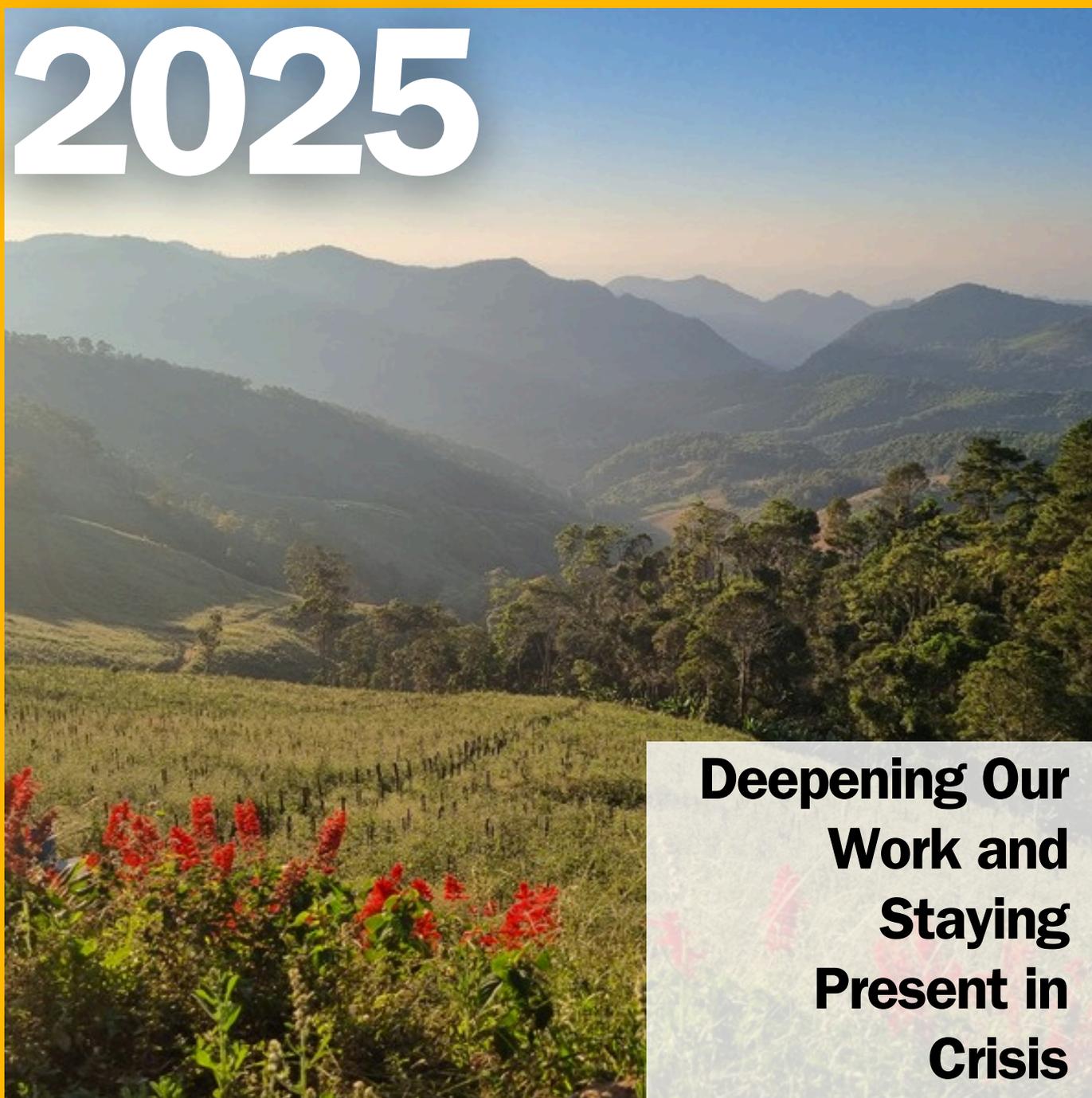




PARTNERS ASIA

IMPACT REPORT

2025



**Deepening Our
Work and
Staying
Present in
Crisis**

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

2025 was a year shaped both by crisis and by quiet, deliberate change. Across Southeast Asia where Partners Asia works, war, displacement, and repression continued to be a daily reality for millions of people. Then came the March 2025 earthquake in Burma/Myanmar—a sudden and devastating reminder that for many of the communities we work with, the crises they face are nothing short of relentless.

