

Bold local leaders championing justice and hope.

There is power in our partnership.



# A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

It is with great enthusiasm and pride that we present Partners Asia's 2023 Impact Report. This year's report is a testament to the enduring spirit of hope and resilience that characterizes the communities we serve in Southeast Asia. It underscores the transformative power of trust-based partnerships with esteemed community leaders, and I am excited to share our progress and impact with you.



**Patricia Curran**  
**Executive Director**

In a region where human rights are often challenged, our work at Partners Asia is more critical than ever. Our commitment to supporting grassroots initiatives, empowering marginalized voices, serving as a conduit between people like you and passionate drivers of change, and fostering sustainable change is unwavering. Throughout the pages of this report, you will witness the tangible outcomes of our collaborative efforts with local leaders and organizations, and the profound difference it has made in the lives of individuals and communities.

Central to our approach is the belief that sustainable progress is achieved through genuine partnerships built on trust, mutual respect, and shared values. We recognize the invaluable contributions of respected community leaders who serve as catalysts for positive change. 2023 was a year of nurturing these relationships and amplifying local voices. Through resourcing communities to address the needs THEY prioritized, we were able to effect meaningful and lasting impact on the ground both in terms of resourcing groups who are fighting for their survival and those who are finally getting a taste of what it means to thrive.

This report serves not only as a reflection of our achievements but also as an invitation to continue to join us in our mission. To our esteemed donors and supporters, your unwavering commitment fuels our work and inspires us to reach greater heights. Together, we are building a brighter future for Southeast Asia, where human rights are upheld, and communities thrive.

I invite you to delve into the stories of hope and resilience contained within this report, and to witness firsthand the transformative power of trust-based partnerships. Your continued interest and support are vital as we navigate the challenges ahead and strive to create a more just and equitable world where communities and their trusted leaders drive transformative change.

Thank you for your dedication to our shared vision. I look forward to the opportunity to connect and collaborate further as we move forward in partnership.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia'.

## PARTNERS ASIA'S APPROACH

We want our partnerships to make a **real change** in this world.

### MISSION

Our mission is to **enhance human dignity, equity, and well-being** for marginalized and disenfranchised communities in Southeast Asia and beyond.

### VISION

Partners Asia envisions a world where all people have the **social, political, and economic power to survive and thrive.**

### STRATEGY

We achieve our mission through **long-term strategic partnerships, nurturing solidarity between local partners and global allies** so that together we can leave a legacy of lasting, systemic change.



A community development worker is interviewed about how to strengthen local to global partnerships.

*"Being connected to PA has allowed us to make a lot of progress over the past year. We've built new networks with other organizations, and from peer-to-peer trainings we learned how different groups work on different issues in different communities."*

*- Humanitarian aid partner*



# 2023 AT A GLANCE

Overcoming a range of challenges, our partners **worked harder than ever** last year to realize their vision for **lasting community-driven change**. Here is a glimpse of the activities we supported:

91

## GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES FUNDED

PA funded local organizations working with vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach areas to advance **education access, human rights, gender equality, social welfare**, and more.

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## ALLIANCE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED

By encouraging **peer-to-peer training, exchange and mentorship** programming, and backing **new coalitions** and communities of practice, we facilitated **valuable opportunities for connection**.

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## ADVOCACY CONSULTATIONS & CONVENINGS

PA hosted documentary screenings and partner meetings and conferences to **identify and pursue shared goals** toward more equitable, inclusive, and mutually respectful aid partnerships.



Indigenous youth leaders participate in a locally-led documentary workshop sponsored by PA in Thailand in 2023 (Sai Leng Learn Kham)

*"PA is flexible and is always there to listen and advise when we face challenges. Thank you for your generous and continued support. We are grateful to work together with you to bring positive change to communities in need."*

*- Partner feedback from Annual Survey*

Presented by



Film screening  
AMONG THE DIFFERENCES

## MEET OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Partners Asia's Board is composed of members deeply committed to social change and who have a personal connection with Southeast Asia. As a Board, they are responsible for the transparency, accountability and good governance in all aspects of PA's operations.



