



ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2022

January 15th, 2023

Creating safe spaces, capacity, and resilience for Human Rights
Defenders inside Myanmar and at the borders

BACKGROUND

Although the military staged a coup in Burma on February 1, 2021, the people remained defiant, and many continue striving to restore democracy and human rights in Burma. As the peaceful demonstrations were cracked down by indiscriminate shootings killing many people, the people have been resisting holding arms against the repression of the military. Their families, friends, villages, and even townships have been also facing collective punishment including the burning down of villages, shooting all people in sight, and even airstrikes to the primary schools killing children.

Tens of thousands of pro-democracy activists were imprisoned and tortured. Many of them were imprisoned far away from their families. To avoid arrest and persecution, many activists have been fleeing from their homes, hiding, and relocating to other places while continuing their strive for democracy. All of them need support to have resources to escape and survive.

Many activists and the general people fled to the Thai border controlled by ethnic armed groups. Most of them crossed the border and took refuge in neighbouring countries especially Thailand for security, accommodation, and international communication.

All Burmese people leaving for Thailand are labelled officially as illegal immigrants in Thailand. The Thai authorities do not provide any legal documents for safety. Moreover, the UNHCR does not issue any documents to them, so they could face arrest and deportation at any time. On the other hand, most of the activists arriving at Maesot have been without income for over a year and a half while hiding and fleeing for their lives. They also have a language barrier and a lack of knowledge of local systems. They need urgent support for safe passage, safe house, basic food, security, jobs, vocational training, Thai language training, health services, education for the children, and assistance for asylum-seeking.

In this context, NMF has been running many activities in support of the Burmese community inside and outside including but not limited to the following activities.



The programs inside Burma

- 1) Assistance to the internally displaced persons (IDPs) especially in Sagaing Region
- 2) Applying on behalf of the human rights defenders for emergency funds
- 3) Assistance to the peaceful pro-democratic activists running and hiding for their lives
- 4) Assistance to the political prisoners including access to ICRC, legal aid, and prison visit
- 5) Providing safe houses at the border

The programs at Maesot and Thailand

- 1) Providing basic food assistance and safe houses to the democratic activists who have fled to Maesot
- 2) Support for the application of human rights defenders to get emergency funds
- 3) Providing vocational training such as electric sewing machine training and hairdresser training, and job facilitation for them in the local job markets
- 4) Providing online free formal basic education to Burmese children in Myanmar
- 5) Organising online English and Thai language training for Burmese activists
- 6) Providing Telehealth consultation and assistance to the Burmese people in Maesot who are in lack of money, knowledge, Thai language fluency, and social support networks in circumstances of medical and health emergencies
- 7) Providing rescue and resettlement programs for the Burmese refugees and migrants in Maesot helping to have a safe trip, providing temporary safe houses to newcomers, finding jobs for the jobless, helping arrested ones, assisting in emergency health issues, and etc.

PROGRAMS INSIDE BURMA

1) ASSISTANCE TO INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN SAGAING REGION

NMF has been channelling donations by individual donors to the IDPs throughout the year, mostly in areas in Sagaing, Karenni, Shan, and Karen areas. In December 2022, with funding from TROCAIRE, THAILAND, a program was commenced assisting IDPs in the Sagaing Region.

2) ASSISTANCE TO THE POLITICAL PRISONERS

According to AAPP update on 4th November 2022, a total of (16089) people have been arrested since the coup and, among them (12879) people are currently under detention, (1631) of whom are serving sentences. A total of (128) people have been sentenced to death. Most of them were detained simply for exercising their legitimate rights. Furthermore, several thousands are evading the junta's arrest warrants. Moreover, at least 2413 people, most of them human rights defenders have been killed at their homes and in the demonstrations. The actual numbers are likely much higher.



