coordinator; Zaw Min Oo, Senior Researcher; Nyein Thiri Swe, Senior Researcher.

A special acknowledgement goes to all Members and Staff of the Shan State Hluttaw, who took active part in the various activities under the project "Building Parliamentary Research Capacity: The case of Shan State's Sub-National Parliament in Myanmar".

Finally, deepest appreciation goes to Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), who graciously provided a grant to support the implementation of this project.

Nature and Value of
Parliamentary Research

Photo: Research Training with Members and Staff of the Shan State Hluttaw, September 2017.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After studying this chapter you should be able to:

- Define parliamentary research and its value;
- Understand the different research methodologies;
- Understand the structure of analytical reports.

What is Parliamentary Research?

The term 'research' has a different meaning in an academic setting versus a parliamentary setting. Academic research conveys the notion of pure primary research to discover the truth and fundamental relationships in society for the purpose of advancing knowledge and/or understanding. In contrast, research for a legislature is more applied in nature and seeks to draw upon the wide range of existing knowledge and synthesize it into a form that is useful for parliamentarians. This information is then applied by parliamentarians to their understanding and the development of a solution to a specific problem or issue.[1]

In a parliamentary democracy, legislatures enhance the voice of the people and it is parliamentarians who represent these voices. According to an Inter Parliamentary Union publication, Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century, parliamentary development experts agree the following functions are considered key tasks undertaken and expected of all parliaments:

- Law making;
- Oversight of executive actions, policy and personnel;
- Approval of expenditures, usually in the context of the national budget;

[1] Cuninghame, Keith, *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries, 2nd ed.*, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2009, p. 61.

- Debating issues of national and international interest; and
- Approving constitutional changes.[2]

Within this context, it is evident the ability of parliamentarians to fulfill their responsibilities, requires access to legislative research that is objective and factual, well balanced and presents all sides of the issue.[3] For example, to support the legislative responsibilities of parliamentarians, Research Services need to provide them with relevant information and analysis to enhance their knowledge of and assess the content of legislation being considered by Parliament. In particular, the Research Service may provide background information on and develop summaries on bills being tabled by the government, while also preparing summaries on the intent of proposed legislation and its interaction with existing laws. At the same time, staff of the Research Service are available to parliamentarians to provide personalized and confidential briefings for Members, who are seeking to understand the complexities of the issues being addressed in a proposed piece of legislation. [4]

Another key role for parliamentarians, as highlighted above, is to hold governments to account by scrutinizing their activities and ensuring parliament's decisions have been implemented.[5] In this capacity, parliamentarians, throughout parliament's life cycle, are called upon to analyze budgets, the governments' estimates and the overall economic health of the country or state.[6] These issues are complex, multi-factored and require specialized expertise to identify and interpret the various factors at play. As a result, the ability of parliamentarians to fulfill their oversight roles is shaped by access to legislative research that is knowledgeable, objective, factual and well balanced.[7]

These examples demonstrate, the importance of having a Research Service to provide parliamentarians with the information they need to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. Alternatively, parliamentarians, without a research service, face the daunting task of identifying the relevant information needed on their own.[8]

Rationale for a Research Service to serve Parliamentarians

Parliamentarians operate in an environment where an instant response to a wide range of public policy issues is expected and time for reflection is limited. In this environment, a legislator needs to give a simple and brief explanation on any given topic. For this to happen, a parliamentarian needs reliable information and to be briefed on complex technical and legal issues, in order to formulate and present their position in a simplified manner, without distorting the message and the information to support their explanation.

In many cases, the ability of a parliamentarian to become knowledgeable about the range of possible issues and the quality of a parliamentarian's response is vastly improved with the assistance of a parliamentary research service. More specifically, these services not only allow parliamentarians to better understand policy issues and their contexts, but more importantly determine who the key stakeholders are and what their perspectives are on a given policy. As parliamentarians have busy schedules, they have limited time to devote to research. Parliamentary research support allows them to perform their roles more effectively and efficiently. As a result, Parliamentary research services not only help find relevant and authoritative information quickly; they also make sense of the information through analysis.[9]

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[2] Cuninghame, Keith, *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries, 2nd ed.*, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2009, p. 19-20.

[3] Cuninghame, Keith, *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries, 2nd ed.*, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2009, p. 61.

[4] Sonia L'Heureux, "The Library's Research Service: Added Value for Parliamentarians," *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, Winter 2013, p. 18.

[5] International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, *Guidelines for Parliamentary Research Services*, 2013, p. 11.

[6] Sonia L'Heureux, "The Library's Research Service: Added Value for Parliamentarians," *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, Winter 2013, p. 19.

[7] Susan Swift, "Value and Methodology of Parliamentary Research: The Experience of the Ontario legislative Assembly," Presentation given on September 4, 2017.

[8] International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, *Guidelines for Parliamentary Research Services*, 2013, p. 11.

[9] Sonia L'Heureux, "The Library's Research Service: Added Value for Parliamentarians," *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, Winter 2013, p. 17

Despite these obvious advantages, there are many additional services researchers can provide to parliamentarians.

- **Parliamentary research services are dedicated to Parliament.** This means the researchers not only understand how parliament operates, but more importantly how to respond to each member's needs, regardless of their political orientation;

- **Working for parliament not the government**. Parliamentarians need independent sources of information, if they are to hold the government to account. This is not to say that Government's do not provide Parliamentarians with information. However, there is a tendency for this information to support the government's policy position, which is why independent information and analysis from a Research Service is needed as a counter balance;

- **Synthesis from different sources.** A researcher brings together key points covering the range of credible perspectives and presents them in an accessible manner. The briefing provided is balanced and unbiased, but written with political awareness allowing members to make informed decisions and to fulfill their various roles and responsibilities;

- **Covers the full range of public policy.** Parliamentary research services can act as 'one-stop shops' where parliamentarians can seek information on a wide range of topics. While also being expected to provide their opinions based on expertise or on their assessment of the evidence reviewed;

- **Confidential to Parliamentarians, when necessary.** The majority of information produced by legislative libraries is available for all members to access. However, in some cases, a member seeking information may not want the fact that they are making the enquiry known especially by their political opponents. Typically in cases where a member makes a request for "customized" or "personalized" research, the service provided is entirely confidential. This allows members to have the confidence to seek information when they need it without fear of disclosure;

- **Collective Memory.** Parliamentary libraries can act as repositories of knowledge, particularly in those legislatures where essential elements of the legislative process may not have become part of the official record.

- **Impartial.** A parliamentary research service must be accessible and equally accessible for parliamentarians from all political parties across the political spectrum. These parliamentarians need to have confidence that any information from this service is balanced and unbiased.[10]

Partisan vs. Non-Partisan Research

The importance of ensuring that any research provided by the parliamentary research service is non-partisan cannot be overstated. Partisan research serves political purposes; it is not well balanced in terms of perspectives that it includes and instead presents only one side of the issue. In contrast, non-partisan research is objective and factual, well balanced and presents all sides of the issue. It does not favour one perspective over another.[11]
Thus, the role of a parliamentary research service is to provide neutral analysis covering a wide spectrum of perspectives on any issue that would be the same whether it is offered to government or opposition members.[12] Non-partisan research is important in helping parliamentarians, from both government and opposition, understand all sides of the debate and it allows them to make policy decisions based on the same pool of information, which is balanced, objective and factual.[13]

The role of the parliamentary research service becomes to be the 'broker' of reliable, authoritative information: constantly scanning the world of knowledge for information and concepts that will shed light on the nature and scope of public policy issues and organize this information into terms that are easily understood by parliamentarians.[14] Parliamentary research services not only help parliamentarians find the relevant information; they also help them make sense of the information through analysis of its various dimensions and relating it the current work of Parliament.[15] In parliaments around the world, researchers in parliamentary research services are relied upon to use well-founded and accepted arguments to develop lines of enquiry to assist parliamentarians in their day-to-day work.[16] Additionally, as governments often change, the research staff does not, which means it can also serve as an avenue of institutional memory.[17]

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[10] Cuninghame, Keith, *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries, 2nd ed.*, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2009, p. 21-22.
[11] Cuninghame, Keith, *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries, 2nd ed.*, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2009, p. 61.
[12] IPU, "Guidelines for Parliamentary Research Services," August 2013, p. 13.
[13] Susan Swift, "Value and Methodology of Parliamentary Research: The Experience of the Ontario legislative Assembly," Presentation given on September 4, 2017.
[14] Cuninghame, Keith, *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries, 2nd ed.*, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2009, p. 61.
[15] Sonia L'Heureux, "The Library's Research Service: Added Value for Parliamentarians," *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, Winter 2013, p. 17.
[16] IPU, "Guidelines for Parliamentary Research Services," August 2013, p. 13.
[17] Susan Swift, "Value and Methodology of Parliamentary Research: The Experience of the Ontario legislative Assembly," Presentation to Members and staff of the Shan State Hluttaw delivered on September 4, 2017 in Taunggyi, Myanmar under the project "Building Parliamentary Research Capacity: The case of Shan State's Sub-National Parliament in Myanmar".

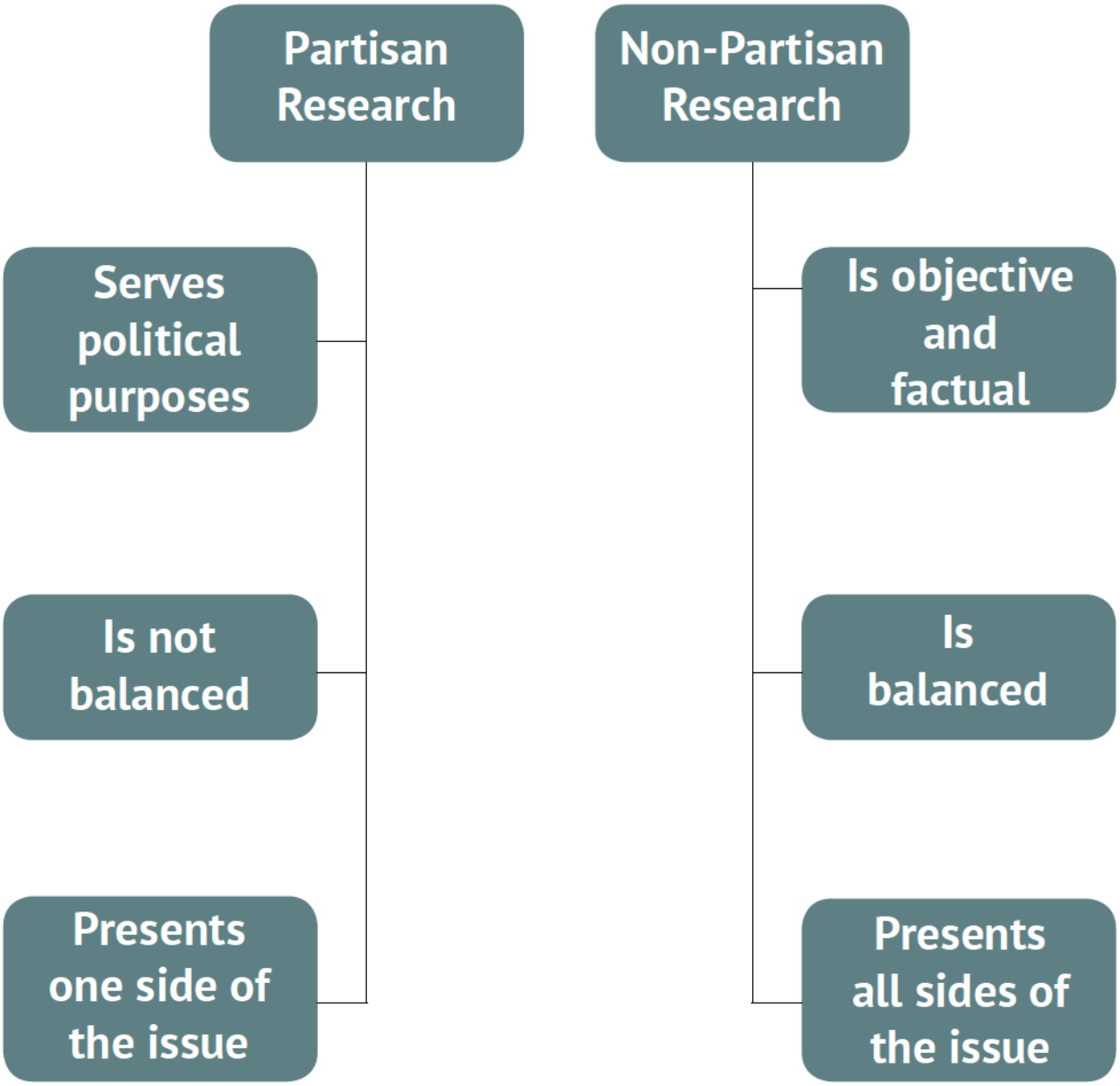
Partisan Research
Serves political purposes
Is not balanced
Presents one side of the issue
Non-Partisan Research
Is objective and factual
Is balanced
Presents all sides of the issue

