



Respectful Workplaces

EXPLORING THE COSTS OF BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT TO BUSINESSES IN MYANMAR

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



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IFC
2121 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20433
Internet: www.ifc.org

The DaNa Facility
Room 302, Prime Hill Business Square, No.60, Shwe Dagon Pagoda Road,
Dagon Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Internet: www.danafacility.com

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

FGD	Focus group discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
HR	Human resources
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key informant interview
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
NGOs	Non-government organizations
OSH	Occupational safety and health

Definitions and Types of Bullying

BULLYING IS:

Repeated and unreasonable behavior directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.

It can include:



- Abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments
- Unjustified criticism or complaints



- Aggressive and intimidating conduct
- Repeated threats of dismissal or other severe punishment for no reason



- Constant ridicule and being put down
 - Humiliating a person
 - Practical jokes or initiation



- Spreading gossip or malicious rumors about a person
- Deliberately excluding someone from work-related activities



- Setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines
- Setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond a person's skill level
- Deliberately changing work arrangements to inconvenience a particular worker or workers



- Sabotaging a person's work, for example by denying access to supervision, consultation or other resources; withholding or supplying incorrect information; hiding or sabotaging documents or equipment; not passing on messages; and getting a person into trouble in other ways
- Interfering with someone's personal property

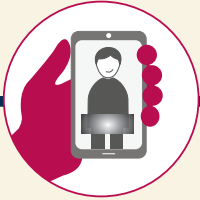
Definitions and Types of Sexual Harassment

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS:
Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated.

It can include:



- Suggestive comments or jokes
- Insults or taunts of a sexual nature
 - Unwanted invitations for sex
- Persistent requests to go out on dates
- Intrusive questions about another person's private life or body



- Inappropriate advances on social networking sites
- Sexually explicit pictures, posters, screen savers, emails, Facebook posts, instant messages including SMS, Viber, Messenger, WhatsApp
- Accessing sexually explicit internet sites at work



- Intrusive contact or conduct of a suggestive nature outside of working hours



- Behavior which would also be an offence under the criminal law



- Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing
 - Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against someone



- Staring or leering

Foreword

Attracting and retaining qualified employees is a key priority for all businesses in Myanmar, given the shortage of skilled workers in the country. When employees leave or are distracted by disrespectful behavior while performing their jobs, businesses lose out. Business growth, productivity and profitability are impacted.

Feeling safe is a prerequisite for being productive at work. Bullying and sexual harassment at the workplace threaten to disrupt feelings of safety. These things are often not talked about openly, yet they exist and they impact turnover and productivity.

In a first for Myanmar, IFC and the DaNa Facility decided to conduct the Respectful Workplaces Study to determine the prevalence and cost of bullying and harassment in the agribusiness, finance, retail and tourism sectors.

Bullying and sexual harassment at work present significant business costs. The study estimates a 14 percent loss in productivity due to disrespectful behavior at work. This is a conservative estimate and does not include losses due to turnover, absenteeism, recruitment and retraining, reputational risk and risks to employee safety. Respectful workplaces are good for employees and good for business.

The results of the study highlight some other pertinent points. Key amongst these is that bullying and sexual harassment is a workplace culture issue. Bullying and sexual harassment were not common in all businesses. There is an opportunity for business to learn from those Myanmar companies with positive, respectful workplace practices to improve their productivity.

These findings shine a light on the extent of workplace bullying and sexual harassment. They provide an insight to what takes place across Myanmar businesses and offer recommendations on how to improve the situation and help businesses boost their performance.

This ground-breaking research offers business leaders an opportunity to acknowledge that bullying and sexual harassment exist at workplaces. But it shouldn't stop there; the report also provides a set of practical recommendations, targeting business leaders, human resource managers, employees and other interested parties. These recommendations present a pathway forward to creating workplaces that are safe and free from bullying and sexual harassment.

IFC and the DaNa Facility, united in their vision to improve business performance in Myanmar, are ready to help Myanmar businesses create respectful workplaces.



Vikram Kumar
Country Manager,
Myanmar and Thailand
International Finance Corporation



Paul Joicey
Director of Programmes
The DaNa Facility

1 Executive Summary

Respectful workplaces are good for employees and good for business. Creating respectful workplace cultures free from bullying and sexual harassment will help increase productivity, support business growth and attract and retain talented employees. This report shows examples of common disrespectful behaviors and provides practical recommendations for how businesses can create respectful workplaces in Myanmar.

Bullying and sexual harassment is not an issue unique to Myanmar, but is experienced in workplaces all around the world. Whilst little research has been done into sexual harassment in the workplace, one in three women report experiencing either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner in their lifetime.¹

Global studies have documented the costs to business due to disrespectful behaviors in workplaces.² These costs relate to absenteeism, presenteeism, employee turnover, business productivity, occupational health and safety risks within the workplace and business reputation. To date, other than in the garment sector³, no research has been done to explore the impacts or costs of bullying and sexual harassment on businesses in Myanmar.

The Respectful Workplaces research project was undertaken by International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the DaNa Facility to explore workplace bullying and sexual harassment in businesses in Myanmar. This report describes the research methodology and presents results. It analyzes the findings and makes recommendations for businesses and those who support businesses in Myanmar to create more respectful workplaces. This report also provides an evidence base of use to others interested in tackling bullying and sexual harassment in Myanmar.

The project aimed to assess the costs of workplace bullying and sexual harassment in large businesses in four sectors in Myanmar⁴: agribusiness, finance, retail and tourism. These are priority sectors for IFC and the DaNa Facility, and this research was intended to inform the work that both organizations do with clients and stakeholders in these sectors.

Through collecting and analyzing data from employees working in large businesses located in these sectors, the project aimed to study:

- the shape and forms which workplace bullying and sexual harassment take in these businesses;
- how socio-cultural and workplace norms and mechanisms relate to these behaviors;
- risk factors for workplace bullying and sexual harassment;
- effectiveness of company policies, protocols and training; and,
- support mechanisms for employees.

The findings offer an opportunity to identify what businesses can do and what support they may need to create professionalism and positivity in Myanmar workplaces. The report can offer insights for businesses in other countries to create respectful workplaces.

1.1 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Sexual harassment affects all workplaces. Fifteen percent of employees said they had been sexually harassed and 21 percent said that they had witnessed someone being sexually harassed. All employees, regardless of gender or age, are at risk. The most commonly witnessed and experienced types of sexual harassment are body shaming, hearing someone tell a joke containing sexual content and inappropriate hugging. While a majority of employees recognize sexual harassment to be a problem in their workplace, they nevertheless consider many of these behaviors normal.

Bullying is more common than sexual harassment. An employee is almost three times more likely to have witnessed or experienced an incident of bullying than sexual harassment. Forty percent of employees said they had been bullied and 56 percent said they had witnessed bullying.⁵ The most common types of bullying are being gossiped about, being shouted or sworn at by a supervisor, being teased and being excluded from work-related social events. These behaviors are often considered normal and victim blaming is a common response. Employees want to address bullying behaviors, but they are not always sure what constitutes bullying, and they may lack the communication skills and tools to deal with workplace conflict professionally.

Men and women both experience bullying and sexual harassment in Myanmar workplaces, but their experience is different. Both men and women are at risk of being bullied and sexually harassed in their workplaces. More men than women have experienced bullying. More women than men have experienced sexual harassment. Both men and women recognized that some of their past behaviors may have been unintentionally disrespectful.

Bullying and sexual harassment are a cost to business. Bullying and sexual harassment, while normalized, have a negative impact on employee health and wellbeing. Employees may need to take time off to deal with the impacts of being bullied and sexually harassed. Bullying and sexual harassment also cause employees to work slower or with less concentration. Time away from work or being distracted by sexual harassment

and bullying results in an estimated 14 percent annual loss of labor productivity for a business. Some employees surveyed reported leaving a previous job because of bullying or sexual harassment. Other business costs due to bullying and harassment were not captured in this research but can be significant including turnover, recruitment and retraining.

Businesses are not adequately prepared to respond.

There are very few businesses that have formal policies and procedures in place to help prevent and respond to workplace bullying and sexual harassment. There is a preference to insist that a business works like a “family.” This means that incidents of bullying and sexual harassment that occur in the workplace are not reported, understated or ignored.

The way that employees respond to incidents is not good for businesses.

Employees do not have access to formal reporting mechanisms in their workplaces. Instead, they try to ignore incidents, sometimes confront offenders and sometimes discuss what has happened with colleagues who may later gossip about the incident. Increasingly, employees are using social media such as Facebook to post and comment about incidents and individual offenders. This causes reputational damage to companies and the individuals concerned and does not effectively address the issue.

Bullying and sexual harassment are workplace culture issues that can be addressed.

While all businesses are located in Myanmar, some businesses had high levels of bullying and sexual harassment and some businesses had relatively low levels. In some cases, the same business had different experiences of bullying and sexual harassment across two different locations. This appears to contradict the commonly voiced excuse that these issues are due to “Myanmar culture.” There are examples of Myanmar business leaders taking practical actions to promote respectful workplaces.

1.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Advice and support for senior management, HR managers and employees will be critical to create respectful workplace cultures in Myanmar workplaces. Increasing awareness about bullying and sexual harassment, as well as developing skills and capacity to create respectful workplaces, are key to that support. In order to change social attitudes towards bullying and sexual harassment, and increase positive behaviors in workplaces, businesses will require the collaborative and combined efforts of other organizations.



PHOTO: SHOBHNA DECLITRE/IFC

FOR SENIOR MANAGERS AND DIRECTORS

Senior managers, including the Board of Directors, should promote learning, support business initiatives to understand and address workplace bullying and sexual harassment, act as role models and promote business efforts to create a more respectful workplace.

Recommendation	Description
Training	Provide training in leadership, communication and respectful workplace skills for senior employees.
Code of conduct	Adopt and actively implement a business code of conduct covering expected behaviors of all employees including senior employees.
Mobilize resources	Set up a structure to deliver respectful workplaces and resource it adequately.
Performance expectations	Introduce performance management tools and practices across the business.
Public leadership	Actively promote and practice respectful behaviors.
Culture days	Encourage learning about diversity.
Employee reward program	Introduce a program to reward employees for respectful workplace behaviors.
Safe transport initiatives	Promote initiatives that support improved safety for employees when traveling to and from work.
Counselling services	Provide access to a counselling service for affected employees.
Business cost reporting	Introduce reporting methods to monitor costs of bullying and sexual harassment to the business (such as turnover and absenteeism).
Domestic violence research	Explore the impacts of domestic violence on the business.
External relationships	Build or strengthen external relationships with organizations that can provide support to deliver respectful workplace programs and initiatives.

FOR HR MANAGERS

HR managers should promote learning, formalize business responses to allegations of workplace bullying and sexual harassment, and manage business initiatives to prevent workplace bullying and sexual harassment.

Recommendation	Description
Training	Provide training for HR staff to improve awareness of workplace bullying and sexual harassment, and to learn skills to manage respectful workplace policies and grievance mechanisms. Provide training to employees to promote continuous learning about preventing workplace bullying and sexual harassment. Consider offering communications training to staff to help them professionally raise and communicate issues and grievances.
Workplace culture	Work with management to propose and implement solutions to help create a respectful workplace.
Diversity and inclusion	Promote diversity and inclusion.
Policy	Implement and communicate a policy on anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment.
Grievance mechanism	Implement and communicate a model grievance mechanism to respond to allegations of workplace bullying and sexual harassment.
Prevention actions	Plan and run prevention activities to promote continuous learning on workplace bullying and sexual harassment.
No body shaming campaign	Plan and run a campaign to end body shaming in the workplace.
No gossiping campaign	Plan and run a campaign to end gossiping in the workplace.
Visitor expectations	Introduce and communicate expectations for visitors who come to the workplace on how to behave when in the workplace.
Organize satisfaction surveys	Run regular employee surveys to monitor well-being and workplace relationships.
Measure the effectiveness of respectful workplace programs	For management reporting, capture data relating to workplace absenteeism, staff turnover, complaints and training to measure the effectiveness of interventions.

FOR EMPLOYEES

Employees can support respectful workplaces by participating in learning, understanding their company guidelines and becoming more confident to discuss and respond to incidents of workplace bullying and sexual harassment in positive ways.

Recommendation	Description
Participate in company training	Attend Company training on anti-bullying and sexual harassment.
Know the company code of conduct, policy and grievance mechanisms relating to respectful workplaces	Read employer's code of conduct, policies and grievance mechanisms, understand them and ensure they are used to raise complaints.
Discuss performance expectations with manager	Employees should understand the expectations of their job and discuss their work with managers, including any issues or concerns which prevent them from achieving their tasks.
Contribute to company satisfaction surveys	Share opinions openly through staff satisfaction surveys.

FOR OTHERS

Others can promote respectful workplaces by supporting business to understand and address workplace bullying and sexual harassment, and by advocating for better prevention of sexual harassment in Myanmar.

Recommendation	Description
Legal advocacy	Advocate for the prevention of workplace bullying and sexual harassment to be identified as employer responsibilities in Myanmar law.
Provide support services	Provide advice, guidance and support to businesses and employees.
Advocacy campaigns for respectful workplaces	Raise public awareness about topics such as body-shaming, victim-blaming, consent and online bullying.
Safe public transport	Advocate for safe transportation for workers.
Domestic violence impact on business	Support research into the impacts of domestic violence on the private sector in Myanmar.
Training	Offer training to businesses to support efforts to prevent and respond to workplace bullying and sexual harassment, and other forms of gender-based violence.
Gender equality	Promote gender equality in workplaces and support the introduction of policy or law that supports gender equality.
Partner with the business sector	Develop partnerships with the private sector to address workplace bullying and sexual harassment more effectively together.

2 Introduction

2.1 THE BUSINESS CASE FOR RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES IN MYANMAR

Myanmar is changing fast. After years of military rule, the country is undergoing a gradual democratic transition. Traditional social and cultural norms are being challenged by the interests in new styles of dress, popular culture, new technologies and new ways of forming and expressing gender and sexual identities, especially among younger people. The economy currently faces some challenges, including the risks of inflation, slow growth and ongoing conflict in many areas of the country.⁶ Within this context of change and challenges, the private sector is expected to play an important role in the continuing development of Myanmar.

More than 50 percent of employed people in Myanmar continue to work in agriculture, either in small family farms or as hired labor. Large companies in the private sector provide 1.7 million of the country's jobs. While this makes up only 7 percent of the country's total number of jobs (24.1 million), the rate of job growth in the private sector has been high since the national government relaxed its control over the economy in 2010. It has been recognized, however, that large companies operating in Myanmar will face challenges in finding and holding on to employees from the domestic labor market who have the skills to meet business needs.⁷

Labor force participation is 83.8 percent for men and 55.1 percent for women.⁸ Social norms make it difficult for women in Myanmar to manage work alongside motherhood. It is generally expected women will prioritize having children and caring for children over paid work. Employment for young women is therefore often short-term, resulting in high rates of turnover and loss of skills for businesses.

There are signs the situation is changing. Women in Myanmar are now marrying at a later age and more women are choosing not to marry at all.⁹ The average age of marriage for women in Myanmar is 22. For women in urban areas, this increases to between 24 and 25. The average age at which women give birth to their first child is just under 25. Women with higher education and wealth tend to have fewer children.¹⁰ Women's use of

contraceptives has also dramatically increased.¹¹ These changes provide opportunities for women to engage in paid work for a few years longer. The pressure to leave work when pregnant and to not return to work after giving birth remains a barrier to women's participation in employment and economic growth in the country.¹²

The opening up of Myanmar to the rest of the world has resulted in many large businesses in Myanmar employing internationals and nationals to work together. This presents opportunities for local employees to learn from the international experiences of their colleagues. It also brings specific challenges and misunderstandings, which can make it difficult to create a good working environment where people feel comfortable, respected and valued. Communication in Myanmar tends to be less direct. Myanmar people are taught to respect their elders and avoid debate or confrontation where possible. This can make it difficult for national staff to express ideas about their work that may be different to those suggested by their managers. It can also mean they are reluctant to speak up about disrespectful behaviors they see or experience in their workplaces.

Economic growth in Myanmar will require a skilled workforce, however, due to lack of quality education and work experience, it remains difficult to recruit talented staff.¹³ Myanmar workplaces often began as family businesses, which lack the policies and practices of more formal companies. This means staff do not necessarily understand newly introduced concepts such as performance management and what is expected of them as employees in this workplace environment. When managers implement professional performance management methods, staff sometimes misinterpret this action as "bullying" when the manager is reasonably asking them to improve their work quality or outputs.¹⁴ The risk of this happening can make managers reluctant to seek improvements in their employees' outputs because they fear being (wrongly) accused of bullying. This prevents them from doing what they need to do to support the growth of their business.

Discrimination based on gender, sexual identity and disability is seen in the recruitment and employment practices of Myanmar businesses, who are therefore encouraged to adopt more responsible and ethical business practices, and introduce anti-discrimination policies and procedures.¹⁵ Implementing policies and procedures are important first steps to creating a respectful workplace culture. However, a workplace's culture is not solely created through policies and procedures. The attitudes and behaviors of those who work there—both leaders and workers—also matter. These attitudes and behaviors create the workplace culture.

Since 2017, IFC in Myanmar has been helping companies to close gaps between men and women in their operations by assessing related policies and practices and advising them how to adopt global standards, establish respectful workplaces, and recruit, retain and promote women. This business advisory includes supporting business to build respectful workplaces by implementing policies and mechanisms for preventing and addressing bullying and sexual harassment.

2.2 TACKLING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN MYANMAR

The National Action Plan for the Strategic Advancement of Women (2013–2020) has highlighted the intention of the government to further women's rights and promote equality between men and women in Myanmar. Government responses to the risk of sexual harassment for women have been criticized for not addressing its root cause—gender inequality.¹⁶ While there is currently no specific reference to sexual harassment in the workplace under Myanmar law, a Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women law has been drafted. Gender-based violence in the community is recognized to affect the contributions women make to Myanmar's national economy.¹⁷ The draft law—which has not yet passed—covers, among other issues, stalking, cyber abuse and harassment in the workplace.¹⁸

Under the current law, Section 509 of the Penal Code could provide some protection for women, but not for men.

Whoever, intending to insult the modesty of any woman, utters any word, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object, intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen, by such woman, or intrudes upon the privacy of such woman, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.¹⁹

Throughout this research, participants identified incidents of sexual harassment that had occurred in their workplaces. Some of these behaviors included showing female colleagues sexually explicit images or making comments that suggest a female colleague has engaged in sexual behavior. These could be considered crimes punishable under this section of the code. However, most cases are not reported to police and for those that do make it to court, women risk reputational damage if the offender is acquitted. Htar Htar, Founder and Director of Akhaya Women (an organization that offers a women's empowerment program in Myanmar through training on sexuality and the body) has described the situation as not “a rule of law, but a rule of men.”²⁰

Efforts to tackle sexual harassment in Myanmar have not always been easy. An initiative in Yangon involved providing women with whistles they could blow to alert others to an incident of sexual harassment on a bus.²¹ This initiative encouraged women to become actual whistleblowers. The initiative faced some difficulties. It could only work if other people in the bus knew what the blowing of the whistle meant. In some instances, women who blew the whistle were ignored or criticized. Instead of becoming aware of an incident of sexual harassment going on, others on the bus instead interpreted the blowing of the whistle as a disturbance of the peace. In Myanmar, there is societal expectation that women will maintain peace and not create a disturbance, even if this requires them to remain silent about harassment or violence they experience.

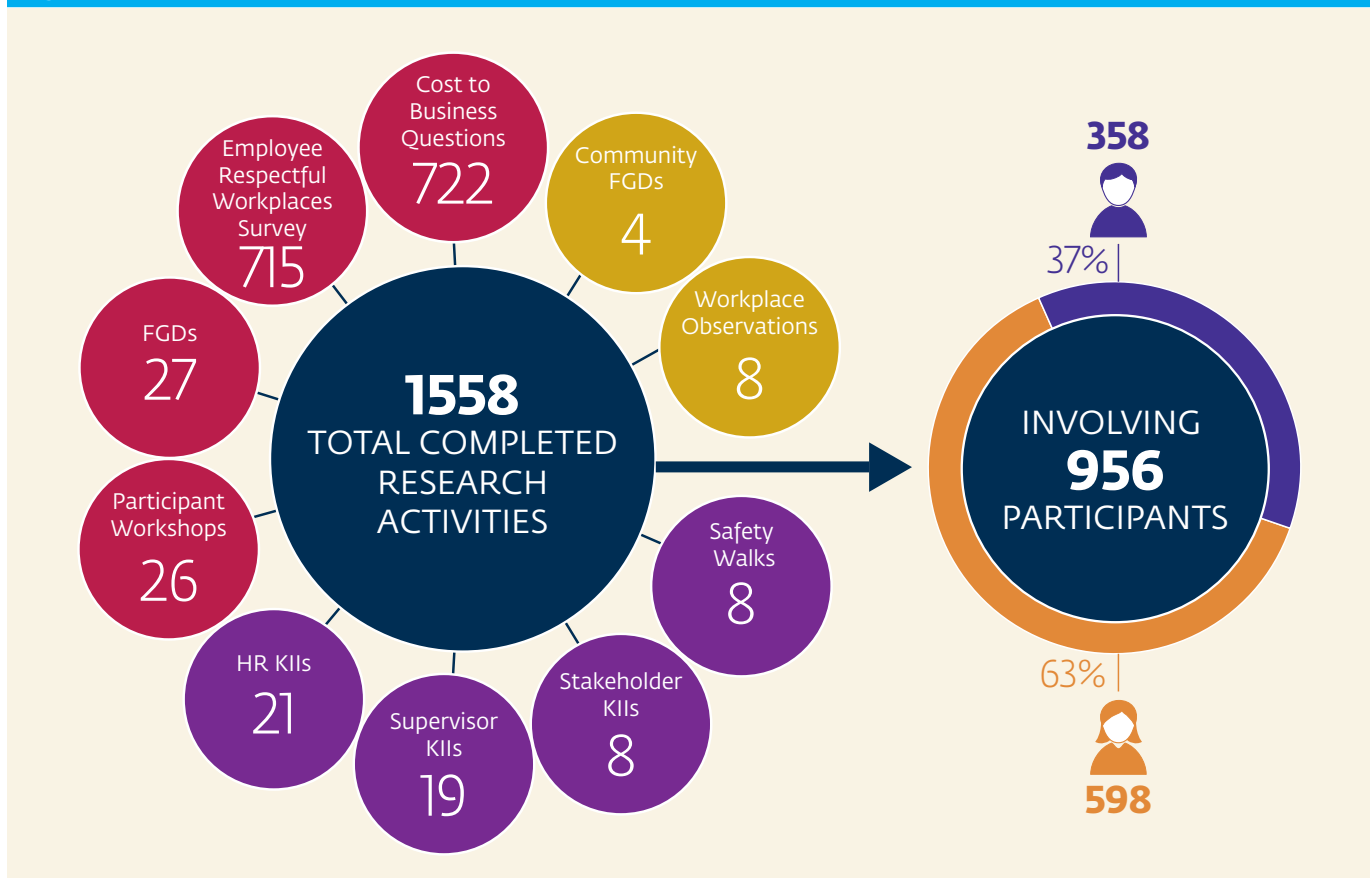
Like in many countries, there is very little information on bullying and sexual harassment in Myanmar. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has raised concerns about this, as well as the lack of response from businesses in Myanmar to address the issue.²² More recent research on sexual harassment

in workplaces in Myanmar has focused exclusively on the garment sector, where about 91 percent of employees are women. The reports from different research projects confirm that inside the factories, employees are subjected to intimidation, bullying, threats of dismissal, verbal and physical abuse and sexual harassment. Outside the factories, the women face harassment and abuse when traveling to and from work.²³ This research has helped identify important issues that affect the lives of women who work in Myanmar's second largest industry, but businesses, industry bodies and government departments have not always agreed with the findings.²⁴

2.3 ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Research was carried out in 39 organizations (large businesses, small businesses, community groups and not-for-profit organizations) between September and December 2018. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through employee Respectful Workplaces surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), safety walks (an interactive walking tour around the business premises to explore employee perceptions of risks and safety), workplace observations and a cost to business question sheet. The available data from these activities constitutes the complete research project dataset. In total, 956 research participants were involved in 1,558 research activities. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the number of each completed research activity and the gender percentages of the research participants. More detailed information on the research methodology is available in Appendix 2.

Figure 1: Research dataset summary



3 Key Findings

3.1 SEXUAL HARASSMENT AFFECTS ALL WORKPLACES

The results of the survey show that both bullying and sexual harassment occur in all the participating businesses. One in five employees has witnessed an incident of sexual harassment. Of the survey respondents, 84 percent said sexual harassment was a problem in their workplace.

Figure 2 shows how employees responded when they were asked if they had witnessed or experienced sexual harassment in their workplace.

Fifteen percent of employees said they had been sexually harassed and 21 percent said that they had witnessed someone being sexually harassed. For women, 19 percent have witnessed an incident of sexual harassment and 17 percent have experienced one. For men, this is 23 percent and 11 percent respectively.

One in five employees has witnessed an incident of sexual harassment.

Figure 2: Incidence of sexual harassment

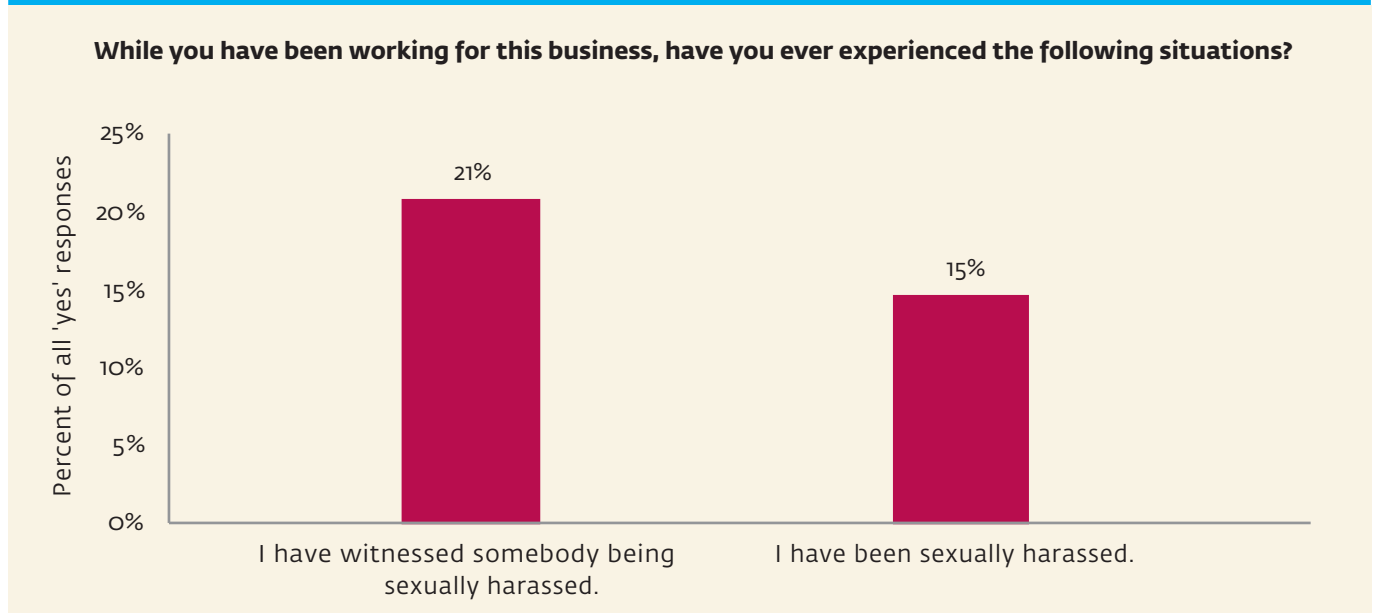
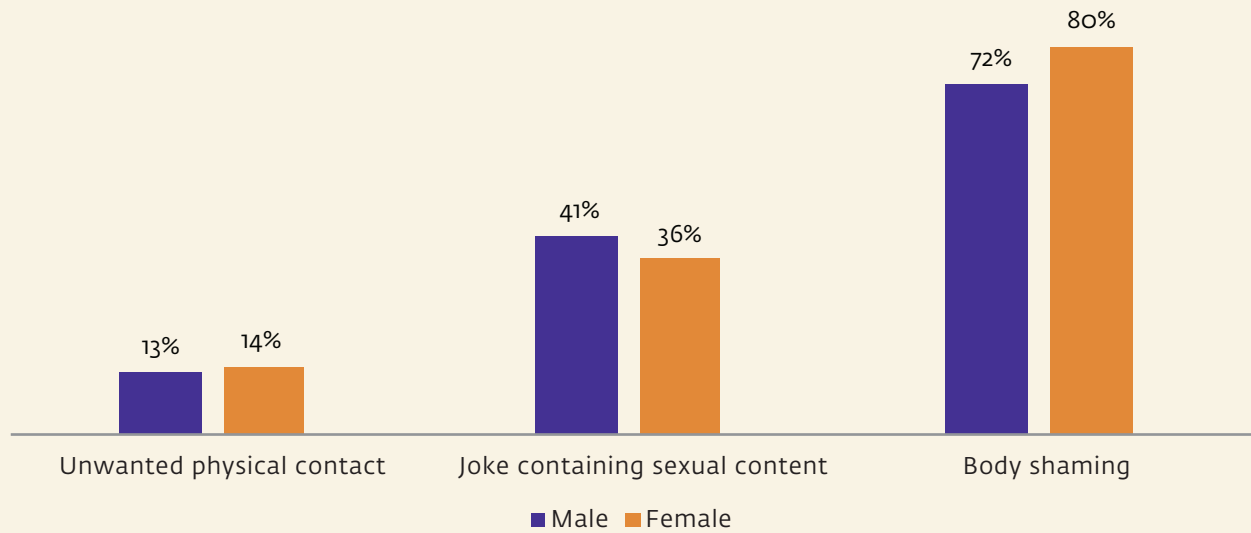


Figure 3: Common types of sexual harassment witnessed by respondents



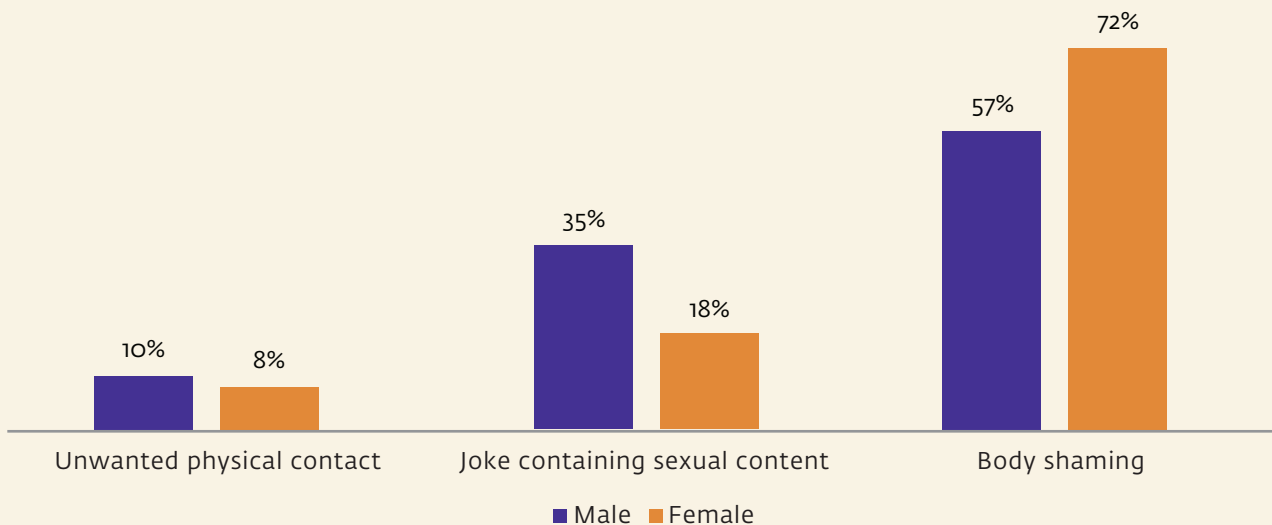
The most commonly **witnessed** incidents of sexual harassment are body shaming (76 percent), hearing somebody tell a joke containing sexual content (38 percent) and hugging or kissing somebody in a way that made them uncomfortable (13 percent). These results are disaggregated by gender in Figure 3.

