



**Discussions on Governance and
Transitional Justice :**
Evidence from Myanmar Migrants and
Refugees in Thailand

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Wai Moe is an independent journalist and researcher on Myanmar. He served as a facilitator for FGDs.



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I. Introduction

While the people of Myanmar suffer with daily violence and other forms of oppression perpetrated by the military regime that seized power on 1 February 2021, in a variety of venues inside the nation and in Thailand and other nations, its future is being debated. This report and the research upon which it is based should be viewed as a reaction to the external conversations that are taking place in Chiang Mai and other locations around the world among Myanmar expatriates, representatives of governments, international agencies, development organisations, and other NGOs regarding the future of Myanmar.

The assessment of the authors of this report and the Myanmar Advocacy Research Group (MARG) is that these conversations/debates regarding the future of Myanmar are dominated by typical sets of actors that include the nation's expatriate political, economic, social, and academic elites, and elite representatives of the international community. MARG fears that the interests of the groups for which it provides research evidence and advocates – the nation's least advantaged and most marginalised rural and urban residents – will not be adequately represented or otherwise considered in these elite conversations/debates in Chiang Mai and other locations around the globe. MARG also fears that these conversations fail to recognize that Myanmar's problems go far beyond disruptions to democratic processes and governance caused by the 2021 coup. Rather, problems associated with inter-ethnic tensions, corruption, and lack of responsiveness, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in governance are deeply rooted in the social and cultural lifeways of Myanmar and must be addressed at micro levels of experience among the nation's people.

The current study emerged as a response to these concerns. The evidence that is presented in this report demonstrates MARG's commitment to these ideas as its research team engaged with members of the Myanmar immigrant/refugee community in Thailand regarding their experiences with violence and other forms of oppression and their assessment of the need for local governance building and transitional justice.

The research team refers to its approach in the current research as “empowering” and “advocacy” in nature. It should not be assessed in standard terms of social research, field work, or qualitative or quantitative methods. It should be assessed in terms reflected in the label “learning discussions” that were applied in the focus group discussions (FGDs) that provided most of the evidence considered in this report.

The research team discussed with Myanmar immigrants/refugees living in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot, Thailand for MARG's governance and justice ideas. Through these discussions, the researchers sought to develop common understandings regarding how the participants' shared experiences with violence and other forms of oppression can inform the implementation of grassroots governance and justice-seeking ideas and empower the participants to participate in their application across their nation in the future.

Key findings

The following are some of the key findings of these discussions.

1. Participant discussion of **harms or injustice experienced** fall within the following themes.
 - Harms and injustices reported touch every aspect of life in Myanmar society.
 - The Tatmadaw was most frequently identified as the perpetrator of abuses.
 - Individual episodes and patterns of violence as well as long-term, structural oppression.
 - Distinct focus on violent responses experienced by a cross section of Myanmar society because of resistance to the coup and the military regime.

- FGD participants reported experiencing violence, discrimination, and other forms of oppressive behaviour based on identity.
 - Dislocation was a frequent focus, as participants were forced to flee to the countryside and then to Thailand.
 - The collapse of weak institutions of governance after the coup exacerbated harm, as did the COVID-19 emergency.
2. Participant **reactions and responses to harm and injustice.**
- Participants described responses to the coup and military junta's repression in terms of externally (protest, resistance) and internally directed (micro and macro forms of capacity-building) action.
 - Joining anti-military regime resistance movement (CDM, PDF), resistance-oriented social media and campaigns, documentation.
 - Resistance actions took various forms, including protests, social media campaigns, and documentation of resistance activities.
 - Participants also engaged in capacity-building efforts to support the survival and resistance of Myanmar people, including joining support groups, disseminating information, and participating in education reform efforts.
3. Participant reaction to **goals and processes of transitional justice.**
- Participants offered international examples that Myanmar could draw upon and learn from.
 - Considered how EAOs, CSOs, the media, celebrities should be held to account in addition to military leadership.
 - Emphasis on the importance of prevention via societal change to prevent future coups.
 - Invested equal amounts of time on holding perpetrators accountable and on transforming structures and processes of governance.
 - Address the trauma of people of Myanmar through mental health services.
 - Deep and long-term institutional change versus truth commissions and judicial proceedings.
 - Public civics education focus on justice.
 - Grassroots level co-learning across ethnic and other identities.
 - Public debate and deliberation across identities and interests.
4. Following discussion on MARG's conceptualisation of **governance**, participants mentioned that governance in Myanmar must be transformed (see Appendix 1). Five categories of ideas were offered:
- i) good governance, ii) federalism, iii) local governance, iv) emphasis on governance over government, and v) education. These issues are summarised below.
 - Good governance: Politically unbiased government; rebalancing civil-military relationship; need for an electoral reform.
 - Federalism: Prefer to focus on decentralization of governmental authority and effective local government at the district level and below.
 - Local governance: elective administrators and democratic processes at grassroots level based on broad and inclusive participation; administrative professionalisation;