With the assistance of the Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisers, 250 political prisoners (196 males and 54 females) were assisted through their family members to have regular prison visits. In total, 162 USD to every political prisoner was supported for 6 months (May to October). The selection criteria included

- Female prisoners
- Over 60 or under 16 years of age
- Sick, wounded, or handicapped
- With prison terms over 5 years or still under trial
- Those sent to prisons far away from the family
- Those who have strived for democracy committedly
- Family having incredibly young children, sick, old, or poor
- Family having one or more family members who are members of the CDM movement (Civil Disobedience Movement), under arrest warrant, killed in the democracy movement, or political prisoner.

The recipients included those from all 14 regions and states, and all 36 detention centers and prisons. The post-program survey underlined that the assistance was very helpful for their survival and regular support to the prisoners and, the requirement to continue the program. Moreover, the survey found out that

- 45% of 250 prisoners suffered torture or violence in interrogation centres or prisons.
- 30% got open wounds due to the torture.
- Due to extensive torture, 20% of 250 prisoners suffered severe defects such as deafness, blindness, broken bones, mental disorders, brain damage, or burns including the one-leg amputation of 2 prisoners.
- 65 prisoners including 11 females were sent to the prisons far from their families.

The funding stopped in October 2022, but the families of the political prisoners have been continually asking for emergency assistance. In response, they were provided a small amount of cash depending on a case-to-case basis. Moreover, all of the families are contacted regularly by the NMF counsellor to understand their situation and to provide psycho-counselling if required.

3) ASSISTANCE TO THE POLITICAL ACTIVISTS IN MILITARY-CONTROLLED AREAS

This program was commenced in 2021 with funding from ADN, Asia Democracy Networks. In 2022, with funding from FHI 360, 200 political activists including 101 males, 98 females, and 1 LGBT from all 14 states and regions, who were under arrest warrants, so they have been running away from homes and hiding around in military-ruled areas, were provided cash assistance of about 334 USD during six months (April to October 2022) and, thus they could have enough resource to stay alive and free. The recipients included all categories of



political actors including parliamentarians, activists, CDM members, party members, ethnic leaders, CBO and union members, and media personnel. As a result, nobody was arrested in the program period. In the screening process, priority was given to

- Those in urgent need of assistance
- Poor or lack of social support
- Those who were issued arrest warrants
- Female activists
- Over 60 or under 16 years of age
- Sick, wounded, or handicapped
- Those who have strived for democracy committedly
- Those with the family having incredibly young children, sick, old, or poor
- Those with family having one or more family members who were members of the CDM movement (Civil Disobedience Movement), under arrest warrant, killed in the democracy movement, or political prisoners.

Moreover, the program provided three safe houses at the border inside Burma offering refuge, food, and accommodation to 30 activists for six months. All participants totaling 230 were also provided with the required training, Digital Security Training, and Resilience Training.

The data in the program showed

- 83% had previous arrest and detention
- 60% were under arrest warrants
- 59% experienced house raids by authorities
- 19% of their homes were sealed and confiscated
- 17% had another family member in jail.

The post-program survey showed that 4% of the recipients had already left Burma for neighbouring countries, and also underlined that the program was very effective and much needed to be continued.

With assistance from ADN (Asia Democracy Networks), another similar program will be commenced this month.



PROGRAMS OUTSIDE BURMA

1) RESCUE, RELIEF AND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM

With the support of the **SMILE Project of ADN**, NMF launched in 2022 April this program for pro-democracy activists fleeing from Burma to save their lives, by providing safe houses on the Burma side, safe passage across the border, and; temporary safe houses and basic food supply, vocational trainings, job facilitation, helping police arrest cases, assisting in emergency health issues, etc. in Maesot.

During 9 months from April to December,

- 839 calls for help were received
- 77 activists and family members were helped to have safe passage to Maesot
- 168 were provided with safe accommodation
- 256 were helped to get jobs
- Another 334 were also assisted such as information, contact numbers, advice, and connection with the right service or appropriate resource persons.

