



# SUNI-SEA NCD Self-Care Application: Recommendations for Intervention Strategies

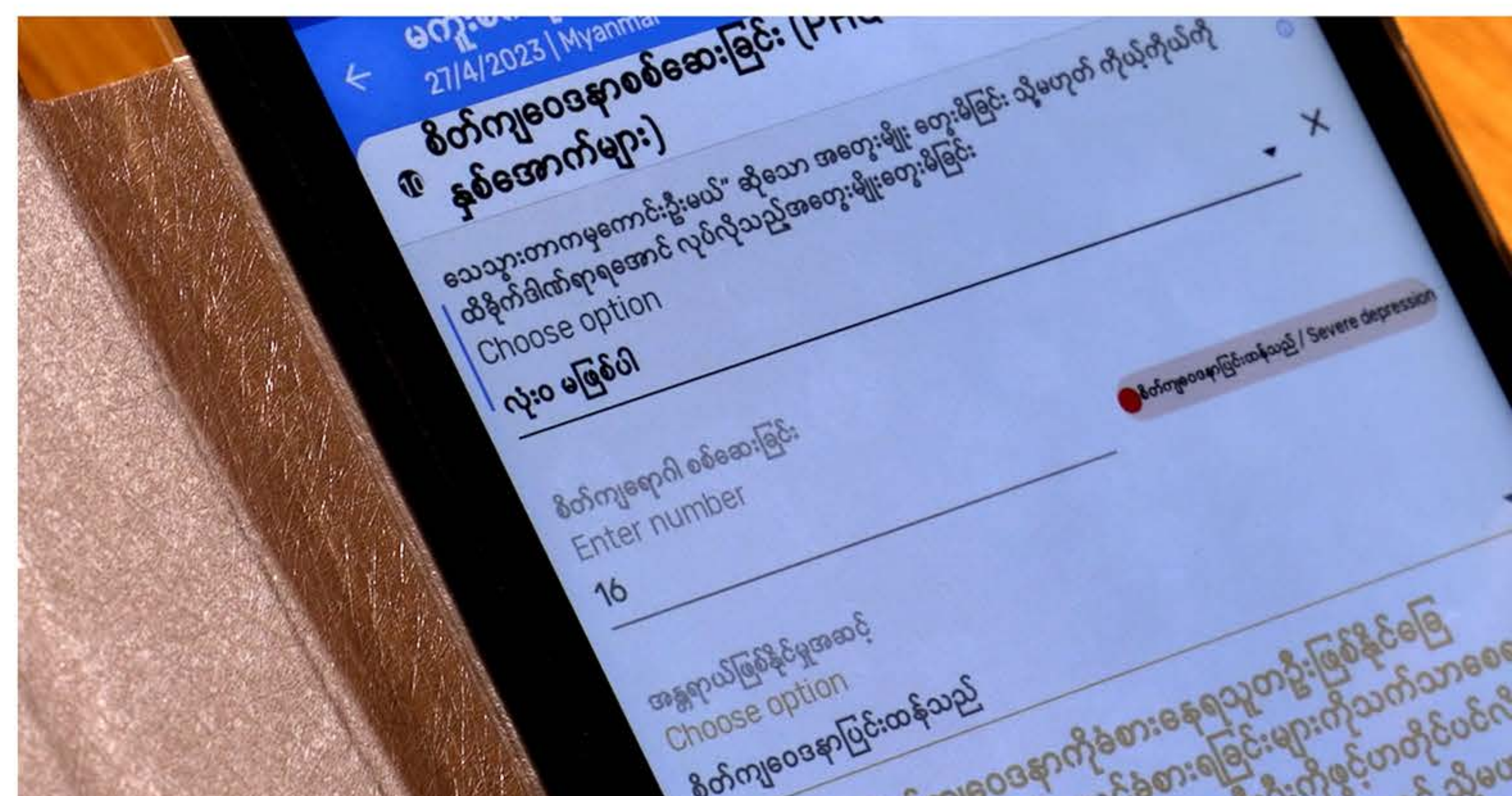
## Executive Summary

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) pose a significant public health challenge, requiring innovative solutions and concerted efforts from all sectors of society. The SUNI-SEA NCD Self-Care Application, developed by HelpAge International Myanmar under the SUNI-SEA project, presents an opportunity to address this challenge. The application allows individuals to self-assess their risks for hypertension, diabetes, and mental health conditions, offering valuable advice on managing these risks. However, to broaden its reach, there is a need for the strategic involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), and civil society organisations (CSOs).

