

“Our Shared Responsibility”

**How Civil Society is Strengthening Local Resilience for
a Federal Democratic Burma/Myanmar**



September 2025

Copyright © 2025



The report was co-authored by 18 civil society organizations including the organizations listed below. Two organizations have chosen not to disclose their names.

1. Burmese Women's Union
2. Generation Wave
3. Human Rights Foundation of Monland
4. Kachin Women's Association Thailand
5. Karen Peace Support Network
6. Karen Women's Organization
7. Karenni National Women's Organization
8. Kayan Rescue Committee
9. Kayan Women's Organization
10. LGBT Alliance Myanmar
11. Progressive Voice
12. Ta'ang Women's Organization
13. The Ladies
14. Twae Latt Myar
15. Young Wings
16. Youth for Myanmar

Cover page photo credits (clockwise from the top): KPSN, KNWO, Youth for Myanmar, KNWO, KNWO

Table of Contents

Acronyms	4
Preface	5
Introduction	8
Methodology	10
Humanitarian aid	12
Expanding to humanitarian aid	13
Matching and meeting dire needs on the ground	14
Importance of building trust for providing aid and beyond	17
Towards a peaceful, just, and inclusive Burma/Myanmar	20
Sustainable community initiatives	24
Agriculture and home gardening	24
Vocational training	27
Community health care	28
Local infrastructure development	30
Human rights protection and bottom-up federalism	33
Expanded efforts to protect and support human rights defenders	33
Human rights awareness trainings	34
Women's and youth empowerment	35
Supporting inclusive bottom-up federalism	39
Challenges	41
Security, transportation, and communication challenges	41
Major funding constraints and other donor-related challenges	43
Conclusion	46
Recommendations	48
Bibliography	51

Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BWU	Burmese Women's Union
CBO	Community-based organization
CDM	Civil Disobedience Movement
CDMers	Members of the Civil Disobedience Movement
CHRO	Chin Human Rights Organization
CSO	Civil society organization
ERO	Ethnic resistance organization
GW	Generation Wave
HRD	Human rights defender
HURFOM	Human Rights Foundation of Monland
IDP	Internally displaced person
INGO	International non-governmental organization
KNWO	Karenni National Women's Organization
KPSN	Karen Peace Support Network
KRC	Kayan Rescue Committee
KWAT	Kachin Women's Association Thailand
KWO	Karen Women's Organization
KyWO	Kayan Women's Organization
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
NUG	National Unity Government
PYO	Pa-O Youth Organization
TWO	Ta'ang Women's Organization
UN	United Nations
WGSS	Women and Girls Safe Space
WLT	Women's Leadership Training

Preface

On 28 March 2025, a 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar,¹ with its epicenter in Sagaing Region. The disaster killed more than 4,000 people and injured more than 11,300.² Entire communities across Sagaing, Mandalay, Magwe, and Bago Regions, as well as eastern and southern Shan State and Naypyidaw, were devastated. Homes, schools, places of worship, and essential infrastructure were reduced to rubble. An estimated 17 million people were affected by the earthquake, and over 200,000 were displaced, with many forced to live in makeshift tents and temporary shelters that were vulnerable to aftershocks.³ The Sagaing earthquake added yet another layer of devastation to a country already in crisis—a nation bleeding from the severe, ongoing violence and atrocity crimes committed by an illegal, brutal military junta.⁴

Immediately following the earthquake, the people of Myanmar mobilized themselves in acts of extraordinary people-to-people solidarity. Civil society groups and local humanitarian responders from Yangon and central Myanmar quickly launched emergency rescue and relief missions.⁵ Simultaneously, groups operating in neighboring countries and diaspora communities worldwide mobilized resources and began fundraising to support these efforts.⁶ Many civil society groups restructured and integrated the earthquake response efforts into their planned activities. Operating

- 1 One year following the 1988 pro-democracy uprising, the former military junta changed the country's name from Burma to Myanmar overnight. The deception of inclusiveness and the historical process of coercion by the former State Peace and Development Council military regime in the usage of "Myanmar" rather than "Burma" without the consent of the people is recognized and not forgotten. Thus, some groups continue to use "Burma" as the country's name. Within this report, "Burma/Myanmar" is used in the title and headings, and "Myanmar" is used throughout the body of the text.
- 2 "Death Toll Within a Month from Myanmar's Earthquake Reaches," *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 9 May 2025, <https://english.dvb.no/live-burma-earthquake/> (reporting 4,477 fatalities and 11,366 injuries, citing announcements from the National Unity Government, junta announcements, and "trustworthy news media and on-the-ground information").
- 3 Simon Scarr, Vijdan Mohammad Kawoosa & Dea Bankova, "How a 'supershear' quake tore through Myanmar," *Reuters*, last updated 30 April 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/MYANMAR-QUAKE/SUPERSHEAR/zgvojljojpdp/>
- 4 Khin Ohmar, "A community-led response to the earthquake is the only answer," *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 28 April 2025, <https://english.dvb.no/a-community-led-response-to-the-earthquake-is-the-only-answer/>.
- 5 See, e.g., Earthquake Response Team For Sagaing Federal Unit, Facebook, 2 April 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Ai6gkYqBA/>; Women for Justice – wj, "Support for Earthquake Victims in Sagaing Township," Facebook, 7 April 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1RvyveGZyf/>; Emergency Management Committee.MDY, Facebook, 29 April 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/share/1AU5h9pnW6/>.
- 6 See, e.g., "Myanmar Earthquake Relief," MM Earthquake Response Coordination Unit, <https://www.myanmar-earthquakehelp.com/en>, last accessed 20 August 2025; "Earthquake Appeal: Give Hope, Rebuild Lives," Better Burma, <https://www.betterburma.org/earthquakerelief>, last accessed 20 August 2025.

independently of the junta, they provided lifesaving aid, conducted immediate rescues, and began assessing needs for long-term rehabilitation. These civil society groups and local humanitarian responders, which have operated under fire for years, once again proved their resilience and relevance, reaching the most vulnerable at their time of greatest need—especially in areas deliberately terrorized by the junta and inaccessible to international agencies. In doing so, the Myanmar people’s democratic resistance movement not only responded to the people’s dire needs amid disaster, but also continued their broader struggle for justice, human rights, equality, sustainable peace, and federal democracy.

In stark contrast, the Myanmar military junta—illegitimate, illegal, and wholly rejected by the people—set out to exploit the earthquake for its own political, military, and financial gain, calling for international assistance while continuing its terror campaign against civilians nationwide.⁷ Since the earthquake, the junta has weaponized, manipulated, and obstructed aid, including by withholding lifesaving relief supplies; imposing arbitrary restrictions on relief efforts; harassing, intimidating, and arresting medics, aid workers, and volunteers; and stealing or extorting humanitarian resources.⁸ At the same time, from 28 March to 16 June 2025, the junta conducted at least 982 attacks, including airstrikes and artillery barrages, deliberately targeting civilians—in quake-affected areas and beyond.⁹ The juxtaposition of the people’s solidarity-driven rescue, relief, and rehabilitation response and the junta’s relentless violence underscores a central truth of Myanmar’s polycrisis: The people are leading their own resistance, organizing their own relief and recovery, and envisioning and striving for their own federal democratic future, while the junta keeps trying to destroy it by all means possible.

The research underpinning this report—which focuses on Myanmar civil society’s role in strengthening local resilience and advancing sustainable, community-led solutions—was conducted entirely before the March 2025 earthquake. Nevertheless, its findings remain more urgent than ever. The earthquake has amplified the need for international support to be firmly aligned with, and accountable to, the people of Myanmar—not the junta which brought this catastrophe upon them. This moment

7 AFP, “Myanmar junta asks for international aid after earthquake,” *Mizzima*, 28 March 2025, <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/03/28/20560>.

8 “Myanmar junta admits to firing on Chinese Red Cross aid convoy,” *Myanmar Now*, 2 April 2025, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-junta-admits-to-firing-on-chinese-red-cross-aid-convoy/>; “Myanmar military restricts access to quake-hit Sagaing Region,” *Myanmar Now*, 7 April 2025, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-military-restricts-access-to-quake-hit-sagaing-region/>; RFA Burmese, “Volunteer groups pause quake aid in Myanmar citing junta restrictions,” *Radio Free Asia*, 9 April 2025, <https://www.rfa.org/english/myanmar/2025/04/09/myanmar-aid-groups-halt-junta-restrictions/>.

9 “The Regime’s Air and Artillery Strikes Across the Country After the Earthquake: March 28 – June 16, 2025,” *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 16 June 2025, <https://english.dvb.no/live-burma-earthquake/>.

calls for principled action to support local civil society in its lifesaving and nation-shaping efforts, and to deprive the junta of the means to carry out further atrocities. The international community must act decisively to hold the junta accountable under international law and cut off the junta's ability to wage war against civilians—particularly its capacity to conduct airstrikes. In tandem, sustained, flexible, and principled support from the international community to Myanmar civil society will help not only to strengthen communities' resilience and resistance, but also to sustain their ongoing efforts to lay democratic foundations for rebuilding Myanmar and their collective future.

Introduction

Since its illegal coup attempt on 1 February 2021, the Myanmar military junta¹⁰ has plunged the country into an unprecedented and dire human rights and humanitarian crisis. In the immediate aftermath of the coup attempt, the people of Myanmar rose up through the Spring Revolution¹¹—including the historic Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM)¹²—aiming to end military tyranny, build sustainable peace, and establish inclusive federal democracy.

Today, the Spring Revolution continues to advance, with the junta suffering major losses—of territory, military personnel, and control over civilian administrations and institutions—to revolutionary forces countrywide. Townships covering 86% of the country’s territory and including 67% of the national population are not under stable junta control.¹³ As collective punishment for the people’s nationwide resistance movement, the junta has only increased its widespread and systematic campaign of terror against the people through airstrikes, paramotor and drone attacks, artillery shelling, ground attacks, mass arson, massacres, rape, other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary arrests, forced conscription,¹⁴ and other atrocities.

-
- 10 “Military junta” and “junta” refer herein to the Myanmar military—and its administrative body, the “State Administration Council,” recently renamed as the “State Peace and Security Commission”—following its attempted coup, to underscore that the junta is an illegal, illegitimate entity and that Myanmar’s people have categorically resisted the attempted coup and rejected the junta as their government.
 - 11 In the wake of the military’s illegal coup attempt on 1 February 2021, the Spring Revolution emerged as the Myanmar people’s nationwide, bottom-up democratic resistance movement against the Myanmar military and its illegal attempt to seize power. This revolution is unparalleled in Myanmar’s history, drawing its strength from the intersectional and intergenerational collaboration and coordination among diverse groups nationwide, including longstanding ethnic resistance organizations. The goals of the Spring Revolution transcend the dismantling of the military junta. This revolution has united Myanmar’s people—across ethnicities, religions, social classes, genders, and sectors—behind the common goal of ending the military’s atrocity crimes, societal divisions, misogyny, discriminatory ideologies, and decades-long impunity to pave the way for the establishment of an inclusive and peaceful federal democratic Myanmar that guarantees equal rights for all.
 - 12 Within days of the coup attempt, the CDM emerged as hundreds of thousands of public sector workers withdrew their labor from junta-co-opted public institutions with the goal of rejecting and crippling the military’s coup attempt. For more information, see “Civil Disobedience Movement: A Foundation of Myanmar’s Spring Revolution and Force Behind Military’s Failed Coup,” 19 civil society organizations, 25 May 2023, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2023/05/25/civil-disobedience-movement-a-foundation-of-myanmars-spring-revolution-and-force-behind-militarys-failed-coup/>.
 - 13 “Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar 2024 Update,” Special Advisory Council for Myanmar, 30 May 2024, <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SAC-M-Effective-Control-in-Myanmar-2024-Update-ENGLISH.pdf>
 - 14 For more information, see “Challenges Faced by the Myanmar Queer Community After the 2024 Conscription Law,” *Queers of Burma Alternative*, 17 January 2025, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2025/01/17/challenges-faced-by-the-myanmar-queer-community-after-the-2024-conscription-law/>; “Myanmar’s Youth at Risk,” *Progressive Voice*, 31 January 2025, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2025/01/31/myanmars-youth-at-risk-the-juntas-intensified-forced-conscription-campaign/>; “Drafted by Desperation,” *Progressive Voice*, 7 September 2024, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2024/09/07/drafted-by-desperation/>.