The most commonly **experienced** incidents of sexual harassment are body shaming (66 percent), hearing someone tell a joke containing sexual content (25 percent) and hugging or kissing someone in a way that made them feel uncomfortable (9 percent). These results are disaggregated by gender in Figure 4.

When the results of the survey are disaggregated by gender, age, level of employment (worker versus other) or marital status, the outcomes are almost identical. In all categories, the most frequently experienced behavior is body shaming. Employees who had attended university are, however, more likely to experience comments about their body or clothes (68 percent experienced this behavior) compared with those who did not attend university (53 percent). The risk level for experiencing sexual harassment is 8 percent higher for respondents living with a disability compared with respondents with no disability (22 percent compared to 14 percent).

Have you noticed that the percentages of specific sexual harassment reported are higher in Figure 3 and Figure 4 than the general sexual harassment reported in Figure 2? The explanation for this difference is on page 22.

Figure 4: Common types of sexual harassment experienced by respondents



In one workplace, a woman had been told she could become a mechanic if she agreed to give the other male mechanics a kiss.

Female employees whose work requires them to have direct and regular contact with customers are especially vulnerable. They are leered at, complimented for wearing short skirts and touched. Customers also take photos of them without their consent.

Body shaming

Participants described specific experiences of being body shamed by colleagues.

In my workplace, some colleagues initiated a discussion about my wearing style and my body parts. They just make out that it is a joke, but it is making fun.

Some people greet me saying, "Oh, you are becoming thinner day by day. Aren't you feeling well?"

Unwanted touching

More than one in seven of the survey respondents said they had seen somebody touch, hug or kiss a colleague in a way that made this person feel uncomfortable.

A male staff gave a pencil to a female worker and tried to touch her.

At the time, when she asked the trainer a question, he walked behind her and gave her a hug as he tried to explain.

When she is climbing up ladder, they stare at her buttock. They stare at the upper part of her body—her breast area—when she bends down to pick up something.

Sexual exploitation and sexual violence

Sexual exploitation is one of the two major types of sexual harassment where a person is offered something in exchange for sexual favors. In one workplace, a woman had been told she could become a mechanic if she agreed to give the other male mechanics a kiss. In another, the participants said there are some male staff members who were regularly offering money to women if they could see their private parts.

Several incidents of sexual violence were identified as having occurred in the workplaces.

I had to stay in the staff house where there are both male and female. One day, male staff set up a hidden camera in female bathroom in order to get photo. And one female found this camera.

Sometimes, he makes an appointment with the female staff and then when they meet, he requests her to have sex.

He takes female staff to field trips and they stay in a hotel together. At that time, female junior staffs can't refuse.

Reports of such incidents were rare within the research, but these serious examples demonstrate that an effective and urgent response is required.

Forced exposure to sexual images

Employees in the workplaces are being forced to see sexually explicit images and content.

I saw such sexually explicit videos on the computer screen of a male employee.

Some of my colleagues told me they dare not go near those computers after I heard and saw such sexual pictures and videos.

I have even seen that one of my male colleagues is making sexual chat on the computer screen.

In one case, a male employee left sexually explicit pictures on the desk of a female colleague. This meant she was forced to see the material when she returned to her work station.

3.2 BULLYING IS MORE COMMON THAN SEXUAL HARASSMENT

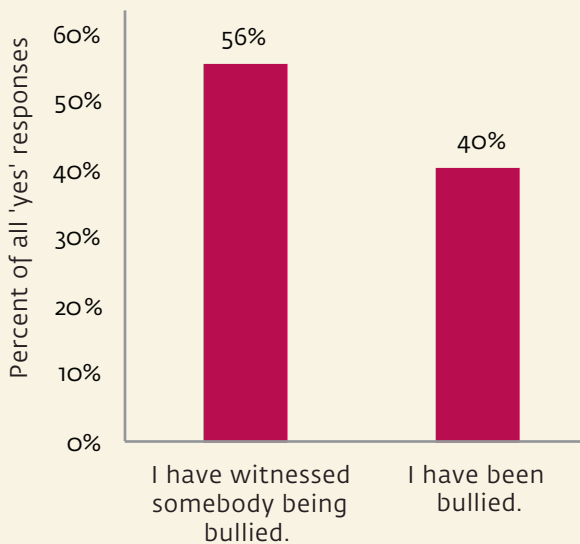
Incidents of bullying are more common than incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace. It is almost three times more likely an employee will have witnessed or experienced an incident of bullying than sexual harassment. Of the survey respondents, 92 percent said they think bullying is a problem in their current workplace.

Figure 5 shows how employees responded when they were asked if they had witnessed or experienced bullying in their workplace.

It is almost three times more likely an employee will have witnessed or experienced an incident of bullying than sexual harassment.

Figure 5: Incidence of bullying

While you have been working for this business, have you ever experienced the following situations?



Two in every five survey respondents have directly experienced bullying in their current place of work and 56 percent said they had witnessed bullying²⁵.

Figure 6 shows the most common types of bullying witnessed by respondents. The four most common types of bullying witnessed are the same as the four most common types of bullying experienced (as shown in Figure 7).

In total, 40 percent of the survey respondents said they had experienced bullying in their current workplace. However, 85 percent of respondents identified they had experienced at least one of the four types of bullying behaviors shown in Figure 7.

Incidents tend to involve being gossiped about (51 percent), being shouted or sworn at by a supervisor (35 percent) and being excessively teased (31 percent). Almost half (46 percent) also say they are not always invited to work-related social events, indicating that excluding individuals from group activities is also common.

In total, 40 percent of the survey respondents said they had experienced bullying in their current workplace.

Figure 6: Common types of bullying witnessed by respondents

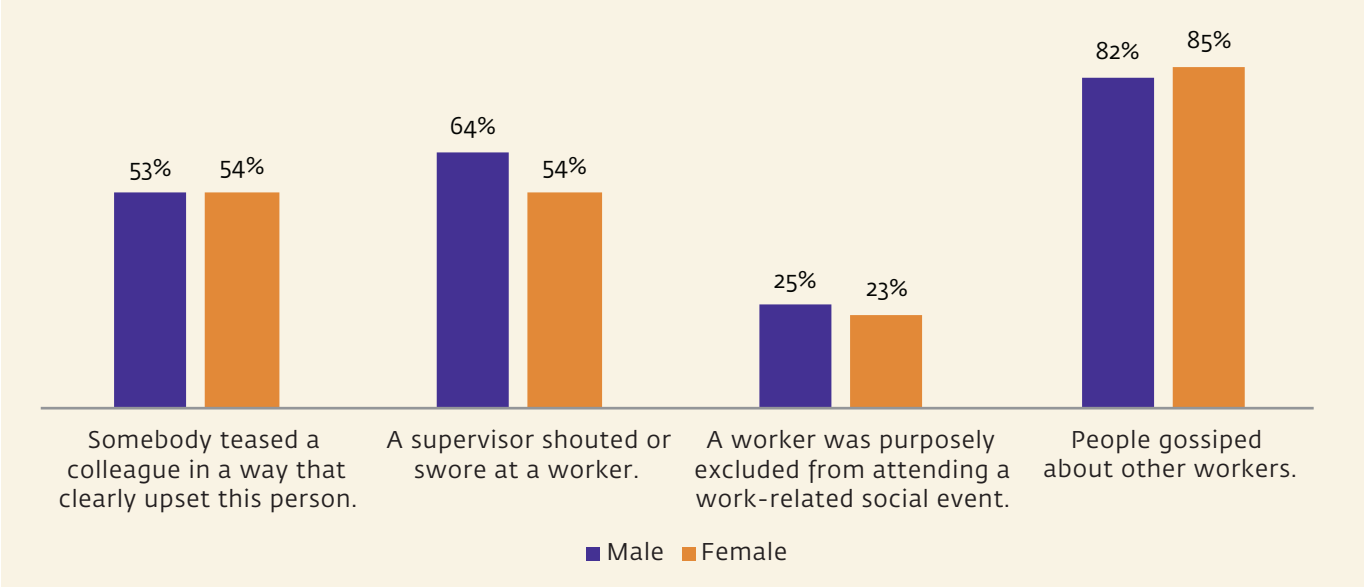
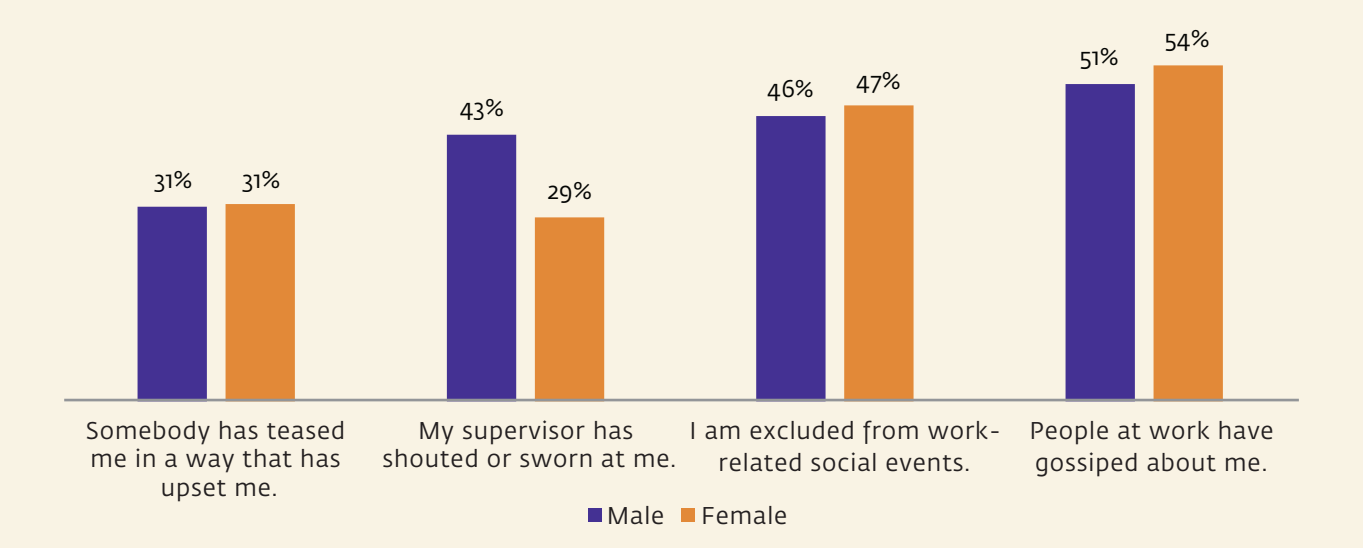


Figure 7: Common types of bullying experienced by respondents



Gossiping

Gossiping that employees hear often relates to rumors about co-workers or themselves. The gossip is often negative and untrue, and employees gave examples of gossiping being used to embarrass someone or harm a person's reputation.

Even though two employees made the same mistake, the supervisor told other people it was only the one employee (who made the mistake).

The manager said things about her to customers, about her mistakes. She didn't know.

Gossiping is a type of bullying, but where the topic is about sexual behavior, it could also be classified as sexual harassment.

Being shouted at by a supervisor

Almost 60 percent of the survey respondents said they had seen or heard a supervisor shouting or swearing at a worker. Incidents include staff being scolded in front of their colleagues for mistakes in their work, talking about individual employees to other team members, and ridiculing employees who are finding work tasks difficult or announcing to them they should probably leave. One participant said they had seen a supervisor physically abuse a worker by pulling their hair.

Participants identified incidents when a supervisor had linked the employee's performance at work to an insult about their attractiveness.

One supervisor made a comment about a female staff member. He said, "Although you are beautiful, you are very useless in your work."

One participant said, "If an employee makes a mistake, the supervisor talks about this in front of customers even if it can be discussed privately in the office room." In one case, the manager shouted at an employee in front of customers, insisting she carry his bag and "do her job." A participant described this as "a manager scolds the employee in a way that affects the employee's dignity." Affected employees said they have not been supported by their managers who maintain the position that "the customer is always right."



PHOTO: SHOBHNA DECLITRE/IFC

During one of the KIIs for this research, the participant cried. They told the research team they had been scolded by the manager the day before in front of other employees for not arranging the participants for the research.

Employees also identified being excluded from carrying out certain tasks, meetings and communications as common experiences of bullying. Among work colleagues at the same level, the bullying involves making fun of a person when they are speaking another language or criticizing the way they write e-mails.

Differences in recognizing general harassment or bullying experiences versus specific examples

The results in this section shown in Figure 2 and Figure 5 relate to general questions about witnessing or experiencing bullying or sexual harassment. Later in the survey, respondents were asked if they had seen or experienced specific behaviors like being sworn at by a supervisor, being gossiped about and being excluded from a work social event, training or meeting. There was a difference between employees' responses to general questions compared to their responses to questions about specific behaviors. More employees reported experiencing or witnessing specific bullying or sexual harassment behaviors, than when asked only general questions.

Figure 8: Percent who acknowledged they had been bullied or sexually harassed, compared to percent who said they had experienced at least one indicative behavior

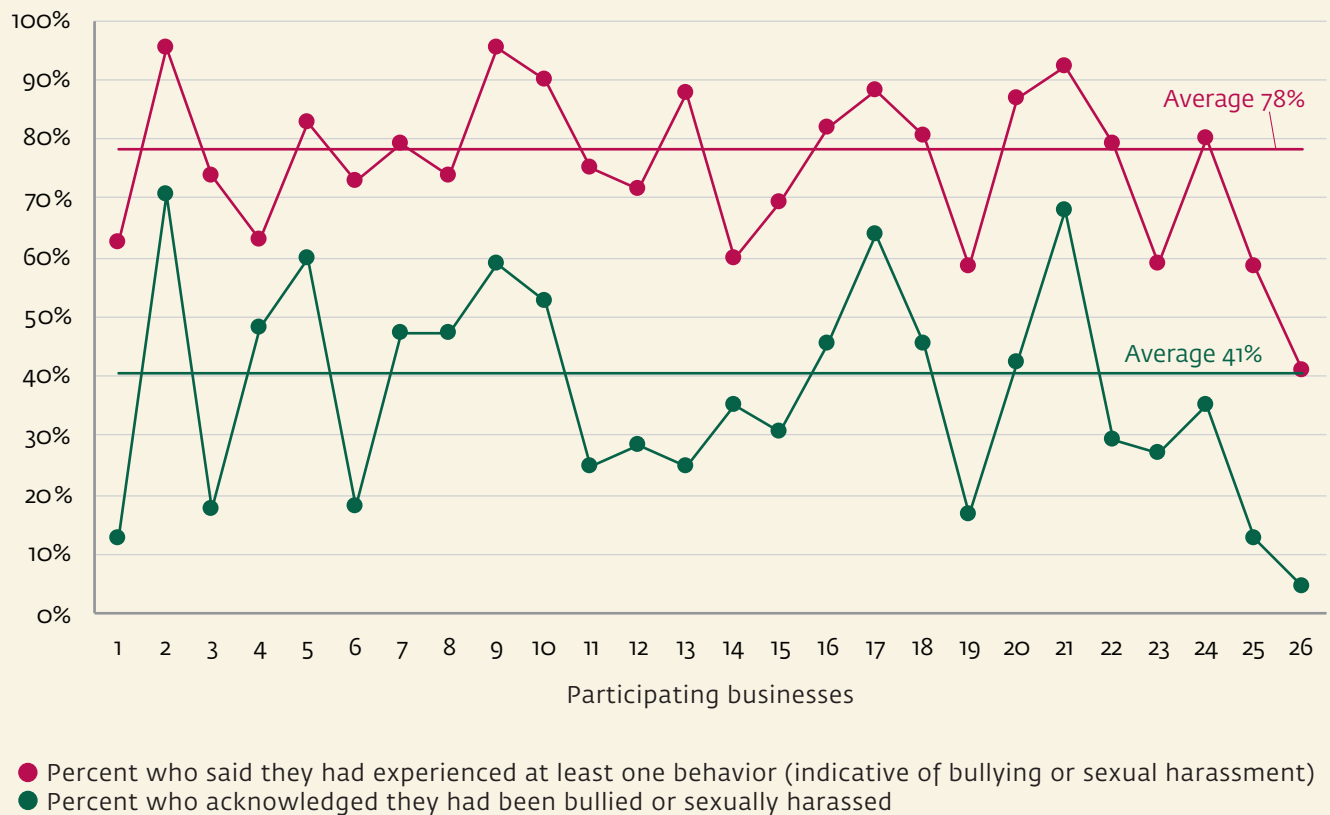


Figure 8 shows the difference by company. Each pair of dots along the x-axis of this chart represents the responses from one of the 26 participating large businesses.

This graph shows that employees were on average almost twice as likely (78 percent) to acknowledge a specific type of harassment they had experienced in their workplace (such as being body shamed or being shouted at by a supervisor) than they were to accept that they had been a “victim” of bullying or sexual harassment (41 percent). Many participants did not seem to recognize specific behaviors as bullying and sexual harassment. As described in the key findings, many behaviors are

considered by both employees and managers to be part of the normal business environment.

This response is a common finding in research on bullying and sexual harassment, where people are less likely to identify as having been “bullied” or “sexually harassed” and more likely to identify with specific behaviors. This can be for several reasons such as fear of reprisal, shame, victim blaming and loss to personal reputation. This means that the results reported for bullying and sexual harassment in general (in Figure 2 and Figure 5) are likely to be lower than actual incidences.



PHOTO: SHOBHNA DECLITRE/JFC

3.3 MEN AND WOMEN BOTH EXPERIENCE BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN MYANMAR WORKPLACES, BUT THEIR EXPERIENCE IS DIFFERENT

This difference of 37 percent between the general results and the specific results is a significant finding of the research. It can be used to inform interventions the participating businesses (and other businesses in Myanmar) may take to respond to bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces.

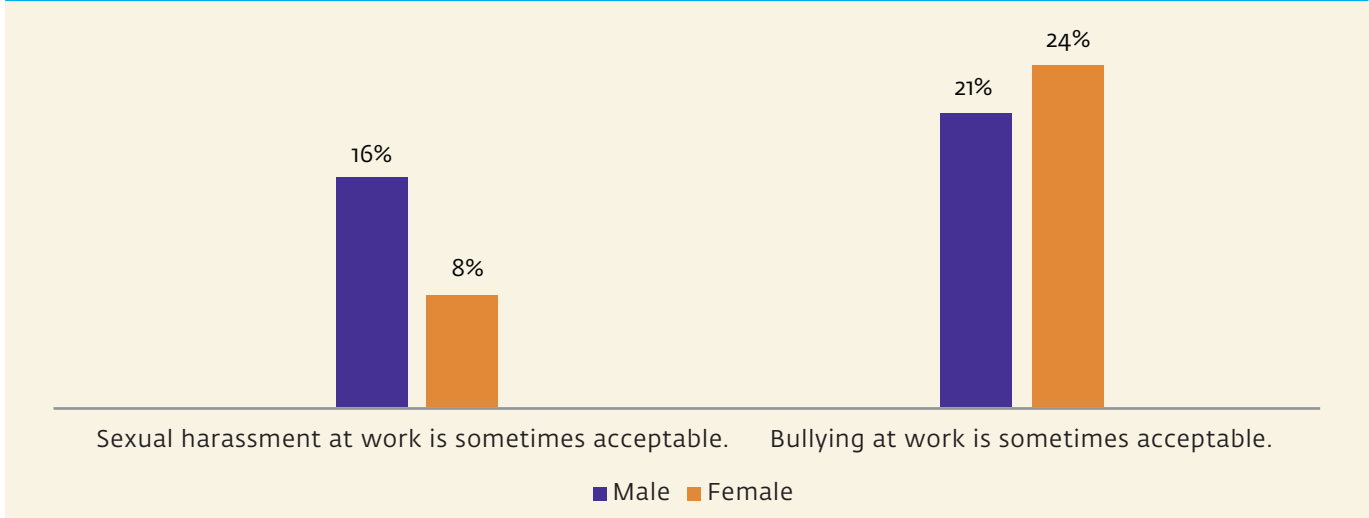
- Responses to incidents of bullying and sexual harassment—whether by individual employees or within formal business mechanisms—need to recognize the strength of the person who is making the allegation and the weakness of those who rely on bullying or sexual harassment to undermine others. This is an attitude HR managers in particular should be encouraged to adopt.
- For training, using the terms “bullying” and “sexual harassment” may be less effective than using specific examples of disrespectful behaviors that can and do occur in workplaces. For example, employees may not always understand that being shouted at by their supervisor is a form of bullying, but they can easily identify when they have been shouted at by their supervisor.
- In policies, there is a need for clarity on what is meant by bullying and sexual harassment to close the gap between knowing what behaviors are occurring and knowing that these behaviors are unacceptable in the workplace.

Discussions about sexual harassment in the businesses have focused on negative impacts these behaviors have on women and business gender equality goals. Bullying has not received the same focus. The research results show that bullying affects male more than female employees. As a proportion of the total number of males and females who completed the survey, more men than women have witnessed and experienced bullying in their workplace. Bullying is regarded by respondents as normal behavior that (all) men do.

Men and women are equally likely to report disrespectful behavior to a supervisor or manager in their workplace, however, men are less likely than women to expect their report will be believed.

When asked whether bullying was acceptable (Figure 9), 23 percent of the survey respondents said they believe it is sometimes acceptable at work. Similarly, 13 percent said they believe sexual harassment is sometimes acceptable at work. Seven percent believe both are acceptable.

Figure 9: Acceptance of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace



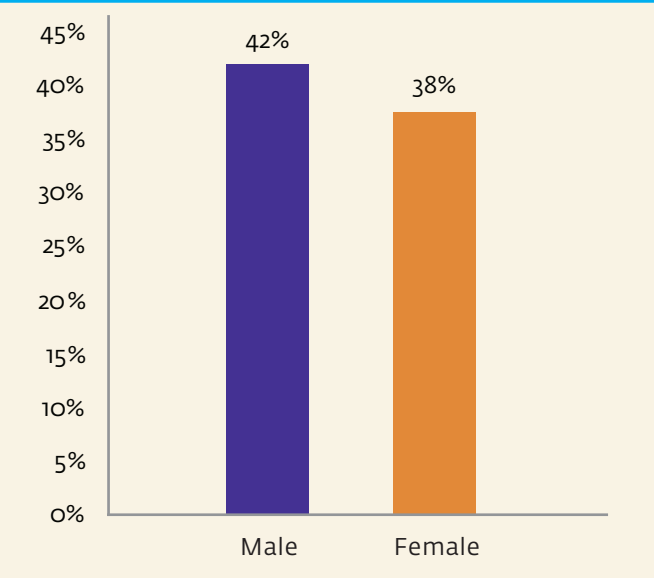
Employees who believe bullying or sexual harassment are sometimes acceptable, or who believe people are sometimes responsible for being bullied or sexually harassed, hold a negative attitude. These employees represent the core resistance to addressing bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of respondents who have indicated they sometimes blame the behavior of the targets of bullying or sexual harassment and/or who believe bullying or sexual harassment at work is sometimes acceptable.

This represents 38 percent of female respondents and 42 percent of male respondents. It reveals a high level of normalization of workplace bullying and sexual harassment in the participating businesses for around 40 percent of all employees.

Addressing these negative attitudes, while increasing the contrasting positive attitudes that employees have, is important for establishing respectful workplaces in which employees can work safely and productively.

Figure 10: Participants who hold negative attitudes by gender



Reasons for Victim Blaming

Employees identified a number of reasons why they think somebody could be targeted for bullying or sexual harassment. Figure 11 shows the percentages of the survey respondents who identified a range of individual attributes and characteristics as reasons why somebody might be bullied or sexually harassed in their workplace.

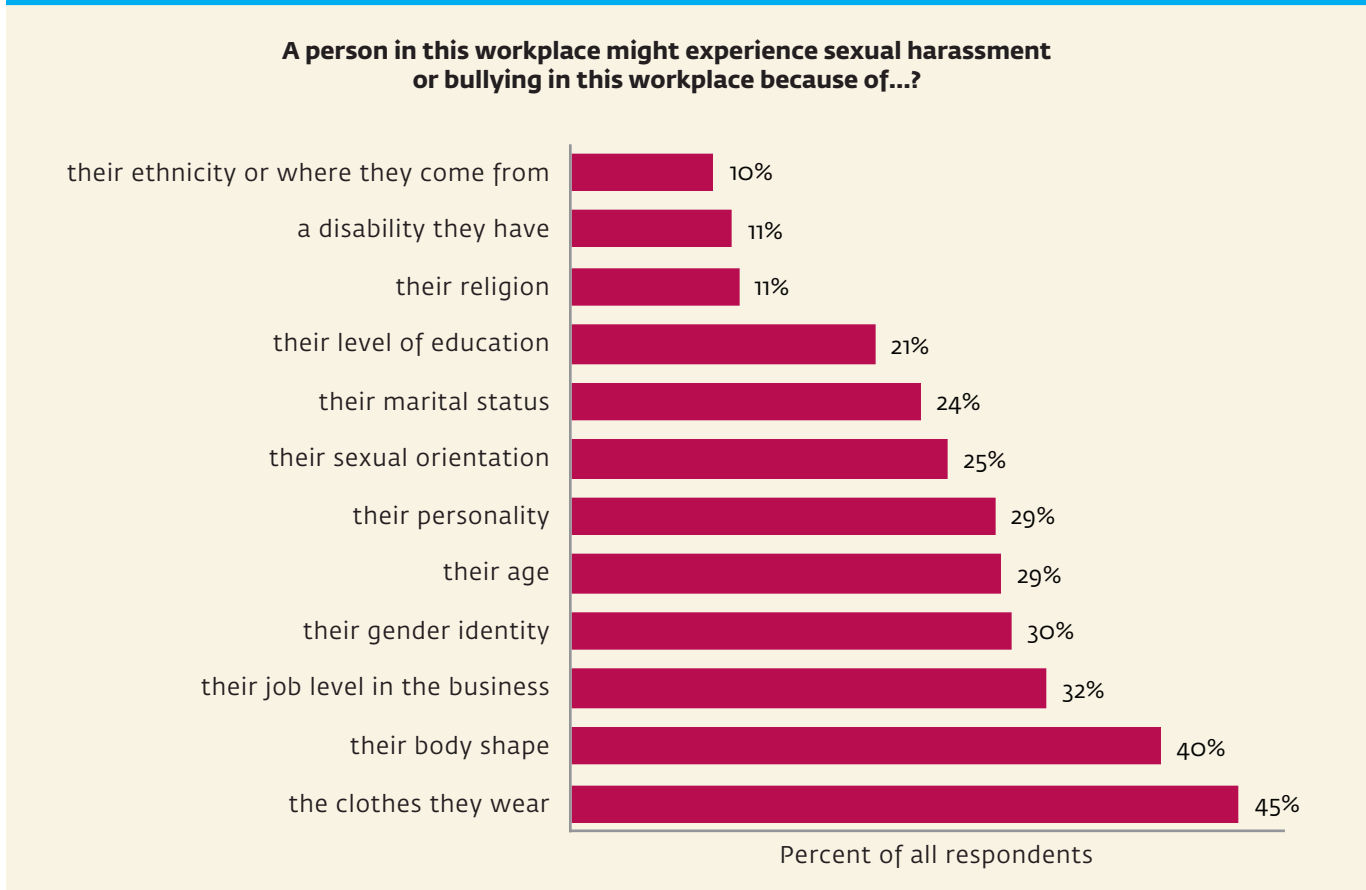
Overall, 18 percent said that their work colleagues sometimes behaved in a way that encouraged them to be bullied. By doing so, these 18 percent show their support for victim blaming under certain circumstances. For sexual harassment, it is 13 percent.²⁶

Women wearing “inappropriate” clothing is regularly used as justification for victim blaming. Inappropriate clothing and body shape are the top two reasons employees give for why they

believe people “deserve” to be sexually harassed. There is pressure on employees to maintain a particular dress code and body shape to avoid being sexually harassed and being blamed for it. For “appropriate” clothing for women, the point of reference is traditional dress. Women who choose to wear more modern clothing are seen to place themselves at risk. In comparison, there is no “inappropriate” clothing for men, and their choice of clothing is not seen to put them at risk of harassment.

A “good” or attractive body shape is a body that is not too fat and which has individual body parts that are appropriately sized to match the overall size of the body. Any “failure” to maintain this ideal body is considered to be a valid reason to harass somebody. Large buttocks and breasts are referenced in numerous examples of sexual harassment and in jokes the employees make about each other.

Figure 11: Frequency of reasons for sexual harassment or bullying



There is no difference in the percentages of women and men who blame their colleagues for the sexual harassment they experience (13 percent) and only one percentage point difference in blaming colleagues for experiencing bullying (19 percent men, 18 percent women). Men are twice as likely to believe sexual harassment is sometimes acceptable in the workplace, however they are slightly less likely than women to believe the same about bullying. The behaviors affect women and men similarly.

One HR manager claimed, “Sexual harassment is 75 percent related to women’s wearing style.” Another insisted, “It is Myanmar culture to ask when are you going to get married or to ask a colleague why they are so fat,” and therefore these comments should not be considered bullying or harassment.

Disrespectful Behaviors are Visible and Out in the Open

Survey respondents identified the general office or work area as the most common place where they have witnessed and experienced either bullying or sexual harassment. This was the location where 24 percent of all respondents had witnessed an incident and 16 percent had experienced an incident. This suggests the behaviors are normalized because they occur where others are able to hear and see what is happening.

The general office or work area would form the most open space in a workplace. Other similarly open locations within a workplace—reception area, staff canteen, elevator, walkways—were rarely identified as locations where bullying or sexual harassment occurs. In more private spaces in contrast, fewer respondents indicated witnessing or experiencing an incident. Only 3 percent said they had seen or experienced bullying or sexual harassment in either a manager’s office or staff facilities (for example, toilets or changing rooms).

The top three locations where incidents have been witnessed are the same for both genders. These locations are the general work area, online and when traveling to or from work. For women, these are also the top three locations where they have experienced an incident.

A manager took photos of employees while they were sleeping in the staff restroom and posted these on Facebook.

Online Bullying and Harassment

From the survey, 16 percent said they had witnessed an incident online and 8 percent said they had experienced an incident online. One female employee was upset about seeing her ex-boyfriend with a new partner, so she posted videos to show when they had been together. A manager took photos of employees while they were sleeping in the staff restroom and posted these on Facebook.

