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# Youth empowerment in a disempowered context: The case of Youth Empowerment initiatives in IDP camps in Myanmar

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I, Benedicte Sundli, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

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# Abstract

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The stateless Rohingya constitutes the majority of the 128 000 internally displaced people (IDPs) living in the Sittwe rural camps since 2012. To ensure meaningful participation and provide hope in intolerable circumstances, the Norwegian Refugee Council have increased their efforts to empower the young people in the camps. This thesis explores the meaning of empowerment from a camp management perspective by examining the implementation of a youth empowerment training in two camps managed by the Norwegian Refugee Council. The empirical findings results from two months of fieldwork in Sittwe and examines the camp management's difficult balancing act of emphasising some elements of empowerment while limiting others. The findings reveal that the youth empowerment training can only be limited and unsatisfactory, but still the camp managers seek to provide the youth reasons for them to engage in camp life, and address the need for improving the life of the IDPs in the camps.


**Key words:** Rohingya; youth; empowerment; internally displaced; camp management

«Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects”

- Paulo Freire

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## List of acronyms

AAP          Accountability to affected populations

CCCM      Camp coordination and camp management

CFM         Complaint feedback mechanism

CMA         Camp management agency

CMC         Camp management committee

IASC         Inter-Agency Steering Committee

IDP          Internally displaced persons

INGO        International non-governmental organisation

MTN         Maw Thi Ngar (Camp1)

PSN          Persons with specific needs

TKP          Thet Kae Pyin (Camp2)

UN           United Nations

UNFPA     United Nations Populations Fund

UNHCR    United Nations High Commissioner of refugees

# Figures, maps, tables and photos

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# 1. Introduction

It is a warm summer day in Myanmar, Rakhine State, in March 2019, seven years after the government decided to segregate the Muslim and the Buddhist communities due to a series of violent clashes leading to internal displacement and encampment of more than hundred thousand people.

I am sitting in an air-conditioned van together with the camp management team in Sittwe. As we arrive at the first checkpoint, one of the camp management officers get out of the car with a pile of documents with schedules of all planned camp management activities for the coming month and identification papers of everyone in the car. The checkpoints are staffed with several police officers and marks the beginning of a restricted area, with Muslim villages and camps for internally displaced people (IDP), framed by tall barbed fences. The police officers examines the documents thoroughly and signals the van to continue through to the next checkpoint. The car is now taking us towards the camp area one kilometre from the first checkpoint. I concentrate to absorb the beautiful landscape. Hectares of bright green fields reveals itself before my eyes. Piles of haystacks lined up to feed the livestock. Young boys herding skinny cows through rivers and pastures. The van follows a narrow and bumpy dirt road through a lively Muslim village with fruit markets, restaurants, schools, clothing stores and a health facility. My team member's points out a bamboo fence and explains that this is the only division between the village and one of the IDP camps the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) are in charge of. This camp hosts 6000 Muslim Rohingyas (and Kaman) people that have been forced to flee from their homes in Myanmar because of violence and insecurity. Eventually, the van stops in front of a modular house with a sign reading "NRC Camp management office". A large flagpole decorates the front of the building, lifting the Myanmar National flag to the skies and reminding the camp population of the country they are born and raised in but are not allowed to identify with because the 1982 Citizenship Law fail to recognise them as legal citizens of Myanmar (Ahsan Ullah, 2016).

The Muslim minority, self-identified as Rohingya, have lived in Myanmar for generations, yet the government refuse to recognise them as an ethnic group and refer to them as "*Bengali*", implying that they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. The term *Rohingya* is derived from *Rohang*, the former name of the Rakhine State. However, the government argue that the

term is a modern construct encompassing Bengalis that was imported to Myanmar in the British Colonial times, and write them off as an indigenous ethnic group in Rakhine State (Ahsan Ullah, 2016). The 1982 Citizenship Law facilitated the exclusion of the Rohingyas in all categories of citizenship (Ahsan Ullah, 2016). The status of stateless makes the young Rohingya extra vulnerable as registration and identification papers are required to access higher education and job opportunities. Furthermore, restricted freedom of movement enforced by multiple checkpoints and limited opportunities within the camp area, leave the Rohingya in a state of powerlessness with limited control, and dependency on humanitarian assistance to cover basic needs. The camp leadership have increased focus on empowering the youth in the camp with the overall aim of making them independent and self-driven in the running of the camp.

The NRC are in charge of two camps and constitutes one of the three camp management agencies (CMA) in Sittwe. The NRC have amplified the importance of *empowering* the young people in the camp to uphold and restore their dignity, self-reliance and ownership, and consequently ensure good camp management (IOM, NRC, & UNHCR, 2015). Empowerment refers to the process of enabling an individual, group or community to alter their situation of powerlessness through active participation (Zimmerman, 2000). However, due to obvious restrictions and limitations, the camp managers are not able to change the situation of the camp population. The camp managers can only facilitate for the camp population to change the perception of their situation. This indicates that a camp context constitutes a different approach to empowerment than under other circumstances.

 The overall aim of this research is to explore the meaning of empowerment from a camp management perspective, by examining at the NRC's implementation and assessment of a youth empowerment training in two IDP camps. Particularly, the study aims to investigate (1) which approaches and mechanisms (referred to as "activities") NRC camp management implements to empower youth (2) The objective and the outcome of the youth empowerment training (3) how are "empowerment" issues manifested in these activities? (4) How is empowerment assessed in these camps?

## 1.1 Thesis outline

To answer these questions the thesis is structured in seven chapters. The first chapter has set the scene of the research and introduced the topics explored in the thesis, as well as the research objective and the research questions guiding this research. The second chapter presents the contextual background of the research by introducing the Norwegian Refugee Council and its operation in Myanmar, camp management, youth in conflict-affected areas and a brief humanitarian overview of Myanmar, before turning to the Sittwe rural camp area and the study areas. The third chapter introduce the concepts of empowerment and youth empowerment based on existing literature in the field. Chapter four address the research methodologies applied in the sampling processes, and the methods employed for collecting and analysing data to answer the research questions. The fifth chapter presents the findings and the main body of the thesis. The first section of the chapter introduce the camp management's perceptions of youth empowerment and the barriers to achieving it. The second section presents the different approaches and mechanisms implemented by camp management to achieve empowerment of the IDPs. Followed by detailed information about the objective, target and execution of the youth empowerment training. The final section of this chapter look at NRCs efforts and methodologies of assessing empowerment in the camp. The sixth chapter relates the findings to the conceptual framework and previous literature in the field of empowerment, and discuss the different implications of the meaning of empowerment in a camp context. The seventh chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the research objective and providing recommendations for similar approaches to empowerment in a camp context.

## 2. Contextual background

This chapter presents the context in which the NRC's activities are carried out in. First, the chapter will introduce the Norwegian Refugee Council and its activities in the North West region of Myanmar followed by an introduction to camp management. Then I will direct the focus to youth in conflict-affected areas and the importance of focusing on this particular group in the process of obtaining durable solutions. Furthermore, this chapter establish the need for humanitarian intervention. The final section of this chapter contextualise the case by introducing the *Sittwe Rural Camps* and present the two campsites studied.

**2.1 The Norwegian Refugee Council and its operations in Myanmar**

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is a widely recognised independent humanitarian organisation. It was established in 1946 under the name "Aid to Europe". The objective of the organisation then, was to protect and support people in Europe that had become displaced during World War II. The organisation changed its name to the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1953, and have since continued its work to protect displaced people, and further assist them in creating a sustainable future through humanitarian aid and advocacy, all over the world. In 2018, the organisation had more than 14 000 employees working in emergencies and crisis-affected areas in 31 countries across the globe (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019a).

2.1.1 Guidelines and principles

NRC is a rights-based organisation guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality. These principles are in place to ensure that NRC provides non-discriminating assistance to those in most dire need, regardless of political point of view (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2017, 2019a). Having a rights-based approach implies that NRC considers the displaced populations legally entitled to protection and assistance (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2017). To ensure accountability and transparency, NRC emphasises participation by the displaced population, and they work to involve and engage them in all phases of their assistance (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2017).

NRC have formulated six core competencies based on their assistance: Livelihoods and food security; education; camp management; information counselling and legal assistance; shelter and settlements; and water, sanitation and hygiene promotion. One of NRCs main objectives is to "respect and protect people" by achieving durable solutions and end displacement. The NRC highlights three ways to achieve durable solutions for IDPs: a sustainable resettlement at another location in the country; return and reintegration at their place of birth; and local integration where they currently seek refuge (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019a; Sundli, 2018).

2.1.2  NRC operations in Myanmar

In 2008, NRC started its operations in Myanmar to protect and support the people displaced due to the civil and ethno-religious conflicts in Myanmar. NRC Myanmar aim to help the most vulnerable people in the country by reinforcing safety and protection within all the implemented programmes (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019c). The NRC Myanmar country office is located in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city. In addition to the country office, NRC operates in eight other states and regions – including two offices in Rakhine state, Maungdaw

and Sittwe, referred to as the North West region. The Sittwe office has been in operation since October 2015, while the Maungdaw office opened in 2017. However, due to violent clashes in 2017, NRC had to reduce the capacity in the Maungdaw office and move some of the staff to other locations for safety reasons. Per 2019, NRC North West has approximately 90 staff members (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019b).

The complexity of the conflicts and issues in Myanmar have required a multidimensional response. In the North West, NRC has responded with a multitude of programme activities covering all the six core competencies. NRC is responsible for managing the two camps, Maw Tin Ngar and Thet Kae Pyin, located in proximity to Sittwe town. With funding from the United Nations and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, camp management in Sittwe focuses on building community ownership through implementing complaint feedback mechanisms (CFM), supporting persons with specific needs (PSN), reconstruct and maintain shelters and by build the capacity of the community leaders (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019b). Furthermore, the NRC education sector focuses on primary education and vocational trainings for the IDPs, and the young people in the villages located inside the restricted area. In 2019, the education sector rolled out vocational trainings in phone repairing and carpentry. The education sector are responsible for establishing and maintaining the temporary learning spaces inside the camps (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019b). The information, counselling and legal assistance programme is an important actor for housing, land and property rights in Myanmar. They provide trainings and counselling to provide IDPs and the Muslim villages the information necessary to exercise their land rights and get legal identity papers. Furthermore, this programme focus on solving land disputes across Rakhine by providing collaborative dispute resolution trainings adapted to the context (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019b). The shelter emergency unit has reinforced focus on disaster risk reduction, as Myanmar is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters. The Rakhine state is particular prone to cyclones, landslides and flooding—the shelter emergency unit therefore has an important job concerning hazard preparations, as well as rebuilding and reconstructing important infrastructure when necessary (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019b). In 2018, NRC shelter repaired the road between the two camps, and eleven schools. NRC's livelihood unit have emphasised focus on strengthening local economies through the running of a *Cash for Assets* programme, targeting 697 households. This programme gives the targeted population the opportunity to work for two months and receive payment facilitated to cover basic needs,

consequently fuelling local economies (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019b).

### 2.1.3   Camp management

A camp, whether it is for refugees or IDPs, is a temporary solution in situations of emergency until a sustainable and durable solution is established. The state has the overarching responsibility of protecting its population. However, when the state fails to do so, humanitarian agencies have to step in and "cooperate" with the state in protecting the rights and dignity of the vulnerable population, and help to cover basic needs. The camp management agency (CMA), in this case NRC, is responsible to make sure that the camps and the assistance provided are upholding agreed standards by following national, as well as international, laws, guidelines and the *sphere handbook—* addressing the common principles and minimum standards in humanitarian response (IOM et al., 2015). The CMA has an important role in coordinating the different stakeholders and service providers to make sure that all needs in the camp are covered, and that the camp population receives the assistance necessary to live a dignified life.  The standard of a CMA is defined from its ability to coordinate all the stakeholders according to their interests.



*Figure 1 Illustrates the holistic approach of camp management to ensure assistance and the protection of the camp population. Retrieved from the Camp management toolkit (IOM/NRC/UNHCR, 2015).*

By comparing the camp management approach to a house, the figure (see fig.1) above creates a picture of how camp management work to coordinate with the different stakeholders and actors involved in the camp while using *international laws & standards,* and *participation,* as foundations to ensure the protection and assistance of the camp population.

When dealing with vulnerable people and people at risk, it is important to show accountability. Because the CMA has the responsibility of the camp, and the coordination of the stakeholders in the camp, they also have the responsibility to ensure Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) by following the Inter-Agency Steering Committees' (IASC) five commitments to AAP: leadership/governance; transparency; feedback and complaints; participation and design; and monitoring and evaluation (IOM et al., 2015). This implies that the CMA have to take on the leading role to ensure accountability to all stakeholders involved in the camp. NRC emphasise the importance of being transparent to the camp population by informing them about the procedures and organisational aspects of the camp. Being transparent about the events and procedures in the camp is essential for the displaced community to be able to acquire ownership. The CMA can facilitate for the acquisition of ownership through involving the camp population in decision-making processes, and help them utilise resources (IOM et al., 2015).

The CMA aim to increase the efficiency of its programmes, and ensure the safety and protection of the camp population, through feedback and complaint systems. Involving the population of the camp in the planning and set-up, maintenance, and closure of the camp, is important to demonstrate AAP. The last commitment of AAP encompass the involvement of the camp population in designing programs, monitoring camp activities and in evaluating the general operation of the camp. (IOM et al., 2015). Ultimately, the IASC's five commitments to AAP goes beyond covering the basic human rights of the camp population as they focus on wellbeing, inclusion and ownership.

### 2.1.4   Youth in conflict-affected areas

The term youth is a social concept and refers to the transitional period from childhood to adulthood. Youth is usually defined by age, but has no universal definition. Because most organisation and agencies do not operate with a separate category for *youth,* there is lacking information and statistics for this certain group in the context of displacement (UNHCR., 2013). NRC usually employ the UN age definition ranging from 15-24 , but in this research the term youth is used to describe young people between 15 and 25 years.

Youth is often perceived as hope for the future and have the last few decades played an important role in promoting innovative solutions and societal development. Furthermore, youth have aspired changes in politics. A recent example of this is the 16-year-old climate campaigner, and now role model, Greta Thunberg. Thunberg has received multiple

acknowledged nominations, titles and prices for her efforts to direct political attention towards the necessity to take the climate crisis seriously. As per 2019, there are 1.8 billion young people in the age range 10-24 years. This is the largest population of young people the world have seen (Edwards., 2019). The majority of this population live in underdeveloped countries and one third of these young people live in conflict-affected areas where they are blocked from opportunities to live out their potential and contribute in the development of the world around them (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016). The young people that live in constraining conditions, with lack of access to education and limited livelihood opportunities, have to ignore future desires for the benefit of covering basic needs (UNHCR., 2013).

The Senior Research Officer at the Refugee Studies Centre, Jason Hart, emphasises the responsibility of humanitarian agencies to adjust their structures to ensure meaning to the lives of young people in conflict-affected areas, and prepare them for a life outside the camps (Hart, 2008). In the report "Adolescents and youth strategy", UNFPA, claim that having a safe and dignified transition from childhood to adulthood is a universal right and emphasises the importance of taking the participation of youth, in all aspects of life, seriously (UNFPA, 2013).

## 2.2   A humanitarian overview of the situation in Myanmar

Since Myanmar declared its independence in 1948, the country has been characterised by violence, armed conflicts and tensions between different ethnicities and religions. In 2012, the underlying tensions between the Buddhist Rakhine and Muslim Rohingya strongly resurfaced. It culminated on the 3rd of June, when a Rakhine mob killed ten Muslim Rohingya as a response to an incident the 28th of May, when a Rakhine woman was raped and killed by three young Muslims (Kipgen, 2014). This led to the first of two large outbreaks of violence between the Rohingya and the Rakhine in 2012, leading to the displacement of more than 140 000 people (CCCM, DRC, & UNHCR, 2017).