As always, it was local organizations who responded first. They searched for survivors, provided food and shelter, checked on elders and children, and began the long work of helping their communities find their footing again. Partners Asia's role was not to direct this response, but to stand behind it, to move resources quickly, and to trust the judgment and leadership of those who were already there.

All of this unfolded in a year marked by massive international funding cuts by the United States and a broader global retreat from humanitarian responsibility. The consequences in the communities our partners serve have been devastating.

And yet, 2025 was not only a year of response. It was also a year when we began, more intentionally, to change how we work. In a world of shrinking civic space, protracted conflict, and deepening uncertainty, “development projects” alone are not enough. Our partners told us what they need—and what they are already building—are stronger connections with each other, collective strategies, and alliances that can outlast any single grant or organization.



PATTY CURRAN
Executive Director

That's why we refreshed our own strategy to better support what our partners are prioritizing: learning, exchange, and movement building. This is slower work in some ways. It requires deep trust, patience, and a willingness to relinquish control. It is also more durable, and ultimately more hopeful.

Throughout this report, you will see both sides of 2025. You will read about emergency response and humanitarian action. You will also see examples of partners coming together across divides and imagining futures that are larger than survival alone. You may notice something else: honesty about how hard this work is. These organizations are under extraordinary pressure. Many face constant risk, exhaustion, and loss. And yet they exemplify courage, creativity, and a steadfast commitment to the power of the people.

Partners Asia exists to serve these leaders and these movements. Our role is not, and never has been, to be at the center of the story, but to help make space, to connect, to resource, and to walk alongside. 2025 reminded us why that role matters. Staying present is itself a form of commitment. Even in a crisis, people are not only responding to what is breaking: they are also quietly and persistently building what comes next.

With gratitude for our partners and for all who make this work possible,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patty", written over a white background.





Our Board: Committed to Social Change

Top: Hal Nathan (Chairman), Therese Caouette, Tabitha Jordan, Andrew Kessler
Bottom: Cynthia Tin-Oo, Lily Tung, Professor Nuntavarn Vichit-Vadakan, Khin Ohmar

WHO WE ARE



Our Staff: Expertise in the US and Southeast Asia

Top: Patty Curran (Executive Director), C. Lisa Mitchell-Reed (Chief Financial Officer), Somphavanh "Linda" Cajski (Director of Operations), Leslie Schneider (Bookkeeper)
Bottom: Pawsansoe Bree (Partnership Lead), Yingcharm Khampan (Partnership Lead), Pornpimol Chaiboon (Grants Administrator)

For security reasons, not pictured are the six members of our Advisory Council, lifelong human rights advocates and experts from Burma and Thailand who advise Partners Asia on strategy to ensure our support aligns with local visions. Learn more about them and our whole team [here](#).



2025 TIMELINE: WHAT OUR PARTNERS FACED

JANUARY

THE US CUTS NEARLY \$60 BILLION IN INTERNATIONAL AID.