As of this writing, the Myanmar military's violence has internally displaced more than 3.5 million people,¹⁵ and the dire humanitarian needs thereof are escalating rapidly. Prior to the coup attempt, the Myanmar military's violence had already forced an estimated 328,000 people into protracted internal displacement—particularly in Rakhine, Kachin, Chin, Shan, Mon, and Karen States.¹⁶ The military's violence has also displaced more than 1 million Myanmar people across international borders, including to Bangladesh, Malaysia, India, and Thailand.¹⁷ Today, the military junta deliberately prevents the delivery of aid to internally displaced persons (IDPs), the vast majority of whom are in resistance-controlled areas.

The 7.7-magnitude earthquake on 28 March 2025 further compounded Myanmar's polycrisis, causing massive loss of life and destruction—exacerbated by the junta's blatant weaponization, obstruction, and manipulation of aid. While the junta has attempted to exploit the earthquake disaster for its own gain, Myanmar civil society has taken a people-to-people solidarity approach, providing emergency relief and medium-term rehabilitation while looking into solutions for long-term recovery.

In this context, the Myanmar people are steadfastly pursuing a homegrown political transformation by establishing bottom-up governance in the country's liberated areas¹⁸ and caring for one another in response to disasters—both natural and military-made—through collective and coordinated action. **Civil society groups have met this moment with diverse and multifaceted initiatives to strengthen the resilience of Myanmar's communities, bridging the human rights and humanitarian crisis of today with Myanmar's federal democratic future.**

As resistance humanitarians,¹⁹ Myanmar civil society groups²⁰—including civil society

15 “Myanmar Situation: IDPs in Myanmar,” UN High Commissioner for Refugees: Operational Data Portal, last updated 1 September 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar>. The figures here are likely gross underestimations of the true magnitude of internal displacement.

16 “Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 29,” UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 6 May 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-29-6-may-2023>.

17 “Myanmar Situation: Myanmar Refugees and Asylum Seekers,” UN High Commissioner for Refugees: Operational Data Portal, last updated 31 August 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar>.

18 Karenni Civil Society Network, Karenni National Women's Organization, the Union of Karenni State Youth, and Progressive Voice, “Federalism from the Ground Up: The Karenni Model of Nation-State Building,” Progressive Voice, 9 October 2024, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2024/10/09/federalism-from-the-ground-up-the-karenni-model-of-nation-state-building/>.

19 Adelina Kamal & Rin Fujimatsu, “From humanitarian resistance to resilience: Nation-building in active conflict,” Humanitarian Practice Network, 10 April 2024, <https://odihpn.org/publication/from-humanitarian-resistance-to-resilience-nation-building-in-active-conflict/> (“In Myanmar, this ‘resistance humanitarianism’ manifests in rejecting the military junta, working towards dismantling the military's decades-long oppressive systems, and building a resilient web of people-centered horizontal networks as building blocks for a future federal democracy in Myanmar.”).

20 With inclusivity in mind, “civil society groups” is used throughout this report to refer to civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), CSO/CBO networks, and groups of human rights defenders (HRDs) and local humanitarian responders.

organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), CSO/CBO networks, and groups of human rights defenders (HRDs) and local humanitarian responders—are simultaneously responding to dire emergency needs on the ground; creating sustainable access to food, livelihoods, and other basic needs; as well as strengthening local capacities to resist injustice, protect human rights, and build people-led governance for inclusive, bottom-up federalism. Myanmar civil society groups continue these efforts to strengthen local resilience—leading to sustainable solutions—despite immense security and logistical challenges, including relentless junta violence, massive funding cuts, and onerous donor requirements.

In Myanmar, resilience goes far beyond adapting to and overcoming challenges. Resilience also means the capacity to resist military tyranny and injustice, as well as stand up for the rights of oneself and one's community. It is also the capacity to actively pursue freedom and build a federal democratic future. In defining resilience, a women's organization from Chin State said:

“

When we say “resilience,” it is the ability to resist injustice ... If we aren't strong enough, how are we going to rebuild ourselves by the time we get justice? ... It is very important for us to be ready to receive justice the way we want.²¹

”

In this way, resilience is the means by which the Myanmar people are actualizing their collective will. According to the Burmese Women's Union (BWU), “We have a dream of how we want to see the country [in the future] ... With resilience, we will continue our work until we achieve [the goal of] building a new country.”²² The Myanmar people's resilience, therefore, neither lessens nor precludes the urgent, ongoing need for humanitarian aid and other forms of support for the people. Their resilience also never justifies the denial or withdrawal of such support. Instead, the people's resilience should ignite increased support for these communities and their collective, ongoing efforts to establish an inclusive, peaceful, and rights-protecting federal democracy.

Methodology

This report is informed by qualitative field research—including 35 semi-structured interviews, two focus group discussions, and three field reports—with a total of 28 Myanmar CSOs, CBOs, CSO/CBO networks, and local humanitarian responders. Of the individuals interviewed, 30 identified as women, 24 as men, and two as LGBTQIA+.

²¹ Interview with a women's organization from Chin State, November 2024.

²² Interview with Burmese Women's Union, October 2024.

The interviewed groups included, but were not limited to, women's, youth, and LGBTQIA+ groups, as well as ethnic CBOs/CSOs and networks. The research aimed to reflect the diverse nature of Myanmar civil society and the ongoing grassroots efforts to build locally led, sustainable solutions for Myanmar's future—often initiated and led by these groups. Interviewees included representatives from groups operating or providing support in Ayeyarwaddy, Bago, Magwe, Sagaing, and Tanintharyi Regions; in Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, and Shan States; and along the Thailand-Myanmar and India-Myanmar borders. While some groups conduct activities in both Myanmar and its neighboring countries, this report focuses on activities conducted in Myanmar. Among the interviewed groups, some have been operating for decades, while others were formed after the 2021 coup attempt.

Interviews were conducted online and in person along the Thailand-Myanmar border between October 2024 and March 2025. The focus group discussions were conducted in person along the Thailand-Myanmar border in October 2024. All interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with the free, prior, and informed consent of the participants, and with the utmost care for the safety and security of both the participants and the researchers. All interviews and focus group discussions were completed before the earthquake of 28 March 2025. As such, the immense efforts of Myanmar civil society to provide support for emergency humanitarian needs and long-term rehabilitation in the aftermath of the Sagaing earthquake are not covered herein.

Humanitarian aid

In response to the junta-caused human rights and humanitarian crisis, civil society groups across Myanmar have exponentially expanded their humanitarian aid work since the coup attempt, especially once the junta began targeting entire communities to collectively punish the people and suppress their resistance. Driven by their shared responsibility to care for one another and their proximity to local communities, Myanmar civil society groups are providing cash, food, water, medicine, hygiene supplies, health information, and more to meet the actual needs of vulnerable populations on the ground.

To provide aid, these groups emphasize the foundational importance of building and maintaining trust with local communities. At the same time, many groups see the provision of humanitarian aid as fundamental for achieving their organizations' respective missions to, for example, protect and promote human rights, as well as build a peaceful and federal democratic Myanmar. By fulfilling basic needs on the ground, Myanmar civil society groups are strengthening individuals' capacities to contribute to their communities, participate in public life, and resist injustice and military tyranny.



Aid items being prepared for delivery to IDPs in Demawso Township, Karenni State, in September 2024. [Credit: KNWO]

Expanding to humanitarian aid

Since the junta's coup attempt, Myanmar civil society groups have been critical providers of humanitarian aid for local communities, leveraging their robust local networks, trust with communities, and collective expertise to reach the most vulnerable. Some groups—including faith-based groups, particularly those based in ethnic states—have been providing such assistance for decades in response to military violence and natural disasters. Before the coup attempt, many groups were also involved in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.²³

Beginning in 2021, the junta-caused crisis drove many more civil society groups that do not primarily identify as aid organizations or consider aid provision their organizational mission, as well as newly formed aid groups, to directly support the escalating humanitarian needs on the ground.²⁴ Going beyond their typical activities, civil society groups have taken up this work to ensure the people's survival and bolster their capacity to resist injustice and build a better future. This work also serves to reinforce the legitimacy of the groups' efforts to advocate for rights-based policies and amplify the people's voices. The Karen Environmental and Social Action Network explained:

“

*I think this is our shared responsibility [to provide humanitarian aid] ... We say this is one of our responsibilities because the humanitarian crisis is related to the political crisis. We oppose injustice. We would like to eliminate this system. That's why we must provide support ... and find ways together [to solve communities' problems]. It's one of our efforts in opposing injustice.*²⁵

”

Multiple civil society groups also expressed a strong sense of obligation to support and serve the communities in which they have carried out their activities.²⁶ Some similarly

23 Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, November 2024; “Myanmar’s Civil Society Takes the Lead in Combating Covid-19,” The Reality of Aid Network, 6 July 2021, <https://realityofaid.org/myanmars-civil-society-takes-the-lead-in-combating-covid-19/>; Thu Thu Nwe Hlaing, “No COVID-19 response is possible without civil society involvement,” UNOPS, 10 June 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/no-covid-19-response-possible-without-civil-society-involvement>.

24 Interview with a Karen organization working on education, November 2024; Interview with Ta’ang Women’s Organization, November 2024; Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, October 2024.

25 Interview with Karen Environmental and Social Action Network, October 2024.

26 Interview with Burmese Women’s Union, October 2024 (“Since before 2021, we have been working together with [these communities], and we have gone [there] and carried out our activities. In this difficult time, when the people from our community are in need of support, it feels like we have an obligation. I think since we have been with the community in peaceful times, leaving them during such a difficult time is something that should not happen.”).

expressed that civil society groups are part of these communities themselves and are in continuous, close contact with the people, making them an accessible and natural point of contact in times of need:

“

*In emergency situations, [IDPs] don't know who to reach out to and ask for help. Mostly, they contact the groups who they are in close contact with. So, if they need humanitarian aid, they contact the locally based organizations first ... For the emergency cases that need immediate action, international [groups] cannot come and do it. Only organizations like us can make contact and take action.*²⁷

”

On this point, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) noted that they expanded their aid work because “it was important to have an organization that represents the Chin ethnicity to respond” to the escalating needs on the ground, equipped with an in-depth understanding of the Chin State context and established channels for resource mobilization.²⁸

Local civil society groups have also had to expand their humanitarian aid work due to, among other reasons, the departure of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and other international aid agencies. Many INGOs have ceased operating where junta attacks have escalated, and support through junta-controlled channels does not reach these areas. Therefore, for much-needed humanitarian support amid escalating military violence, communities rely on local civil society groups—both newly formed and long-existing—that are still on the ground and able to assess and meet the people’s needs. For example, according to the Ta’ang Women’s Organization (TWO), “in northern Shan, with the intensifying conflict, the big [organizations] have left ... and support doesn’t reach our area. So, what I would like to share is there are still CSOs who are working on the ground in this area. Even though we don’t feel safe and we have to flee sometimes, there are more needs when the conflict intensifies. The needs in our area are very high.”²⁹

Matching and meeting dire needs on the ground

Civil society groups provide many types of humanitarian aid, including, but not limited to, cash support, food, health care, education, shelter, clean water, sanitation and

27 Interview with Pa-O Youth Organization, October 2024.

28 Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, November 2024.