In May 2019, the UN deputy humanitarian Chief, Ursula Mueller, paid a visit to Rakhine State in Myanmar, which still hosts around 128 000 IDPs from Muslim minorities. After this visit, Mueller drew attention to the unacceptable living conditions these people face as most of them have lived in camps isolating them from the rest of the nation since 2012 (OCHA, 2019).  Nearly one million people across Myanmar still depend on humanitarian assistance and protection due to continuing outbreaks of violence and militarised conflicts. As revealed in the figure below (figure 2), humanitarian organisations target the four states Rakhine, Kachin, Shan and Kayin. Rakhine State has the largest number of people in need, where the

humanitarian sector targets 751 000 people. Out of these people, 51% are below the age of 18 (United Nations, 2018). The research of this study was conducted partly in the outskirts of Sittwe and in Sittwe town, located in Rakhine State.
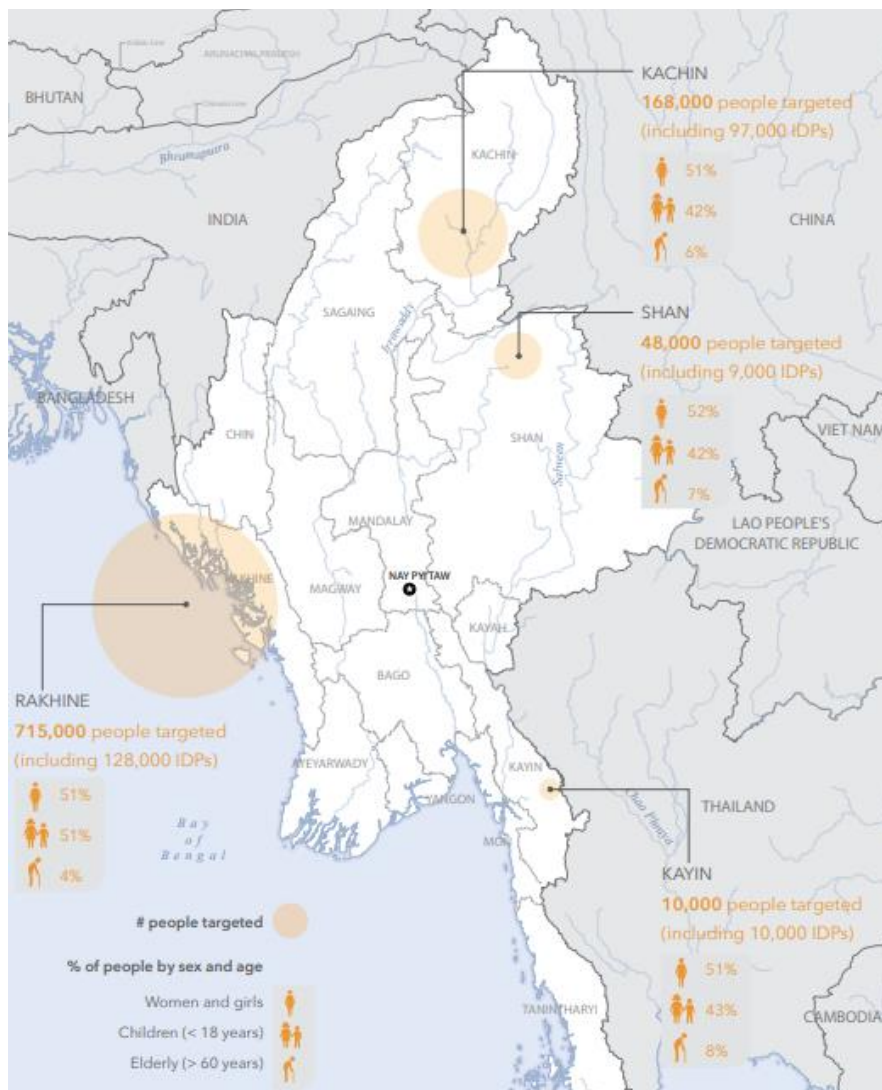


*Figure 2 this figure provides an overview of the number of people targeted for humanitarian assistance in Myanmar (UN, 2018).*

During the flare up of the internal conflict in 2012, people of various ethnic groups—mainly Rohingya, Rakhine, Maramgyi and Kaman—became internally displaced. The majority of the displaced Rakhine and Maramgyi, are now resettled in relocation sites. The Muslim minorities Rohingya and Kaman, on the other hand, still find themselves confined in camps with restricted freedom of movement (Amnesty International, 2017). This also limit their access to higher education, appropriate health services and livelihood opportunities (PIMS, 2018). The Rohingya (and the Kaman) people suffer from a range of discriminatory policies and practices. Among them, the denial of citizenship is probably the most serious and the

main obstacle for reaching a durable solution to the mass displacement of the Muslim minorities confined in the Sittwe Rural camp area. Without legal identifications, it is not possible to live a dignified life.  As stated by  Rudolf and Schmitz-Pranghe (2018), the government reinforces ethnical division and religious nationalism by not recognising the Rohingyas as one of the legal ethnicities in Myanmar.

## 2.2.1   The Sittwe rural camps

Sittwe is the capital city in Rakhine state, localised in western Myanmar. Rakhine state has a population of approximately 3.2 million people. Due to lacking education opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, poor health and limited job opportunities, Rakhine suffers from low income per capita and high measures of poverty, ranking second of the poorest states in Myanmar (CCCM et al., 2017). Due to the large number of displaced people spread across 39 locations in Rakhine state, international humanitarian organisations with camp management capacity remain as important contributors to those affected by displacement (CCCM et al., 2017).

The establishment of the Sittwe rural camps—and Muslim villages within the camps—is a result of a protective measure made by the government in 2012 to segregate the Muslim Rohingyas from the Buddhist Rakhine, in order to minimize the risk of more violent outbreaks. Tall fences entangled with barbed wire and multiple military checkpoints were implemented to segregate the two communities and consequently restrict the Muslim minorities to move out of the restricted area (CCCM et al., 2017).  According to the Sittwe camp profiling report (2017), there were 14 camps in rural Sittwe hosting 97 484 people from Muslim minorities in January 2017. The map below (Map. 1) provides an overview of the population in the camps, presented by households. A household is defined as a group of people whom have lived together and shared one living arrangement for more than a half year (CCCM et al., 2017).
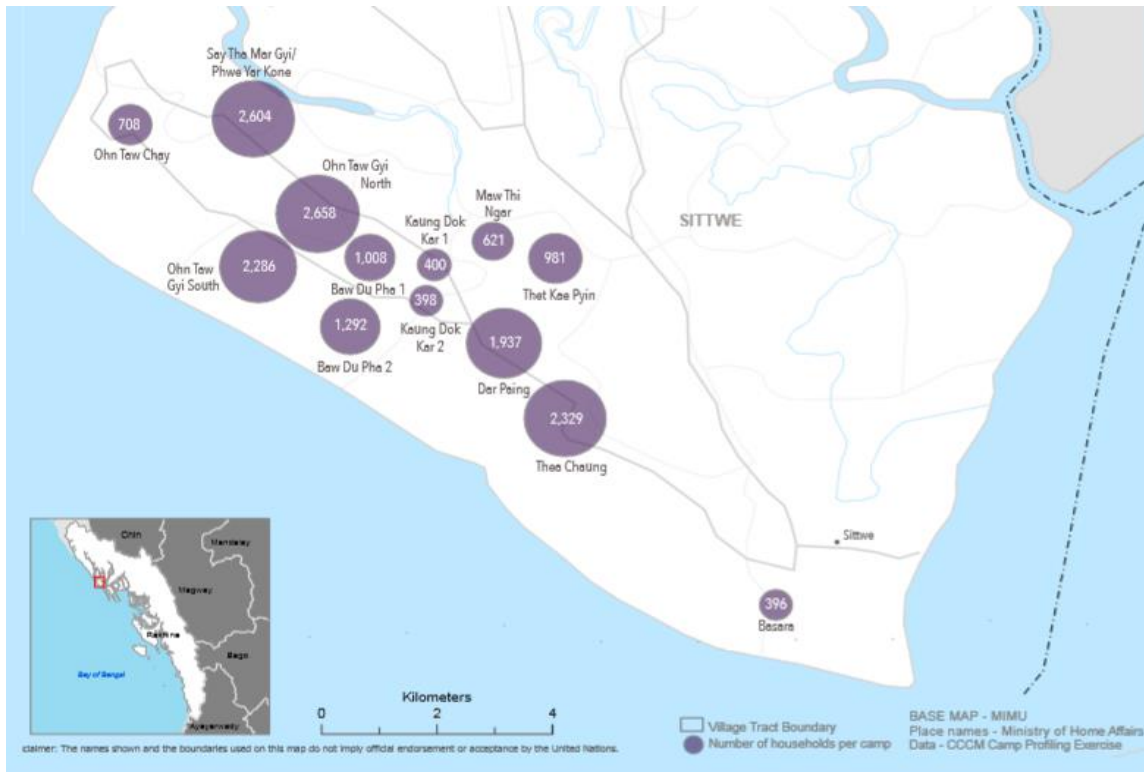
*Map 1 Population overview - Sittwe rural camps. Map retrieved from the Sittwe Camp Profiling Report, 2017*

Even though the military still controls and restricts the movement out of the camp area, the Muslim minorities are able to move freely between the villages and camps in the segregated area. Combined with death and birth rates, these internal movements affect the number of people living in the camps. The majority of the people living in the camp used to live in urban areas: 84% of the camp population used to live in Sittwe Township, 11% in Pauktaw Township, 3% from Kyaukpyu Township, 1% from Myebon Township and the remaining 1% came from Rathedaung, Minbya and Mrauk-U Townships (CCCM et al., 2017). As illustrated in the figure below (fig.3), most of the IDPs left their homes during the two violent outbreaks in 2012, and have been living there since. Per 2017, only 2% of the camp population have lived in the camp less than three years (CCCM et al., 2017).

*Figure 3 The red line illustrates when people living in the camp left their home while the purple line illustrates when they arrived the Sittwe rural camps. Retrieved from Sittwe Camp Profiling Report, 2017.*

According to the Sittwe camp profiling report (2017), 93% of the people living in the camps falls within the definition of IDPs provided by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (CCCM et al., 2017). IDPs are defined as individuals or groups that unwillingly have to leave their places of origin "to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border" (IOM et al., 2015, p. 17). The Sittwe camp profiling report indicates that for the majority of the camp population living in the camp was the best option for the displaced population to feel safe and secure. However, the remaining 7% of the camp population left their homes to look for better livelihood opportunities, because of problems within the family, or to receive humanitarian assistance (CCCM et al., 2017).

The figures below (fig. 4 & fig.5) demonstrates that there are a higher number of young people living in the camps than in general in Myanmar. This indicates that young people tend to stay in the camps, while adults are more likely to escape the camps through irregularly migrations (by boats etc.). Furthermore, other factors such as restricted access to health facilities and medicines as well as birth rates and death rates may be explanatory factors as to why the camp population average is young compared to the rest of Myanmar (CCCM et al., 2017).
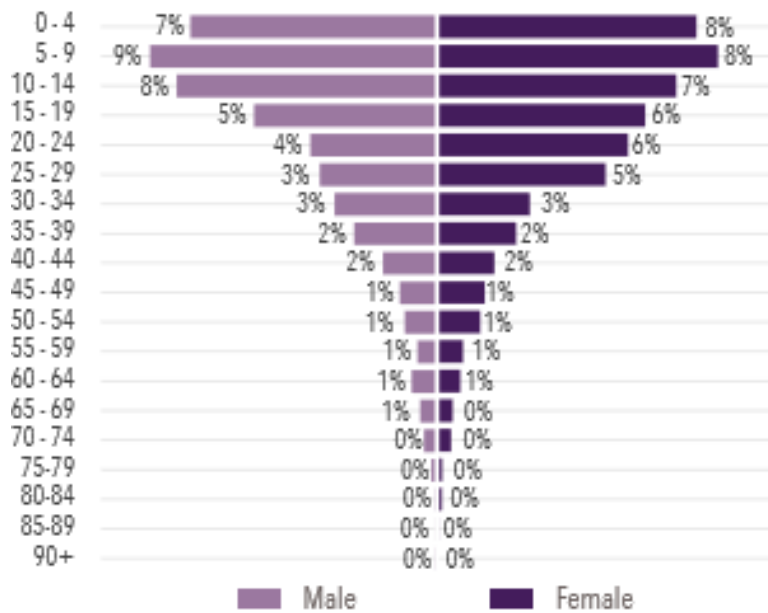
*Figure 4Sittwe Rural Camps – Age and gender desegregated population (CCCM et al., 2017)*
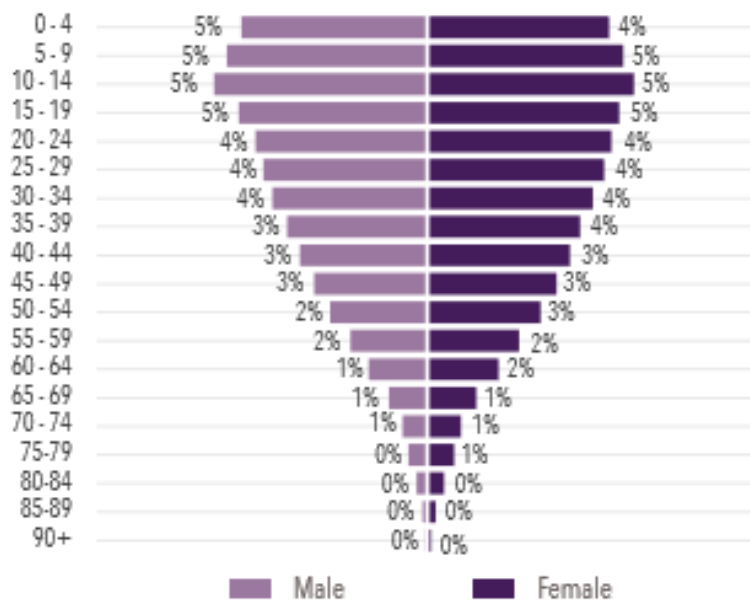


*Figure 5Myanmar - Age and gender desegregated population (CCCM et al., 2017).*

Most of the young people in the camps have been living there large parts of their youth and have therefore not had the opportunity to access higher education. This seem to have had an impact on language skills and literacy rates, as the camp population speak Muslim languages (Rohingya or Kaman) and rarely get the opportunity to practice any other language. Statistics

convey that the number of young people speaking Rakhine language or Myanmar language is on average lower than among the older camp population. Male camp residents are superior Rakhine and Myanmar speakers compared to the female residents (CCCM et al., 2017). The figure below (Fig.6), reproduced from the Sittwe Camp Profiling Report (2017), illustrates the literacy rates for people aged 15+ outside and within the camps. This figure show that there are high rates of illiteracy in the Muslim camps and villages located within the segregated area, compared to the Rakhine villages. The figure also reveal that there are significantly higher illiteracy rates among women than men.
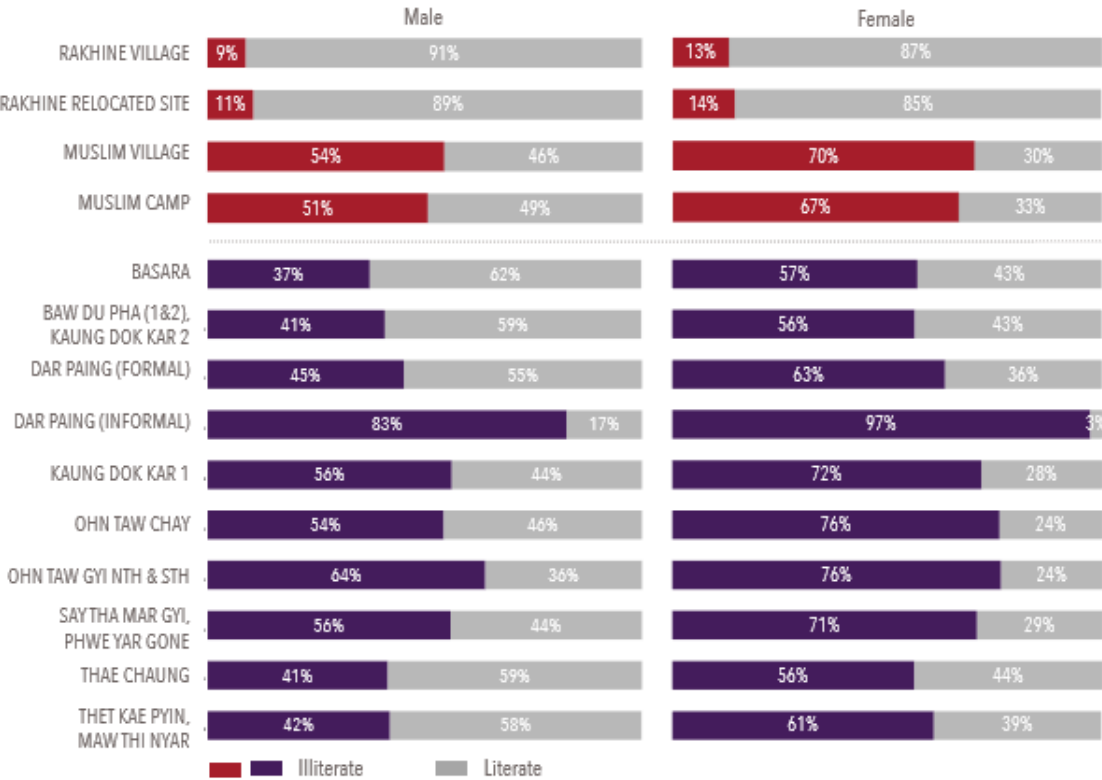


*Figure 6 Literacy rates across camps and villages. Retrieved from the Sittwe Camp Profiling Report (2017)*

Furthermore, the level of language speaking skills and literacy rates correspond with job opportunities in the camps. The people with high literacy rates and decent knowledge of the Myanmar and Rakhine language were more likely to have full time jobs (CCCM et al., 2017). According to the Sittwe Camp Profiling Report (2017), the ability to speak Rakhine language is necessary to be employed by the government in the position as a Camp Management Committee (CMC) member. The ability of speaking Rakhine (and Myanmar) is also emphasised as an important factor to get to work for humanitarian organisations (CCCM et al., 2017). The humanitarian sector make up a large part of the income generating activities for the camp population together with other sectors such as fishing, multi-sector daily

labourer, transport, handicraft and tailoring, consumer goods/retail, construction and farming (CCCM et al., 2017). The majority of the people living in the camps do not have a formal job, and are not able to utilise the skills acquired prior to their displacement. Those that do work, on the other hand, have experienced an increase in salary compared to their life before the camps (CCCM et al., 2017). The Sittwe camp profiling report revealed that the average monthly income of 50% of the camp population is $33 *less than* the average monthly income for the Rakhine communities (CCCM et al., 2017).