**Hal Nathan**  
Chairman



**Dr. Cynthia**  
Tin-Oo



**Therese Caouette**



**Prof. Nuntavarn**  
Vichit-Vadakan



**Tabitha Jordan**



**Lily Tung**



**Andrew Kessler**



**Khin Ohmar**

## MEET OUR ADVISORY COUNCIL

Our Advisory Council are experts from Southeast Asia who direct local organizations as well-respected leaders of their communities and advise PA on organizational strategy to ensure that our work advances local initiatives and visions.



**Kyaw Kyaw Min**  
Htut



**Nai Aue Mon**



**Naw K'nyaw Paw**



**Jessica Nhkum**



**Saw Kapi**

# STORIES OF HOPE

2023 marks another year Partners Asia has witnessed the **compassion, resilience, and determination** of our bold partners on the ground. Here are a few such special moments.

## PA PARTNER GATHERING

Our Partner Gathering was an extraordinary occasion, filled with inspiration and shared insights. Major discussions—interpreted into multiple languages—covered donor relationships, alliance building, and local representation in decision-making. Overwhelmingly positive anonymous feedback included praise for the “inclusive agenda” and “equal participation.” “Seeing people with similar beliefs inspired us and gave us energy to continue the struggle for what we fight for,” one participant said. This was our objective!

## INDIGENOUS YOUTH RAISE THEIR VOICES

Young people from indigenous communities in Southeast Asia face unique social and cultural challenges as they navigate life transitions and uncertain futures. Increasingly, they are leading advocacy movements and embracing their power to demand change. By providing funding for their work and opportunities for training and connection, PA is proud to support emerging leaders’ commitment to achieving recognition of their rights.



The director of a grassroots feminist group enjoys a moment in nature during a PA-supported exchange with an indigenous women’s organization (Hing Hoy Noy)

*“There is hope, always. We will continue to help as long as we can, and we will not forget about the children in a country that is full of horror and war. These children give us hope for a better future and more peaceful society.”*

*- Education partner*



# STORIES OF RESILIENCE

During a crisis, we want to make sure our partners do not feel alone. **Flexible funding** allows them to advocate for their communities' rights, determine their priorities together, and keep those who are **most vulnerable** safe. If they are supported to lead in tenuous times, they can build a more secure future.

## CYCLONE MOCHA RESPONSE

In May 2023, Cyclone Mocha devastated parts of coastal Rakhine State, Myanmar and neighboring Bangladesh, killing hundreds of people and displacing more than 100,000, many of whom were ethnic Rohingya already living in refugee and IDP camps. International aid agencies were denied direct access to many affected areas.

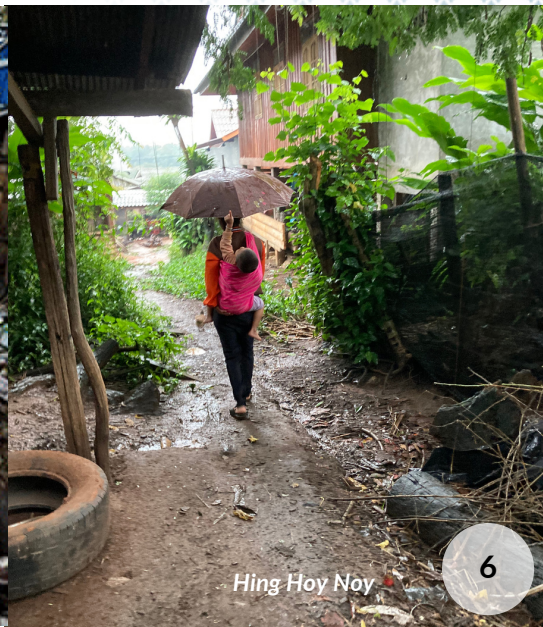
Engaging with our supporters and strategizing with local networks, in just five days Partners Asia raised more than \$40,000 in humanitarian assistance for our partners already on the ground and ready to respond.