This document provides an overview of the application and proposes recommendations that these organisations can implement, drawing on a recent study of 1830 respondents and user testimonials.

## Introduction: The SUNI-SEA NCD Self-Care Application

The SUNI-SEA NCD Self-Care Application provides an innovative tool for assessing NCD risk. It encourages individuals to





practice self-care by understanding their risk for hypertension, diabetes, and mental health conditions. The application goes beyond assessment, offering counseling sessions for mental health support and the ability to calculate users' BMI and assess cardiovascular disease risks based on physical measurements.

With a focus on proactive self-care and early detection, the application also provides recommendations for further medical care and suggests a timeframe for re-checking using the app.

Additionally, it equips users with health promotion information to reduce the risk of these conditions.

Take charge of your health and well-being with the comprehensive SUNI-SEA NCD Self-Care Application.

## Problem Statement

NCDs have emerged as one of the leading causes of death and disability worldwide, and the problem is particularly acute in Myanmar. Data from a recent study by SUNI-SEA involving 1830 respondents, with an average age of 59.6 years, highlights the scale of this problem. More than half of the respondents were at risk of NCDs, with hypertension being the most common.

The study identified several risk factors, including inadequate fruit and vegetable intake, raised blood pressure, and overweight or obesity.

Furthermore, high-risk behaviours such as tobacco use, alcohol consumption,

and physical inactivity were prevalent among respondents.

These risk factors and behaviours underscore the urgent need to increase awareness and provide tools such as the SUNI-SEA NCD Self-Care Application to manage these risks effectively.

## User Perspectives

User testimonials have confirmed the numerous benefits of the SUNI-SEA NCD Self-Care Application. Users appreciate its utility in enabling self-assessment of health risks, particularly for individuals over 40 with a higher risk of developing NCDs.

The application empowers users to proactively manage their health, and achieve cost savings.

An application user from Htwet Ni Village, Pindaya Township, Shan State, expressed, *"I have become more aware of my lifestyle and how to lead a healthy life after using this app."*

A Shwe Da Nu self-help group project coordinator stated, *"This app informed me about the health risks of my dietary habits... I am now following the recommendations that this app made."*

A Patheingyi Township, Mandalay region volunteer said, *"With this application, you can self-measure your health risks. You can easily find out if you have the risk of having diabetes or hypertension."*

These testimonials underscore the value of the SUNI-SEA application in enhancing personal health understanding and management.