### 2.2.1.1 Study Areas: Maw Ti Ngar and Thet Kae Pyin

This research is limited to and conducted in the two camps organised by NRC, Maw Ti Ngar (MTN) and Thet Kae Pyin (TKP), both located in the Bu May village tract. The next section provides detailed information about the camps, the camp population, the services within the camp and the camp structures.

When the displacement initially set in, Save the Children served as a sort of camp focal point - and NRC chose not to be engaged in camp management of these sites due to disagreement with regulations imposed by the government. However, after negotiations the NRC chose to step in, in 2016, and have managed MTN and TKP since. The figures (Fig. 7 & Fig. 8) reproduced from latest site profiling reports,  illustrates that there are 656 households, housing 3514 people in MTN and 1000 households housing 5999 people in TKP (CCCM., 2019a, 2019b). Because the camp population benefit from not reporting death to increase food rations, there might be some discrepancy between these numbers and the actual number of people living in the camps. Most humanitarian organisation does not deal with the category of *youth*, this explain the mission age and gender breakdown for this certain group ranging from 15 years to 25 years. However, the figures (Fig.7 & Fig.8) reveal that 33% of the camp population in both MTN and TKP falls within the age groups *12-17* and *18 -25*.  Furthermore, the figures show that both camps have approximately the same proportion of the various age groups in the camp: 54% of the people living in the camps are children and 4% are categorised as elderly. The largest population groups in the camps are people ranging from 26 – 59 years. The figure also reveals that there is an insignificant gender divide in the camps, whereas 52% of the camp populations are female (CCCM., 2019a, 2019b).The figure also provides an overview of persons with specific needs (PSN) in each camp. Child or adolescent at risk, elderly person at risk, people with disabilities, persons with specific medical condition

and woman at risk usually categorizes the PSN. According to the figures, lactating women (5,1% TKP and 4,6 % MTN) are the largest group of vulnerable people identified in both camps followed by elderly at risk (3,3 %) in MTN and single headed households in TKP (2,1 %).
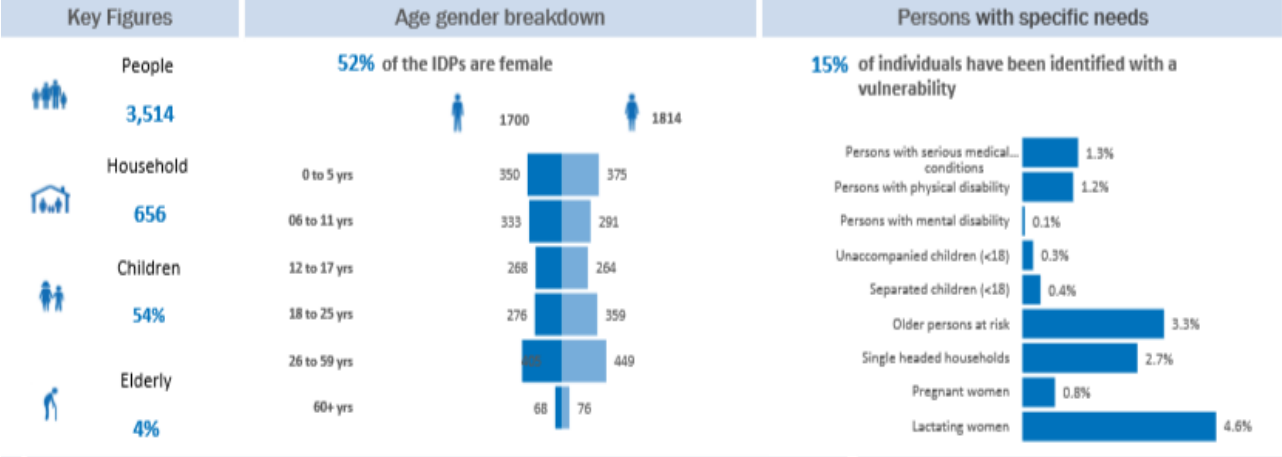


*Figure 7Population figures - Maw Thi Ngar. Retrieved from CCCM site profile MTN (CCCM., 2019a).*
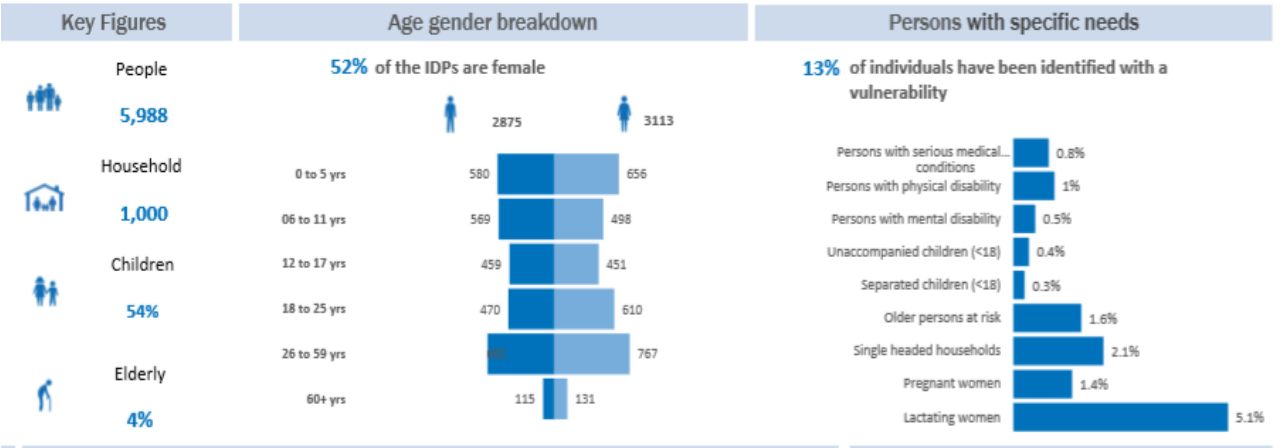


*Figure 8 Population figures - Thet Kae Pyin. Retrieved from CCCM site profile TKP (CCCM., 2019b).*

The camps are located in the Sittwe rural camp area and is a 20-minute car ride from the NRC office located in the *green zone* in Sittwe Township. The green zone refers to the part of the city where humanitarian organisations are allowed to stay in agreement with the government. Two police checkpoints are located at the outskirt of the camps to control the movement in and out of the camps. In order to pass these checkpoints and access the camps, the humanitarian actors (and other stakeholders) have to provide a government approved travel authorisation and people living in the camp have to apply for an official travel permit. These

checkpoints also function as informal "curfews"—restricting the camp population to move out of the camps and villages within the segregated area (Amnesty International, 2017). Inside the segregated area, there are several Muslim villages, located side by side to the camps. In MTN, a bamboo fence identifies the borders of the camp. TKP however, does not have any fences but is recognised by the large amount of shelters stretching through the landscape characterised by blue latrines provided by Oxfam and Solidarities International. TKP is one of the camps closest to the checkpoints (one km), and because of this, it has one of the biggest marketplaces that can be found inside the segregated area (CCCM et al., 2017). In the villages, the camp population can access clothing stores, toy stores, restaurants, health facilities, schools etc.



*Photo 1 This picture shows the outskirts of TKP and the characteristic blue latrines. Photo by author.*

Both of the camps have a modular house as a designated camp management office. The camp managers and mobilisers use these offices to organise camp activities, host community group meetings, coordination meetings, trainings and to store tools provided for the camp population. The camp management offices are also a secure space for the camp population to address in case of concerns. Both offices were equipped with generators for electricity supply

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to power projectors used during trainings, and fans to cool down the building during the warm/ dry season.

Inside the camps, there are multiple boards with visual information to inform the camp population of distributions of food and non-food items, risks associated with smuggling and human trafficking, and the various service providers in the camp. Knowing what service providers do can make it easier for the camp population to know whom to address for the appropriate issue. As shown in the figures below (fig.9 & fig.10), none of the camps have specific service providers for gender-based violence (GBV) or non-food items.
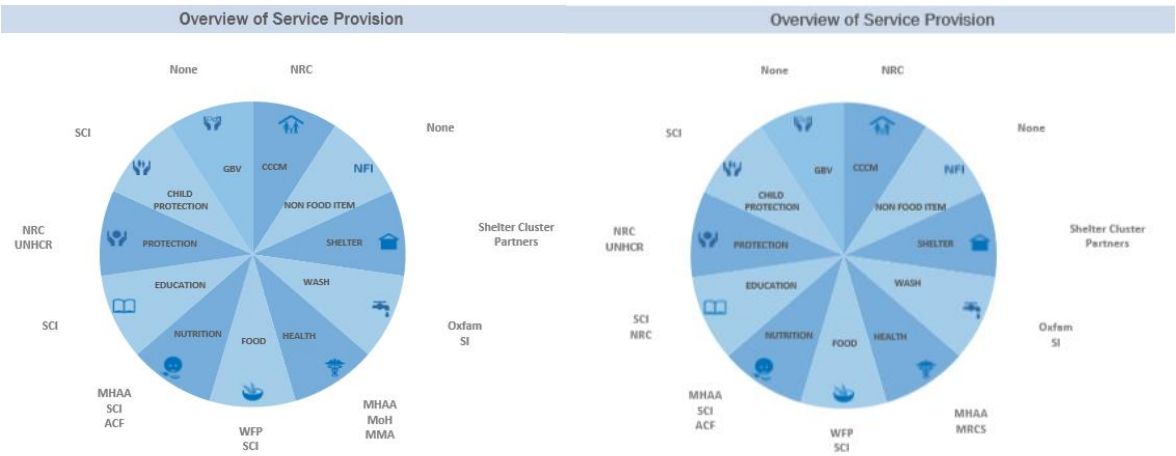


*Figure9 Overview of service providers in MTN (CCCM., 2019b) Figure 10 Overview of service providers in TKP (CCCM., 2019b)*

The education partners, Save the Children International (SCI) and NRC, provides temporary learning spaces used for education purposes targeting children in kindergarten (5), primary school (6-10) and middle school (10-13). While the education for children in the kindergarten and primary school age follow the same system and curriculum as the governmental schools, the learning spaces focus on literacy, numeracy and vocational training for the post-primary school children. In 2017, the government provided around 20 primary middle schools in the Sittwe rural area. In 2016, the first and only high school (15-17) within the camp area was established in TKP (CCCM et al., 2017).  Because service providers provide the education, the teachers are usually low qualified volunteer teachers trained by the partners in pedagogics (CCCM et al., 2017). As demonstrated in the figures below (Fig. 11, Fig. 12 and Fig. 13), the school attendance among boys are higher than the school attendance among girls in the camps. Furthermore, the school attendance decreases as the children get older (CCCM et al., 2017).
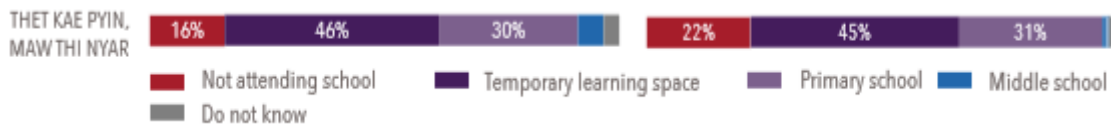
*Figure 11 School attendance for children aged 6 to 9 years (male to the left and female to the right ) (CCCM et al., 2017)*



*Figure 12 School attendance for children aged 10 to 13 years (male to the left and female to the right)  (CCCM et al., 2017).*



*Figure 13 School attendance for children aged 14 to 15 years (male to the left and female to the right) (CCCM et al., 2017).*

The above figures show that the school attendance decreases in line with the increasing ages. Lack of access to education, too expensive transport to school, responsibilities in the house, livelihood opportunities and cultural and religious norms, might be some of the explanatory factors for these statistics. Because of the restricted freedom of movement, the minority of the young people in the camp are able to access higher education on university level (CCCM et al., 2017).

The camps are divided in zones with one zone leader in each zone. MTN have 82 shelters and is divided in four zones with about 20 shelters in each zone. TKP have 125 shelters in 6 zones.



*Figure 14 MTN - population density*          *Figure 15 TKP - population density (CCCM et al., 2017)*
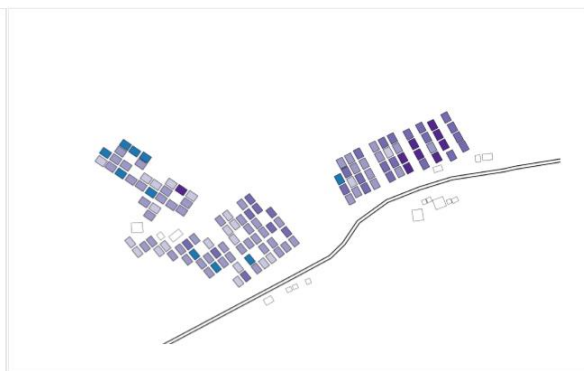
The humanitarian community in the Sittwe rural camps have, since the beginning of the mass displacement, consistently worked to reinforce the temporary nature of the camps, by implementing temporary shelters created to last between two to three years. However, because most of the camp residents have lived in the camps for more than five years, the shelters in both camps have been renovated and reconstructed (CCCM et al., 2017). These shelters comprise longhouses in woven bamboo materials, divided in 8 to 10 units. Each unit can house one household. The figures above (Fig.13 & Fig. 14) give an idea of room calculated per person. As illustrated by the figures, there is a higher population density in TKP than in MTN. To live in a temporary shelter with high population density, can be mentally demanding. Consequently, only 21% of the camp population in the Sittwe rural camps have ownership to their shelters (CCCM et al., 2017).

The first map on the following page (map 2) shows the camp infrastructure in MTN. The camp management office is located at the entry point of the camp, next to the temporary learning center. The dots on each side (top/down) of the shelters illustrate the number of latrines available. Furthermore, the map shows that there are two mosques in the camp. One is located between the clusters of shelters and the other one is placed on the far left, at the outskirt of the camp area.