29 Interview with Ta’ang Women’s Organization, February 2025.

hygiene supplies, and clothing.³⁰ The aid these groups provide closely depends on the needs, security, and local context of the community served.³¹ Civil society groups learn this information through close communication with people on the ground, as well as the data collected therefrom, such as the number of IDPs in a certain area or the number of injured persons after a junta airstrike.³² Their deep understanding of the real-time situation on the ground—made possible by trust, local connections, and proximity—allows them to determine the best way to support a particular community. BWU further explained:

“For us, instead of reaching out to the community saying what we can support, people from our network go to the area or IDP camp and make an assessment by talking with the people from the community. [For example,] some need milk powder because the mother died in a bombing. That kind of need we can only know when we receive the information from the ground. We cannot go by seeing with our eyes. [We need to hear from the people directly.]”³³

For IDPs in some areas, cash support is preferred and more effective because it is easy to carry cash and purchase the items they need locally.³⁴ Cash support also mitigates security and transportation challenges, including the risk of aid items being seized at checkpoints.³⁵ In other areas, however, food support is preferred:

“It is difficult to transport humanitarian aid to IDPs. Therefore, some IDPs said that they only need cash support rather than material support because they can buy whatever they need, and it is easy for them to carry cash. In some areas, it is better for IDPs to receive food support instead of cash. [For example, in one village in Sagaing Region,] the [junta] conducts military operations in that village often. Therefore, many villagers closed their shops, so it is difficult for IDPs there to buy what they need, even though they have money.”³⁶

30 Interview with a women’s organization from Chin State, November 2024; Interview with a local humanitarian responder in northern Shan State, November 2024; Interview with Burmese Women’s Union, October 2024; Interview with a local organization, November 2024; Interview with Ta’ang Women’s Organization, November 2024; Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, November 2024; Interview with a humanitarian responder in Kachin State, November 2024.

31 Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, October 2024; Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, November 2024.

32 Interview with Pa-O Youth Organization, October 2024.

33 Interview with Burmese Women’s Union, October 2024.

34 Interview with a CSO in Shan State, October 2024; Interview with Latt Pa Dan Strike Committee, November 2024.

35 Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, November 2024; Interview with a CSO in Shan State, October 2024.

36 Interview with Latt Pa Dan Strike Committee, November 2024.

With such severe needs on the ground, civil society groups often work together to coordinate and conduct humanitarian activities in their areas of operation—to both meet needs effectively and avoid overlapping efforts.³⁷ For example, in Kachin State, a CSO network of multiple local organizations has been exchanging information, coordinating, and collaborating to provide aid for over a decade: “When the IDP number increases, [the organizations] have to shift to humanitarian activities in the area where they are working ... We cannot do [humanitarian response] alone. Therefore, we are doing coordination. We discuss the needs and response [as a network]. [Each organization is responding] within the capacity they have.”³⁸



KPSN and a local CBO preparing to deliver emergency assistance for IDPs affected by a junta attack in Kawkaik Township, Karen State. [Credit: KPSN]

Likewise, in Karen State, the Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN)—the largest Karen civil society network—holds coordination meetings among Karen CSOs and CBOs to discuss and share data from the ground, determine fundraising needs, and strategize to maintain local ownership of the humanitarian response.³⁹ Because of frequent cooperation among its 22 member organizations, KPSN can meet local communities’

³⁷ Interview with a CSO network in Kachin State, November 2024.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, February 2025 (“We know that everything we do should be bottom-up; it cannot be top-down. The needs or demands must come from the community, and our job is to respond to the needs. We cannot go and implement our own agenda. For us, we don’t predict and plan things ourselves; it is not the way we do our work.”).

urgent needs more effectively and efficiently—such as during flooding in September 2024—by, for example, collectively raising funds as a network and coordinating the provision of support among its members.⁴⁰

KPSN also leverages its network to monitor local situations and document junta bases defeated or abandoned; IDP numbers; the targeting of civilians; human rights violations due to shelling, airstrikes, and drone attacks; and the number of people injured or killed.⁴¹ This data collection aims to enhance the coordination of local humanitarian responses, meet needs effectively, and document self-determination and reclamation of control in Karen State, while also countering United Nations (UN) data that is reliant on the junta for access and information:

“

*The whole international community uses UN data, but it's ineffective. It's only half of the Karen number in terms of the IDPs. If we say that their data is not credible, we need to have our own data. In terms of the IDP data, we can prove that there is no better data [than KPSN's], because we have central, district, township, village tract, and village level data.*⁴²

”

Similarly, in Sagaing Region, the Sagaing People Support Network—a network of 24 local aid groups—collects data on displacement, destruction caused by junta attacks, and the provision of aid, including the number of organizations providing health care and the services they offer.⁴³ Using this data, the network members exchange information about humanitarian needs and support each other in providing assistance throughout Sagaing Region. By doing so, they increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their support, avoiding overlap and addressing areas of need.

Importance of trust building for providing aid and beyond

Trust is fundamental and central to the provision of humanitarian aid. In Myanmar, decades of military violence, surveillance, and weaponization of aid have resulted in skepticism and concern on the part of local communities towards the activities of unfamiliar groups, whether local CSOs or international aid agencies. BWU explained, “As we are careful with who to trust, [communities] also choose who to trust—whether

⁴⁰ Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, October 2024.

⁴¹ See “Regaining Control of Our Lands,” Karen Peace Support Network, 28 November 2024, <https://www.karenpeace.org/report/regaining-control-of-our-lands-english-version/>.

⁴² Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, October 2024; Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, February 2025.

⁴³ Interview with Young Wings, October 2024.

the group is really supporting them or taking advantage. Are the groups taking our information and sharing it with [the junta] or not? Their side also has suspicion, so it is very important to build trust.”⁴⁴ Sensitive information about the activities of civil society groups or local communities shared with the junta often puts anyone involved in the junta’s crosshairs, as the junta continues to target civil society actors for arrest, torture, and death.⁴⁵ As a result, civil society groups across the country recognize trust with local communities as foundational for providing humanitarian aid and pursuing other collective initiatives, particularly across ethnic lines.

Community trust must often be earned through understanding, respect, regular coordination, follow-through, accountability, and long-term engagement on the part of civil society groups that provide support or otherwise work in the community. On this point, the Karenni Social Welfare and Development Center (KSWDC) said, “What you say and what you do have to be the same.”⁴⁶

For example, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), which operates in Mon State and Tanintharyi Region, has built trust “with direct communications, inclusive participation, being transparent, and making an effort to understand the needs of people to provide effective support.”⁴⁷ HURFOM noted, “We cannot build trust from short-term collaboration. Trust can be built from long-term engagement and distributing resources transparently.”⁴⁸ When providing emergency support to IDP communities in Tanintharyi Region following junta attacks that displaced hundreds, HURFOM also found communication with IDPs’ village committees integral to the initiative’s success:

“

*[The village committees’] on-the-ground insights were invaluable in accurately assessing the needs and risks within each community. Their involvement not only improved the accuracy of resource allocation but also strengthened community trust in the project, as villagers knew that trusted local figures were involved in decision-making processes. This collaboration fostered a sense of ownership and empowerment within the affected communities.*⁴⁹

”

44 Interview with Burmese Women’s Union, October 2024.

45 “Myanmar: Four years after coup, junta increases legal restrictions and continues its persecution of political prisoners,” CIVICUS, 19 February 2025, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/myanmar-four-years-after-coup-junta-increases-legal-restrictions-and-continues-its-persecution-of-political-prisoners/>.

46 Focus group discussion with Karenni civil society organizations and humanitarian responders, October 2024.

47 Written responses from Human Rights Foundation of Monland, December 2024.

48 Ibid.

49 Information shared by Human Rights Foundation of Monland, October 2024.

Once initial trust is established, the actual provision of aid can create a positive feedback loop, in which providing aid fosters even greater trust with the respective communities. In other words, aid provision can strengthen community trust: By providing aid in close collaboration with communities they serve, civil society groups can improve their relationships with them, better understand their needs, and pursue additional initiatives as a collective. These community-led initiatives may include vocational capacity building, small-scale infrastructure development, or human rights awareness and protection activities. A women's organization from Chin State noted, "Being able to provide humanitarian aid is a strength for us in building relationships with communities."⁵⁰



A MHPSS workshop with IDP community organized by KNWO in Karenni State. [Credit: KNWO]

In Karenni State, the Karenni National Women's Organization (KNWO) has found that through their humanitarian aid provision in solidarity with local communities, local trust in and reliance on their organization has grown: "Before the coup [attempt], the community didn't really seem to accept the [gender-based violence] work we've been doing, but after the coup [attempt], KNWO has been working beyond that, including assisting with humanitarian aid and working for the betterment of the economy and politics. People see more of our work, so they are more reliant and more trusting [of us]."⁵¹

⁵⁰ Interview with a women's organization from Chin State, November 2024.

⁵¹ Interview with Karenni National Women's Organization, February 2025.

Without trust, some communities have been reluctant to engage with civil society groups and accept aid—particularly where historical tensions, distrust, or mistrust exist between different ethnic or religious groups. For example, in northern Shan State, home to many ethnic groups, TWO found, “Some villagers welcomed our projects, and other villagers did not. When we tried to meet Shan IDPs in displacement sites in order to provide them aid, they did not accept us in the beginning because they did not trust us.”⁵² After TWO explained the purpose of the visit—to collect data to inform the provision of aid—some villagers still refused their assistance due to a lack of trust, likely related to interethnic tensions. In a further attempt to build trust, TWO delivered aid to the community during their next visit, and as a result, they were welcomed by the villagers.

On the other hand, the lack of timely response or follow-through can break or erode trust, jeopardizing an organization’s ability to engage effectively. For example, in a village in Sagaing Region, following a mass arson attack by the military junta, the Monywa People’s Strike Steering Committee was contacted by several organizations that wanted to provide support. The Steering Committee collected data from villagers and provided the information to the organizations to inform the support, but this collaboration put community trust at risk: “[T]hose organizations were delayed in providing humanitarian aid. Therefore, the villagers started to lose their trust in [the Steering Committee] because we asked them for the data, and they provided us the data we asked for, but they did not get the support on time.”⁵³

In addition to trust, humanitarian aid provided by civil society groups can also foster solidarity in the people’s collective struggle to survive and resist. BWU noted, “When we go to support them, it is not just distributing aid. We are together with the women. We will share their burden as much as we can ... [They can know that] they are not alone—there are organizations behind them, supporting them.”⁵⁴ According to Young Wings, which provides humanitarian support in Ayeyarwaddy, Sagaing, and Magwe Regions, these acts of solidarity can build stronger trust: “Building trust by being and standing together with the people is stronger than building trust by giving materials.”⁵⁵

Towards a peaceful, just, and inclusive Burma/Myanmar

For civil society groups, providing humanitarian aid is one of the main ways to strengthen the resilience of local communities—not only for the people’s survival, but also for their resistance against injustice, their capacity to stand up for their rights, and their motivation and capability to contribute to their communities to build a better future. Civil society

52 Interview with Ta’ang Women’s Organization, November 2024.

53 Interview with Monywa People’s Strike Steering Committee, October 2024.

54 Interview with Burmese Women’s Union, October 2024.

55 Interview with Young Wings, October 2024.

groups also see humanitarian aid delivery missions as fundamental for achieving their organizations' goals, such as realizing federal democracy, sustainable peace, gender equality, and human rights for all in Myanmar. CHRO explained, "When the basic needs aren't met, it's hard to think about one's rights."⁵⁶ Providing humanitarian support is therefore also critical for the success of the Spring Revolution:

“

*When we look at the revolution, [we see that] it started with the people. How can we achieve the goal we want to see? Only if we have the resilience of the people. If people can participate actively in the revolution, that also helps us with our goal. We show people that we are there for them [through humanitarian support]. The crisis intensified in mid-2024, and it's been very difficult for us ... so by helping each other and supporting each other, we can work towards our goal.*⁵⁷

”



A town hall built for and in collaboration with IDP communities in Namtu Township, Shan State, supported by TWO. [Credit: TWO]

⁵⁶ Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, February 2025.

⁵⁷ Interview with Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee, February 2025.

Similarly, regarding the people power driving the Spring Revolution, the Kayan Women's Organization (KyWO) noted, "The role of the people is very important ... therefore, it is important to fulfill their needs ... By [CSOs] supporting them and fulfilling their needs on the ground, their participation can also increase towards the goals that they want to achieve."⁵⁸ In this way, civil society groups view the provision of humanitarian aid as essential for strengthening communities' and individuals' capacities to be active and collective changemakers who build sustainable solutions for Myanmar's future rather than passive aid recipients.