Of all the examples of sexual harassment collected from employees for this research, those that occur online outside the physical workplace are the most intense. In one workplace, the FGD participants said they were aware of two or three female colleagues who had received sexually explicit photos and messages via Viber from the same phone number. The harasser was targeting married female staff. Nobody knew who the man was, but the messages suggested he knew a lot about the women he was harassing. He knew what they looked like, what they were wearing on particular days and when they were in the office. The HR manager confirmed she had heard about these incidents and they had discovered the offender was using a telephone number registered in Thailand.

The intensity of the behaviors and associated risks of harm to people who are targeted do not appear to be appreciated by employees. During one FGD, a female participant disclosed that someone had been sending her messages with sexual content through Viber. She said she usually received these message at the beginning of each month. In response, another female joked about the situation, asking, “Is it in the early days of a month? Right? Are you waiting for those messages...?”

47 percent of the participating businesses' employees do not feel safe when traveling to and from work. Two thirds of these are women.

Traveling to and from Work

Of the total survey population, 11 percent said they had witnessed and 7 percent said they had experienced an incident when traveling to or from work.

Being stared at or touched were identified as common issues women faced on public transport where men are said to be “waiting for and taking opportunities.” The examples of sexual harassment when traveling to and from work given by employees are extensive.

Especially on the bus, men standing beside women and leering.

It is very common in the public bus when we come to the office, like the assistant tries to touch my arm or buttocks when he helps me on to the bus.

On the way to go back home from the office, while a female employee was taking the bus, there was a strange man nearby her side who touched her. But she dared not tell him not to do so. She is very afraid.

Our uniform is a short skirt. And when we come to the office by bus, one girl asked “Why are you girls wearing short skirts and why do girls think that they are beautiful with short skirts.”

One female employee experienced that she was pulled out of the bus by a strange man who squeezed her neck. Other people said he was mentally ill.

One female employee said she always carried chili spray with her when taking the bus to and from work. This indicates the extent to which female employees are aware of the risks they face when using public transport to commute to work. It also gives some indication of the frequency and severity of the incidents.

Participants also said they faced sexual harassment when walking to or from work, including when they are close to their business premises.

There is a small shop (selling betel nut and leaves) on this street and there are some boys in this shop. Sometimes, when female employees come to the office, these boys make catcalling.

On my way home, a stranger passed by my side and he said “I would like to have sex” so I could hear him.

Another female participant shared a similar experience of being followed while riding her motorbike home from work on a Friday evening. She said her home is far from the office but a boy followed her all the way on his motorbike while calling out sexually explicit words.

The research shows that 47 percent of the participating businesses' employees do not feel safe when traveling to and from work. Two thirds of these are women whose safety is compromised because of the risk of being sexually harassed by men on public transport.

Only 2 percent of men said they had been bullied or sexually harassed while traveling to or from work. Men identified when they are traveling away for work (for example, to a conference or on a business trip) as the third location where they most commonly experience an incident. For men, incidents of bullying or harassment when traveling to and from work are also less frequent than when they are inside a manager's office.

3.4 BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT ARE A COST TO BUSINESS

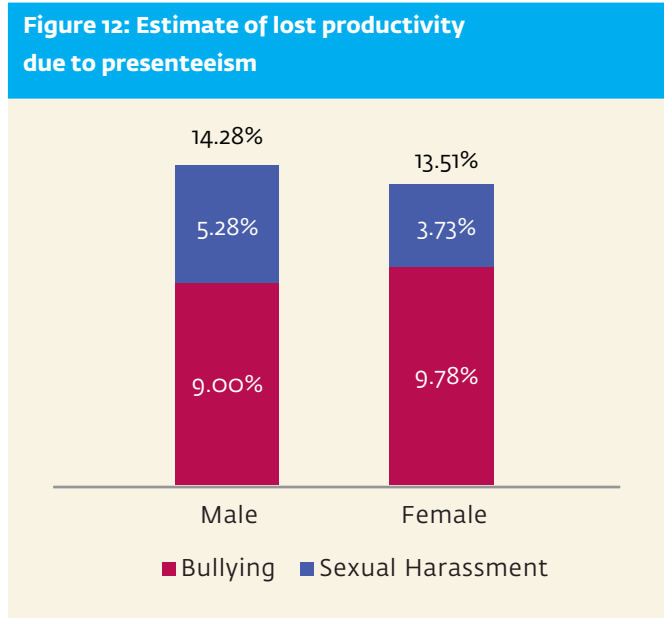
In the Cost to Business Questions, respondents were asked how many days in the past month they were absent from work due to bullying and sexual harassment. In response, 19 employees said they had taken time off work due to bullying and six had taken time off due to sexual harassment. In total, 26 days were lost during the past month due to bullying and seven days due to sexual harassment. The total number of absentee days due to bullying and sexual harassment as a percentage of days worked in a month (assuming 20 days worked per month) was therefore only 0.2 percent. However, presenteeism (where someone is at work but not operating to their full capacity) was much more widespread, with a calculated productivity loss of almost 14 percent due to sexual harassment and bullying. The employees' self-assessments of reduced productivity suggest bullying has slightly more impact on women than men, and that sexual harassment has slightly more impact on men than women, as shown in Figure 12.



PHOTO: SHOBIHA DECLOITRE/IFC

In both cases, the impact is certainly not zero and the combined productivity loss of around 14 percent is significant and concerning. It should also be considered a conservative estimate as it only accounts for what proportion of time an average employee worked slower than usual. It does not take into account various other costs that might accrue such as lost production or service delivery, opportunity cost, the cost of time taken by supervisors or co-workers to support the target of bullying or harassment, or medical costs.

Even as a conservative estimate, the 14 percent of lost productivity suggests a significant benefit to businesses that engage in prevention work and ensure effective responses are taken when incidents occur. For example, if this loss was extrapolated to the entire finance sector within Myanmar accounting for around 42,000 employees, this would amount to a United States dollar equivalent of around \$4.5 million annually in lost labor productivity (assuming a 4,800 Kyat daily minimum wage).



3.5 BUSINESSES ARE NOT ADEQUATELY PREPARED TO RESPOND

Work to prevent bullying and sexual harassment from occurring in a workplace has not been a key priority for the businesses. While several HR managers said they had policies, procedures and training in place to address these behaviors in their workplaces, the research team could only confirm this to be true for one business.

In the Respectful Workplaces survey, respondents were asked whether they had taken any time off from work due to sexual harassment over the past year. Respondents were asked the same question for bullying. They were also asked whether they had left a previous job due to sexual harassment or bullying. Managers are unaware that 9 percent of employees from across the businesses reported they have taken time off during the past year and 6 percent have left a previous employer because of an incident of sexual harassment. Bullying was responsible for 2 percent of the workforce taking time off work in the past year.

Training

Of the total survey respondents, 27 percent said they had received training on bullying or sexual harassment in their current workplace. The HR managers of only three of the participating businesses said that specific training on bullying and sexual harassment was offered. In eight businesses, the HR manager said there was no training specifically on bullying or sexual harassment, but discussions about these topics were included in other training sessions (for example, during induction).

Two of the HR managers said they relied on external organizations, especially non-government organizations (NGOs), to provide this kind of training to their employees. One said they were planning to roll out training, starting with business areas where they believed employees were most at risk. Only one of the HR managers provided details of their training approach and content.

Managers are unaware that 9 percent of employees from across the businesses have taken time off during the past year and 6 percent have left a previous employer because of an incident of sexual harassment.

One manager insisted training was not required.

I have not talked about this. I don't want employees to think there is an issue. We talk about the code of conduct. Getting to know the organization alone is enough [during induction]. We would not do that [training]. There are no cases. It's the same as telling them [employees] they cannot carry a gun. They would start to think there is an issue of people carrying guns in our workplace.

The conclusion is that the majority of the research participants have not received training on workplace bullying and sexual harassment.

Of the 21 HR managers who were interviewed, seven said they had received training related to bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces.

3.6 THE WAY SOME EMPLOYEES RESPOND IS NOT GOOD FOR BUSINESS

More than 90 percent of the survey respondents believe incidents are taken seriously in their workplace. Also, 89 percent said they would feel comfortable reporting an incident they had witnessed to either a supervisor, manager or HR manager in their workplace. For reporting within their workplaces, 81 percent of survey respondents said they would know to whom to report an incident that happened in their workplace. Of these, 72 percent said they would also trust that anything they said would remain confidential. However, reporting is not the preferred choice of response for employees.

Only 14 percent of the total survey population said they have reported an incident that has occurred in their current workplace. Even among those who said they would know to whom to report and who also said they would trust their report would remain confidential, only 14 percent have actually made a report. Of the 400 respondents who had witnessed an incident of bullying or sexual harassment in their workplace, only 17 percent had reported this incident to a manager. Only one third of the total survey respondents said they trust that people who report incidents are believed.

Ignoring Incidents

Employees ignore many of the incidents they see or experience. They often say they would advise a colleague to ignore bullying and harassment too. Figure 13 shows the total percentage of survey respondents who said they would ignore specific behaviors.

Other employees responded that they would copy the incident, report, intervene or laugh.

Taking Action

Of the survey respondents, 42 percent indicated they would intervene in certain circumstances and have done so in the past. This indicates that some employees are dealing with bullying and sexual harassment they witness or experience. When asked if they had already intervened when incidents had occurred in the past, 31 percent of the survey respondents said they had helped a work colleague who had experienced bullying or sexual harassment in their workplace, and 38 percent said they have confronted an offender.

Copying Behaviors

Up to 5 percent of respondents said they would laugh at or copy the listed behaviors. Seeing a manager give a shoulder massage to another worker is the behavior most likely to be

Figure 13: Percent of ignore responses per behavior

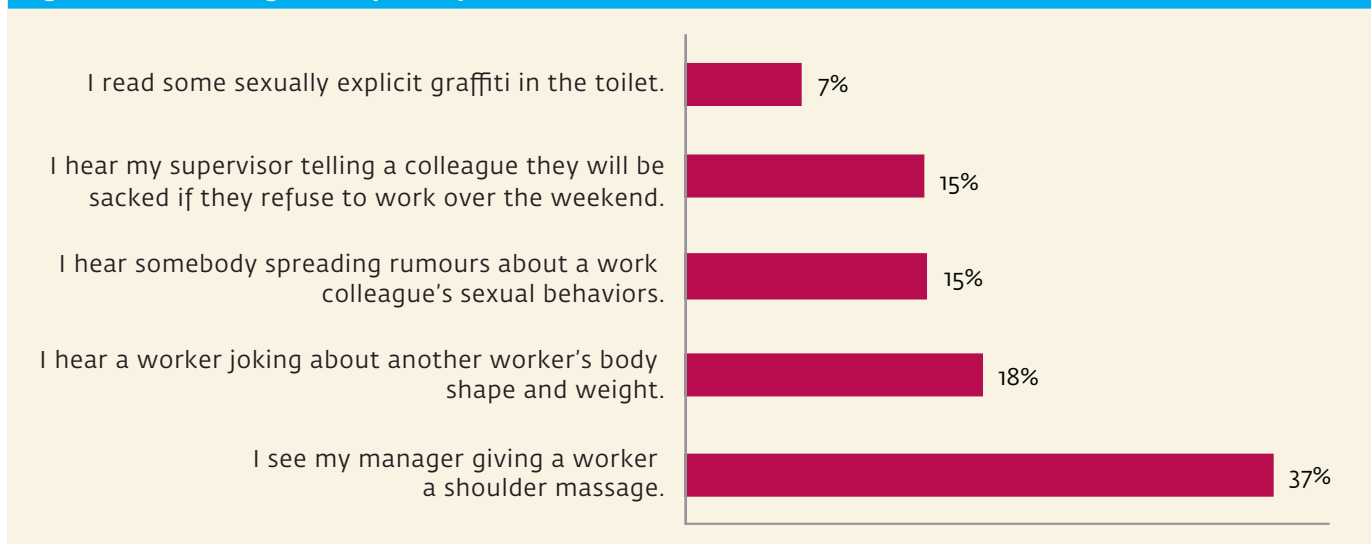




PHOTO: SEB HIGGINSON/IFC

laughed at and copied. In all cases, male employees are more likely than female employees to laugh at an incident. The same is not true for copying behavior. While female employees are more likely than male employees to intervene in both scenarios, they are more likely than males to copy spreading rumors about a work colleague's sexual behaviors and to joke about another worker's body and weight.

Taking Time off Work

Equal percentages (2 percent) of women and men said they had taken time off during the past year because they had been bullied. There is a two percentage point difference (10 percent women to 8 percent men) for having taken time off during the same period because of sexual harassment. The same percentage point difference exists for having previously left a job because of bullying or sexual harassment, this time with men more likely to have done so (7 percent to 5 percent).

Taking Action Online

Social media such as Facebook and new technologies like Viber and WhatsApp offer spaces for employees to continue what are already frequently witnessed and experienced behaviors in their physical workplaces—gossiping about and shaming colleagues. One employee “found out” about an affair between a manager and his secretary, so they took a video of the couple together and posted it online.

Employees are increasingly recognizing bullying and sexual harassment as unacceptable behaviors, and they want to speak out. In the absence of formal grievance mechanisms in their workplaces, they take actions that may have negative consequences for a business (such as, other employees leaving, skilled people not wanting to work there, reputational risk to the business brand and products, Facebook complaints).

Social media provides the “perfect” alternative to formal grievance mechanisms in their workplaces. Employees can report incidents anonymously. They can spread information about “bad” colleagues, supervisors and managers. Employees may post on social media the name of their company and a description about what happened; and this presents a risk to a business’ reputation. One online post about one disrespectful behavior or about one manager can easily lead to widespread gossiping about that manager as a bad person. The manager’s place of work can be implicated if named. While intervening shows that employees are not accepting the behaviors, some interventions are clearly not good for business.

3.7 BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT ARE WORKPLACE CULTURE ISSUES THAT CAN BE ADDRESSED

Throughout the research, “Myanmar culture” was regularly used as an excuse for disrespectful behavior to be normalized in the workplace. Figure 8 shows that whilst all 26 businesses are located in Myanmar, some businesses had high levels of bullying and sexual harassment and others had relatively low levels. In some cases, the same business had different experiences of bullying and sexual harassment across two different geographic locations. This appears to contradict the excuse that bullying and sexual harassment are a normal part of “Myanmar culture.”

The research found some good examples of Myanmar business leaders taking practical action to promote respectful workplaces. There was also a high level of employees who admitted they may have bullied or harassed others in the past without knowing it. This ownership of disrespectful behavior is a positive sign that employees in Myanmar have an appetite for change.

The research found some good examples of Myanmar business leaders taking practical action to promote respectful workplaces.



PHOTO: SHOBIHA DECLOITRE/IFC

Seeing Behaviors as Normal

Senior personnel advocate ignoring incidents of workplace bullying and sexual harassment because they also consider them to be normal behaviors. Supervisors made the following comments:

There are no serious cases. It's just kidding, like laughing at somebody's skin color. Brown skin, black skin—something like that. But these are not problems and they are not reported.

Sometimes, they are very familiar with each other so they joke with each other. They say, if you eat a lot and you put on weight, you will not get a boyfriend. It is normal and they are not angry with each other.

The employees know about the supervisor's habitual behavior and communication style. They are used to being told off very openly or hearing the supervisor use some offensive word unintentionally. They will not feel anything even though this supervisor uses such offensive words. But for the new employee, they can think it is bullying.

In the first comment, the supervisor has assumed the reason the employees do not report these incidents is because they are “not problems.” The second supervisor has assumed the comments have no impact on people. The third example exposes the vulnerability of new employees who are expected to change their initial reading of behaviors as bullying (or sexual harassment) and recognize these behaviors as a normal part of the workplace culture.

More than 90 percent said they thought bullying in their workplace was a serious problem.

Appetite for Change

More than 90 percent of the survey respondents said they thought bullying in their workplace was a serious problem, whereas 40 percent also recognized they may have engaged in bullying behavior without realizing it at the time. In the workplaces, 54 percent of employees now say they would report hearing a supervisor threaten a colleague with dismissal for refusing to work over the weekend. However, employees generally feel less able to challenge bullying than sexual harassment in their workplaces, especially when the bullying is perpetrated by somebody senior.

Family Myth

HR personnel rely strongly on a belief that all employees are working as a “family”—like “brothers and sisters”—to ensure incidents of bullying and sexual harassment do not occur. Sometimes working as a “family” is used to justify why work to prevent bullying and harassment (such as policies and training) is not required. HR managers are also influenced by the insistence on maintaining social harmony in Myanmar society. They can be reluctant to introduce prevention work—or even talk about bullying and harassing behaviors—in case this creates a workplace disruption. This is a way in which some organizations avoid dealing with difficult issues, and thereby allow the negative behaviors to continue unresolved.

In one workplace, where the HR manager said they had received some psychological awareness training but had received no allegations, a supervisor identified that one female employee, who had reported being harassed (sexual pictures sent by phone), was transferred to another department “for her safety.” No action was taken against the offender. Dealing with incidents quietly allows a continuation of the imagined “familial” harmony. It does not, however, help the business deal with the impacts of the behaviors on its employees’ well-being and productivity, or on business performance and reputation.



PHOTO: SHOBHANA DECLOITRE/IFC

4 Recommendations

The analysis shows there are many opportunities for participating businesses to improve how they address bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces. All the businesses are at risk of an estimated 14 percent of productivity loss due to the impacts of these behaviors on their employees. All the businesses have shown a willingness to respond to the issues through their participation in this research project. The recommendations will therefore provide practical guidance to HR managers and business leaders on how to address issues specific to their workplace, as well as how they might share successes and lessons with other businesses operating in Myanmar.

Bullying and sexual harassment are social issues that affect all workplaces in Myanmar. Indeed, these are issues that extend beyond the workplace into public spaces, schools and homes. It is therefore hoped some of the recommendations can also offer guidance to other organizations and actors interested in exploring bullying and sexual harassment in Myanmar, especially for advocacy work and legal change.

4.1 DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1.1 Recommendations for Senior Managers and Directors

Training. The development of an extensive management training program to deliver skills in management styles and leadership communication will address concerns among employees about the way they are treated by senior personnel. This training would help managers learn more effective methods for two-way interaction with their staff. It would help businesses implement management and leadership best practices. The program should include training on performance management, communicating with staff, setting expectations and communicating change. These management and leadership practices can contribute to employee creativity and productivity and help attract and retain skilled staff. For international workplaces, some exploration of cross-cultural communications is also recommended. A refresher course should be compulsory as a first step for any senior personnel who have not followed the business' anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment policy and/

or code of conduct. It is also important to include the Board of Directors in respectful workplaces initiatives.

Code of conduct. One way to address the barrier for employees to be able to criticize or call out bullying behaviors exhibited by their superiors is to ensure managers and supervisors have clear guidelines on how they are expected to behave and interact with staff in the workplace. There may be some duplication in this code of conduct and the business' general code of conduct for all employees. However, a specific code of conduct for managers and supervisors would emphasize the requirement for senior personnel to exhibit exemplary behaviors in their workplace. It would also strengthen the case for a complaint against a manager or supervisor, by identifying nonconformity with behaviors listed in the code of conduct as a reason for disciplinary action. Prohibited behaviors should be identified in a severity matrix linked to appropriate disciplinary actions. Prohibited behaviors should include shouting at employees and criticizing employees in front of their colleagues. This code of conduct could be developed in collaboration with managers and supervisors as part of the training recommended above. This would increase ownership of the code of conduct by the same personnel who are expected to abide by it.

Mobilize resources. To implement effective measures to prevent and address bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace, management need to ensure adequate budget and human resources are allocated to fund proposed initiatives and sufficient personnel. It is a good idea to begin with a Respectful Workplaces action plan that includes estimated cost and business priorities before allocating people and time to the project. Once people are given responsibility for the actions set out in the action plan, it is a good idea to ensure these responsibilities are included in their performance objectives and job description.

Performance expectations. All businesses can benefit from the introduction of performance management tools. Performance management includes clearly communicating to all employees the expected duties and deliverables that contribute to overall business objectives. Encouraging managers and employees to have regular conversations about expectations, goals, achievements and challenges ensures employees are completing their work effectively and get the feedback

and recognition they need to improve. It is also important to clarify what is expected of employees to help eliminate false allegations of bullying by managers who ask for improved outputs and to reduce the risk of employees being given too much work to complete within unreasonable deadlines or too little work to complete according to their skill levels. This may involve a review of current contract templates to ensure there are references to expectations (of effort and output) and performance management. The grievance mechanism should allow for employees to raise concerns about workloads without having to lodge this as an incident of bullying. Employees should also be trained in how to raise complaints and discuss work concerns with their superiors.

Public leadership. Managers should actively promote respectful behaviors in their workplace. This might include making a pledge in front of employees not to engage in bullying behavior or any other behavior prohibited in the code of conduct. It might also include giving talks at events to share their personal journey from participating in disrespectful behaviors without realizing they were doing so, and/or their professional journey to understand the importance of creating a respectful workplace.²⁷

Culture days. Managers should support workplace culture days to provide opportunities for employees to learn about diversity. Access to accurate information about different cultures can help reduce incidents of discrimination that involve acting out unconscious bias based on a lack of knowledge and understanding of another person's culture. The definition of "culture" here should be broad, to include the cultures of marginalized groups such as people with disabilities and people who identify with the LGBTQI communities.²⁸

Employee reward program. It is important to reward positive behaviors. Businesses should offer rewards to employees who actively show respect for their work colleagues. These rewards would help make examples of respectful behaviors more visible and communicate how these behaviors benefit employees, teams and the business. This rewards program could be linked to an existing similar program if available (for example, employee of the month). Rewards for specific displays of respectful behavior should however be clearly identified and communicated.

Safe transport initiatives. Managers should explore ways to improve safety for employees when traveling to and from work. This should include researching the specific risks of sexual harassment female employees face while commuting. This research could inform new initiatives within the business' occupational health and safety work. Examples of initiatives to consider are:

- working with municipal councils and committees to improve public transportation;
- working with external organizations to support initiatives against sexual harassment on buses;
- formalizing a buddy system to encourage employees to travel home together;
- supporting external organizations to provide anti-sexual harassment training to owners of small businesses near the office; and,
- communicating regular updates about incidents to employees to raise awareness about unsafe commuting routes or local businesses.

Counselling services. Businesses should provide affected employees with access to a free, independent and confidential counselling service. Employees should be made aware of how to access this service. Employees who report incidents of bullying and sexual harassment should be invited to make use of this service; and this step should be included in the grievance mechanism. Sometimes these programs are called Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).

Business cost reporting. Calculating the costs of bullying and sexual harassment to an individual business is difficult without accurate and reliable data on absenteeism and presenteeism. Managers should support the collection of this data to inform business responses to disrespectful workplace behaviors. It is likely many businesses will require external advice on what specific data is required and how to collect this data. Support for businesses should include:

- providing templates for capturing information from employees who take days off;
- running workplace satisfaction surveys;
- providing templates for regular (for example, annual) reporting; and,
- providing advice on suitable questions to use in exit interviews.

Consideration should be given to how the data collection, reporting and analysis can be automated by offering businesses access to an online system for inputting data. This system would make it easier for businesses to monitor (i.e., reduction in business cost) improvements over time. Data input into the system by businesses could also provide important and useful information on country-wide and sector specific costs (baseline and improvements). The system will need to guarantee confidentiality for and security of business data.



PHOTO: SHOBHNA DECLOITRE/IFC

Domestic violence research. Managers should support additional research into the costs of domestic violence on employee productivity and business performance. HR Managers are aware of how domestic violence affects employees. Some have already been involved in helping employees deal with violence they are facing at home. More information, including data to help calculate the costs to businesses, is needed to inform decisions about suitable support systems for affected employees. It is likely many businesses will also require external advice and assistance to conduct this research. This would include relying on external organizations, whose employees have expertise in this field and specifically in working with survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), to run employee surveys that might include sensitive questions. Additional support may be needed to help set up the system in a business for regular collection of relevant data and reporting.

External relationships. Managers should build stronger relationships with external organizations that work in the fields of gender equality, women's empowerment and GBV. Managers should take an interest in attending workshops and presentations offered by these organizations to help with their continuous learning about some of the underlying causes of workplace bullying and sexual harassment. These organizations may also be able to support the efforts of businesses to create more respectful workplaces through providing training and counselling services.

4.1.2 Recommendations for HR Personnel

Training. HR personnel have an understanding of what constitutes workplace bullying and sexual harassment. However, they are sometimes unaware of the prevalence of bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces. They would benefit from training to:

- help them understand why the behaviors are bad for business;
- understand how to respond;
- learn how to set up and run an effective grievance mechanism for addressing workplace bullying and sexual harassment;
- learn how to record incidents (including confidentiality); and,
- learn how to create and run effective prevention initiatives in workplaces.

This training could be complemented by additional support (such as coaching) to help individual HR managers apply what they have learned to implement policies and procedures in their business.



PHOTO: SHOBHNA DECLITRE/IFC

Employees also have some knowledge of what constitutes bullying and sexual harassment. They would benefit from improved knowledge, including information on how to identify and respond to these behaviors on social media. A training course for employees should place an emphasis on facilitating employee-led responses to specific behaviors, including gossiping and body shaming. The recommended approach is to develop a modular training program that offers opportunities for discussion and learning in short sessions, to promote continuous learning. Issues to include as modules of learning are:

- use of social media for posting information about work colleagues and the workplace;
- body shaming;
- gossiping;
- giving constructive feedback to work colleagues;
- finding a voice to raise complaints in the workplace;
- understanding professional performance;
- dealing with conflict and disagreement in the workplace;
- professional relationships with colleagues of the opposite gender;
- emotional intelligence;
- discrimination based on gender and sexual identity; and,
- working with people with disabilities.

Each module should follow the same methodology to introduce the topic, encourage discussion about the topic within the context of the workplace, identify causes and impacts, and develop opportunities for change. Key lessons should be identified in the training manual for the facilitator to provide during each session. The time required for each module should not exceed 90 minutes. Modules can be offered to businesses as a full program or as needed.

Workplace culture. HR managers would benefit from clarity on what is expected of them to help create a respectful workplace. They should be given the responsibility to identify and respond to disrespectful behaviors, and to support prevention initiatives. They should be instructed to take efforts to ensure all incidents of disrespectful behaviors are reported. This may include giving the HR department the additional responsibility of being aware of what employees are saying about the business and their colleagues on social media.

Diversity and inclusion. HR managers should promote diversity and inclusion by ensuring policies for recruitment, promotion and pay prohibit discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status and age. They should introduce ways to monitor the application of these policies to ensure discrimination is not being actively or unconsciously applied. They should also support managers to raise awareness about diversity among employees.

Policy. An anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment policy would be the first step a business can take to show commitment to create a respectful workplace. This policy would also inform plans to introduce a grievance mechanism, disciplinary measures, support services for affected employees, a reporting and monitoring mechanism, and internal communications and initiatives. The policy should address bullying and sexual harassment of work colleagues online. It should also make specific reference to bullying and sexual harassment of vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities and persons who identify as LGBTQI. HR managers may require support from external organizations to help them draft and finalize a policy suitable for their businesses, in which case a policy-development workshop and one-on-one coaching are recommended approaches. Note that to make a policy effective, a grievance mechanism is also required.

Grievance mechanism. HR managers would benefit from understanding the fundamentals of an effective grievance mechanism for responding to incidents of bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces, including:

- confidentiality;
- a survivor-centered approach;
- different support methods for those targeted with sexual harassment or bullying (such as based on gender identity, sexual orientation, disability); and
- dealing with false allegations.

The specific content of a grievance mechanism will be different for each business depending on organizational structure, capacities and size, as well as the extent of the support services the business will/can offer to affected employees. Similar to the introduction of the model policy, the development of a

grievance mechanism could be achieved by inviting a group of HR managers to attend a workshop and offering additional one-on-one support to finalize the draft developed during that workshop. Note that a grievance mechanism can only work with an effective policy.

Prevention actions. HR managers should be responsible for developing and running campaigns and activities to prevent bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace. While some of the initiatives may simply be awareness-raising using the business' existing communication methods (for example, company and team meetings, intranet, posters, newsletters), there should also be interactive and participatory activities to encourage engagement of employees in continuous learning about respectful behaviors.

No body shaming campaign. One of the early initiatives in each business should be to run a campaign to raise awareness about and to discourage body shaming. This is one of the most frequently witnessed and experienced types of disrespectful behaviors in all the participating businesses. Individual businesses could work together to create the initiative's key messages and materials, with support from an external organization that could run a creative development workshop. The messages and content should integrate respect for diversity and inclusion, by discussing different ways body shaming is used to attack women, men, young women, persons with disabilities and persons with gender nonconforming identities.

No gossiping campaign. Another of the early initiatives in each business should be to run a campaign to raise awareness about and to discourage gossiping. This too is one of the most frequently witnessed and experienced types of disrespectful behaviors in all the participating businesses. Individual businesses could again work together to create the initiative's key messages and materials, with support from an external organization that could run a creative development workshop. This initiative should challenge existing ideas among employees about normal sexual behavior and their right to ask questions and make assumptions about a co-worker's sex life and/or expression of sexual orientation.

Visitor expectations. Visitors to the workplace should be made aware of the code of conduct and/or unacceptable behaviors. This includes any person who is not an employee in the workplace (contractors, consultants, trainers, employees from another office, attendees at meetings). The business' support for respectful workplace behaviors should be visible in the reception area for all visitors to see on arrival.

Organize satisfaction surveys. The businesses could introduce short, regular surveys to monitor the level of satisfaction of their workforce. This does not mean running formal, lengthy surveys. Satisfaction surveys simply capture the employees' mood and can be limited to a few key questions:

- How was your day?
- How motivated were you today?
- How productive do you think you were today?
- What was your level of learning today?

The results of the surveys could feed into a mood meter that is displayed in the workplace. The results could also inform future initiatives or opportunities, to improve motivational skills, creative skills and team work.

Measure the effectiveness of respectful workplace programs. Measuring key metrics such as absenteeism, sick leave and staff turnover will help a business measure the effectiveness of its respectful workplaces program and better understand business costs. Other ways to measure and better understand the reason for staff leaving the organization include conducting exit interviews with staff who leave or reviewing resignation letters.

4.1.3 Recommendations for Employees

Participate in company training. Attending training on anti-bullying and sexual harassment will help employees to understand what behavior is acceptable and what is not acceptable. It will also provide a forum for employees to ask questions about parts of the policy or grievance mechanism they do not understand. Attending training will help employees to lead by example, demonstrate their commitment to respectful workplaces to management and better fulfil their duties and expectations as an employee of the company. Training is also an important part of employee career development. Future employers may look favorably on hiring staff who have received respectful workplaces training.

Know the company code of conduct, policy and grievance mechanisms relating to respectful workplaces. Employees are required to comply with certain policies and procedures, and those relating to respectful workplaces are no exception. Understanding employer's policies and grievance mechanisms will enable employees to put them into practice, raise complaints in a professional manner, and support and advise staff and co-workers on how to handle issues correctly and confidentially.

Discuss performance expectations with manager. The ability to discuss job expectations with management and effectively raise issues relating to delivery of tasks are key traits of professional employees. These conversations should be held regularly and could be set up as part of a regular monthly meeting or be a more informal conversation. Key topics for discussion could include:

- What are the manager's or supervisor's expectations of the employee's work?
- Is the employee meeting the manager's expectations?
- Does the manager have any suggested improvements to the employee's work?
- Does the employee have issues that are preventing them from delivering their work to the necessary quality or time?
- Does the employee require training or extra resources to do their job?