Photo: Practical exercise on legislative research with Shan State Hluttaw staff, January 2018.

The Value of Parliamentary Research

The value of parliamentary research is that it is both proactive, anticipating the needs of parliamentarians, and reactive, responding to them.

In anticipating the needs of parliamentarians (being proactive), researchers need to be aware of the background to current legislation, especially when it is scheduled to be debated. At the same time, researchers need to be aware of parliamentarians' needs, such as policy issues which are likely to come up for discussion. In order to be in a position to respond to the request of parliamentarians, researchers need to have both good knowledge and familiarity with their subject, while simultaneously have access to key sources of information and documents to remain current and up-to-date. Included amongst these sources are contacts within Government Departments, civil society organisations and think tanks. [18]

In contrast, the reactive part of researchers work involves responding to the individual requests from each parliamentarian. The scope for such request is potentially very broad and often requires substantial research work on a policy issue and then condensing the findings into short concise briefings, so the information can be easily understood and consumed by members.[19]

Overall, the value of parliamentary researchers is in their ability to discover the most relevant authoritative information and summarizing it for parliamentarians. Their range of skills, including their organisational, classification and searching skills combined with their analytical, writing and subject matter knowledge help inform the debate. [20]

[18] Cuninghame, Keith, *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries, 2nd ed.*, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2009, p. 63-64.
[19] Ibid., p. 64.
[20] Ibid., p. 66.

Research Methodology

When preparing a research brief for parliamentarians, there are three critical points to keep in mind:

- The structure of your report can vary depending on the subject of the request;
- Only provide parliamentarians with what they need to know to become informed about a specific issue; and
- The first paragraph is the most important, as it should always state what the briefing is about.

A worthwhile consideration before starting to draft and write a research brief is to think critically about your audience, as this is fundamental to writing an effective briefing. For example, start by imagining your audience and asking yourself the following questions; what do they need to know, when do they need it and how should the information be presented?[21] Simultaneously, start preparing your research brief following this six step process, also known as the research briefing methodology.

The methodology in preparing a research brief is broken down into the following steps:

1. Clarifying the Question
2. Planning your Research Brief
3. Conducting an Effective Search
4. Critically Evaluating Sources
5. Writing the research brief
6. Reviewing for Quality Assurance

1. Clarifying the Question

The first step in preparing a research brief is to clarify the question you are trying to answer. A parliamentarian's specific needs should be clarified and the researcher needs to ensure they understand a member's request before proceeding. A good brief cannot be prepared without a clear understanding of the question. Here are some helpful tips parliamentary researchers use to help them understand a question:

- Who is the audience?
- What is the purpose?
- What is the timeframe?
- Do you already have some information about the issue?
- Always ask the parliamentarian making the request open-ended questions, so you elicit information from them about the request rather than unconsciously relying on your own assumptions. [22]

Whenever receiving an enquiry from a parliamentarian, be sure to ask them questions that not only help you understand what is needed, but also makes them feel confident that you have understood their request. Some tips worth considering:

- Verify key pieces of information. For example, take note of key names, places and phrases
- Ask follow-up questions, so that you understand what the MP is really interested in
- Say if you do not understand the question – you cannot answer effectively a question that you do not understand. A member will be glad to explain their request.
- Verbally summarize the request to the Member. This helps ensure you both understand what the enquiry is.

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[21] Oliver Bennett, House of Commons Library Research Service UK, ***Myanmar Parliament: Guide to Writing parliamentary research briefings,*** June 2015, p. 6.

[22] Susan Swift, "Introduction to the Methodology of Parliamentary Research, Presentation delivered to Members and staff of the Shan State Hluttaw," September 2017.

- Make sure to read the daily news. Members usually ask about topical issues, and therefore, every morning you should listen or read the daily news
- Get a deadline. If you get them the information too late, the research will be useless
- Get the Members details:
  - √ Their name
  - √ Contact details (telephone number and email)
  - √ How they want to receive their briefing – email or hard copy. [23]

2. Planning your Research Brief

Once you have clarified the question and have a clear understanding of the topic, the next step is to develop an outline to write the research brief. The outline, organized in a logical manner, sets out where in the brief the different issues will be discussed.[24] It also helps identify key questions to be answered and key concepts or technical terms that will be defined. A good outline ensures all important questions and/or concepts are covered.[25] For examples of Research Briefing Outlines, please refer to the Annex of this document.

3. Conducting an Effective Search

Once an outline of the research brief is prepared, the researcher must consider information sources and places to look for the information needed. Some potential starting places to consider are Google, Wikipedia, news websites, sources within the parliamentary library, parliaments (both your own and other countries), Government departments and international organisations websites.

In Myanmar, the House of Commons and DFID UK prepared a Manual entitled "Myanmar Parliament: Guide to writing parliamentary briefings," in June 2015, which outlines three important resources researchers should use, as they are available in Myanmar language.

The first source, according to their publication, is the Hluttaw Research Service. When contacting the Hluttaw research services, check if a similar question has been or is being answered by someone working in the Library, as members often are interested in the same topic. This helps save time by not repeating work.

The second resource, consulted if the first proves unsuccessful, is a simple Google search. Most information can now be found on the internet, in particular international organisations and news outlets now publish all their documents and reports online.

The third resource is to think about specific people or organisations in Myanmar that may have the information a researcher is looking for. You can first check the websites of these organisations, but if the information cannot be found online, do not hesitate to give them a call or send a quick email.

However, whenever making contact with an external organisation it is important to remember:

- √ Never give out any information about the Member who has requested the research (see the points about confidentiality above);
- √ Explain to them the research brief needs to be non-partisan and any information provided will be considered, however may not necessarily be incorporated into the briefing; and
- √ Properly reference all information to the correct source.

[23] Oliver Bennett, House of Commons Library Research Service UK, ***Myanmar Parliament: Guide to Writing parliamentary research briefings,*** June 2015, p. 10.
[24] Oliver Bennett, House of Commons Library Research Service UK, ***Myanmar Parliament: Guide to Writing parliamentary research briefings,*** June 2015, p. 11.
[25] Susan Swift, "Introduction to the Methodology of Parliamentary Research, Presentation delivered to Members and staff of the Shan State Hluttaw," September 2017.

4. Critically Evaluating Sources

Once all the sources of information for the research brief have been identified, each source needs to be critically evaluated. As only the best resources available should be used when writing a research brief. Resources can be evaluated by considering the following:

- Authority (the author, organisation or publisher's credentials. Is the source credible and authoritative on the particular subject?
- Accuracy (is the source generally accurate and well written. Does it list the author and institution that published the document, including their contact details?)
- Objectivity (Is the source is well referenced? Does it advocate or imply a specific point of view?)
- Currency (Is the information the most current and up to date?) [26]

It is up to each individual researcher to evaluate and assess the accuracy, reliability and currency of each source. Additionally, when reading each source the researcher should summarizes all useful information and always be sure to write down the full source reference, as it will make it easier to find the source in the future. [27]

5. Writing the Research Brief

When writing a research brief it is important to write simply, clearly and concisely. Clear writing means:

- It is logical and direct, and cannot be misunderstood
- Uses short sentences (one issue per sentence)
- Short paragraphs (one issue per paragraph)
- Uses only necessary and familiar words and avoids the use of jargon, which many not be understood by the reader. If it is necessary to use technical words, explain them.

One of the most important services offered by research departments and researchers is the ability to synthesize and analyze large amounts of information for readers, who are not subject matter experts. As a result, **the shorter a brief is, the better it is**. Following these best practices, any researcher can write a short succinct brief.

- ***Avoid repetition***
- ***Leave some important things out.*** You do not need to include everything you know about an issue because not everything will be important to the reader; remember your audience and the purpose behind the request
- ***Use Annexes.*** If there is information that a researcher may want to include, move it to an annex. This avoids making the body of the briefing too long. For example, lists of data, large quotes and supplementary information all can be annexed
- ***Use Quotations only if absolutely necessary.*** It is better to try and paraphrase rather than copy and paste large sections from other documents.
- ***All quotations, information and ideas should be clearly referenced.***

Having a logical and easy to understand structure also helps the reader follow the flow of information. Here is an example of a logical order:

- Answer the research question at the beginning of the research brief. First, set out the question you are answering and answer it directly at the beginning, so the reader does not have to go deep into the paper before discovering what they are looking for;
- The most important information is found at the start. Be sure to start your research brief, including the headings and paragraphs with key information to capture the reader's attention. It is important to use headings to "chunk" the information into manageable and easily understood topics;

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[26] Oliver Bennett, House of Commons Library Research Service UK, ***Myanmar Parliament: Guide to Writing parliamentary research briefings,*** June 2015, p. 16.

[27] Susan Swift, "Introduction to the Methodology of Parliamentary Research, Presentation delivered to Members and staff of the Shan State Hluttaw," September 2017.