In addition to strengthening the people's resilience, this people-led approach to humanitarian aid has led to close collaboration between civil society groups and emerging local administrations. Such collaborations have, in turn, strengthened these bottom-up governance structures by bolstering their legitimacy and public trust.⁵⁹ For example, in Karenni State, the Interim Executive Council of Karenni State has a humanitarian department operating in various townships, which also coordinates with local CBOs and CSOs to support the people effectively. On this coordination, the Coordination Team for Emergency Relief (Karenni) said, "We can say the cooperation is stronger. People also know which channel to go to if they need support."⁶⁰ Similarly, in Mon State and Tanintharyi Region, HURFOM "distributed food and provided shelter for IDPs in collaboration with donors, [ethnic resistance organizations (EROs)], the [National Unity Government (NUG)], and local armed forces ... [and was] able to successfully manage security and distribute aid by building trust with EROs with all-level participation and consistent collaboration."⁶¹

Civil society groups also support local communities and their bottom-up governance by giving them decision-making authority over humanitarian support. For example, KPSN provides funding directly to each district in Karen State and gives the communities the power to determine the priorities and manage the budget "because they know their situation best."⁶² This delegation of decision-making authority fosters mutual trust and respect, while also enabling local communities to develop their financial, logistical, and evaluation capacities.

58 Interview with Kayan Women's Organization, January 2025.

59 Interview with Latt Pa Dan Strike Committee, November 2024.

60 Focus group discussion with Karenni civil society organizations and humanitarian responders, October 2024.

61 Written responses from Human Rights Foundation of Monland, December 2024.

62 Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, February 2025.

Spotlight: Meeting dire emergency needs in Wetlet Township, Sagaing Region

In Wetlet Township, Sagaing Region, any organization seeking to operate in the area must register with the NUG. This registration requirement was established due to previous cases of INGOs lacking sensitivity and consideration in the distribution of aid, thus breaking community trust and causing harm to local people. In one case, an INGO provided assistance only to some parts of Wetlet's Chaungmido Village—failing to reach all of those in need—which caused conflict among the residents of that village. In some cases, some INGOs operating in the area were revealed to be cooperating with the junta. There were also cases where INGOs refused to reveal their organizations' names when asked by locals.

As of this writing, Twae Latt Myar—an LGBT-led organization—is one of two groups providing humanitarian aid in Wetlet Township. Prior to the coup attempt, the group focused on advocating for LGBT rights and health care. Now they focus on providing humanitarian aid—including menstrual hygiene kits, shelter, food, emergency health care, and education support—to IDPs, landmine victims, and others with emergency needs.

As a local humanitarian responder, Twae Latt Myar has put significant effort into building trust with the local community because they provide assistance through their connections on the ground. Since 2021, the organization has joined local coordination meetings to hear the needs directly from the community and share what kind of support they can provide. Twae Latt Myar explained, “This kind of connection strengthens trust between us [the community and Twae Latt Myar] because strangers and organizations are not allowed to enter the villages during this time.”⁶³

63 Interview with Twae Latt Myar, November 2024.

Sustainable community initiatives

Strengthening local resilience requires not only humanitarian aid to meet emergency needs, but also sustainable initiatives that support community self-reliance, provide livelihoods, and promote social harmony.⁶⁴ With this in mind, civil society groups across the country are supporting local communities, including displaced and conflict-affected populations, through local initiatives such as agriculture and home gardening projects, vocational training, community health care, and small-scale infrastructure development. In addition to improving local resilience through increased access to food and income, these initiatives also support civil society groups' goals of sustainable peace and bottom-up federal democracy by strengthening social cohesion and encouraging collaboration and collective action.

Agriculture and home gardening

The junta's terror campaign has caused massive food insecurity across Myanmar. Entire communities have been forcibly displaced from their farmlands, unable to return safely to cultivate or harvest their crops due to the high risk of landmines, unexploded ordnance, and repeated aerial bombings or ground artillery attacks by the junta. In parallel, skyrocketing commodity prices prevent families from purchasing basic staples, such as rice and cooking oil. In response, civil society groups are supporting communities and households in strengthening their capacities to cultivate their own food sources.

Last year, KyWO piloted a small-scale home gardening project for six months across 10 IDP camps. The project primarily focused on IDP women, providing seeds and agricultural tools for them to grow various fruits and vegetables. In addition to supporting social harmony by bringing people together to garden, the project has also improved the households' food security and the participants' psychosocial well-being—increasing their self-reliance and self-confidence. According to KyWO, “They feel like they have a job to do, and even though they don't have basic income, they don't have to spend a lot of money compared to before. It's not like they're just sitting around depressed about their situation. This project gives them something to do.”⁶⁵

Similarly, the Kayan Rescue Committee (KRC) in Karenni State—a coordination body of CSOs in Karenni State—has been supporting farming initiatives for IDP communities

64 Interview with Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee, October 2024; Interview with a local organization, November 2024.

65 Interview with Kayan Women's Organization, November 2024.

in Pekhonn and Demawso Townships since early 2024.⁶⁶ In both townships, the host communities have provided the land for the IDPs to farm. In Pekhonn Township, IDPs are now growing garlic, lettuce, and other items that they previously could not afford due to increasing commodity prices. Likewise, in Demawso Township, IDPs, with the support of KRC, are collectively cultivating around 100 acres of previously unused land, as allowed by the host community, to grow multiple crops to sustain their families. While improving food security, this farming initiative has also provided jobs and income for these IDP communities. KRC has found that IDPs in Pekhonn Township are using the income from farming to support their children's education.



A rice field grown by an IDP community in Demawso Township, Karenni State. [Credit: KRC]

KRC has observed that through this initiative, IDP farmers have been experimenting with resourceful, creative methods to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. They have also been sharing their knowledge with one another. One IDP farmer has been teaching others how he implements a specific technique for land preparation that conserves water, which is particularly critical during the dry season, from February to May.

In both locations, these farming initiatives are improving the psychosocial well-being of IDPs, sustaining their families physically and financially, and promoting social harmony with the host communities. For example, host communities benefit from the IDPs sharing farming products with them, which fosters mutual support and cooperation. KRC has also observed that with income generation and improved food security from farming, IDPs can participate more in the local community and engage in other activities to sustain themselves, which serves to prevent conflict:

⁶⁶ Interview with Kayan Rescue Committee, February 2025.

“

For social cohesion, it's hard to do in practice. The IDPs are really grateful when local people let them use their land ... We're also seeing the local mindset is that they also want to help the IDP community. IDPs are always negotiating with the local community. So, their cohesion and coordination are increasing, and getting better. This kind of resource sharing is also contributing to social cohesion between these communities.⁶⁷

”

Similarly, in Sagaing Region, Young Wings—a local organization formed after the coup attempt to provide humanitarian support—is supporting IDPs through their “Revolutionary Farming” project. The project was named in reference to the group’s commitment to nonviolent revolution through collective action. To initiate the project, the group met with an IDP community to discuss how they could assist, resulting in Young Wings proposing a sustainable farming program. Then, the IDP community and Young Wings made a collective decision to start the program. The project initially focused on growing vegetables, but after realizing that these could not sufficiently meet the IDPs’ basic needs, the group expanded their efforts to include rice cultivation. Young Wings and the IDP community now tend the paddy fields collaboratively. This collaboration has improved not only the IDPs’ food security, but also the mental and physical health of the IDPs involved in farming—including women, youth, and elderly persons—by giving them a chance to build relationships with each other and contribute to their community.⁶⁸



Women working in the peanut farm as part of the Young Wings’ “Revolutionary Farming” project in Sagaing Region. [Credit: Young Wings]

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Interview with Young Wings, January 2025.

Also in Sagaing Region, Twae Latt Myar provides agriculture-related trainings to IDPs who have permanently resettled in the area. The group has provided trainings on how to make natural fertilizers, which crops to grow during specific seasons, and how to prevent insects from destroying crops, among other topics. Following these trainings, IDPs have become self-reliant: “When the season arrives to grow beans, they know how to grow beans, and in this area, they cannot buy fertilizer, so now they know how to make fertilizer and can grow plants.”⁶⁹ Twae Latt Myar has heard from IDP camp leaders that because of these trainings, IDPs can generate income and fulfill their basic needs.⁷⁰ In terms of reaching the organization’s vision of a free and fair federal democracy in Myanmar, “[Twae Latt Myar] can see that [these initiatives] are indirectly supporting the federal goal: When people can sustain themselves, they can contribute to other people and share [resources].”⁷¹

Vocational training

For both IDPs and non-displaced persons in Myanmar, securing employment or any form of livelihood has become extremely difficult, if not impossible, given the junta-caused economic crisis. With locals and IDPs alike struggling to find sources of income and facing challenging economic circumstances, host communities usually lack the capacity to provide jobs for IDPs.⁷² To address these needs, civil society groups are supporting individuals through vocational training in various fields, equipping them with new skills to earn income and support their families using local resources.

Since 2017, TWO has been providing vocational training to survivors of conflict and gender-based violence, as well as HRDs. TWO and the participants create an action plan together based on what the participants would like to learn, such as making fermented tea leaves, sewing, repairing mobile phones, making juice or soap, weaving, repairing motorbikes, doing make-up, making food, or providing basic medical care. The trainings range from a few days to several months, depending on the complexity of skills involved. Following the training, some participants have opened their own shops to support their livelihoods: “After receiving training, they open shops to make juice, and if they run out of materials, they sell other things as a convenience store. From that income, they can cover their basic food and also their children’s school fees. After COVID-19, we saw people were able to sustain themselves through this income generation.”⁷³

⁶⁹ Interview with Twae Latt Myar, February 2025.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Interview with Ta’ang Women’s Organization, November 2024.

⁷³ Ibid.



A woman weaving Karenni traditional cloth in a refugee camp on the Thailand-Myanmar border. [Credit: KNWO]

In Karenni State and in refugee camps, KNWO has been implementing a women's capacity building program to support women's livelihoods since before the attempted coup.⁷⁴ The program includes trainings about how to make traditional bags, weave towels and traditional clothing, make toys, and raise chickens. It also provides a marketplace for income, enabling women to sell their handicrafts and traditional clothes to local communities and diaspora communities abroad. As a result of this program, women can better support their households, become more confident and social in the community, and manage their own finances. Similarly, in Chin State, CHRO collaborated with 13 local CSO partners to organize a weaving training for women. Since receiving the training, the trainees have generated income by selling blankets and other products. In Karen State and in refugee camps, the Karen Women's Organization (KWO) provides weaving training upon community request and helps artisans sell their woven products, including Karen bags and clothing.

Community health care

For decades, minority ethnic communities have faced significant barriers to accessing health care. Today, Myanmar's health care sector is under constant junta attack countrywide, forcing many to suffer from worsening health conditions due to lack of access to care. Since the coup attempt, the junta has targeted hospitals, clinics,

⁷⁴ Interview with Karenni National Women's Organization, February 2025.

and other medical facilities, as well as health care workers, with airstrikes, artillery shelling, raids, and arbitrary arrests. To strengthen local resilience in the health care sector, civil society groups have been training individuals to become community health workers and lay counselors to meet dire medical needs on the ground.⁷⁵

Since 2004, the community health care service program of the Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT) has trained women community health workers to provide care in villages across Kachin State. After receiving initial medical training from KWAT, interested participants receive at least six months of training from Mae Tao Clinic. Thereafter, the women return to their communities to work in mobile health clinics. As a result, KWAT has found that, "If something happens in the village, people approach them, and they believe in them. People in the communities are happy to have them in their community. They feel that they don't have to worry about their health care because someone is giving them services."⁷⁶ KWAT's training of women community health workers is one example of the many decades-long efforts that ethnic CSOs have been making to strengthen local capacities for the provision of health care.⁷⁷

In Chin State, CHRO trains locals to serve as mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) providers, also known as lay counselors. Following their initial training, the lay counselors also participate in monthly supervision sessions with a professional counselor and a practicing psychologist. Across Chin State, the lay counselors host focus groups of 10 to 12 individuals—such as groups of youth or women—where participants can share their feelings and struggles and discuss ways to strengthen resilience in their communities. Even in periods when CHRO is unable to provide funding, the lay counselors continue their activities, providing counseling services independently. CHRO explained, "It's a skill set that you can share freely to the public, and you can use it to facilitate community workshops, where you can bring people into a healthier way."⁷⁸ In one case, an MHPSS provider successfully intervened in a suicide attempt, demonstrating the effectiveness and importance of the program in saving lives.