2) BASIC FOOD ASSISTANCE TO THE ACTIVISTS

After the fall of Laykaekaw, a small town near the Thai-Myanmar border on December 26th of 2021, many refugees fled to the Thai side. NMF in cooperation with OIA, Overseas Irrawaddy Association, provided hundreds of meal boxes to the refugees and IDPs daily for almost a month. Most of the assistance came from overseas Burmese.



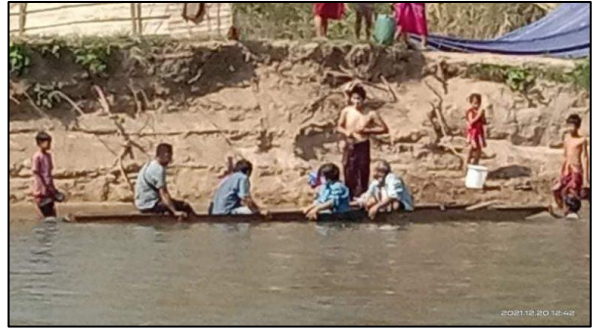
Providing food and drinking water for 70 disabled and elderly people in Mae HtawThale Monastery – January 2, 2021



Providing food and drinking water to the refugees in Maekauking village- Jan 4, 2021



Donating food and drinking water to the IDPs near Phalulay area – Dec 25, 2021



Donation of food and drinking water to the at IDPs in old casino in Phalulay area- December 25, 2021

With assistance from ADN, NMF also provided safe passage to over 200 pro-democracy activists and, a living cost of 2000 Baht each to over 300 of them for the first month. About 150 parliamentarians also were provided 3000 Baht each for the first month's living cost.



Due to the long-term basic food requirement of the new arrivals, the NMF has distributed since February 2022 basic food supplies for three months to each of the 5924 pro-democracy actors and family members.

Usually, the basic foods are dropped at the doorsteps of the NMF depot where they need to be repacked to suit the quota for each person in preparation for distribution to the applicants. NMF has to take care of all the security, cost, time, and manpower for this process. It is also dangerous, unsafe, and burdensome for the recipients to come and pick up their quotas at our office. **It will be much better if the assistance can be provided in cash instead of material assistance.**



2.1) Emergency Basic Food Provision

The new arrivals needed emergency basic food for the initial period when they were applying and waiting for the regular three-monthly supply. In this context, from September to December, 129 human rights defenders including 65 males and 64 females were provided with emergency basic food supplied by the Suwannimit Foundation.



3) PROVISION OF SAFE HOUSES

With the support from the Smile Project of ADN, safe houses had been provided from April 2021 to February 2022 to the activists arriving in Maesot. In total, over 150 took refuge in those houses.

From April to June 2022, with assistance from IRI, International Republican Institute, direct cash assistance to 200 entities including 9 safehouses and 174 individual housings was provided for three months.

Since the middle of July 2022, due to the high demands, three safe houses were provided to about fifty activists. The funding was received from the Smile Project of Asia Democracy Networks.

In September 2022, with the full funding from the IRI for six months (September 2022 to February 2023) the NMF commenced assistance to three types of safe houses including:



- 4 NMF safe houses with 91 residents where all cost for lodging including food, rent, utilities, security, medical, transport, and communication along with kitchen and living facilities are provided.
- 14 Individual housings of pro-democracy actors with special needs, and
- 17 safe houses (with 230 residents) which were managed by other organisations or individuals who were facing financial difficulties.