- potential ethnic groups autonomy at the local level.
- Governance over government: NGOs, the business community, religious organisations, and the people working together in inclusive deliberative democratic processes.
 - Education: Shifting from content to development of critical thinking, human rights training, meeting grassroots economic needs.
5. Participant assessment of **barriers to governance change and transitional justice**
- Unwillingness of the military to relinquish power
 - Inter-ethnic tensions/Bamar ethnic majority's control of institutions
 - Corruption at all levels including in international relief aid distribution
 - Difficulty of finding trusted entity to facilitate a TJ process
 - Desire for revenge as opposed to justice
 - Lack of accountability from international community
 - Societal divisions around rural/urban interests, elites, religious, ethnic identities
 - Traditional top-down approach to Myanmar government
6. Participants showed substantial agreement with the general concepts of **bottom-top governance**. For example, they agreed on the importance of:
- Substantial agreement with general concepts of bottom-top governance
 - Emphasis on inclusive participatory decision-making
 - Strengthening administrative competence and capacity at the village level
 - Inter-identity understanding and trust-building is essential

Following these findings, MARG will organise a forum to discuss models of grassroots governance-building that brings together MTJ as an interrelated and supportive processes. In the Forum, three approaches will be explored: (1) How to bring community members with different identities work together to plan futures of their communities; (2) How to build common community-based identities and accumulate shared experiences to provide a sustainable platform for just treatment of all Myanmar people, regardless of their identity; and (3) How can civil society organisations interested in grassroots governance and MTJ should be supported by collateral educational efforts on the community level.

II. MARG background

MARG is an intersectoral group of Myanmar people who fled the 2021 military coup d'état to northern Thailand. MARG was formed as a product of the group members' participation in a July-September 2021 seminar at Chiang Mai University's School of Public Policy regarding the prospective post-military regime governance of Myanmar. Participation in the seminar produced shared concern among them for the future governance of their nation. Their shared vision for the future of the nation's governance focuses on the necessity for representation of the needs and priorities of the least advantaged and most marginalised Myanmar people living in rural villages and urban neighbourhoods. MARG believes that governance at every level in the future should be based on the principles of inclusive deliberative democracy that begins at the grassroots level. Governance decision-making and policies at the state/region and national levels should be induced by decision-making processes and priorities set at the local (sub-district) level that reflect the needs and priorities of villagers and urban residents of Myanmar.

Additionally, MARG's analysis of Myanmar's experience of injustice and oppression leads it to argue for a process of transitional justice that is also focused on the grassroots experiences, needs and priorities of Myanmar people. As a result, its assessment is that a prospective process of transitional justice should be integrated into the approach that it supports for local governance-building across the nation.

III. Conceptualising grassroots governance and micro transitional justice (MTJ)

Grassroots governance

During the 2011-2021 decade of democratic institution-building in Myanmar, the area of governance that progressed least was at the local level (Batchelder, 2018). Recognition of this deficiency contributed to MARG's framing for its recommended approach to governance-building for the nation's future. Based upon grassroots evidence from across Myanmar during its 2011-2021 democratic opening and international theory, practice, and research on deliberative democracy and deliberative governance systems, MARG has conceptualised an alternative vision for the future of governance for the nation. It is based on an argument that governance decision-making and policy priority setting should be induced through structures and processes of deliberative democracy and deliberative systems that are built from the grassroots upward through state/regional and national governance (Crumpton, 2022; Crumpton, et al, 2022).

The governance values that frame MARG's conceptualisation are based on a belief that the needs and priorities of the nation's least advantaged should be represented in decision-making and policy settings from villages and village tracts and urban neighbourhoods to township, district, state/region, and national levels of governance to create a deliberative system of governance.