## Camp Infrastructure

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Camp Management Office | | Mosque | |
| Modular House | | 8 Unit Temporary Shelter | |
| Unidentified Building | | Camp Boundary | |
| Temporary Learning Centre | | Latrine | |

*Map 2 This map provides an overview of the camp infrastructure in MTN. Retrieved from the Sittwe Camp Profiling Report, 2017 (CCCM/DRC/UNHCR, 2017).*



## Camp Infrastructure

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Antenatal Care Centre | Pregnant and Breastfeeding Mothers Space | | Clinic |
| Camp Management Office | Temporary Learning Space | | |
| Modular House | 8 Unit Temporary Shelter | | Camp Boundary |
| Mosque | | | |
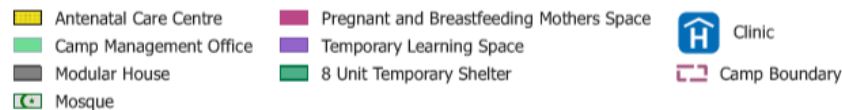
*Map 3 This map provides an overview of the camp infrastructure in TKP. Retrieved from the Sittwe Camp Profiling Report, 2017 (CCCM et al., 2017).*

This map (see map 3) outlines the infrastructure in TKP. In contrast to MTN, TKP have defined spaces for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers as well as antenatal care centers and a health clinic. The health clinic in TKP is the highest quality clinic in the Sittwe rural camp area and operates 24 hours, seven days a week (CCCM et al., 2017). If the health clinic is not able to treat its patients, the clinic can make emergency referrals to the hospital in Sittwe. Additionally, TKP have two mosques and two temporary learning spaces. Due to overarching similarities between the camps, this study will talk about the two camps as one.

## 3. Conceptual framework

This chapter seeks to create a common understanding of the concept *empowerment*, and its application in the field of youth. In the first section, this chapter explain empowerment by relating it to the concepts of *powerlessness* and *power*. The second section introduce previous research in the field of youth and explores different dimensions and models embedded in the discourse of youth empowerment. By focusing on youth empowerment from a camp management perspective, empowerment is defined as a tool to alter youths' life. In other words, youth empowerment is underlined as building confidence and self-esteem through capacity building (e.g. developing knowledge) and increasing participation in the camp community.

### 3.1 What is empowerment?

Empowerment is a fluid concept with multiple definitions. Empowerment is increasingly used in the field of development and is often defined by its absence among vulnerable individuals and groups (Martínez, Jiménez-Morales, Masó, & Bernet, 2017). Vulnerable groups does in many cases include ethnic minorities, the poor, children, women and persons with specific needs etc.

To understand the notion of empowerment, it is necessary to dive into the existing literature and try to understand the origin of the term. However, some critiques of the empowerment concept (Martínez et al., 2017) highlight that the literature on empowerment is characterised by taking theoretical approaches based on secondary data, resulting in a lack of first-hand data. Nevertheless, this was not the case for the Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire who was an engaged teacher, that have played an important role in the development of the concept of empowerment. The concept was implemented in various context in the 1970's and the literature suggest that it emerged from feminist theory and the concept of *popular education* invented by Freire (Luttrell, Quiroz, Scrutton, & Bird, 2009). Freire is well known for his work *the pedagogy of the oppressed*, where he amplifies the importance of education to teach the oppressed and enable them to rebel and end their oppression, through development of self-esteem and critical thinking (Freire, 1999). In the 1980s, empowerment was associated with a "radical project of social transformation" (Luttrell et al., 2009), in which groups that were secluded from the society gained the opportunity to enhance their rights. The term Empowerment was first employed in the South were it was used in affiliation with women movements and in relation to gender issues and was later used by movements fighting racial

discrimination (Luttrell et al., 2009; Martínez et al., 2017). The use of the term have since expanded to include a diversity of marginalised groups (Luttrell et al., 2009) encompassing ethnic minorities such as the Rohingya, and are now widely used in the development sector as an instrument for development and poverty reduction (Martínez et al., 2017). Chaudhuri (2016) points out that misuse of the term among development agencies have consequently reduced its meaning as it has become a buzzword aimed to convince funding agencies. Others criticise this increased popularity of the term in development practices to provide a fake claim of addressing discrimination (Luttrell et al., 2009).

Rappaport (1984), one of the most influential names within empowerment theory, defined empowerment as the process in which individuals are able to take control of their lives through active participation and increased self-confidence (Rappaport, 1987). Similarly, Zimmerman defines empowerment as the link between having the ambition to get something done and the capability to achieve it through participating in the community and show civic engagement. In addition, as stated by Luttrell et Al. (2009), the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (2004), allude to empowerment as "…an emancipation process in which the disadvantaged are empowered to exercise their rights, obtain access to resources and participate actively in the process of shaping society and making decisions" (Luttrell et al., 2009, p. 2). According to Martinez et Al. (2017) most of the literature presents an agreement that empowerment is a process in which the individual, group or community; in this case the displaced youth, are able to alter their situation of powerlessness and acquire control over their lives and are enabled to participate in making decisions that affects their lives.

In order to grasp the full meaning of empowerment, it is necessary to have a certain comprehension of the concept it origins from. The various meanings and interpretations of empowerment manifests in the debated conceptualisation and operationalisation of *power* (Luttrell et al., 2009). Staples (1990) introduce *empower* as a verb emerged from power, meaning, "to power someone or something". Furthermore, he describe the core of power as "the ability to act or to prevent action" (Staples, 1990, p. 29). Power theories often distinguish between structure and agency. In structure related power theories, the structure of the social world defines the individual and its agency. Because the structure shapes the capacity, power and opportunity of the individual, structure-related theories explain social inequalities. In agency-related theories, the agent play the central role in society and have autonomy to act freely thus creating the social world and structures they are surrounded by (Chaudhuri, 2016).

However, theorists such as Anthony Giddens (1984) combines these theories in his theory of structuration where he explain that social structures and people's agency are both important drivers in shaping the society (Giddens, 1984).

According to Mosedale (2005), among others, it is only possible to empower individuals, groups or a community that is disadvantaged or disempowered. In the publication "a practical guide to empowerment", UNHCR refer to disempowerment as "*[a]ny action, policy development and/or relief program or process through which women's and men's priorities, needs and interests are further ignored, reducing their participation in decision-making and representing an obstacle to their economic, political and social improvement*" (UNHCR, 2001, p. 3). The lacking opportunities and extra responsibilities brought upon youth in displacement is likely to affect their ability to build on own capacities (Hart, 2008), thus hindering them to improve their economic, political and social situation.

This thesis applies an instrumentalist approach to empowerment by focusing on empowerment merely as a process, and not an outcome (Luttrell et al., 2009). Hence, focusing on the level of participation and capacity among the youth in the IDP camps in the development of and attendance in camp activities. Empowerment is the process in which individuals, groups or communities become stronger and more confident and gain ownership of their lives (Zimmerman, 2000). Mosedale (2005) states that because empowerment is a process and not a final destination, it is not possible to reach a level of absolute empowerment. An individual, group or community is only empowered in comparison to others, or in comparison to their previous state (Mosedale, 2005). Labonte (1989) and Mosedale (2005) emphasise that "empower" is a reflexive verb, meaning that it is not possible to empower someone from the outside without taking away their ability to choose freely. Consequently, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), humanitarian or development agencies cannot empower anyone; but merely facilitate for empowerment by implementing mechanisms and approaches for empowerment (Mosedale, 2005). With external factors facilitated, the process of change have to start within the individual, group or community by building their self-esteem and awareness of the situation in which they find themselves (Luttrell et al., 2009; Rowlands, 1995).

Power, education and participation are three concepts that fuels, and links to the conceptualisation of, empowerment. Empowerment roots in power and enable an individual, group or community to alter their state of powerlessness. Education is central in capacity building to enable participation in decision-making process and acquire ownership of their

lives (Martínez et al., 2017). According to the World Bank, cited by Narayan (2002), participation is regarded as empowering when the vulnerable group are included in decision-making processes,  and can access information and accountable institutions.

## 3.2 What is youth empowerment?

Even though empowerment is an increasingly popular term cross disciplines, there is a lack of literature and empirical evidence on youth empowerment. It is important to acknowledge that most of the research on empowerment in the field of youth is conducted on adults, and is therefore known to be imprecise when addressing youth (Martínez et al., 2017). Another limitation is that the literature exclusively concerns suppressed youth, or youth at risk (Martínez et al., 2017). However, this makes the literature relevant to the youth addressed in this particular study.

Youth empowerment is a relatively unexplored area and differs from the general concept of empowerment as it concerns the development of young people and their relations to adults. Youth empowerment is, as stated by Martinez et. Al (2017), referring to the process in which young people can develop self-esteem and self-efficacy to access power and resources, and actively participate in decision-making processes by utilising their competencies, and capacities (Martínez et al., 2017). In the perspective of the participants in the youth empowerment training examined in this research, empowerment indicates that the young people have the opportunity to strengthen their position in the community and allow them to acquire a greater sense of control over their lives.

In the article "towards a critical social theory of youth empowerment", Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, and McLoughlin (2006), explore youth empowerment by reviewing four conceptual models, namely: *the adolescent empowerment cycle*, *youth development and empowerment*, *transactional partnering* and *education empowerment*, and creates their own model called *critical youth empowerment* (Jennings et al., 2006). These models are interlinked, efficiently emphasise, and summarise factors suggested to be of great importance for vulnerable young people to develop and acquire control over their life. The adolescent empowerment cycle and the youth development and empowerment model both focus on what Jennings et al. (2006) refer to as "meaningful participation". These models suggest that taking part in valued activities' and having a specific role in the community creates a sense of being useful by contributing to the wider community and will prevent youth at risk substitute from negative social activities. Chinman and Linney (1998), the creators of the adolescent empowerment cycle, believed that young persons' that is provided meaningful

roles and responsibilities by an adult would experience a feeling of affiliation that fuels positive development. Meaningful participation, through roles and responsibilities in the community, is opening doors for youth to develop and build on their capacities by adopting skills and knowledge that will be useful in tackling challenges (Cargo, Grams, Ottoson, Ward, & Green, 2003; Jennings et al., 2006). A limitation of this model however, is the missing description of what roles and responsibilities this might apply.  In the youth empowerment training, the camp management team introduce the youth to the roles and responsibilities in a camp and facilitate for youth participation in the different camp activities.

The youth development and empowerment model is concerned with empowerment on both individual and on a community level. This model regard individual empowerment to come from within through self-esteem and confidence, and empowerment to take place on a community level through the process of enabling the community to change for the better (Jennings et al., 2006). The youth development and empowerment model conceptualise youth empowerment as the opportunity for young people to grow and develop through the supervision, and guidance of supportive adults – making them able to take on significant roles in the community and contribute in problem-solving through community-based initiatives (Jennings et al., 2006). The next model, transactional partnering, places the dispensation of power between adult and youth at the core of development and empowerment of young people. Cargo et al. (2003) implies that it is crucial for adults to create a safe environment for youth, by providing the support and guidance necessary to facilitate opportunities for the marginalised young people (Cargo et al., 2003; Jennings et al., 2006). The education and empowerment model, reflects Freire's emphasis on "critical reflection and reflective action" among young people to guide the community towards organisational change through "political, individual and collective effectiveness" (Jennings et al., 2006). Jennings et al. (2006) have built on elements presented in these models in the development of the critical youth empowerment theory, which reinforce youth as critical and active citizens in making organisational and social changes in and for the community (Jennings et al., 2006).

The table below (table 1), provides an overview of the six dimensions of youth empowerment constituting the critical youth empowerment model, and outlines to what extent these dimensions are embedded in the other models mentioned by Jennings et Al. Jennings et al. (2006).

*Table 1 This table provides an overview of five models of youth empowerment and categorise these in six dimensions (the dimensions of critical youth empowerment). Retrieved from: Jennings et. al 2006.*

| Dimensions | AEC | YDE | Transactional Partner | Empowering Education | Critical Youth Empowerment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Safe, supportive environment | Adults provide positive reinforcement. | Adults, family support via high expectations, positive reinforcement. | "Welcoming social climate" emphasized. | Supportive environment emphasized. | Environment must be safe, supportive, fun, caring, challenging. |
| Meaningful Participation | **Meaningful participation is critical for positive social bonding.** | Opportunity to learn skills, assume responsibility, participate in public affairs. | Structured process to develop and implement a youth-defined, community-based agenda | Structured experience includes interviewing, critically reflecting, and social action project. | Opportunities for youth to develop capacities in meaningful forum with youth responsibility and decision-making. |
| Shared Power | Shared power mentioned but not included in model. | Shared power mentioned but not included in model. | **Incremental transfer of power to youth as they gain competence and confidence.** | Adults and youths are co-learners; shared leadership discussed but not emphasized in model. | Shared power critical, incremental transfer of power to youth as they gain capacity. |
| Individual- and Community-level oriented | | Focused on individual-level development through participation in community affairs. | Individual- and community-level goals of esteem and capacity building. | Individual- and community-empowerment viewed as interwoven. | Individual- and community-empowerment viewed as interwoven. |
| Socio-political change goals | | Contribute to community affairs but not for goals of social change. | Contribute to community affairs but not for goals of social change. | Dialogue stage includes societal analysis and leads into social action projects. | Programs emphasize societal analysis and encourage social change goals. |
| Critical Reflection | Critical awareness mentioned but not demonstrated. | | Critical awareness and reflection mentioned but not demonstrated. | Dialogue stage includes societal analysis through structured questions. | Critical reflection integral to CYE through varied youth-based approaches. |

However, after a thoroughly examination of empowerment literature in the field of youth, Martinez et. Al (2017) map out the following dimensions as the most frequently mentioned aspects of youth empowerment: 1. the personal growth and well-being dimension 2. The relational dimension 3. The educational dimension 4. The political dimension and 5. The transformative dimension. These dimensions focus on personal, as well as collective empowerment.

According to the examination of the literature, conducted by Martinez et Al (2017), covering basic needs and building on self-esteem and well-being is a crucial first step towards youth empowerment. The second dimension focus on the youth's role in the community and the relational aspects in which the role of the young person is considered important in interaction with adults. Through recognition and interaction with others, young people gain confidence and are able to change the perception of their own capacities. The relational dimension is important in promoting and contributing to the young person's personal development. This dimension is in line with several of the models mentioned above, amplifying that interaction with adults have positive impacts on youth development and efficiently leads to a strengthened position in the community. The educational dimension emphasise the importance of knowledge as a tool to strengthen young peoples' position by giving them the ability to think critically and the means to play a role in the social transformation of the

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society they live in. Educational programmes and trainings provide young people with power through awareness raising leading to increased understanding. The political dimension conceptualise youth empowerment in the sense of giving young people room to impact organisational structures, by being involved in making decisions. Furthermore, the transformative dimension relates to the critical youth empowerment models' view that youth empowerment is "the process by which adolescents develop the consciousness and skills necessary to envision social change and understand their role in that change" (Wagaman, 2011). Through a combination of involvement in meaningful activities and critical thinking, young people are likely to undergo social transformation from regarding themselves as victims, or oppressed to see themselves as positive contributors to the community (Martínez et al., 2017). The emancipative dimension reinforce the importance of upholding the conditions that enable young people to acquire ownership of their lives, making them less dependent on other people or actors (Martínez et al., 2017).

This overview of models and dimensions of youth empowerment creates a more fulfilling picture of the many definitions and theories of empowerment in the field of youth. To grasp the complexity of this concept it is necessary to not distinguish these models and dimensions from each other, but rather regard every dimension as a valued piece in the puzzle of understanding - and achieving youth empowerment. When approaching (youth) empowerment it is necessary to consider gendered differences because females often have fewer opportunities and less power in the community than males, this may result from religious or cultural norms or values that distinguish between female and male (Kabeer N, 2000; Mosedale, 2005). It is therefore important to facilitate for females to attend in activities and participatory structures promoting empowerment.

It is challenging to measure and assess the multidimensional conceptualisation of empowerment; especially in a camp context where the youth and the wider camp population are denied basic rights such as freedom of movement and right of citizenship, which poses as great challenges to the empowerment processes. Despite the contested nature of the concept of empowerment, both in the acquisition to adults and in the field of youth, the majority of the literature view empowerment as a process affecting several layers (e.g individual, group, and community) (Jennings et al., 2006). It is challenging to measure a process, as it is something that develops over time and it is not possible to measure empowerment as a static concept, because it is ever developing and normative. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, the multidimensional concept depends on context, and the predetermined assumptions of the

individuals using and interpreting it (Zimmerman, 2000). To measure, or assess, empowerment it is therefore necessary to employ specific variables of measurement relevant to the specific context and development programme (Malhotra & Ruth Schuler, 2005). To assess youth empowerment in this context, however, the camp management agency could look at the variables *knowledge* and *level of participation* – in the training and whether there is any increased youth participation in the community in general (Malhotra & Ruth Schuler, 2005).

