



BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR OUR SOCIETY

NEW MYANMAR FOUNDATION

**Narrative Report On FHI-360's
Humanitarian Support For Pro-Democracy
And Human Rights Actors Absconding For
Their Lives in Myanmar**

7 DECEMBER 2023

NEW MYANMAR FOUNDATION

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Narrative Report On FHI-360's Humanitarian Support For Pro-Democracy And Human Rights Actors Absconding For Their Lives in Myanmar

1. Background Information

Myanmar's population has endured prolonged political, social, and economic oppression since the military junta, led by Min Aung Hlaing, seized power in a coup on February 1, 2021. The widespread response to this oppression has been the proliferation of national and international donors and organizations providing humanitarian assistance across the country, with the New Myanmar Foundation being one of them. Established in January 2008, this foundation has been dedicated to advancing democracy and human rights within Myanmar since its inception.

Following the ruthless military coup in 2021, the New Myanmar Foundation intensified its humanitarian efforts to aid the people of Myanmar, whose lives have been endangered by threats such as repression, arbitrary arrests, and daily violence inflicted by the military junta. The consequence has been a mass exodus of innocent citizens to neighboring countries and territories controlled by ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) due to the perilous conditions they face. Among these individuals are children, the elderly, women, the infirm, and those barely managing to survive, who lack access to quality healthcare and live in a constant state of insecurity.

Furthermore, there exists a marginalized segment of the population unable to flee for their lives due to responsibilities for elderly parents, infants, or their involvement in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). As a result, they find themselves trapped within the country, facing severe challenges. With the aim of assisting these marginalized individuals who are trapped within the country, the New Myanmar Foundation has implemented this project with the generous financial support by FHI-360 starting from April to September 2023. According to surveys of program, this is an effective project for human right activists who flee from their home country, and we received requests to extend the project duration.

2. Brief Introduction of the project

Initiating a project aimed at providing financial assistance to individuals facing urgent needs within the country, the New Myanmar Foundation launched this initiative in November 2023, with financial backing from FHI-360.

3. Objectives

The primary purpose of the project is to offer financial aid to individuals who are at risk of detainment, have had their homes destroyed, sealed, or searched, or have been subjected to forced torture. These funds are intended to assist them in managing lives in safe areas. It aims to address their immediate challenges related to securing food, shelter, and access to healthcare during their period of absconding.

4. Project Period

The project's duration spans a month, commencing on November 10, 2023, and concluding on December 15, 2023.

5. Project Implementers

The Program Manager managing this project is Peter from New Myanmar Foundation, who operates under the guidance and supervision of Director Dr. Sann Aung.

6. Implementation process

Implementation steps are as follow;


1. Proposal writing

Period: On 25th October 2023.

Description: The project proposal, along with a comprehensive implementation plan, is being prepared and submitted. Subsequently, an acknowledgment or confirmation is issued by the relevant organization.

2. Preparation of application form

Period: 10th November, 2023.

Description:  Announcement of this project was first published in the Telegram group which was formed after the project period of the 180 people who received the previous grant. Application form was prepared via Google Forms. Those who received the previous grants were fleeing within Myanmar, due to internet difficulties. If necessary, contacted via phone was completed.

3. Application analyzing

Period: From 11th November 2023 to 12th November 2023.

Description: During (10) days of surveying, a total of (157) respondents were received. The remaining (23) people were unable to contact since they left the telegram group chat due to security concerns. Therefore, a total of (157) applicants have been selected to receive subsidies for this project.

4. Financial supporting

Period: From 14th November 2023 to 18th November 2023.

Description: In order to ensure fundamental standards for money transfers, a sanctions check was conducted through a three-stage process as outlined below for (157) respondents.

- Office of Foreign Asset Controls (OFAC) - <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/>
- System for Award Management (SAM)- <https://sam.gov/>
- United Nations Security Council – <https://scsanctions.un.org/search/>

As the cash transfers were intended for recipients inside Myanmar, the initial cash transfer was facilitated through Kpay and Wave accounts. Due to the political instability and cash transfer through foreign bank accounts, have been monitored by the military, cash transfer was conducted with the help of reliable agents to ensure the individual security. Afterward, acknowledgments for the cash transfers were prepared.

5. Conducting socio-economic survey and analyzing the data

Period: From 20th November 2023 to 22nd November 2023.