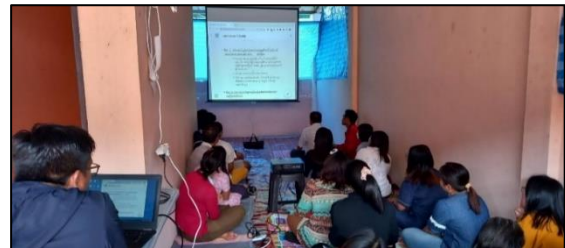
Small library in NMF safe houses



Medical Clinic in NMF safe houses



Monthly Consultation with the residents



Digital Security Training at NMF safe houses

4) VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

4.1) MOTOR SEWING MACHINE TRAINING

The NMF has been running electric sewing machine training, especially for female activists since February 2022. Ten-day training is run two times a month for ten participants where a one-day session on human rights, women's rights, and migrant rights and information on local NGOs are also provided. The participants are provided with transport to and from the training center where they are also provided with accommodation and food free of charge for twelve days. Then, they are assisted to get jobs in the local garment factories or to run their own sewing jobs.

In May 2022, the assistance of 250,000 Baht was provided by AUSAID for six months (May to November 2022). It covered just training costs, so other essential costs such as rent, utilities, equipment, job procurement cost, security costs, etc. were partially supported by other donors and individuals. Up to the end of December 2022, 241 trainees including 95 men and 148 women finished the training and, 194 of them including 82 men and 112 women got jobs, mostly in the garment factories.



Batch -24 Graduation Ceremony



Batch-25 Graduation Ceremony

4.1.1) ESTABLISHMENT OF A SMALL SEWING MACHINE WORKSHOP

There have been exploitations of migrant workers at the garment factories including

- 12 hours a day working hours
- Being paid under the minimum wages to the workers
- Just one day off per month

As an alternative, a sewing machine workshop was opened in October 2022 employing 13 competent trainees (9 women and 4 men). They got job contracts with the local garment factories who sent the raw materials, cloths, to be sewed and, sent the products back to them. The workshop is still trying hard to be successful.



Opening Ceremony of Sewing Machine Factory/Workshop

4.2) HAIRDRESSING TRAINING

As an alternative to the garment factory jobs, this program was created in August 2022 to provide free hairdressing trainings which last for five weeks, one for female and one for male. They were trained by competent and well-experienced Burmese professional trainers. It was partially funded by the overseas Burmese community.

Three batches have already graduated and the fourth one is still underway. In three batches, 30 males and 29 females graduated and, 11 males and 16 females got the jobs.

Closing Ceremony of Batch – 3 Male Course, on 22nd December 2022



Closing Ceremony of Batch – 3 Female Course, on 30th December 2022





5) TELEHEALTH PROGRAM

Most of the Burmese in Maesot have to take a very low profile, which in turn, makes them lack of income, knowledge, social networks, and Thai language fluency. When they face emergency health issues, they are very confused and did not know what to do, whom to approach, or where they need to go. For the worse, the health services in Thailand also are accessible to Burmese only in emergency cases and they have to pay all the costs.

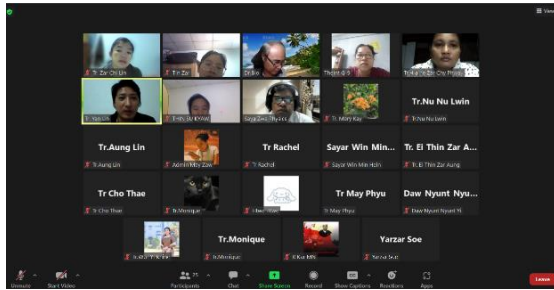
In this context, the NMF TeleHealth program has been running since June 1st, 2022, with initial assistance from the Smile Project. Currently, the program has been running 18 hours a day (0600-2400), seven days a week by two competent staff on a voluntary basis. Coordination and consultation with other health institutions including the Maetao clinic led by Dr. Cynthia Maung and the Tele Healthy program of the NUG government are in place. Within 7 months, 195 Burmese people in Maesot including 44 men, 98 women, and 53 children had online advice and treatment from Burmese health professionals. Currently, 23 medical doctors including 10 physicians and specialists have been helping the program.