Displaced persons gather to accept locally distributed aid during the rainy season (Local Partner)

*"We try to be resilient, but we cannot do that alone. We must have friends and networks of likeminded people who love justice, human rights, and democracy. Because of you, we can stand again and fight the difficulties together."*

*- Kyaw Kyaw Min Htut, PA Advisory Council*



# WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

For over 20 years, PA has challenged conventional development practices by **shifting power to local hands** and **building lasting community strength** from the ground up. We are proud of our **multi-ethnic team** whose members speak a total of seven languages and **practice language justice** through inclusive partnerships that do not require English as a common language. To address power imbalances and promote equity, we are committed to:

**Solidarity:** Local experts are the real experts. Our job is to listen, stand with them, and leverage our resources to support their priorities and strategies.

**Trust-Based Relationships:** Sustaining lasting, meaningful, and open connections with our partners is at the core of everything we do.

**Minimizing Red Tape:** One of our partners' biggest complaints is how long it takes for donor resources to reach them, and how funding is often structured in a way that makes it impossible to meet actual needs. That's why we have developed responsive and streamlined grant-making processes based on needs and context.



Children displaced by war study in a makeshift school supported by PA in 2023  
(Local Partner)

*"PA and its network provided us not only with resources but also with inspiration and ideas from different backgrounds. PA's flexibility and genuine partnership enabled us to do more work responsively."*

*- Education partner*



# OUR SCOPE IN 2023

You supported **\$3.6 million in flexible grants** for **91 organizations and individuals** in 2023.

These grants supported initiatives led by local community groups serving grassroots organizations and their leaders in Southeast Asia. Your partnership has helped empower locally-led change by:



Championing local leadership and local ways of approaching problems.



Shifting decision-making power to communities.



Building meaningful connections between inspiring leaders and organizations.



Filling gaps created by traditional aid practices.



Meeting emergency needs in real time.



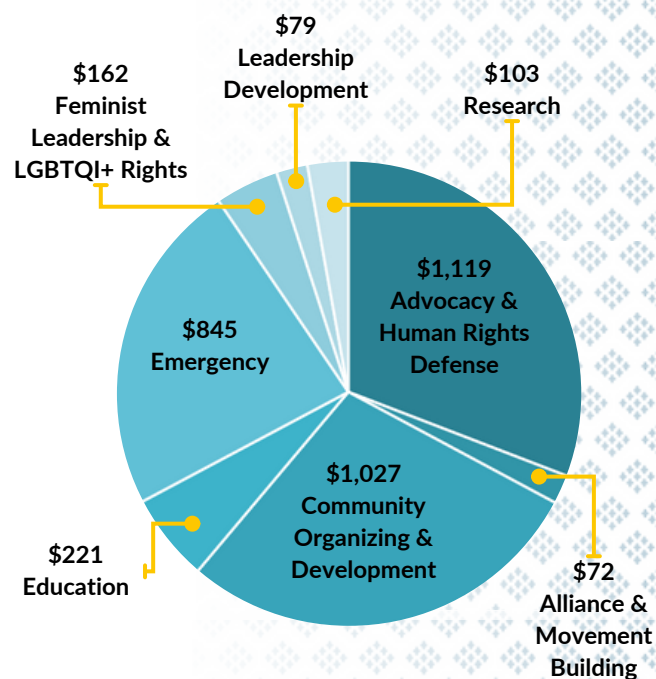
Funding grants for education, community organizing and development, advocacy and human rights defense, feminist leadership and LGBTQI+ rights, and alliance building.



## \$3.6 Million in Flexible Grants

In 2023, Partners Asia gave \$3.6 million in flexible grants. We had **\$2.1 million in direct grants**, and **\$1.5 million in fiscal sponsorships**. We worked with **91 organizations and individuals** to support locally-led initiatives in Southeast Asia.

Here's where the funds went:  
(In thousands of dollars)



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We listen. We learn. We support.



LEARN MORE AT  
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