In Asia, this included support for education, health, human rights, and gender equality. The communities our partners represent felt these cuts through clinic closures and an end to food programs that support vulnerable populations. *Resources are also withdrawn from already stretched civil society networks as communities call on them to fill gaps left by larger organizations' exits.*

MARCH

A 7.7-MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE HITS CENTRAL BURMA

The disaster killed thousands and destroyed infrastructure and homes nationwide. *Trusted community networks already operating on the ground were among the first responders in the aftermath—saving lives, distributing food, and rebuilding homes.*

APRIL

HIGH LEVELS OF ARSENIC ARE FOUND IN NORTHERN THAI RIVERS

The pollution is caused by rare earth and gold mining in Shan State, Burma, and poses transborder health risks to millions of people living along the Kok River and other tributaries of the Mekong. *Local organizations carry out critical research, community consultations, and demand action and accountability.*

JULY

CLASHES BREAK OUT ALONG THE THAI-CAMBODIA BORDER

The fighting causes displacement and high tension between the two countries that continues throughout the year. *Community-based groups focus on promoting peace.*

NOVEMBER

SOUTHERN THAILAND FACES CATASTROPHIC FLOODING

Record-setting rainfall forces millions of people from their homes. *Area education and rights groups pivot to disaster relief.*

DECEMBER

ANOTHER YEAR PASSES IN BURMA, WHERE THE MILITARY WAGES WAR ON ITS OWN PEOPLE.

2025 concludes with reports of 3.6 to 3.8 million people displaced internally, with many more having fled to neighboring nations. *Long-established community networks—often the only groups with access to affected populations—continue to advocate for cross-border support as international aid shrinks, so that they can meet the basic needs of their people surviving unimaginable circumstances.*





2025: A STRATEGY REFRESH

WHAT DO WE DO?

Partners Asia stands with grassroots leaders and organizations in Southeast Asia working alongside marginalized communities, including women, LGBTQI+ people, youth, migrant workers, and stateless and indigenous peoples. We provide flexible funding, capacity support, and encourage connections so our partners can meet urgent needs, protect rights, and build movements for lasting change. **Our core commitments remain to grassroots partnerships, trust-based philanthropy, local leadership, long-term solidarity, and inclusivity.**

WHAT'S CHANGED?

We've seen a significant increase in funding tied to specific focus areas, and a decline in flexible, unrestricted funding available for cross-cutting needs. To adapt to funding uncertainty, we recognized a need to align our strategy with targeted donor priorities—without losing sight of partner-defined needs or compromising our core values—while protecting space for rapid response and innovation. This includes by supporting Exchange Visits and Learning Grants for partners and appointing Focus (Issue) Area Leads on our team.

SHIFTS AND REAFFIRMATIONS

-  Continue support for urgent, time-sensitive needs
-  Expand our partnerships in Southeast Asia
-  Formalize thematic issue-area leads internally to build expertise, strengthen coordination, and promote shared leadership
-  Broaden support for grassroots alliances

WHAT IS MOVEMENT BUILDING?

- Strengthening relationships, sharing analysis, and building collective power so grassroots actors can shape systems that affect their lives 
- Supporting partners to meet urgent needs while deepening solidarity in the long-term 
- Recognizing that in conflict contexts, traditional logframes often fail to capture resilience, solidarity, and power-shifts 

Our vision is that communities across Southeast Asia thrive in dignity, equity, and self-determination, free from oppression and able to shape their own futures.



**IN 2025, WE GAVE
\$5 MILLION IN
RESPONSIVE AND
FLEXIBLE FUNDING.**

\$2.9 MILLION IN DIRECT GRANTS

\$2.1 MILLION IN FISCAL
SPONSORSHIPS

SUPPORTED **111 ORGANIZATIONS
AND INDIVIDUALS** IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



WHAT WE SUPPORT



Alliance-Building & Solidarity

Connecting organizations, movements, and communities across borders and identities to learn, build trust, and grow collective power.



Community Resilience & Local Power

Strengthening grassroots organizations and community leaders to meet everyday needs, build social cohesion, and grow local systems that can endure crises and shape futures.



Gender Justice & LGBTQI+ Dignity

Standing with women and LGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities to claim safety, rights, leadership, and belonging, especially where their identities place them at heightened risk of violence and exclusion.



