



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Connecting 22,000 Rural Women Through Technology & Innovation iWomen Inspiring Women App



"We are afraid of this tricky world
Don't dare to go far
With great fear in heart
Like miserable caged birds
Now comes iWomen
We can share knowledge and wisdom
Go together hand in hand
Bright future as leaders risen"

Thet Thet Win
Poet and Rural Woman Leader

iWomen Inspiring Women App Journey

As part of its support to strengthen Myanmar's public institutions' social accountability and public service delivery, UNDP brought together 2,000 existing rural women's savings and lending groups (known as Self-Reliant Groups, SRG) into one national network known as May Doe Kabar (Women's World). These groups were part of UNDP's grassroots capacity building initiatives since 2003. In 2014, the original 2,000 savings and lending groups were organized into 31 women led regional groups known as Township Leading Groups (TLG).



In 2015, UNDP Myanmar sought support from UNDP's Asia Pacific Innovations Facility to find ways in which technology and innovation could help connect the 2,000 SRGs groups and 31 TLGs into a cohesive civil society network as well as mentor members of the network to play increasing roles as community leaders and as the interface between Myanmar public institutions and rural communities. The result was a bespoke technology, iWomen Inspiring Women App developed specifically to network the 2,000 rural women groups into one organization and through the use of this technology to build the capacities of rural women into village and township leaders. This technology was named by May Doe Kabar Leadership as iWomen Inspiring Women app.



The iWomen App development process started with the following challenge statement developed by May Doe Kabar rural women leaders and UNDP innovators during a Human-Centered Design Workshop in 2015:

How to establish the best support and communication system for rural women members of May Doe Kabar Network to enable them to overcome their physical and emotional isolation and to build enough self-confidence, vision and courage to become capable and well-respected leaders within the community?

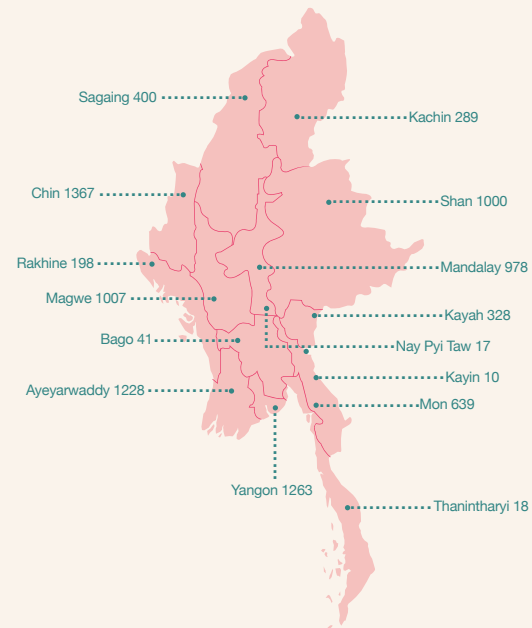
May Doe Kabar rural women leaders decided to take advantage of the Myanmar digital revolution, enabling for the first-time millions of Myanmar citizens to afford a SIM card, to own a mobile phone and to connect to the internet. During a 10-week period of rapid development, the first prototype of the iWomen App was co-developed by rural women leaders of May Doe Kabar Network, Myanmar tech women and UNDP innovators. The co-development was underpinned by a combination of adapted Human-Centred Design principles and Principles for Digital Development.



The iWomen Inspiring Women free mobile android app was launched on International Women's Day in 2016. It has since then reached over 9,000 rural people across 14 States and Regions in Myanmar (80% female, 20% male).



iWomen User 9056



iWomen Partners

Content partnerships with national and international organizations ensure the iWomen App provides a continuous stream of relevant content for its rural women audience. Partnerships have been established with Akhaya Women, Gender Equality Network, PACT, Path, UNFPA, UN Women, among others. The iWomen team provides innovative mobile technology trainings. In 2016 and 2017 training was given to PACT women's groups, CARE women rubber groups, Oxfam women groups in Rakhine.