Contribute to company satisfaction surveys. Completing company surveys on employee satisfaction gives employees an opportunity to voice their opinion about the workplace and raise issues and suggestions to improve workplace culture. Being open and honest in their responses will help ensure the information collected is useful for management and HR in making practical improvements in the workplace.

4.1.4 Recommendations for Others

Legal advocacy. There is currently no reference to sexual harassment within Myanmar law. The country's labor laws do not identify this as a workplace issue. Myanmar has not ratified the ILO's Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention. The national government is, however, working with the ILO to update its labor laws. There is an opportunity to use some of the findings from this research to advocate for attention to bullying and sexual harassment as workplace issues and, therefore, as responsibilities of employers. This could help ensure minimum protection for employees especially if employers are required to adopt policies or show evidence of prevention work. Given the lack of attention to discrimination in Myanmar's labor laws, there is no obvious specific labor law in which workplace bullying and sexual harassment can easily be seen to fit. There may be an opportunity to introduce these issues as components of workplace occupational safety and health (OSH). Myanmar's new labor law addressing OSH issues is currently in draft form.²⁹ There may also be an opportunity to discuss sexual harassment more broadly in the proposed Prevention and Protection against Women bill.

Provide support services. Community groups and NGOs often have unique expertise on topics relating to bullying and sexual harassment. Many are already providing support services within the communities in which they work, including training, counselling and legal advice. There is an opportunity for these organizations to extend advice, guidance and support to businesses and employees within their communities.



PHOTO: SHOBHINA DECLOITRE/IFC

Advocacy campaigns for respectful workplaces.

Community groups and NGOs already work on a number of public campaigns to tackle issues relating to bullying and sexual harassment. This study provides these organizations with further evidence and an opportunity to raise public awareness about specific topics such as body shaming, victim blaming, consent and online bullying.

Safe public transport. More attention should be given to promoting safety in public transport, especially the bus system in Yangon. This will require collaboration between relevant government departments and organizations with an interest in promoting public safety, especially safety for women. The private sector should be invited to collaborate on such an initiative to help link it to the right to safety for everybody when traveling to and from work. Businesses could be invited to sponsor elements of the initiative.

Domestic violence impact on business. Business attention to the impacts of domestic violence on their employees is likely to increase if there is more information about how domestic violence affects employees and businesses performance. Further research is therefore required. Businesses that participated in this research project may wish to be involved. Estimating the costs of domestic violence to the national economy is also an important way to engage government. This should therefore be considered when analyzing the results of the research.

Training. Businesses will require access to knowledge and tools to help them engage in prevention work and to build effective responses. External organizations with expertise in the fields of gender, GBV and/or organizational culture should support business efforts by developing and offering a range of relevant training courses that meet workplace needs. Organizations are encouraged to be experimental and creative in their approaches to ensure training courses offer more than basic education on definitions of bullying and sexual harassment. An emphasis should be placed on promoting experiential learning using participatory adult learning methods. The content of distinct courses could cover gender transformative learning, alternative masculinities, sexual health and gender empowerment to help support continued changes in attitudes that inform practices of workplace bullying and sexual harassment. A collaborative approach between external organizations is advised to avoid duplication and unnecessary competition, and to ensure full coverage of topics and issues.

Gender equality. Building the business case for gender equality with the business sector will help to improve attitudes and address gender gaps. Organizations and networks working on gender equality activities should develop connections with the business community to support positive attitudes toward gender equality and strengthen business sector initiatives.

Partner with the business sector. External organizations are encouraged to build relationships with businesses to provide ongoing support for the prevention of workplace bullying and sexual harassment, and to work as allies of individual businesses that are actively promoting respectful workplaces and gender equality. These organizations may be able to draw on work they are already doing in the public sector and in communities, and adapt existing training courses and programs to meet the specific needs of the private sector. Building these business relationships will complement the recommendation for managers to learn more from external organizations that have expertise in the areas of gender equality, women's empowerment and GBV. Employment, business and industry organizations should also disseminate and publicize information on businesses that are making efforts to tackle bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces. This should include sharing information about initiatives and effective business systems. The sharing of this information will benefit the individual businesses by promoting them as employers of choice. It may also motivate other businesses to commence similar work.

5 Appendixes

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition ³⁰
actor	An individual who is involved in gender research or work and who participated in this research, but who is not an employee of one of the participating businesses.
body shaming	Criticizing a person because of their appearance, especially making negative comments about the clothes they are wearing, or the shape or size of their body and body parts.
bullying	Repeated and unreasonable behavior directed towards a person or a group of persons that creates a risk to health and safety.
disaggregated	Disaggregated data is data that has been broken down by sub-categories, such as gender, age or level of education. When disaggregated, data can reveal results that may not be visible in the aggregated data. Disaggregated data can, for example, show differences in the results between females and males.
discrimination	Any distinction, exclusion or preference that is made on the basis of a particular characteristic (such as race, sex, religion) and that impairs equality of opportunity and treatment (for example, in employment or occupation).
gender	Gender refers to the behaviors, social attributes and opportunities associated with being a particular sex. These behaviors, social attributes and opportunities are socially constructed. They are learned through gender socialization. They are context and time specific, and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a person in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between genders with regard to assigned responsibilities, activities, access to and control over resources, and decision-making. There are also dominant views on how a person should display their gender based on assumptions of gender linked to sex assigned at birth.
gender-based violence	Any form of violence, including physical and verbal abuse, related to social and cultural expectations of gender roles, often for the purpose of sustaining power. It can include intimidation, bullying, the use of language to harass or undermine and the use of physical force. Gender-based violence can affect both men and women.
gender identity	How someone feels (in their heart, mind, body and soul) about which gender they are.
gender nonconforming	Referring to a person whose gender expression does not conform to conventional gender-based stereotypes.
interviewee	A person who participated in a key informant interview for research. This includes human resources managers, workplace supervisors and managers, and representatives of non-private sector organizations.
masculinity	The particular pattern of social behaviors or practices that is associated with ideals about how men should behave. It is a relational concept, defined in opposition to femininity and ideals about how women should behave. There are multiple masculinities. These change over time and between and within different social settings. Some masculinities may hold more power and privilege than others. Some may be considered exemplary and indicative of "the real man." Common features of dominant or preferred masculinity in many cultures are dominance, toughness, and risk-taking. Some masculinities may be socially marginalized.
offender	A person or group that directly inflicts or otherwise supports violence or other abuse inflicted on another against their will.

participant	A person who participated in any research activity. The term is also used specifically for those employees who participated in a focus group identified as “FGD participant.”
respondent	An employee who completed the employee survey.
sex assigned at birth	The sex marker that appears on someone’s identity documents.
sexual exploitation (and abuse)	Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual abuse is further defined as “the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.” Women, girls, boys and men can experience sexual exploitation and abuse. In the context of World Bank supported projects, project beneficiaries or members of project-affected communities may experience sexual exploitation and abuse.
sexual harassment	Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment differs from sexual exploitation and abuse in that it occurs between personnel/staff working within the same workplace, and not between staff and project beneficiaries or communities. The distinction between sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment is important so that agency policies and staff training can include specific instructions on the procedures to report each. Both women and men can experience sexual harassment.
sexual orientation	What a person is physically, psychologically, romantically or sexually attracted to.
sexual violence	Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic a person’s sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless or relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.
survivor	A person who has experienced gender-based violence, including for the purpose of this report bullying and sexual harassment. The terms “victim” and “survivor” are often used interchangeably. Victim is a term more often used in the legal and medical sectors. Survivor is the term generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors because it implies resiliency.
survivor-centered approach	The survivor-centered approach is based on a set of principles and skills designed to guide professionals—regardless of their role—in their engagement with survivors (predominantly women and girls but also men and boys) who have experienced sexual or other forms of violence. The survivor-centered approach aims to create a supportive environment in which the survivor’s rights are respected and prioritized, and in which the survivor is treated with dignity and respect. The approach helps to promote the survivor’s recovery and ability to identify and express needs and wishes, as well as to reinforce the survivor’s capacity to make decisions about possible interventions.
target	A person who has been the target of sexual harassment and/or bullying in the workplace. This term has been used in place of “victim” or “survivor” to ensure that a false equivalency is not made between, for example, a target of bullying in the workplace and a survivor of a physical assault or rape. While both situations are serious, the term “target” allows for a wider range of possible experiences ranging from barely any impact to a severe impact on the person from their experience, whereas a victim or survivor implies a severe impact is more likely.
transgender	A person whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth.
victim blaming	Shifting the blame for why the bullying or harassment has occurred on to the person who has suffered. Victim blaming focuses on the individual and/or their behaviors, rather than on the structural causes (such as gender inequality) that underlie the violence that has been perpetrated. It promotes the idea that people can avoid violence if they avoid taking risks or stop engaging in particular behaviors, such as walking alone, staying out after dark or wearing “provocative” clothes.

Appendix 2: Research Methodology

An extensive outreach initiative was undertaken to advertise the research project and to encourage businesses to participate. This included direct contact with existing clients of IFC and the DaNa Facility, issuing invitation letters and e-mails to contacts in more than 200 large businesses, sharing information about the research with industry bodies, publicizing the project on social media, and holding face-to-face discussions with business managers to secure their agreement to participate. In total, 29 businesses and 10 other organizations participated. "Other sectors" includes businesses not in the primary sectors. Figure 14 shows the breakdown of the participating businesses per sector group.

Research was sometimes carried out in multiple workplaces of a business. This was the case for businesses that had business units operating in more than one of the four target sectors and for businesses that had large offices (and multiple branches) in more than one location. In both cases, the individual business unit or workplace was counted as a separate business, and the research data was kept separate for each for the purpose of the analysis.

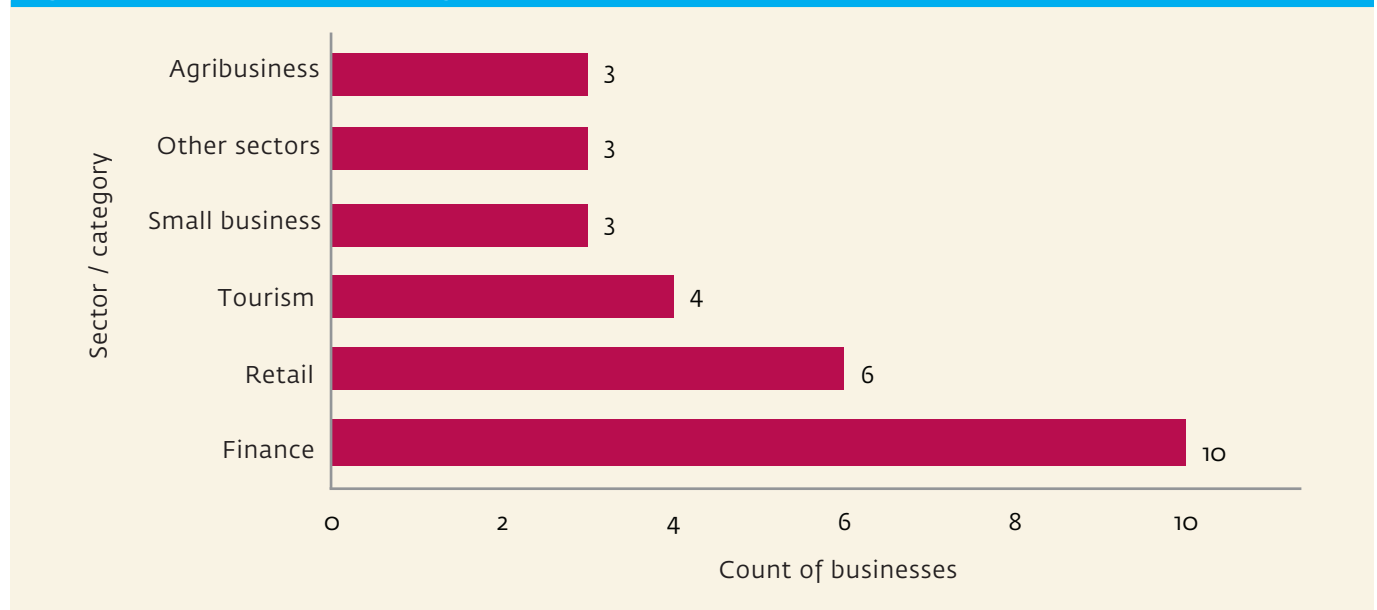
Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Data collection was completed using six research activities: employee

Respectful Workplaces survey, key informant interview (KII), focus group discussion (FGD), safety walk, workplace observation, and a cost to business question sheet.³¹

For participating large businesses, the research team spent a full day in each workplace. In all businesses, the employee survey, at least one KII, at least one FGD and the business cost question sheet were completed. A safety walk and/or workplace observation were completed in some businesses. In the case of the KIIs, the target interviewee was either the HR manager and/or an alternative manager or supervisor. In some businesses, two KIIs were completed. A FGD included up to eight employees of the same sex. In some businesses, two FGDs were completed to cover both female and male employees. The number of completed surveys in each workplace ranged from 12 to 46. Data collection in small businesses comprised only one KII with a senior manager. Completion of the employee survey and FGDs was not possible in these businesses due to the low number of total employees.

Additional FGDs were held with people who identified as being employed in a professional capacity in private sector businesses and who were affiliated with community groups that offer support for specific demographic populations. The populations

Figure 14: Breakdown of participating businesses



covered by these additional FGDs were deaf persons and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex (LGBTQI). These FGDs were organized with the assistance of relevant community groups and conducted outside the workplace. The purpose of running these additional sessions was to ensure inclusion of information about workplace bullying and sexual harassment from people who might otherwise not have been visible or easily accessible while carrying out the research activities in workplaces.³²

Additional KIIs were also conducted with representatives of non-government organizations and professional industry bodies. These stakeholders were invited to participate in a KII because it was identified that their work and/or the work of their organizations meant they were likely to have knowledge about bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces in Myanmar.

Figure 1 in section 2.3 shows the total number of each completed research activity. The available data from these activities constitutes the complete research project dataset.

Prior to commencing research activities in all the large businesses, the national consultants delivered a one-hour workshop to introduce and explore the topic of respectful workplaces with employees. All employees scheduled to participate in a research activity in their workplace that day were required to attend this workshop. During the workshop, the consultants used a number of interactive activities to explore definitions and examples of workplace bullying and sexual harassment with attendees. This helped reduce the risk of participants misunderstanding or not understanding key concepts, and therefore reduce the risk of errors in the results. Previous research into sexual harassment in workplaces in Myanmar identified that employees did not have a clear understanding of what this term means, and this affected the results.³³

Research participants from the large businesses were selected at random. Before arriving at a workplace, the research team requested a copy of the full list of employees in the business identifying the name, role and gender of each employee. Each employee on the list was assigned a number (if not already provided in the list), and an automated system was

used to select employees to participate in each research activity. No employee was selected to participate in more than one research activity, except for the employee Respectful Workplaces survey and cost to business question sheet which were collected during the same session from the same cohort of employees. With the exception of the safety walks, all the research activities were conducted with single-gender groups. Employees at management level were excluded from completing the employee survey, the cost to business question sheet, FGDs and safety walks.³⁴

The research project sought to ensure inclusion of persons outside dominant groups, including people who do not identify as either female or male. The answer of “other” was available as an option for gender identity in the employee Respectful Workplaces survey. The use of this word to describe non-female and non-male gender identities runs the risk of reaffirming female and male as the central norms and thereby re-othering and re-marginalizing people with alternative gender identities. In the design of the survey, consideration was given to how certain answers might present barriers to participants’ willingness to complete the survey in full. The research team decided that the inclusion of terms such as “transman”, “transwoman” or “genderqueer” may have become such barriers. The translation of these terms into Burmese is difficult due to a lack of widely understood equivalents and because these are examples of gender identity that have emerged within a specifically Western framework of gender politics and experiences. None of the survey respondents in fact selected “other” as their gender identity. The research team had anticipated that it might be difficult for gender nonconforming persons to self-identify in the survey, due to the fear of exposure and risk of discrimination. The inclusion in the research activities of FGDs with persons who identified as being part of the LGBTQI community sought to ensure inclusion of the voices of employed persons who might otherwise have selected “other” as their gender identity.

The research team comprised four consultants from the global social research company [Factive Consulting](#). Two national researchers were responsible for scheduling and data collection. The lead international researcher monitored the quality of the incoming data and conducted some of the KIIs with stakeholders. A communication consultant provided remote support

for use of technology to collect and store the data. The research team leveraged cloud-connected iPads and Scantron style optical mark recognition forms to manage data collection.

In total, 715 employees completed the Respectful Workplaces survey. All these respondents confirmed they had attended the workshop on respectful workplaces before completing the survey. Attendance at this workshop was mandatory for all research participants to guarantee a high level of confidence in the ability of participants to understand the two key concepts in the survey: bullying and sexual harassment (in the workplace).³⁵

Survey respondents were not obligated to answer all the survey questions. In cases where a respondent did not answer a particular question where an answer would have been expected (for example, what is your age group?), this participant was removed from the total population count for that question. The same applied in the case of a respondent providing multiple answers to a question where multiple answers would be considered impossible and therefore invalid (for example, age group, place of birth). This was to ensure the results to all individual answers showed a total percentage of 100 percent for these types of questions. For questions where multiple responses were expected (for example, 'list all that apply' type questions), percentages should generally not be expected to sum to 100 percent unless the analysis specifically states otherwise (for example, the relative ratio of a given response to other responses for a question of this type).

Demographic information about the survey respondents allows the analysis in this section of the report to explore the possibility of differing results for different groups of employees according to gender, age, disability, level of education and level of employment. This cross-analysis of the survey results is important to identify risks that may be unique to particular groups. Are people of a certain age more at risk of experiencing bullying or sexual harassment in their workplaces, for example? Does a person's gender or employment level affect their willingness to report an incident? This kind of disaggregated analysis helps provide a more nuanced picture of the situation for bullying and sexual harassment in the participating businesses. Where relevant—and especially with respect to experiences and risks—such disaggregated analysis is offered. The analysis in this

section also draws on the qualitative results from the KIIs and FGDs conducted with employees, as well as other stakeholders. In differing situations, this additional information helps clarify, challenge or confirm survey results.

Experiences of bullying and sexual harassment—whether as witnesses, targets or offenders—can also be split by workplace. Doing so will help identify if there are any commonalities or differences between the participating businesses. Are rates of experiencing sexual harassment less common in one particular business than others, for example? Does a business have a higher level of reporting than another? The purpose of answering these kinds of question is not to expose any particular business. The analysis of the results disaggregated by individual business does not identify the names of the businesses. Results from individual business are also presented in no particular order in the charts.

This disaggregated analysis can instead help to show that bullying and sexual harassment are not only found in certain "bad" businesses. In fact, as the results of this research, when disaggregated by individual business, show these behaviors are common across all the businesses. Bullying and sexual harassment are therefore issues that are costing all the businesses by creating environments in which employees have to spend time and energy dealing with the disrespectful behaviors that are going on around them and which they experience directly.

Employees were not obligated to respond to every question in the Respectful Workplaces survey. Of the total survey population, 3 percent did not provide an answer to the question about witnessing bullying in their current workplace. More than double this did not answer the question about experiencing bullying. For both witnessing and experiencing sexual harassment, the rate of no response is approximately 8 percent. The research did not include asking respondents to explain why they did not answer a question. Possible reasons for not wanting to disclose incidents of bullying or harassment—whether witnessed and/or experienced—might include fear of reprisal from their employer, not wishing to provide information that could reflect negatively on their employer, not knowing if they had witnessed/experienced an incident or not, or not wishing to reflect on these experiences due to trauma or shame.

After completion of the data collection and preliminary analysis of the results, two validation workshops were held to share the findings and to discuss the analysis. The first workshop included representatives of organizations and individuals who were identified as having a professional or personal interest in exploring gender issues in Myanmar. For the second workshop, senior managers (including the HR manager) from the participating businesses were invited to attend. During this second workshop, attendees had an opportunity to ask questions about the findings and to consider what businesses might need to help respond to identified issues. A one-page infographic of some of the individual business results and a similar infographic of the overall results were placed in envelopes and handed out to the business representatives. The names of the businesses were not recorded on these infographics.

LIMITATIONS

The sample size of participating businesses was small and therefore we cannot conclude that these research results are representative of business in Myanmar. Data presented in this report reflects the results from the research dataset as outlined in Figure 1 in section 2.3. Given that participants were randomly selected, the results are representative of what is happening in the participating businesses. The analysis also gives insights into workplace bullying and sexual harassment in these businesses.

Businesses where senior management (or whose investors) have positive attitudes towards topics such as gender, workplace culture and workplace behaviors (including specifically bullying and sexual harassment) were more likely to participate in this research. Where business leaders have a negative attitude towards these topics, businesses would probably have been less likely to participate. The research results may reflect the workplace situation only in businesses where there is already some willingness to address issues relating to bullying and sexual harassment.

The sample size of businesses in each sector was small and therefore we cannot conclude that these research results are representative of business sectors. In the case of all sectors, the total number of participants would not qualify as a suitable sample size to obtain a high level of confidence in the

results for drawing conclusions about the sector as a whole. Additionally, some of the participating businesses, including some in the finance sector, were not selected randomly. They were invited to participate in the research because they are already clients of IFC and/or the DaNa Facility. Because of these limitations in the study, any analysis of these results to make generalizations about specific sectors should not be considered final. Further research would be required to better understand trends relating to the sectors.

Table 1 shows the margin of error we could expect if we were to use the results of this research project to explore the respective situations for workplace bullying and sexual harassment in each sector with a 95 percent confidence level. To illustrate this with an example for the Finance sector, this means that if the Respectful Workplaces survey were conducted again 100 times with the same number of randomly selected respondents each time, in 95 of those 100 surveys, we would expect to see results within 5.67 percent of the stated result for this survey.³⁶ To make statistically robust generalizations about the sector as a whole, we would seek to obtain a 99 percent confidence level with a 5 percent margin of error (or less). The number of randomly selected respondents from each sector that would be required to obtain this confidence level is shown in the bottom row of the table. The required sample size does not change much for populations larger than 20,000, so these figures are similar for all sectors.

Only in the case of the finance sector might we have some reasonable level of confidence in using the research results from that sector to make claims about the sector as a whole. There were more research participants from the finance sector than any other sector. For completed employee surveys, the difference between the number of respondents in the finance sector and those in the agribusiness sector is the largest, with 234 more completed surveys in the former than in the latter. There were also more research activities carried out in the finance sector than in the other sectors. This situation is to be expected given that the number of participating businesses in the finance sector was 10, compared to three in agribusiness, six in retail and four in tourism. This weighting of the results toward the finance sector is factored into the analysis by, where relevant, identifying sector differences.

Table 1: Margin of error per sector

	Agribusiness	Finance	Retail	Tourism
Estimated population size³⁷ of sector	11,026,852	42,891	1,946,852	983,210
Actual number of survey respondents	66	297	174	96
Margin of error (95 percent confidence level)	± 12.06 percent	± 5.67 percent	± 7.43 percent	± 10 percent
Respondents required for 99 percent confidence level with 5 percent margin of error	664	654	664	664

The project did not seek to limit the locations of businesses. However, the majority of the participating business were located in Yangon or Mandalay where the majority of large Myanmar businesses have their head offices. Only three of the participating businesses were located elsewhere. The analysis does not seek to investigate possible differences in workplace bullying and sexual harassment based on location or state.

Research into experiences of violence, harassment or abuse always raises ethical concerns about how to ensure the safety of people involved. The research team received training before commencing the research to understand their responsibility to conduct the research in a way that would do no harm to participants.³⁸ Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that any information they provided would be anonymous. They were not asked to discuss specific details of personal experiences of bullying or sexual harassment. To further reduce the risk of harm to research participants, the researchers carried small contact cards with anonymous helpline numbers to hand out confidentially to any participant who asked for further assistance or who wanted to discuss their personal experiences. Some of these cards were handed out to participants on request.

There are certain words and terms related to the broader topic of GBV that are more commonly used and understood in English, and some of these words do not translate easily into Myanmar language. To ensure accuracy in the translation from English to Myanmar language, the research team collaborated with several people with experience conducting research into gender issues in Myanmar, including some employees of IFC and the DaNa Facility. Key research terms—including “sexual harassment” and “bullying”—were introduced and explained to research participants during the initial one-hour workshop prior to starting research activities in all workplaces. Two members

of the research team also worked together to translate the results of research activities (especially from the KIIs and FGDs) from Myanmar language into English. These approaches helped reduce the risks of misunderstanding and incorrect translation of questions and answers.

There are additional limitations placed on this kind of research due to the stigma associated with social issues such as sexual harassment. Some organizations and participants were reluctant to even say the phrase “sexual harassment.” Research participants may be reluctant to answer questions honestly, especially questions that ask them to identify types of behaviors they may have witnessed or experienced, because of the shame associated with the behaviors. They may have concerns that sharing an experience of sexual harassment could expose them to further risks of being teased, ignored or blamed by others. This can lead to underreporting of experiences and underestimating the severity of incidents. The majority of the research for this project was conducted inside workplaces. Participants were asked to identify types of bullying and sexual harassment they had witnessed and experienced in those workplaces. They may have been concerned about the negative consequences of speaking openly in the presence of an offender of bullying or harassment, not showing respect for their leaders (which is a Myanmar cultural norm) and creating conflict. They may also have been afraid of losing their jobs. The researchers were also concerned about the risk to employees who said something negative about their workplace. In some cases, when employees—Myanmar national staff in particular—identified an incident of bullying or sexual harassment that had occurred in their workplace, they quickly insisted the behavior was not intentional or just a joke. Despite the limitations described, the results suggest a high level of response and honesty from participants.

Appendix 3: Research Aims and Questions

Research Aim 1: Identify the forms of workplace bullying and sexual harassment, disaggregated by gender, sexual identity, age, ethnicity, religion, education, marital status, migration status, disability, location, time, employment status and job role.

Question 1. What forms of workplace bullying and sexual harassment do workers experiences?

Question 2. What kinds of workers experience these forms of workplace bullying and sexual harassment?

Research Aim 2. Identify the socio-cultural and workplace norms and mechanisms that, with respect to workplace bullying and sexual harassment:

- *encourage targets of harassment and bullying to raise grievances;*
- *blame and/or silence targets;*
- *encourage witnesses to speak out;*
- *silence witnesses;*
- *support whistle-blowers; and,*
- *protect perpetrators.*

Question 3. What are the socio-cultural norms that silence discussions about workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 3a. What are the socio-cultural norms that encourage discussions about workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 4. What are the workplace norms that encourage targets of workplace sexual harassment or bullying to speak out?

Question 4a. What are the workplace norms that blame targets of workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 4b. What are the workplace norms that silence targets of workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 5. What are the workplace norms that encourage witnesses of workplace sexual harassment or bullying to speak out?

Question 5a. What are the workplace norms that silence witnesses of workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 6. What are the workplace norms that support whistle-blowers of workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 7. What are the workplace norms that protect perpetrators of workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 7a. What are the workplace norms that help identify and respond to perpetrators of workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Research Aim 3: Identify the risk factors that pre-dispose workers to perpetrate and/or suffer bullying and sexual harassment, determined by demographics of workers (gender, sexual identity, age, ethnicity, religion, education, marital status, migration status, disability, location, time, employment status and job role), experiences of domestic violence (including family and sexual violence), employment conditions (job role, contract type) and levels of debt.

Question 8. What are the risk factors for perpetrating workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 9. What are the risk factors for suffering workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Research Aim 4: Identify the kinds of responses that targets and witnesses of workplace bullying and sexual harassment can take and cannot take.

Question 10. What responses can targets of workplace bullying and sexual harassment take?

Question 10a. Do targets of workplace bullying and sexual harassment know about these response mechanisms?

Question 10b. Do targets of workplace bullying and sexual harassment have confidence in these response mechanisms?

Question 10c. What responses can targets of workplace bullying and sexual harassment not take?

Question 11. What responses can witnesses of workplace bullying and sexual harassment take?

Question 11a. What responses can witnesses of workplace bullying and sexual harassment not take?

Research Aim 5: Identify the existence, relevance, comprehensiveness and implementation of company policies, protocols and training for dealing with sexual harassment or bullying in workplaces.

Question 12. What policies do businesses have to respond to workplace bullying and sexual harassment?

Question 12a. How relevant are these policies?

Question 12b. How comprehensive are these policies?

Question 12c. How are these policies communicated and implemented?

Question 12d. How effective are these policies in preventing and responding to workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 12e. How do these policies deal with perpetrators?

Question 12f. Are HR and grievance personnel trained in how to implement these policies?

Question 12g. Do employees know about the existence of these policies?

Question 12h. How do employers ensure employees understand these policies?

Question 13. What protocols do businesses have to respond to workplace bullying and sexual harassment?

Question 13a. How relevant are these protocols?

Question 13b. How comprehensive are these protocols?

Question 13c. How are these protocols communicated and implemented?

Question 13d. How effective are these protocols in responding to workplace sexual harassment or bullying?

Question 13e. How do these protocols deal with perpetrators?

Question 13f. Are HR and grievance personnel trained in how to implement these protocols?

Question 13g. Do employees know about the existence of these protocols?

Question 13h. How do employers ensure employees understand these protocols?

Question 14. What training do businesses have on workplace bullying and sexual harassment?

Question 14a. How relevant is this training?

Question 14b. How comprehensive is this training?

Research Aim 6: Identify the existence of support mechanisms, policies, resources and health services offered by employers for employees facing domestic violence.

Question 15. What support mechanisms do businesses offer for employees facing domestic violence?

Question 15a. What are the existing policies?

Question 15b. What resources are available to implement the mechanisms?

Question 15c. What support services (health, counselling, case management, legal) are available for employees to access?

Question 15d. Do employees know about these support services?

Question 15e. Are available support services used by targets of harassment and bullying?

Question 15f. Are targets satisfied with these support services?

Research Aim 7: Estimate the costs to business per sector (agribusiness, finance, retail and tourism) of workplace bullying and sexual harassment.

Question 16. What is the cost to a business per sector of workplace bullying and sexual harassment?

Appendix 4: Research Activities

The research methodology used six different research tools to collect both quantitative and qualitative data in the participating businesses and from other research participants (small businesses, employed persons linked to community groups supporting vulnerable populations and other stakeholders). Short descriptions of these six tools are provided below.

Prior to commencing research in any of the large businesses, the research team led a one-hour workshop with research participants to introduce them to the general research themes and to provide an opportunity for the participants to explore specific types of bullying and sexual harassment that might occur in workplaces.

After completion of the data collection and some preliminary analysis, two validation workshops were held with interested stakeholders and representatives of the participating businesses respectively.

Tool 1: Employee Survey

Use of questions to gather quantitative data from employees on different aspects of their workplace culture. The employee survey will be run with a group of up to 20 single-gender employees in each workplace for the large businesses. The facilitator will guide the respondents through each question, and respondents will use a fixed response form to record their answers anonymously and in confidence. The questions will seek to collect data on workers' experiences of and attitudes toward bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace, with data disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, religion, employment contract type, job role and household context. The survey will be available in both English and Burmese.