Inclusive and deliberative structures and processes at the grassroots level should serve as the governance needs surveillance and priority identification mechanisms necessary to understand and act on the basic public service deficiencies of Myanmar's rural villages and urban neighbourhoods. In other words, the future national governance system for planning, budgeting, and managing public service provision should prioritise basic "survival" needs at the grassroots that include nutrition, housing, health care, education, community level economic development, community safety, and rural transportation.

Micro-transitional justice

The research team assesses that a vision of the importance of grassroots action to support national governance-building is also applicable to the prospects for Myanmar's nascent transitional justice process. MARG's ideas follow the arguments of transitional justice scholars (e.g., Aiken, 2014) who push for the transforming contributory potential of collective identity-building to the efficacy of institutional designs intended to provide justice and reconciliation in divided societies.

The research team asserts that building bridges across gender, age, ethnicity, religious, and other identities at the grassroots in a search for collective identity might be a practical and sustainable approach needed to support national ambitions for transitional justice. This involves individual members of different identity groups entering into dialogue in villages, village tracts, and urban neighbourhoods to recognize and understand their common experiences with violence and other forms of oppression and injustice and discovering their common interest in building just, peaceful, inclusive, and stable communities. This localised dialogue will contribute to creating a Myanmar that is also just, peaceful, inclusive, and stable. MARG refers to this approach to common identity and justice-seeking as "micro-transitional justice" (MTJ).

Linking grassroots governance building with MTJ

The assessment of the research team is that grassroots governance-building and MTJ should be interrelated and supportive processes that can make each more effectively transformational and sustainable. Community members learning to work together on an inclusive basis across their identities and other interests to identify community needs, priorities, and actions to address them can contribute to the development of common identity that supports the pursuit of justice at all levels of Myanmar society. As community members with different identities work together in deliberative processes to plan the futures of their communities, they will also build common community-based identities and accumulate shared experiences that can provide a sustainable platform for just treatment of all Myanmar people, regardless of their identity.

Grassroots governance and MTJ objectives should be supported by collateral efforts on the community level. For instance, this research envisions the development of community education programs that, as they provide a broad range of inter-generational education experiences, they also offer learning opportunities concerning governance-building and justice-seeking from the grassroots to the national level. This community education model can contribute to the development of a new approach to citizenship ideation that can be embraced and acted on by all community members across identity categories.

As noted above, an underlying assumption of the current research is that Myanmar's problems associated with inter-ethnic tensions, corruption, and lack of responsiveness, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in governance are deeply rooted in every corner of the social and cultural lifeways of Myanmar. As a result, to create the breadth and depth of change needed in every sector of Myanmar society, these problems must be addressed through an approach that gets at the roots of these problems. This approach should link grassroots governance-building with justice-seeking supported by a civic education approach focused on the micro levels of experience among the nation's people.

IV. Research design

In a recent report, applying the lens of “inclusive analysis” (4), Haines and Buchanan (2023) considered in the context of research concerning post-2021 coup Myanmar, a variety of issues related to performing

analysis guided by principles and actions to elevate non-dominant perspectives and interpretations of politics, economics, and social and cultural dynamics, informed by a diverse range of people. (5)

In doing this they noted the importance of religion and ethnicity as “drivers of exclusion and contestation Myanmar” (5) that are frequently not adequately considered by analysts. Beyond this consideration of the importance of religion and ethnicity, they called upon those who fund, design, conduct, and analyse research at this fragile and uncertain stage in the history of Myanmar “to integrate gender and social inclusion perspectives more systematically into their work” (6).

As it seeks to acquire evidence from survivors of violence and oppression in Myanmar regarding their experiences and, based on their experiences and understandings, assess ideas regarding future governance-building and justice-seeking in their nation, this study intends to respond to the caution and care for which Haines and Buchanan (2023) call. The study was conducted by Myanmar people with profiles very similar to those of many of the participants in the study. It sought contributions from a diversity of voices that reflect a multitude of experiences in the cauldron of social tension that defines Myanmar. In the reflexivity built into the design of the FGD/learning discussions utilised for evidence gathering, the study sought to assure that participants were true co-producers both of the research evidence and the emergent/adaptive research design to accumulate that evidence. Beyond the analysis and suggestions of Haines and Buchanan (2023), the researchers in this study were intentional in making it a thing of Myanmar and its people and in so doing, resisting historic imperatives of Western scholarly imperialism concerning the design and conduct of grounded research.