Testimonials

"As long as iWomen is together with us, we, the rural women, don't need to get depressed and don't need to be scared of anything. It's our duty to be active and work hard. Let's share knowledge and ideas about our work among us."
Daw Win Sar, iWomen App user

"I become more inspired. I have never experience the game like game in iWomen App. It makes me to think new ideas. Because of iWomen App, new May Doe Kabar members are increasing in my community and I am more knowledgeable."
Daw Cho Aye, May Doe Kabar Chairwoman

iWomen Impact

Connecting Rural Women to Modern Technology and Innovation by Closing the Gender Gap in Phone Ownership and Increasing Mobile Literacy in Myanmar

The iWomen App works as the key communication tool of the May Doe Kabar network of 20,000 rural Myanmar women, building cohesion of its 2,000 women saving and lending groups under 31 women-led Civil Society Organizations.

The iWomen App leverages the democratizing power of tech platforms to shift the mind-set of rural women: from members of 2,000 separate saving and lending groups to leaders of 31 civil society organizations connected into one National Network. The iWomen Inspiring Women Mobile Application is transforming the lives of rural Myanmar women from passive receivers of technology into a vibrant network of achievers.

The iWomen App works to achieve a transformational change of mind-set for rural women to feel as worthy as men in owning and using mobile technology. The iWomen App enabled over 5,500 rural women who had never used a mobile phone before to become Tech Champions in their communities. Over 1,000 innovative training sessions on mobile technology and ICT were conducted by a Network of 300 iWomen young volunteers in 8 States and Regions.

228
Role Plays

300+ IT
Volunteers

With support from UNDP, May Doe Kabar negotiated its first commercial deal with an international electronics company to close the 36% gender gap of phone ownership in Myanmar rural areas. To date, over 1,000 high quality phones have been sold to May Doe Kabar Network members through an affordable monthly phone instalment plan that enables rural women to afford a mobile phone for the first time. As a result, female phone ownership within May Doe Kabar Network grew by 20%.

Enhancing social recognition for rural women leaders by building access to inspiration & educational content

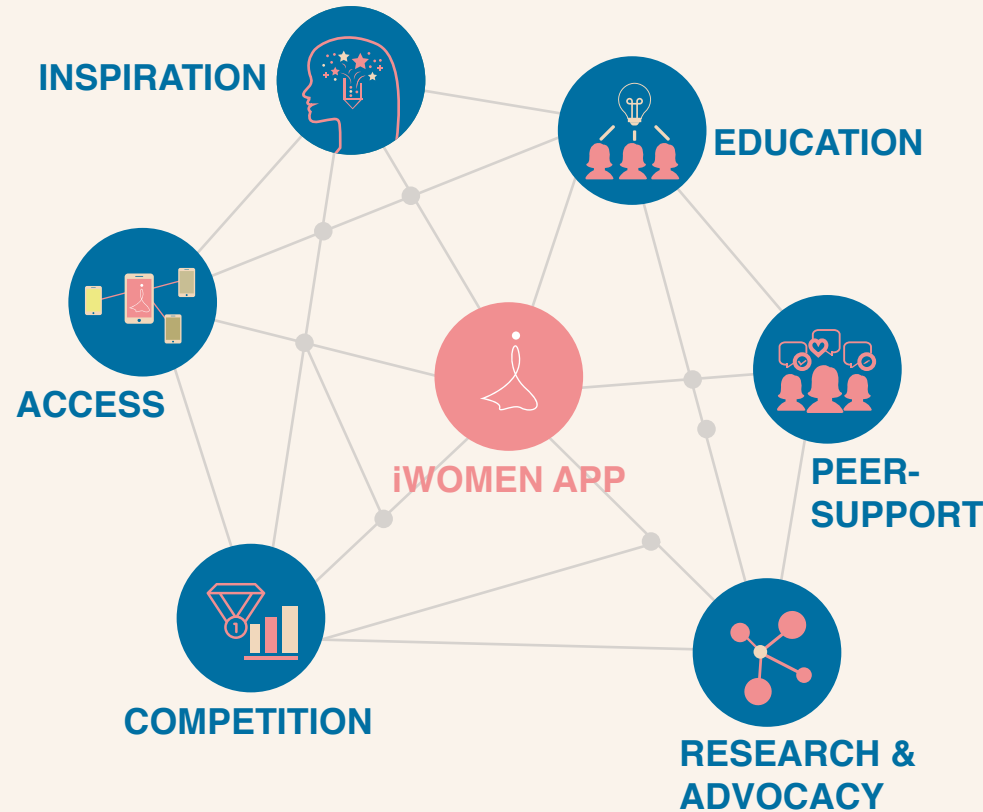
The iWomen App works to achieve transformational change as it aims to build the confidence of rural women around ideas such as leadership and holding positions of responsibility. The iWomen App targets three key barriers that prevent women from taking up leadership positions in local communities (as identified in the 2015 UNDP Leadership Journeys of Myanmar's Female Village Tract/Ward Administrators Report): (1) Lack of confidence and self-belief (2) Lack of local female leader role models (3) Lack of support from other women in the community.

