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Category	: International Rice Research Conference
Select Theme	: Sustainable and equitable farming systems
Endorsement email	:
Keyword 1	: Livelihood and social equity
Keyword 2	: Sustainable management practices
Keyword 3	: Gender-responsive practices
Title of Entry	: Diversification and intensification of rice-based systems in lower Myanmar
Presenting author	: Romeo V. Labios
Presenting author email	: r.labios@irri.org
Co author 1	: Romeo V. Labios ¹ , Grant R. Singleton ¹ , Martin Gummert ¹ , Arelene Malabayabas ¹ , Reianne Quilloy ¹ , Christopher Cabrado ¹ , Caling Balingbing ¹ , Aung Myo Thant ² , SuSu San ² , Yan Lin Aung ² , Than Aye ² , TinTin Myint ² , Aye Min ³ , Cho Cho Aung ⁴
Co author 2	:
Affiliation presenting author	: 1-International Rice Research Institute, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines
Affiliation 1	: 2- International Rice Research Institute Myanmar Office, Yangon, Myanmar
Affiliation 2	: 3- Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Myanmar 4-Department of Agricultural Research, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Myanmar
Select only one type of presentation	: 15 minute oral presentation
Abstract	: An adaptive research on cropping options to increase and sustain productivity of both rice–rice and a rice–pulse cropping system was conducted in the Ayeyarwady Delta in Myanmar from July 2012 to December 2017. The project aimed to improve farmers’ profitability through developing best practices for rice production, including postharvest management and innovative approaches to improve the productivity of the above cropping systems. Improved management practices for rice and pulse production and

new varieties of rice and pulses were tested under standard protocols in farmers' fields. Later, once the farmers had observed scientist-led field trials for 2–3 seasons, they selected and then tested new management practices and new varieties. The new varieties were introduced to farmers via farmer participatory varietal selection and the field data on the performance of the varieties fast-tracked the release of 12 new rice varieties over the 5.5-year study. The project reached more than 10,000 farmers in the Ayeyarwady and Bago regions. Some 3,670 farmers were directly involved in the field trials. In the last year of the project, the “improved management practices” for lowland intensive rice–rice and rice–pulse systems were rolled out in a national initiative. Each of the main rice production districts had to establish 0.16 ha demonstration plots in their farmer outreach camps. Our detailed studies, established in farmers' fields with their participation in the implementation of improved practices, indicated that yield increases were consistently more than 20% higher than farmers' practices. In addition, improved postharvest management reduced losses by, on average, 15%; this included reduced rodent losses. The improved postharvest management of rice also improved the quality of the rice and increased the sale price. Farmers who implemented improved management practices pre- and postharvest increased their income by 30%.

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