Tool 2: Key Informant Interview

Use of set questions to conduct interviews with HR managers, other select business managers and external stakeholders. The KII questions for HR and other business managers will be similar, and will refer to behaviors and response mechanisms within the workplace. The KII questions for external stakeholders will focus on broader issues relating to bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces in Myanmar. All KIIs will be semi-structured, allowing for additional and probing questions to be asked in response to answers. HR managers will be asked to provide copies of relevant

policies (such as sexual harassment, code of conduct). Interviews will be conducted in Burmese or English.

Tool 3: Focus Group Discussion

Use of four interactive activities to extract information from employees about bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces.

- A gender equality attitudes assessment (with focus on harassment and bullying behaviors).
- Storytelling of experiences of workplace harassment and bullying (using "what if..." approach in Q&A session or through role-plays).
- A discussion on differences between sexual harassment, bullying and friendly interactions around the issue of consent.
- A brainstorming of ideas to promote respectful workplaces.

Discussions will be conducted in Burmese. Each group should include no more than eight employees, in single-gender groups.

Tool 4: Safety Walk

Use of an interactive walking tour around the business premises to explore perceptions of risks and safety through the eyes of employees. Safety walks will be conducted in Burmese and will include approximately three employees.

Tool 5: Workplace Observation

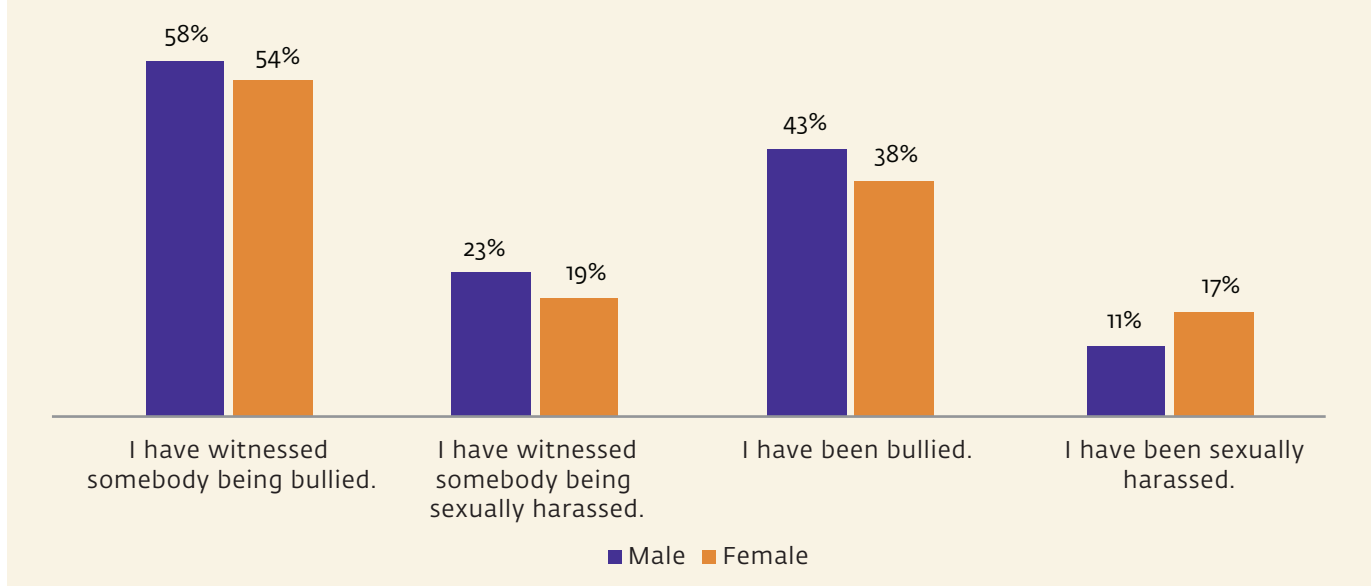
While in the workplace, the researchers will make a number of observations about the business premises and workplace culture to identify materials or behaviors that could suggest positive and negative support for bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace. They will, for example, listen for use of language between employees and identify the kinds of images that are visible.

Tool 6: Business Costs Surveys

HR managers and survey respondents will also be asked to provide some additional information on absenteeism, average salaries and the impacts of bullying and sexual harassment on workplace performance. This information will be used to estimate the cost to business for workplace bullying and sexual harassment.

Appendix 5: Results and Analysis

Figure 15: Incidence of sexual harassment and bullying by gender



Perhaps the headline result from this research study is that bullying and sexual harassment is taking place across all participating businesses at a significant incidence level. Figure 15 shows that men and women report a similar incidence level, except women are 35 percent more likely to have experienced sexual harassment compared with male respondents.

This section of the report will explore the results of the research study in more detail and will provide analysis based on participant demographics and per sector differences.

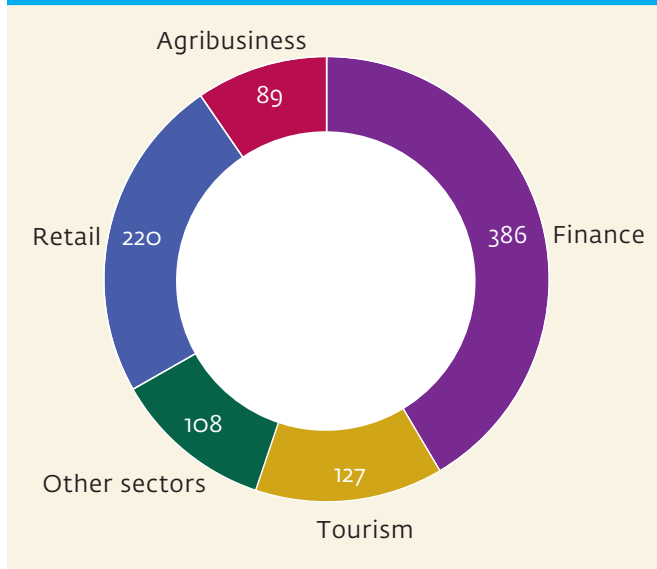
ABOUT THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Participants in the research were young (78 percent aged between 18 and 34), single (59 percent) and without dependent children (68 percent). While there were more women (58 percent) than men (42 percent) who participated in the research, analysis shows there is a balanced representation and experiences of men and women were not very different. Most were highly educated, with 85 percent university educated and 88 percent were permanent employees. The majority of participants were from Yangon and Mandalay (55 percent) and identified as Bamar (80 percent). Employees worked mostly in the four primary sectors – agribusiness, finance, retail and tourism. Most of the group (66 percent) worked in non-supervisory roles and 82 percent had been with their company for one to five years.

Sector

The total research population includes a significantly larger number of respondents from the finance sector than all the other sectors. Figure 16 shows the total number of research participants (including employee survey respondents, FGD participants and KII interviewees) per sector.

Figure 16: Number of research participants per sector



Out of the total survey population of 715, 297 respondents were from the finance sector. Analysis of the full survey dataset could produce findings biased toward this sector. In some cases, especially when looking at the general demographics of the survey population, this will not present an issue. When considering the results of experiences of workplace bullying and sexual harassment, separating the results by sector will sometimes be useful to help identify risks or practices in individual sectors. In the case of all sectors, however, the total number of participating businesses and the employee sample size would be considered too small to make generalizations about the sectors. The analysis therefore identifies trends, risks and opportunities within the group of participating businesses.

Gender

The gender identity of the survey respondents is split 58 percent to 42 percent between females and males respectively.³⁹ While the number of female respondents in the total survey population is larger, the gender identity percentages for females and males represent a relatively balanced survey population. The results of the survey therefore reflect the experiences and thoughts of both female and male employees in the participating businesses. Throughout this chapter, the survey results are often disaggregated by gender⁴⁰ to identify and explore differences between females and males in the results. As this gender analysis shows, these differences are minor.

Age Group

The majority of the survey respondents are in the 25 to 34 age group. This applies for both females and males, and in all sectors. 56 percent of respondents identified as being in this age group. Only 6 percent indicated they were aged 45 years or older. The survey results therefore represent the experiences and attitudes of relatively young employees, many of whom would be in the early stages of their career after graduating from university.

The average age of the total number of employees who participated in the FGDs is 30. These participants therefore fall within the same age bracket as majority of the survey respondents. The average age of the 41 HR managers and other managers who participated in a KII is 38. The seniority of these personnel in the businesses would account for the higher average age.

Religion

The majority of the survey respondents (91 percent) identified as Buddhist. The second most commonly selected religion was Christianity (7 percent). Only 1 percent said they had no religion. These religious affiliations are close to the national rates of 89.9 percent Buddhist and 6.3 percent Christian.⁴¹ The fact that a significant majority of the respondents identify with the same religion means the results cannot be analyzed to identify differences in experiences and attitudes toward workplace bullying and sexual harassment based on religious affiliation. Any claim of a link between these experiences and attitudes and being a Hindu, for example, would not be adequately accurate given that only 1 percent of the respondents identified as Hindu.

Birthplace and Relocation

More than 50 percent of respondents were born in either Yangon (38 percent) or Mandalay (17 percent). This is likely because the majority of the workplaces visited for conducting the research were also located in these two urban centers.

Table 2 shows the top two identified birthplaces (excluding Yangon and Mandalay) per sector, including the percentages of survey respondents from each sector who made these selections.

Among the total survey population, the most commonly cited birthplaces other than Yangon or Mandalay were Ayeyarwaddy and Bago. These two locations account for the birthplaces of 17 percent of the total survey population. Only 1 percent said they were born outside Myanmar. Of those who work in Yangon, 50 percent were not born there. Of those working in Mandalay, 17 percent were not born there.

Survey respondents were asked to identify if they moved here (for example, to their current place of residence) to start their current job. Among those currently working in Yangon, 61 percent said “Yes”. The corresponding percentage for Mandalay is 56 percent. The question linked to these results is somewhat ambiguous. When asked, “Did you move here specifically to start this job?”, some respondents may have answered “Yes” to mean they moved in order to be closer to their new place of work but this move was within Yangon or Mandalay because they were already living in the city at the time of employment. The percentage of survey respondents who are new migrants to the cities cannot therefore be calculated. Such a calculation might have helped identify if new migrants face different levels of risks of experiencing workplace bullying and sexual harassment.

Table 2: Origins of participants by sector (excluding Yangon/Mandalay)

#	Finance	Agribusiness	Retail	Tourism	Other sectors
1	Bago 8 percent	Thaninthayi 25 percent	Ayeyarwaddy 9 percent	Ayeyarwaddy 24 percent	Kayah 33 percent
2	Ayeyarwaddy 8 percent	Sagaing Ayeyarwaddy (tied) 11 percent	Bago 7 percent	Bago 7 percent	Shan 18 percent

Figure 17: Respondents who relocated for work by sector, disaggregated by gender

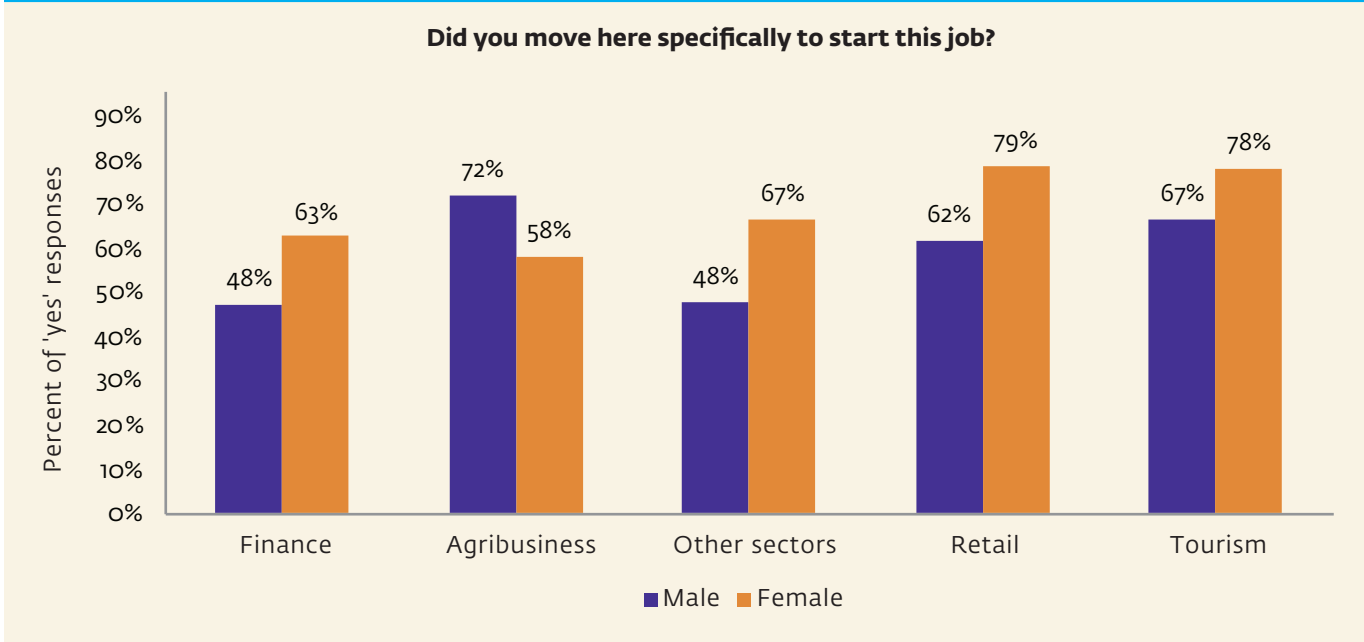


Figure 17 shows the percentages of respondents from each sector who said they moved specifically for their current job, disaggregated by gender.

With the exception of agribusiness, substantially more women relocated for work than men in each sector. Overall, 64 percent of women compared to 57 percent of men said they had moved in order to take up their current employment.

Disability

From the survey population, 4 percent of both females and males identified as having a disability.⁴² This is close to the national rates. In the 2014 census, 4.6 percent of the total population in Myanmar self-identified as having a disability. The disabled persons in this sample population are spread across all four sectors. The highest rate is found in the agribusiness sector (9 percent).

Marital Status and Parenthood

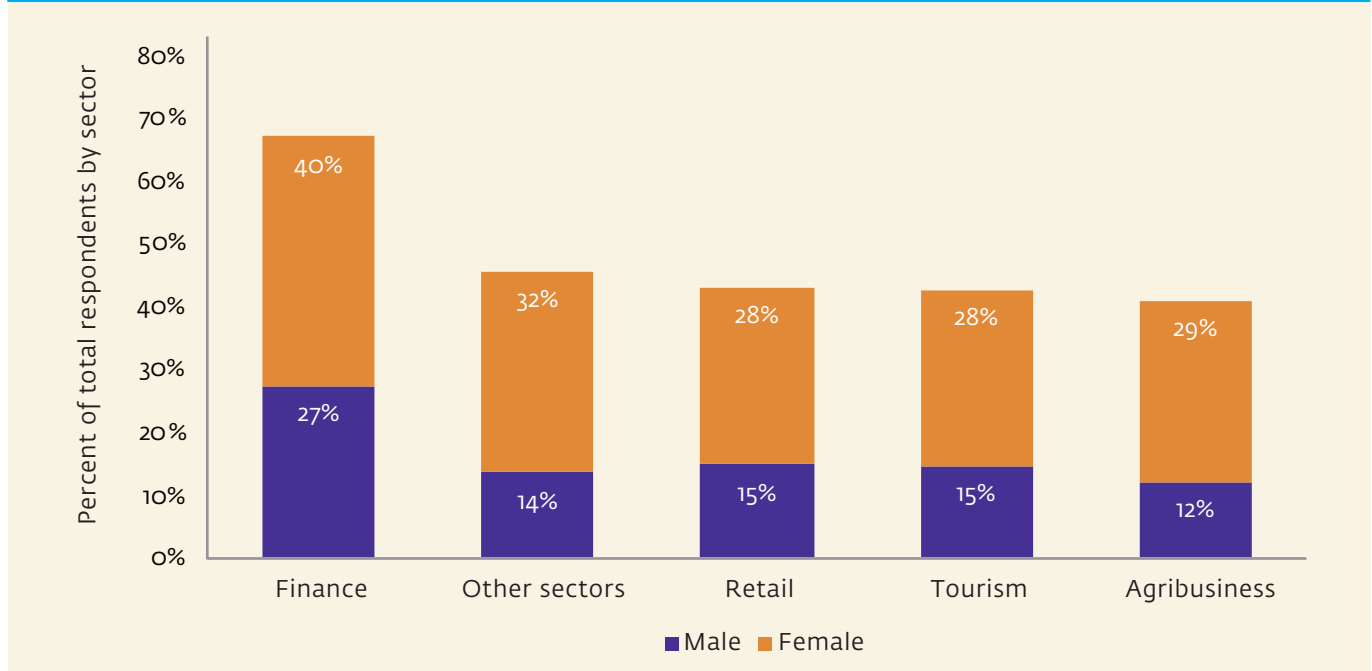
A majority of the survey respondents identified as single (59 percent). Among the men, 46 percent identified as married, compared to 31 percent of women. Employees are more likely to be married than single if they work in agribusiness or the other sectors. In finance, the ratio of single to married employees was almost three to one. The highest rates of divorcees were in agribusiness and tourism—3 percent in both sectors.

Almost one third of the survey respondents said they had dependent children under the age of 16. Of these, 53 percent were female. From the total survey population, 36 percent of the male employees said they had dependent children compared to 30 percent of female employees. Respondents who work in tourism or other sectors are the most likely to have dependent children. The lowest rate was among respondents who work in finance (23 percent).

Figure 18 shows the proportional percentages per sector of employees who identified as single and without dependent children, disaggregated by gender.

In the finance sector, there is a larger percentage of both single females and single males with no dependent children than in any of the other sectors.

Figure 18: Percent of single respondents with no dependent children by sector



Education

The majority of the survey respondents (85 percent) have completed university education. The research results do not provide additional information about the participants' level of university education. Some survey respondents suggested to the research team they would have liked to have had additional options to identify their qualifications beyond a bachelor's degree. This suggests that some have further degrees. Overall, this indicates a highly educated workforce. Nationally, only 7.6 percent of the population in Myanmar has completed education above graduate diploma level.⁴³

Female respondents were more likely to have completed university education (91 percent) compared to males (77 percent). The percentage point difference of 14 percent is higher than the national difference where 8.2 percent of females compared to 6.8 percent for men have completed a university diploma or above. The finance sector had the highest rate of employees who are university educated (96 percent). The sector with the lowest rate was agribusiness (55 percent), where we also see the highest rate of employees who had only completed middle school education (24 percent). This is almost four times higher than in any other sector. Respondents who said they had not completed any formal education are found in the finance, tourism and retail sectors. In each case, this is only one person.

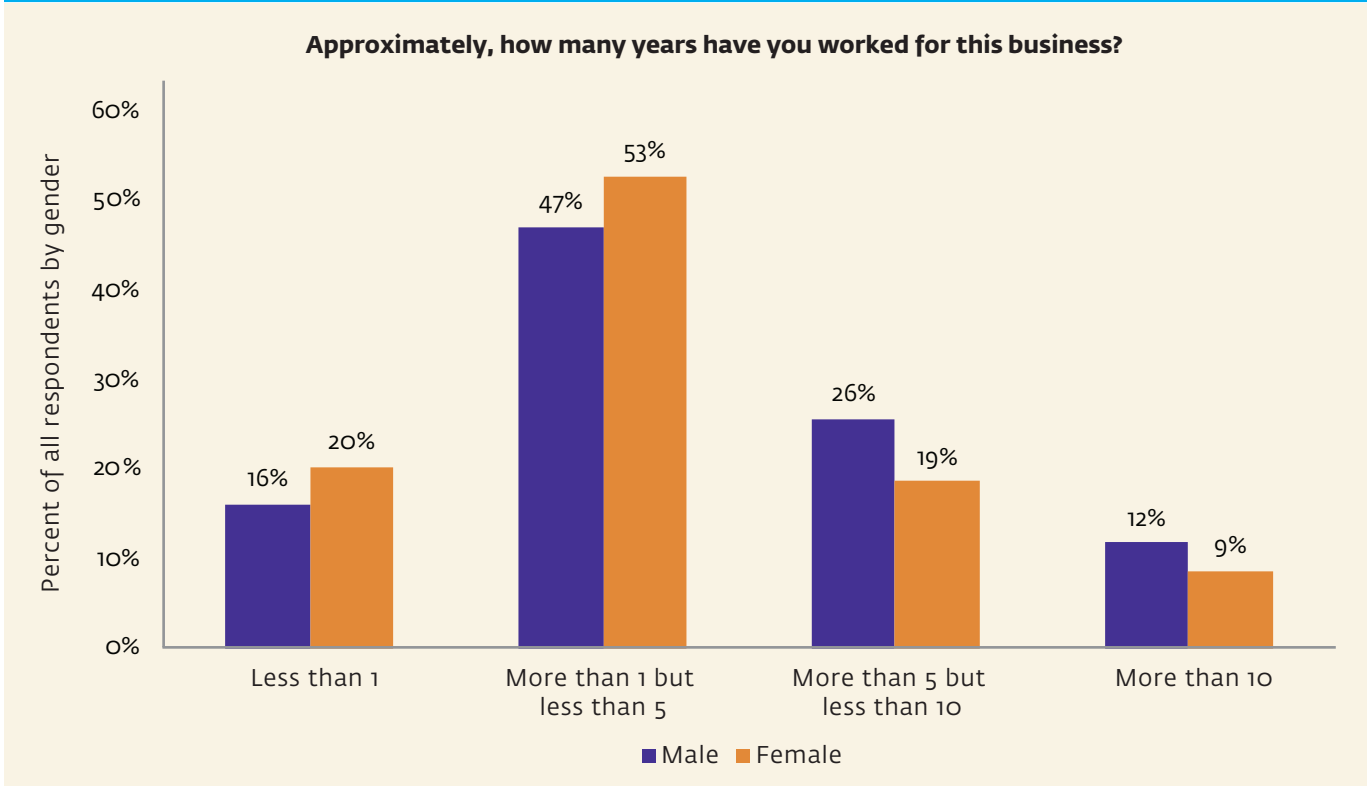
Type, Duration and Level of Employment

About 90 percent of the total survey respondents have permanent employment status regardless of gender and sector. This makes it difficult to consider if employment status affects an employee's level of risk of experiencing bullying or sexual harassment in their workplace. The sample size of those who are not in permanent positions—temporary fixed contract, casual for example—is too small. There is a slightly higher rate of casual employees in the agribusiness sector. Here, it is 17 percent compared with between 1 percent and 5 percent in all other sectors.

68 percent of the survey respondents have worked in their current workplace for fewer than five years. This reflects the relatively young age of the survey population. It is about the same situation in the finance, retail and tourism sectors. In agribusiness, the rate is much higher (91 percent). The agribusiness sector also has the highest percentage of employees (38 percent) who have worked for less than one year.

38 percent of males have worked in their current job for more than five years. This compares to 26 percent of women. This may be the result of a continuing social expectation in Myanmar that women should cease employment after they have had children. Figure 19 shows the length of employment for women and men according to level of employment.

Figure 19: Gender differences in employment duration



The gender ratio among more senior personnel from the participating businesses who completed a KII was 24 females to 17 males. This suggests that longevity in employment in the same job may increase a woman's access to promotion.

When discussing with contacts in participating businesses who to invite to complete the employee survey, the research team asked that employees who were working at management level be excluded from this particular research activity. The plan was to collect information from more senior personnel in KIIs. However, 13 percent of the survey respondents identified as managers and 22 percent identified as supervisors. This information allows some analysis of possible differences in experiences and risks of workplace bullying and sexual harassment based on level of employment.

DO BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT TAKE PLACE AT WORK?

The results of the survey show that both bullying and sexual harassment occur in all the participating businesses. Employees are witnessing and experiencing both behaviors in all the workplaces. Two out of five of the survey respondents have experienced bullying in their current place of work. One out of five has witnessed sexual harassment.

Figure 2 and Figure 5 show how employees responded when they were asked if they had witnessed or experienced bullying or sexual harassment in their workplace.

Figure 8 shows the percentage of employees who acknowledged they had been bullied or sexually harassed, compared to the percentage who said they had experienced at least one specific type of bullying or harassing behavior that was indicative of sexual harassment or bullying. Each pair of dots along the x-axis of this chart represent the responses from one of the 26 participating businesses. A number from 1 to 26 was assigned to each business to ensure anonymity.

That graph shows that in all businesses, employees are more likely to identify having experienced specific behaviors than to say they have been bullied or sexually harassed. One possible conclusion here is that the respondents did not understand the more general terms of “bullying” and “sexual harassment,” but they did understand the specific behaviors. The research team nevertheless reported a high level of understanding of the general terms bullying and sexual harassment among participants as a result of attending the mandatory workshop at the beginning of the research. During the workshop, participants were introduced to both the broader terms and related specific behaviors.⁴⁴ The same terms and behaviors were used in the research methodology and activities.

What is more likely is that participants were willing to identify the behaviors they had experienced in their workplace, but they preferred not to label these behaviors as bullying or sexual harassment. They could accept they had experienced the behaviors, but they did not want to accept that they were “victims” of bullying or sexual harassment. The same situation arose in other research that explored women’s experiences of sexual harassment in Myanmar workplaces, where 58 percent of participants identified they had experienced sexual harassment in their workplace, but only 3 percent said they had been sexually harassed.⁴⁵ In some cases, this difference is linked to the normalization of specific behaviors, including being shouted at by a supervisor and being the target of body shaming. A participant knows a colleague has made comments about their body or clothing, but this is considered normal behavior within their workplace so it is not interpreted as sexual harassment. In other cases, a participant may be willing to acknowledge that a colleague has teased them in a way that has had upset them. However, they do not want to interpret this incident as them having been bullied or sexually harassed, both of which are

Two out of five of the survey respondents have experienced bullying in their current place of work. One out of five has witnessed sexual harassment.

positions within the businesses (and within Myanmar society as a whole) that locate the individual as weak and troublesome and expose them to the risk of shame and retaliation.

This is a significant finding of the research, especially for informing interventions the participating businesses (and other businesses in Myanmar) may take to respond to bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces. It suggests there is a need to challenge the belief that somebody who experiences bullying or sexual harassment is weak. They need to be seen not as victims, but as employees with the right to work free from harassment and abuse. Responses to incidents of bullying and sexual harassment—whether by individual employees or within formal business mechanisms—need to recognize the strength of the person who is making the allegation and the weakness of those who rely on bullying or sexual harassment to undermine others. Employees who speak out about incidents are not disturbing the “family” peace. To the contrary, they are seeking to create peace within the familial workplace environment by raising awareness about behaviors that threaten this peace. This is an attitude HR managers in particular should be encouraged to adopt. For training, it means that using the terms “bullying” and “sexual harassment” may be less effective than using specific examples of disrespectful behaviors that can and do occur in workplaces. For policies, it means clarity on what is meant by bullying and sexual harassment to close the gap between knowing what behaviors are occurring and knowing that these behaviors are unacceptable in the workplace. In line with other global findings, the more specific and concrete the naming of behaviors, the more effective the responses can be.

Attitudes

The attitudes of individual employees in a workplace give an indication of that workplace's culture. Positive attitudes toward gender equality would indicate a workplace culture that treats women and men equally. Positive attitudes toward respectful behaviors would indicate a workplace culture that does not tolerate the maltreatment of workers, including bullying and sexual harassment. In contrast, negative attitudes among employees (including managers) toward gender equality and respectful behaviors would increase the risk of discrimination and abuse in a workplace.

When asked whether bullying was acceptable, 23 percent of the survey respondents said they believe it is sometimes acceptable at work. Similarly, 13 percent said they believe sexual harassment is sometimes acceptable at work. The percentage who believe both are acceptable is 7 percent. Addressing these negative attitudes, while increasing the contrasting positive attitudes that employees have, is important to establishing respectful workplaces in which employees can work safely and productively. Of the total survey respondents, 88 percent said they believe bullying is a problem in their workplace. Slightly less (84 percent) said they believe sexual harassment is a problem in their workplace. These figures show an awareness of the problem. Also, 87 percent and 77 percent do not agree that bullying and sexual harassment respectively are acceptable. These are the positive attitudes that require reinforcement and encouragement.

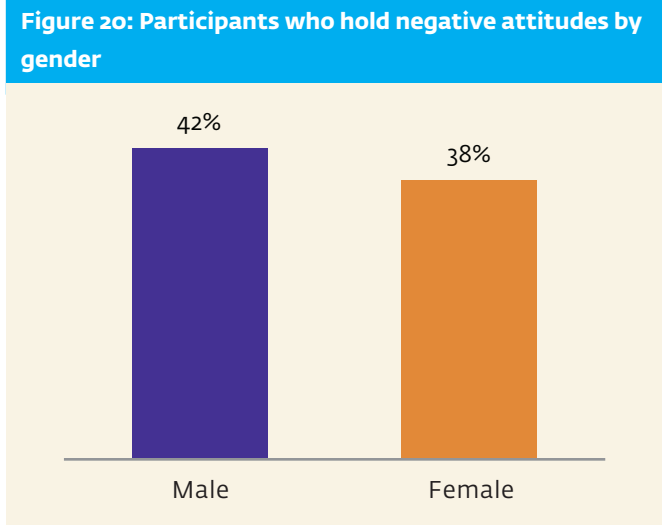
Employees identified a number of reasons why they think somebody could be bullied or sexually harassed, as shown in Figure 11.

These results give further insight into the specific negative attitudes that employees hold. Overall, 18 percent identified at least one characteristic about a person that they thought was a good enough reason for that person to be bullied. By doing so, these 18 percent show their support for victim-blaming under certain circumstances. For sexual harassment, it is 13 percent.⁴⁶

When asked why a person in a workplace might experience bullying or sexual harassment, the two most commonly selected answers by survey respondents were the clothes that a person wears (45 percent) and the body shape of the person (40 percent). We find elsewhere in the research results that employees do, in fact, believe people—women in particular—are to blame for the sexual harassment they face if they decide to wear clothing that others deem inappropriate. More than one third of the FGD participants agreed that women have nothing to complain about if they wear “inappropriate clothing” to work and then suffer sexual harassment from their male colleagues. We also find that employees believe that making fun about a colleague's body is acceptable behavior. In more than one third of the FGDs, the participants identified that these kinds of behaviors occur in their workplaces. Responses they suggested people should take in these situations included ignoring it and accepting that it is “not a serious problem.” If they heard a colleague joking about another worker's body shape and weight, 21 percent of the survey respondents also said they would ignore the situation, and 4 percent said they would laugh.

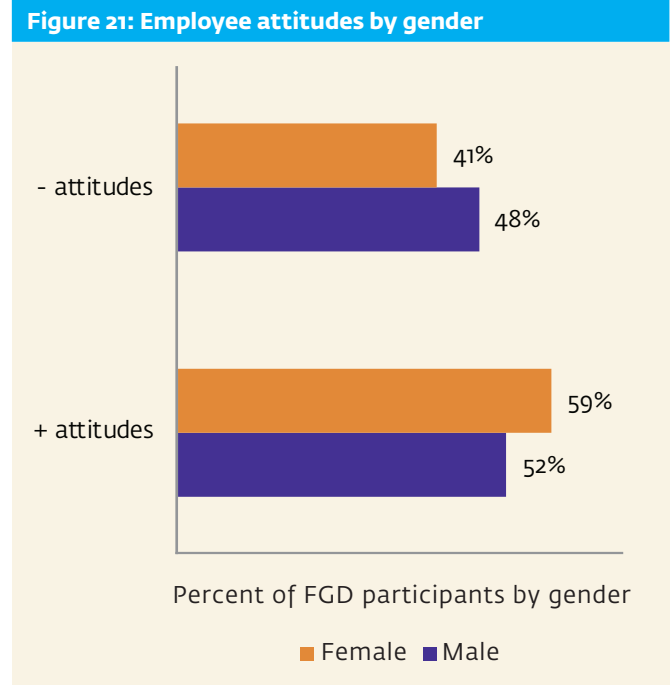
As discussed in more detail later in this report, identifying behaviors as common or as part of the Myanmar culture does not mean there are no negative impacts for people toward whom the comments or actions are directed. When bullying and sexual harassment are treated as common and normal in a workplace, this results in a higher risk of employees being exposed to behaviors that negatively affect their productivity. It is therefore in the interest of businesses to aim to eliminate otherwise culturally accepted behaviors that impede business performance.