75 In addition to the community health trainings described herein, since the 2021 coup attempt, CDM health workers have formed networks to provide health care to communities across Myanmar. For more information, see, e.g., CDM Medical Network, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/cdmmn/>; "Who we are," Chindwin Medical and Humanitarian Network, <https://www.cmhn-mm.org/about>; Sally Kantar, "Resisting by all means possible," *Myanmar Now*, 12 October 2023, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/resisting-by-all-means-possible/> ("Under the name Nway Oo Kyan Mar—Burmese for 'Spring Health,' a reference to the Spring Revolution which aims to topple the junta—the group built a field hospital in January 2022 after providing mobile health services to internally displaced persons (IDPs) for around eight months prior. They were joined by doctors, nurses and midwives taking part in the Civil Disobedience Movement against military rule.").

76 Interview with Kachin Women's Association Thailand, January 2025.

77 See, e.g., "Training," Mae Tao Clinic, last updated 27 September 2018, <https://maetaoclinic.org/training/>; Alyssa L. Davs, Ye Myint Htwe & Khin Htu Thet, "Myanmar's Community-Based Health Workers," CHW Central, 14 October 2020, <https://chwcentral.org/myanmars-community-based-health-workers/>.

78 Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, February 2025.

Local infrastructure development

The junta's terror campaign aims to destroy civilian infrastructure to deplete community resilience and crush the people's resistance movement. In response, some civil society groups are supporting the development of small-scale infrastructure, such as shelters, roads, bridges, and community centers.

In northern Shan State, Own Land supports the resettlement of villagers when they are forcibly displaced.⁷⁹ For example, the village of Mang Yang in Hpawng Hseng Township, northern Shan State, is no longer habitable because of a previous Myanmar military outpost that left behind many landmines and explosives. For this reason, local administrative bodies prohibited villagers from living there, and all villagers were forced to relocate. In collaboration with local partners, Own Land supported this resettlement technically and financially. For example, Own Land provided villagers with zinc roof sheets to construct shelters and ensured accessible water sources for the relocated village.



*A bridge built for and in collaboration with local communities in Namtu Township, Shan State.
[Credit: TWO]*

⁷⁹ Interview with Own Land, November 2024.

Also in northern Shan State, TWO's Community Development and Humanitarian Aid program has undertaken small-scale infrastructure development projects—such as roads, bridges, and town halls. They pursue these projects after building trust with local communities and understanding their needs, taking at least a year to develop strong relationships before the project begins. Before a project is conceived, TWO meets with villagers to share information about TWO's work and learn more about the villagers' current situation, as well as what they would like to see in their community. TWO also provides capacity-building trainings, such as in leadership and management, to the community based on their interests. Then, a village committee is formed to oversee any infrastructure projects: "Before we conducted the project, we and the village committee drafted action plans for the project. We discussed what should be done and what should be prioritized first to implement the project."⁸⁰

In one community, TWO and the village committee collaborated to construct a bridge connecting two villages, with TWO providing project management, budgeting, and funding support. TWO "explained to them the detailed plan of the construction project, such as the budget and other preparations," as well as ensured that individual villagers would be paid for their work constructing the road.⁸¹ Upon the bridge's completion, TWO has found that the bridge greatly benefits the community by making transportation easier. For example, children in one village can now easily and safely cross the river to attend school on the other side—the only school nearby. Previously, children in the village struggled to attend school because of transportation difficulties, especially during the rainy season when crossing the river was too dangerous.

In another village, TWO supported a community's construction of a town hall, which was constructed by local carpenters who received wages for their labor. TWO has found that both the bridge and the town hall continue to promote social integration and, ultimately, federal democracy where diverse groups interrelate: "Through those activities, it helps [different ethnic groups] to unite more and to live in harmony. Having a bridge between two villages, for example, makes it easier for them to travel back and forth and interact. We see that these activities promote social harmony and a peaceful society, which can contribute to federal democracy."⁸² TWO also takes special care to share this vision with the communities it supports:

⁸⁰ Interview with Ta'ang Women's Organization, February 2025.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

“

*Any time we do this kind of development, we don't just leave it there. We give it to the community leaders by doing some kind of handover process with them—explaining our objectives of doing this kind of project, especially that we are promoting diverse communities living in harmony and that the project is not only specific for only one village. It's for common use and for everyone to come and use it.*⁸³

”

Spotlight: Women and Girls Safe Space in Karenni State

In Karenni State, the Karenni National Women's Organization (KNWO) has created the Women and Girls Safe Space (WGSS)—an open-door community center for women and girls to engage in various activities, including vocational training, yoga, cooking, children's games, self-care and human rights trainings, and group discussions. For those who cannot come to the WGSS, KNWO also makes home visits to learn about women's needs and implement services to meet those concerns.

According to KNWO, the WGSS has not only equipped women with vocational skills and offered them a safe, welcoming place to engage with each other, but it has also improved their mental health, self-reliance, and confidence. KNWO explained:

*Especially during this time, as their husbands are going to the frontline [to fight for the revolution], women stay at home, so they feel like their role has disappeared in the family and is not valuable, lowering their confidence. [KNWO] wants to support the women's self-reliance [and also acknowledge that] ... they're also playing an important role staying at home and taking care of their children. They are also somehow contributing to this revolution. By saying that, women can build their confidence and see their importance.*⁸⁴

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Interview with Karenni National Women's Organization, February 2025.

Human rights protection and bottom-up federalism

In the post-attempted coup landscape, Myanmar civil society groups have continued or expanded their rights-focused activities, alongside their humanitarian aid provision and sustainable community initiatives, in an effort to strengthen local resilience to push back against injustice and build a rights-respecting future for Myanmar. With this goal in mind and through close coordination and collaboration with each other, civil society groups are protecting HRDs, providing human rights awareness trainings to the general public, empowering women and youth to engage in politics and community decision-making, and supporting the development of systems for inclusive, bottom-up federalism.

Expanded efforts to protect and support human rights defenders

Many civil society groups have started or expanded efforts to provide protection and other specific support for HRDs, including members of the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDMers).⁸⁵ For example, Generation Wave (GW) provides emergency support and capacity building for CDMers and other HRDs in close collaboration with trusted partners on the ground.⁸⁶ GW's emergency support efforts include cash support for emergency relocation and basic needs, as well as funding for safe houses and medical emergencies. Regarding capacity building, GW offers trainings about both digital and physical security, as well as about human rights and nonviolent action, also called nonviolent or civil resistance. Regarding the importance of supporting HRDs in this way, GW said, "In terms of the needs of the movement ... the more they're secure, the more they can be involved, so that's why emergency support is an essential part of the current situation. If they're not secure, they can't be involved ... One of our objectives is to empower civil resistance, so that's why we provide security assistance."⁸⁷

Last year along the India-Myanmar border, Youth for Myanmar—a CSO founded in 2022 by women HRDs—conducted capacity-building training for teachers, including CDMers, working in IDP camps located in remote and difficult-to-access areas.⁸⁸ The training aimed to strengthen the teachers' capacities to provide quality education to

85 Interview with Kayan Women's Organization, November 2024; Interview with Young Wings, October 2024; Interview with Ta'ang Women's Organization, November 2024; Interview with Burmese Women's Union, October 2024; Interview with Generation Wave, October 2024.

86 Interview with Generation Wave, October 2024.

87 Interview with Generation Wave, February 2025.

88 Field report from Youth for Myanmar, May 2024.

children. Youth for Myanmar organized the training in collaboration with the local Township Education Board, which liaised closely with village leaders, elders, and administrators to assess and coordinate training requirements. As a result of the training, the teachers not only gained confidence, but also demonstrated enhanced skills in independently designing lesson plans, organizing curriculum content, improving interpersonal relationships among teaching staff, and implementing advanced teaching methodologies. By supporting these teachers in applying student-centered pedagogy, Youth for Myanmar also observed that the IDP students are more effectively engaged in their education and are beginning to overcome learning barriers caused by displacement.

Human rights awareness trainings

For decades, Myanmar's civil society groups have been actively in educating communities about human rights. Since the coup attempt, public interest in these awareness trainings has increased significantly, particularly among youth.⁸⁹ Regarding human rights trainings for the general public, KyWO noted, "For some, they had never heard of this kind of training. Only after the attempted coup did they want to receive this kind of training and get awareness of [politics, federalism, and human rights]. When we give this training, we aren't just sharing theories. We are also applying them to political regions and states."⁹⁰

In southern Shan State, one CSO provides community trainings on human rights, health, documentation, and federalism. This CSO has used these trainings to give youth an opportunity to raise their voices: "Especially for the young people, they really want to have a voice, even though everything has been pressuring them not to speak out. As a CSO in Shan State, we create a safe space for those young people ... to speak out. They want to share what's happening and what violations are happening."⁹¹ The Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO) has observed the same eagerness, noting that young people often want more details on the training topics and wish to learn more so they can provide further trainings to their communities.⁹² PYO has also found that these trainings introduce youth to work opportunities, including data collection and human rights documentation.

89 Interview with Kayan Women's Organization, November 2024; Interview with Generation Wave, October 2024; Interview with Pa-O Youth Organization, February 2025.

90 Interview with Kayan Women's Organization, January 2025.

91 Interview with a CSO in Shan State, February 2025.

92 Interview with Pa-O Youth Organization, February 2025.



Women exchanging their experiences during a workshop organized by KWO in Dawei Township, Tanintharyi Region. [Credit: KWO]

Regarding the right to health, a CSO in Shan State also provides health training for teenage girls and young women, usually over two to three days, either online or in person. This training has had a positive effect on the participants' mental health, with the participants gaining "more autonomy, more understanding, and more acceptance of their bodies."⁹³ For this CSO, this training serves as a foundational step towards greater participation of women in building a federal democratic union: "We don't want women to be left out. Health care is a basic right, and through this training, women can understand their own autonomy and make their own decisions about their body ... Women can claim their rights, so they are able to participate in the movement. Then, they can reach another level, like participating in politics."⁹⁴

Women's and youth empowerment

Civil society groups across the country are keen to ensure not only that the future federal democratic Myanmar is built from the ground up, but also that emerging bottom-up governance is multigenerational and gender inclusive. This collective vision is up against deeply rooted patriarchal norms perpetuated by decades of military violence against women and gender minorities, as well as a political system characterized by an age-based hierarchy that relegates youth voices. With these challenges top of mind, civil society groups are conducting programs to empower women and youth, enhancing their resilience to resist injustice and ensuring their meaningful participation in building a new Myanmar.

⁹³ Interview with a CSO in Shan State, February 2025.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Through empowerment programs, women's organizations aim to encourage and equip women to participate at every level of decision-making, "promoting them to be agents of change in carrying out administration in their community."⁹⁵ In central upper Myanmar—also known as the Dry Zone, which spans most of Magwe, Mandalay, and Sagaing Regions—BWU sees women leading local resistance efforts, including protest groups, humanitarian responses, and human rights documentation, but not being recognized for their work. According to BWU, "These women are leading, but not being recognized and not being heard. We want to make sure they're not silenced ... We want to equip them and strengthen their capacity and provide them with resources they can get access to."⁹⁶ So far, BWU has conducted workshops on topics such as federalism and Women, Peace, and Security, so that "When [they join] men-dominant groups, they feel ready to jump in and discuss things and take leadership roles."⁹⁷

Separately, KyWO, KNWO, KWAT, and KWO each implement women's empowerment programs that include classroom and internship components. KyWO's program primarily focuses on women in IDP camps, with the main goal of increasing their participation in local governance and politics, and building their capacity to serve in local government administration. According to KyWO, "We don't have a lot of women working at the administrative level, but we are trying to increase the participation of women through this program."⁹⁸ This capacity building aligns with and supports the Interim Government of Karenni State's efforts and legal requirements to have "at least 30 percent women's participation in the state interim legislative, executive, and judicial branches."⁹⁹ Focusing on young women, KNWO's Women's Study Program, KWAT's Women's Leadership Training (WLT), and KWO's Karen Young Women's Leadership School share a similar goal and include classroom training about community development, human rights, transitional justice, and federalism.¹⁰⁰ In reflecting on KWAT's WLT, one participant said:

95 Interview with Burmese Women's Union, February 2025 ("For now, we have heard a lot about the resistance forces being able to control their territory. It is good news. But what we worry is that it does not mean victory for the revolution by only being able to capture territory. When a territory is captured, is it all men who are taking roles in administration in that territory? [If so,] the patriarchal norms—and addressing the problems [of gender-based violence] with the traditional norms—all of those things will continue [as they were before]. What we are doing is to empower women to participate more in every level of change. Instead of seeing women as victims who always need help and support, we are promoting them to be agents of change in carrying out administration in their community.").

