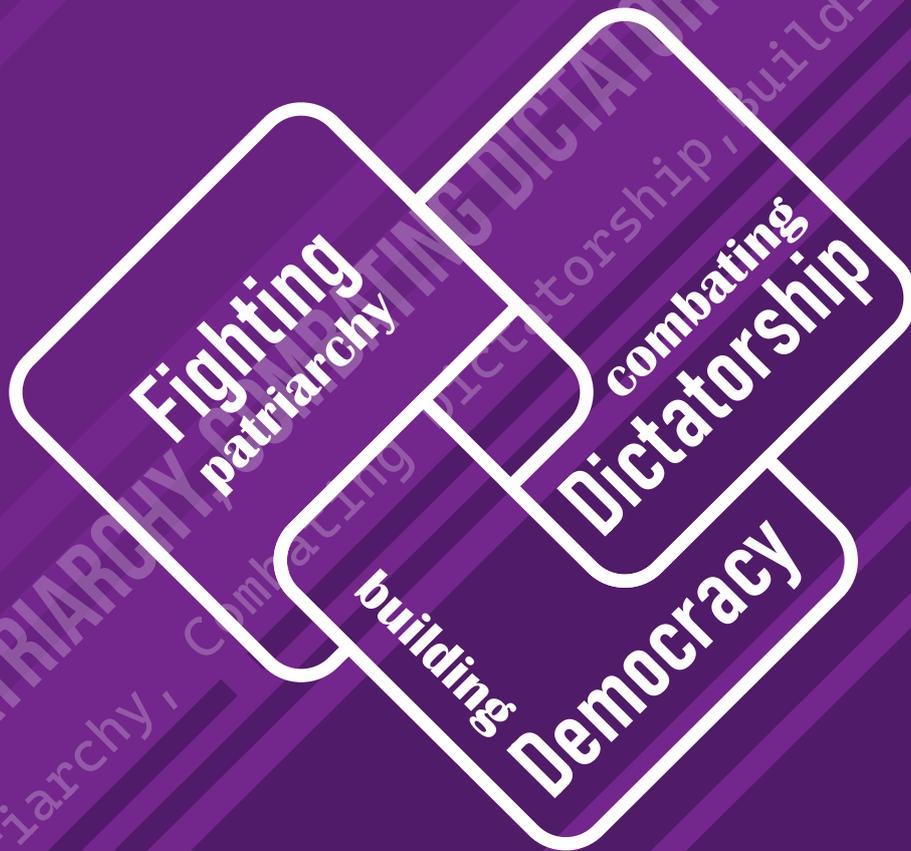




Women's League of Burma

B U I L D I N G
The Triple Resistance

Women leaders' perceptions of changes and challenges a year and a half after the coup in Burma



Foreword

Our country, Burma, is going through a momentous turning point in history. Burma has been undergoing civil wars for over seventy years as attempts and efforts are being made to eradicate autocratic, military dictatorships and oppressive authoritarian regimes, and bring about a federal democratic union that guarantees the right to self-determination and equality for ethnic nationalities. In such endeavours, it is imperative to recognise the importance of and create an enabling environment for women's participation.

Despite facing violence, oppression, and marginalisation for decades, this research report highlights the persistent and active participation of women to break through these challenges and limitations to reach the goal of building a future federal union. Women's participation at all levels of decision-making and the peace process are under-recognised and there has been an age-old failure to provide them with the necessary support they need. If we are to build a new federal union where we live together in peace, the abilities, skills, knowledge and power of everyone in our country must be fully utilised to achieve it.

Thus, the research aims to call attention to the needs of women - an enabling environment so that women can meaningfully and impactfully participate in every decision-making process. It is our belief that this research will contribute to the realization of gender and gender equality issues leading to increased women's participation in all levels of decision-making.

Women's League of Burma

BUILDING THE ‘TRIPLE RESISTANCE’:

Women leaders’ perceptions of changes and challenges a year and a half after the coup in Burma

1. Introduction

For decades women from Burma have been active participants in struggles for democracy, federalism, and ethnic self-determination. They have taken to the streets to protest, launched campaigns, and joined their male counterparts in the jungle to support the fight against the Myanmar military. Growing out of this resistance women’s organizations played a critical role in supporting women to access education, health services, and livelihood opportunities. Many have operated for decades in conflict-affected areas, dealing with oppression and violence perpetrated by the military.