## 4. Methodology

The empirical analysis in this study is predominately a product of a two-month fieldwork from the end of February to April 2019, in the position as a camp management intern, in central Rakhine state in Myanmar. My interest for camp management arose as I got my first internship in the camp management department in NRC's head office, autumn 2018. During my internship, one of my main responsibilities was to discover digital opportunities for community engagement, participation and communication in camp settings. As I was examining and categorising piles of documents for a digital platform, I came across the "camp management community training" developed to empower people residing in camp settings. Three months later, the programme development manager in the camp management country programme in Myanmar, offered me another intern position to support the local camp management team in implementing this training in two IDP camps during a period of two months as a "youth empowerment project".

Upon my arrival, the programme development manager introduced me to, at that time, the three other people constituting the camp management team (later subsidised with three more people during my fieldwork) and I immediately became part of a hardworking team, preparing the camps for the highly stressful monsoon season. The programme development manager, and the rest of the camp management team, were all aware of my neutral position as a researcher, but it is important to state that my history as a human rights defender for Amnesty might have certain impact on my assumptions of the Myanmar government. In the position as a researcher, it is important to consider underlying and predetermined assumptions (Bryman, 2016). Because of Myanmar governmental restrictions, I had to hide some of the elements of the research to ensure the protection of NRC, the camp community and myself. However, because the research is in the best interest for all parts, I chose to carry through by operating with a combination of Myanmar and NRC regulations.

In the end of February 2019, when I first arrived Myanmar my plan was to research how NRC conceptualised youth empowerment in the camp. As I sought to explore how these trainings reflected the concerns of the youth and to what extent the youth felt "empowered", I employed a qualitative research strategy to capture the multiple subjective views of the participants (Bryman, 2016) . The flexible nature of the qualitative methods proved to be suitable to my study as I stumbled upon several obstacles and had to change my research questions multiple times during the process. With these changes, I also had to modify the strategies for data collection to ensure that these strategies adhered to the emerged research question. This indicates that, combined with my predetermined assumptions influenced by my background in Amnesty, this study employ both a deductive and inductive approach as I let the theory and the shape of the study emerge through my experiences in the field (Creswell., 2013). Qualitative research methods proved to be convenient as governmental restrictions, enhanced by the CMC, hindered direct explicit interviews with the camp residents. Despite this hindrance, participatory observation allowed me to observe and be involved in the camp life.

Doing a qualitative research on the meaning of youth empowerment in IDP camps for *Rohingyas* does not only highlight the youth perspective and provide data to fill the information gap on this certain age group, but also empower them by lifting their stories and by not forgetting them (John Creswell, p. 48).

## 4.1 Research approach

I chose to approach this thesis with a qualitative case study design, to answer the question of what the meaning of empowerment is in a camp context illustrated by looking at the specific case in central Rakhine State. According to Bryman (2016), it is suitable to employ a case study design when the researcher want to make a comprehensive and analytical study of a single case. Creswell (2013) highlights, that the case may be "a concrete entity, such as an individual, a small group, an organisation, or a partnership. At a less concrete level, it may be a community, relationship, a decision process, or a specific project" (Creswell., 2013). By looking at the youth empowerment training, this study presents an in-depth understanding of how the camp management team in NRC work with "empowerment" in this particular context, and is therefore a good example of an *instrumental case study*. The contextual conditions in this case is indeed an important factor as the camp context has become a prolonged solution, increasing the importance of providing meaningful and empowering activities.

**4.2 Sampling approaches**

4.2.1  Sampling of context

During my internship at the head office autumn 2018, I capitalised best practices to develop case studies by interviewing colleagues in the field. In this process, I familiarised with the programme development manager in Myanmar and shared my interest of participatory camp structures with her. As her local camp management team was affected by recent resignations, underfunding and a large amount of work prior to the monsoon season, she was open for a collaboration where I was able to immerse in camp life and learn about the roles of a camp manager, and she would benefit from my knowledge and labour. The Sittwe rural camps in Myanmar were selected partly because of convenience as this was the only country programme that offered me this opportunity, but also purposive as the camp management team in Sittwe work in a formal camp setting with focus on participatory camp structures and empowerment (Bryman, 2016).  The IDP camps in rural Sittwe was established in the aftermath of the violent outbreaks in 2012 and has consequently existed beyond the temporary nature of a camp. Most of the camp residents suffers reduced ownership to their lives, as they have been living in the camps for seven years. I therefore found it interesting to study the meaning of empowerment in an IDP camp, in the context of Myanmar.

4.2.2  Sampling of participants

I aimed to interview representatives from the camp management team to understand the camp management perspective of the meaning of empowerment in a camp setting. I initially planned to conduct 6 interviews (the full team), to ensure an in-depth understanding of the camp management perspective, as everyone in the team work with different approaches that ultimately have an empowering effect on the youth. Due to time constraints, I was only able to conduct in-depth interviews with the programme development manager and camp management leader. However, through my working objectives, I had the chance to interview all team members about their main activities in the camp. Additionally, I was able to conduct one interview with a camp mobiliser in one of the IDP camps in the lunch break during the training. Because the mobiliser was an IDP within the age range considered youth, this interview provided me with a youth perspective of empowerment in the camp and validated some of the information stated by the programme development manager and team leader. Furthermore, to gain informed background information on NRCs work with youth and youth empowerment, I had the pleasure to speak with the education programme manager whom have been working with youth programming for several years. She provided me with an

analytical image of the youth programmes in Myanmar. The sampling strategy was purposive (Bryman, 2016), as I selected participants strategically to achieve a "camp management perspective" and gain background information from a camp context. Additionally, informal conversations and interviews during my process of developing reports on the youth empowerment training, and the camp management activity summary report, feed in to the data collection.

The table below (2) provides an overview of the informants in the qualitative interview.

| Interview number | Age | Position | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 32 | Camp management programme development manager | Female |
| 3 | 27 | Camp management leader | Male |
| 2 | 32 | Education programme manager | Female |
| 4 | 24 | Camp mobiliser | Male |

As part of the camp management team, I supported the selection of participants for the youth empowerment training. As the study and the training targeted youth, a criterion was that the participants belonged to this age group, ranging from 15-25. Because of high rates of dropouts in previous projects, I aimed for a sample size of 25 participants in each camp to begin with. As expected, the numbers of participants dropped throughout the training and each training had an average of 18-20 participants. The camp management team mobilised members of already existing youth community groups to ensure that the participants was willing and eager to learn. Furthermore, the information about the youth empowerment training spread through mass messaging, to ensure that everyone in that target group had the opportunity to attend. It is important to acknowledge that due to lacking documentation and knowledge of the date of birth, there might be some discrepancy between the beneficiary and the age provided, which neither the beneficiary nor NRC is aware.

*4.2.2.1 Focus group*

In the process of selecting participants for the youth empowerment training, the community engagement officer and the camp management leader conducted focus groups that I was unable to attend due to the delay of my TA. The purpose of these focus groups was to inform about the training and map out the most suited and engaged candidates, referring to the candidates able to commit to the full training. It was conducted separate focus groups for female and male, to ensure representation from both genders considering religious and cultural aspects. The participants of the focus group had the opportunity to consider the offer for a couple of days before they were asked to commit to the training.

## 4.3 Field access

Researching in another culture can be difficult as it can be challenging to get access to the field and find an appropriate field to study (Bryman, 2016). Even though I found my way in to the camp management department by coincident, this turned out to be a decisive factor and my key to access the field. I played an open, overt role as a researcher, but positioned as an intern by playing a part in the daily assignments of the camp management team. Being a part of the local camp management team was an advantage, as I got the opportunity to work and collaborate with people whom lived in and had an in-depth understanding of the complexity of the Myanmar context.

Due to strict regulations by the government, it is difficult even for established humanitarian organisations to get access to the camps. Therefore, being a part of an acknowledged organisation was critical to get through the checkpoints and enter the camp area. The NRC office is located outside the camp. Consequently, the camp management team have to cross the police checkpoints to access the camp management office located inside the camps, every day. The purpose of the camp management department is to be visible in the camp and build good relations with the camp population. In addition to the camp management team that works in office (NRC office and camp management office), they have camp mobilisers that is present in the camp – to support the camp population in any way needed. Because the camp management team had already built this trust with the camp population, it was easy for me to engage with them by introducing myself as part of the team.

The conflict in Sittwe has been an on-going problem for several years and has led to extended involvement from various INGOS. This has characterised Sittwe as an established "expat environment". More than thirty organisations are working inside- and outside of the camps in the Sittwe area, and both the camp population and the Rakhine community is used to seeing

people from different cultures. Therefore, I did not experience any scepticism while I was there. However, when doing fieldwork, it is important to build trust and show respect and understanding towards the respondents. Throughout my two months as part of NRC, I aimed to build trust by being curious on their culture and indulge in their traditional ways of living – such as joining them for shared lunches in the office, rather than eating at western cafés with other expats. The national staff seemed to appreciate my efforts and came with remarks as "the expats never eat our food" and "thank you for trying our culture!".

Throughout the internship, I spent enough time with my team to build their trust and establish good relations with them. Some of the team members, the camp management leader and the community engagement officer in particular, became good friends and turned out to be important key informants through informal conversations. In retrospect, I believe that my position as an "intern", allowing me to take on a clumsy and curious role and not being in a position of power, made it easier for me to build trust with the team. This assumption bases on observations of the relation between the team and other expats.

## 4.4 Methods of data collection

My position as an intern in the local camp management department, gave me the opportunity to apply four elements of qualitative methods to explore the meaning of empowerment in a camp setting from a camp management perspective. Through participatory observation, qualitative interviews, reports and pre- and post-tests, I have listened to conversations, asked questions, observed social relations and reflected in my diary, to develop and answer my research questions. Additionally, I have used secondary data drawn from published and unpublished literature to support the research. The use of multiple methods have helped validate my research by triangulating the information to the degree possible within short time, thus improving the validity and reliability of my research.

### 4.4.1 Participatory observation

Participatory observation was the main source of primary data employed in this research. By conducting participatory observation and immersing in the daily life of the local camp management team, I gained insight in their perspective of, and approaches to, empowerment (Thaagard, 2013). By attending team meetings as well as agency coordination meetings, listening to conversations and observing interactions, I gleaned information about the camp context, and the specific role of camp management. This enabled me to observe behaviour, listen to conversations between others, take notes of situations and my reflections around

them and ask questions of relevance both in the NRC office and in the IDP camps (Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, extensive field notes was an important part of the process as it helped me structure and systematise my observations of the youth empowerment training.

As part of the participatory observations, I indulged in the life of the camp management team. I spent full working days in the office from eight in the morning until five, six or seven in the evening, depending on the amount of work. Once my TA to access the camps came through, a normal working day included approximately six hours in the camp to observe and support the conduction of the youth empowerment training. The training consisted of nine modules all together. Two representatives from the camp management team, the community engagement officer and the camp management leader facilitated the first few modules of the youth empowerment training together, every other day in each camp. This allowed for one of them to translate the most important things and ideas emerging from the youth group to me. However, to limit the duration of the training, the facilitators split to double the speed by conducting the training in each camp simultaneously. Because I did not speak the language in which the training was conducted, I was only able to take notes based on obvious observations such as level of participation, engagement in discussion and group work, attendance (before and after lunch), interactions and conduction of methodologies to assess the level of empowerment. Pre- and post-test relating to each module was the main methodology applied to assess the outcomes of the youth empowerment training. I developed these questions with support from the programme development manager, to map out the participants' comprehension of the topics presented in the specific module. Due to a combination of language barriers between the participants and high rates of illiteracy, the pre- and post-tests became a time-consuming process. My observations gave me a better understanding of the difficulties that might occur in the assessment of empowerment in a camp context.

Participatory observation allowed me to create social relations to the camp management team and gave me the opportunity to learn about the work of a camp manager, understand the system of working in a camp context, and localise the key informants of my research project. This was a demanding and important process in order to earn trust and reliability.

4.4.2 Qualitative Interviews

I conducted four semi-structured interviews with different levels of extensiveness. The semi structured design of the interviews permit flexibility and allowed me to ask sub questions

beyond my interview guide. The interview guide provided a certain structure to the interview and ensured that the interview consistently revolved around the topic of empowerment, without rejecting ideas generated throughout the interview (Thaagard, 2013). I conducted three of the interviews in the NRC office, while the last interview took place in the camp management office inside one of the camps. These were strategic locations to make the informants comfortable and avoid disruptions. Setting may been an important factor in a qualitative interview to establish an open and trustworthy atmosphere (Bryman, 2013).

With the informants' permission, I recorded the interviews, as this allowed me to direct my full focus towards the informants and what they were saying. Because I used a mobile phone to record the interviews, I made sure never to mention the name of the informants or the organisation while recording. I made full transcriptions to feed in to my notes from the interviews once I was back in Norway.

### *4.4.2.1 Informal conversations*

In addition to the interviews, informal conversations with colleagues from the office as well as representatives from other INGOS provided me with insightful information about the conflicts in Myanmar, the issues with the Rohingyas, and the question of empowerment in a camp context. These conversations contributed in giving me a holistic picture of the situation and the issues that might occur. For example, governmental regulations leading to limited access to the field.

### 4.4.3   Reports

In my terms of reference, agreed on in the beginning of my fieldwork, the main objectives revolved around developing various reports related to camp management activities. These reports were based on observations made in the field, interviews with my colleagues and analysis of PSN household surveys. Even though these reports were part of my working objectives, they provided me with useful data about the different responsibilities each camp management officer played in the different approaches and mechanisms implemented to empower the camp population.

### 4.4.4   Pre- and post-tests

In order to explore the meaning of empowerment in a camp context, I wanted to test and evaluate one of the methodologies the NRC employed in order to assess empowerment. According to the programme development manager, pre- and post- tests were the most efficient way to assess the youth empowerment training. This entails a list of 6-10 questions

that each participant in youth empowerment training was to answer before and after each different module. The questions were designed to fit the designated module, meaning that each module would reveal the answer to the questions. The aim of these questions were to map out the prior understanding each participant had of the topic represented in the specific module. When I developed the questions, I tried to simplify them as much as possible and make them easy to understand.

Because the majority of participants were illiterate and did not speak Myanmar, the camp mobilisers had to assist by translating the questions and writing down the answers. Because of time constraints, this process often happened in small groups, indicating that the participants might have influenced each other's answers. Furthermore, lack of training in employing this kind of method generated further challenges, as some of the "before" were asked in the aftermath of the related module. How regularly, and in what modules, this happened is uncertain.

These tests were supposed to be part of the methodology to assess empowerment, but as there were some obvious flaws, they cannot be used due to methodological reasons. There is, however, a lot to be learned by these. By examining the answers, it is inevitable to see that there are indeed lack of knowledge and lack of understanding of the questions, and the methodology. In some of the questions the answers does indeed reflect an increased understanding. On the other side, the translation of the questions from Rakhine to English makes it difficult to interpret the answer, and know whether the lack is in the participants' understanding or in the translation.

It is important to acknowledge that the answers from the pre- and post-tests was translated by the camp management team and reviewed by the programme development manager, and that the answers therefore might reflect a camp management perspective.

### 4.5 Data Analysis

In qualitative methods, analysis and data collection often happen interchangeably. As I collected the data, I also used a thematic approach of analysis, as this had most relevance to my study. Thematic analysis focus on different themes, which have the same function as coding throughout the process of analysing the data. By dividing the data in different themes relating to youth empowerment such as *understanding*, *mechanisms and approaches, assessment* and *barriers*, it was easy to relate the data to my research question and get a

structure and organised overview of the data. Furthermore, this method of analysis helped me to gain a theoretical understanding of my findings (Bryman, 2016, p. 585).

## 4.6 Research Ethics

Following ethics is an important part of data collection to ensure the protection and security of all the participants of the study. As part of NRC, I had to sign a code of conduct where I agreed to follow the humanitarian principles, and the "do no harm" principle to avoid putting NRC, the participants nor myself at risk. I have chosen not to anonymise this thesis to make it more interesting for the reader and provide a clearer picture of the situation in which this research was conducted. Consequently, I have chosen to make this thesis confidential and keep it away from the public, as I believe that it can potentially jeopardise the work of the NRC.

## 4.7 Limitations

The challenges affecting this research started already prior to my arrival in Myanmar. The fieldwork was a spontaneous decision accumulated by a "once in a lifetime" internship opportunity, and is influenced by poor preparations. The research is characterised by a combination of the difficult context, in regard of governmental restrictions, language barriers and time constraints. In order to get through the police checkpoints and access the camps, it is necessary to have a granted travel authorisation. To get a full month access to the camps, it is required to apply within the last two weeks of the prior month, with a valid visa and a schedule for the planned camp activities that certain month. However, if the travel authorisation is for less than one month, some waiting time might occur. Because I did not get the visa before the end of February (when I arrived Myanmar), I had to wait two weeks to be granted access to the camps. Even though this gave us enough time to contextualise and prepare for the youth empowerment training, it delayed the process and resulted in less time to conduct observations in the camps.