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 Interview with Kayan Women's Organization, January 2025.

99 Karenni Civil Society Network, Karenni National Women's Organization, Union of Karenni State Youth, and Progressive Voice, "Federalism from the Ground Up: The Karenni Model of Nation-State Building," citing Interim Arrangements of Karenni State, Section 4, articles (e) and (f).

100 Interview with Karenni National Women's Organization, February 2025; Interview with Kachin Women's Association Thailand, January 2025.

“

I have learned that politics is not only about displacement, but it is also about transportation difficulties, increasing commodity prices, access to the internet, communication cuts, and so on ... After the WLT training, I am able to analyze the current political situation. I also understood that politics matter for everyone. From the training, I also understood that we have obligations not only to protect our individual rights but also to build a peaceful, developed, just country. By joining this program, I was trained to work cooperatively with others and to have more confidence in ourselves.¹⁰¹

”

During all four programs, following the classroom training, the participants complete internships with local CSOs and CBOs. The internship component has led to nearly all participants working for local CSOs, CBOs, or the public sector, including in community development and social services. In urging more support for programs that increase women’s representation in leadership and decision-making roles, KWO Chairperson Naw K’nyaw Paw said, “This not only strengthens the efforts and advocacy of women’s groups, who are already doing remarkable work on the ground, but also contributes to long-term women’s empowerment, capacity building, and the sustainability of meaningful change.”

At the same time, some groups are implementing youth-focused programs to educate and empower younger generations to build solidarity among themselves and engage in politics, local governance, and nonviolent action—all towards achieving a bottom-up federal democracy.

For more than ten years, PYO has organized a youth exchange program connecting minority ethnic youth from Karenni, Mon, Rakhine, and eastern Shan States, as well as Tanintharyi Region.¹⁰² The program’s main goals are to exchange information about the ground situation in different areas, encourage youth to participate more in local governance, and take collaborative action together. For example, as a result of the program, the participants identified the need to train youth in setting up and running local administrations: Once resistance forces take control of an area, local governance needs to be established and carried out effectively, and young people should be equipped to take this on. To meet this need, the participants have been

¹⁰¹ Participant reflection on the Women’s Leadership Training, on file with Kachin Women’s Association Thailand, November 2024.

¹⁰² Interview with Pa-O Youth Organization, February 2025.

collaborating to deliver these trainings to young people across the country, working towards bottom-up federalism across diverse ethnicities and geographies.

In Sagaing Region since early 2023, the Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee has been conducting youth empowerment trainings for young people aged 16 to 35.¹⁰³ Most participants are students, aged 16 to 19, from local NUG schools. These trainings cover the basics of federal democracy, human rights, gender equality and stereotypes, local governance, and public speaking. As a result, the group has seen more participation from students and the community in nonviolent action, such as protests, as well as an increased understanding of a common goal: "At first [the students] join because they hate the military junta, but they don't know anything about federalism. [After attending the training,] their beliefs are becoming stronger because they understand what they are doing, and they have a clear goal."¹⁰⁴



A woman giving a presentation during KWAT's Women's Leadership Training. [Credit: KWAT]

¹⁰³ Interview with Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee, February 2025.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Supporting inclusive bottom-up federalism

Civil society groups are playing an active role in strengthening bottom-up governance as a part of the people's efforts to build an inclusive federal democracy from the grassroots level. Through engagement with local administrations at the village, township, and state/regional levels, civil society groups provide technical support and conduct rights-based advocacy to strengthen local resilience towards building inclusive, bottom-up federalism.

In Karenni State, KyWO provides human rights awareness trainings, technical support, and capacity building to township-level administrations in resistance-controlled areas.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, in Sagaing Region, Twae Latt Myar provides trainings for local governance bodies to support system building.¹⁰⁶ The group also hosts dialogue sessions with the local People's Defense Force to encourage understanding of and adherence to the Code of Conduct. Separately, the group has participated in a series of dialogues with strike groups, community leaders, and other civil society actors to understand local concerns and then communicate those to the local administration. Building on these dialogues, a local human rights complaint mechanism has been established with Twae Latt Myar's support, allowing locals to file complaints and seek remedies for human rights violations.

In Chin State, which is more than 90% liberated from the junta,¹⁰⁷ CHRO is responding to the dire humanitarian emergency while also building systems for the future.¹⁰⁸ Over the last year, CHRO has been collaborating closely with the local administration's health team to develop health policy for Chin State. In supporting the development of this policy, CHRO has advocated for a rights-based approach, centering health as a basic human right and ensuring that public health is a pillar of the bottom-up democratic system going forward.

To promote and strengthen local education governance for a federal democratic future, a Karen organization working on education collaborates closely with the Karen Education and Culture Department, a department of the Karen National Union, throughout Karen State.¹⁰⁹ The Karen education system comprises 1,761 schools,

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Kayan Women's Organization, January 2025.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Twae Latt Myar, February 2025.

¹⁰⁷ "Chin Rebels Rout Myanmar Junta From Falam After Five-Month Battle," The Irrawaddy, 8 April 2025, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/chin-rebels-rout-myanmar-junta-from-falam-after-five-month-battle.html>.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, February 2025 ("Regarding the humanitarian crisis on the western border, we have been doing emergency response, protection, and resilience projects. During the last two to three years, we had to do a lot of emergency response. While we are doing emergency responses, we are also working on system building.").

¹⁰⁹ Interview with a Karen organization working on education, November 2024.

serves more than 140,000 students, and employs more than 10,500 teachers. To strengthen this system and grow its capacity for the future, this Karen organization provides training for teachers, school materials for students, and funds for teacher salaries. KPSN—of which this Karen organization is a member—is working in tandem to coordinate support for education initiatives with the goals of maintaining local ownership of the Karen education system and strengthening these institutions as the foundations of an inclusive federal future.¹¹⁰

Spotlight: Supporting human rights education with CDM teachers

Generation Wave (GW) provides human rights awareness trainings for the general public, CDMers, and other HRDs. After attending these trainings, CDM teachers and professors share this knowledge by integrating human rights concepts and principles into their curriculum.

GW sees these trainings as intended and beneficial not only for the revolutionary period, but also for Myanmar's future, "so that CDMers and the public are aware of human rights and follow human rights principles."¹¹¹ The trainings mainly focus on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also include content based on the participants' work and interest—such as children's rights for CDM teacher trainings.

Following these trainings, GW continues to collaborate with CDMers who are applying the trainings' content to their own work. For example, GW works closely with a CDM professor who founded an online school staffed by CDM teachers. This CDM school regularly consults with GW for advice on content and learning resources in order to best integrate human rights and nonviolent action in their curriculum.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, February 2025.

¹¹¹ Interview with Generation Wave, February 2025.

Challenges

Myanmar civil society groups face immense challenges. Amid the junta's terror campaign against the people, these groups have had to diversify their ways and means of overcoming extreme human and organizational security risks, transportation difficulties, and communication cuts—among many other challenges—to conduct their work effectively. Moreover, insufficient and inflexible international funding, compounded by burdensome and unrealistic reporting requirements, severely hinders their critical work—including the timely and efficient provision of lifesaving emergency aid.

Security, transportation, and communication challenges

Through its campaign of terror, the military junta's illegal and oppressive laws, policies, and new Chinese surveillance technology have forced independent civil society groups operating in junta-controlled areas to maintain extremely low profiles to conduct their work effectively.¹¹²

Junta road blockages and checkpoints also hinder civil society groups' ability to deliver humanitarian aid to IDPs and other vulnerable populations.¹¹³ At checkpoints, junta personnel and personnel of junta-affiliated militias conduct invasive searches and seizures—of persons, belongings, and vehicles—confiscating aid supplies and other materials, as well as threatening and extorting individuals it perceives as aid workers.¹¹⁴ These personnel particularly harass and assault women and LBGTQIA+ individuals,

112 See “Chinese Spy Tech Driving Junta Internet Crackdown: Justice For Myanmar,” *The Irrawaddy*, 20 June 2024, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/myanmar-china-watch/chinese-spy-tech-driving-junta-internet-crackdown-justice-for-myanmar.html>; “Myanmar's Digital Dictatorship,” Access Now, <https://www.accessnow.org/spotlight/myanmar/>, last accessed 20 August 2025; Cherry Aung, “Digital dictatorship in Myanmar: Biometric data collection sparks fear among activists,” EngageMedia, 28 July 2023, <https://engagemedia.org/2023/myanmar-biometric-data-collection/>.

113 Interview with Burmese Women's Union, October 2024; Interview with a CSO in Shan State, October 2024; Interview with Own Land, November 2024; Interview with Ta'ang Women's Organization, November 2024.

114 RFA Burmese, “Junta targeting aid groups, social workers in Myanmar's Sagaing region,” *Radio Free Asia*, 23 May 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/junta-arrests-aid-groups-sagaing-05222024171217.html>; “Junta Extorts Aid Workers in Southern Shan State,” *Network Media Group*, 10 April 2025, <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/junta-extorts-aid-workers-southern-shan-state>; Than Lwin Times, “Tanintharyi residents report excessive extortion by junta soldiers at checkpoints,” Myanmar Peace Monitor, 3 May 2023, <https://mmpeacemonitor.org/en/en-news/tanintharyi-residents-report-excessive-extortion-by-junta-soldiers-at-checkpoints/>; RFA Burmese, “Myanmar junta's confiscation of food, medicine leaves Kayah state residents at risk,” *Radio Free Asia*, 21 February 2023, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/roadway-checkpoints-02212023165344.html>; “Myanmar: Junta Blocks Lifesaving Cyclone Aid,” Human Rights Watch, 20 June 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/20/myanmar-junta-blocks-lifesaving-cyclone-aid>; RFA Burmese, “Myanmar junta blocks aid to thousands impacted by Typhoon Yagi,” *Radio Free Asia*, 19 September 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-junta-blocks-yagi-aid-09192024121729.html>.

committing aggressive body searches, physical and sexual violence, and verbal abuse.¹¹⁵ These checkpoints, therefore, also prevent civil society groups and other humanitarian responders from carrying important documents and information, both physical and digital, while traveling.¹¹⁶ Twae Latt Myar, which works in Sagaing Region, explained, “It’s extremely difficult to carry items [with us] because there is a lot of investigation. [In one case, we had to divide aid items into seven separate deliveries, instead of delivering them all at once as planned.] We have also experienced the confiscation of items if we were deemed suspicious.”¹¹⁷

In addition, when traveling to areas where IDPs are located, junta attacks—including airstrikes and shelling—have forced civil society group members to hide in bunkers or otherwise shelter in place, at times causing them to be stuck along the route for days at a time.¹¹⁸ Likewise, military operations have forced civil society groups to cancel or postpone their activities.¹¹⁹ For example, IDPs in certain parts of Sagaing Region have expressed interest in pursuing livestock farming to address their food security and generate income; however, this type of initiative is currently impossible due to the junta’s occupation of the area.¹²⁰ Furthermore, because of these massive security risks, civil society groups find it increasingly difficult to find transportation to deliver aid and reach vulnerable communities.

The lack of phone and internet connection, imposed by the junta, makes communication with local communities, donors, and other civil society groups extremely difficult.¹²¹ TWO explained, “Sometimes we know people are fleeing, but we can’t contact them because there are difficulties with internet and phone lines. It’s difficult to get the information [about what they need]. Usually, the area where IDPs stay doesn’t have phone signal or internet connection. Sometimes once we collect the number of IDPs, if we go the

115 “Women Are Targets Of Sexual And Physical Harassment At Military Council Checkpoints,” *Shan Herald Agency for News*, 6 February 2023, <https://english.shannews.org/archives/25806>; “Rainbow Amid the Storm: Exposing the Harsh Realities of LGBTQIAs in Post-Coup Myanmar,” Myanmar LGBTIQ Human Rights Watch Forum, 31 May 2023, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2023/05/31/rainbow-amid-the-storm-exposing-the-harsh-realities-of-lgbtqias-in-post-coup-myanmar/>.