Generating more women leaders by providing capacity building has also been a crucial part of the work. Established in December 1999, the Women’s League of Burma (WLB) is a multi-ethnic network of women’s organizations aimed at increasing women’s representation in leadership, and decision and policy-making roles, including in the struggle for democracy and human rights, the national peace and reconciliation processes, and in politics. Set up in 2006, WLB’s **Political Empowerment Program (PEP)** (now integrated with other programs in the Leadership for Change Department) has focused on strengthening women’s participation in the public arena, preparing women to become future leaders at local, regional, and national levels. PEP’s range of initiatives, including the Emerging Women Leadership School, feminist leadership and negotiation training, and internships, have helped budding ethnic women leaders to build practical skills and attain decision-making positions in civil society, ethnic resistance organizations, and political organizations.

Although there were still many challenges [Matelski and Noan, 2022], there were signs by late 2020 that initiatives to promote women’s leadership were beginning to bear fruit. In November elections, women’s representation among elected parliamentarians at all levels of government increased to 17%, up 12 percentage points since 2012. [Onello, 2021]. WLB’s Voices of Female Candidates of the 2020 General Elections report [2020], found that 907 women had participated in the elections despite facing structural and political constraints. Women’s organizations were eager to implement recommendations from the report including advocating for electoral reform and working more closely with political parties. Previously ranked in the bottom 15%, Burma managed to move up to 118th place in the global Gender Inequality index by 2019. [Onello, 2021].

The 1 February 2021 military coup was a crushing blow, bringing fresh challenges and changes to women leaders, impacting their daily lives, their work, and how they advocate for their rights. Women have been the target of killings, torture and violations committed during military attacks. [WLB Monthly Situation Reports, 2021 – 2023] Women across Burma are also experiencing financial hardships and difficulties in accessing health services as systems fail. [UNDP and UN Women, 2022]

Yet these fresh challenges have not dimmed women’s strength and resilience. In the weeks and months after the coup media articles

appeared highlighting the prominent and creative roles of women in the resistance. [Khan, 2021; Khin Khin Mra, 2021; Quadrini, 2021; BWU, 2022; Ebbighausen, 2022.] Special attention was given to the role of women in urban protests and in leading humanitarian response.

This report takes a deeper look at the situation of women leaders 18 months after the coup, particularly ethnic women leaders working in areas most affected by conflict. Engaging with alumni of the PEP’s Emerging Women Leadership School and women leaders, it provides insight into the impact of the coup on women’s participation. What kind of new (or ongoing) challenges do they face? Are their organizations still able to operate as before? Are ethnic women taking on new responsibilities? How has their work on women’s issues been transformed (or not?) As they approached the second-year anniversary of the coup, what were the main priorities for ethnic women and women’s organizations working in rural, conflict-affected areas?

This brief shines the light on ethnic women and women working in rural areas of Burma, providing a snapshot of perceptions of what has changed while embarking on what one woman termed the ‘triple resistance’: fighting patriarchy, combatting dictatorship, and working to build federal democracy.

¹ Most were short media articles based on interviews with selected activists. An exception was the 2022 Women Trailblazers Call for a New Era of Reform report by Burmese Women’s Union (a WLB member), which includes findings from interviews with 34 women.

2. Methodology

WLB researchers conducted individual interviews with 21 women between 26 October to 14 November 2022 using an open-ended questionnaire. To showcase diverse perspectives, WLB selected interviewees who represented women from a range of ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds, and who are working in a wide range of geographical areas in Burma. Preference was given to women from ethnic or rural areas.

Interviewees were also selected to represent women leaders at different stages in their careers: those just starting out, rising stars in research and programming, and leaders with years of experience.

This research is meant to be a snapshot of perceptions at a particular moment in time. It does not represent the views of all women leaders from Burma. Due to time, budget and security constraints, the number of interviewees was limited to 21 women with access to internet or phone connection.