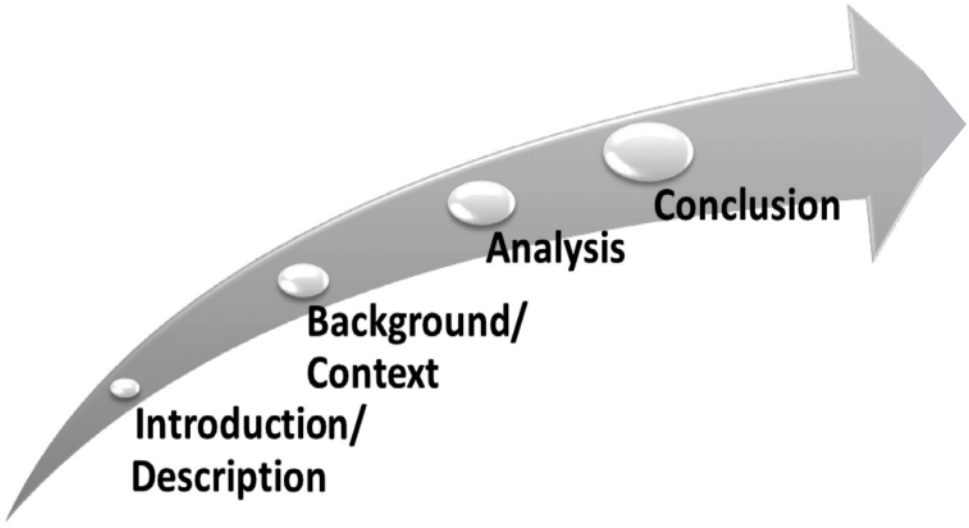
- Use a chronological structure when presenting information so the reader can see at a glance the key lines of your thinking.

Breaking up the text with lists, tables and text boxes is always a helpful way of making the briefing easier and more interesting to read. A well-designed chart and/or table helps your reader better understand your points, often at a glance without having to read through a lot of text. Remember, numbers are always important to parliamentarians; therefore, they should be used as often as possible, in order to help make your point.

Lastly, a researcher should never include their own political views or biases in the writing or make judgements that could be politically motivated. Each briefing report should be non-partisan by:

- Using un-emotive language – pay particular attention to adverbs and adjectives that may affect the "tone" of the writing;
- Being balanced – always be sure to present all credible points of views in the briefing;
- Use evidence and the best primary sources available, being clear where this information came from and any potential shortfalls in them.

GENERIC LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH OUTLINE



6. Reviewing for Quality Assurance

Once the research brief has been written, it should always be reviewed by either a manager or a senior researcher. Editing helps make a brief clearer, more precise and effective and ensures that it is politically neutral.

In the publication, "Myanmar Parliament: Guide to Writing Parliamentary Research Briefings," prepared by the UK House of Commons under a UK Aid funded project, a checklist was developed that breaks down the editing and proof reading of a research brief.

General Checks

- Is there a title and date?
- Does the first paragraph clearly state what the briefing is about or what the Member has asked for?
- Is there a summary of the key points in the briefing?
- Are the pages numbered?
- Fonts and text size are correct

- Double check all spelling, including names and technical words
- Double check all grammar and punctuation
- Acknowledgement of supporting evidence and references

Expressing Information Clearly

- Have all the main points in your briefing been answered
- All the paragraphs contain one idea, which is introduced in the first sentence
- Does the writing flow smoothly from one section or paragraph to the next?

Useful Information for Members

- Relevant parliamentary information is provided, such as debates, committee reports, parliamentary questions etc.
- Government policy is clearly stated
- Only the most politically important information is included

Non-Partisan

- No use of emotional or opinionated language, unless in a direct quotation
- A range of viewpoints are provided
- Conclusions are only given if they are well supported by good evidence

Gender-Sensitive
Parliamentary Research

Photo: Research Training with Members and Staff of the Shan State Hluttaw, September 2017.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After studying this chapter you should be able to:

- Define gender-sensitive parliamentary research;
- Understand how to incorporate gender-specific analysis into Analytical Reports.

What is Gender-Sensitive Parliamentary Research?

Gender-sensitive research takes into account whether and how women and men, boys and girls, are affected differently by the issue at hand. It also examines any differences between the views and opinions of these groups on the issue that is being researched.

Incorporating a gender dimension in research is important as men and women can have different roles, different influences and powers, and correspondingly different perspectives on a problem. By combining their different experiences and viewpoints, researchers can help parliamentarians to better understand the complexities of a problem and take them into account in performing their legislative, representative and oversight roles.

Moreover, gender-sensitive research should recognize that within the categories of men and women, girls and boys there can be a great variety of perspectives based on factors such as ethnicity, class, occupation, etc. [28]

Including a gender dimension does not change the scope of the research. It provides a broader perspective creating a more complete picture of the problem that is covered.

[28] Swedish International Development Agency: Gender Analysis: Principles and Elements. Available at: https://www.sida.se/contentassets/3a820dbd152f4f-ca98bacde8a8101e15/gender-tool-analysis.pdf

Defining the Research Question

Bringing in a gender angle when the research question is being identified is essential, as it defines what information will be gathered and in what ways.

Some gender-specific questions that can be asked at this stage include:

- Who does the issue currently affect? Does the issue affect men and women differently and if so how? Have women and men already taken action to address this issue and how? Are there differences in their approaches?
- What previous research has been conducted on the topic? Did that research take gender dimensions into consideration?
- What sex-disaggregated data is available on the topic?[29]

Sources of Information

Given that parliamentary researchers undertake mostly secondary research, identifying appropriate sources of information is essential for the ability of the researchers to incorporate a gender lens in their work. Particularly useful is having access to gender-disaggregated data: i.e. % of women engaged in a particular economic activity versus, % of men engaged in a particular economic activity; % of men affected by certain disease, % of women affected by certain disease, % of girls dropping out of school at certain age versus % of boys, etc.

Annex E includes a list of Myanmar language sources that parliamentary researchers can examine when looking for information that would allow them to undertake gender sensitive research assignments.

Annex D includes some key English language sources that may provide researchers with international perspectives on gender-related issues.

As already noted earlier in this Manual, the role of parliamentary researchers is to provide the elected members with balanced, non-partisan information and analysis that presents and compares the different views on dealing with a particular issues that there might be (borrowed perspectives), along with the researcher's own assessment and proposed alternatives.

In Myanmar, as in many other countries, there is a variety of think-tanks, capacity building organisations and networks working on women's rights and gender inclusion. They can be a useful source of information and analysis relevant to gender aspects of research assignments. Among these organisations, the executive branch of government, and other stakeholders, there can be different perspectives: the role of the parliamentary researchers is to identify the perspectives, compare and present them to parliamentarians in a balanced way.

[26] INSTRAW: Gender Research: A How-To Guide. Available at: http://www.gendervh2020.cz/files/gender-research-a-how-to-guide.pdf

Using Gender-Sensitive Language in Analytical Reports

Using gender-sensitive language is important for highlighting the gender aspects of the issue(s) that is the focus of research. Language itself is not neutral and, in many cultures it can reflect the values of a patriarchal society. Generic terms can be used to present generic situations and gender specific terms to make visible men's or women's roles and perspectives.[30]

For example, if you are talking about men's role in farming, it is better to specify that you are talking about "male farmers" and if you are talking about women's role "female farmers". If only the generic term "farmers" is used, the differences between men and women, which can be significant in farming (as well as in other activities), may not be visible in the research report. Moreover, depending on the cultural bias, readers may equate a generic term as referring to only men or women: for example, the term "herders" can be automatically interpreted by many readers as referring to male herders.

Examples of Gender-Sensitive Research

Healthcare

The importance of taking differences between men and women into consideration in research can be illustrated by the example of health care. For years, researchers used the male subject as the norm, disregarding biological differences between men and women, what these differences might mean to drug testing, and the different impacts of disease on men and women.[31] In 1985, a Public Health Service task force in the United States found that the exclusion of women from clinical research was detrimental to women's health. We now know that "Sex hormones appear to influence the effects of many drugs… the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and menopause can affect how drugs react in women's bodies. Additionally, drugs such as oral contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy may alter drug interactions in women." [32]

The World Health Organization (WHO) has begun to focus not only on the biological differences between men and women (sex differences), but on the gender (cultural) dimensions of health. WHO explains that gender differences can give rise to inequities between men and women in health status and access to health care. For example:

- A woman cannot receive needed health services because norms in her community prevent her from traveling alone to a clinic; and
- A teenage boy dies in an accident because he is trying to live up to his peers' expectations that young men should be 'bold' risk-takers.

A country's lung cancer mortality rate for men far outstrips the corresponding rate for women because smoking is considered a marker of masculinity, while it is seen as unfeminine in women." [33]

Employment

An example of gender-sensitive research on employment in Asia is a 2015 report of the Asia Development Bank entitled "Women in the Workforce". The evidence examined revealed that "women in Asia are on average 70% less likely than men to be in the labor force, with the country-to-country percentage varying anywhere from 3% to 80%. This gap persists despite economic growth, decreasing fertility rates, and increasing education."[34] According to the same report, quantitative research demonstrates that increasing the presence of women in the workforce can have significant benefits for economic growth and welfare, but neither economic growth nor increasing education appears sufficient to pull women into the labor force. The results of a new simulation model quoted in the report suggest that closing the gender gap could generate a 30% increase in the per capita income of a hypothetical average Asian economy in one generation. Surveys suggest that, compared to men "women are often perceived to have lower skills for the labor market. In some countries, social norms that emphasize domestic work as the primary responsibility of women constitute a significant constraint to their social activities and mobility." The report offers recommendations on what policy makers can do, such as:

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[30] ICIMOD: Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Research. Available at: https://www.icimod.org/resource/1290

[31] For more on biological differences in human health research, see the Society for Women's Health Research (http://www.womenshealthresearch.org) and the Institute of Medicine's report ***Exploring the Biological Contributions to Human Health: Does Sex Matter?*** Available online: http://www.nap.edu/books/0309072816/html/

[32] Society for Women's Health Research. Available online: http://www.womenshealthresearch.org/site/PageServer?pagename=hs_facts_dat

[33] World Health Organization (WHO). Why Gender and Health? Available at: http://www.who.int/gender/genderandhealth/en/index.html

[34] Asia Foundation. Women in the Workforce: an unmet potential in Asia and the Pacific. Available online at: https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/.../women-work-force-unmet-potential.pdf

- To attract more female talent to the labor force, policies should promote a more flexible and family-friendly workplace that allows equitable and efficient distribution of time among household members;

- In some countries in Asia, measures should be instituted to (i) increase the security and protection of female workers, (ii) provide them appropriate transportation alternatives to the workplace, and (iii) give greater focus on improving women's productivity in countries where lack of access to property and credit are key constraints and where the female labor force participation rate is very low;

To encourage more women to seek and demand better workplace opportunities, policies such as those that explicitly promote skills-training for them should be instituted.

Design and Delivery of Trainings

Photo: Research Training with Members and Staff of the Shan State Hluttaw, September 2017.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After studying this chapter you should be able to:

- Identify training needs;
- Design a training curriculum;
- Evaluate trainings.

Introduction

Before designing a training, it is important to understand the project cycle, its different phases and the definition of a project.

A project definition varies, as it covers a wide range of operations from small projects to large complex programs.

Overall, to be viable and successful, a project has to be guided by the following principles:

➢ ***The starting point of a project is the existence of a problem or gap affecting a certain group***

- The definition of the problem or gap justifies the need for intervention and the project documents will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the solution;
- For example, during a needs assessment mission to Shan State, a gap was identified in the Hluttaw's ability to undertake gender-sensitive parliamentary research. As a result, a program was designed to build the research capacity of the Hluttaw, both for Members and staff.

➢ ***A sustainable project is integrated and coherent with broader development goals***

- A project can increase and improve its impact and effectiveness by being connected to a component of an international development agenda. For example, a project's objective will be compatible with and interconnected to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a collection of key global goals set by the United Nations to cover a range of social and economic development issues.