116 Interview with Ta’ang Women’s Organization, November 2024; Interview with a CSO in Shan State, October 2024.

117 Interview with Twae Latt Myar, November 2024.

118 Interview with a women’s organization from Chin State, November 2024; Interview with a Karen organization working on education, November 2024.

119 Interview with Ta’ang Women’s Organization, November 2024; Interview with Monywa People’s Strike Steering Committee, October 2024.

120 Interview with Latt Pa Dan Strike Committee, November 2024.

121 Interview with a women’s organization from Chin State, November 2024; Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, November 2024; Interview with Generation Wave, October 2024; Interview with Pa-O Youth Organization, October 2024; Interview with a humanitarian responder in Kachin State, November 2024.

next day to distribute aid, the number has changed.”¹²² The lack of internet access also exacerbates the challenges that civil society groups face in complying with donor-required checklists and progress reports.¹²³

Major funding constraints and other donor-related challenges

The current level of funding is insufficient to meet the dire humanitarian needs on the ground, much less provide long-term support for sustainable initiatives and democracy building. In particular, the United States government’s massive and sudden aid cuts have obstructed many Myanmar civil society groups’ critical lifesaving aid and democracy-building work, forcing them to urgently seek alternative sources of funding.¹²⁴

Many groups are keen to expand both their humanitarian aid efforts and their sustainable community initiatives, but funding limitations prevent the long-term growth of these activities. For example, from 2021 to 2022, KWAT organized a baking and cooking training for survivors of domestic violence and other women who had faced human rights violations.¹²⁵ However, due to funding constraints, KWAT has so far been unable to provide funding to support the women in opening a shop or otherwise producing income with these new skills.

Even when funding is available, strict donor requirements jeopardize Myanmar civil society groups’ “do no harm” approach and require them to make difficult choices about how to allocate their limited resources to provide support:

“

*For example, there are Villages A, B, and C, and we only have the capacity to support 80 people. Village A is in a dire situation of need, and it has [a population of] 300 people. For us, we can only support 80 people, so it becomes very difficult for us to go and support them. If we can’t support everyone, they will complain that they were left out, and it will not be a good feeling for them. So, we have to go another village instead. We’ve faced that kind of situation several times already.*¹²⁶

”

¹²² Interview with Ta’ang Women’s Organization, November 2024.

¹²³ Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, November 2024.

¹²⁴ “Statement of UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, Address to the 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council,” UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, 19 March 2025, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/my/2025/03/19/statement-of-un-special-rapporteur-on-the-situation-of-human-rights-in-myanmar-tom-andrews-address-to-the-58th-session-of-the-un-human-rights-council/>.

¹²⁵ Interview with Kachin Women’s Association Thailand, October 2024; Interview with Kachin Women’s Association Thailand, January 2025.

¹²⁶ Interview with a women’s organization from Chin State, November 2024.

Relatedly, in emergency situations, civil society groups often face delays in receiving funding, which hampers their timely response to extremely urgent needs.¹²⁷ In some cases, groups have requested funding from donors for a specific population. However, by the time the funds are received, the needs have increased, and strict donor requirements disallow the groups from stretching those funds to match the changed needs on the ground.¹²⁸

This delay in receiving funding from international donors is caused by lengthy bureaucratic processes, which have also involved donors requesting onerous documentation that puts both aid providers and recipients at risk. The requested documentation has included hard copies of household registrations for aid recipients, photos of displaced villagers, physical receipts from local shops, and personal identifying information of HRDs to be assisted.¹²⁹ In particular, it is often difficult to get official receipts for purchases as local vendors also put themselves at risk of harassment, extortion, arrest, and imprisonment by the junta for selling large quantities of food or other commodities.¹³⁰ With official receipts, purchases can be further traced back to civil society groups, exposing them to similar risks for making the purchase. These rigid donor requirements put civil society groups and the communities they serve at severe risk. These risks could be avoided if donors apply the “do no harm” principle and place trust in the groups’ local expertise, established accountability, flexible approach, and strong relationships with affected communities, which are grounded in trust and transparency.¹³¹

To carry out timely, safe, and effective responses to communities’ urgent needs, some civil society groups seek support from diaspora groups and like-minded private funders who understand the ground reality of the crisis and trust the groups’ integrity, capability, and capacity. For humanitarian emergencies in particular, groups often seek ad hoc financial support from these private funders while continuing to advocate for flexible, proactive funding from governmental donors to bolster the sustainability of their humanitarian response efforts. KNWO explained, “In [September and October 2024], when there was flooding, people were in emergency need. At that time, we

127 For example, Twae Latt Myar explained, “The entire village was burned down [by the military junta]. We requested [donors for support]. There is no food left here. They delivered the [financial] support only after two months.” Interview with Twae Latt Myar, November 2024.

128 Interview with a women’s organization from Chin State, November 2024.

129 Interview with Monywa People’s Strike Steering Committee, October 2024; Interview with a women’s organization from Chin State, November 2024; Interview with Kayan Women’s Organization, November 2024.

130 Interview with Burmese Women’s Union, October 2024.

131 Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, October 2024; Interview with Karen Environmental and Social Action Network, October 2024.

found ways to respond quickly by calling for donations within our network. [But] it would be better if we can be ready for any emergency time to be able to give services.”¹³²

Moreover, civil society groups report that international donors are more willing to provide funding for natural disaster response, such as in the aftermath of the Sagaing earthquake, rather than the urgent humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations—including the IDPs forced to flee by the junta’s violence and atrocity crimes. This unwillingness places a massive strain on civil society groups striving to support populations severely harmed and forcibly displaced by the military junta’s terror campaign.

Despite these immense challenges, Myanmar civil society groups continue to operate to the fullest extent possible to meet the dire needs of the people on the ground, thus fulfilling their shared responsibility with resilience, people-to-people solidarity, and resistance. With the trust of local communities and extensive networks, civil society groups are delivering aid, including lifesaving support to Myanmar’s most vulnerable communities, while finding creative solutions to overcome immense challenges.

¹³² Focus group discussion with Karenni civil society organizations and humanitarian responders, October 2024.

Conclusion

Civil society groups across Myanmar, including women's, LGBTQIA+, and youth groups, are working tirelessly at all levels to strengthen local resilience—from fulfilling the most fundamental human needs through humanitarian aid and supporting livelihood and community development, to enhancing local governance and protecting human rights. Their humanitarian aid, sustainable development, capacity strengthening, human rights, and democracy building work are all interrelated, complementing each other to achieve the Myanmar people's long-term collective goals.¹³³ Civil society groups do all of this despite overwhelming human and organizational security risks, serverly limited funding, and other operational challenges.

With a collective vision of a peaceful, just, and inclusive country free from military tyranny, they are supporting local communities with multifaceted, bottom-up approaches. This support is not only to meet urgent needs and save lives, but also to bolster the people's capacity and capability to resist injustice; pursue long-term, sustainable solutions for the country; and build a future Myanmar they want to see. BWU explained:

“*Helping each other as much as we can also boosts our connection and network. If [we] are separated, it is easier to destroy [us], but if we are connected and united, it will be hard to destroy. So, for us, we [have been able to] stay connected and united until today. That is what the junta is afraid of. The people's resilience is vital.*”¹³⁴

With this focus on strengthening local resilience, the work of Myanmar civil society groups is bridging the gap between the human rights and humanitarian crisis of today and Myanmar's inclusive, peaceful federal democracy of tomorrow. It is this resistance born of resilience that is advancing the people's Spring Revolution and pushing the junta to the brink of collapse: “As long as the people are resisting, [the junta] will never be able to win.”¹³⁵

However, the international community, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its Member States, has utterly failed to take decisive action

¹³³ These long-term collective goals include establishing federal democracy, building a sustainable peace, and ensuring stability with the guarantee of human security.

¹³⁴ Interview with Burmese Women's Union, October 2024.

¹³⁵ Interview with Burmese Women's Union, February 2025.

against the root cause of the crisis: the Myanmar military junta. This failure continues to exacerbate mass displacement, famine, disease, and other dire humanitarian conditions. In particular, ASEAN, Russia, China, and India continue to lend political, military, and economic support and false legitimacy to the military junta, deepening their complicity in the junta's international crimes against the people of Myanmar. The reality is that unless and until the international community weakens the junta's capacity to commit atrocities—particularly airstrikes—against the people of Myanmar, the polycrisis will only worsen, and aid alone will never be enough: “Instead of providing aid to us, [the international community] first should try to stop all the attacks that the [Myanmar] army conducts that are impacting our lives.”¹³⁶

In Myanmar, civil society groups that are operating independently of the military junta are holding up the sky. They are shouldering the collective responsibility to save lives and strengthen local resilience towards a better future, hand in hand with local communities. This has been demonstrated by the people-to-people solidarity response to the junta-caused human rights and humanitarian crisis since 2021 and to the Sagaing earthquake of March 2025. These groups deserve trusted, equal, and meaningful partnerships with international donors, as well as investment in their capacity, capability, expertise, and initiatives: “[Donors] must recognize the fact that there are organizations who are responding to the immediate needs of the community, and they must trust our capacity.”¹³⁷

In tandem, this recognition and respect must also come from the NUG, EROs, and other local administrations—particularly through ensuring the inclusion and meaningful participation of civil society groups, especially women's, LGBTQIA+, and youth groups. Myanmar's legitimate governance bodies must actively engage civil society in decision-making processes and policy development during the establishment of federal units, as well as interim governance arrangements and institutions. This engagement should continue throughout the Spring Revolution, the transition to inclusive federal democracy, and beyond.

¹³⁶ Focus group discussion with local Karen community leaders, October 2024.

¹³⁷ Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, November 2024.

Recommendations

To the international community and donors:

- Cut all ties—including political, business, and military engagement—with the illegal Myanmar military junta immediately, and stop lending false legitimacy to the junta, including through international and regional forums;
- Take all necessary actions to prevent the Myanmar military junta's commission of further atrocities, including through a global arms and aviation fuel embargo;
- Join and expedite the ongoing international and Myanmar people's efforts to hold Myanmar military generals and all other perpetrators of atrocity crimes in Myanmar to account under international law through all available avenues;
- Engage formally and officially with the NUG, EROs, and bottom-up governance bodies, including ethnic and regional consultative councils and administrations;
- Robustly support the Myanmar people's efforts to end military tyranny and establish inclusive bottom-up federal democracy, including by supporting people-led governance bodies, democratic institutions, and the rule of law at Myanmar's local and state/regional levels to ensure adherence to international humanitarian law and international human rights law;
- Increase financial support for, recognize the contribution of, and form equal partnerships with trusted local frontline humanitarian responders, including ethnic CSOs, CBOs, and other Myanmar civil society groups, in delivering aid through border-based channels;
- Increase financial and technical resources for Myanmar civil society groups to implement and expand their emergency humanitarian responses, longer-term sustainable community initiatives, and efforts to protect human rights and build federal democracy;
- Increase financial support for initiatives that promote the inclusion and leadership of women, youth, and LGBTQIA+ persons in political decision-making and local governance bodies, from federal institutions to community leadership;
- Provide more flexible funding to Myanmar civil society groups, relax onerous reporting requirements, and end registration requirements;
- Recognize and support locally led border-based channels for trusted local frontline humanitarian responders and civil society groups to deliver aid to internally displaced communities;

- Ensure transparency and accountability to prevent aid from being weaponized, manipulated, or obstructed by the military junta and its auxiliaries; and
- Provide robust financial support for the protection and livelihoods of Myanmar HRDs, frontline humanitarian responders, and members of Myanmar civil society groups.

To the National Unity Government, ethnic resistance organizations, ethnic councils, and people's administrations:

- Prioritize the security of the Myanmar people by ensuring adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law and related codes of conduct on the part of resistance forces, and by taking all necessary measures, including informing local communities when resistance forces' operations will occur;
- Promote and comply with the principles of “do no harm” and non-discrimination in the delivery of humanitarian aid;
- Establish, strengthen, and support federal and state-level justice and accountability mechanisms to protect religious minorities from all forms of persecution, as well as women, children, LGBTQIA+ persons, and others from sexual and gender-based violence and other forms of persecution;
- Strengthen the acknowledgement of the invaluable role of civil society groups and ensure opportunities for them to meaningfully participate in local, state/regional, and federal efforts to establish an inclusive federal democratic system;
- Establish a platform or coordination body among the NUG, EROs, and other governance bodies at Myanmar's local and regional levels—in the spirit of democratic federalism—to improve collaboration in dismantling the military junta, develop a clear political roadmap for federal democracy, and engage collectively with the international community;
- Collectively call on the international community to support locally led border-based channels for delivery of humanitarian aid and other forms of assistance to reach the most vulnerable populations, particularly IDPs; and
- Ensure the realization of gender equality and equity across all levels of society, including through additional, meaningful opportunities for women's and LGBTQIA+ participation in local governance bodies, from federal institutions to community leadership—during the revolution's interim period, future transitional processes, and beyond.