It is fair to consider that employees who believe bullying or sexual harassment are sometimes acceptable, or who believe people are sometimes responsible for being bullied or sexually harassed, hold a negative attitude. These employees represent the core resistance to addressing bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces. Figure 20 shows the percentages of respondents from the survey population who hold negative attitudes toward bullying and sexual harassment, disaggregated by gender.



This means that 38 percent of female respondents and 42 percent of male respondents have given at least one answer to a survey question that indicates they either blame the behavior of the person who was targeted or believe that bullying or sexual harassment at work is sometimes acceptable. This reveals a high level of normalization of workplace bullying and sexual harassment in the participating businesses for around 40 percent of all employees. There is only a slight difference between females and males in this respect.

During the FGDs, employees were also asked to say if they agreed or disagreed with a number of workplace scenarios. All the answers were assigned a score of -1 or +1 depending on whether the choice of “agree” or “disagree” indicated a negative or a positive attitude. Some of the scenarios were specifically about bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace. Others were more general scenarios about men or women. Figure 21 shows the results identifying both the number and percentages of respondents who indicated they held positive or negative attitudes.



Proportionally, the results indicate slightly stronger negative attitudes among male employees which are matched by corresponding stronger positive attitudes among women. Combined, 82 percent of the FGD participants said they believe it is okay for men to tease a male work colleague about his private life. For 47 percent, they would prefer to ignore the situation if a colleague said something offensive to them in order to avoid making a fuss.

Figure 22: Participants who hold negative attitudes by age group

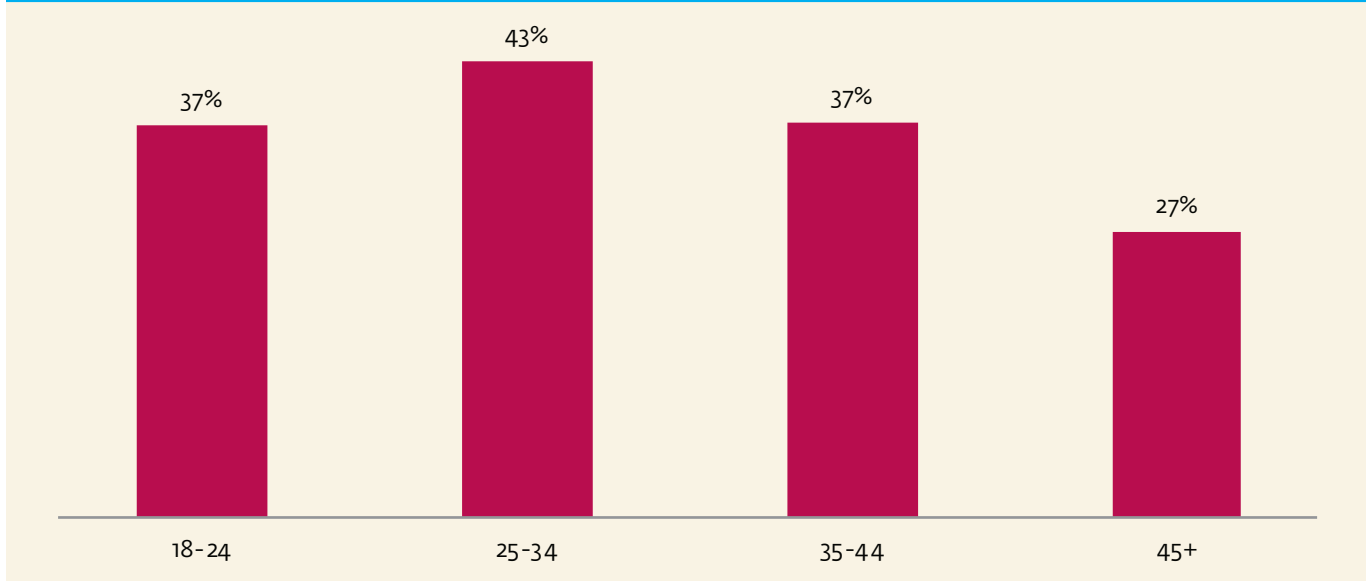


Figure 22 shows some difference between age groups.

The sample size of the 45+ category is relatively small. Notably, the largest population group of 25-34 (56 percent of all respondents) exhibits the highest proportion of negative attitudes at 43 percent.

HR manager and others who were interviewed for the KIIs, including those in small businesses, gave a number of reasons why they think a person might perpetrate bullying or sexual harassment. Their responses indicate a strong belief that level of education, in particular, and also age play a role. One HR manager insisted bullying and sexual harassment could not occur in their workplace because “we are all highly educated.” The research team witnessed several incidents while they were conducting research in this manager’s workplace, and heard from lower level staff who said bullying regularly occurred. Another HR manager suggested that bullying and harassment occurred in their workplace because young people did not have the experience or skills in managing professional relationships. The research results do not support these views. Of the survey respondents who have a university education, 38 percent hold negative attitudes toward workplace bullying and sexual harassment. Of those in the most dominant age bracket—25 to 24—57 percent do not. Despite what many of the research participants believe, there is no correlation between level of education or age and engaging in bullying or sexual harassment. As one HR manager explained differently, the underlying causes are actually linked to “stereotypes, [social] norms and patriarchy that are influencing us everywhere.”

Experiences

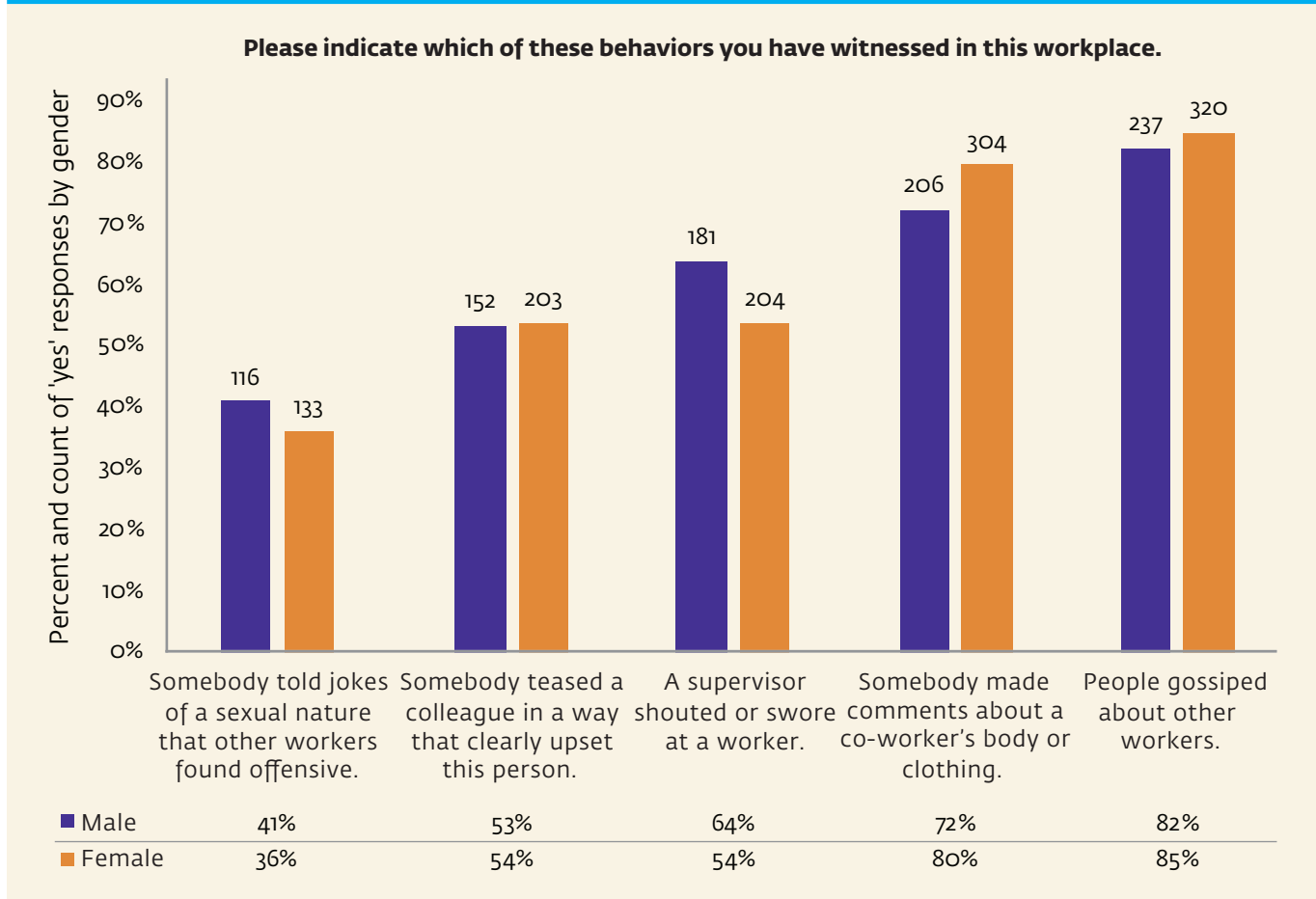
Of the survey respondents, 92 percent said they think that bullying is a problem in their current workplace and 84 percent said sexual harassment was a problem in their workplace. The gender identity of the respondents does not affect these positions. In all sectors, the percentage of respondents who identified bullying and/or sexual harassment as a problem in their workplace was above 75 percent. These high rates of recognition of the problems correlate with the high rates of experiences. The total percentage of survey respondents who said they had witnessed or experienced sexual harassment or bullying was 61 percent.⁴⁷

As Witnesses

In total, 56 percent of the employees who completed the survey said they had witnessed somebody being bullied in their current workplace. The percentage who said they had witnessed somebody being sexually harassed is 21 percent. The survey respondents were also asked to identify specific behaviors of bullying and harassment they had witnessed in their workplace. From a list of specific behaviors, 87 percent said they had witnessed at least one.

Figure 23 shows the five most commonly witnessed behaviors related to bullying and sexual harassment. It also shows the total number of respondents who said they had witnessed each behavior disaggregated by gender.

Figure 23: Most frequently witnessed behaviors



In all sectors, the top two witnessed behaviors were “Somebody made comments about a co-worker’s body or clothing” and “People gossiped about other workers.” Participants gave specific examples of body shaming they had seen in their workplaces:

Other people said to her that you are very thin. At that time, that girl thought it is her weakness and so she took medicine to gain weight and went to the fitness center.

There are always comments about the color of a person’s complexion, wearing style, about make-up and facial appearance. It is common between subordinates.

One employee told another about her bad underarm smell in front of many other employees. At that time, some other employees said, “Oh your personal hygiene is very bad.”

Gossiping that employees hear typically involves references to another person’s sexual behaviors—real or imagined. This might

be the suggestion that an employee has received a promotion in return for a sexual favor or a comment about what a colleague might have been doing on their day off with a new boyfriend or girlfriend. The content of the gossiping is intended to embarrass or shame a person within a society where conservative views on “good” sexual behaviors remain strong. Suggesting that somebody (especially a woman) has received a promotion because they have had sex with a manager is an easy way of causing harm to somebody’s reputation because—as stakeholders interviewed for this research shared—it is a reality in workplaces in Myanmar that women are offered promotions in return for sex.

There is almost no difference in witnessing bullying or sexual harassment in the workplaces based on gender, with 88 percent of men and 87 percent of women saying they had witnessed at least one incident. The research team also witnessed a number of incidents while they were carrying out the research in workplaces, including one male and one female employee calling a colleague “fatty.”

A witness may not be directly involved in the incident. They may not get involved. Participants gave several examples of cases where the behavior may not have been carried out with such a blatant attempt to force other employees to see the images.

I saw such sexual explicit videos on the computer screen of a male employee.

Some of my colleagues told me they dare not go near those computers after I heard and saw such sexual pictures and videos.

I have even seen that one of my male colleagues is making sexual chat on the computer screen.

In these examples, the employee who is carrying out the behavior is not directly bullying or harassing another employee. Not being directly involved does not mean the incident does not affect witnesses. One participant reflected on how it feels to be a witness of a disrespectful behavior in their workplace.

Among colleagues, it is common that they are kidding in a sexual nature. They say your buttock has become bigger and you have become attractive. This is if they are very friendly. The offender and victim are together with this kidding, but the other person who hears this feels uncomfortable.

The behavior is taking place in the office space where the computers are easily visible to other employees who have not given their consent to be exposed to these images and who may be disturbed by what they see. One obvious question is what need an employee might have to be looking at sexually explicit videos or images in order to carry out their work. The fact that people are viewing such materials in spaces where other employees can see what is going on nevertheless suggests this behavior is quite normalized. In one FGD, one participant insisted there was nobody in their workplace looking at sexually explicit video or pictures. A colleague immediately responded with laughter, saying, "Yeah, there is no one! Because you also watch that video and so nobody talks about this!"

Employees in the workplaces are also being forced to see sexually explicit images and content. In one case, a male employee left sexual explicit pictures on the desk of a female colleague.

This meant she was forced to see the material when she returned to her work station. Employees are also being directly sexually harassed.

A male staff gave a pencil to a female worker and tried to touch her.

At the time, when she asked the trainer a question, he walked behind her and gave her a hug as he tried to explain.

When she is climbing up ladder, they stare at her buttock. They stare at the upper part of her body—her breast area—when she bends down to pick up something.

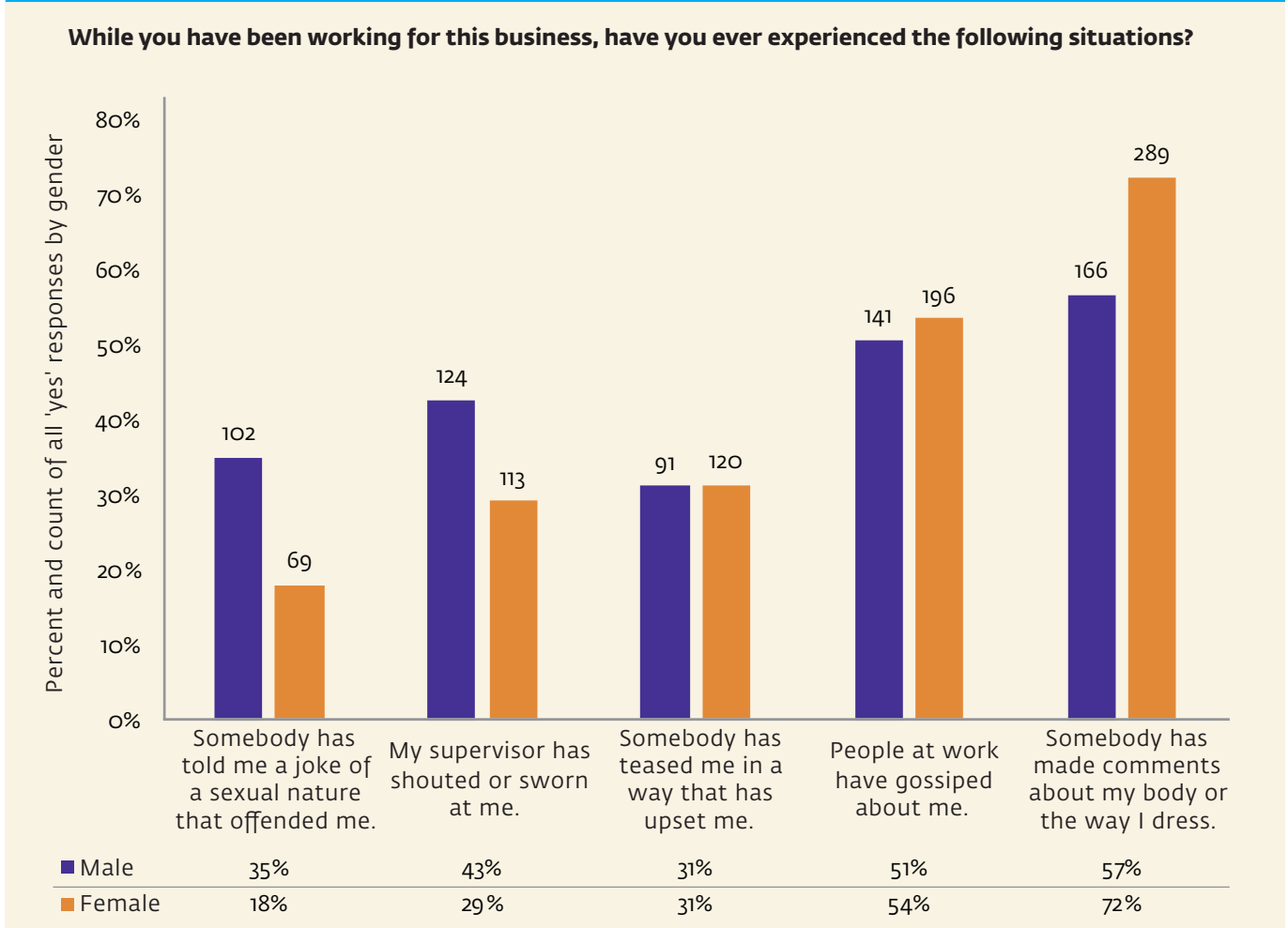
More than one in seven of the survey respondents said they have seen somebody touch, hug or kiss a colleague in a way that made this person feel uncomfortable. This kind of harassment could in some cases constitute sexual violence.

Almost 60 percent of the survey respondents said they had seen or heard a supervisor shouting or swearing at a worker. Being shouted at or humiliated by supervisors and senior managers was the most common type of bullying that participants discussed in detail. The number of specific incidents discussed in the FGDs is extensive, indicating a strong need for businesses to pay attention to communication styles of and potential abuses of power by their leaders. The incidents include staff being scolded in front of their colleagues for mistakes in their work, talking about individual employees to other team members, and ridiculing employees who are finding work tasks difficult or announcing to them they should probably leave.

Employees have concerns about favoritism in assigning job tasks and intentional allocation of tasks or deadlines a supervisor knows a person cannot achieve. In some cases, however, the behaviors of supervisors indicate more than a lack of communication skills and appear to be intentionally cruel. Participants identified incidents when a supervisors also makes a comment to an employee that links the employee's performance at work to an insult about their attractiveness.

The supervisor insulted her female staff. She told her, "Until now, you are not good enough to sleep with your husband."

Figure 24: Most frequently experienced behaviors



Among work colleagues at the same level, the bullying involves making fun of a person when they are speaking another language or criticizing the way they write e-mails. These behaviors do not help to create a work environment in which employees encourage each other and support each other to improve.

As Targets

In total, 40 percent of the survey respondents said they had been bullied in their current workplace. Fifteen percent said they had been sexually harassed. Survey respondents were also asked to identify specific behaviors of bullying and harassment they had experienced. The total who said they had experienced at least one of the listed behaviors was 78 percent. There is almost no difference in the proportional percentages based on gender, with 77 percent of males and 79 percent of female saying they had experienced at least one incident.

Figure 24 shows the five most frequently occurring behaviors related to bullying and sexual harassment that respondents have experienced in the workplace. It also shows the total number of respondents who said they had experienced each behavior disaggregated by gender.

The most frequently experienced behaviors across all sectors were “Somebody has made comments about my body or the way I dress” and “People at work have gossiped about me.” These are exactly the same as the most commonly witnessed behaviors.

For witnessing, in all sectors more respondents had witnessed gossiping than body shaming. When asked about experiences, the reverse is the case in all sectors except for agribusiness.

Participants disclosed specific experiences of being body shamed by colleagues.

Half of the respondents said a colleague in their workplace had gossiped about them. Gossiping can be initiated by a statement an employee makes about a colleague initially in front of other employees.

I have experienced that one of my colleagues asked me loudly, "Did you take sick leave to see your boyfriend yesterday?"

Some colleagues gossip about me in front of many people saying, "I saw you with your boyfriend in a park."

These statements include the suggestion of sexual behavior, which could therefore be classified as sexual harassment. This suggestion becomes the focus of the gossiping that follows. These experiences match what the employees are also witnessing in their workplaces.

Similarly, the kind of bullying the employees have experienced involves being teased by work colleagues, including supervisors, for not being good enough or not having the skills to do a good job.

When the results of the survey are disaggregated by gender, age, level of employment (worker versus other), or marital status, the outcomes are almost identical. In all categories, the most frequently experienced behaviors are being gossiped about and body shaming. When disaggregated by level of education, these are still the two most frequently experienced behaviors for all levels. Employees who had attended university are, however, more likely to experience comments about their body or clothes (68 percent experienced this behavior) compared with those who did not attend university (53 percent). It is possible there is a correlation between having a university education and being more likely to wear modern clothing. There may be a stronger social pressure for university educated people to do so to display a higher social status. Given the high level of normalization of bullying and harassing women who do not wear "appropriate" (that is, traditional) clothing, this could explain why therefore university educated people are more at risk of receiving disrespectful comments about their body or clothing. Overall, however, these results provide conclusive evidence that no employee can avoid experiencing these behaviors in their current place of work.

There is a difference in the level of risk of experiencing sexual harassment between women who moved to take up their current job and women who did not. The percentage of women who moved and who had experienced sexual harassment in their workplace is 14 percent. For women who did not move, it is 19 percent. As previously discussed, the results of the survey do not provide information on the move. For some women, it could have been from their birthplace to the urban area. For others, it could have been a move within the same city or town where the business is located. Looking at the percent of women who said they moved to either Yangon or Mandalay for work and experienced sexual harassment but were actually born there (18 percent) compared with those women who moved for work but were not born there (13 percent), we see a similar result emerge. Overall, these results do not suggest an increase in risk of sexual harassment based on whether a woman moves for work. In fact, they suggest the opposite.

For women who were not born in Yangon or Mandalay but who now work in one of these cities, 26 percent have worked for their current employer for less than a year and 80 percent for less than five years. The comparable percentages for women who were born in and also work in either of these cities are 13 percent and 70 percent. Women born outside Yangon or Mandalay may proportionally have experienced fewer incidents of sexual harassment in their workplaces because they have not been employed as long as women born inside these two major urban areas. These women may maintain more traditional ideas about the way they dress. In contrast, women who were born in the major cities may be more open to and used to wearing more modern styles of clothing. This would increase their level of risk of experiencing sexual harassment because a primary justification the research participants give for excusing victim blaming is what a person (and especially a woman) wears.

Figure 25: Differences in experiences of sexual harassment or bullying for respondents with a disability

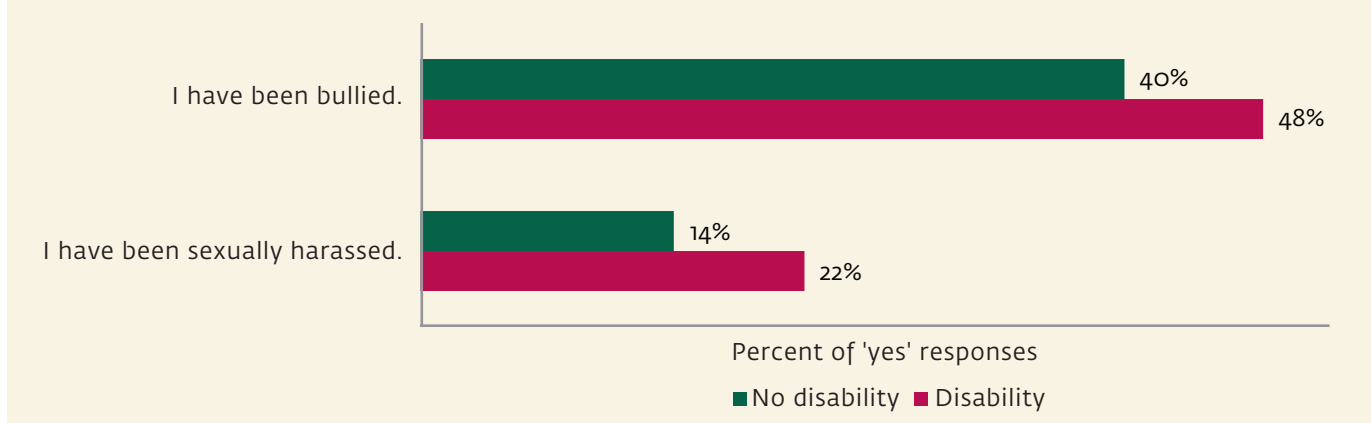


Figure 25 illustrates differences in the incidence of being bullied or sexually harassed for respondents who are living with a disability compared with those who have no disability.

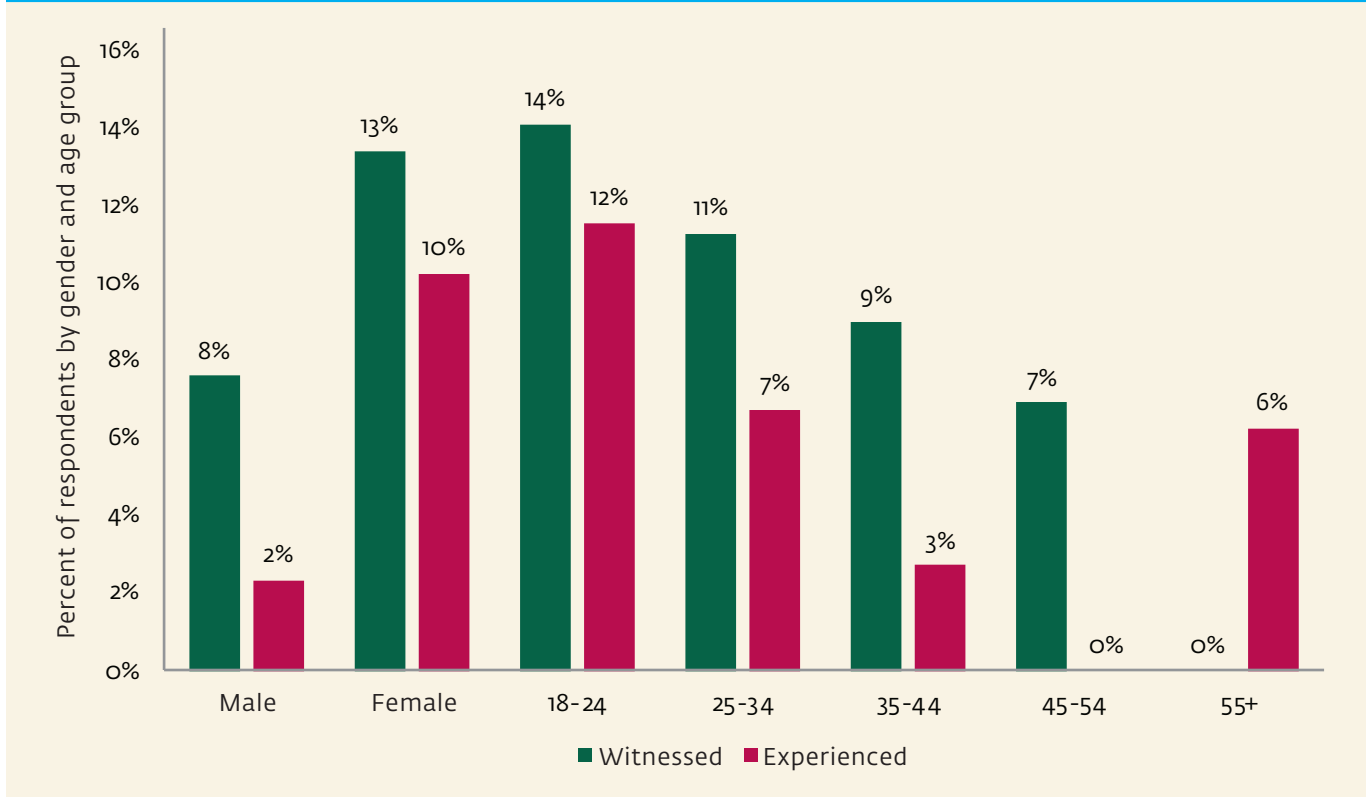
The data shows that the risk level for experiencing sexual harassment or bullying is 8 percent higher in each instance for respondents living with a disability compared with the rest of the population. However, in total only 27 respondents (4 percent of survey population) identified as having a disability, so the possibility of an increased risk for this demographic would need to be validated with further research.

In order to ensure better inclusion of people with disabilities in the research, two FGDs were conducted with a total of 10 persons (six female and four male) who identified as being employed (but not necessarily in any of the participating businesses or the four primary sectors) and deaf. These participants said bullying by colleagues is something they regularly face in their workplaces. Bullying behaviors they have been subjected to include being excluded from meetings, being laughed at for communicating in sign language, and colleagues refusing to

collaborate with them to complete work tasks. Their level of vulnerability is especially high because of the difficulties they face in finding employment. One participant said, “We have to be patient with the others because it is not possible for us to leave the job. It is difficult for us to get a job compared to others.” Some said they had previously been refused employment because they are deaf. There is therefore increased pressure on them to tolerate bullying behaviors by their work colleagues.

In addition to experiences of gossiping and body shaming, participants also shared incidents of sexual exploitation and sexual violence. Sexual exploitation is one of the two major types of sexual harassment where a person is offered something in exchange for sexual favors. Sexual harassment is sometimes considered a subset of sexual violence, and sexual violence can also be a type of sexual harassment. It includes any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force. Several incidents of sexual violence were identified as having occurred in the workplaces.

Figure 26: Incidence of bullying and sexual harassment when traveling to or from work



Of the total survey population, 11 percent said they had witnessed and 7 percent said they had experienced an incident when traveling to or from work. Figure 26 shows the gender and age breakdowns.

Challenging Notions of “The Workplace”

Bullying and harassment that occur online and when traveling to and from work force a reconsideration of what gets defined as “the workplace.” Some of the online abuse may occur while the offender and/or target of abuse were physically inside an office. In these cases, the abuse is more easily understood as a workplace issue. When the online incident takes place outside the business premises or outside work hours, it becomes more difficult to agree on these as workplace issues—and therefore as issues of concern for an employer. The issue of addressing—both preventing and responding to—harassment of employees while they are traveling to and from work may prove more difficult for employers to grasp and accept. How, for example, can an employer monitor the safety of its employees while they are traveling to and from work, especially if their employees are using a diverse range of transportation methods (including walking)? What level of control can they have over the

behaviors of people who are not employees and who are, as the research shows, the most likely offenders of harassment against female employees as they travel to and from work?