Knowledge, Evidence & Voice

Supporting research, documentation, and learning that amplifies community voices, strengthens advocacy, and ensures that lived realities shape policy, practice, and public narratives.



Learning, Belonging & Future Pathways

Expanding access to education and opportunity for children, youth, migrant workers, and stateless communities, helping them build skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging.



Protection, Dignity & Survival

Supporting communities affected by conflict, displacement, repression, and humanitarian crises.

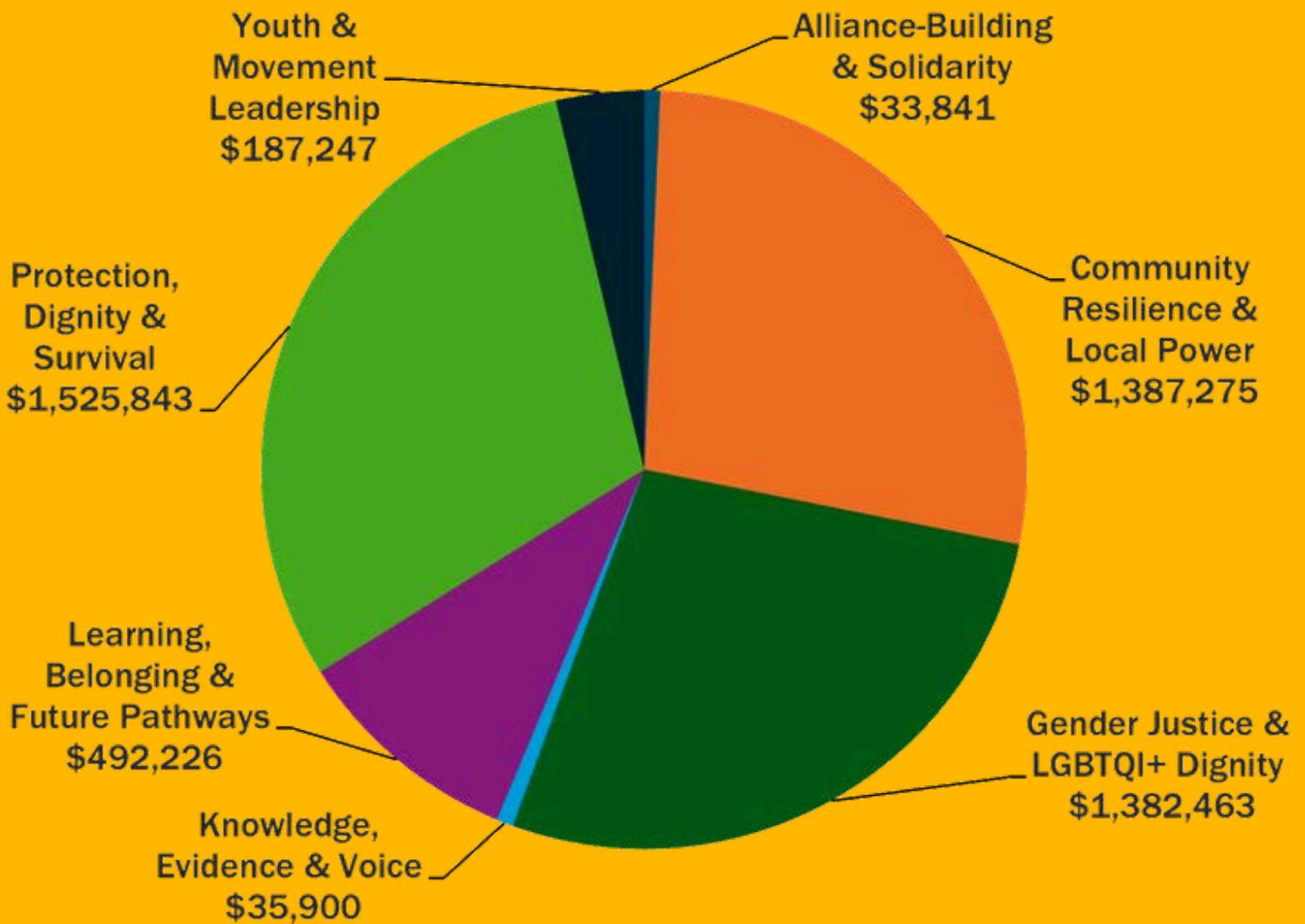


Youth & Movement Leadership

Investing in the next generation of leaders and organizers, and nurturing and fostering the courage, skills, and vision needed to sustain movements for justice over the long term.