In another recent report, Chew and Jap (2023) considered the importance of assessing the attitudes of the Myanmar youth population (ages 15-34) and their engagement with issues related to citizenship, national and ethnic identity, and inter-ethnic relations in the context of post-coup Myanmar. They also obtained useful empirical evidence on the attitudes of this population regarding national identity juxtaposed with ethnic identity, the extent of and limitations to inclusive attitudes concerning ethnicity, and differences in attitudes between those of the target population and the 35 and older population. The evidence that they offer paints a picture of complexity and sometimes conflicting attitudes in the youth population in terms of encouraging and limiting inclusiveness that crosses lines of ethnic identity.

The current study can be viewed as both following Chew and Jap’s (2023) suggestions regarding the importance of the attitudes of the youth population to the political future of Myanmar and adding evidence concerning the complexity of attitudes on ethnic identity, historic experiences of ethnic exclusion and oppression, the challenges of creating cross-ethnic identity understanding and cooperation, and ideas regarding how to encourage such understanding and cooperation at the grassroots level. 80% of the current study’s participants fit Chew and Jap’s definition of “youth”. The research group included multiple ethnic identities. This study offers extensive cross-generational and cross-ethnicity evidence concerning the characteristics and implications of inter-ethnic tensions. It also assesses the potential meaning of these tensions for governance-building and justice-seeking in Myanmar’s future.

Research description

Based upon a conceptualisation of the importance of grassroots governance-building and MTJ and their interrelatedness, the researchers identified a main objective.

Objective: *Explore concepts of grassroots governance-building with MTJ and the experiences and opinions of immigrant/refugee Myanmar people living in Thailand*

Thousands of Myanmar people live in northern Thailand. Some have lived there for decades as economic migrants or refugees fleeing continuing conflict, while many arrived more recently as a result of the 2021 coup. The research team assessed that this population of expatriate/refugee Myanmar people would be a meaningful source of experiences and opinions regarding the potential value of grassroots governance and MTJ. As a result, the researchers designed a research plan that would:

- Gather evidence from a sample of this target population regarding their experiences of violence and other forms of injustice and oppression across gender, age, ethnic, religious, and other identities.
- Share with the sample of the target population a conceptualisation of grassroots governance and MTJ and how they can be linked for more a more responsively governed and just future for Myanmar.
- Obtain from the sample of the target population their reactions regarding this conceptualisation of grassroots governance and MTJ and how they can be linked for more a more responsively governed and just future for Myanmar.

For this report, the researchers organised focus group discussions (FGDs) to explore the experiences and opinions of immigrant/refugee Myanmar people living in Thailand. A total of 12 FGDs were conducted between 13 August and 19 December 2022 in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot, Thailand. The FGDs were framed as “learning discussions.” This is because, while the FGD facilitators sought to learn about the participants’ experiences with violence and other forms of injustice and oppression, they also offered participants opportunities to learn about and react to the subject conceptualisations of linking grassroots governance-building and MTJ. Appendix 1 provides a detailed description of the methodology used in this research.

Considerations regarding the study’s strengths and limitations

Interpretation of the evidence considered in this report must take into account a variety of limitations that the canons of social research ascribe to it. The sampling and recruitment approach used resulted in a group of research participants that is not very representative of the characteristics of the Myanmar immigrant/refugee community in Thailand or of the population of most interest to MARG, the least advantaged and most marginalised people of Myanmar. The collective identity of the research group is better educated and reflects higher socio-economic status than might be found in the rural villages and poor urban neighbourhoods of the nation. The FGD participants are likely more activist – even revolutionary – in their ideas and actions than the people of Myanmar as whole. While the researchers were successful in oversampling Gen Z group members as intended, in that the members recruited have lived and received education in Thailand, there are likely limitations to their similarity to Gen Z members living in Myanmar. Their FGD contributions reflect this.

An additional limitation involves the conduct of the FGDs – both within each FGD and across FGDs. The conduct of FGDs was not uniform. Rather, it reflected an adaptive posture among the facilitators. According to social research standards, this might be seen

as threatening both the validity and reliability of the evidence produced by the FDGs.