However, the research shows that 47 percent of the participating businesses’ employees do not feel safe when traveling to and from work. Two thirds of these are women whose safety is compromised because of the risk of being sexually harassed by men on public transport, as discussed previously. Only 2 percent of men said they had been bullied or sexually harassed while traveling to or from work. There is no specific information in the research results on what these incidents might have involved. The total percentage represents a significant number of employees across the businesses who are worrying about what might happen to them during their commute to work. The emotional impact of this on the employees is likely to be affecting their performance at work. They may be thinking about the risks they will face on their journey home. They may arrive at work having experienced an incident of sexual harassment that has left them feeling ashamed and isolated. These are the kinds of situations that affect a worker’s performance and, therefore, a business’ productivity and profits.⁴⁸

Not responding to the risk of employees being harassed while traveling to and from work is already costing the businesses that participated in this research. This risk—and especially the risk of sexual harassment on public buses—is, however, not something any individual employer can address entirely alone. Commuting is a significant hazard for employees of the participating businesses. It is also a hazard—and a reality—for many other (predominantly female) employees in cities like Yangon.⁴⁹ Any prevention work requires input from a number of actors, including government departments, private transportation companies and the police. This suggests the need for a coordinated and comprehensive response, ideally including industry bodies that can help raise awareness about the issue and strengthen the right of all people to be safe in public spaces.

HOW ARE COMPANIES RESPONDING?

Policies and Practices

When asked if their current employer had an anti-sexual harassment policy, 25 percent of survey respondents said “Yes” and 28 percent said their employer had an anti-bullying policy. When factoring in those who were also unsure about the existence of these policies, the maximum number of employees who might currently benefit from this kind of preventative method is 347 out of the total population of 715. This constitutes potential coverage under a workplace policy for 48 percent, which would be a promising start for preventative work. The actual number is, however, likely to be much lower.

During the KII, HR managers were also asked if there were formal policies in their workplace to address bullying and sexual harassment. Ten out of the total 27 said “Yes.” The total number of survey respondents in these ten businesses is 267. Only one HR manager was able to confirm this by providing an actual copy of a policy. All other managers failed to provide a copy despite numerous requests. Looking at additional comments these participants made when asked about their policies in the KIIs, it is more likely they did not actually have a specific policy to address bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces. Instead, these issues were at best referenced in the business’ general code of conduct.

A similar level of uncertainty exists with respect to the existence of formal procedures to respond to allegations of bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace. Five of the HR managers—all of whom had said there was a policy in place—said they had formal reporting and response procedures. Again, only one manager confirmed this by providing documented evidence. When asked how they might respond to any allegations of bullying or sexual harassment made by employees, some HR managers gave responses that indicated they might follow a formal procedure. One indicated that “only two management level persons are able to be involved in these issues.” Another identified that their employees could report issues through an anonymous e-mail or telephone service. One HR manager said they were introducing a whistleblowing system into their business, but it was not clear if this system would include a process for reporting incidents of bullying and sexual harassment specifically.

Overall, the results of the research indicate there are, in fact, few businesses that have formalized processes in place for responding to workplace bullying and sexual harassment. One of the stakeholders said in their KII that they were certain such procedures—and linked policies—were rarely found in businesses in Myanmar. 81 percent of the survey respondents said they would know who to report to if they witnessed or experienced an incident. However, this does not indicate the reporting system has been formalized. This result does not confirm if all employees in a particular business are thinking about the same person. It is more likely they are indicating they would know a person to whom they could report the incident. This person might well be the HR manager—some of whom indicated in the KIIs that they do seek to create “safe spaces” for their employees to discuss issues. It could alternatively be somebody else with whom they would feel comfortable discussing such an incident—a friend, work colleague or somebody in their family. This informal reporting may help the employees to cope with incidents. It does not allow them access to formal counselling or other professional support services. It may also not result in the issue being resolved in the best interest of the business, especially if there are ongoing impacts including lost productivity for the affected persons and the continuation of the behaviors by offenders.

Training

Of the total survey respondents, 27 percent said they had received training on bullying or sexual harassment in their current workplace. There was no difference in those who had received training based on gender. There are, however, some differences based on sector. Employees in the retail and tourism sectors are almost twice as likely to say they have received this kind of training as employees in agribusiness.

The HR managers of only three of the participating business said that specific training on bullying and sexual harassment was offered. This would mean that a maximum of 55 of the survey respondents could have received training at their current workplace. Other respondents who said they had received training may have been referring to training they had received prior, even though the question had asked the about training in their current place of work. In eight businesses, the HR manager said there was no training specifically on bullying or sexual harassment but discussions about these topics were included in other training sessions (for example, induction). This could mean that an additional 227 of the survey respondents had received some information on bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace, but this information would not constitute training.

One HR manager said they were planning to roll out training starting with business areas where they believed employees were most at risk. Only one of the HR managers provided details of their training approach and content. Another manager insisted training was not required.

The conclusion is that the majority of the research participants have not received adequate training on workplace bullying and sexual harassment. Again, the one-hour workshop offered to these employees before commencing research activities appears to have been highly successful in raising awareness and changing attitudes. This workshop did not focus on compliance. It did not, for example, introduce employees to any suggested rules or disciplinary procedures. Instead, it provided employees with an opportunity to explore different types of bullying and sexual harassment that might occur in the workplace. It opened up the space for employees to discuss these issues without judgment or fear of non-compliance. Given how successful this

approach was, training that promotes participatory learning about both disrespectful and respectful behaviors is recommended as something the businesses should consider for all employees.

Of the 21 HR managers who were interviewed, seven said they had received training related to bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces. For three of these, this training had been provided by external organizations including UNDP and the ILO. Only one manager provided detailed information on the content of the training they had received. Despite this low level of training among these key personnel who would likely be involved in responding to an allegation of sexual harassment in their workplace, 70 percent of the survey respondents still said they believed their managers are competent to deal with such incidents. FGD participants also regularly cited the HR manager specifically as the person they would recommend to inform if a colleague told them about an incident. When asked if they understood what bullying and sexual harassment were, all HR managers certainly gave answers that indicated they could define these terms. Many, however, said they had never received an allegation, and some insisted these were not issues that affected their business. These managers are under pressure to maintain social harmony in workplaces. Any allegation of bullying or sexual harassment is more likely to threaten their ability to achieve this, more so than the actual incident.

Dealing with incidents quietly allows a continuation of the imagined "familial" harmony. It does not, however, help the business deal with the impacts of the behaviors on its employees' well-being and productivity, overall business performance or reputation. Training on how to respond to allegations for HR managers in particular would provide these managers with the skills they need to address disharmony in their workplaces that is currently hidden from them (or which they are currently ignoring). If HR managers are competent in this area, their performance can be measured according to how well they address bullying and sexual harassment, rather than how well they maintain (the illusion of) harmony in the workplace.

Supervisors too identified far fewer types of bullying and sexual harassment occurring in their workplaces than their employees did. For this level of employee, there is a risk they may see their

bullying of workers as a normal part of getting work done in a hierarchical structure. Authoritarian leadership styles have been associated with increased likelihood of bullying and sexual harassment occurring in organizations.⁵⁰ There are alternative leadership methods that promote more respectful interactions with workers and that better motivate workers to produce good work, contribute discretionary effort (for example, work late or on weekends) and remain in the business. There are also different and more respectful communication methods supervisors could use to explain work and address work-related issues. In addition to providing specific training on bullying and sexual harassment to supervisors, therefore, the businesses could ensure their supervisors are actively promoting a respectful workplace by giving them access to leadership and communication training.

Response to Incidents

The research was able to collect information on responses taken with respect to specific incidents of bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces. Additional questions were asked to survey respondents and FGD participants to explore what they might do if they witnessed or experienced such an incident, and to understand what might motivate them to or prevent them from taking action.

For reporting within their workplaces, 81 percent of survey respondents said they would know to whom to report an incident that happened in their workplace. Of these 72 percent said they would also trust that anything they said would remain confidential.

This overall level of knowledge about what to do and trust in the system has not translated into actual experiences of having discussed an incident with a manager, including HR. Only 14 percent of the total survey population said they have reported an incident that has occurred in their current workplace. Even among those who said they would know whom to report to and who also said they would trust their report would remain confidential, again only 14 percent have actually made a report. Yet, from this same cohort, 55 percent said they have either witnessed or experienced an incident. A possible reason for not

reporting is a lack of trust in what are already mostly informal systems for doing so in the participating businesses. Only one third of the total survey respondents said they trust that people who report incidents are believed.

More than 90 percent of the survey respondents believe incidents are taken seriously in their workplace. Also, 89 percent said they would feel comfortable reporting an incident they had witnessed to either a supervisor, manager or HR manager in their workplace. It appears, however, that reporting to any of these personnel is not the preferred choice. Of the 400 respondents who had actually witnessed an incident of bullying or sexual harassment in their workplace, only 17 percent had reported this incident to a manager. Instead, the employees take alternative actions, many of which do not involve discussing the issue formally with their managers.

Ignoring behaviors is one response employees currently choose to take. Figure 13 shows the total percentage of survey respondents who said they would ignore specific behaviors.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is a high level of acceptance of bullying and sexual harassment by employees. This would be one reason why employees choose to ignore incidents. It would also be a reason why employees would encourage their colleagues to do the same. Overwhelmingly, when asked what advice they would give to colleagues who were receiving sexually explicit messages, employees said they would just recommend blocking the number. In one FGD, all the participants except one were employees who had worked in the business for a while. The new employee started to share her experiences of being bullied and harassed in her new workplace. Her colleagues interrupted her to explain why the issues were happening and how she should behave. They suggested she should be patient as one day the issues would pass. They also shared with her that they too had experienced similar incidents in the workplace when they were young and admitted that sometimes they had cried a lot. However, they had been patient, just worked hard and waited for an opportunity to transfer to a different workplace. They encouraged her to “do like us.”

Senior personnel advocate ignoring incidents of workplace bullying and sexual harassment because they also consider them to be normal behaviors. Supervisors made the following comments:

There are no serious cases. It's just kidding, like laughing at somebody's skin color. Brown skin, black skin—something like that. But these are not problems and they are not reported.

Sometimes, they are very familiar each other so they joke with each other. They say, if you eat a lot and you put on weight, you will not get a boyfriend. It is normal and they are not angry each with other.

The employees know about the supervisor's habitual behavior and communication style. They are used to being told off very openly or hearing the supervisor use some offensive word unintentionally. They will not feel anything even though this supervisor uses such offensive words. But for the new employee, they can think it is bullying.

In the first comment, the supervisor has assumed that the reason the employees do not report these incidents is because they are “not problems.” The second supervisor has assumed the comments have no impact on people. The third example yet again exposes the vulnerability of new employees who are expected to change their initial reading of behaviors as bullying (or sexual harassment) and recognize these behaviors as a normal part of the workplace culture.

It is possible that, in some circumstances, the behaviors are considered by the parties involved to be harmless. It is possible that friends can enjoy a joke between them about their bodies or about something sexual they might have done. If neither party is offended by what is said, the comment becomes a joke. The purpose of investigating disrespectful behaviors in workplaces is not to prevent people from enjoying their workplace or close friends being able to decide on what is acceptable within their friendship. Some employees were adamant that certain behaviors did not affect them. In one of the FGDs, a male participant said that people always joke about his “big buttock” and he “was used to it.” However, what the supervisors read (rightly or wrongly) as acceptance of the behaviors by employees does not necessarily mean employees always support the behaviors. The male employee might be used to

the comments about his body, but he may have had to learn to accept that such comments are acceptable in order to be seen as somebody who is willing to maintain the harmony of the workplace.

There are signs that employees are starting to recognize the personal cost of this illusion of harmony in their workplaces. One male FGD participant said that in his workplace, some female employees touch his belly frequently in what they believe is a loving way. Although he does not like it, he said he couldn't tell them and he was unsure if he could report this kind of behavior. He asked the research team for more information so he could clearly understand disrespectful behaviors in the workplace. One employee vehemently disputed assumptions made by senior personnel that body shaming does not make people angry. Another said, “Many years ago I didn't know about bullying and sexual harassment but now I know about that.”

Evidence of this awakening on the part of employees can be seen in the intent they have to intervene when incidents occur. For all scenarios, the percentage of respondents who said they would intervene is higher than the percentage of those who said they would ignore, except for the scenario where they observed a manager giving a worker a shoulder massage. Interventions take numerous forms.

When asked if they had already intervened when incidents had occurred in the past, 31 percent of the survey respondents said they had helped a work colleague who had experienced bullying or sexual harassment in their workplace; and 38 percent said they have confronted an offender. A common new way of intervening is, as discussed earlier in this section of the report, sharing information about the incident online. This usually involves sharing information about the incident and the people involved, making criticisms, shaming or spreading gossip. One online post about one disrespectful behavior about one manager can easily lead to widespread gossiping about that manager as a bad person. The manager's place of work can be implicated if named. While intervening shows that employees are not accepting the behaviors, some interventions are clearly not good for business.

While female employees are more likely than male employees to intervene in both scenarios, they are more likely than males to copy spreading rumors about a work colleague's sexual behaviors and to joke about another worker's body and weight.

Prevention Work

A few employers provide training on bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces to their employees. As previously discussed, this is often included in induction training or communications the HR manager decided to circulate. Overall, there is little evidence of sustained or focused efforts to prevent bullying and sexual harassment in the participating businesses.

There is, however, clear evidence of a desire for this kind of work—and for attention to the issues in general—to be more visible in the businesses. The following actions were all identified by 95 percent of the survey respondents as prevention activities they would like to see in their workplaces:

- Delivering anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment training to employees.
- Educating employees about what behaviors are not acceptable at work.
- Informing employees about how to report incidents.

During discussions with managers in the KIIs and employees in the FGDs, additional ideas for prevention work were suggested. These were raising awareness among employees about their rights, running communication training to help employees deal with personal issues at work, capacity building for managers to improve leadership styles, collaboration with NGOs, support from larger businesses for smaller businesses, and more efforts to drive equality in the workplace for all.

While there are certainly barriers to preventing bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces in Myanmar, including the normalization of behaviors that reinforce gender inequality, both employees and employers from the participating businesses have shown a willingness to engage with the issues. Attendance at the presentation sessions before the start of any research activities has been high. It appears the information provided in these sessions has motivated participants to want to talk about the issues. The research project has therefore potentially and hopefully helped deliver some prevention work within the participating businesses by opening up spaces for discussions. The challenge now is to build on this high level of participation by more than 1,000 employees across 29 businesses, to strengthen both prevention and response work, and to advocate for broader changes in knowledge of, attitudes toward and practices of bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces in Myanmar.

COSTS TO BUSINESS

Bullying and sexual harassment are disrespectful behaviors. They are not conducive to creating a workplace in which employees want to or can apply their skills, do good work and develop their careers. Instead they create disharmony between colleagues and teams, distrust in senior personnel and other colleagues, and an emotionally tired workforce. When employees witness or suffer incidents, they work slower than they normally would or could. This is the definition of “presenteeism”—the state of being physically at work but not fully functioning. Affected employees also take time off to avoid offenders or risky situations, or to help them deal with the impacts. “Absenteeism”—being away from work, often habitually—is a further consequence of workplace bullying and sexual harassment.

There are other cost implications for businesses. If a workplace becomes known (through social media, for example) as a place where employees are being bullied or harassed, customers may boycott its services and/or products. Suppliers and investors may reconsider their relationships with the business. Skilled personnel who might otherwise be able to make a significant contribution to the business’ performance and growth may actively choose not to seek work there. Inside the workplace, when employees are dealing with risks and incidents of bullying and sexual harassment, they are not concentrating fully on their tasks. This can result in decreased attention to safety procedures and careless use of equipment, resulting in injury, compensation pay-outs and damaged machinery.

The cost of bullying and sexual harassment to businesses can be estimated by considering turnover costs, absenteeism costs and presenteeism costs.⁵¹ These are categorized as “indirect intangible costs” that refer to a loss of opportunity because of an incident and its ongoing impacts. An example would be an employee avoiding having to complete a particular task if this task requires them to collaborate with a colleague who has bullied them. “Direct tangible costs” would include expenditure on services to support employees who experience bullying or sexual harassment. In this case, an example would be paying for an employee’s medical or counselling fees after an incident has occurred.

One aim of the research project was to try to estimate the costs to business per sector (agribusiness, finance, retail and tourism) of workplace bullying and sexual harassment. The research methodology therefore included an additional series of “cost to business” questions that asked employees to provide information about the number of days they were absent from work during the previous month due to bullying and sexual harassment. Employees were also asked to estimate how often over the same period of time they had felt distracted, tired or unwell at work due to bullying and sexual harassment. In both cases, the questions about the impacts of bullying were separated from the questions about the impacts of sexual harassment. In total, 722 employees completed this additional question sheet.⁵² A copy of these questions can be found in Appendix 7.

Presenteeism

The information provided by employees on presenteeism offers the strongest data for estimating some of the costs of workplace bullying and sexual harassment to the participating businesses. This data indicates a 14 percent productivity loss per annum per business. This figure has been calculated by assigning a percentage productivity loss to each employee’s answer to the two questions about feeling distracted, tired or unwell at work due to bullying and sexual harassment. Table 3 shows the percentages assigned to each available answer to these questions.⁵³

Table 3: Attributed productivity loss per response category

Response	Productivity loss
Never	0 percent
Rarely	10 percent
Sometimes	20 percent
Often	30 percent
Always	40 percent

For each response, the total count of respondents was tallied, then multiplied by the attributed productivity loss to calculate total productivity loss per response. These totals were added together to determine an overall productivity loss. The percentage productivity loss was calculated by dividing the overall productivity loss by the total number of respondents. Table 4 shows how the cost of presenteeism due to bullying was calculated.

Table 4: Calculation of productivity loss from bullying			
Response	Productivity loss	Count of responses	Productivity loss (per response category)
Never	0 percent	353	0
Rarely	10 percent	109	10.9
Sometimes	20 percent	186	37.2
Often	30 percent	57	17.1
Always	40 percent	4	1.6
Totals		709	66.8
Calculation: $66.8 / 709 * 100 = 9.42$ percent total productivity loss			

Table 5 shows how the cost of presenteeism due to sexual harassment was calculated.

Table 5: Calculation of productivity loss from sexual harassment			
Response	Productivity loss	Count of responses	Productivity loss (per response category)
Never	0 percent	525	0
Rarely	10 percent	78	7.8
Sometimes	20 percent	98	19.6
Often	30 percent	9	2.7
Always	40 percent	3	1.2
Totals		713	31.3
Calculation: $31.3 / 713 * 100 = 4.39$ percent total productivity loss			

The total productivity loss was calculated by combining the productivity loss from bullying with the productivity loss from sexual harassment (9.42 percent + 4.39 percent = 13.81 percent).

More men than women said they had experienced bullying. More women than men said they had experienced sexual harassment. The costs to business, which are based on the employees' self-assessments of reduced productivity, suggest that bullying has more impact on women than men. Similarly, sexual harassment appears to have more impact on men than women. In both cases, the impact is certainly not zero. Both bullying and sexual harassment are causing men and women to work slower. Women may, however, be more used to sexual harassment and have therefore built a stronger tolerance to it. Equally, the same could be said for men and bullying.

The estimate of 14 percent negative impact on a business due to the impacts of workplace bullying and sexual harassment on employees is a conservative estimate. It does not include any further losses due to turnover or absenteeism. In addition, it does not take into account any derivative losses in production

of goods and/or services due to the reduced productivity of the employees, as this is difficult to calculate and would vary greatly from business to business. The data is reliant on employees being able to recall the level of impact during the previous month. It also assumes they understood the questions to be asking about workplace bullying and sexual harassment, and not similar behaviors they may face elsewhere. The 14 percent estimate nevertheless suggests a significant benefit to businesses that engage in prevention work and ensure effective responses are taken when incidents occur.

Absenteeism

The research methodology also included some additional questions for HR managers about average rates of pay and total number of employees. This information was provided for 19 of the 26 large businesses. The information does not, however, appear to be accurate in all cases. Overall, the data provided by HR managers is inconclusive and insufficient to make any claims about the costs to the businesses of workplace bullying and sexual harassment. Given the costs of presenteeism, however, we can assume there would be some costs associated with absenteeism, and this is something the businesses should investigate further.

Domestic Violence

During the KIIs, HR managers, as well as any additional manager or supervisors who were interviewed, were asked to explain what they knew about the level of risk that domestic violence posed to their employees, and to provide information about any support services their business offered to affected employees. Domestic violence is also recognized to cost businesses, again affecting employee presenteeism and absenteeism. It is, therefore, in the interests of businesses to address domestic violence for productivity reasons.

The results of the KIIs suggest that only two of the businesses offer counselling service to employees affected by domestic violence. The exact costs of providing this service was not requested as part of the research. The direct tangible costs of domestic violence to these two businesses cannot therefore be calculated. HR managers gave no indication that any other services were offered, although employees in some of the businesses appear to be allowed to take annual leave or sick leave "if something bad has happened to them at home." Informal support was also identified as being offered in some businesses whereby the HR manager or a colleague would be asked to "care" for the affected employee. The calculation of indirect tangible costs to business would require further detailed research including asking employees about their experiences and impacts.

Research on domestic violence and its impact on employees and the workplace could be useful in convincing businesses to take action. Many of the HR managers recognized that if an employee is affected by domestic violence, this would have an impact on the business, and that the business should therefore have a responsibility to offer some assistance. Only a few managers maintained a position that it was not appropriate to bring personal issues into the workplace.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER SECTORS AND SMALL ENTERPRISES?

Small Businesses

The situation in the participating small businesses is the same as that in the large businesses with respect to availability of policies, protocols and training to address bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace. None of the small businesses has any of these prevention tactics in place. In all cases, the total number of workers was small, sometimes only three people. The business leaders rely on building overall positive and close relationships with their staff to ensure that incidents of bullying or sexual harassment do not occur and can be discussed openly if they do occur. In the case of two of the businesses, these key personnel were also able to draw on the resources available in their international head offices for any support they might need.

The employees also shared similar positions with respect to responsibility and ways to respond. They exposed their gender bias when they specifically noted that their “female colleagues should be aware of their behavior and wearing style” to prevent placing themselves at risk of sexual harassment. They also identified many of the same informal ways to respond to incidents of bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces, including discussing the issue with a supervisor, blocking the telephone number of a harasser, and confronting a harasser directly to ask them to stop.

The KII interviewees shared their views on how cross-cultural differences might affect understandings of as well as business responses to bullying and sexual harassment. One interviewee discussed how they found it more difficult to build positive professional relationships with members of their team who were not of the same gender. They said they sensed a gender barrier that they had not experienced in their home country, and that it “was difficult to have a trusting and close relationship between a woman and man” in a workplace in Myanmar. In two of the interviews, the issue of cross-cultural communication was also raised as something that needed to be considered in order to ensure sensitive issues like sexual harassment could be discussed. One interviewee suggested that concepts of collaboration and team relationships might differ.

Another argued that both international staff and Myanmar staff needed to understand better the communication culture in the workplace, taking into consideration whether the business was an international or local one. These kinds of issues were not raised by KII interviewees from the large businesses. The interviewees from the small businesses were, however, all international staff. Two of them were relatively new to Myanmar.

Among these interviewees, there is some evidence of making incorrect assumptions about why sexual harassment might occur and who it might affect. Two suggested that incidents would more likely occur in developing countries and would involve people of low education. Another suggested it could be a problem in Myanmar because of the strong patriarchal culture in this country—a culture they said did not exist in their home country. This suggests a lack of understanding of how global the problems of sexual harassment and bullying are.

Garment Sector

The treatment of workers inside factories in the garment sector in Myanmar—the country’s second largest sector—has been the focus of some significant scrutiny. A shared conclusion in a number of recent reports is that the sector’s workers are disadvantaged, discriminated against and abused.⁵⁴

Approximately 91 percent of the sector’s workforce is women. The garment sector in Myanmar—similar to in other countries such as Bangladesh and Cambodia—has been highly feminized. This necessarily places gender at the center of any work to explore the experiences of the sector’s employees and business performance. Factory owners and supervisors often say they prefer to employ women because they believe women are more dexterous and more adept at completing intricate, repetitive work (like sewing). Women benefit from gender stereotyping and hierarchies in the Myanmar culture to maintain almost exclusive access to jobs in the sector. The majority of the female employees nevertheless work in low paid jobs that require low skills. They are provided with limited opportunities for promotion and skills development. They work not with any aspirations or hopes of a long-term career, but in order to meet the everyday needs of their families. Their “career” in the sector is also short. Social and organizational pressure on women to leave their job after becoming pregnant means the

majority of female employees leave within five years. Employers do not actively encourage female skilled workers to re-enter the workforce after giving birth.

Inside the factories, the wellbeing of employees is undermined because of a normalization of bullying and sexual harassment. Supervisors—who are also under pressure to meet deadlines set by management—shout at workers who make a mistake. The workers are threatened with dismissal if they take a day off or cannot meet production targets. The women tease each other. Sometimes they do this to relieve the boredom of the repetitive work. Sometimes the teasing goes too far. It crosses over into body shaming, inappropriate comments about a co-worker's assumed sexual activity and gossiping. They dissect the woman's body into pieces to identify a fat belly, big breasts or a big buttock. They tweak each other's nipples and ridicule women who do not look or dress like "real" women. On their way home, they face the risk of further harassment as they stand in crowded buses or travel home alone in the dark. The women fight through the bullying, the harassment and their tiredness to meet production targets. How much they get paid is dependent on how much they produce. Many of the women are using most of what they earn to support their families, many of which are located in poor, rural locations throughout Myanmar.⁵⁵

The results of recent IFC research into selected factories in the sector found that 18 percent of the total survey population said they had taken time off because they had been subjected to bullying or sexual harassment in their factory. From the same sample population, 55 percent said they had worked slower because they had been shouted at, upset, bullied or sexually harassed, or because they were sick or did not have enough food to eat. All these problems are costing the businesses extensively. For each factory, this cost includes approximately USD\$90,581 each year in lost productivity due to absenteeism and presenteeism alone.

Vulnerable Groups

The research team conducted four FGDs with employed persons linked to community support groups. The target demographics for these participants were deaf persons and persons who identified with the LGBTQI community.⁵⁶ The dataset is not extensive. The information these participants have contributed to the research nevertheless gives some indication of the unique characteristics of these demographic populations with respect to bullying or sexual harassment in the workplaces.

The deaf persons identified that they face intentional bullying on account of their disability. Colleagues mock them when they use sign language and refuse to work with them. They have other experiences that could be interpreted as intentional practices of bullying, but which may also indicate a general lack of awareness on the part of managers and colleagues of the specific needs of these employees. Examples include not being invited to meetings, being transferred to other work stations without discussion, and being excluded from training. One participant suggested that their colleagues may sometimes underestimate their capacities and make assumptions about what they can and cannot do.

LGBTQI persons also face bullying in their workplaces. Transgender men are especially vulnerable.

People in the workplace pay more attention to transgender men and they assume that transgender men are not normal [...]. Sometimes colleagues call a transgendered man "a man who has menstruation". Sometimes they humiliate transgender men by saying they are "with balls" and laugh at them.

Transgender persons are denied opportunities to work in roles predominantly taken by one particular gender. If the role is usually considered a man's role, a transgender-man can be refused this role because he is not considered a real man. If the role is usually considered a woman's role, a transgender-man can also be refused this role because he is considered to no longer be a woman. The refusal of access to opportunities in their workplaces are therefore based on perceptions of their gender by others, and not on self-identification or competencies. One transgender participant said a work colleague had made a threat on social media to abduct them.

For LGBTQI participants, experiences of sexual harassment were more common. Their work colleagues ask them detailed questions about their sex life. They ask lesbian-identifying people “who is the man?” They ask transgender people which toilet they usually use. They ridicule transgender-men by calling them “a man who menstruates.”

The impacts of these experiences on both deaf persons and LGBTQI persons are sometimes similar to those noted by other research participants. They feel sad, unhappy in their workplace, depressed and demotivated. One said they considered suicide. Another said it is difficult not to interpret the bullying and sexual harassment as indicative of true failures on their part. This suggests they internalize the negative attitudes of those who perpetrate the behaviors against them and start to see their identified “abnormalities” as reason why they are subjected to the abuse. The deaf participants all indicated they try to ignore the bullying they face because they worry about finding a job elsewhere. LGBTQI participants revealed a more defiant attitude in response. They said they would be willing to leave a job if the employer did not support them. One participant said it was important to challenge their colleagues’ use of their sexual orientation as a weakness and to “fight back” because otherwise the behaviors of the offenders would get worse. The participants express this attitude and confidence despite the fact that employment opportunities for members of the LGBTQI community are limited to a small number of sectors.⁵⁷

The marginalization of deaf persons and LGBTQI persons within the wider culture in Myanmar makes them especially vulnerable to experiencing bullying and sexual harassment in their workplaces. Social attitudes, assumptions and prejudices are easily played out in the workplace by colleagues who believe it is acceptable to make fun or probe into their personal lives of people they already see as “abnormal.” In some cases, it is likely the offenders bully and sexually harass their deaf and LGBTQI colleagues to help reaffirm in their own minds the abnormality of the targets of their abuse in comparison to the normality of themselves. As one of the participants explained, “Sometimes we are excluded and not provided with enough information, so we make mistakes in our work, and then we are blamed again by our colleagues or managers.”

Stakeholders

A number of representatives from NGOs and industry bodies were invited to participate in a KII to share knowledge and information about bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces in Myanmar. Overall, their comments confirm that these are issues businesses currently face. All the interviewees said they were not aware of any extensive work on the part of businesses to introduce policies or offer training on these issues. One interviewee identified that during the course of their work they had only ever seen reference to sexual harassment in one business’ code of conduct. Overall, they agreed that incidents of bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces are hidden and that business managers did not have the skills or tools, or sometimes the desire, to respond.

The interviewees named the following demographic groups as especially vulnerable to bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces: women, disabled persons and LGBTQI persons. Three of the interviewees suggested that people who were shy were also vulnerable because they were seen by offenders to be less likely to speak out. One said they believed that people who came from rural areas to work in the cities were also at risk. The risk level of such people may be linked to what some of the interviewees identified as important in order to protect oneself from being bullied or sexually harassed—knowledge of one’s rights, the content of the law and the kinds of behaviors that might be considered unacceptable in a business context. A lack of knowledge about these issues was seen to be the reason why young women in particular are being offered promotions in exchange for sex. One interviewee identified a case of regular sexual harassment and abuse of female workers as a condition for handing them their wages.

More so than in other interviews conducted for the research, these interviewees linked the practices of bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces to broader social norms within Myanmar culture. They suggested that both the behaviors and the lack of response to these behaviors were caused by the normalization of a power hierarchy in specific relationships. This relationship was sometimes based on age, but often on assigned roles. The social requirement to obey one’s elders, parents and teachers is being carried over into the workplace where juniors have to do what their managers say and where

managers often abuse this power. The interviewees cited several specific examples of bullying and sexual harassment perpetrated by managers they had heard about or witnessed, including making trainees sit on their knee and requests for sexual favors during recruitment interviews.

Women and LGBTQI persons were identified as people who had bullied and sexual harassed others. Overwhelmingly, however, the interviewees said that in their experiences the majority of the behaviors were perpetrated by men. Gender norms in Myanmar culture were discussed as another cause of bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces. “Most men see women as only support to their roles and as dirty because they menstruate”, said one interviewee. When a woman occupies a position of authority in a workplace or even a job that a man could have had, some men get angry and respond by trying to bully or harass her out. They “see their behavior as normal for them as men,” and this is how they excuse it if anybody ever confronts them. Because women are taught in Myanmar culture to be quiet and to feel shame, this further prevents any disclosure of incidents. Gender norms therefore represent a significant barrier to challenging the vulnerability of women in the workplace, while also strengthening the ability of men to bully and harass others without consequences. As one interviewee noted—offering a challenge to the use of “the family” by other interviewees to signify natural harmony in the workplace—“patriarchy does not just influence our families; it also influences our workplaces.”