➢ ***A project is a participatory exercise from beginning to end***

- Individuals or an institution likely to be impacted by the project must take an active part in its design, decision-making and implementation phases.

➢ ***Sustainable projects are gender-sensitive***

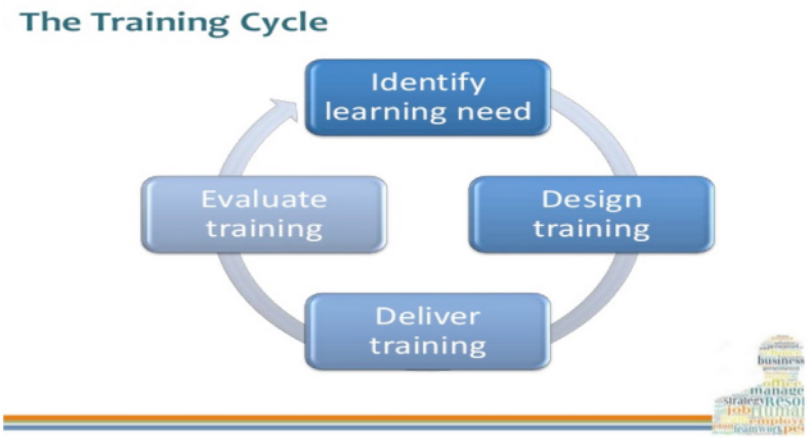
- It is essential to analyse the gender differences and inequalities, and take them into consideration when designing and implementing training sessions. Failure to do so can damage the effectiveness and sustainability of projects and, in a worst case scenario, exacerbate these gender inequalities.[35]

How is a Project Designed?

There are different approaches to designing a project. However, most international development organisations follow the training management cycle when planning trainings.

In the training management cycle, every project follows a series of phases, allowing the process to be guided from the moment the problem is identified until it is solved. This series of phases is known as project cycle. Each phase is critical and should be fully completed before moving onto the next phase. In all projects, design is the starting point of the project cycle, as it provides structure to what has to be achieved, how it is to be implemented and how progress will be verified. As a result, the design phase is the most crucial phase.[36]

Diagram: Training Cycle



Introduction to Training Sessions

Planning training sessions involves identifying training needs, recommending objectives and outcomes, and suggesting how these can be achieved, based on the results of the needs assessment. A training plan forms the foundation of an effective training program, while determining the what, who, when, where, how and why of a training program. Effective trainings require clear pictures as to how the participants will apply the skills and knowledge learned. [37]

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[35] International Labour Organization, *Project Design Manual,* 2010, pg. 12-14. Available: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_159819.pdf

[36] International Labour Organization, *Project Design Manual,* 2010, pg. 16-17. Available: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_159819.pdf

[37] Manual on Training Planning, Project on Improvement of Local Administration in Cambodia, Ministry of Interior and Japan International Cooperation Agency, pg. 4. Available: https://www.jica.go.jp/project/cambodia/0601331/pdf/english/2_Training_01.pdf.

Identifying Training Needs (Needs Assessments)

The design, implementation and evaluation of parliamentary research trainings start with a needs assessment. A parliamentary research capacity needs assessment is a systematic process for determining and identifying needs or gaps between the current state of a parliament's research capacity/services and products and its desired state. In other words, a parliamentary research capacity needs assessment accomplishes the following:

- identification of gaps in research capacity/services and products, while determining concrete steps to address them, in order to improve the provisions of the research services;
- helps ensure existing (often limited) resources are directed towards developing and implementing prioritised and realistic parliamentary research solutions;
- helps develop/fine-tune the parliamentary research capacity implementation plan; and
- Sets a baseline for measuring the results of parliamentary research trainings and other capacity building activities.

It should be noted that a research service or department will only be successful if it understands which research products and services are valuable to parliamentarians. This means identifying what works, or not, and for whom, and methods of evaluating its services offered by taking into consideration the needs and preferences of both Members and parliamentary staff. For example, some parliamentarians may value access to in-depth analysis of complex public policy issues, whereas other may prefer timely access to succinct material to support their parliamentary work.

Therefore, when conducting a needs assessment of parliamentary research capacities an organisation needs to determine which research products and services can be developed, given the research departments current capacities; what type(s) of information Members need most to undertake their work; and if the goal is offer research services to committees, for the first time, there is need to know how committees do their work and what their major research priorities are (legislative drafting, financial oversight, accountability etc.).

There is no set blue print for how to conduct a needs assessment. However, in common practice, needs assessments follow a three-step process:

1. ***Phase I-Pre-assessment (exploration):*** This involves preparation of a design and implementation plan, determination of the assessment methodology and time frames, determination of measurable indicators for desired research services and products/capacity, consideration of data sources and deciding on research capacity priorities.
2. ***Phase II-Main Assessment (data gathering and analysis):*** This involves collecting data on the current status (the "what is") of research services and products/capacity, or gaps, to compare the status with the vision of "what should be," and to determine the magnitude of needs, or gaps the research services and products/capacity and their causes.
3. ***Phase III: Post-assessment (decision making/utilisation of findings):*** This phase acts as a bridge from the analysis to action (to use needs assessment findings). It answers important questions: What research needs are the most critical? What are some possible solutions? Which solutions are best?

Timing for a Needs Assessment

The nature of the work, composition and administration of parliament presents a unique need for research. It is for this reason that a needs assessment, more generally or of parliament's research services or departments, can be conducted in one of three ways; ***(i) proactively*** (when resources are available) to identify opportunities to improve research service delivery; ***(ii) reactively*** in response to changes in a parliament (turn-over of new Members, new legislative functions, external changes); or ***(iii) continuously*** as a part of the integrated component of parliamentary reform and modernisation.

In practice, needs assessments are conducted at either the project proposal stage or at the outset of a project, which is helpful in developing the project implementation plan and setting the baseline for measuring project results. There is no set timing to conduct a needs assessment and as such, many assessments combine these two options.

It is worth noting that needs assessments of parliaments research capacities can be conducted by Parliaments themselves (Self-assessments) or alternatively, by an external team of experts (External Assessments). There is no rule governing which of these options can be used to assess a parliament's research capacity, however the most important criteria to consider is the team assembled to undertake the assessment.

The Assessment Team

To be successful in assessing parliamentary research needs, the Needs Assessment Team should be comprised of people with a range of skills, including:

- In-depth knowledge and experience in parliamentary research
- Data acquisition and information synthesis
- Knowledge of the country and Parliament being assessed, and the specific working culture, professional contacts/relationships within the Parliament being assessed
- Familiarity with parliamentary rules, practices and procedures/ parliamentary research
- Experience with participatory processes
- Experience with qualitative assessments (e.g., stakeholder consultations and focus groups)

Examples of people that could be included as part of the Assessment Team:

- Current and former parliamentarians and parliamentary staff
- National and international parliamentary development experts
- Needs assessment experts, especially with conducting assessment of legislatures

When constituting an assessment team, it is always advisable to consider and never underestimate the influence of the peer-to-peer factor, as parliamentarians and parliamentary staff prefer to interact with their peers. Therefore including on the team acting and/or former parliamentarians and parliamentary staff can have a positive impact on the success of an assessment.

Tools for Needs Assessment

Once the needs assessment team has been assembled, the assessment work can commence. There are common methods used in collecting data during a needs assessments, particularly desk reviews, key informant interviews/private meetings and surveys/ and focus groups. A summary of these tools can be found in Annex B.

1. **Desk Reviews:** Gathering and analyzing information which is already available in print or electronically (internet). This may involve reviewing documents and reports relevant toi the assessment, such as institutional strategic plans, standing orders, specific Acts of Parliament etc. This is a quick and efficient means of collecting data, which can be used in the initial stage of the assessment as well as in benchmarking the process;

2. **Private Meetings/Key Informant Interviews:** Interviews with key stakeholders are held and those interviewed are selected by the assessment team based on their personal experience or their current role in parliament. Some examples of key informants commonly selected are Members of Parliament, Directors of the Research Services, parliamentary staff and Committee Chairs. Through these private meetings, more in-depth information is gathered about key stakeholders' capacities and knowledge, about either parliament or specifically the research products and services;

3. **Surveys/Questionnaires:** Surveys and short questionnaires are a commonly used method of data collection, which provides the needs assessment team with specific information on specific topics. For example, a survey can be designed to gather more data on gender-sensitive parliamentary research capacities of a parliament. The information collected is then synthesized into a short statistical summary of the thoughts and opinions amongst those who completed the survey/questionnaire.

4. **Focus Groups:** Another method of data collection is interviewing a carefully selected group of people, who participate in a pre-determined, focused discussion led by an experienced evaluator. This may be helpful when collecting specific in-depth thoughts and opinions on the quality and types of research products and services.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Data

Once a needs assessment has been completed, the team will have a combination of qualitative and quantitative data that needs to be analyzed and synthesized into a needs assessment report. This raises the question as to the difference between qualitative and quantitative data; Qualitative Data is the data based on attributes and properties, whereas Quantitative Data is the type of data which can be measured and expressed numerically. The table below highlights the pros and cons of these two types of data.

Qualitative	Quantitative
Pros √ Essential in a field such as Parliament where politics is important √ Allows for subtle nuances to be reflected √ Validation of findings is possible	**Pros** √ Can access large number of MPs and staff √ Allows for objective data to support subjective, qualitative data √ Ensures greater ownership of results
Cons √ Can result in elite bias √ Limited number of respondents √ Can prove difficult to collect data in politically volatile situations	**Cons** √ Cannot rely on surveys alone √ Supporting Parliaments is too nuanced and complex for just objective data

Balanced approach

In order to ensure that all relevant perspectives in Parliament are reflected in the needs assessment, the Assessment Team must be conscious of "capture" by key groups who would want to ensure that the assessment reflects their agenda. In this regard, a balanced approach should be used to ensure the needs of all groups, whether parliamentarians (ruling and opposition/male and female), parliamentary staff (senior and junior) and majority and minority groups, are equally captured in the assessment.

Key factors to consider when conducting a Needs Assessment

- Keep in mind the value and necessity of broad-based participation by key stakeholders, especially parliamentarians who are the direct clients of the parliamentary research products and services (a needs assessment is a participatory process , it is not something that is "done to" people)
- Choose the most appropriate means of gathering information about critical issues and other data, bearing in mind how busy parliamentary calendars are and that sometimes parliaments are politically charged. As a result, needs assessments of parliamentary research capacities should not ignore these important factors. Furthermore, it is worth noting the priorities identified at the end of a needs assessment may be counter to entrenched ideals in the system/leadership of a given parliament. Regardless, these findings are still worth presenting in the final needs assessment report and discussing with the parliamentary leadership.
- Recognise and understand the core of the group (parliamentarians or parliamentary staff) whose needs are being assessed
- Data gathering methods by themselves are not needs assessments; rather they are a part of the process.

Once a needs assessment has been completed, the project team will have better knowledge of the present situation within a given parliament, which allows them to have a clearer picture of the gaps between the present and desired situations. Therefore, the needs assessment reaffirms whether an organisation's idea for training is an effective means of filling the gaps identified. Examples of assessment case studies can be found in Annex A.