However, these weaknesses according to social research standards should also be seen as strengths in terms of the ultimate intent of the project: To introduce concepts concerning linking grassroots governance-building with MTJ to make the process of building a new Myanmar include meaningful and sustainable democratic processes and justice. The profile of the FGD participants is not that of the elite groups that are dominating the conversation/debate regarding the future of Myanmar in Chiang Mai and other venues. Rather, the FGD participants as a whole are the relatively young and active “doers” who will be called upon to transform governance-building and justice-seeking ideas into meaningful action in the nation’s rural villages and urban neighbourhoods. The reflexive and adaptive processes seen within and among the FDGs that might be seen as unacceptable according to standard terms of social research reflect ideas regarding the deliberative governance approach. The research team did not view this FGD-based research process as research per se. Rather, it viewed this research process as the beginning of implementing its ideas in an ongoing process of governance-building and justice-seeking.

V. Evidence and analysis

Objective: Explore the correspondence between a conceptualisation of linking grassroots governance-building with MTJ and the experiences and opinions of immigrant/refugee Myanmar people living in Thailand

Participant characteristics

Number of participants

There was a total of 115 participants across the FGDs or an average of 9.6 participants per FGD. The number of participants per FGD ranged from 8 to 13.

Age

As can be seen in Table 1, Gen Z members in the target population were over-represented among FGD participants, although not to the extent proposed in the research design. However, in that 80% of participants were 35 or younger, the collective composition of the FGDs was relatively young.

Table 1. Age distribution of FGD participants.

Age Group	Count	Percentage of total	Cumulative
16-25	52	45.2%	
26-35	40	34.8%	80.0%
36-45	18	15.7%	95.7%
46-55	3	2.6%	98.3%
56-65	2	1.7%	100.0%

Three of the FGDs were comprised entirely of Gen Z participants and two were comprised of a majority of Gen Z members. Of the remaining seven FGDs, only one did not include a mix of Gen Z and older participants.

Gender

Of the 109 FGD participants that identified as either male or female, 58.7% identified as male and 41.3% identified as female. Due to the difficulties encountered in escaping Myanmar, more men cross into Thailand than do women. As a result, this gender representation is not surprising.

Place of origin

Among those participants who identified their place of origin (n = 74), 11 states or regions were represented: Ayawaddy, Bago, Kayin, Magway, Mandalay, Mon, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan, Thanintharyi, and Yangon. More than half of the participants came from three: Yangon (28.4%), Shan (12.2%), and Mandalay (10.8%). Reflecting the fact that some participants are from families that have lived in Thailand for many years as migrants or refugees, 8.3% of participants self-identified as “Thai born” as opposed to having a Myanmar state or region of origin.

Religion

A large majority (87.0%) of participants self-identified as Buddhist. 5.2% identified themselves as Christian, 2.6% as Muslim, and 3.5% as having no religion.

Education

As represented in Table 2, the FGD participants have attained relatively high levels of education. A plurality (41.3%) of participants have attained at least a bachelor's degree (41.3%), while a majority (51.3%) have attained a bachelor's degree or more education. That said, reflecting the research design's intent to over-represent Gen Z (ages 16-25), a large proportion (48.6%) have attained 7-12 years of or some college education.

Table 2. Education level of FGD participants.

Education Level	% of Participants
7-12	22.9%
Some college	25.7%
Bachelor's	41.3%
Some grad	7.3%
Master's	1.8%
Master's +	0.0%
PhD	0.9%

Self-described background of participants

FGD participants were asked to self-describe their backgrounds according to their terms. From the responses of the 98 participants who provided this information, Table 3 represents a categorisation of the responses and the percentage of total respondents whose self-described responses fit in each category. The categories that appear in Table 3 are non-exclusive. That is, the responses of some respondents include more than one category.

Perhaps the most notable result regarding self-identification was for the category labelled "Activist." 51.0% of the respondents identified themselves as associated with the civil disobedience movement (CDM), people's defence force (PDF), student movements, or other activist groups. Reflecting the study group's Gen Z composition bias, 38.7% of respondents identified themselves as 7-12 or college students. Equal numbers (15.3%) of respondents described themselves as either former government workers or employed in other areas, including work as attorney, medical doctor, businessperson, journalist, poet, artist, and filmmaker.

Table 3. Self-described background of FGD participants.