At over \$1.5 million, our biggest area of support in 2025 was emergency response, standing with communities affected by war and natural disaster, including the earthquake in Burma.

This was possible in part due to our Metta Fund, a dedicated reserve designated to enable immediate, trust-based responses in moments of crisis.





Local Networks, Lifesaving Help

Community groups across Burma lead earthquake relief efforts



On March 28, 2025, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck Sagaing Region, in Burma's central dry zone; the devastation reached as far west as Chin State and as far east as southern Shan State. It brought further loss to communities that had already endured years of war and repression by a brutal junta. Thousands of lives were lost, hundreds of thousands of buildings and homes were damaged, and millions of people were left without basic necessities in the aftermath of the disaster.

The humanitarian response led by local aid networks was rapid, effective, and carried out amid severe restrictions imposed by the military. Our partners were among the first to respond in their communities, organizing emergency food, shelter, and medical care and assessing the widespread destruction. They knew what was needed, and we knew it was our job to gather funds to support them.

When we announced our fundraising campaign for earthquake relief, our long-time donors gave generously, as did hundreds of new individuals. We reactivated our presence on social media and leaned on long-standing relationships with trusted supporters, sent out appeals, and applied for grants from likeminded institutions, committing to giving 100% of funds raised to local groups on the ground. We urged people to only give to trusted community-based networks or donors who partner with them, so that aid funds would not be co-opted by the military, as had occurred during past disasters in Burma.

Globally, aid is not always quick to arrive in emergencies: it can take weeks for some international funds to reach people on the ground. We are proud of the responsive system we have developed at Partners Asia to review urgent proposals and disburse grants in a crisis. After the 2025 earthquake, we were able to get emergency funding to our partners within 48 hours of their requests, enabling true real-time support.

When we reflect on this disaster, it was community-based organizations' capacity, understanding, and access that saved lives. Their efforts reinforced the reality that we are not helpless in a crisis: we can make sure that local groups have the resources they need to respond quickly and effectively. The 2025 earthquake was a reminder of our shared power, and our responsibility, to do our best to ease suffering wherever we are confronted with it.

Photo: A building destroyed by the earthquake on Inle Lake, Shan State (Supplied)

\$622,806

That's how much support we delivered to nearly 30 local organizations for earthquake relief and recovery, prioritizing funding for groups working in remote geographic areas. 100% of earthquake-related donations to Partners Asia went to our partners.

What did our funding cover?

\$1

One packet of electrolyte powder—a necessity as temperatures soared above 100 degrees F.

\$2

One meal for a volunteer rescue worker.

\$15

One tarp under which to shelter from the elements.

\$100

One temporary shelter made from wood and bamboo.

\$300

Building materials to fix a damaged home.

\$500

Dry food supplies for a group of 50 displaced persons.



Photo: Local volunteers deliver supplies after the earthquake (Supplied)



“As we did our outreach, we saw that kids were **shaken, anxious,** showing signs of trauma. Our volunteers suggested we bring them **simple toys,** in addition to the food, water, and clothing we were distributing. At one camp, we gave water toys and backpacks to 180 children. It was right before the [annual] water festival. **The smiles on these children’s faces, and their parents’ joy, were truly heartwarming.**”

“With \$5,000, we provided **cash assistance** to 15 rural households damaged in the earthquake and paid for **repairs to a local school.** The earthquake struck a region that is **already vulnerable due to ongoing armed conflict** and insecurity. Limited emergency assistance has reached the affected communities here.”