3. An Overview of Interviewees

21 | Women interviewed

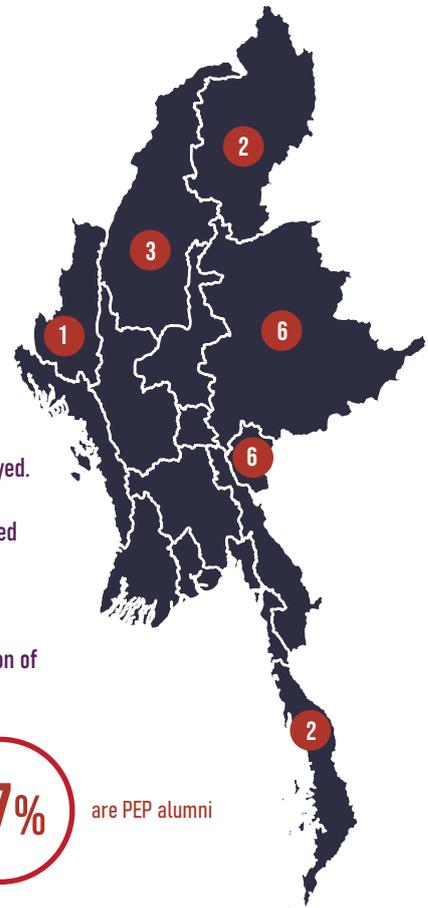
12 | Women's organizations represented

10 | States and regions covered by organizational activities

For this study, 21 women were interviewed representing 12 different women's organizations across the country. Two were not working at women's organizations. One works in the health sector, and another had resigned from a women's organization before the coup and was not employed.

Originally based in 7 different states and regions (see map), all interviewees are currently displaced either inside or outside the country. Despite this, they continue to implement projects spanning 10 states and regions.

The interviewees belong to 10 different ethnic groups with special attention to ethnic representation of rural areas of the country.



62%

of the women interviewed are in leadership positions

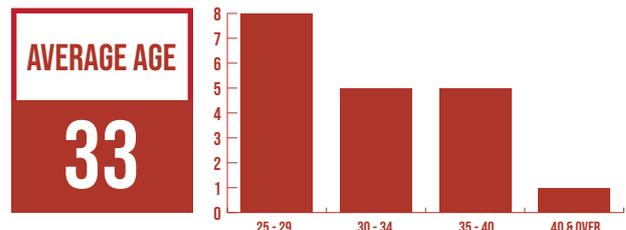
52%

are current or former WLB Policy Board members

47%

are PEP alumni

13 of the women are married, often with additional duties of childcare. Five women are unmarried, while the marital status of three others is unknown. The average age of the women activists is 33, the eldest being 47 and the youngest 25.



Following the coup, all women interviewed, were forced into hiding, displaced temporarily or permanently. Nine of them are currently displaced outside the country (in Thailand or India) or in the border areas. Two reside in IDP camps inside Myanmar, while the rest were forced to relocate at least once. Despite these challenges however they continue to work for their organizations and their communities, even extending existing programming and taking on new roles.

4. The personal impact of the coup

The answers about personal challenges following the coup reveal the wide-ranging and damaging impact of oppression and violence. The most reported impacts were displacement/lack of secure housing, security threats, mental health challenges, and economic difficulties.

The largest impact for most women was displacement with all women reporting being forced to flee at least temporarily since the military coup. Almost half of them were permanently displaced outside of the country, living in exile in either Thailand or India. A large proportion of those remaining inside Burma were forced to flee their homes due to intense fighting and/or security concerns. They are taking shelter in the homes of relatives, in IDP camps or in safehouses of their region of origin. A few have been forced to move regularly because of ongoing security risks.

Displacement and security concerns were strongly connected. Often the primary impetus for dislocation was a security issue (fighting, arrest warrant). Sometimes however the new “safe” location was also a source of ongoing precarity because of lack of legal status (documentation), lack of access to services (education for children), and loss of livelihood opportunities for the family. Some women were forced into hiding on their own or only with immediate family.

“When I had to relocate after the coup, I faced several challenges in my family and was unable to continue my work [for a while]. I miscarried my 5-month-old pregnancy while fleeing the coup... There were also security concerns at my new location, which had been invaded and searched twice by the military junta. My coworkers were arrested. In the neighbourhood where I live, there has been violence, injustice, and abuse.”