6) FREE ONLINE BASIC EDUCATION: SPRING BRIDGE ONLINE SCHOOL (SBOS)

With support from Burma Center Praque, since January 2022, the NMF taught non-formal education face-to-face in Maesot using home-based learning as the Burmese migrant schools were not allowed to open. Five teachers taught in four different places of Maesot to around 200 students.

However, it became stranded in April due to two main reasons including COVID-19 and security concerns. A pilot program for the primary level (Grades 1-5) was prepared where 200 children would be taught by 6 teachers. However, due to high demand, the program was extended to include all Grades (Grades 1-11) and was launched in the first week of June 2022, with 54 teachers teaching over 1400 students. It is six months course and aimed to be finished in December 2022.

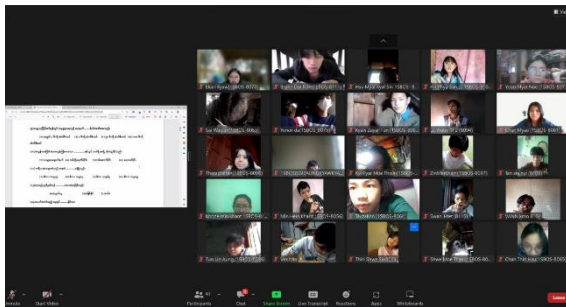
As of today, 43 volunteer teachers are teaching 764 students. All examination for Grade 1 to Grade 11 was finished and the lists of G1 to G9 students who passed exams have been announced. The graduation ceremony for Primary classes was done online on 31.12.2022.



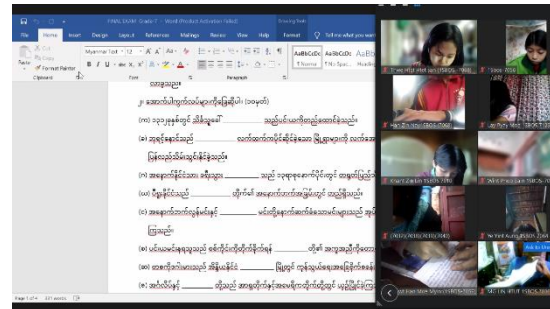
Weekly Meeting with Teachers



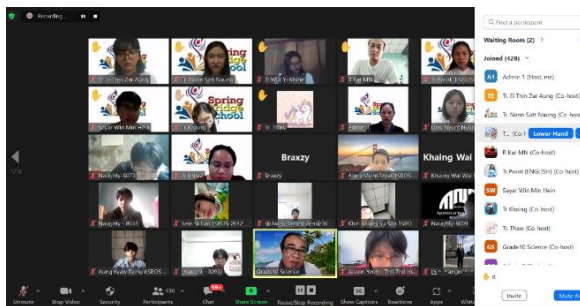
Graduation Ceremony (Response by Students)