WHAT DID OUR PARTNERS SAY?

“**Local networks delivered life-saving help.** They are still repairing homes, reconnecting families, restoring small livelihoods, and trying to bring back a sense of dignity. Support for these efforts **directly strengthens the social, economic, and cultural life of communities who have lost everything.**”



Photo: A car full of toys for children who lost their homes in the earthquake (Supplied)



‘Let Us Grow In Our Own Way’: Youth Take Charge



Photo: A meeting of young people from diverse communities across Thailand becomes the first gathering of its kind for an up-and-coming youth network (Partners Asia)

From the Mountains to the Sea is a youth network linking young people from diverse and marginalized communities from northern Thailand, the Thai-Burma border, and the islands and coastal regions of Thailand’s South. Its members are from several indigenous groups, and many are stateless or have been forced off their ancestral lands.

In July 2025, Partners Asia was the only donor to support the first gathering of 30 youth from across this network. The one-week meeting was a platform to collaborate and connect on their own terms. Many saw the ocean or boarded a plane for the first time. What they said they found was a sense of solidarity in the similar struggles they face: for land, identity documents, belonging, and basic rights.

“My home is in the mountains and their home is at sea,” one young woman from an indigenous community in the North said of her peers from the South. “We speak different languages. But so much else is the same. We understand each other, we are kind to each other. And that is very beautiful.”

They also talked of a drive to become the next generation of leaders. They began to map out a better future: one in which they freely determine strategies for supporting and empowering their communities—on their own terms.

“Often youth programs are led by adults who are experts in youth leadership, and we have to follow their directives,” another participant explained. “I think they have good intentions, but it is actually stopping the youth from truly growing and developing into their full potential. They need to step back and let us grow in our own way at our own pace. Allow us to make decisions and learn from our mistakes. That is how we will become the next leaders of our communities.”

This is why Partners Asia is a proud supporter of youth-led organizations like those affiliated with From the Mountains to the Sea, and of groups that prioritize youth inclusion in their decision-making. **What is required of us? Listen, trust the process, and step aside.**

‘Trust and Access Still Make All the Difference’

February 2025 marked the fourth year since Burma’s military coup. The following reflection comes from a long-time partner working inside the country, shared anonymously due to security risks. They describe how local organizations meet emergency needs while providing education and documenting human rights violations, and how this work is integral to the country’s future.

How would you describe the humanitarian crisis in Burma?

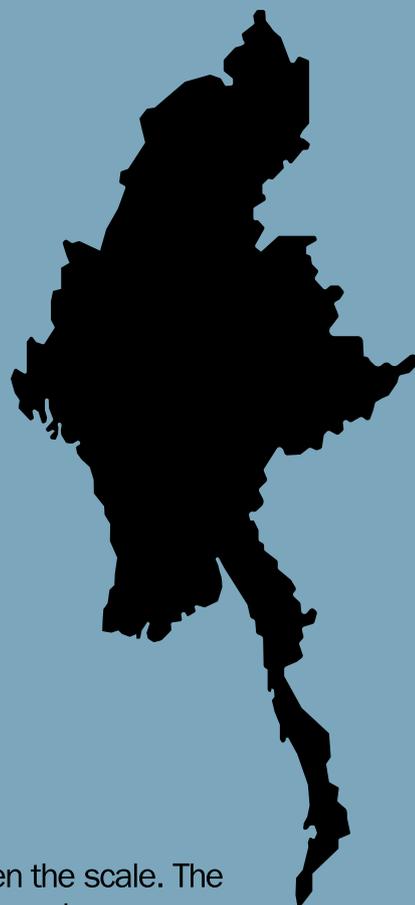
Looking at the numbers of human rights violations, Burma has broken the scale. The conflict has touched every corner of the country. More than 22,000 people are imprisoned. We have recorded over 6,800 armed clashes and more than 2,600 military air strikes; health facilities and schools are frequently targeted. Overall, at least 7,000 people have been killed. Some 3.8 million people are displaced inside the country. There are so many difficulties to manage on the ground.