It is during the interviews with the stakeholders where we find the only references in the entire research data to the inadequacy of the laws in Myanmar. The interviewees all work for organizations that are involved in advocacy work with the government. This explains their interest in seeing legal change to support employee well-being. They said they want to see new laws introduced to compel businesses to take actions to protect their employees from bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces, while also supporting business-led efforts to raise awareness about the issues through introducing policies, training and communications.

Three of the eight stakeholders who were interviewed to share their expertise as people working on gender issues in workplaces confirmed that sexual exploitation was common. One said they were aware of a trainer who had tried to touch a young woman’s hair and was encouraging trainees to sit on his knee during workshops. Another said it was certainly not uncommon for female applicants to be told they could have the job in exchange for sex. Another disclosed a case of a female worker who had finally found the courage to speak out after she had been forced to have sex with the person responsible for handing out the monthly wages. This had not been an isolated incident. The offender was withholding her wages each month until she agreed.

The comments made by these interviewees do not relate to the specific context of bullying and sexual harassment in the businesses that participated in this research project. They nevertheless paint a fairly grim picture of the prevalence of these behaviors in workplaces in Myanmar and the lack of efforts to respond. While this is certainly important knowledge to encourage more attention to these issues at a national level, it also suggests that the participating businesses are leading the way in this work. Their participation in the research showed a willingness to allow their employees to be open about their concerns and experiences. They are also now in well positioned to move forward with recommendations that can help them build more respectful workplaces that are safe for their employees and better for business.

Appendix 6: Respectful Workplaces Survey Questions

Respectful Workplaces Survey Question Sheet

Before you start the survey

Please read this information carefully.

You have been invited to complete this survey because your employer has agreed to participate in research on respectful workplaces in Myanmar. Your participation is voluntary. If you no longer wish to complete this survey, please tell the facilitator.

You can record your answers in private. You do not need to discuss your answers or your participation in this survey with anybody else, including your colleagues and managers.

Your participation in this survey is also anonymous. You are not required to write your name on the answer sheet. The answers you give will be confidential and will only be used for the purpose of our research on respectful workplaces in Myanmar.

The aim of this survey is to learn about how behaviours in your workplace affect you and your ability to work.

The survey should take up to 30 minutes to complete.

You should have attended a short presentation on respectful workplaces earlier today in your workplace. You should therefore be familiar with the terms “sexual harassment” and “workplace bullying”. These are key terms you need to understand in order to complete this survey.

If you did not attend the presentation, please tell the facilitator.

You should recall from the presentation that both men and women can experience both sexual harassment and bullying; and that both men and women can perpetrate both sexual harassment and bullying.

Some of the questions in this survey ask you to think about sensitive subjects. We understand these questions might make you feel uncomfortable. We encourage you to answer all questions and to be as honest as possible. The more information you give in this survey, the more work we can do to help your employer and other businesses in Myanmar to create more respectful workplaces. If you feel distress while participating in this survey, please let the facilitator know.

If you have any questions while you are completing this survey, please ask the facilitator for guidance.

How to complete the survey

You will receive a copy of the survey questions and a copy of the survey answer sheet.

Important instructions for completing the answer sheet:

- Do not write your name on the answer sheet. This survey is confidential.
- Please record all your answers on the answer sheet using a black pencil (2B) which will be provided.
- Make sure you completely fill the circle and do not use ticks or crosses.
- Use an eraser to remove incorrect answers.
- Try to keep the answer sheet clean and do not make any marks outside of the provided areas.
- Do not fold or crease the answer sheet.
- Clearly mark your answers like in the example below.

● Correct: the circle is completely filled in.

⊗ Incorrect: Do not use cross marks.

⊙ Incorrect: Do not use tick marks.

If you make a mistake or wish to change your answer, please call the facilitator for assistance.

Please try to answer all questions. Please give honest answers, even if you think they are negative. Your answers cannot be traced back to you, and the purpose of this survey is to improve workplace conditions.

If you make a mistake or wish to change your answer, please call the facilitator for assistance.

Please try to answer all questions. Please give honest answers, even if you think they are negative. Your answers cannot be traced back to you, and the purpose of this survey is to improve workplace conditions.



Sexual Harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated.



Workplace Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.

Before you start the survey

Q1.
Have you attended the presentation on respectful workplaces?

	Yes	No
1	(a)	(b)

Q2.
Do you agree to participate in this survey?

	Yes	No
2	(a)	(b)

Q3.
Do you understand the instructions for completing this survey?

	Yes	No
3	(a)	(b)

If you have answered NO to any of these three questions, please tell the facilitator.

Section 1 – Demographic profile

Q4.
What is your gender identity?

	Female	Male	Other
4	(a)	(b)	(c)

Q5.
What is your age group?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
5	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

Q6.
What is your religion?

	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Animist	No religion	Other
6	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)

Q7.
What is your ethnic race?

	Bamar	Chin	Kachin	Karen	Kayah	Mon	Rakhine	Shan	Other
7	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)

Q8.
Where were you born?

	Ayeyarwaddy	Bago	Chin	Kachin	Kayah	Kayin	Magway	Mandalay	Mon	Nay Pyi Daw	Rakhine	Segaing	Shan	Thaninthayi	Yangon	Outside Myanmar
8	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)	(m)	(n)	(o)	(p)

Q9.
Do you identify as having a disability?

	Yes	No
9	(a)	(b)

Q10.
Do you have dependent children under the age of 16?

	Yes	No
10	(a)	(b)

Q11.
What is your marital status?

	Married	Single	Divorced	Widowed
11	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)

Q12.
What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

	None	Primary	Middle	High	University
12	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

Q13.
Which of these best describes your employment status?

	Permanent	Casual	Fixed term
13	(a)	(b)	(c)

Q14.
Approximately, how many years have you worked for this business?

	a. Less than 1	b. More than 1 but less than 5	c. More than 5 but less than 10	d. More than 10
14	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)

Q15.
Did you move here specifically to start this job?

	Yes	No
15	(a)	(b)

Q16.
What is your level of employment?

	Supervisor	Manager	Other
16	(a)	(b)	(c)

Section 2 – Views and experiences of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace

Q17.

Please identify if you agree or disagree with each of these statements.

Choose **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** as your answer to each statement.

A. Sexual harassment at work is sometimes acceptable.

B. Bullying at work is sometimes acceptable.

C. Some of my work colleagues sometimes behave in a way that encourages them to be sexually harassed.

D. Some of my work colleagues sometimes behave in a way that encourages them to be bullied.

17	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	Agree
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	Disagree

Q18.

While you have been working for this business, have you ever experienced the following situations?

Choose **YES** or **NO** for each situation.

- A. I have witnessed somebody being bullied.
- B. I have witnessed somebody being sexually harassed.
- C. I have been bullied.
- D. I have been sexually harassed.
- E. I may have bullied somebody without knowing it was wrong.
- F. I may have sexually harassed somebody without knowing it was wrong.

18	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	Yes
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	No

Q19.

Please identify the locations in this business where you have **witnessed** sexual harassment or bullying.

Select all that apply. If none apply, leave your answer blank.

a. General office or work area

b. A manager's office

c. Reception area

d. Staff canteen

e. Staff facilities (e.g., toilets, changing rooms, rest area)

f. Elevator or walkway (e.g., corridor)

g. Travelling to or from work

h. During work travel (e.g., conference, business trip)

i. Online (Facebook, phone message, email etc.)

j. Other

19	<input type="checkbox"/> a	<input type="checkbox"/> b	<input type="checkbox"/> c	<input type="checkbox"/> d	<input type="checkbox"/> e	<input type="checkbox"/> f	<input type="checkbox"/> g	<input type="checkbox"/> h	<input type="checkbox"/> i	<input type="checkbox"/> j
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Q20.

Please identify the locations in this business where you have **experienced** sexual harassment or bullying.

Select **ALL** that apply. If none apply, leave your answer blank.

- a. General office or work area
- b. A manager's office
- c. Reception area
- d. Staff canteen
- e. Staff facilities (e.g., toilets, changing rooms, rest area) Elevator or walkway (e.g., corridor)
- g. Travelling to or from work
- h. During work travel (e.g., conference, business trip)
- i. Online (Facebook, phone message, email etc.)
- j. Other

20	<input type="checkbox"/> a	<input type="checkbox"/> b	<input type="checkbox"/> c	<input type="checkbox"/> d	<input type="checkbox"/> e	<input type="checkbox"/> f	<input type="checkbox"/> g	<input type="checkbox"/> h	<input type="checkbox"/> i	<input type="checkbox"/> j
----	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Q21.

If you have **witnessed** sexual harassment or bullying at work, please identify the time period when this usually happens.

a. Between 8am and 5pm

b. Between 5pm and 8pm

c. Between 8pm and 8am

d. No specific time

21	<input type="checkbox"/> a	<input type="checkbox"/> b	<input type="checkbox"/> c	<input type="checkbox"/> d
----	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Q22.

If you have **experienced** sexual harassment or bullying at work, please identify the time period when this usually happens.

a. Between 8am and 5pm

b. Between 5pm and 8pm

c. Between 8pm and 8am

d. No specific time

22	<input type="checkbox"/> a	<input type="checkbox"/> b	<input type="checkbox"/> c	<input type="checkbox"/> d
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Q23.

Please indicate which of these behaviours you have witnessed in this workplace.

Choose **YES** or **NO** as your answer to each behaviour.

- A. A worker was purposely excluded from attending a work-related social event.
- B. A worker was purposely excluded from attending a work-related conference or training session.
- C. Somebody teased a colleague in a way that clearly upset this person.
- D. Somebody told jokes of a sexual nature that other workers found offensive.
- E. Somebody made comments about a co-worker's body or clothing.
- F. People gossiped about other workers.
- G. A colleague was purposely not given enough time to complete their tasks.
- H. A supervisor shouted or swore at a worker.
- I. A supervisor gave a worker tasks that the supervisor knew the worker would not be able to complete.
- J. A person touched, hugged or kissed a colleague in a way that made this person feel uncomfortable.
- K. A person repetitively asked another employee to go on a date with them, even after the employee had said no.

23	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> G	<input type="checkbox"/> H	<input type="checkbox"/> I	<input type="checkbox"/> J	<input type="checkbox"/> K	Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> G	<input type="checkbox"/> H	<input type="checkbox"/> I	<input type="checkbox"/> J	<input type="checkbox"/> K	No

Q24.

Please indicate which of these behaviours you have experienced in this workplace.

Choose **TRUE** or **FALSE** as your answer to each behaviour.

- A. I am always invited to work-related social events.
- B. I have been purposely excluded from attending a work-related conference or training session.
- C. Somebody has teased me in a way that has upset me.
- D. Somebody has told me a joke of a sexual nature that offended me.
- E. Somebody has made comments about my body or the way I dress.
- F. People at work have gossiped about me.
- G. I am always given enough time to complete my tasks.
- H. My supervisor has shouted or swore at me.
- I. My supervisor sometimes gives me tasks that they know I do not have the skills to complete.
- J. Somebody has touched, hugged or kissed me when I did not want them to.
- K. I always feel safe at work.
- L. I always feel safe travelling to and from work.

24	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> G	<input type="radio"/> H	<input type="radio"/> I	<input type="radio"/> J	<input type="radio"/> K	<input type="radio"/> L	True
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> G	<input type="radio"/> H	<input type="radio"/> I	<input type="radio"/> J	<input type="radio"/> K	<input type="radio"/> L	False

Q25.

A person in this workplace might experience sexual harassment or bullying in this workplace because of...?

Select **ALL** that you think apply.

- a. their marital status
- b. their religion
- c. their age
- d. their gender identity
- e. their body shape
- f. the clothes they wear
- g. their ethnicity or where they come from
- h. their sexual orientation (e.g., heterosexual, homosexual)
- i. their level of education
- j. a disability they have
- k. their job level in the business
- l. their personality

25	<input type="checkbox"/> a	<input type="checkbox"/> b	<input type="checkbox"/> c	<input type="checkbox"/> d	<input type="checkbox"/> e	<input type="checkbox"/> f	<input type="checkbox"/> g	<input type="checkbox"/> h	<input type="checkbox"/> i	<input type="checkbox"/> j	<input type="checkbox"/> k	<input type="checkbox"/> l
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Q26.

Please identify which of these situations are true or false for you in this workplace.

Choose **TRUE** or **FALSE** as your answer to each situation.

- A. In the past year, I have taken time off from work because somebody sexually harassed me at work.
- B. In the past year, I have taken time off from work because somebody bullied me at work.
- C. In the past year, I have taken time off work because of an argument that happened at home.
- D. In the past, I have left a job because somebody sexual harassed or bullied me.

26	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	True
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	False

Q27.

Do you think **sexual harassment** is a problem in this workplace?

		Yes	No	Not sure
27	<input type="radio"/> a	<input type="radio"/> b	<input type="radio"/> c	

Q28.

Do you think **bullying** is a problem in this workplace?

		Yes	No	Not sure
28	<input type="radio"/> a	<input type="radio"/> b	<input type="radio"/> c	

Section 3 – Responding and support in the workplace

Q29.

As far as you know, does your employer have policies and documented practices on the following?

Please answer **YES**, **NO** or **UNSURE** for each.

- A. sexual harassment
- B. bullying
- C. domestic violence

	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	Yes
29	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	No
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	Unsure

Q30.

Have you received training on anti-sexual harassment or anti-bullying in this workplace?

		Yes	No
30	<input type="radio"/> a	<input type="radio"/> b	

Q31.

Please identify if you agree or disagree with each of these statements.

Choose **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** as your answer to each statement.

- A. If I witnessed or experienced an incident of sexual harassment or bullying in my workplace, I would know who to report this to.
- B. Managers in my workplace are competent in dealing with incidents of sexual harassment and bullying.
- C. If I were to report witnessing or experiencing sexual harassment or bullying in my workplace, I would trust that anything I said would remain confidential.

	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	Agree
31	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	Disagree

Q32. Please identify which of these situations are true or false for you in this workplace.

Choose **TRUE** or **FALSE** as your answer to each situation.

- A. I have reported an incident of sexual harassment or bullying to HR or a manager.
- B. I have confronted a work colleague who has perpetrated sexual harassment or bullying.
- C. I have helped a work colleague who has experienced sexual harassment or bullying.
- D. I have discussed sexual harassment or bullying with my supervisor or manager.
- E. I have helped a work colleague who has experienced violence in their home.
- F. I have spoken to an external organisation about sexual harassment and bullying that is happening in my workplace.

32	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	True
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	False

Q33. Please identify the most likely action you would take in each of the following situations in this workplace?

Choose **ONE ACTION** for each situation.

- A. I hear somebody spreading rumours about a work colleague's sexual behaviours.
- B. I see my manager giving a worker a shoulder massage.
- C. I hear my supervisor telling a colleague they will be sacked if they refuse to work over the weekend.
- D. I read some sexually explicit graffiti in the toilet.
- E. I hear a worker joking about another worker's body shape and weight.

33	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	Ignore
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	Report
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	Laugh
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	Copy
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	Intervene

Q34. Imagine you have witnessed an incident of sexual harassment or bullying in this workplace. Please identify which of the following would encourage you to report this incident.

Choose **YES** or **NO** for each situation.

- A. If I understood what would happen after I reported the incident.
- B. If I trusted that anything I say about the incident would remain confidential.
- C. If I were sure I would not be exposed for having reported the incident.
- D. If the person who was harassed or bullied was my friend.
- E. If I trusted the person to whom I can report the incident.
- F. If I felt this incident was bad for my work conditions.
- G. If I felt this incident was bad for the business.

34	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> G	Yes
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> G	No

Q35. Imagine you have witnessed an incident of sexual harassment or bullying in this workplace. Please identify which of the following would prevent you reporting this incident.

Choose **YES** or **NO** for each situation.

- A. If the perpetrator was a manager or supervisor.
- B. If I thought I would be blamed for the incident.
- C. If I did not know the person who was harassed or bullied.
- D. If I thought there would be negative consequences for me or for the person being harassed or bullied.
- E. If I thought my employer would accuse me of being disloyal to the business.
- F. If I thought my colleagues would disapprove of my actions.

35	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	Yes
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	No

Q36. As far as you know, does your employer provide any of these services to support employees who have experienced domestic violence?

Choose **YES** or **NO** for each service.

- A. Health services
- B. Counselling
- C. Legal assistance
- D. Referrals to other services
- E. Emergency accommodation
- F. Case management

36	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	Yes
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> F	No

Q37. Do you think incidents of **bullying** in your workplace are taken seriously?

37	<input type="radio"/> a	<input type="radio"/> b	<input type="radio"/> c
	Yes No Not sure		

Q38. Do you think incidents of **sexual harassment** in your workplace are taken seriously?

38	<input type="radio"/> a	<input type="radio"/> b	<input type="radio"/> c
	Yes No Not sure		

Q39. Do you think people who report witnessing or experiencing sexual harassment or bullying in your workplace are believed?

39	<input type="radio"/> a	<input type="radio"/> b	<input type="radio"/> c
	Yes No Not sure		

Q40.

Imagine you have witnessed an incident of sexual harassment or bullying in this workplace today. Please identify if you would feel comfortable taking each of the following actions.

Choose **YES** or **NO** for each action.

- A. Reporting the incident to my supervisor
- B. Discussing the incident with a colleague
- C. Reporting the incident to a manager
- D. Reporting the incident to HR
- E. Confronting the perpetrator

40	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	Yes
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	No

Q41.

Which of the following actions do you think would help prevent sexual harassment and bullying in your workplace?

Choose **YES** or **NO** for each action.

- A. Delivering anti-sexual harassment and anti-bullying training to employees.
- B. Educating employees about what behaviours are not acceptable at work.
- C. Informing employees about how to report incidents.
- D. Communicating anti-sexual harassment and anti-bullying messages through posters, screensavers, flyers etc.

41	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	Yes
	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	No

END OF SURVEY

Appendix 7: Cost to Business Questions

Additional Questions for Employees
ဝန်ထမ်းများအတွက် နောက်ထပ်မေးခွန်းများ

Research Code သုတေသန ကုတ်	
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Age of participant ပါဝင်ဖြေကြားသူ၏အသက်	
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Gender of participant ပါဝင်ဖြေကြားသူ ကျား ၊ မ		
	Male ကျား	Female မ
Tick one (✓) အမှန်ဖြစ်ပြုလုပ်ရန်		

<p>1. In the past month, how many days were you absent from work due to sexual harassment? ပြီးခဲ့သောလထဲတွင် လိင်ပိုင်းဆိုင်ရာ နှောင့်ယှက်မှုခံရသောကြောင့် အလုပ်ဘယ်နှစ်ရက်ပျက်ကွက်ခဲ့ပါသလဲ။</p>	
<p>2. In the past month, how many days were you absent from work due to bullying? ပြီးခဲ့သောလထဲတွင် နှိပ်စက်ဖိနှင်းမှု ခံရသောကြောင့်အလုပ်ဘယ်နှစ်ရက်ပျက်ကွက်ခဲ့ပါသလဲ။</p>	
<p>3. In the past 4 weeks, approximately how often have you felt distracted, tired or unwell at work due to sexual harassment? Circle one answer. သင့်အနေဖြင့် လူနဲ့ခွဲတဲ့ လေးပတ်က အလုပ်ခွင်မှာ လိင်ပိုင်းဆိုင်ရာ နှောင့်ယှက်ခံရမှုကြောင့် စိတ်ဖိစီးမှု ခံရသော အကြိမ်ရေ ၊ ပင်ပန်းသည် သို့မဟုတ် အဆင်မပြေဖြစ်သည်ဟု ခံစားရသော အကြိမ်ရေ ခန့်မှန်းခြေ မည်မျှ ရှိသနည်း။ အဖြေတစ်ခုကို ပိုင်းပါ။</p>	<p>Never ဘယ်တော့မှ Rarely ရှားရှားပါးပါး Sometimes တခါတရံ Often မကြာခဏ Always အမြဲတမ်း</p>
<p>4. In the past 4 weeks, approximately how often have you felt distracted, tired or unwell at work due to workplace bullying? Circle one answer. သင့်အနေဖြင့် လူနဲ့ခွဲတဲ့ လေးပတ်က အလုပ်ခွင်မှာ နှိပ်စက်ဖိနှင်း လုပ်ခံရမှုကြောင့် စိတ်ဖိစီးမှု ခံရသော အကြိမ်ရေ ၊ ပင်ပန်းသည် သို့မဟုတ် အဆင်မပြေဖြစ်သည်ဟု ခံစားရသော အကြိမ်ရေ ခန့်မှန်းခြေ မည်မျှ ရှိသနည်း။ အဖြေတစ်ခုကို ပိုင်းပါ။</p>	<p>Never ဘယ်တော့မှ Rarely ရှားရှားပါးပါး Sometimes တခါတရံ Often မကြာခဏ Always အမြဲတမ်း</p>

6 Endnotes

- 1 World Health Organization, 2013.
- 2 Care International, "I know I cannot quit."
- 3 See, for example, EmREF, Young Women; and, Laplonge, Weaving Gender.
- 4 Full details of the aims of the project and the research questions are available in Appendix 1.
- 5 This report classified gossiping as bullying behavior. However, it is clear from focus group discussions that some gossiping is of a sexual nature and could thus be considered sexual harassment. The survey data does not allow for identifying gossip of a sexual nature from other types of gossip; therefore, overall rates of sexual harassment at workplaces in Myanmar may be slightly higher than reported in this study.
- 6 WBG, Navigating.
- 7 WBG, Future Jobs.
- 8 WEF, Gender Gap, 197-198.
- 9 Department of Population, Thematic Report, 113-117.
- 10 MOHS, Demographics.
- 11 Aye and Nyunt, "The Status," 25-26.
- 12 GEN, Raising the Curtain.
- 13 WBG, Future Jobs, 45.
- 14 In one of the validation workshops, one international business professional raised a concern that national staff might increasingly draw on the "bullying card" as an excuse to not have to improve their performance or complete assigned tasks. The research discovered some misunderstanding among Myanmar employees about the difference between being bullied and being asked to improve their professional outputs.
- 15 MCRB, Combatting Discrimination.
- 16 Thein, "Gender Equality," 4.
- 17 ADB et al., Gender Equality, 89.
- 18 MCRB, Combatting Discrimination, p.12.
- 19 Myanmar Penal Code, 1861.
- 20 Verbruggen, "Start to Fight."
- 21 Thein, "Sexual harassment."
- 22 MCRB, Combatting Discrimination, p.16.
- 23 Action Aid, Safety Audit; Action Labour Rights, Under Pressure; EmRef, Baseline; Fair Wear Foundation, Country Study; Progressive Voice, Raising.
- 24 Htwe and Win, "Hit Back."
- 25 This report classified gossiping as bullying behavior. However, it is clear from focus group discussions that some gossiping is of a sexual nature and could thus be considered sexual harassment. The survey data does not allow for identifying gossip of a sexual nature from other types of gossip; therefore, overall rates of sexual harassment at workplaces in Myanmar may be slightly higher than reported in this study.
- 26 These "reasons" were offered as possible answers to a question that asked the respondents to select multiple responses to explain "A person in this workplace might experience sexual harassment or bullying in this workplace because of...?" Respondents may have interpreted the meaning of this question in one or two different ways:
 Interpretation 1: What are the reasons a perpetrator might target a particular person to harass? What do you think are they seeking to ridicule or attack through their harassment?
 Interpretations 2: What is it about the targets that makes them vulnerable? What do you think these people have or do that causes them to become targets of harassment?
 The difference in interpretation is important because it means a respondent's choices indicate either their understanding of the social norms that place people at risk (Interpretation 1) or their acceptance of the level of risk for people based on social norms (Interpretation 2). Do perpetrators have particular biases or dislikes that motivate their behaviors? Or, do their targets do or have something "abnormal" that means they should be bullied and harassed? Based on the additional results discussed here, the conclusion is that Interpretation 2 is the case.
- 27 While public support by men against sexual harassment and for gender equality are important, these should not result in a lack of opportunities for women to speak about their experiences and journeys. Senior managers who relinquish their position of power and visibility to allow others to speak and to be heard help challenge the hierarchical structures that allow sexual harassment and gender inequality to occur and to be seen as the norm.
- 28 It is important not to assume the experiences of all persons with disability or all LGBTQI persons are the same. These groups should not be represented as having one homogenous culture. Men who identify as gay, for example, should not be called on to talk about the culture of transmen unless they also identify as transmen and/or have specific involvement with this community.
- 29 For an English translation of this draft law, see http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/pdf/2017-11-Occupational-Safety-and-Health-Law_unofficial_translation.pdf.
- 30 Definitions are taken from a variety of resources including those created by IFC, the Transgender Training Institute and UNFPA.
- 31 Please refer to Appendix 4 for more information on each of the research activities.
- 32 While the employee survey did ask respondents to identify their gender identity and if they had a disability, it did not ask about sexual orientation. For gender identity, survey respondents were offered the option of identifying as "other." Any direct reference to specific other gender identities (e.g., transgender) or sexual orientation was omitted from the survey after discussion among the research team, and based on the decision that such references might create confusion and/or discomfort for survey respondents in the target population.
- 33 Laplonge, Weaving Gender.
- 34 The selection of employees to complete the survey and to participate in FGDs and safety walks relied on role descriptions in provided employee lists to exclude senior personnel from these research activities. The results of the survey show, however, some managers and supervisors did complete the survey.
- 35 Two people responded to some of the survey questions but had indicated at the beginning of their answer sheets that they did not agree to participate in the survey. The results of these two surveys have been excluded from the results and analysis.
- 36 The calculations of margin of error and confidence level assume a normal distribution of answers with a response distribution of 50 percent. For questions where the results were heavily skewed towards one answer, the response distribution yields an inherently conservative estimate of the margin of error. The sample size n and margin of error E are given by:

$$x = Z(c/100)^2 r(100-r) \quad n = Nx / ((N-1)E^2 + x) \quad E = \text{Sqrt}[(N-n)x / n(N-1)]$$
 where N is the population size, r is the fraction of responses, and $Z(c/100)$ is the critical value for the confidence level c .
- 37 Statistics are taken from the results of the Myanmar 2014 census which identifies population in employment aged 10 years and over by industry. The corresponding industries listed in the census data and used for the purpose of estimating the total number of employees in each of the four primary sectors are agriculture, forestry and fishing, financial and insurance activities, wholesale and retail trade (including repair or motor vehicles and motorcycles), and accommodation and food service activities.

- 38 “Do no harm” is a principle applied in research or humanitarian work to minimize negative impacts on others who are involved (such as research participants and humanitarian aid beneficiaries). In practice, this can involve making decisions about when to stop the research if there is a perceived or known risk to participants, ensuring research activities take place in a safe and private space, and altering questions to reduce the risk of trauma when participants are responding. Applying the “do no harm” principle is especially important when researching gender-based violence because of the risks that participants may be re-traumatized by speaking about past experiences of violence or exposed to further violence because of their involvement in the research.
- 39 Two respondents did not provide an answer to this question.
- 40 The terms “gender” and “sex” are used interchangeably in English to refer to sex assigned at birth. “Gender” is also used to describe the social roles, relationships and expectations based on a person’s assigned sex. Throughout this report, the term gender is used to describe both. Survey respondents were asked to choose their “gender identity”—female, male or other. (None of the respondents selected “other.”) When the results are disaggregated by gender, these therefore represent the results of the different cohorts based on gender identity and not necessarily sex assigned at birth. Gender identity—how an individual understands and practices their own gender—can be different from sex assigned at birth.
- 41 See the 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census.
- 42 This is significantly less than the 9 percent of workers who identified as having a disability, based on the results of IFC’s recent additional research into-labor and gender-related risks in select garment factories in Myanmar.
- 43 Department of Population *Thematic Report*, 51.
- 44 Refer to page 9 in this report for specific examples of bullying and sexual harassment that were introduced and discussed during the workshop.
- 45 Kyu and Kanai, “The Prevalence.”
- 46 These “reasons” were offered as possible answers to a question that asked the respondents to select multiple responses to explain “A person in this workplace might experience sexual harassment or bullying in this workplace because of...?” Respondents may have interpreted the meaning of this question in one or two different ways:
 Interpretation 1: What are the reasons a perpetrator might choose a particular person to harass? What do you think are they seeking to ridicule or attack through their harassment?
 Interpretations 2: What is it about the targets of harassment that makes them vulnerable? What do you think these people have or do that causes them to become targets of harassment?
 The difference in interpretation is important because it means a respondent’s choices indicate either their understanding of the social norms that place people at risk (Interpretation 1) or their acceptance of the level of risk for people based on social norms (Interpretation 2). Do perpetrators have particular biases or dislikes that motivate their behaviors? Or, do targets of harassment do or have something “abnormal” that means they should be bullied and harassed? Based on the additional results discussed here, the conclusion is that Interpretation 2 is the case.
- 47 Refer to Figure 2 for a breakdown of incidents of sexual harassment and Figure 5 for a breakdown of incidents of bullying.
- 48 The topic of the costs to business of bullying and sexual harassment is discussed in more detail in the next section of this report.
- 49 GEN, “Silence,” 36; and, Naing, “Hidden Scourge.”
- 50 Hunt et al., “Reviewing.”
- 51 As an example, see CARE’s report on *The Prevalence and Productivity Cost of Sexual Harassment to the Cambodian Garment Industry*, 2017.
- 52 Employees were asked to complete the additional cost to business questions immediately after completing the survey. There were, however, seven more submitted additional questions sheets than submitted surveys. There are no identified scanning errors that might indicate an omission or duplication of either. It is possible that a small number of employees decided not to submit their completed Respectful Workplaces survey, which could account for this discrepancy.
- 53 The use of the questions and the allocation of percentages of productivity loss to answers follows a similar method previously used by IFC to investigate the costs to business in SoTuna in the Solomon Islands. See the case study [here](#). Initially, the productivity loss multiplier for this research used the same 10 percent increments linked to the frequency of the effect reported. These increments were later changed to 5 percent due to very high prevalence of violence and self-reported impacts in the Solomon Islands. For the purpose of calculating the cost to business for this research, the 10 percent increments have been retained. While there is a high prevalence of violence in Myanmar, self-reporting of both the violence and the impacts are likely to have been new ideas for many of the research participants.
- 54 Action Aid, *Safety Audit on Women Garment Factory Workers in Yangon*, (Unpublished, 2017); Action Labour Rights, *Under Pressure: An Assessment of Labour Conditions in Garment Factories in Myanmar which are Wholly Korean Owned or in a Joint Venture with Korean Companies*, (Yangon, 2016); Fair Wear Foundation, *Myanmar Country Assessment*, (2016); Oxfam, *Made in Myanmar: Entrenched Poverty or Decent Jobs for Garment Workers?*, (Oxford, 2016); and, Progressive Voice, *Raising the Bottom: A Report on the Garment Sector in Myanmar* (Yangon, 2016).
- 55 Laplonge, *Weaving*.
- 56 These two distinct demographic groups have previously been identified as especially vulnerable to discrimination in workplaces in Myanmar. See MCRB, *Combatting Discrimination*.
- 57 MCRB, *Combatting Discrimination*, 19.

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Contact Information

IFC Myanmar
20th Floor, Sule Square
221 Sule Pagoda Road
Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar

☎ (+95) 1 9255020

ifc.org

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