Designing Trainings

The training plan serves two important functions; (1) to direct and focus the training; and (2) to help make decisions about the training. It is also an important tool for identifying potential problems and design constraints. For example, the training plan forces organisations to think about what they are planning to do and what resources are needed to undertake it.[38] A training plan should incorporate the following elements, which will be explained in greater detail below:

- Training Title
- Definition of Training Scope
- Identification of the Target Group
- Identification of Key Topics and Activities
- Identification of Required Resources
- Training Duration

Training Title

The training or project should have a title that reflects its purpose.

Definition of Training Scope

Sample Question	Sample Answer
Why is the training needed?	To improve the level of knowledge amongst Members and staff of the Shan State Hluttaw in the area of gender-sensitive parliamentary research
What should the training goal be?	To understand the basic principles of parliamentary research
When the participants finish this training, what should they be able to do?	To apply the research principles in the preparation of a research brief
Under what circumstances?	Simulated work conditions, i.e. working in the Research Department of the Hluttaw
To what level of competency?	Their level of knowledge will increase from a Level 1 to a Level 2 on a scale of 1 to 5, where I is minimal knowledge and 5 is maximum knowledge

The scope of a training defines its goals and objectives. Some questions to consider when defining training scope have been summarized in the table below.
It is also important to remember that there needs to be a concrete way to measure what participants will learn. This involves turning a general idea into concrete goals or objectives, which are clearly stated. This will help avoid the pitfalls of over-committing an organisation as well as aid in the management of expectations, within the implementing organisation and amongst the beneficiaries.

For example, a parliament that has no experience and capacity to conduct gender-sensitive parliamentary research, is the beneficiary of a training session. The goals or objectives of this training will be to introduce parliamentarians and staff to the nature of parliamentary research and its value for their work; introduce parliamentarians and/staff to the methodology for parliamentary research; and help parliamentarians and/or staff build basic practical research skills. These goals will be used to measure the success of the training sessions. [39]

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[38] Manual on Training Planning, Project on Improvement of Local Administration in Cambodia, Ministry of Interior and Japan International Cooperation Agency, Available: https://www.jica.go.jp/project/cambodia/0601331/pdf/english/2_Training_01.pdf.

[39] Balinov, Ivo and Lola Giraldo, "Designing and Implementing Research Trainings for Parliamentarians," Presentation at Train-the-Trainers on Parliamentary Research, Yangon, September 2017.

Remember, when developing objectives for the training session, they should be:

- √ **Specific –** clear-cut and to the point without leaving a lot of room for ambiguity
- √ **Measurable –** it is helpful to develop clear goals or objectives that can be measured to help an organisation quantify what has been done. These also help both the trainers and participants to feel a sense of accomplishment.
- √ **Attainable –** reflecting what can be realistically accomplished in the given (usually limited) time, particularly, if an organisation is developing the first training session. [40]

Identification of the Target Group

The target group is the group that will benefit from the project.[41] When designing a training, it should reflect; **(1)** the participants current level of knowledge and skills; **(2)** the gaps in their knowledge and skills; **(3)** knowledge and skills they need to acquire; **(4)** how many people need to receive the specific knowledge and skills; **(5)** how many participants will the training have; and **(6)** are there any special considerations to consider when preparing the training, i.e. cultural customs, language and geographic location.[42] The ultimate beneficiaries are those who will benefit from the training long-term, which is the reason to thoroughly assess their capacity during the needs assessment. [43]

Clearly knowing a target group, including their strengths and weaknesses, ensures training sessions meet their specific goals and objectives (Training Scope). For example, when designing trainings on gender-sensitive parliamentary research, participants that should be included in the training sessions are:

- *Parliamentary Leadership*
  - The Speaker
  - Heads of the Administration
    - Both their presence and support throughout the duration of your project
- *Parliamentarians*
  - Make sure to include all Political Parties represented in Parliament
  - Seek a Gender Balance: male and female Parliamentarians often have different views and needs
- *Parliamentary Research Staff*
  - Parliamentarians are not always ready to have sessions together with staff: arrange separate sessions if needed
  - Parliamentarians and Staff have different roles
  - Seek Gender Balance
- *External Actors*
  - Organisations and Experts supporting Parliament with research and analysis [44]

As the topics for trainings can vary, there are a series of questions organisations responsible for designing trainings could consider to help identify the appropriate participants.

- ***Who is the target audience for a training session?***
  - Answering this questions helps identify the specific people or group of people that should be targeted with/for the training. For example, the target group of trainees for a training focused on strengthening the gender-sensitive parliamentary research capacity of the Shan State Hluttaw in Myanmar, would be the Members and parliamentary staff of the Shan State Hluttaw.
- ***What is the participants' background?***
  - This question focuses not only on participants' educational background, but more importantly on their professional knowledge and skills. When designing a training, an organisation needs to consider the participants' job profile or description, especially the knowledge and skills needed for the position. In this manner, the training organizers can compare their desired situation versus their current situation to help prioritize the needs to be addressed with/in the training. For example, in the Shan State Hluttaw, parliamentary staff are responsible for providing research and informational support the Members, who utilize this information to make policy decisions.

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[40] Community Toolbox. **Developing a Strategic Plan and Organization Structure,** *Chapter 12: Designing a Training Session,* Available: https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/training-and-technical-assistance/design-training-session/main, accessed May 10, 2018.

[41] International Labour Organization, *Project Design Manual,* 2010, pg.31. Available: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_159819.pdf

[42] Manual on Training Planning, Project on Improvement of Local Administration in Cambodia, Ministry of Interior and Japan International Cooperation Agency, pg. 10. Available: https://www.jica.go.jp/project/cambodia/0601331/pdf/english/2_Training_01.pdf.

[43] International Labour Organization, *Project Design Manual,* 2010, pg. 31. Available: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_159819.pdf

[44] Balinov, Ivo and Lola Giraldo, "Designing and Implementing Research Trainings for Parliamentarians," PowerPoint Presentation, September 2017.

- ***What pre-training material will participants need?***
  - If a knowledge gap has been identified among the training participants, it is worthwhile to consider sharing documents with the participants in order for them to read prior to attending the training. This will help ensure all participants have the same background knowledge prior to the training session.

- ***Will some participants need more training than others?***
  - This is one of the most challenging aspects of designing a training session. In this circumstance, it may be worth while to consider having several training sessions to address the different levels of knowledge amongst participants. [45]

Identification of Key Topics and Activities

Critical topics and activities are what should be included in a training, and are often called components or modules. [46]

Organisations design training sessions to fill specific needs, such as parliamentarians needing more research and information to make sound policy decisions or parliamentary staff needing to improve their skills in certain facets of the job. These needs or gaps are identified during the initial needs assessment. The information gathered helps the organisation determine a project baseline, while simultaneously identifying key topics and activities.

Once the key topics have been identified, there are different methods that can be employed in preparing the training material needed:

- **Using materials already in existence**
- **Developing internal/specific training material**
- **Using a hybrid approach: a combination of the previous two points.** [47]

Identification of Required Resources

Required resources are the human resources (project team members, subject matter experts etc.) and assets (equipment, facilities, services etc.) needed for all phases of a training (design, implementation and evaluation). The identification of required resources can be broken down into a series of questions, as demonstrated in the table below. [48]

Sample Question	Sample Answer
What facilities will be required for training implementation?	A training room to fit approximately 30 people
What equipment will be required on the training dates?	Computers, projectors, screen, stationary for participants, microphones, etc.
What roles need to be filled on the project team?	A program manager, Program Officer, Program Finance Officer, Program Administrative Staff
What subject matter experts will be needed?	An expert on gender-sensitive parliamentary research will be needed

When designing a training, the importance of the availability of financial resources needed to undertake trainings cannot be overlooked. Most often, the financial resources provided by funders are not unlimited and for this reason, implementing organisations need to tamper their expectations. It is worthwhile to consider the following during training design:

- √ How much money is available for a training session(s)?
- √ How much will each training session or activity cost?

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[45] MCommunity Toolbox. **Developing a Strategic Plan and Organization Structure,** *Chapter 12: Designing a Training Session*, Available: https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/training-and-technical-assistance/design-training-session/main, accessed May 10, 2018.

[46] Manual on Training Planning, Project on Improvement of Local Administration in Cambodia, Ministry of Interior and Japan International Cooperation Agency, pg. 11. Available: https://www.jica.go.jp/project/cambodia/0601331/pdf/english/2_Training_01.pdf.

[47] Community Toolbox. **Developing a Strategic Plan and Organization Structure,** *Chapter 12: Designing a Training Session*, Available: https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/training-and-technical-assistance/design-training-session/main, accessed May 10, 2018.

[48] Manual on Training Planning, Project on Improvement of Local Administration in Cambodia, Ministry of Interior and Japan International Cooperation Agency, pg. 13. Available: https://www.jica.go.jp/project/cambodia/0601331/pdf/english/2_Training_01.pdf.

- √ What resources are absolutely necessary?
- √ Are alternative/cost effective resources available to undertake a training session?

By answering these important questions, organisations can quickly determine what is possible within the available resources. In certain circumstances, where resources are much less than initially anticipated, organisations could consider some potential alternatives to achieving their desired results. For example, scaling back the training to something smaller and more manageable within the allotted resources or teaming up with another organisation(s) to pool each organisation's financial resources and deliver a larger training session together. [49]

Training Duration

This refers to how often and how long the training will be delivered. In many cases this is influenced by the financial resources available to an organisation to undertake a training activity. For this reason, it is important to have a good grasp of the project budget when deciding on the frequency and length of training activity. [50]

In general, participants needs also have an impact on the frequency with which a training session is offered. However, there are a series of questions organisations can use to help guide the allocation of time to a training session. These include:

- √ How complex should the training session be?
- √ How much time do participants have to learn new knowledge or skills?
- √ What are the participants learning preferences and styles?
- √ What will entice participants to attend the training session?

The answers to these questions impact the timing and costs associated with a training. For example, an introductory training session may take longer to implement as the participants need to be introduced to the principles that build the foundation of a given topic, as opposed to a more targeted training, which focuses specifically on the topic.

The final step in this process is utilizing the information gathered and prepared during the planning process and formulating a curriculum for the training. This will serve as a blueprint for the training session and more importantly, will help structure the content. A training curriculum is a statement of the intended aims and objectives of a given training. Furthermore, it should include a description of the training structure (requirements, length of each session etc.) as well as the methods for learning, teaching and opportunities to receive feedback. Overall, this document guides the decision making process, while simultaneously highlighting accountability.[51] For an example of a Training Curriculum, please refer to the Annex C.

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[49] Community Toolbox. **Developing a Strategic Plan and Organization Structure**, *Chapter 12: Designing a Training Session*, Available: https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/training-and-technical-assistance/design-training-session/main, accessed May 10, 2018.

[50] Manual on Training Planning, Project on Improvement of Local Administration in Cambodia, Ministry of Interior and Japan International Cooperation Agency, pg. 13. Available: https://www.jica.go.jp/project/cambodia/0601331/pdf/english/2_Training_01.pdf.

[51] Manual on Training Planning, Project on Improvement of Local Administration in Cambodia, Ministry of Interior and Japan International Cooperation Agency, pg. 15 and 19. Available: https://www.jica.go.jp/project/cambodia/0601331/pdf/english/2_Training_01.pdf.