Also, to the National Unity Government:

- Fully recognize, respect, and support ethnic representation and ethnic capacities, including by making concerted efforts to understand the situation of ethnic minority nationalities and their multigenerational struggles for self-determination and equality; and
- Fully recognize, respect, and support EROs and ethnic civil society groups in their initiatives and establishment of local and state/regional governance bodies in line with the principles of bottom-up federal democracy.

Bibliography

Commentary

- “Drafted by Desperation,” *Progressive Voice*, 7 September 2024, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2024/09/07/drafted-by-desperation/>.
- Khin Ohmar, “A community-led response to the earthquake is the only answer,” *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 28 April 2025, <https://english.dvb.no/a-community-led-response-to-the-earthquake-is-the-only-answer/>.
- “Myanmar’s Youth at Risk,” *Progressive Voice*, 31 January 2025, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2025/01/31/myanmars-youth-at-risk-the-juntas-intensified-forced-conscription-campaign/>.

News media

- AFP, “Myanmar junta asks for international aid after earthquake,” *Mizzima*, 28 March 2025, <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/03/28/20560>.
- “Chin Rebels Rout Myanmar Junta From Falam After Five-Month Battle,” *The Irrawaddy*, 8 April 2025, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/chin-rebels-rout-myanmar-junta-from-falam-after-five-month-battle.html>.
- “Chinese Spy Tech Driving Junta Internet Crackdown: Justice For Myanmar,” *The Irrawaddy*, 20 June 2024, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/myanmar-china-watch/chinese-spy-tech-driving-junta-internet-crackdown-justice-for-myanmar.html>.
- “Death Toll Within a Month from Myanmar’s Earthquake Reaches,” *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 9 May 2025, <https://english.dvb.no/live-burma-earthquake/>.
- “Junta Extorts Aid Workers in Southern Shan State,” *Network Media Group*, 10 April 2025, <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/junta-extorts-aid-workers-southern-shan-state>.
- “Myanmar junta admits to firing on Chinese Red Cross aid convoy,” *Myanmar Now*, 2 April 2025, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-junta-admits-to-firing-on-chinese-red-cross-aid-convoy/>.
- “Myanmar military restricts access to quake-hit Sagaing Region,” *Myanmar Now*, 7 April 2025, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-military-restricts-access-to-quake-hit-sagaing-region/>.

RFA Burmese, “Junta targeting aid groups, social workers in Myanmar’s Sagaing region,” *Radio Free Asia*, 23 May 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/junta-arrests-aid-groups-sagaing-05222024171217.html>.

RFA Burmese, “Myanmar junta blocks aid to thousands impacted by Typhoon Yagi,” *Radio Free Asia*, 19 September 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-junta-blocks-yagi-aid-09192024121729.html>.

RFA Burmese, “Myanmar junta’s confiscation of food, medicine leaves Kayah state residents at risk,” *Radio Free Asia*, 21 February 2023, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/roadway-checkpoints-02212023165344.html>.

RFA Burmese, “Volunteer groups pause quake aid in Myanmar citing junta restrictions,” *Radio Free Asia*, 9 April 2025, <https://www.rfa.org/english/myanmar/2025/04/09/myanmar-aid-groups-halt-junta-restrictions/>.

Sally Kantar, “Resisting by all means possible,” *Myanmar Now*, 12 October 2023, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/resisting-by-all-means-possible/>.

Simon Scarr, Vijdan Mohammad Kawoosa & Dea Bankova, “How a ‘supershear’ quake tore through Myanmar,” *Reuters*, last updated 30 April 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/MYANMAR-QUAKE/SUPERSHEAR/zgvojlyojpd/>.

Than Lwin Times, “Tanintharyi residents report excessive extortion by junta soldiers at checkpoints,” *Myanmar Peace Monitor*, 3 May 2023, <https://mmpeacemonitor.org/en/en-news/tanintharyi-residents-report-excessive-extortion-by-junta-soldiers-at-checkpoints/>.

“The Regime’s Air and Artillery Strikes Across the Country After the Earthquake: March 28 – May 26, 2025,” *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 16 June 2025, <https://english.dvb.no/live-burma-earthquake/>.

“Women Are Targets Of Sexual And Physical Harassment At Military Council Checkpoints,” *Shan Herald Agency for News*, 6 February 2023, <https://english.shannews.org/archives/25806>.

Reports and briefing papers

Adelina Kamal & Rin Fujimatsu, “From humanitarian resistance to resilience: Nation-building in active conflict,” Humanitarian Practice Network, 10 April 2024, <https://odihpn.org/publication/from-humanitarian-resistance-to-resilience-nation-building-in-active-conflict/>.

“Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar 2024 Update,” Special Advisory Council for Myanmar, 30 May 2024, <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SAC-M-Effective-Control-in-Myanmar-2024-Update-ENGLISH.pdf>.

“Challenges Faced by the Myanmar Queer Community After the 2024 Conscription Law,” Queers of Burma Alternative, 17 January 2025, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2025/01/17/challenges-faced-by-the-myanmar-queer-community-after-the-2024-conscription-law/>.

“Civil Disobedience Movement: A Foundation of Myanmar’s Spring Revolution and Force Behind Military’s Failed Coup,” 19 civil society organizations, 25 May 2023, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2023/05/25/civil-disobedience-movement-a-foundation-of-myanmars-spring-revolution-and-force-behind-militarys-failed-coup/>.

Karenni Civil Society Network, Karenni National Women’s Organization, Union of Karenni State Youth, and Progressive Voice, “Federalism from the Ground Up: The Karenni Model of Nation-State Building,” Progressive Voice, 9 October 2024, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2024/10/09/federalism-from-the-ground-up-the-karenni-model-of-nation-state-building/>.

“Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 29,” UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 6 May 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-29-6-may-2023>.

“Rainbow Amid the Storm: Exposing the Harsh Realities of LGBTQIAs in Post-Coup Myanmar,” Myanmar LGBTIQ Human Rights Watch Forum, 31 May 2023, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2023/05/31/rainbow-amid-the-storm-exposing-the-harsh-realities-of-lgbtqias-in-post-coup-myanmar/>.

“Regaining Control of Our Lands,” Karen Peace Support Network, 28 November 2024, <https://www.karenpeace.org/report/regaining-control-of-our-lands-english-version/>.

Social media

CDM Medical Network, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/cdmmn/>.

Earthquake Response Team For Sagaing Federal Unit, Facebook, 2 April 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Ai6gkYqBA/>

Emergency Management Committee. MDY, Facebook, 29 April 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/share/1AU5h9pnW6/>.

Women for Justice – wj, “Support for Earthquake Victims in Sagaing Township,” Facebook, 7 April 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1RvyveGZyf/>.

Other online sources

Alyssa L. Davs, Ye Myint Htwe & Khin Htu Thet, “Myanmar’s Community-Based Health Workers,” CHW Central, 14 October 2020, <https://chwcentral.org/myanmars-community-based-health-workers/>.

Cherry Aung, “Digital dictatorship in Myanmar: Biometric data collection sparks fear among activists,” EngageMedia, 28 July 2023, <https://engagemedia.org/2023/myanmar-biometric-data-collection/>.

“Earthquake Appeal: Give Hope, Rebuild Lives,” Better Burma, <https://www.betterburma.org/earthquakerelief/>, last accessed 20 August 2025.

“Myanmar: Junta Blocks Lifesaving Cyclone Aid,” Human Rights Watch, 20 June 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/20/myanmar-junta-blocks-lifesaving-cyclone-aid>.

“Myanmar Earthquake Relief,” MM Earthquake Response Coordination Unit, <https://www.myanmarearthquakehelp.com/en>, last accessed 20 August 2025.

“Myanmar: Four years after coup, junta increases legal restrictions and continues its persecution of political prisoners,” CIVICUS, 19 February 2025, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/myanmar-four-years-after-coup-junta-increases-legal-restrictions-and-continues-its-persecution-of-political-prisoners/>.

“Myanmar Situation: IDPs in Myanmar,” UN High Commissioner for Refugees: Operational Data Portal, last updated 1 September 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar>.

“Myanmar Situation: Myanmar Refugees and Asylum Seekers,” UN High Commissioner for Refugees: Operational Data Portal, last updated 31 August 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar>.

Myanmar’s Civil Society Takes the Lead in Combating Covid-19,” The Reality of Aid Network, 6 July 2021, <https://realityofaid.org/myanmars-civil-society-takes-the-lead-in-combating-covid-19/>.

“Myanmar’s Digital Dictatorship,” Access Now, <https://www.accessnow.org/spotlight/myanmar/>, last accessed 20 August 2025.

“Statement of UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, Address to the 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council,” UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, 19 March 2025, <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/my/2025/03/19/statement-of-un-special-rapporteur-on-the-situation-of-human-rights-in-myanmar-tom-andrews-address-to-the-58th-session-of-the-un-human-rights-council/>.

Thu Thu Nwe Hlaing, “No COVID-19 response is possible without civil society involvement,” UNOPS, 10 June 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/no-covid-19-response-possible-without-civil-society-involvement>.

“Training,” Mae Tao Clinic, last updated 27 September 2018, <https://maetaoclinic.org/training/>.

“Who we are,” Chindwin Medical and Humanitarian Network, <https://www.cmhn-mm.org/about>.

Field interviews, focus group discussions, and field reports

Field report from Youth for Myanmar, May 2024.

Focus group discussion with Karenni civil society organizations and humanitarian responders, October 2024.

Focus group discussion with local Karen community leaders, October 2024.

Information shared by Human Rights Foundation of Monland, October 2024.

Interview with a CSO in Shan State, October 2024.

Interview with a CSO in Shan State, February 2025.

Interview with a CSO network in Kachin State, November 2024.

Interview with a humanitarian responder in Kachin State, November 2024.

Interview with a Karen organization working on education, November 2024.

Interview with a local humanitarian responder in northern Shan State, November 2024.

Interview with a local organization, November 2024.

Interview with a women's organization from Chin State, November 2024.

Interview with Burmese Women's Union, October 2024.

Interview with Burmese Women's Union, February 2025.

Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, November 2024.

Interview with Chin Human Rights Organization, February 2025.

Interview with Generation Wave, October 2024.

Interview with Generation Wave, February 2025.

Interview with Kachin Women's Association Thailand, October 2024.

Interview with Kachin Women's Association Thailand, January 2025.

Interview with Karen Environmental and Social Action Network, October 2024.

Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, October 2024.

Interview with Karen Peace Support Network, February 2025.

Interview with Karenni National Women's Organization, February 2025.

Interview with Kayan Rescue Committee, February 2025.

Interview with Kayan Women's Organization, November 2024.

Interview with Kayan Women's Organization, January 2025.

Interview with Latt Pa Dan Strike Committee, November 2024.

Interview with Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee, October 2024.

Interview with Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee, February 2025.

Interview with Own Land, November 2024.

Interview with Pa-O Youth Organization, October 2024.

Interview with Pa-O Youth Organization, February 2025.

Interview with Ta'ang Women's Organization, November 2024.

Interview with Ta'ang Women's Organization, February 2025.

Interview with Twae Latt Myar, November 2024.

Interview with Twae Latt Myar, February 2025.

Interview with Young Wings, October 2024.

Interview with Young Wings, January 2025.

Participant reflection on the Women's Leadership Training, on file with Kachin Women's Association Thailand, November 2024.

Written responses from Human Rights Foundation of Monland, December 2024.



Contact Information

Progressive Voice

-  <http://www.progressivevoicemyanmar.org/>
-  <https://www.facebook.com/progressivevoice>
-  @PVamplify
-  @PVAmplify.bsky.social
-  info@progressive-voice.org