Description: With the aim of analyzing the socio-economic situation and evaluating the implementation processes, a survey was conducted from 157 selected people right after the funding support. The survey was prepared using Google Forms and disseminated via Telegram groups of those selected people.

According to the survey, people living inside the country have been suffering much worse social, economic and political situation currently. The best solution for this crisis is the tripartite dialogue among the military, the ethnic leaders and the democratic forces lead by Aung San Suu Kyi along with supervision and support of the international communities lead by United Nations.

Completion Report of Socio-economic for Freedom House project is attached as Annex (a)

6. Project completion activities

Period: From 19th November 2023 to 20th November 2023.

Description: To assess the overall impact of the project, information is gathered from project beneficiaries by the following means:

- (i) Demographic survey
- (ii) Tracking the utilization of funds by individual beneficiaries
- (iii) Assessing health, security, and socioeconomic conditions
- (iv) Measuring the satisfaction level of beneficiaries

In addition to the activities mentioned above, a thorough review of cash transfer documents and acknowledgment letters is conducted. Meanwhile, a comprehensive project report is developed.

7.2. Demographic information of selected (157) people

7.2.1. Table showing the location of selected (157) people

Table 1. Tabel of selected 157 people's location

No	Location	Number of applicants
1	Kachin	1
2	Kayah	2
3	Kayin	1
4	Sagaing	24
5	Tanintharyi	1
6	Pago	15
7	Magway	20
8	Mandalay	39
9	Mon	2
10	Rakhine	1
11	Yangon	33
12	Shan	10
13	Ayeyarwaddy	8
	Total	157

According to the information presented in Table 1, the majority of the selected applicants reside in the country's capital cities, including Yangon, Mandalay, and Sagaing. These urban areas have been under severe oppression by the military junta. In contrast, applicants residing in various states are given lower priority compared to those in regions, primarily because several states in Myanmar are under the guardian by numerous ethnic armed groups.

7.2.2. Gender and age analysis

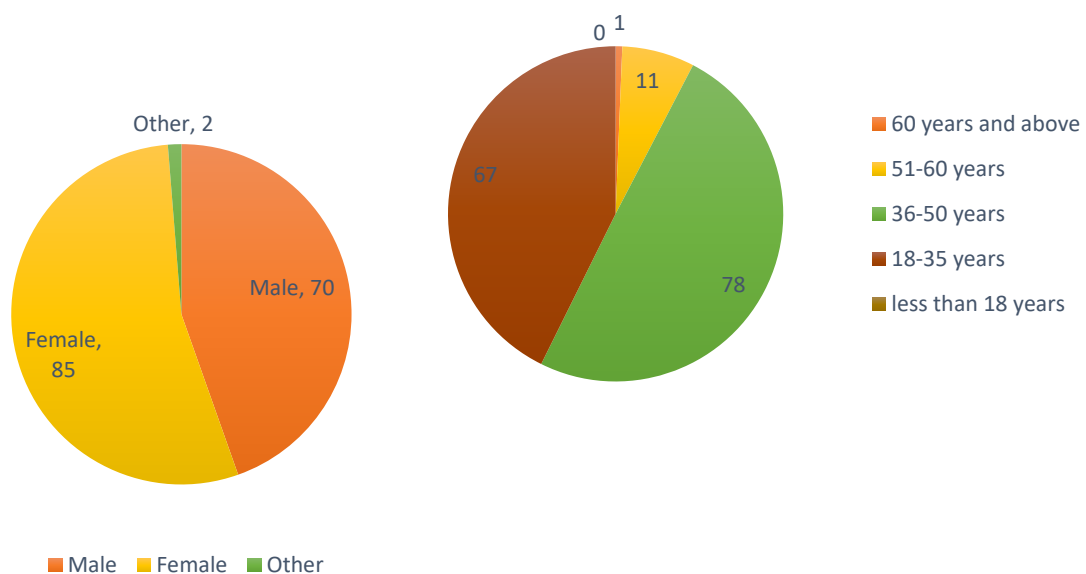


Figure 4. Gender and age analysis of selected 157 people

Figure 1 : Gender Ratio and Age Group Chart of (157) beneficiaries

As women are given favorable over men, the selected women outnumbered men. The targeted victims' age class by the military includes young adults of 18 to 35 years and older adults of 36 to 50 years, as these age groups often resist oppression.