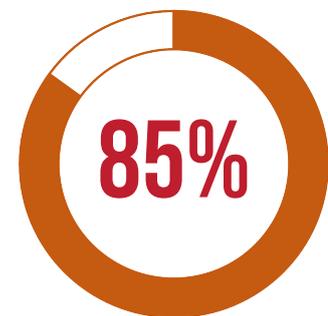
Although few had experienced direct violence, about half of those interviewed reported that they were still at risk from military airstrikes, artillery attacks, and fighting. Two had relatives arrested and one killed by junta security forces. Several reported destructions of homes and loss of belongings in military attacks, police raids, and thefts. Two have lost family members during COVID outbreaks due to lack of access to health care, while another’s brother died because he was not able to access treatment for drug addiction after the coup. These examples demonstrate that military oppression claims a much larger number of lives than just those who fall victim to armed violence.

When asked specifically, the majority (85%) reported negative effects on their well-being and mental health. These included problems with sleeping, lack of concentration and focus, loss of appetite, and hypervigilance. The loss of a sense of security and physical safety affected all women regardless of their location. The constant threat of violence in areas of active fighting is an obvious stressor. Surveillance and risk of arrest were also key causes of worry and strain. IDP camps come with additional concerns, especially violence against women, travel restrictions, and lack of hygiene. Lack of access to the internet posed a daily

Challenges



are displaced across the border into neighbouring countries while the rest remain in hiding or in IDP camps inside Burma



of women reported their mental health being periodically or continuously affected

Stressors impacting mental health



challenge. Those outside the country's borders are coping with a unique set of anxieties tied to the lack of documentation, language barriers, and access to medical care and livelihood opportunities.

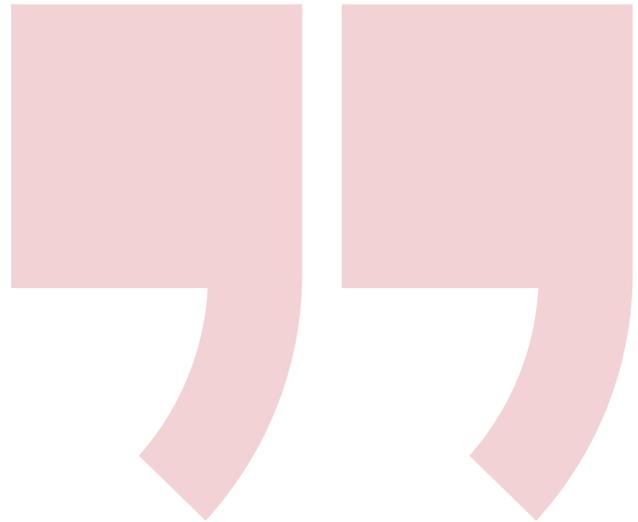


“It is inconvenient for me to have to climb a mountain to participate in an online meeting in the late evening or at night. Also, it is forbidden to leave the IDP camps, according to the rules.”

Separation from family and friends was also a prominent stressor leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Often forced to flee alone or with only a few relatives, women had ongoing security concerns for relatives who remained in conflict areas. Some also worried that their own work and participation could put their relatives at increased risk of arrest, harassment, or worse.

Many women interviewed named work as a primary source of stress immediately following the coup. Increasing workloads combined with a lack of concentration and sleep resulted in diminished productivity and effectiveness. Some questioned their capabilities to lead or take on new positions. Notions of inadequacy were sometimes reinforced by women being side lined along with so-called women's issues like gender-based violence, as those working in governance structures reported. Some also had feelings of guilt and reported irritability with family members as they struggled to balance organizational work, revolutionary work, household tasks, and childcare. Some of these feelings were exacerbated by working from home.

Not all impact was negative; there was personal growth born of facing myriad challenges. Women became more patient, flexible, and even creative in dealing with threats and emergencies. Skills were built through participation in new political and civil society spaces: coordination, listening, leadership, policy development, and networking. There was deepened commitment and eagerness to further expand skills.



“In addition to having to adjust to a new leadership position and a new learning environment, I also became more patient than usual. My listening abilities have improved, and my engagement has increased. I am becoming more aware of the political roles and areas in which I would be interested in engaging more. Now that I am in a position of leadership, I have learned to listen and think more.”

“I have to exercise greater patience... during this time in politics. I have become a master at adapting my skills to function well under pressure and challenges. I have gained the ability to be more optimistic and dedicated.”