5,500 Women
Trained on ICT

1,490
Poems, Stories
Lessons

Close to 10,000 women can now access for the first time in their language a stream of weekly inspirational stories and educational content and can play monthly themed self-confidence building games. 9,000 women can contact leaders from 31 women-led CSOs across the country through an interactive GIS mapping tool and share their stories. To date, 1,121 stories, poems and essays were shared through the app as women outlined their vision for their villages, how they would tackle gender inequalities and how they are coping with gender based violence. In 2017, the United Nations University Computing and Society conducted a study of the iWomen App impact revealing the app contributed to an increase rural women users' emotional and social well-being. The 2013-2017 UNDP Baseline-Endline Survey shows the iWomen App has contributed to increased social recognition, self-confidence and leadership skills of rural women.

iWOMEN AT A GLANCE



iWomen App Functions

The iWomen App provides rural women access to online content to enhance their social standing and empowerment. The App is built on a comprehensive methodology providing capacity building content contained in one platform. Using a monthly system of publishing relevant content, across a set of easy to understand mobile app functions the iWomen App creates behaviour change as women can:



Be Inspired

Rural women's attention is captured by sharing human interest stories written by women from Myanmar and other parts of the world..



Ready to Play

Rural women test their knowledge of previously shared material on the app by participating in competitions with attractive prizes and express themselves by submitting themed poems and essays.



Talk Together

Rural women talk to one another sharing their experiences, ideas and asking each-other questions.



Be Knowledgeable

Rural women learn about topics such as gender based violence, rule of law, technology, leadership, financial management and entrepreneurship.



Be Together

Rural women members of May Doe Kabar Network find each other through a GIS mapping tool which features the profiles of the May Doe Kabar's 31 women-led civil society organizations.



Sister Apps

Provides a directory of free mobile applications useful for rural women to download.

Rural women influencing evidence based policy making through an online crowd-sourcing platform used for advocating rural women's needs.

The iWomen App acts as qualitative and quantitative platform enabling rural women to have their voices heard through polls, surveys and storytelling. Rural women can gather evidence through the app for the local and national government on issues of concern such as Gender Based Violence and Safe Migration. For example, on the topic of Gender Based Violence, 2,800 women responded to a nation-wide survey on the frequency, types and characteristics of violence faced by rural Myanmar women. During the 2016 16 Days of Activism Campaign, the iWomen App provided a series of daily messages on the types of most common Gender Based Violence, key steps to be undertaken when a violence occurs, explanation of the root causes of violence as well as legal international principles protecting women against violence. Rural women users shared their advocacy messages on Gender Based Violence and Women's Equality through the Be Bold for Change Campaign.



Created 30
Empowering Cartoons

The Gender Based Violence survey results, hundreds of stories of violence and advocacy messages shared through the app were compiled and presented by UNDP and MDK rural women leaders to the Myanmar Department of Social Welfare to inform the drafting of the Protection and Prevention of Violence against Women Bill. On the issue of Safe Migration, the iWomen App was used to facilitate a live Q&A between government officials of the Ministry of Labour Immigration and Population and rural women members of May Doe Kabar.