The local New Year holiday, *Thingyan*, from 13th to 16th of April unexpectedly interrupted my fieldwork as most of the staff extended the holiday by taking leave. As I was unaware of this holiday, I failed to conduct several interviews with the camp management staff that I had scheduled for this week. Furthermore, the programme development manager, whom had the role of being my supervisor, suddenly announced that she would be at home leave the last three weeks of my fieldwork. This did not only affect my research in which she was an important resource, but it also increased the workload for the entire team – making them less available more unavailable for interviews. If I were to do this research again, I would

probably choose another time of the year and reassure that no local holidays would affect my fieldwork, or if Myanmar was more open, I could have gone home to celebrate the holidays with colleagues. However, because this fieldwork was indeed a predetermined agreement with limited opportunities to negotiate, I had limited opportunities to adjust or facilitate it to fit my preferences in terms of time schedule, to the degree I would like.

Another important element to mention in this section are the language barriers leading to ample confusions.  The facilitators of the youth empowerment training and the community mobilisers that was supporting them have limited experience within translation. Because the training material were translated from English to Rakhine and from Rakhine to Rohingya, it is likely to think that some information was lost in the process. Furthermore, the answers of the pre- and post-tests  reflect a lack of understanding of the methodology applied to assess the training and a lack of understanding of the questions asked. However, it is impossible to know whether this lack of understanding is rooted in the participants', the mobilisers whom translated the answers from *"Rohingya"* to Rakhine, or the facilitators whom translated the answers from Rakhine to English.

The agreement between NRC and I, was that the facilitators, from the camp management team, were going to translate all the answers from the pre- and post-tests and send them to me within two weeks. Because of the increased workload due to the monsoon season, the team were not able to finish the translations and send them to me before the 10th of June. This delay had significant impact on my process of analysing the data, and shaping the thesis. In similar projects, it might therefore be more convenient to hire a certified translator to guarantee the work and the quality of the data. However, I did manage to work around this and find an angle suitable for the interviews, field notes and observations I made during my stay.

## 5.  Findings

In the beginning of the establishment of the Sittwe rural camps, the few organisations present exclusively focused on providing the assistance necessary to cover basic needs. Now, seven years after the establishment of the camps there is an increased focus on participatory mechanisms and approaches to create ownership and give value to the lives of the camp population. The objective of the camp management department is to protect the rights and dignity of the displaced population, with an overarching aim of achieving durable solutions. The camp management department provide platforms for coordination and communication

between the displaced population and the stakeholders and work to empower the displaced by reinforcing participatory structures and enable them to influence the management and evaluation of the camp by taking part in decision-making. This chapter introduces the camp manager's perception of youth empowerment and the barriers to empower youth in the camp. Furthermore, the chapter presents different elements of camp management and governance before turning to the place of the youth empowerment programme within the broad governance and management of the camp. The last section of the chapter provides an overview of NRCs efforts to assess empowerment in the camp.

## 5.1 A camp management perspective: Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment can be defined, understood and assessed in many different ways. In this part I will present camp management's perspective and understanding of this concept, and what they perceive as the barriers to achieve, and assess, youth empowerment in the camp. The following information is based on interviews conducted with the camp management leader and the camp management programme development manager.

### 5.1.1 Conceptualising youth empowerment

From a camp management perspective, empowerment lies in the camp activities that include mobilisation, participation and community engagement. The camp managers emphasise that even though learning technical skills such as barbering, knitting, sewing etc. Have an empowering effect, providing training and skill-set is not enough to empower someone. According to the programme development manager, the camp management department approach empowerment with trainings to increase knowledge and provision of participatory models to enable the youth to influence decision-making and express their concerns. The camp management leader support this and enhance the importance of youth empowerment training and states that "empowerment is achieved through improving capacity, skills, knowledge and attitudes". He explained that they have designed the youth empowerment training to foster critical thinking processes. By reflecting on the roles and responsibilities of the various actors in the camps, the youth will gain a deeper understanding of what is happening around them thus giving them agency to take on responsibilities and engage in different roles in the community. The overall goal is for the youth, together with the wider camp population, to be self-driven and take over the roles that the INGOs play in the camp per today.

According to the camp management department, they work with youth towards a durable solution through consultations where they inform the youth about their opportunities, by providing trainings where the youth learn to handle specific issues in the camp - and slowly transition responsibilities over to the youth. The interviews implied that information-sharing about camp activities is important to ensure informative decision-making. Informative decision-making indicates that the youth have the opportunity to acquire updated information necessary to make decisions affecting their lives. Furthermore, the programme development manager emphasises that trainings are important for the young people to mobilise - and provide for themselves in case the government choose to close the camp, meaning that INGOs and service providers will no longer have access to provide assistance to the camp population.

The camp management leader states that, despite their efforts to empower the youth inside the camps by ensuring protection and increasing knowledge, the youth will not be able to access livelihood opportunities and create a real life for themselves if the government does not cooperate in the sense of giving the camp population freedom of movement.

5.1.2 Challenges and barriers to achieve youth empowerment

Working with empowerment in a camp context is complicated, as the context is characterised by challenges and barriers requiring alternative approaches to empowerment. According to the informants, freedom of movement, access to livelihood, access to non-segregated services and lack of citizenship, is posing as the main challenges of empowerment in an IDP camp. The camp management representatives also mentioned other challenges, like the creation of dependency through reliance on the assistance provided by the INGOs, as well as negative attitudes towards the youth empowerment programme.

Many of these challenges are interrelated. Restricted freedom of movement and lack of citizenship retrieve the youth from opportunities to pursue higher education and utilise their skills, hence severely limit their opportunities to create a livelihood. Limited movement limits the chances to learn and grow. Furthermore, the programme development manager explained that experiences from the camps show that being unable to utilise acquired skills have created frustration among youth in the camp and have consequently lead to a state of carelessness. The camp management leader emphasise this as one of his main concerns: "They see themselves as victims, affected people. They do not have any plans for the future – they do not think about the future. They just eat, sleep and listen to music. Because of no freedom of movement, no access."

Another challenge emphasised by NRC, is dependency. Relying on the assistance provided by the INGOs and service providers creates a dependency that reinforce vulnerability and social cohesion. By continuously receiving assistance, the camp management leader think that the camp community will continue to view themselves as affected people, victims. He believes that by carrying this label the camp community could be paralysed from trying to change their own situation, killing future desires of the youth. He suggest that every organisation involved in the camp should and need to reduce the amount of assistance provided and focus on participation instead. He states that "if the camp population receive something one day, they will request the same service tomorrow". Therefore, by reducing the assistance they will understand that they need to engage in the camp life and spend their days strategically to maintain access to necessary services. The camp management leader believe that a gradual reduction of humanitarian assistance might change the camp populations' perception that they will get something effortlessly every time an organisation enter the camp. Both the camp management leader and the programme development manager argue that this might also lead to community engagement.

The camp management leader reveal that some of the leaders in the camp, the zone leaders, members of the community groups and the camp management committee, have undertaken a negative attitude towards participatory activities initiated by NRC. He convey that instead of engaging the camp community to attend trainings, such as the youth empowerment training, lack of knowledge make them question the reason and motives for the training and spread negative information that creates scepticism among the camp residents. This negativity generated from people in leading positions in the camp is a barrier for achieving empowerment in the camp. According to the camp management leader, the camp population have built-in fear related to their persecution, and tend to have negative attitudes towards the unfamiliar. He believes that it is necessary to make them feel safe and improve the basic knowledge of the camp population in order to overcome this phenomenon and achieve a behavioural change. He continue to argue that this raise an important point proving the necessity of educating the future leaders of the camp to spread the power of knowledge and eliminate protection issues and other difficulties in the camp.

## 5.2 Mechanisms and approaches to empowerment
The youth participants' in this research are living in one room that they share with their family in a shelter shared with seven other families, in camps isolated from the wider community in one of the poorest provinces in Myanmar. Within the camp area, there are no

access to education, limited opportunities of livelihood, poor health facilities and one football court. Police checkpoints at every entrance, hinders the youth from exiting the camp area. With activities focusing on training, awareness raising, information-sharing and two-ways communication and influencing decision-making, the camp managers seek to empower the youth and the wider camp population. Both camps have an emphasised focus on activities focusing on community engagement, participation and empowerment. This section provides and overview of the activities' established in the camp with purpose of involving and encouraging the camp population in the camp governance.

### 5.2.1 Information and two-ways communication

In the camp management toolkit, developed by the International Organisation for Migration, NRC and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, information and communication are expressed as one of the most important tools. According to the toolkit, enforcing a two-way communication between the INGO and the camp community will efficiently increase the quality of the camp management programme. It can also create a sense of ownership and contribute to empowerment of the camp community (IOM et al., 2015).

#### *5.2.1.1 Complaint Feedback Mechanism (CFM)*

The complaint feedback mechanism is the biggest component of camp management. For the camp population to be fully empowered it is necessary to have a feedback mechanism that allows them to file complaints and concerns to NRC under safe and trusted circumstances. To maintain the camp community's trust in the system, it is important that NRC address the complaints and concerns in a safe manner by keeping their anonymity and responding to their concerns. There are three identified categories of complaints, which entail personal and sensitive complaints, service complaints and complaints on a third person or actor.

The CFM is a proactive approach as it is a new way of interaction between the agency and the camp population. The camp management team have a specialised person that receives, coordinates and identifies the relation between the issues. In every participatory approach, interpersonal skills are of great importance. In this case, the camp community is expected to open up about personal issues, which might entail protection concerns. It is therefore important that the camp management representatives build their trust through good dialogues, respective communication, transparency throughout the case and considerate behaviour. Because these issues can be very sensitive, it is important that the camp management staff are trained and competent enough to receive these kind of complaints.

Through mass messaging, the camp management team have informed the camp community of the possibilities to seek the local camp management office to file any complaints – either in privacy or in public through organs such as the camp community meetings. Through tools such as online question forms, the CFM allows the camp management team to identify and advocate for issues faced by the camp community and send referrals to relevant service providers. After receiving a complaint, the CFM officer make sure to keep the complainant updated throughout the process.

On some occasions the CFM have been helpful to identify people with specific needs, which require specified support from the camp management team. According to the programme development manager, the CFM provides them with complaint and feedback from the community, which ensures that the programmes covers gaps and needs within the camp. This have an empowering effect on the camp community as it reflects their comments and concerns. An example of such a case is a woman who complained that her husband, whom was responsible for their livelihood, abused her. Consequently, she was hiding in the house of a friend. After a thoroughly investigation of the case, the camp management team put her in the category of "women at risk", providing her with additional assistance and protection.

### 5.2.1.2 Mass messaging

Camp management have an emphasised focus on communication with the community to make sure that they are involved in everything that happens in the camp life. Mass messaging is an efficient way of providing important information about service provision, assistance, activities and protection risks in the camp, through information boards, loudspeakers, focus group discussions and community meetings. The high rates of illiteracy in the camp have led to an increased focus on oral and visual mass messaging in the camps. Instead of posters with factual texts, the strategically placed posters in the camp revealed a series of pictures conveying the dangers of paying money to be smuggled across the ocean, as they might potentially end up being trafficked. In terms of oral mass messaging, the mobilisers in the camp management team record a message in to a speakerphone and go around with a pushcart to spread the information to the entire camp. Because there are multiple ethnicities in the camp, the camp management team record messages in different languages to ensure inclusion of everyone.

### 5.2.1.4 Focus discussion group (FDG)

This participatory assessment method enables the camp management agency to meet up and discuss specific topics with relevant representatives from the camp community to achieve an

in-depth understanding of their perspectives. In a focus discussion group, the discussion usually revolves around a couple of key points that the facilitator (from camp management) presents for the rest of the group. NRC also uses focus discussion groups to share information regarding services and activities in the camp and receive feedback from the camp community.

In order to localise appropriate and interested participants for the youth empowerment training, the camp management leader and the camp management community officer conducted several focus discussion groups in both camps. The FDGs enabled the facilitators to talk to, and inform, the participants about the length and content of the training. The participants came with some useful insights that NRC could take into consideration. For example, that it would be difficult for the participants to attend the training on Fridays because they have to go to the mosque to pray. The FDG effectively provided NRC and the participants with the information needed for them to be able to commit to the full training. Furthermore, FDGs can be empowering as it involves the participants in the process from the beginning and allows them to share their opinions and influence decisions regarding camp activities.

## 5.2.2 Meaningful participation & Influencing decision-making

Positive participation in the camp community may empower the camp population through the recognition attached to playing a meaningful role. Through meaningful participation the youth, and the wider camp population, are given the opportunity to take part in decision-making and have an impact on their lives in the camp – increasing their possibility of acquiring ownership.

### *5.2.2.1 Camp committees*

The camp management toolkit (2015) refers to camp committees as representative groups within the camp community with sector specific focus such as health committees, wash and sanitation committees, women committees etc. However, in MTN and TKP the only committee that exists is the CMC, appointed by the government. In each of the two camps, the CMC consists of nine men and six women.

The programme development manager alleges that the CMC consider themselves the most powerful organ in the camp because of their close collaboration with the government. According to the programme development manager, also the camp management team have to collaborate and coordinate with the CMC. The camp management team have monthly coordination meetings with the CMC. The programme development manager explain that

during these meetings they have to share their monthly agenda and activity plan with the CMC and allow them to bring up any issues they have with the camp, and the management of the camp.

Furthermore, the programme development manager and the camp management leader emphasise that because the CMC is organised by the government, NRC are not able to interfere with the selection process of the CMC and make sure that there are no corruption. The programme development manager add that it is "common knowledge" within the camp that the CMC consists of the most economically powerful people in the camp, and they are not representative for the rest of the camp community. She continues by saying that even though NRC does not support any form for corruption, the CMCs close relation to the government makes it difficult for NRC not to cooperate with them. The camp management leader emphasise that the governments' regulations and restrictions are imposed upon NRC, in order to maintain access to the camps. NRC have, however, according to themselves, developed both a code of conduct and terms of reference for the CMCs, but as far as it is known the government have not enforced either with the CMC.

During my visits to the camps, I got first-hand experience with the CMCs scepticism and their striving to control what was going on in the camps. As soon as I arrived in either of the camps, the CMC started questioning my motives and my reasons for being in the camp, requiring seeing my legal documents, together with my travel authorisation. The CMC clearly had a strong feeling of control within the borders of the camp.

### 5.2.2.2 Community groups

Through the community groups, NRC gives the camp community a platform to take part in decision-making and voice their concerns regarding the services in the camp and the camp life. The committees are a direct link between the INGOs and the representatives of the camp population. The camp management team conduct monthly meetings with four inclusive community groups divided by women, men, elderly and youth. All groups include persons with specific need to the degree possible. The objective of these meetings are for NRC to share information about camp activities and services with the camp community and collect their feedback, in order to identify needs and gaps within the camp. In the meetings, NRC encourage the group members to come up with solutions and provide action points to how they want to reach the solution. It is important that NRC have full transparency on the progress of the issues, especially if the context does not allow a solution to the problem.

The community groups play an important role for community participation in camp management. Through the community meetings, which function like a face-to-face discussion to facilitate the coming activities, NRC can benefit from the local knowledge of the camp community, and share information about updates and assistance. Through the monthly meetings with the community groups, NRC aim to maintain a good relationship with the community, by ensuring accountability towards the camp population and build trust.

Because the community groups are appointed by NRC and not by the government, they are not acknowledged in the same way as the CMCs, and are regarded as informal.

### 5.2.2.3 Employment

Because of camp management's many roles and responsibilities it is natural that the camp management agency might require some assistance from the camp community. Even though employment is not directly associated with community participation, employing camp residents is a way of utilising the camp community potential and building the camp populations competencies. NRC have hired 22 mobilisers from the camp community for support in the camps. The mobilisers represent both genders whom had to apply for the position with a written application and a resume as in any ordinary job. The application process ensures that the mobilisers have a good educational background. Being a camp mobiliser is a full-time paid position.