5. New roles, new responsibilities?

Most women had worked with women's organizations throughout their careers, and this hasn't changed after the coup. Yet, they all reported taking on additional responsibilities and sometimes new roles - within or as part of their organizations, or as individuals. Organizational work retained a focus on women's issues while work done in individual capacity was often linked to broader notions of supporting the resistance. Boundaries between 'organizational' and 'revolutionary' work were fluid, a complexity illustrated by the interplay among women's participation in nonviolent protests, humanitarian aid efforts, and politics.

“Women are inspired and encouraged in some ways. Our desire to learn more has been sparked by women’s growing involvement and participation. Women have more options than ever before... Women have become more active in politics, as well as in community and social development.”

i New roles, new responsibilities?

Over two thirds of the women took part in peaceful protests and strikes soon after the coup. Most participated “as individuals” joining local strikes in their cities and towns. Many have done so along with friends and even relatives. Some attended protests with colleagues from women’s organizations, linking it more closely with their professional capacities.

They often used the opportunity to raise awareness about women’s issues but for many, participation had a broader purpose of removing the military junta, or prioritizing issues such as pushing for federal democracy and abolishing the 2008 Constitution.

Many felt that women had played a critical role in the protests through mobilization, organizing activities and establishing strike committees. It also provided an opportunity to forge connections with local and emerging activists with whom they hadn't previously worked. These relationships then could be carried over into other activities, forming the basis for political alliances, local administrations, and humanitarian aid networks.

ii Driving relief efforts

Nearly all the women interviewed reported taking part in humanitarian aid efforts. Most were doing so as part of their work with women's organizations. This largely entailed the provision of basic needs (food, shelter, clothing), services (counselling), and emergency assistance (safe houses and safe travel) to female IDPs, women in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), and women human rights defenders (WHRDs).

Many also reported doing this type of voluntary work supporting the revolution in addition to their organizational work. They raised funds and organized donations for victims of conflict and those at risk, primarily CDM members and IDPs.

OVER 2/3 PARTICIPATED
in nonviolent action

Nearly 100% involved in humanitarian relief work



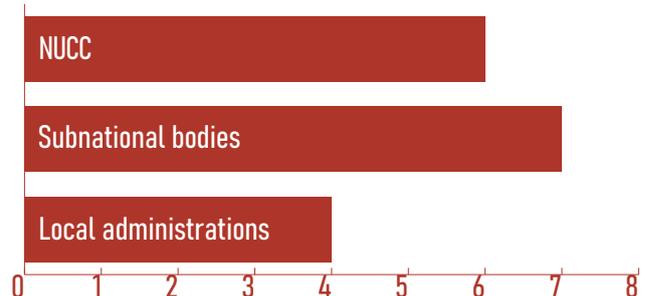
50% took on new political/governance roles



iii Stepping into new political and governance roles

More than half of the women interviewees have taken on political positions at bodies and structures emerging and expanding in the wake of the coup. There is participation at all levels - national (NUCC Joint Coordinating Committees), subnational (e.g. Karenni State Consultative Council, Ta'ang Political Consultative Council) and local. Five women served on multiple entities. Many held their positions as representatives of their organization or WLB, but some participated in their individual capacities.

Six of the interviewees participating at the national level were doing so at the NUCC representing their organizations and/or the WLB. Women (7) were most involved in subnational bodies. Women at national and subnational levels sat on a broad range of committees (including federal affairs and transitional justice), but most were expected to contribute on “softer” issues such as education, gender, and humanitarian assistance, regardless of the level of involvement. Nonetheless this participation was illustrative of women's achievement in securing representation for more women's organizations in these bodies and leveraging political capital to advocate for women’s perspectives. Local governance levels appeared to offer more opportunities and flexibility; four of the women were currently active, including in People’s Administration Teams (Pa Ah Phas) and village administrations



The costs and gains of stepping up – The perception of women in “masculine” spaces

Taking on these new challenges has not been without its difficulties. Participation in nonviolent protests, politics, and the provision of humanitarian aid has come with great risks and costs for individuals and women's organizations. Many interviewees were forced to flee, and some women's organizations have been monitored, sending all staff into hiding. At least one women's organization was raided, staff at several other organizations were detained. The director of one women's organization was killed during a violent crackdown on a peaceful protest.