7.3. Political background information of selected beneficiaries

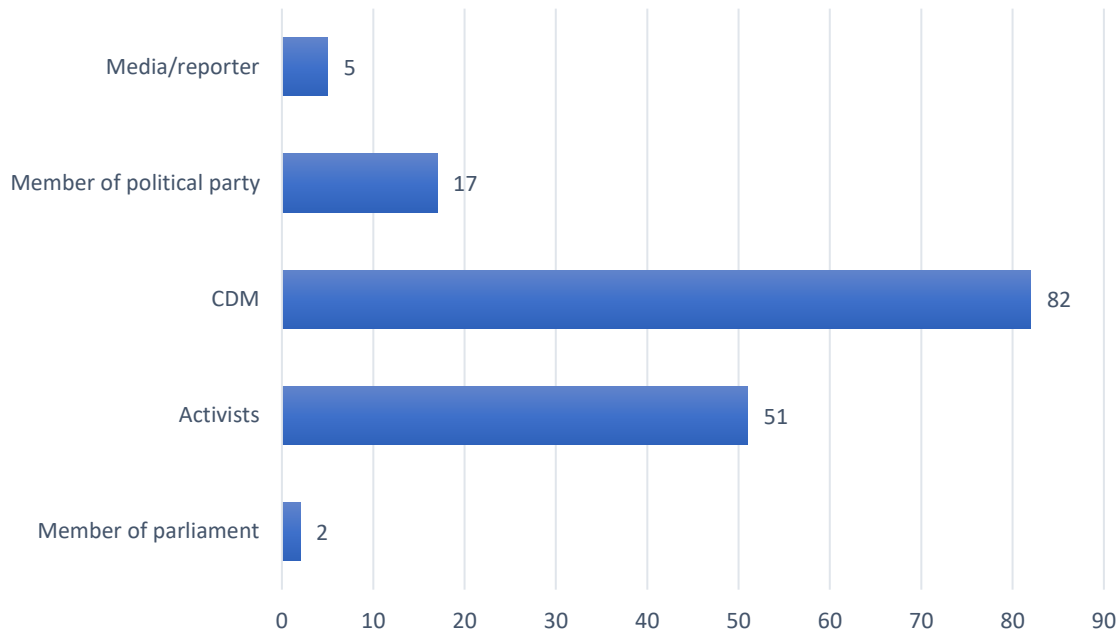
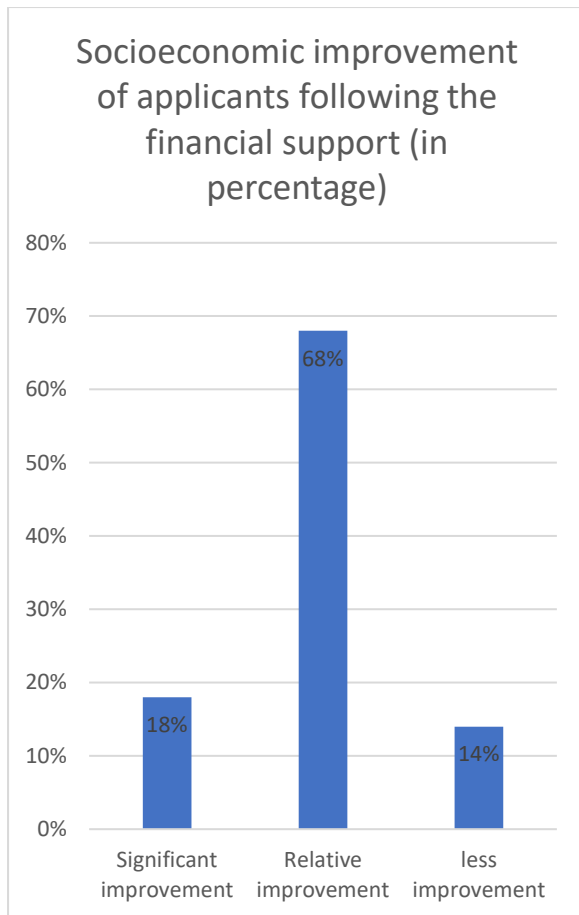


Figure 2. Figure showing the background information of selected 157 beneficiaries

In accordance with the project's objectives, the majority of the chosen applicants are individuals affiliated with the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), who are pro-democracy and human rights advocates. Additionally, a small number of selected individuals include members of parliament, political party members, as well as members of the media and reporters.