To prepare for the position, the mobilisers receive introduction to the NRC guidelines and principles and are obliged to sign a code of conduct. The code of conduct reassures that the mobilisers act in regard of the humanitarian principles and is in place to ensure a safe environment for the camp community. All mobilisers work under the supervision of a focal person. It is advantageous for the camp management agency to hire people from the camp community to support their staff as they speak the same language as the rest of the camp community and hold a local perspective. By recruiting people from the camp community, the camp management agency aim to enhance trust in their services by having a direct link to the camp community.

The roles and responsibilities of the mobilisers includes translating written and oral information, participate and co-facilitate community meetings, support the CFM, recreational activities, camp cleaning campaign, manage household visits for persons with specific needs and service monitoring. Service monitoring is a monthly service assessment to identify issues on services including water and sanitation, shelter, nutrition, health, education, food and

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construction of latrines. In the position as mobilisers, youth have the opportunity to take part in and influence decision-making processes that affects the camp community. According to the programme development manager, the mobilisers can influence strategies and programme development by providing information about issues in the camp. The mobilisers have the ability to view issues from a local perspective and come up with good solutions that may be implemented in the camp. An example of this is "awareness training" to identify drainage issues. Drainage issues can have large consequences in a camp setting as it may cause a significant increase in health risk. Mobilisers are one of the camp management agencies' best sources of information as they can give opinions based on trainings and contextual understanding.

According to the camp mobiliser I spoke to, his position have provided him with increased knowledge in respectful and transparent communication. He claims that working as a mobiliser have raised his awareness of how INGOs work in the field, this has taught him how to build a good relationship with the community and have helped him to find his place in the community. Since he started as a mobiliser, he have become more confident in speaking in front of people, and in himself.

## 5.2.3 Training and awareness raising

Trainings are emphasised by the informants as an important element of empowerment within the camps. Relevant trainings allow the camp population to increase their knowledge, understand their situation and strengthen their position in the society they live in. By training the camp population, the camp management department aim to prepare them to take over the responsibilities the camp management and other INGOs holds per now. Trainings encourage meaningful participation and seek reduce aid dependency.

### *5.2.3.1 Early warning awareness training*

As formulated in the camp management toolkit, the aim of trainings in the camp is " to build or improve competencies in camp management and related topics"(IOM et al., 2015). Camp management conducts early warning training twice a year, before and after the rainy season, to prepare the participants for potential risks such as fire, earthquake, cyclones, tsunami, landslides and flooding. During the training, the participants achieve a practical understanding of how to act in case of disasters. From a camp management perspective, these trainings are necessary as it increase the awareness and safety in the camps. Additionally, by building their competencies the camp community are less dependent on humanitarian and other

organisations in case of emergency. Therefore, trainings such as early warning trainings are empowering in the sense that it decrease the camp community's vulnerability.

According to the programme development manager, these trainings were proven successful in 2018, when a fire broke out in MTN. In previous fires, before attending the training, the camp community have waited for assistance to put out the fire. This resulted in unnecessary damage. This time however, the camp community had put out the entire fire by using the existing fire points as well as the knowledge gained from the training.

## 5.3 The youth empowerment training

This year the camp management team in Sittwe rolled out a newly developed youth empowerment training, as a tool to empower the youth in the camps by engaging them with different participatory approaches to learn about the camp life and build their competencies.

The youth empowerment training emerged from the materials of a *camp community training*, that NRC developed in cooperation with the camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) cluster in 2009. The original material initially aimed to train leaders in the camps in camp management, with the overall goal of influencing community participation in the camps. The camp management programme in Tanzania (with support from UNHCR), targeted representatives from leader groups within the camp in their implementation of the camp community training. Leader groups refers to zone leaders, community group members and camp committees. In skype conversations with the programme development manager in Tanzania, I learned that this training was successful in which it improved the camp leaders' perception of NRC, increased community participation in meetings and decision-making, and an improved sense of responsibility. However, budget cut, staffing gaps, lacking capacity of trainers (facilitators) and government-controlled access to the camps characterised the result of this training.

As part of my internship, I got the opportunity to support and observe NRCs efforts to contextualise the training material (adjust it to the target group and context), implement and assess the youth empowerment training. Based on observations, unpublished documents and conversations with colleagues this section presents the objective, target group, content of the training and the observed outcomes of the training.

### 5.3.1 Training objective and target group

According to the programme development manager, the aim of the youth empowerment training was to enhance community participation, establish good coping mechanisms towards durable solutions, and enable the young people in the camp to acquire ownership. To reach this aim, the training sought to increase the participants' knowledge and understanding of the roles and responsibilities connected to camp management. The camp managers believe that learning about the camp life, and the various stakeholders in the camp, are important elements to make the youth understand their situation and gradually take control over their everyday life. Additionally, information about the organisation of the camp, allow the youth to take on more responsibilities that ideally give them opportunities to influence decision-making processes in the camp. Furthermore, the training aim to build the competencies of the youth and ensure their involvement in the camp from the start.

Youth are in the transitional period between childhood and adulthood and the camp management team therefore see it as the most important group for the youth empowerment training in the camps. The uncertainty of how long these camps will persist, and whether a *durable solution* will be achieved, make it difficult to predict a life for these youth outside the camps. The informants of the in-depth interviews reinforce the importance of the camp management's role to provide the youth with opportunities, to avoid losing the potential of this generation and the next. Because the age group of the youth is both critical and marginalised, NRC has made a leap in emphasising the importance of putting this group on of top of the agenda. The informants argue that their ambition is that the youth someday will go back to their place of origin and rebuild it. If they have not managed to empower the young people in the camp to be independent by then, the young people will still be in need.

### 5.3.2 Content and observations from training

The youth empowerment training comprised nine modules with seven different topics related to camp management: 1) *getting started*, 2) introducing camp management, 3) roles and responsibilities, 4) coordination and information gathering, 5) community participation, 6) protection in a camp setting, 7) technical standards and care and maintenance in camps, 8) distribution and 9) *evaluation and wrap-up*. Before the implementation of the training, the camp management team contextualised the training to make it suitable for the context, and make sure that it would not cause any harm. During this process of contextualising, the camp management team agreed to remove the tenth module about "durable solutions" as they believed it could fuel frustration and have negative impacts on the. Each module encouraged

to discussions in small or large group setting, opened up for questions from the participants and sought to involve the participants through participatory activities.

The first module *Getting Started* prepared the participants' for the coming modules and focused on creating a good learning environment, by establishing group-working norms, exploring the youths' expectations of the training and introducing them to a learner-centred and participatory approach. The second module introduced the principles of camp management, the nature of camps and explained the three phases of the camp life cycle (camp planning & set-up, care & maintenance, camp closure & durable solutions). This module emphasised protection and assistance within camps. The third module, *roles and responsibilities,* talked about the different stakeholders in the camp and the roles and responsibilities of the camp management agency and the community groups in the camp. The fourth module focused on the importance of coordinating the different stakeholders in the camp. Further, the participants' got to reflect over what type of information it is necessary for the camp managers to know – and how this information can be shared without causing any harm. The participants' practiced their coordination skills by coordinating a story. In the fifth module, the facilitators emphasised the importance of *community participation.* This module presented a multitude of activities teaching the participants how community participation is vital to increase the standards in the camp and create a well-functioning community outside the camp. Furthermore, the participants got in-sight in how community participation is essential in camp management to help the camp population to get their dignity back, and be able to acquire ownership to their lives. Module six, *protection in a camp setting,* introduced the role of protection in a camp setting and identified those most at risk (the PSN) and how these people can be protected. Module seven introduced the participants' to the international camp standards, defining the minimum level of assistance required for the camp population to keep their dignity within the camp. The most important of all the standards across all sectors, is participation. In this module the participants' were supposed to get a copy of the Sphere handbook that introduces international humanitarian standards of camps. However, during the contextualisation of the training the camp management team decided that this could cause harm and potentially disempower the participants. Module eight, *distribution,* focused on the linkage between adequate food distributions and the upholding of human rights. This module aimed to enable the youth to take part in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of food distributions in the camp. The last module conducted, the *evaluation and wrap-up,* facilitated for the participants' to reflect on what they learned and provide feedback

on the training. Most of the participants said that the training was interesting, but too time-consuming.

Based on observations and comments from the two facilitators, there have been some positive changes in the behaviour of the participants throughout the training. Most of the participants show improvement in communicating during group work and presenting ideas in the large group setting. The participation in the training varied from topic to topic but the confidence of taking part in the discussion and asking questions significantly increased in both camps during the training period. Furthermore, sitting in a room for (nearly) two months watching the facilitators write and hearing them speak in Rakhine, seemed to have had a positive impact on the participants' literacy skills. This development had a positive impact on the participants' interest in the training.

## 5.4 Assessing empowerment in a camp

The camp management team employ different methodologies to assess empowerment in the camps. As part of the youth empowerment training, the camp management team conducted pre- and post-test to assess youth empowerment by attempting to map out the participants' increase in knowledge related to the topics of the training. In the long term, NRC assess empowerment by monitoring the level of participation and the interest to participate in camp management activities such as community group meetings and awareness trainings. By looking at the level of participation and engagement in the activities, the camp management team are able to say something about the increase in community engagement, which might reflect the level of empowerment.

Another method the camp management team apply to assess empowerment is to take note of new ideas and innovative solutions presented by community members in the community group meetings. These ideas lead to an increase of community-based projects. By implementing community-based projects, NRC shows the camp population that their opinions matters and that they do have the power to influence the activities in the camp. An example of a community-based project generated from the ideas of the camp community is a camp cleaning campaign. The campaign takes place two times a month and is a community initiative established to improve the living standards in the camp by keeping the camp clean. Cleaning the drainage is an important part of this campaign, as drainage blockages may cause an increase of mosquitos and lead to increased health risks. In both camps, two hundred community members and forty daily workers are involved in the campaign. Service providers in the camp support the campaign by providing tools and workforce. This community

initiative proves that the community is concerned about their environment and have realised that they have to take care of it to avoid serious health and protection risks.

Overall, there are various reasons for disempowerment and thus several solutions to achieve empowerment in each camp. When it comes to empowerment activities and assessing them, it remains a diverse conversation for each camp community.

# 6. Discussion and Analysis

## 6.1 Empowerment in a camp setting

This study aim to explore the meaning of empowerment in a camp setting in light of the first implementation of youth empowerment trainings in two IDP camp in the Sittwe rural camps. This chapter effectively discuss the findings from two months of fieldwork, and relate it to existing literature in the field.  First, the chapter is looking at how camp managers approach empowerment through increasing the young peoples' knowledge and understanding of the context the they live in, before turning to the importance of participation to empower the youth, and to uphold the standards of the camp. The chapter proceeds by introducing gendered needs as an element for attendance and participation in the youth empowerment training. Further, the chapter deals with limitations to empowerment imposed by the camp context, expectations and resources to youth empowerment and the camp management's efforts to assess youth empowerment in the camp. Finally, the chapter explore the dilemmas of empowerment in a camp setting.

### 6.1.1 Empowerment through increased knowledge and understanding

My findings suggests that the camp management department play a difficult balancing act of emphasising some elements of empowerment, while restricting others. The nature of the camp and the Rohingyas' status as stateless restricts their opportunities of higher education and limits their opportunities to build livelihoods and pursue dignified lives. While knowing about the intolerable circumstances for the Rohingya more generally, the camp leadership seek to give youth more incentives and more reasons for engaging in camp life. In accordance with Rowlands (1995) arguments that it is easier to empower someone whom understands their own situation, the camp management department have increased focus on training and awareness raising. The objective of this training was to teach the camp community about camp life and raise awareness about the potential risks and issues that might occur. The camp

management's implementation of the youth empowerment training aimed to inform the youth participants about the different roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the camp. By increasing the youth participants' knowledge and understanding about the nature and organisation of the camp, the camp managers sought to facilitate for the involvement of the youth in the different camp processes. Involving the youth in the planning, maintenance and evaluation of the activities in the camp may help them to feel useful, as they are enabled to utilise their knowledge about camp management.

The camp management leader emphasised the important role of knowledge in preventing and reducing issues within the camp. He stated that increasing knowledge about the camp and its motives might result in reduced fear generated by the camp community's previous experiences of persecution. Furthermore, the camp management department emphasise their important role of reassuring the camp population that the camp is a protective measure taken by the humanitarian organisations in agreement with the government, rather than an attempt, of either of the actors, to stigmatise them (the Rohingya & Kaman) further.

## 6.1.2 Increasing and maintaining participation of youth

Both the literature and the findings highlight the importance of participation in the process of youth empowerment. The camp managers portray participation as the foundation of a functional camp community, and believes that community participation will increase the standards in the camp (IOM et al., 2015). In addition to mitigating risks and reducing dependency by allowing the camp population to influence decision-making and re-establish dignity, increasing and maintaining participation of youth contribute to the smooth running of the camp. According to the camp management toolkit, community participation is important in terms of improving assistance in accordance with the local perspectives and capacities (IOM et al., 2015).

Through the youth empowerment training, the camp managers aim to facilitate for the participation of the young people in the camp and give them the opportunity to enrich their lives in the camp by taking on meaningful roles. This is in line with the adolescent empowerment cycle and the youth empowerment and development model which both shed light on the significance for youth to be recognised by contributing to the community (Jennings et al., 2006). The youth empowerment training focus on the administrative- and organisational aspects of the camp, with the objective of raising awareness of the situation the youth live in and the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the camp. The

youth empowerment training engaged the youth participants' and stimulated discussion about the importance of getting involved in the camp life. According to a camp management perspective, the training in itself was empowering in which it was an opportunity to show engagement and learn about the meaningful roles in the camp community. The youth empowerment training did not give the youth any specific and meaningful roles in the community, but it did however facilitate for- and prepare them for taking on such roles. Another factor for youth empowerment, emphasised in the literature, was the importance of getting recognition and have good relations with adults. Recognition by adults were told to have positive impact on young people as it may increase self-efficacy and confidence (Jennings et al., 2006). Due to the flawed methodologies of assessing the empowerment training, this research fails to say something about the young people's own perceptions on this matter. However, the development and increased engagement the facilitators experienced throughout the training suggested that attending the youth empowerment training did increase the young people's confidence.

In addition to the youth empowerment training, the findings introduce the camp community groups and employment by the camp management department as important and efficient approaches towards meaningful participation and decision-making. The representatives of the youth community groups is provided a platform to voice the concerns of the camp community, and thereby play an important role in fronting the youth perspectives on issues related to the service and facilities in the camp. Being listened to and recognised by the camp community officers (in charge of the community groups) that enable them to contribute with problem solving may stimulate the young people's self-efficacy and give them a feeling of being useful. The camp community mobilisers, employed by the camp management department, is another important role in the camp community. According to the points raised by the mobiliser I spoke to, working as mobiliser seemed to be the most fulfilling approach to youth empowerment in the camp, referring to the conceptual models of youth empowerment (Jennings et al., 2006). In the interview, the 24-year-old mobiliser explained that he has gained practical and theoretical knowledge about the nature of- and the organisation of the camp through the position. Furthermore, his position has empowered him in the economic domain by giving him a safe and stable livelihood. The role he plays in the community as a mobiliser have successfully increased his confidence. Ultimately, the position as a mobiliser have in accordance with the camp management definition of youth empowerment, given him opportunity to influence decision-making and helped him to acquire ownership.

### 6.1.3 Gender and participation in the youth empowerment training

In discussion of the youth empowerment training, there were consideration of different gendered needs for the youth girls. The camp managers' initial thought was to conduct separate training for girls and boys, to ensure the involvement and participation of the girls. During the focus discussion groups used in the beginning of the project, to map out the participants for the training, both the male and female groups said that there were no reason to segregate them by gender. However, throughout the training it seemed like some of the girls were too shy to share their ideas. An exception to this overall impression was two girls in MTN that excelled with their engaged participation in group discussions. These girls were able to understand Rakhine as well as Rohingya and were therefore able to communicate directly with the facilitators and ask questions immediately. This gave them the advantage of hearing the content and explanations twice, which enabled them to take a more participatory role than their co-participants.

The cultural and religious norms and values practiced in the camps poses as challenges to involve both genders to the same extent. The camp management leader said that in terms of gendered issues, he experienced that the boys in the camps were more likely to receive parental permission to attend trainings than the girls were. He claimed that only the girls with open-minded parents were allowed to attend the training. The girls in the camp play an important role in the household, in regard of chores. The incentive of providing the youth participants' with lunch seemed to play an important role in the attendance – particularly the attendance of girls.  Reassuring the parents that instead of contributing with chores in the household, the girls will be able to bring home food for lunch every day, makes it easier for the parents to grant permission for the girls to attend the youth empowerment training.