Evaluating Trainings

Programme evaluation is a rigorous and independent assessment of either completed or ongoing activities to determine the extent to which they are achieving stated objectives and contributing to decision making.[52] In contrast to continuous monitoring, they are carried out at discrete points in time and often seek an outside perspective from technical experts. Their design, method, and cost vary substantially depending on the type of question the evaluation is trying to answer. Different types of evaluations comprise project, programme, sectoral, thematic, policy and management evaluations. Other related assessments include audits and reviews. In assessing development effectiveness, programme evaluation efforts aim to assess the following.[53]

1. ***Relevance:*** is concerned whether the results, purpose and overall objectives of the project are in line with the needs and aspirations of the beneficiaries, and with the policy environment of the project.

2. ***Impact:*** is whether there has been a change towards the achievement of the overall objective(s) as a consequence of the achievement of the project purpose. Both intended and unintended impacts are reviewed.

3. ***Effectiveness:*** relates to and describes how well the results achieved have furthered the achievement of the project purpose.

4. ***Efficiency:*** is the relation between the results and means i.e. whether the process of transforming the means into results has been cost-effective.

5. ***Sustainability:*** can be described as the degree to which the benefits produced by the project continue after the external assistance has come to an end.

Furthermore, the practice and use of evaluation is guided by the following principles:[54]

- √ ***Usefulness:*** For evaluation to affect decision making, findings must be perceived as useful and as geared to current operational concerns.

- √ ***Independence:*** For evaluation to be impartial, it must be free from bias in findings, analysis and conclusions. In turn, this means independence from line management.

- √ ***Credibility:*** Evaluation must be perceived as objective, rigorous and impartial. Credibility rests on the professional quality of evaluators and the rigor of methods.

- √ ***Transparency:*** Credibility and usefulness will also depend on the transparency of the evaluation the ready availability of findings to all stakeholders.

Importance of Programme Evaluation

Evaluations enable managers to make informed decisions and plan strategically. Therefore, an independent evaluation serves both as a learning tool and as a means to demonstrate accountability.[55]

1. ***Learning:*** An independent evaluation is an effective means for learning how programs/projects can be strengthened and how resources can be used more effectively. It provides an understanding of the following:

   i. how well a programme has articulated its vision and is achieving its mission;

   ii. the quality of activities and how useful they are in meeting clients' needs; and

   iii. how capacities such as financial and executive management, governance and country-based resources affect quality.

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[52] UNDP (2009) Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

[53] Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland, Guidelines for Programme Design, Monitoring and Evaluation/ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2002) Handbook for Monitoring and Evaluations

[54] UNDP (2009) Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

[55] The World Bank Development Grant Facility (DGF) Technical Note (2003)

Evaluation that is driven by the need to make better programme decisions should clarify with some specificity "who needs to learn what." This frames the exercise and gives it greater legitimacy and focus. Thus, a primary audience for the evaluation should be agents for change, including team leaders and managers. Funders will also need assurance that the programme they are supporting is achieving results.

2. ***Accountability:*** Because development resources are limited and the time frames to achieve results are short, donors have become increasingly focused on delivering results. Programmes are under greater scrutiny because grant resources are especially scarce and largely independently governed. Independent evaluation is crucial for demonstrating how resources have been spent and what results have been achieved. At the same time, it is important that the evaluation goes beyond results and their attribution to ask, "what would have happened if the programme did not exist?" What would happen if the programme ceased to exist?

   It is worth noting that the effective conduct and use of evaluation requires adequate human and financial resources, sound understanding of evaluation techniques and most importantly, a culture of results-orientation, learning, inquiry and evidence-based decision making.

Types and forms of programme Evaluation

While there are many different types of programme evaluations, and many terms are used to describe them. These include:

1. ***Process evaluations:*** assess whether an intervention or programme model was implemented as planned, the intended target population was reached, and what the major challenges and successful strategies associated with program implementation.

2. ***Outcome evaluations:*** determine whether, and to what extent, the expected changes in child or youth outcomes occur and whether these changes can be attributed to the programme or its activities.

3. ***Project evaluations:*** This is the most common evaluation type. The primary purpose of a project evaluation is to make improvements, to continue or upscale an initiative, to assess replicability in other settings, or to consider alternatives. Therefore, although project evaluations are mandatory only when required by partnership protocols, programme units are strongly recommended to commission evaluations, particularly of pilot programmes, before replication or upscaling, projects that are going into the next phase, and for projects more than five years in duration.[56]

4. ***Goals-Based Evaluations:*** evaluate the extent to which programmes are meeting pre-determined goals or objectives.

5. ***Thematic evaluations:*** In addition to project and outcome evaluations, senior managers of programme units may choose to commission thematic evaluations to assess performance in areas that are critical to ensuring sustained contribution to development results. They may focus on one or several cross-cutting themes that have significance beyond a particular project or initiative.

6. ***Impact evaluations:*** are evaluations into the effects, positive or negative, intended or not, on organisations caused by a given development activity such as a programme or project. Such an evaluation refers to the final (long-term) impact as well as to the (medium-term) effects at the outcome level. By identifying if development assistance is working or not, impact evaluation also serves the accountability function.

7. ***Joint evaluations:*** are evaluations to which different partners contribute. Any evaluation can be conducted as a joint evaluation.

8. ***Real time Evaluations:*** are often undertaken at an early stage of an initiative to provide managers with timely feedback, in order to make an immediate difference to the initiative. They are commonly applied in humanitarian or post-conflict contexts to provide implementing staff with the opportunity to analyse whether the initial response or recovery is appropriate in terms of desired results and process. They can also be used in crisis settings where there may be constraints in conducting lengthier evaluations, such as the absence of baseline data, limited data collection efforts due to a rapid turnover of staff (the issue of a lack of institutional memory) and difficulty conducting interviews and surveys due to security issues.

[56] UNDP (2009) Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

It is also important to note that evaluations are defined by when they are carried out :[57]

- √ ***Ex-ante evaluation*** is a forward-looking assessment of the likely future effects of new initiatives and support such as policies, programmes and strategies. It takes place prior to the implementation of an initiative.
- √ ***Midterm evaluation*** generally has a formative nature as it is undertaken around the middle period of implementation of the initiative.
- √ ***Formative evaluation*** intends to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programmes.
- √ ***Final or terminal evaluations*** normally serve the purpose of a summative evaluation since they are undertaken towards the end of the implementation phase of projects or programmers.
- √ ***Summative evaluation*** is conducted at the end of an initiative (or a phase of that initiative) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. It is intended to provide information about the worth of the programme.
- √ ***Ex-post evaluation*** is a type of summative evaluation of an initiative after it has been completed; usually conducted two years or more after completion. Its purpose is to study how well the initiative programme or project) served its aims, to assess sustainability of results and impacts and to draw conclusions for similar initiatives in the future.

Data Collection Methods[58]

The data to be collected and the methods for collecting this data are determined by: the evidence needed to address the evaluation questions; the analysis that will be used to translate data into meaningful findings; and judgements about what data is feasible to collect, particularly within the constraints of time and resources. Most evaluations draw heavily on data (performance indicators) generated through monitoring during the programme or project implementation cycle. Performance indicators are a simple and reliable means to document changes in development conditions (outcomes), production, or delivery of products and services (outputs) connected to a development initiative. It is also important to identify the two main types of data as follows:

1. ***Primary Data:*** consists of information evaluators observe or collect directly from stakeholders about their first-hand experience with the initiative. This data generally consists of the reported or observed values, beliefs, attitudes, opinions, behaviours, motivations and knowledge of stakeholders, generally obtained through questionnaires, surveys, interviews, focus groups, key informants, expert panels, direct observation and case studies. These methods allow for more in-depth exploration and yield information that can facilitate deeper understanding of the observed changes in outcomes and outputs (both intended and unintended) as well as the factors that contributed to fulfilling the operational context for outputs and outcomes.

2. ***Secondary Data:*** This is data collected, compiled and published by a secondary source. Secondary data can take many forms, but usually consists of documentary evidence that has direct relevance for the purposes of the evaluation. Documentary evidence is particularly useful when the project or programme lacks baseline indicators and targets for assessing progress toward outputs and outcome measures. Although not a preferred method, secondary data can be used to help recreate baseline data and targets. Secondary information complements and supplements data collected by primary methods, but does not replace collecting data from primary sources.

Selection of an Evaluation Method

The overall goal in selecting an evaluation method(s) is to get the most useful information from key decision makers in the most cost-effective and realistic fashion. For this reason, the following questions should be considered:

1. What information is needed to make current decisions about a product or program?
2. Of this information, how much can be collected and analyzed in a low-cost and practical manner, e.g., using questionnaires, surveys and checklists?
3. How accurate will the information be?
4. Will the methods get all of the needed information?

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[57] Ibid

[58] Appendix 1 provides an overview of the major methods used for collecting data during evaluations

5. What additional methods should and could be used if additional information is needed?
6. Will the information appear as credible to decision makers, e.g., to funders or top management?
7. Will the nature of the audience conform to the methods, e.g., will they fill out questionnaires carefully, engage in interviews or focus groups, let you examine their documentations, etc.?
8. Who can administer the methods now or is training required?
9. How can the information be analyzed?

Note that the evaluator can use a combination of methods, for example, a questionnaire to collect a large amount of information, and follow-up with interviews to get more in-depth information from certain stakeholders. In certain circumstances, case studies could be used for a more in-depth analysis of unique and notable cases, e.g., those who did or did not benefit from a particular programme etc. Furthermore, there are four levels of evaluating information gathered from clients/stakeholders, including:

√ reactions and feelings (feelings are often poor indicators that your service made lasting impact)

√ learning (enhanced attitudes, perceptions or knowledge)

√ changes in skills (applied the learning to enhance behaviors)

√ effectiveness (improved performance because of enhanced behaviors)

Usually, the more in-depth an evaluation is, the more effective it is.

Analysing and Interpreting Information

Data analysis is a systematic process that involves organizing and classifying the information collected, tabulating it, summarising it, and comparing the results with other appropriate information to extract the useful information that responds to the evaluation questions and fulfils the purposes of the evaluation. It is the process of deciphering facts from a body of evidence by systematically collating the data, ensuring its accuracy, conducting any statistical analyses, and translating the data into usable formats or units of analysis. Data analysis seeks to detect patterns, either by isolating important findings (analysis) or by combining sources of information to reach a larger understanding (synthesis). Mixed method evaluations require the separate analysis of each element of evidence and a synthesis of all sources, in order to examine patterns of convergence.

There are certain basics steps which can help an organisation make sense of all the collected data, including:

1. **Always start with evaluation goals**
   - When analysing data (whether from questionnaires, interviews, focus groups), always start from the review of evaluation goals. This will help organize data and focus the analysis.

2. **Basic analysis of "quantitative" information**
   - Tabulating the information, i.e., add up the number of ratings, rankings, yes's, no's for each question.
   - For ratings and rankings, consider computing a mean, or average, for each question. For example, "For question #1, the average ranking was 2.4". This is more meaningful than indicating, e.g., how many respondents ranked 1, 2, or 3.