7.3. Effectiveness of the Project



According to the survey findings, the socioeconomic status of the majority of applicants has experienced certain extent of improvement after receiving financial assistance. There are only a few individuals whose socioeconomic conditions have seen significant changes or remained unchanged receiving the support.

Figure 3. Figure showing the socioeconomic improvement of selected people after financial support

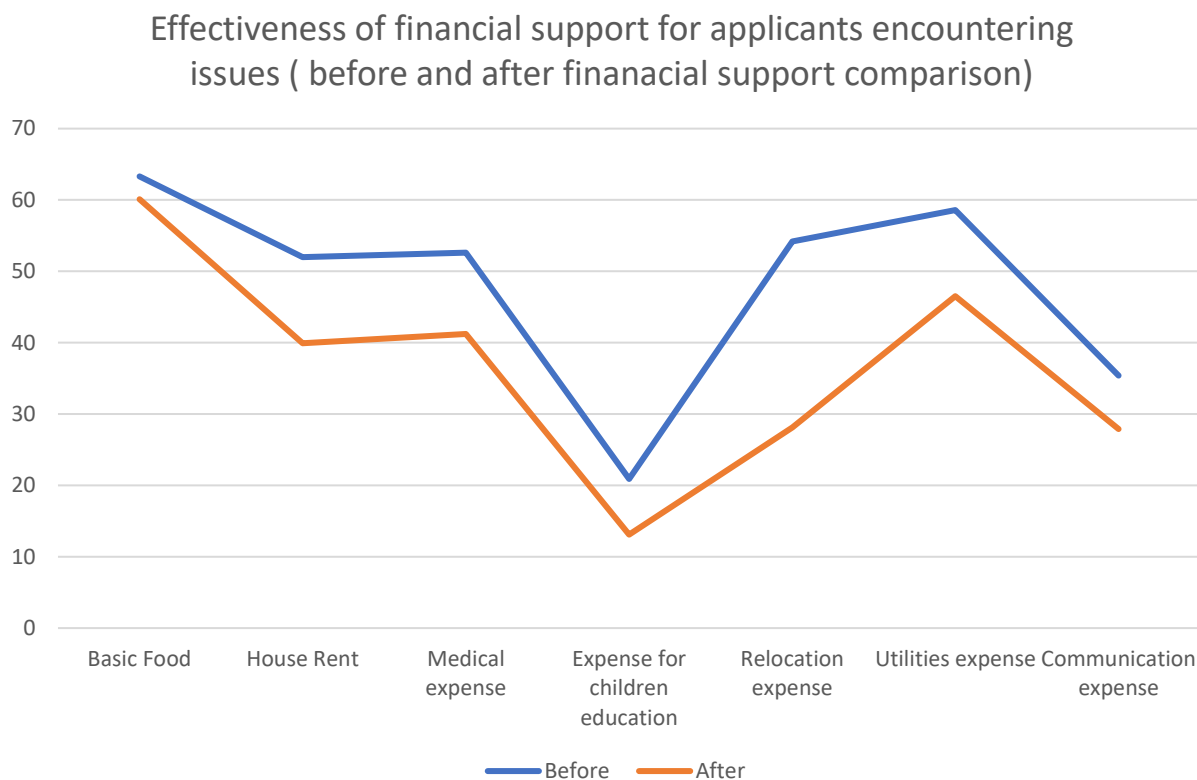


Figure .4 Figure showing the difficulties comparison of before and after financial support

8. Conclusion

The implementation process was carefully planned, including a well-defined timeline, before the project started. The process, of course, was accomplished successfully, adhering to the original plan. The project's announcement reached a wide audience efficiently through sharing on popular online media platforms, websites, various media channels, and groups comprised of pro-democracy and human rights activists. As a result, a substantial number of applications were received. To ensure fairness and prevent fraud while selecting relevant applicants, a prioritization and scoring mechanism was incorporated into the selection process. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with the applicants' references to verify the background information provided by the applicants themselves. Money transfers were made directly to the applicants or indirectly to their relatives. To guarantee successful cash transfers and prevent fraud, direct calls were made to the applicants or their respective referrals both before and after the cash transfer.