Furthermore, there are higher rates of illiteracy among the females than the males in the camp. To adjust this, the camp management team promoted participatory approaches of learning. By implementing group discussions and activities, the camp management agency facilitated for the participation of both genders. The camp management team emphasised the importance of inclusion to avoid that anyone felt ashamed or excluded.

### 6.1.4 Camp structures as limitations for empowerment

The findings reveal that from a camp management perspective, training and awareness raising is essential to empower the youth residing in these IDP camps. Hennink, Kiiti, Pillinger, and Jayakaran (2012) argue that for capacity building to be empowering, it is necessary to have

good structures in place to facilitate for the targeted population (in this case, the youth) to use this knowledge to alter or change their situation. This is in line with the camp management leader and community engagement officer experience from the focus discussion group. The participants of the training is living in a camp context were they live "day by day" and depend on every opportunity to earn money. This indicates that attending the training could be difficult for those with opportunities to work. Furthermore, if the enrolled participants suddenly had the opportunity to do some work for their livelihood, they would consider this a better option than the training. The camp management leader and the community engagement officer experienced that some of the young people in the camps did not have any interest of spending their days in training, as they believed it would not have any impact on their situation in the camp. The youth expressed that because of their restricted freedom of movement, they did not see any opportunity to implement the knowledge in their daily life. Some of their parents did not see the value of the youth empowerment training, arguing that their children could rather help with chores at home or find a daily job and earn some money for the household. In order to get enough youth to participate, the NRC promised to provide lunch, stationaries (pen and notebook) and a certificate at the end of the training. This made it easier for the parents to send their children to training, knowing that it would save them money (or food rations).

The camp context is blocking the young people's ability to utilise knowledge to change their physical or economic situation. However, the youth empowerment training focused on strengthening the youth's position in the camp, by enabling them to acquire knowledge that can be utilised within the borders of the camp. The content of the youth empowerment training facilitates for the young people to fill their days with purpose by taking on roles – such as helping the mobilisers with mass messaging or service monitoring. By taking part in activities in the camp and having the opportunity to influence them, the youth may gradually foster ownership to their lives and build self-esteem. This was the aim of the youth empowerment training and is consistent to Martinez et. Al (2017) perspectives that youth empowerment for young people is to experience a social transformation from feeling useless to consider themselves as contributors to the community.

6.1.5 Expectations and resources available for youth empowerment

In the beginning of the training, the facilitators asked the participants of the training to share their expectations with the group. The majority of the participants' of the training expected it to increase their knowledge, and in turn generate job opportunities and improve their living

situation. The participants believed that by learning more they would gain more confidence as they believe that more opportunities would open up for them. The participants' expectations of the training also revealed that the majority just wanted to learn something new that would fuel their critical thinking processes and fill their days with content. The expectations of the youth are in line with the camp management's expectations to increase the participants' understanding of the roles and responsibilities connected to camp management and promote community participation. However, the facilitators had to adjust and correct some of the youths' expectations to the training, as some of the participants expected to attend motorbike-repairing, mobile phone repairing and sewing.

While the material resources  to the youth empowerment training was adequate due to project funding from donors, the limitations of human resources such as trained personnel, language capability and funding to pay people posed as challenges to achieve the best results of the training. In the busy period before the monsoon season, it was a challenge to mobilise enough resources to make the trainings successful. The camp management leader and the community engagement officer, responsible of conducting the training, are key persons with great responsibilities in the camp management team. In addition to the extensive responsibilities that lie in their positions the camp management team were characterised by a sudden resignation of the person handling the CFM. The CFM is one of the largest components of camp management and required follow-up by the remaining staff in the team. This affected the facilitators' capacity to prepare for the training, and maintain full focus throughout the period of the training. In the process of contextualising the training, the facilitators advocated to simplify the activities and modules to adjust it to the participants' level of understanding. The most time-consuming activities were excluded from the modules, often at the expense of fun participatory activities designed to create engagement.

### 6.1.6 The camp management's attempt to assessing the youth empowerment training

The initial idea was to evaluate the participants understanding by letting them answer pre- and post-tests touching on the topic of seven of the modules (excluding module one and nince). The questions were designed to reveal whether their level of knowledge revealed any signs of improvements after the training sessions, as they were asked the same questions before and after the module. Because neither the facilitators nor the mobilisers had research background, the methodologies used to assess the level of understanding was flawed. Due to language barriers between the facilitators and the participants, the mobilisers translated the questions. To facilitate for the high rates of illiteracy among the participants, the mobilisers interviewed

each participants orally and wrote down the answer. Some of the answers implied that the mobilisers did not understand all the questions, nor the objective of the questions. Furthermore, I observed that some of the pre-questions were asked after the relevant module. This further implies that the methodology of assessing the results of the training are flawed. It is problematic to evaluate the participants' improved understanding without first mapping their base level of knowledge. The methods of assessing youth empowerment proved to be unsuccessful due to time constraints, limited experience and poor understanding of conducting the applied research methodologies and it is therefore not possible to comment directly on the efficiency of the training or the defined variables of empowerment.

## 6.1.7 The dilemmas of empowerment in a camp setting

The concept of empowerment is as demonstrated in the conceptual framework, a vague concept with multiple meanings, applicable in a range of different situations and contexts (Martínez et al., 2017). In the discourse of women empowerment, there is an emphasised focus on giving women the same opportunities as men within the domains of health, economy, politics and natural resources (Hennink et al., 2012; Mosedale, 2005). These domains are often mention as important, and inter-linked, elements in addressing empowerment in international development. Hennink et Al (2012) reinforce that full empowerment is only achieved when the individual, group or community is empowered within all domains. In the field of international development empowerment often relates to poverty alleviation and community development at the economic domain (Hennink et al., 2012). This research deals with youth empowerment, which is often conceptualised by six interrelating dimensions highlighted by Martinez et. Al (2017). However, youth empowerment in a camp context constitutes a different kind of empowerment than under other circumstances. The youth participants' in this research live in camps because they were forced to flee their homes, due to insecurity, violence and protection issues. The people living in camps have limited control of their situation; they experience to be stripped from power and ownership. The camp managers are not able to change neither the situation nor the context the youth live in drastically, but merely focus on what they can do to assist, and ultimately empower, the youth in the situation they are (Mosedale, 2005).

This camp management's way of addressing empowerment may be criticised for not taking the youths' concerns of creating a livelihood, attending university and being able to provide for their families in to consideration. From a youth perspective, empowerment is to acquire knowledge with the overarching goal of creating a livelihood. However, the camp managers

are redefining youth empowerment to fit with the reality of the situation. In regards to the different domains and dimensions of empowerment, the youth empowerment training can only be limited and unsatisfactory, yet the camp management team address the need for action to improve their situation in the camps.

In order to achieve full empowerment it is critical that the government cooperate and give them the opportunity to live fulfilling lives as citizens, with freedom of movement and opportunities to work. However, this remains out of the hands of the camp management department.

## 7. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to investigate the meaning of empowerment from a camp management perspective by observing the mechanisms and approaches to empowerment in two IDP camps and examine the implementation and assessment of the youth empowerment training. The empirical findings contribute to the inconclusive literature on empowerment in the field of youth, and show that it is problematic to work with and assess empowerment in a context with limited access to resources and restricted human rights. This research shed light on an understudied part of empowerment by contributing to the discussion of the problems attached to applying the concept of empowerment in a camp context, and the complexity of the efforts of assessing youth empowerment in the camps.

The study shows that from a camp management perspective, empowerment is to enable the camp population to influence decision-making processes and acquire ownership to their lives. With the mechanisms and approaches implemented in the camp, the camp management department aimed to gradually transitioning their responsibilities over to the camp population to decrease their dependency on assistance and make them self-driven. In the youth empowerment training, the camp management agency focused on increasing the young people's knowledge and understanding about the camp processes to strengthen their position in the camp. Observations from the youth empowerment training revealed some weaknesses in terms of limited human resources, resulting in flawed methodologies of assessing the training. Furthermore, the training did not live up to the youths' expectations that the training would give them vocational-skills and enable them to create livelihoods that would make it possible for them to provide for their family. Despite the restrictions imposed by the camp

context, the provision of the youth empowerment training is a well-meant initiative aimed to generate engagement and offer hope to the youth in a context of desperation.

## 7.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings related to the youth empowerment training, this study imply that there are several recommendations for the implementation and assessment of similar approaches to empowerment in a camp setting. These recommendations bases on strengths and weaknesses observed from the execution of the youth empowerment training:

1) Build bridges and strengthen the relation between the camp leadership and the camp community. The study found that by creating a closer relationship with the young people in the camp, the camp management team builds trust and make themselves more approachable for the camp community.

2) Focus on strengthening communication skills and promote participatory approaches. The findings reveal that the training fostered important lessons about the importance of communicating and participating to generate self-efficacy, confidence and good solutions for the community.

3) Increase human resources in terms of language capabilities and trained personnel, to improve the application of assessment methodologies.

4) Put the youth in normal life situations. Exposing the youth to normalized life situations where they are treated as youth and recognised by adults, is more likely to influence their ability to attain self-efficacy and self-reliance.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Interview guide for in-depth interviews with camp management leader and programme development manager

Age:                    Gender:

- How long have you been working with NRC in the current context?
- What are your work previous experiences in camp context?
- What is your educational and professional background?
  What is your current position?

<u>Understanding the term Youth Empowerment</u>

- Please briefly explain your understanding of youth empowerment.
- What are the barriers to achieve them?
- Why do you think, it's important to empower youth in the camp – bearing in mind that they have restricted freedom of movement?
- In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges for IDPs (Rohingya/Kaman) in these camps?
- Has the way of working with empowerment and participation changed over time? If so, how?

<u>Camp management activities</u>

- In what ways have NRC facilitated participation of youth in camp life?
    o Are there any specific activities for youth?
    o What is the frequency of these activities?
    o How many youth participates in these activities?
    o What are the role of the youth in these activities?
    o To what extent do youth participate in these activities? Are youth actively taking part in discussions in trainings, community meetings etc.
    o How can these activities lead to increased knowledge and skills?
    o How does these activities reflect the youth's concerns?
    o What are the expected effects from these activities?
    o Are youth with specific needs also participating in the camp life? In which way?

- In what ways have NRC influenced their decisions affecting their lives? / Does "youth" have any opportunities to make decisions affecting their situation?
    o Are there any establishment of self-organised youth groups, or similar?

- In what ways can youth support NRC?

     o   Who are the camp mobilisers?
     o   How are camp mobilisers selected for their positions?
     o   What are the roles of camp mobilisers?
     o   What are their responsibilities?
     o   In what ways are mobilisers included in decision-making?

- How does NRC work to empower the youth in these camps?
- What are main challenges related to youth participation and engagement in this context?
- In your opinion, how can NRC and other humanitarian organisations enhance their participation and positively influence their life in a camp setting? (improvements)
- What are the negative effects of/bad coping mechanism in displacement for youth?
- How do you work with youth towards durable solutions?
- Do you have any additional comments or questions related or non-related to this topic?

## Appendix 2: Interview guide for in-depth interview with the education programme manager

Age:             Gender:

- How long have you been working with NRC in the current context?
- What is your educational and professional background?
- What is your current position?
- What are your previous work experiences in camp context?
- What are your experience in working on youth empowerment?
- Please briefly explain your understanding of youth empowerment.
- Why do you think it's important to empower youth in the camp – bearing in mind that they have restricted freedom of movement?
- Does the education team currently have any activities focusing on strengthening youth's role in the camp?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges for IDPs (Rohingya/Kaman) in these camps?
- What are the main challenges related to youth participation and engagement in this context?
- Can you compare them to your previous experiences working with youth?
- In your opinion, how should NRC and other humanitarian organisations enhance youth participation – and positively influence their life in a camp setting?
- What are the negative affects of/bad coping mechanism in displacement for youth?
- What are your recommendations on working with internally displaced youth?

**Appendix 3: Interview guide for interview with a camp community mobiliser**

Age:            Gender:

1. Where are you from?
2. How long have you been living here in this camp?
3. What is your educational background?
4. When did you start working as a mobiliser for NRC (how long)?
5. How did you get this job?
6. What are your role and responsibilities as a mobiliser?
7. How did you usually spend your days before you got this job?
8. How do you usually spend your days now?
9. What activities are you taking part in, in the camp?
10. Do you have the opportunity to share your opinions in meetings (regarding camp life)?
11. According to the camp management team, you have learned a lot about camp management activities. Can you talk about what you have learned and how this has helped you?
12. Do you think that this position has changed your way of behavior or thinking?

**Appendix 4: Questions for pre- and post- test for youth empowerment training**

Module 2: Introduction to camp management

1. What is camp management?
2. What is the aim of camp management?
3. Please briefly explain the word: "protection".
4. Please briefly explain the word: "assistance".
5. What are the three main phases of a camp life cycle?
6. What camp management activities are going on in the camp (where you live)?

Module 3: Roles and responsibilities

1. What organisations are providing services in the camp?
2. Who is providing nutrition assistant?
3. What are the differences between camp administrator, camp coordinator and camp manager?
4. Who is the WASH partner?
5. What are the responsibilities of camp management agencies?

Module 4: Coordination and information gathering

1. What is the meaning of coordination?
2. Why coordination is important?
3. What kind of information is useful to gather in a camp setting?

4. Where do you go if you have information to provide or report?
5. What kind of actors do you know inside and outside of the camp?
6. What are the existing types of communication with communities (how camp management distributed information and messages)?

Module 5: Community participation

1. What do you know about community participation?
2. Is community participation important?
3. Why/why not?
4. What is the meaning of vulnerable people/group?
5. Who are they in the camp?
6. What is dependency?
7. How can participation decrease vulnerability and dependency?
8. In your opinion, what is the main challenges with getting everyone involved in community participation?

Module 6: Protection in a camp setting

1. What is your understanding of protection in a camp setting?
2. Can you mention some activities related to protection?
3. Who is providing protection in your camp?
4. Who is in need of protection?
5. What is the meaning of security?
6. What is security in a camp setting?

Module 7: Technical standards and care & maintenance

1. What is the meaning of standard?
2. Please list three international standards
3. Why international standards are important?
4. What shelter activities are you familiar with?
5. What is care and maintenance?
6. Who are the shelter providers in your camp?

Module 8: Distribution

1. What type of distributions are taking place in your camp?
2. What are the main challenges in distributions?
3. How do you prepare for distribution?
4. Please list 4 main principles of safe, fair and effective distribution
5. What are the necessary activities after distributions?

## Appendix 5: Terms of Reference in Sittwe, Myanmar

<u>Visitor's main objectives and responsibilities:</u>

- With the focus on community participation, carry out community empowerment trainings with the camp management team for the youth community groups in both camps (TKP and MTN Camps). For that, use the materials developed by the CCCM Cluster – total of 9 to 10 topics – and contextualise it. Analyse pre-tests and post-tests. Contact colleagues who have conducted these trainings and collect relevant information. Submit appropriate reports. – If time allows train the women community group in MTN Camp. To be discussed with Camp Management PDM.
- Support the Protection Advisor and the Camp Management PDM in rolling out the new enhanced Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM), following the recommendations in the report submitted by the Roving CFM Advisor. Prepare relevant reports, documents and ensure follow up.
- Together with the Camp Management Officer (Community Engagement), prepare reports on inclusive community group meeting with women, men, youth and elderly in both camps, for the months of March and April.
- Together with the Camp Management Officer (Community Engagement), analyse the outcome of the monthly People with Specific Needs (PSN) household visit – specifically for March only.
- Together with the Camp Management Officer (Operations and Coordination), analyse the effectiveness of the early warning trainings organised in both camps – mainly in April.
- To better understand the regular camp management activities, submit a summary report.

<u>The visitor will use the below methodologies with appropriate considerations in place:</u>

- Community empowerment training – with the initial support of the Camp Management PDM.
- Observation of participation – without pictures taken of beneficiaries to ensure protection and dignity of people.
- Analysing pre-tests and post-tests on various activities, checked by Camp Management PDM – excluding names, only noting age, gender and location.
- Questionnaires on community empowerment training, including consent, checked by Camp Management PDM – excluding names, only noting age, gender and location, such as "IDP camp in Rakhine State".
- Focus discussion groups with youth in both camps conducted by the Camp Management Officer (Community Engagement).
- Key informant interview with Camp Management PDM with Camp Management PDM, Education PM and Rakhine camp management team on prior agreed question set.