3. **Basic analysis of "qualitative" information**
   - Read through all the data.
   - Organize comments into similar categories, e.g., concerns, suggestions, strengths, weaknesses, similar experiences, program inputs, recommendations, outputs, outcome indicators, etc.
   - Label the categories or themes, e.g., concerns, suggestions, etc.
   - Attempt to identify patterns, or associations and causal relationships in the themes, e.g., all people who attended programs in the evening had similar concerns, most people came from the same geographic area, most people were in the same salary range, what processes or events respondents experience during the program, etc.
   - Keep all commentary for several years after completion in case needed for future reference.

Interpreting the information/findings

Interpreting the information/findings is a process of giving meaning to the evaluation results. Interpretation is the process of figuring out what the findings mean, making sense of the evidence gathered and its practical applications. It creates a summation and/or synthesis of information derived from facts, statements, opinions, and documents and more importantly, turns findings into conclusions about the results. On the basis of these conclusions, recommendations for future actions can be made.

Drawing conclusions

A conclusion is a reasoned judgement based on a synthesis of the evaluation results. Conclusions are not findings; they are interpretations that give meaning to the findings. Conclusions are considered valid and credible when they are directly linked to the evidence and can be justified on the basis of the methods of analysis and synthesis used to summarize findings. Conclusions should:

- √ Consider alternative ways to compare results (for example, compared with programme objectives, a comparison group, national norms, past performance or needs)
- √ Generate alternative explanations for findings and indicate why these explanations should be discounted
- √ Form the basis for recommending actions or decisions that are consistent with the conclusions
- √ Be limited to situations, time periods, persons, contexts and purposes for which the findings are applicable.

Making recommendations

Recommendations are evidence-based proposals for action aimed at evaluation users and should be based on conclusions. However, forming recommendations is a distinct element of the evaluation that requires information beyond what is necessary to form conclusions. Developing recommendations involves weighing effective alternatives, policy, funding priorities and so forth within a broader context. It requires in-depth contextual knowledge, particularly about the organisational context within which policy and programmatic decisions will be made and the political, social and economic context in which the initiative will operate. Recommendations should be formulated in a way that will facilitate the development of a management response. Recommendations must be realistic and reflect an understanding of the organisations mandate/mission. Additionally, each recommendation should clearly identify its target group and stipulate the recommended action and rationale.

Lessons learned

The lessons learned from an evaluation comprise of new knowledge gained that can be applicable to and useful in other contexts. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact.

Annexes
Tools and Resources

A. Needs Assessment Case Studies

Burkina Faso

Project Name:	Supporting Democracy in Burkina Faso
Duration:	2016-2019 (ongoing)
Implementing Agency:	Parliamentary Centre
Funder:	Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

Context:

Popular uprisings in 2014 resulted in regime overthrow. Following a transition period, the successful November 2015 elections saw a new National Assembly, intent to improve its capacity to carry out its functions more effectively and transparently.

Primary Objectives:

Multi-faceted and targeted support for the 127 MPs and the parliamentary staff that assist them to perform their functions of representation, legislation and oversight in a more effective, transparent and responsible manner.

A special focus is given to ensure that parliamentarians are able take into account a gender perspective while performing these roles and responsibilities, as well as on providing them with the tools and capacity to engage citizens in their work and consult them on decisions that affect their daily lives.

Support provided under the project so far:

- **Needs Assessment of the National Assembly** was carried out with the participation of the MPs and staff, and shared with the various stakeholders. This comprehensive assessment has served to provide targeted support to meet the specific needs of parliamentarians and staff. To date, more than 110 copies have been shared.

- **A Four-year Strategic Plan** of the National Assembly (2016-2020) has been developed through a participatory, inclusive and results-based approach, involving the MPs and parliamentary staff. With the support of the project, the National Assembly now has a clear vision of the steps and directions it wants to take towards becoming a more effective and open institution. This includes the strengthening of parliamentary research capacity:

Strategic Direction ``Strengthening Organisational Capacity``

Outcome "the development of research services facilitating decision-making for MPs is effective"

Structuring activities:

- Create a unit dedicated to research in the governance structure of the National Assembly
- Build the research capacity of MPs and parliamentary staff
- Rehabilitate, strengthen and equip the Documentation and Archives Directorate

Operational Plan (2017-2020) and repertoire of **Special Projects** that will help bring the strategic plan to life have been developed with the support of the project. With 16 intermediate results, 45 outputs and 182 identified activities this results-based plan offers concrete avenues for partnerships with the international community to support the National Assembly in a coordinated manner and to avoid duplication of efforts. This has already resulted in pledges for funding by several donors of approximately $ 7.5 million US.

The operational plan includes specific activities focused on the strengthening of parliamentary research capacity:

Outputs	**Skills of parliamentary staff are enhanced in the field of research**	**The archival collections are restored**	**An up-to-date library is available and open**
Activities	2Developing a research and knowledge management manual for parliamentary staff	Preparing the draft document for restoring the collections	Providing the library with a document management software
	Acquiring research and capitalization tools	Implementing the Project for restoring archival collections	Carrying out specialized Press and magazines subscriptions
	Training parliamentary staff involved		Providing the library with up-to-date facilities
	Implementing the research manual		

Lessons Learned so far ...

A strong participatory approach is essential for success. The parliament must lead and own the strategic planning. The role of the project is to accompany this process.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project Name:	South-East Europe Parliamentary Program
Duration:	2004-2008
Implementing Agency:	Parliamentary Centre
Funder:	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Specific work related to parliamentary research

Support to the Establishment of Research Unit in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Primary Objectives:

(1) to boost the BiH Parliament's capacity to serve parliamentary committees involved in parliamentary oversight, by developing a Research Centre (RC) to assist the Parliament; and

(2) to raise awareness among MPs about the importance of developing a research unit in assisting parliamentary committees, in order to encourage parliament to internalize the RC within the Parliament.

Support Provided Under the Project:

1. **Needs Assessment Conducted:** parliamentary leaders recognized the lack of research capacity as a serious gap that needed to be filled

2. **Work Plan Developed**

3. **Hiring Staff for the Research Centre:** facilitated by the project while making sure that the Secretary General of parliament was fully involved in the process. Initially staff and operations of the RC were funded by the project, after the end of the project another funder took over. The ultimate goal was to have parliament take over once it has appropriate financial resources

4. **Training and Service Development for the Research Centre:** extensive on-site training in research techniques and service planning, and development of the specific suite of services the RC would offer

5. **Periodic re-assessment and adjustment of service mix and organisational processes**

6. **Promoting the work of the RC to the parliamentary leadership and Members:** pilot project in conducting extensive public hearings and providing detailed research support to all stages of the committees' deliberations. Committee hearings were held by the Legal/Constitutional Committees of both the House of Peoples and House of Representatives on the topic of post-secondary education across 8 cities in the country. The Research Centre provided analytical support to the Committees by preparing briefing papers on the topic, including comparative analysis; recommending expert witnesses; and drafting the final report, including recommendations, for the Committees.

Cross Cutting Theme: Gender.

Researchers trained on how to analyze legislation for differential impact on gender. The Manager of the Research Centre— a woman — guided the development, service delivery, and implementation of the program.

Results:

The quality of staff engaged by the RC and the level of professional training provided produced results, as evidenced by the number of increased research requests and the quality of research reports which were generally well received by Members.

Lessons Learned

Concrete and Tangible Results Help to Ensure Buy-in and Sustainability: The establishment of the Research Centre, followed by relevant and needed services for elected Members across all party lines, were seen as tangible products within the Parliamentary Assembly.

Strengthened Management Systems are Important for the Work of Research Units: The launch of a new institution required the establishment of strong management systems. In order to achieve this, the RC required a leader that was not only a good researcher, but also a good manager.

B. Needs Assessment Tools

DESK REVIEWS

Review of background information that is already available.

Examples: laws governing the work of parliament, rules of procedure, strategic plan, reports on previous assessments, reports from other projects supporting parliament, employment manuals for parliamentary staff, press coverage of the work of parliament, etc.

Desk reviews can help to prepare better for other tools such as private meetings and focus groups and to maximise the use of limited time and resources.

PRIVATE MEETINGS

Best for parliamentary leadership, parliamentarians and senior parliamentary staff

Advantages	Disadvantages
Direct, open interaction: the interviewed share information and views that are difficult or impossible to obtain with other methods	▪ Can be difficult to arrange; ▪ Normally limited time available,especially for meetings with parliamentarians

QUESTIONNAIRES

Best method of obtaining perspective of large number of MPs and staff in short period of time
Key points to keep in mind:

- Design a series of questions before starting assessment (desk review stage)
- Survey should be not too long
- Identify a cross-section of staff and MPs (cover all parties) who should receive survey
- Work with parliament focal point(s) to ensure surveys are completed
- If needed, sit with individuals or a group and support the completion of the survey
- Tabulate questions and responses into assessment considerations
- Feed results

Advantages	Disadvantages
Qualitative data to support assessment	No opportunity for follow up on responses
Large pool of respondents	Limited number of questions
Can reach MPs and staff otherwise not contacted	Ensuring a cross-section can be difficult
Anonymity	

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FOCUS GROUPS

A small collection of similar stakeholders are interviewed together (e.g. parliamentary research staff)

Advantages	Disadvantages
Allows a dialogue between like-minded stakeholders: i.e. women MPs; research staff.	Some participants may not be candid with opinions
Effective gathering of information: fast	Less of an opportunity to gather more complex information
Works best in a semi-structured approach: allow for discussion/conversation	More difficult to follow up or validate

QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE DATA

Qualitative	Quantitative
Pros √ Essential in a field such as Parliament where politics is important √ Allows for subtle nuances to be reflected √ Validation of findings is possible	**Pros** √ Can access large number of MPs and staff √ Allows for objective data to support subjective, qualitative data √ Ensures greater "ownership" of results
Cons √ Can result in elite bias √ Limited number of respondents	**Cons** √ Cannot rely on surveys alone √ Supporting Parliaments is too nuanced and complex for just objective data

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C. Training Curriculum Template

Training Name:		
Training Type	❑ **Training** ❑ **Simulation** ❑ **Workshop** ❑ **Presentation**	
Training Responsible		
vities	• •	
Training Approach	(general idea of the training, short description of how it should be held, for example: it is a TV Show, debate with experts or held in the form of rotating tables; 2–3 sentences to facilitate that will follow this outline in order to organize the same or similar training in the future)	
Participants	(short description of how familiar are participants with the content (None, basic, advance) and their skill(s) level(s))	
	Optimal number of participants: #	
	Targeted Participants ❑ Members of Parliament ❑ Parliamentary Staff ❑ Administration ❑ Other _____	
Date & Time		
Facilitators	Describe training team and their roles and responsibilities)	
Logistics requirements	**What is needed during the training?**	**How to organize training room?**
	❑ Flip chart easels and paper ❑ White board ❑ Projector and screen ❑ Computer ❑ Podium ❑ Printer or Copier ❑ Interpretation (simultaneous/sequential) ❑ Printed material (Program, handouts, guides, documents, presentations, etc.) ❑ Paper, pens, etc. ❑ Other _____	❑ Classroom style ❑ U Shape ❑ Individual Tables ❑ Round Shape ❑ Other _____

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Training Structure

List the sessions, time allocated to each session, who will be facilitating the session and objective. Ideally there will be no more than 4 sessions of 1.5 hours per day.