9. Limitations and Measures

Delays in the project's execution and challenges were encountered due to the unstable internet connectivity and prolong power cut experienced by individuals living in Myanmar. These issues led to disconnections/retardation during the cash transfer process, contacting references, or conducting online training sessions. Therefore, initial target beneficiaries of (180) doesn't meet due to difficulties in reaching referrals and each applicant, and only (157) were selected for this supporting project. To address these challenges, several measures were

implemented. These included making phone calls to applicants both before and after cash transfers and reaching out to reliable referrals to verify individual applicants' background information. Furthermore, training schedules were carefully selected to be delivered outside of regular working hours, ensuring the training did not disrupt the daily activities of the individual applicants.

10. Discussions and Recommendations

The selected applicants are individuals who require humanitarian assistance for various reasons, including being displaced from their homes and seeking a secure place within the country, experiencing unemployment or a lack of job opportunities, facing difficulties in accessing quality healthcare, struggling for basic food and shelter, providing support to elderly parents, or having children who are inaccessible to a quality education. Some of them may also have had their homes destroyed, sealed, or raided, or may be targeted for arrest. The financial support they receive offers them some relief and is applied to address their ongoing challenges of accessing essential food, shelter, and personal security. However, the effectiveness of the project has been hindered by the rising cost of living and fluctuations in inflation rates resulting from the political instability. Last but not least, financial assistance project brings substantial benefits toward pro-democracy and human rights activists residing in Myanmar and the extension or initialization of humanitarian project alike are recommended by this model project.

Appendix

(a) Voices of beneficiaries

A CDM Teacher From Sagaing Region

With the money provided by NMF, I called an agricultural expert to make Bokashi natural fertilizer and implementing a small plantation.

An activist from Magway Region

My husband is gone. My eldest son was prisoned due to his anticoup activities.

I have been fleeing from home with my two children. The military junta sealed my house and properties. Since the junta knew that I am an activist, they are chasing to arrest me. While fleeing, I was unable to work and I had a lot of difficulties with my two children. This financial support helped me to get by for some extend.

A CDM Officer From Chin State

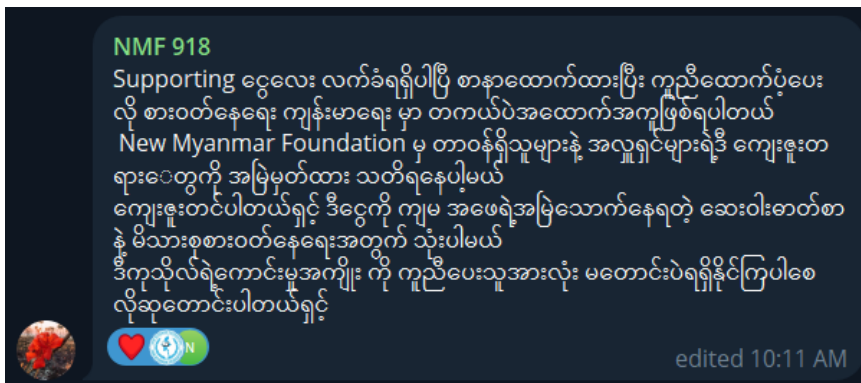
I heard from my friend that this organization really gives financial

assistance. Therefore, I applied by trust. When I was provided financial assistance for real, I participated in politics not because I want to get financial assistance. But I was encouraged because of this assistance.

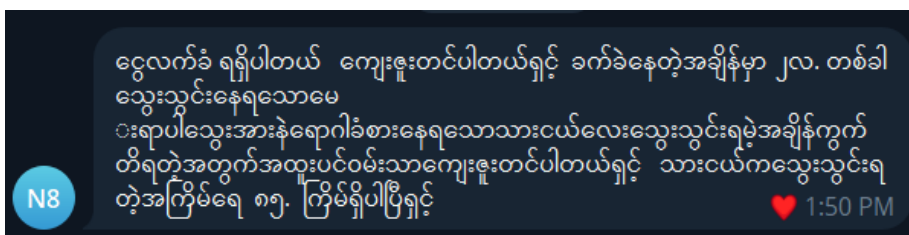
A Disabled CDM Women Who Fled From Yangon

Since I am a disabled person, I have faced more difficulties than others while finding a job. With this financial assistance, I was able to pay for medical cost of my monther and able to repy debt of renting accomodation. I can't thank enough each individual who contributed.