While women leaders interviewed felt that women had more opportunities and had taken great strides in public participation after the coup, many felt these gains were tempered by ongoing challenges linked to discriminatory attitudes and practices. Issues affecting women, particularly gender-based violence, were deprioritized and neglected.

Most interviewees felt that **women had increased their participation** in public work after the coup. They noted the diversity of roles that women have taken on at all levels including village heads, NUG Ministers, IDP camp leaders, and members of armed resistance organizations. These positive changes were seen as a source of strength and motivation.

There is a broader **acknowledgement of the need to include women**, attributed to past advocacy work, especially around gender quotas calling for women to be at least 30% of representation in decision-making bodies. Many emphasized how women were invited to participate and were quick to praise the many women who had accepted invitations and increased women's leadership roles. Yet many questioned the depth and sincerity behind these statements. Some felt that men were paying lip service to gender quotas and had yet to truly embrace the importance of women's participation. While women were asked to participate, their voices were still not taken seriously.

“Women are allowed to participate but their opinions and perspectives are still not fully considered or given significant attention.”

Participation is restricted by discriminatory beliefs that women biologically or inherently lack the capacity to participate or need to be protected/shielded from ‘difficult’ discussions.

“Women are sometimes invited to attend meetings when it is required, but when it comes to political topics, they are often excluded on the grounds that they are more sensitive than males.”

This was especially true in the armed resistance, where women were still largely excluded from leadership and relegated to support roles such as cooks, medics, and administrators. With armed organizations gaining more power, women faced increasing risks of being marginalized from key decision-making bodies and processes.

“In the current state of affairs in Myanmar women have little opportunities for engagement and are unable to speak out if they are not part of armed forces or the PDFs.”

“Armed conflict and the use of forces are prevalent in this political climate. Men are therefore seen as occupying more important roles in the current setting.”

Women were also accused of focusing only on gender issues, which was seen as distracting and disruptive to broader political discussions and revolutionary agendas.

At the same time **issues primarily affecting women were deprioritized**. Many interviewees felt that the momentum and support for issues affecting women that had been growing in the 2000s had been reversed after the coup. Men still had a consciousness about women's issues but now openly challenged the urgency or priority of addressing them. Issues like removing the junta from power and establishing federal democracy were seen as more critical. There was a failure to see the importance of integrating gender issues and analysis into broader revolutionary policies and decision-making.

“Concerns about women's rights and allegations of violence against women do not receive the attention they deserve. It appears that women's difficulties in the present circumstances are not as significant as fights and military confrontations.”

This is particularly alarming because these concerns can hardly be separated from one another. Many women interviewed warned about the increasing number of gender-based violence cases in the country. Although junta security forces were seen to be the main perpetrators, there was also acknowledgement that civilians and men in armed organizations aligned to the resistance were also responsible. Women in armed resistance forces were at particular risk and seen as unlikely to speak out because of both gender discrimination and repercussions for talking about violations within the resistance. Although some policies had been developed to address GBV, many felt there was little political will to build or strengthen justice systems for women survivors.

“Currently it is challenging to ask for women's rights. There is a problem of acceptance. Although GBV cases inside the military are being brought up, they are neglected, and excuses are being given. Although there are policies within armed organizations, there is a lack of attempts to listen to the voices of women.”

“The military junta, the armed forces and armed individuals, as well as civilians, perpetrate sexual violence in the current situation since there is no rule of law. There is no system or mechanism that can shield women from either physical or sexual abuse.”

Adapting and Rebuilding: perceptions of change within women's organizations

Women's organizations faced many challenges after the coup, which profoundly impacted their operations and shifted the focus of their work. Although many women's organizations had been working in conflict areas before the coup, **increased security threats and violence led to more significant challenges**. All but one of the organizations in this study were forced to close offices. About a third relocated to border areas of Thailand, India, or China, which brought advantages (increased safety, more stable electricity, and internet) and challenges (lack of registration or legal status). Some moved offices to more rural areas while others reopened smaller or more temporary offices, sometimes doubling as safe houses, in their original locations. Even when offices reopened, many staff remained in hiding and worked from home. Displacements led to major disruptions and led to longer term changes as organizations rebuilt where and how they worked.