## Recommendations

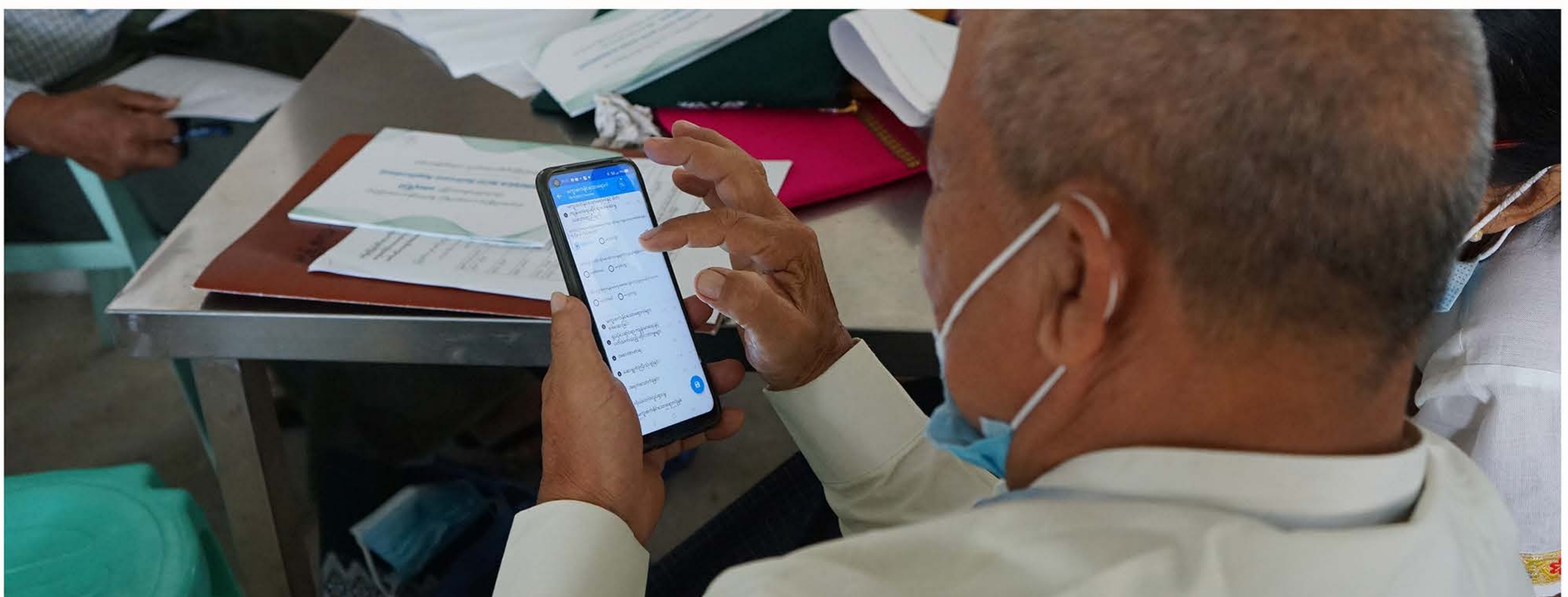
To ensure maximum engagement and utilisation of the SUNI-SEA NCD Self-Care Application, we strongly emphasise the following recommendations for NGOs, INGOs, and CSOs:

**1. Targeted Advocacy and Gender-Sensitive Approaches:** Advocate specifically for the application's use among high-risk groups, including individuals over 40 and those with higher NCD risk factors. Implementing gender-sensitive health strategies that address the unique differences in health behaviors and risks between men and women is crucial.

**2. Tailored Health Promotion and Focused Mental Health Services:** Design community-specific health promotion programmes that effectively target prevalent NCD risk factors. Place particular emphasis on encouraging physical activity, especially among women, and addressing unhealthy behaviors like tobacco and alcohol use. Additionally, prioritise identifying and supporting mental health issues, particularly among younger individuals with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and PTSD.

**3. Strengthened Community-Based Interventions and Advocacy for Healthy Lifestyles:** Enhance community-based programmes via ISHG and other self-help groups to actively promote early detection and management of NCDs. Promote healthy lifestyle choices vigorously among high-risk groups, focusing on addressing inadequate fruit and vegetable intake and insufficient physical activity levels, per the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendations.

**4. Promote age and disability-inclusive programming:** To ensure inclusivity, the specific needs and capabilities of older individuals and those with disabilities must be acknowledged. With rapidly advancing trends in digital technology, it is important to ensure that older people and people with disabilities are included and can access the same services and benefits. NGOs, INGOs, and CSOs should focus on enhancing digital literacy among target populations and consider any specific needs during the development and use of the application and other tools. Furthermore, our experience has shown that intergenerational cooperation is always an asset, and this has been particularly the case in the uptake and use of digital applications.





Adhering to these recommendations can significantly enhance the application's impact and encourage widespread engagement within the target population. Together, we can empower individuals to participate in their health management and foster healthier communities actively.

## Conclusion

The SUNI-SEA NCD Self-Care Application offers a powerful tool to tackle the growing burden of NCDs in Myanmar. However, it requires strategic action from NGOs, INGOs, and CSOs to reach its full potential. By following these recommendations, these organisations can help transform the application into a cornerstone of NCD management in their communities.

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For more information, please visit our website at <https://www.sun-sea.org/en/>



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