Final Examination of Grade 8



Final Examination of Grade 7



Graduation Ceremony



Graduation Certificate

7) ONLINE LANGUAGE TRAININGS

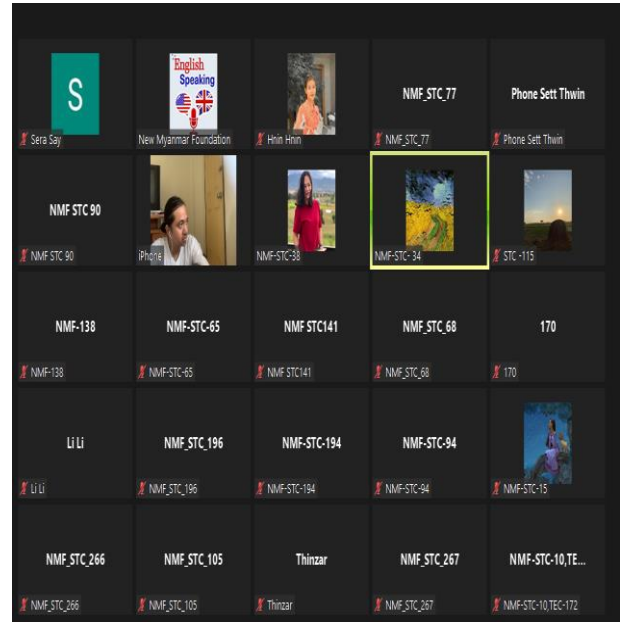
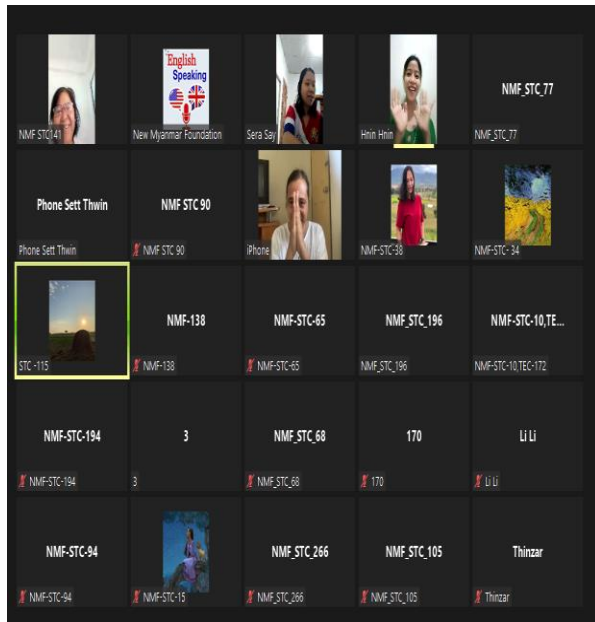
The activists in Maesot need basic Thai language fluency to be used in daily contact with Thai people and for potential encounters with Thai authorities including police, immigration, hospitals, and schools. On the other hand, they need to prepare to improve their English skills to be used in their application for asylum seeking and possible resettlement in democratic countries. So, the NMF launched online language trainings in March 2022.

The first batch of 20 trainees of Thai language training graduated on July 22nd, 2022, and 61 trainees from the second batch graduated on December 8th, 2022. On 19th December, the third Thai language training was opened for new 384 trainees. Just one Thai language trainer was hired for the course due to financial difficulty.

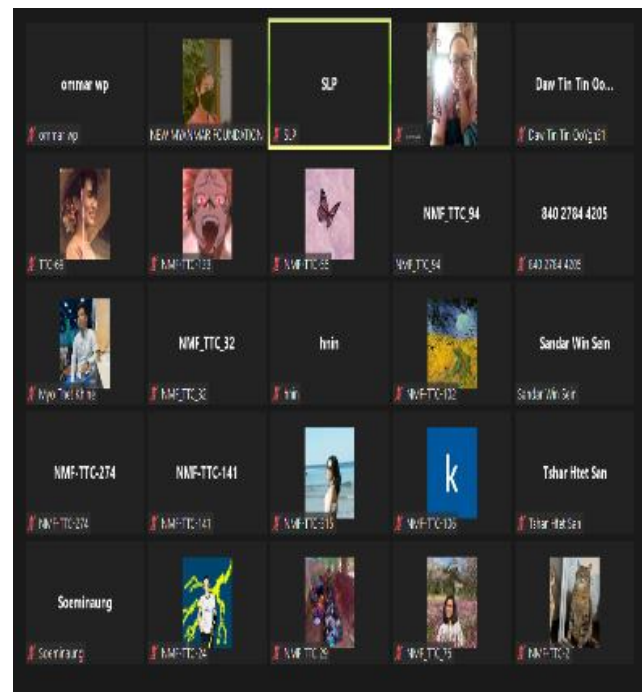


The English language training was run by 6 volunteer teachers. On June 30th, 2022, 88 students graduated from the first training. On October 17th, 2022, 90 students graduated from the second training. On November 7th, the third English course was opened for new 232 trainees.