In-person activities such as meetings, trainings, workshops, and field research were dramatically reduced or cut because of ongoing violence and security threats. Safe houses and clinics were forced to close. These cuts had a devastating impact on empowerment, women's peace and security, gender-based violence, and access to justice work. Some activities were moved online but had more limited impact and excluded those lacking internet access.

On-the-ground activities that were still possible were adapted to the security situation. Target areas were reduced, changed, or even expanded, to focus on communities within safe reach. Community focal persons were recruited, and trust-building prioritized to strengthen ties on the ground. Careful planning and additional time made some travel possible. Yet for many women's organization staff inside Burma each day required balancing organizational work with security and survival. Electricity and poor internet connections made communication and accomplishing even the most basic tasks more time consuming and difficult.

“Implementation is greatly hampered by security considerations, and the staff must work as SAC regime planes fly overhead...Conflict situations can cause delays in travel time and make it unpredictable; a one-week trip can take two weeks instead for example.”

Organizations also had to adapt to new restrictions and threats in the banking sector, finding new ways to transfer funds and plan budgets amidst volatile exchange rates. Donor reporting and relations were impacted.

All organizations **started or expanded humanitarian aid work** since the coup. Many took the lead in provision of basic needs, emergency support and security tools (safehouses, VPNs) for women in their areas notably IDPs, CDM women, and WHRDs. For many it became the bulk (60% or more for some) of their work and required building new skills in logistics, coordination, and community engagement.

Research and documentation of human rights violations also expanded after the coup. While most women's organizations were doing this work

before the coup, they increased their capacities to record violations in their areas and specifically against women. Data was used for reports, advocacy, and awareness-raising campaigns. Organizations gathered information from online news and where possible from staff or focal person reports from the ground.

“Even before, there were human rights violations in the community, but no one paid any attention to them. Following the coup, the organization had to interact with the community in order to gather information from them, which necessitated ongoing trust-building.”

Some organizations **broadened their focus beyond women's issues** to include issues perceived as more urgent during the revolution, such as promoting federal democracy and local, state and national-level governance and policymaking.

Coordination and networking with new and existing partners increased despite general erosion of trust after the coup. WLB and networking with women's organizations was still vital even when it focused on broader revolutionary aims. EROs, other armed resistance organizations, and community-based groups proved to be critical partners in managing security risks and delivering humanitarian aid. Political engagement led to new opportunities for and challenges in building alliances at the local, state, and national levels. Youth organizations reportedly showed more openness and willingness to support women's issues.

Basic Needs

Access to healthcare:

contraception, prenatal care, mental health, and psychosocial support

Security and protection

Access to justice for GBV survivors

Women's empowerment

Interviewees highlighted a number of urgent and overlapping priorities for women. IDP and CDM women were seen as groups in greatest need although pregnant women, WHRDs, and former political prisoners also require special attention.

The **provision of basic needs** (food, shelter, and clothing) is seen by and far as the greatest priority. Nutrition support and access to water were seen as critical to preventing disease and mortality in IDP camps. Livelihood assistance is also critical and should include vocational (i.e., sewing) training that could be provided in person or online.

Women's access to health care and medicines, which have become scarce or expensive in conflict-affected areas, is also crucial. While some EAOs were providing health care in areas under their control, there were still gaps and challenges. Access to vaccinations is an urgent priority.

Prenatal and maternity care for pregnant and breastfeeding women is vital. Nutritional support is a priority in IDP camps and conflict areas. CDM women and WHRDs require financial support to access private hospitals, as public hospitals are out of reach because of security reasons.

There is an ongoing need to ensure access to **contraception and family planning** including hygienic supplies such as sanitary pads and women's underwear. Special consideration should be given to women living in ERO-controlled areas where birth control and abortions are forbidden.

“Certain Ethnic Armed Organizations [EAOs] forbid using contraceptive pills, therefore doing so might result in punishment. Even if abortion and the use of contraception are permitted in certain places, access to medicines and medical care may not be available.”

More **mental health and psychosocial support resources** are needed including counselling services and trauma awareness.

