



# The Life We Lived

**A Research on Land Confiscation and Livelihood Strategies of Farmers  
in the Ayeyarwady Region, Myanmar**

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# Research Focus

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- How does land confiscation affect the livelihoods strategies of farmers in the Ayeyarwady region in Myanmar?

# Myanmar: a Country in Transition

- ❑ Decades of military junta
- ❑ Roadmap to democracy presented in 2008
- ❑ New government in 2011 and major win of NLD in 2015



# Myanmar: a Country in Transition

*“We understood that the government needed to go, but we did not understand that society also needed to change. After the revolution, we thought we would all be free to pursue our own interests and dreams. [...] we understand that we need to take part in the transition, but we do not know what role to play” [...] Please understand how life was for us. Since birth, all we ever heard from authorities were commands—do’s and don’ts. They even told us when we could cook and when we could not. [...] There were no opportunities, only punishments. As a result, people rarely asked questions”.*  
(Naing, 2012 p. 136-137)

# Agriculture and Development in Myanmar

- Agriculture is a major economic sector
- From rice bowl to very low rural productivity
  - ▣ Current: Low productivity and insufficient earnings
- Policy for large-scale land development and resource-extractive economy

# Land Tenure in Myanmar

- ❑ Land ultimately owned by the state
- ❑ Multi-layered law and regulation system on land tenure
- Stacked Law situation creating a variation in law implementation and enforcement.
- ❑ Troublesome legal enforcement
- ❑ Many cases of land confiscation between 1988 and 2008

# Kangyidaung and Pantanaw

- Two townships in the delta region: Ayeyarwady
- Between 1997 and 1999 land has been confiscated
- No compensation or prior information



# Farmers Livelihoods after Confiscation

- Diversification, migration and dependancy
  - “*We do not feel satisfied. [...] We do not have our own life choices*”. (Personal communication, 27-08-2016)
  - Three groups:
    - ▣ Still landless farmers
    - ▣ Farmers that kept some land or regain some land as compensation
    - ▣ Farmers that could buy new plots of land
- Social/economic status is the main determinant whether the livelihoods of the farmers are successful

How can land administration protect, restore and promote sustainable use of land whilst building inclusive societies and reducing inequality?

Or better what are the main reasons for the lack of the sustainable use of land and an inclusive society and the presents of inequality in this case?

- Current power relations & inability to question the power in place
- Stacked laws and complex legal framework
- Insecurity
- Lacking and unclear policy

# Questions?

- You can always contact me by email:  
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