For every session determine the methodology that will be used. For example: "Presentation by facilitator followed by Q&A", "Practical exercise", "Small Group Discussion", "Panel presentation followed by Q&A"

Day 1			
Session / Module: _____		**Length**	_____
Purpose/Objective			
Methodology			
Facilitator/Trainer:			
Material needed:			
Session / Module: _____		**Length**	_____
Purpose/Objective			
Methodology			
Facilitator:			
Material needed:			
Session / Module: _____		**Length**	_____
Purpose/Objective			
Methodology			
Facilitator:			
Material needed:			
Session / Module: _____		**Length**	_____
Purpose/Objective			
Methodology			
Facilitator:			
Material needed:			
Methodology			
Facilitator:			
Material needed:			
		Total Time of the Training:	_____

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D. English Language Research Sources

Agriculture

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations—FAOLEX: Myanmar
http://www.fao.org/faolex/country-profiles/general-profile/en/?iso3=MMR

(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) database of national laws and regulations on food, agriculture, and renewable natural resources.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations—FAOSTAT:
http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#home

FAOSTAT provides free access to food and agriculture data for over 245 countries and territories and covers all FAO regional groupings from 1961 to the most recent year available.

Myanmar: *http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#country/28*

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations—Publications
http://www.fao.org/publications/en/

Free publications from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

International Food Policy Research Institute—Publications and Tools
http://www.ifpri.org/publications

Collaborates with institutions throughout the world and is often involved in the collection of primary data and the compilation and processing of secondary data. The resulting datasets provide a wealth of information at the local (household and community), national, and global levels. The following types of data are available: geospatial data, household and community level surveys, institution level surveys, regional data (China), social accounting matrices, agricultural science and technology indicators. Includes the Global Hunger Index.

Finance Resources

Asia Regional Integration Center—Myanmar
https://aric.adb.org/myanmar/overview

Data on Real Gross Domestic Product.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)—Myanmar
http://www.imf.org/external/country/mmr/

News feed of International Monetary Fund (IMF) news related to Myanmar.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Library
http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/#

ECD iLibrary is the online library of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) featuring its books, papers and statistics and is the gateway to OECD's analysis and data. OECD iLibrary also contains content published by the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), the OECD Development Centre, PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), and the International Transport Forum (ITF).

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Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
http://www.oecd.org/

The mission of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

Myanmar *http://www.oecd.org/countries/myanmar/*

Information is available in French and English.

The World Bank—Data Bank
http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx

Access to The World Banks databases such as World Development Indicators. The World Bank's World Development Indicators provides direct access to more than 700 development indicators, with time series for 208 countries and 18 country groups from 1960 to present.

Education

UNESCO Bangkok—Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
http://bangkok.unesco.org/

The United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) has 195 Members and 10 Associate Members including Myanmar:

http://en.unesco.org/countries/myanmar

Publications are published in a variety of languages including Burmese and can be searched by country here: *http://bangkok.unesco.org/publications*

Energy

International Energy Agency
https://www.iea.org/

IEA publishes around 70 free publications a year such as World Energy Outlook, IEA Energy Journal and Country Reviews.

Myanmar *https://www.iea.org/countries/non-membercountries/myanmar/*

Environment

Environmental Performance Index
http://epi.yale.edu/

The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) ranks countries' performance on high-priority environmental issues in two areas: protection of human health and protection of ecosystems.

Water Data Portal
http://waterdata.iwmi.org/

WaterData in an integrated portal from the International Water Management Institute providing a one stop access to all data stored in the International Water Management Institute's archive. Find water, precipitation and agriculture-related data from around the world.

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Health

Global Health Library
http://www.globalhealthlibrary.net/php/index.php

WHO database for searching the literature of regional medical indices, including AIM (AFRO), LILACS (AMRO/PAHO), IMEMR (EMRO), IMSEAR (SEARO), WPRIM (WPRO).

Global Health Data Exchange (IMHE)
http://ghdx.healthdata.org/

Catalog of surveys, censuses, vital statistics, and other health-related data from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation from the Univ. of Washington.

Myanmar Data *http://ghdx.healthdata.org/geography/myanmar*

Global Health Observatory from WHO
http://www.who.int/gho/en/

WHO's portal for providing access to data and analyses for monitoring global health worldwide. It provides critical data and analyses for key health themes, as well as direct access to the full database.

Demographic & Health Surveys (USAID)
http://dhsprogram.com/Data/

DHS is responsible for collecting and disseminating accurate, nationally representative data on health and population in developing countries.

Myanmar data *http://dhsprogram.com/Where-We-Work/Country-Main.cfm?ctry_id=64&c=Myanmar&Country=Myanmar&cn=&r=4*

World Bank: Health, Nutrition, & Population Dashboards
http://datatopics.worldbank.org/health/

Provides access to health-specific indicators for 200 countries.

World Health Organization (WHO)
http://www.who.int/en/

Myanmar http://www.who.int/countries/mmr/en/

World Health Organization Institutional Repository for Information Sharing (IRIS)
http://apps.who.int/iris/

The Institutional Repository for Information Sharing (IRIS) is the digital library of WHO's published material and technical information in full text produced since 1948. Its content is freely accessible and searchable in the six official languages.

Historical Materials

World Digital Library: Myanmar
https://www.wdl.org/en/search/?countries=MM

A digital library of historical materials from Myanmar compiled by the U.S. Library of Congress, with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

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Southeast Asia Digital Library
http://sea.lib.niu.edu/

A digital library with a variety of materials published or otherwise produced in Southeast Asia hosted by Northern Illinois University.

Myanmar collection *http://sea.lib.niu.edu/Burma*

International Research

***Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—The World Factbook**
https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/

The World Factbook provides information on the history, people, government, economy, geography, communications, transportation, military, and transnational issues for 267 world entities.

Burma *https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html*

Justice and Social Issues

Asian Legal Information Institute (AsianLII)
Provides free access to Asian legislation and cases from all 27 countries and territories.

Myanmar *http://www.asianlii.org/resources/239.html*

World Legal Information Institute (WorldLII)
Myanmar Legal Information *http://www.worldlii.org/mm/*

Myanmar Courts & Case Law *http://www.worldlii.org/catalog/57123.html*

***United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—Refworld**
Legal Information Myanmar *http://www.refworld.org/category,LEGAL,,,MMR,,0.html*

Publications on Human Rights Law in Myanmar published by international courts.
*Note: As these publications are created by external sources, it may be sensitive.

Labour

International Labour Organization—NATLEX:
http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.countrySubjects?p_lang=en&p_country=MMR

Myanmar (International Labour Organization) database of national laws on labor, social security, and related human rights Statistics and Data

Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU)
http://www.themimu.info/

In English and Burmese.

The Myanmar Information Management Unit, or MIMU, provides information management services to strengthen analysis and decision-making of the humanitarian and development community in Myanmar. It maintains a common data and information repository with data from various sources on all sectors, countrywide, at the lowest administrative unit for which it is available. This information is then made widely accessible to UN, NGO, donor and Government stakeholders in the form of maps, databases and other tools which support the coordination, planning and implementation of humanitarian and development activities.

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UNESCO Institute for Statistics
http://uis.unesco.org/

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is an official and trusted source of internationally-comparable data on education, science, culture and communication.

United Nations ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific)
Publications

http://www.unescap.org/publications

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. Publications include the Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific and the Asia-Pacific Development Journal.

World Bank Development Indicators
http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx

Provides access to a wide range of economic, environment, health, political, and social indicators in roughly 200 countries. Time series data is available for many indicators from 1960 onwards. In addition to the wide range of global statistics, the WDI provides convenient data extraction tools that allow data access in Microsoft Excel and other statistical packages.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Reports
http://hdr.undp.org/en/data

Myanmar Profile *http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MMR*

The mission of the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) is to advance human development. The HDRO publishes reports and statistics about global human development.

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E. Myanmar Language Sources for Gender Sensitive Research

Equality Myanmar
http://equalitymyanmar.org/book/archives/category/reference

Over the last fifteen years, Equality Myanmar (EQMM) has trained women, university students, monks and pastors, activists, school teachers, and community leaders and built a strong network of human rights trainers and advocates across the country as well as along its border regions. It produces a range of human rights educational materials, audio/visual tools, and other multimedia resources available in Burmese and ethnic languages.

Gender Equality Network Myanmar (GEN)
http://www.genmyanmar.org/research_and_publications

GEN`s publications range from briefing papers, brochures and legalised translations to full reports. GEN`s large body of work, entitled Raising the Curtain, explores Myanmar's cultural norms and social practices in the context of gender equality. Prior to this, another research piece entitled Behind the Silence focussed on the issue of gender-based violence (GBV) in Myanmar and explored both its prevalence and action to combat GBV. Both of these publications, along with our other publications, are available online in English and Burmese at GEN`s Research and Publications page.

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Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process
https://www.agipp.org/

The Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process in Myanmar (AGIPP) aims to improve the participation of women in the peace process. It also aims to ensure that the negotiations and agreements of the peace process include gender perspectives and priorities.

Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation
https://emref.org/mm/publications/social-impact-assessments

EMReF has been expanding its role in promoting political awareness and participations of citizens and civil society organizations in policy making through providing reliable and trustworthy information on political parties and elections, parliamentary performance, and development policy issues. As a current foundation step, EMReF has been developing an information mechanism which includes three main functions-collecting information, analyzing and distributions to the public through different methods such as website, social media and other electronic instant communication means such as text messages and applications. EMReF is currently conducting various research particularly in the fields of Livelihoods, Gender, Political Economy and Governance, State and Region Parliaments, Rule of Law and Justice and Social Impact Monitoring and Social Assessment.

OXFAM
https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/a-case-for-gender-responsive-budgeting-in-myanmar-603484

Oxfam takes a rights-based approach to its development, humanitarian and campaign work. It believes that all people are entitled to decent work and income security and to essential services such as health and education, and that everyone should have gender equality, security from conflict and disasters, and be able to participate in social and political life. Their website provides a wide selection of reports and papers on the programming, advocacy and research that OXFAM undertakes in order to achieve these aims.

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The Asia Foundation
https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/MM-Gender-Paper_MM.pdf

The Asia Foundation (TAF) works on the ground in 18 Asian countries in strengthening governance, empowering women, expanding economic opportunity, increasing environmental resilience, and promoting international cooperation. It's website provides access to a range of analytical reports in English and Myanmar language, including ones focused on gender equality issues.

Care Myanmar
http://www.caremyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Gender-Analysis-Report-_Final.pdf

CARE has worked in Myanmar since 1995 with the aim of improving living standards through cross-cutting measures, including: gender equality & women's empowerment; public health and hygiene; water, sanitation; HIV/AIDS prevention and care; support for pregnant mothers and children; food and livelihood security (including support to develop agricultural and fishing practices); and disaster risk reduction. It's website provides access to various reports including a Gender Analysis of Female Migrants and Female Sex Workers.

Phan Tee Eain (Creative Home)
https://www.phanteeeain-myanmar.org/publication/

Phan Tee Eain (PTE) was established in 2009 to provide civic and voter education for the 2010 elections. Since 2012 it has also been promoting gender equality among parliamentarians and political parties by strengthening the leadership capacity and skills of women candidates and elected women in Myanmar.

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This publication was carried out with the aid of a grant from **Global Affairs Canada (GAC)** and **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)**.

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