Amid the ongoing war and continued repression, what work are community-based organizations still able to do?

We deliver food, aid, and healthcare in areas that big aid agencies cannot reach. Trust and access still make all the difference. Alongside the emergency aid, we are building stability however we can by supporting community agriculture and providing psychosocial support. We teach human rights. We bring women and youth into decision-making. We document abuses carefully, for the future pursuit of justice.

What support do you need?

What we need most is direct support through fast, flexible grants that are simple to manage and take our security into account. We especially need help keeping health services alive in conflict areas and making these services safe for the people who depend on them. But emergency aid alone is not enough. It must be paired with support for livelihoods, education, health, and local governance so communities can withstand crises and begin building the foundations of a bottom-up, people-centered democracy. This means helping those who keep communities together during conflict: youth groups, women’s organizations, LGBTQI+ networks, and local organizations that are trying to sustain their work amid violence. Helping communities solve problems together and rebuild trust is essential if we want any hope of peace in the long term. Your support offers us a chance to survive, rebuild, and imagine a better future.



An Exchange of Inspiration: Our Partners As Allies



FOMI, the Organization of Development for Migrant Workers in the Deep South, works to protect the rights and future of migrant children in southern Thailand, many of whom lack legal status and are excluded from formal education and basic social protections.

Operating in Pattani and Songkhla provinces, where armed conflict has persisted for more than two decades, public attention is largely dominated by narratives of violence and security operations. Migrant workers and their families, mostly from Burma and Cambodia, remain widely invisible in these areas, after having fled unsafe conditions at home.

FOMI is committed to ensuring that the children of these workers are not systematically left out of the education system. They have strengthened communication and coordination with schools to help ensure their inclusion. But FOMI also has increasingly recognized that enrollment cannot be separated from legal documentation.

That's why, in December 2025, supported by Partners Asia, FOMI's women-led team traveled to northern Thailand for three weeks to learn from three organizations in our network with extensive experience supporting stateless children: Fortune, Group for Children, and the Dara Ang Youth Network. Through this exchange, FOMI gained a clearer understanding of Thailand's legal and civil registration systems, including the procedures and documentation required for children to obtain a national identification number.

Photos: FOMI's Kru Ayu helps a migrant family with school enrollment (above); Kru Ayu (below) (Partners Asia)

"This study trip gave me more confidence," Kru (Teacher) Ayu, FOMI's leader, explained. "Before, I felt that working on legal status issues with local authorities was beyond my capacity. I feel ready to address the root causes of the challenges faced by migrant children in Pattani and Songkhla. I am deeply grateful for this experience."

"[These organizations] helped me understand how the system works. Seeing what they have achieved for their people and their community was truly inspiring. It is through action that learning becomes real. Once we take the first step, the way forward begins to unfold."

The study trip strengthened FOMI's technical capacity to engage in legal work, and they plan in 2026 to expand beyond coordination with local schools. This integrated approach is essential as the number of migrant children continues to grow and as legal recognition remains a foundational requirement for long-term access to education, safety, and social inclusion.

Watch short documentaries about our partners, including Kru Ayu, [here](#).





Our Story

Why We Do This Work: Meet Linda

Who are we and what connects us to our partnerships? Our Director of Operations Somphavanh “Linda” Cajski explains why after eight years at Partners Asia’s US office, this work is still her calling.



What do you do at Partners Asia?

I’m a jack of all trades! I connect the dots between three areas: finance, the directorship, and programming. I pull everything together and maintain a bird’s eye view of the organization.

What keeps you going?