Security and protection for at-risk women and girls must be improved at all levels. Safe houses, safe transportation, and legal services offer critical support on the ground. Protection and early warning mechanisms could prevent violations against women in conflict areas, who are more likely to remain behind in villages under attack. Safe spaces or separate bathroom and shower facilities can increase protection for women in IDP camps.

“People who are displaced have to stay together at facilities such as schools, monasteries, and churches. Women are more likely to encounter sexual harassment and psychological abuse [when living] among other displaced people.”

About a third of interviewees called for the **establishment or bolstering of justice mechanisms to address sexual and gender-based violence**. This should be done by relevant authorities at all levels including the NUG, EROs, subnational administrations and village committees. Mechanisms must protect women from violence perpetrated by all combatants, including those in armed resistance organizations. Transitional justice processes offer opportunities to address broader violations against women.

Women's empowerment was identified as a priority. It is a critical way to strengthen the skills and confidence of women taking on political and administrative work. It can also be offered as livelihood or GBV survivor support work, or as a broader tool for sustaining women during difficult times.

“Awareness raising or empowerment workshops should be provided because women need to be motivated and encouraged to continue living their lives and to develop the skills required for politics and to influence change.”



9. Conclusion

Women and women's organizations have been profoundly impacted by the 1 February 2021 military coup, and conflict, security threats, and instability that have escalated in the past two years. Displacement, violence, and ongoing security threats have led to disruptions in daily life and the implementation of activities. Despite this, women have demonstrated resilience, taking on new roles in nonviolent protests, humanitarian relief, and politics that often blur the lines between organizational and revolutionary work. While women's participation in the public sphere has increased, many barriers remain. Women are side-lined from decision-making bodies and women's issues, seen as threats or distractions to revolutionary agendas, are downplayed. Despite this, women leaders appear to be digging in and are eager to improve their skills to help build a federal democracy which acknowledges and guarantees women's rights.

Women's organizations have rapidly moved and shifted their focus to operate in a challenging security context and respond to the emergency needs of women in their areas including IDPs, WHRDs, and CDMers. The provision of basic needs and /security assistance have become, and looks set to remain, the overriding priority and focus of daily work. This must be supported.

Women are beginning to rebuild, reclaim and reshape empowerment and advocacy work, focusing new energies on change through participation in emerging political and administrative bodies such as the NUCC, subnational bodies, and local administrations. There is interest in developing creative strategies for implementing empowerment programs online and on the ground. Women are learning the new political terrain and starting to work more closely with new civil society, EROs, and political groups. It is hoped that these efforts will not only increase awareness and support for women's issues but also guarantee that they are integrated into broader revolutionary policymaking and administrative efforts.

10. Recommendations

Based on the views and priorities expressed by women leaders in this study, the following recommendations are made.

To donors

1. Provide multi-year flexible and/or core support to women's organizations to allow them to restructure and rebuild programs in evolving socio-political and security contexts.
2. Provide ongoing and increased support for women-led provision of basic and emergency needs, particularly for IDPs, CDM women, and WHRDs. Promote options for cross-border aid.
3. Support the security of women's organizations and WHRDs, including meeting ongoing needs for safe houses.
4. Provide targeted support for women's access to health care including prenatal care, contraception, and family planning.
5. Provide flexible financial and technical support to women's organizations to develop women's empowerment programming.
6. Provide financial and technical support to women taking up political and leadership positions. This must include support for research and technical staff for office/position holders, women-only caucusing and networking spaces, and policy development.
7. Increase support for culturally relevant, evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support services.

To INGOs and the international community

1. Provide technical support and opportunities for peer learning on advancing women's issues within revolutions and broader movements for change.
2. Provide technical support to women taking up political and leadership positions, including support for strategy and policymaking.
3. Provide technical assistance in human rights documentation including evidence gathering and management, trauma-sensitive interviewing, and data visualization techniques.

To democratic policymakers and governing authorities at local, subnational, and national levels

1. Develop justice systems or mechanisms to prevent and address the impacts of sexual and gender-based violence.
2. Ensure that gender quotas are implemented, and women make up at least 30% representation on all committees and decision-making bodies, including/especially those linked to politics and security.

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WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF BURMA (WLB)

The Women's League of Burma is an umbrella organization comprising 12 women's organizations of different ethnic and political backgrounds.

WLB was founded on 9 December 1999

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