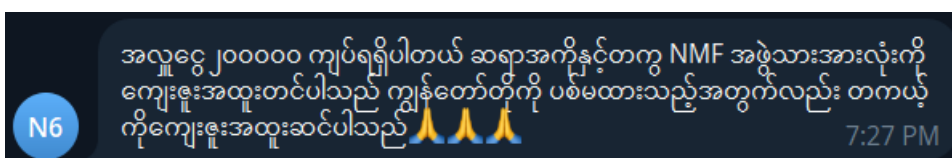
(b) Messages from beneficiaries



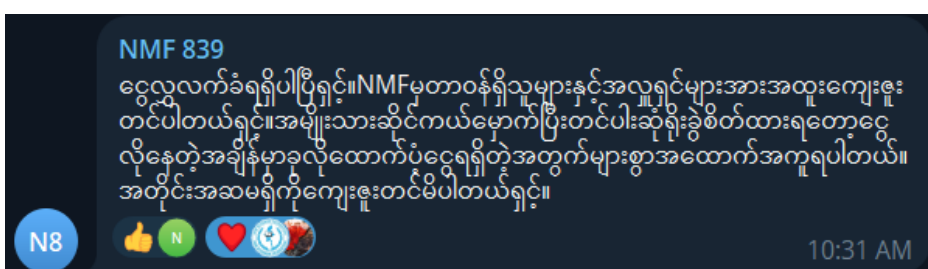
NMF 918 : This financial assistance is very helpful for my livelihood and health during this time. I will always be grateful for the support of New Myanmar Foundation. I will be using this support to buy medication for my father and for the livelihood of my family. I wish you to possess good things.



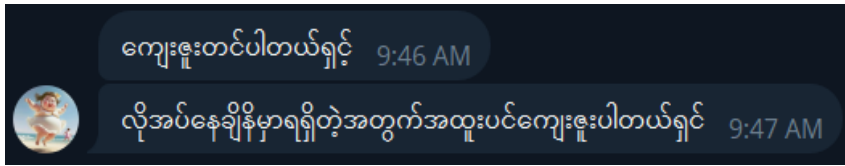
N8 : I gladly received money and very thankful for having this support because my little son, who is suffering from congenital anemia and needs blood transfusions every two months. I received this support at the right time to do blood transfusion treatment for my son. My son has received blood transfusions 85 times.



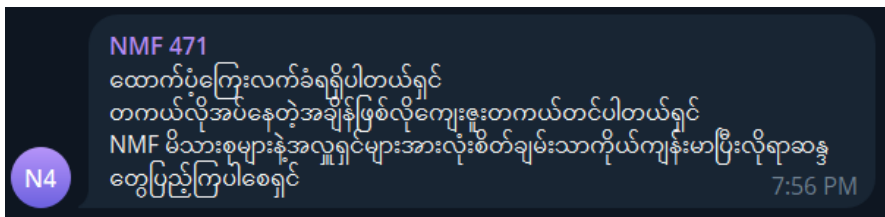
I received 200,000 Kyats. I am very thankful to NMF members. Thank you so much for not abandoning us.



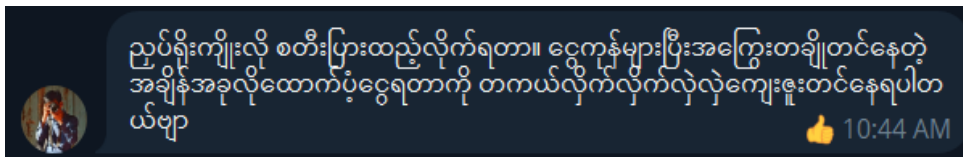
Well-received and special thanks to NMF and donors. This financial support was very helpful for me since my husband had to undergo hip replacement surgery after a motorcycle accident. Thank you so much.



Thank you so much for your support, especially when it is needed.



I am very thankful for this financial support when I am urgently in need. I wish the families of NMF members be pleasant and healthy.



I am really grateful to receive the support at a time when I suffered a broken collarbone and have a steel plate inserted, which costs a lot of money.

New Myanmar Foundation

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