These programs are very useful for the activists and got partial assistance from the Smile Project and the overseas Burmese community.



Closing Ceremony of Second Thai Language Training



Opening Ceremony of Third Thai Language Training

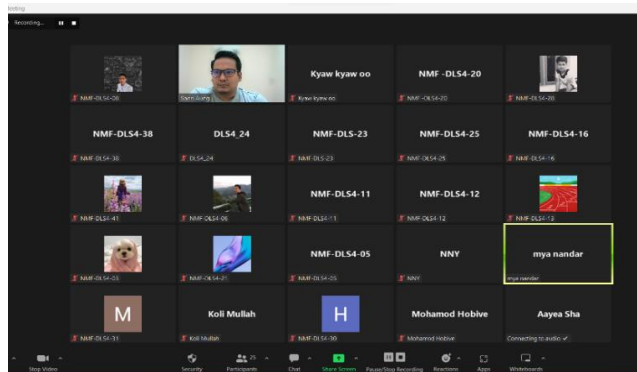


8) DIGITAL INCLUSION AND SECURITY TRAININGS

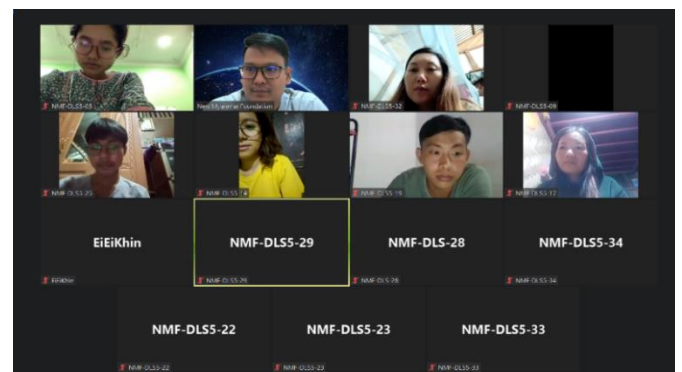
Since the military coup in February 2021, all internet, data, and telephone usage were put under surveillance leading to the arrest, crackdown, and execution of opposition leaders. The military spent millions of dollars to enhance their control and surveillance in all communication systems. They allegedly used foreign experts to get the modern technology and know-how for effective surveillance, monitoring, and blockage.

With assistance from the Canadian Embassy in Thailand, the NMF has been providing twice monthly digital literacy and security training which also promoted civic inclusion. The training is 2 hours a day for five days. The trainees were selected from the democratic actors, migrant workers association members, political organizations, community organizations, CSOs, local NGOs, and women's organizations.

From August to December 2022, seven trainings were completed with total trainees of 258 people.



Batch-4 held from 9th to 13th November



Batch-5 held from 21st to 25th November

9) PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING SERVICE

Almost all clients of the NMF have been suffering psychological trauma including low self-confidence, hopelessness, high sensitivity, irritability, and depression due to the mental and physical sufferings under the persecution, human rights abuses, violations, and repression of the military.

The NMF has been dealing with many clients including family members of political prisoners, activists running away and hiding inside Burma, residents in safe houses, clients approaching the Rescue and Resettlement program, and others mentioned above. Taking care of their psychosocial well-being is one of the crucial services to be provided. In this context, the Psychosocial Support and Counselling Program was launched in the last week of November.



In December, 14 male and 20 female clients including 6 family members of political prisoners, 7 human rights defenders, 6 residents from safehouses, 1 hairdressing trainee, 2 sewing machine trainees, and, 12 pro-democracy activists inside and outside Myanmar were offered counselling service. Moreover, 326 clients from these groups were provided with psychological support by talking kindly and friendly to them.

Any Burmese in and out can contact (+66)63 528 7284 or email: counselling.nmf@gmail.com during office hours.

10) NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

In welcoming the New Year, New Year's Eve gatherings were held at the NMF office which was joined by the pro-democracy and human rights activists, leaders from organizations for refugees, labor organizations, women organizations, ethnic leaders, volunteers in various activities of NMF including educational staffs, health professionals, language training teachers, staffs from basic food support, and the NMF personnel.

In addition, on 31st December 2022, families residing in NMF safe houses also celebrated New Year's Eve intending to form friendly relationships with other families in the neighborhood and ease their day-to-day worries.

Moreover, 54 CDM members including 38 teachers and 16 medical doctors who have been working on a pro-bono basis for seven months at NMF's online basic education program, Telehealth program, and sewing machine training program were provided 1000 Baht one-time honorarium for their selfless dedication to their work. Furthermore, sewing machine training staff went door to door to the poor villagers and donated blankets to Burmese families living close to the training centre.



Gathering at office



CDM Teachers



NEW MYANMAR FOUNDATION (Building A Strong Foundation For Our Society)

P.O. Box (30), Mae Sot Sub District, Mae Sot, Tak District, 63110 Ph: (+66) 626 874 266, (+66) 947 708 838

Email: info@newmyanmarfoundation.info, Website: <https://newmyanmarfoundation.info>



Gathering at Safe House



Gathering at Safe House



Blankets donation



Blankets donation



11) MISCELLANEOUS

11.1) CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM AND FOOD SECURITY PILOT PROGRAM

New Myanmar Foundation conducted the capacity building and awareness training for women IDPs in coordination with our partner organization “Women lead resource center (WLRC) throughout the year 2022 such as “Women’s Rights, Labor Rights Training “and “Vocational Training”. NMF also implemented small agricultural program with local farmers for the food security of IDPs and people in safe houses in Maesot.

11.2) FIELD VISITS & GROUNDWORK





Women in the farm



Women Capacity Building Program



She-Grows



Field Visit



At the border



Support to IDPs



Field Visit



Before the camp was cracked down by air-strike





11.3) PUBLICATION OF THE TRAINING MATERIALS AND CONDUCTING THE SURVEY

NMF published the “Safety Manual for Human Rights Defenders” and other training materials for migrant workers. Moreover, NMF did the opinion survey and socio-economic and political situation of Myanmar after coup in February 2021.

SUMMARY

The NMF has been striving for democracy and human rights at its maximum capacity and in coordination with other democratic and ethnic organisations. All these services are very much supportive and essential to the democratic movement. For these efforts, the assistance and support of the funding organisations and the donors are very much crucial.

All suggestions, advice, concerns, and criticism are welcome and the Executive Director can be reached at all times at his contact address below.

Submitted by,

Dr. Sann Aung
Executive Director
Ph: +66 81 052 4966
Signal: +61 426 512 882
Email: sannaung1234@gmail.com
Website: <https://newmyanmarfoundation.info>



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Only with strong and firm support from the following organisations and individuals, the activities mentioned above can be materialized. We would like to express our highest gratitude on behalf of the people of Burma to the following individuals and organizations.

- 1) NMF staff, volunteers, and local partners including
- 2) Individual donors and supporters around the world
- 3) Amnesty International
- 4) Asia Democracy Network
- 5) Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)
- 6) AusAID
- 7) Burma Center Prague
- 8) Canada Embassy
- 9) Family Health International (FHI 360)
- 10) Fortify Rights
- 11) Freedom House
- 12) Frontline Defenders
- 13) International Republican Institute (IRI)
- 14) Landesa People Empowerment Foundation
- 15) Porticus
- 16) Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors
- 17) The Border Consortium (TBC)
- 18) Trocaire
- 19) Open Society Foundations

CONTACT PERSONS

Dr. Sann Aung	+66810524966(phone), +61426512882(Signal)	sannaung1234@gmail.com
Mya Nandar Thin	+1 34 72 76 43 16	new.myanmar.foudnation@gmail.com