I am so thrilled to wake up to this job every day. It is my calling. I was born and raised in Vientiane, Laos. I have the lived experience of seeing how development has been done in the past and could be done differently in developing countries. I understand our partners in Southeast Asia from a cultural perspective, and their social and political context. The people we serve look like me, speak some of the same languages I do, and have been through the same things for the past generation. We share the same values, the same joys. I bring this emotional connection to my work. I am not just crunching numbers. I know how \$10,000 can change lives in this part of the world.

What unexpected challenges did 2025 hold for you?

We wake up every day never short of surprises! We need to be agile and flexible. When we started a fundraising campaign to support relief and recovery work after the earthquake in Burma, we received a powerful outside endorsement that led to us getting an unexpected 700 new individual donations. This was a lot to process, but we would never say no to support like this for our partners. We are grateful for everything—we want to be overwhelmed by the funds coming in! It is also so affirming that our core circle of supporters, who know the way we work and whose hearts are connected to the part of the world where we work, are here with us steadily and consistently.

Where is this work headed in the future?

We have a solid system, foundation, and team, but we are still evolving as an organization. Our work used to almost exclusively focus on community development and meeting basic needs, but over the last year, we’ve really pivoted towards emergency response to natural disasters and displacement, given the crises our partners face. We are moving into a lot of humanitarian support. We have to do it, and we encourage more donors to pivot, too, because this is what is needed by our partners. We have to listen to them. The circumstances of the world are changing, and the nature of our work is shifting and moving with it, driven by what local leaders need.





Our
Story

Why We Do This Work: Meet Ying

As a Partnership Lead on the ground, Yingcharm “Ying” Khampan emphasizes what our partners have in common: commitment



What do you do at Partners Asia?

My role is to connect partner organizations and Partners Asia’s US office on proposals, reports, and financial information. I manage over 60 grants for more than 30 organizations. I listen carefully to what our partners need, and I coordinate between them and the Partners Asia team. I go on one field visit each month to a new area and visit many partners each time—that is my favorite part of this job.

What is your personal connection to this work?

I am an ethnic Shan person from Burma. I moved to Thailand when I was 16. My childhood was hard. I had difficulties accessing education, and I could never finish an academic year in school, because of conflict. I would have to drop out and start again. It took time for me to graduate. Many ethnic people from Burma have struggled with human rights violations and abuses; this kind of situation has been happening since I was young. When I had an opportunity to work with Partners Asia, this was a chance for me to help my people, and all ethnic people. From my own experience, I know that this funding and this support helps the people a lot.

What is the toughest part of this job, and how do you cope with that?

What’s difficult for me is knowing the challenges our partners are facing but knowing that there is limited funding. I have learned that it is so important for donors to support people in the ways they need, not only in the ways they had planned. When we face a crisis, I always think, how can I help these groups? I turn to our team for support and solutions. This helps me to keep moving forward.

What do you want people to know about our partners?

Our partners are diverse, but their strength is their commitment. That’s true for every group I meet. Even with little funding, their priority is their community. Their administrative costs are low, and they manage their budgets effectively and make sure the money they get benefits the community. I want more donors to give community-based groups the opportunity and resources to do their work. They are already doing it, we just need to support them.

What are your hopes for 2026?

I hope we remain thoughtful and grounded in our work. I want us to keep strengthening relationships with our partners and our support for their communities. Trust and relationships, those are the most important things donors can build with their partners.



Looking Ahead

We remain committed to promoting local leadership and decision-making, and strengthening support for structural change with partners leading the way.

Emergency Response

Urgent, timely humanitarian support for communities surviving crises including natural disasters and displacement.

Community Organizing and Development

Flexible support that centers local leadership, long-term relationships, and collective power to protect the rights of marginalized communities and promote access to education and sustainable livelihoods.

Our Work

With Gratitude

We thank you for your continued solidarity with communities and trusted local leaders in Southeast Asia. Together, we can commit to worthy causes, pool our resources, and sustain local initiatives. Join us in contributing to lasting change in 2026 and beyond.





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