Self-described background	Count	Percentage of Respondents
NGO worker (non-educator)	9	9.2%
Educator	9	9.2%
Former government employee (including military)	15	15.3%
Other work (attorney, doctor, business person, journalist, poet, artist, filmmaker, other work)	15	15.3%
College student	17	17.3%
School student	21	21.4%
Activist (CDM, PDF, others)	50	51.0%

Participant responses

Across the FGDs six themes emerged among the responses of participants to information provided by the FGD facilitators regarding the three areas of focus associated with the central objective of the project:

- Harms or injustices experienced by participants
- Participant reactions and responses (particularly in terms of resistance) to harms or injustices they experienced.
- Participants reactions to the goals and processes of transitional justice
- Participant ideas regarding the future of governance
- Participant assessment of barriers to governance change and transitional justice
- Participant perceptions regarding grassroots governance-building and MTJ concepts

Table 4 represents each of these themes and the definitions for them that were induced from the evidence that emerged from the twelve FGDs conducted in Mae Sot and Chiang Mai. As discussed in the methodology appendix, the codebook that was created in Nvivo included these core themes that were then used to code the transcripts. The themes and definitions that appear in Table 4 reflect the results of the iterative revision process that ultimately encompassed themes that most consistently emerged across the FGD/learning discussion process transcripts. Quotation examples included in the discussion that follows on each theme reflect the evidence from which the themes and their definitions were induced.

Table 4. Analytic themes and data definitions

Theme / Code	Definition
Harm or Injustice Experienced	Descriptions of individual, interpersonal, or systemic harm or injustices that they or people they know have faced in Myanmar as a result of structural conditions in the country.
Responses to Injustice / Resistance	Ways that participants have engaged in responding to or resisting against harms or injustice.
Goals and Processes of Transitional Justice	Expressions of what participants think should be the goals or structure of a transitional justice process.
Future Governance Ideas	Expressions of what participants think future governance in the country should look like.
Barriers / Challenges to Transitional Justice and Future Governance	Factors that participants identify that may serve as a challenges in pursuing transitional justice or future governance strategies.
Perceptions of Micro Transitional Justice and Bottom Up Governance Concepts	Expressions of how participants view the concepts of micro-transitional justice, transitional justice, bottom-up governance concepts, and future governance. This code also includes participant views of the actual FGD process in achieving these goals.

Building upon the most frequently and expressed ideas among FGD participants, a summary assessment for each theme offers the researchers’ interpretation of the collective meaning that they identify and the implications across the themes for implementing a conceptualisation of linking grassroots governance-building with MTJ.

The researchers’ summary assessment on the evidence offered by participants on each theme is followed by short phrases that summarise every comment made by participants in each FGD related to each of the six themes, and quotations from participants that exemplify the content of the discussions across the FGDs on each theme.

It should be noted that the analysis is based on transcripts and translations produced by non-professional translators. In the interest of maintaining what can be viewed as the

authenticity of the transcripts and translations and the voices of the FGDs participants as they were heard and translated by fellow Myanmar people, the non-Myanmar analysts who produced the following analysis minimised their editorial touch in producing the summarising short phrases and reproducing the translated quotations that appear in the following narrative. As a result, some of the wording and sentence construction in the quotations might not seem perfect to the native English speaker.

Theme 1: Harms or injustices experienced

Summary assessment

The FGD participants reported their experiences of a broad range of harms and injustices. The physical and emotional/psychological harms that they discussed involved individual episodes and patterns of violence and other forms of oppression that have extended over many years. They both represented their personal experiences and those that they have experienced indirectly at the societal or community level. The forms of harm and injustice that FGD participants reported touch every aspect of life: from the workplace to daily village lifeways to multi-level politics to relationships among the identity groups that define Myanmar society. As might be expected, the Tatmadaw was most frequently identified as the perpetrator of abuses experienced or observed by FGD participants. The harms and injustices that the participants reported might be best characterised as products of a society in total disarray, from the national level of governance to the village level. That said, there was a distinct focus across the FGDs on violent responses experienced by a cross section of Myanmar society as a result of resistance to the coup and the military regime.

The obvious forms of abuse brutally meted out by the Myanmar military and police was consistently reported by both civilians and former military and police force members among the FGD participants: witnessing the murder of protestors in the streets; direct and secondary experiences of imprisonment and torture; arrest and imprisonment of children, threats of violence against village and activist leaders; rape and other forms of sexual violence; and general bullying of groups marginalised due to their ethnic, religious, sexual, or other identities. However, reports of violence were not limited to those perpetrated by the Tatmadaw. FGD participants also reported experiences of violence involving ethnic armed organisations and other resistance group members. In addition, FGD participants discussed the residual/continuing impacts of the vast expanse of violence and brutal oppression experienced by themselves and other Myanmar people in the form of the lingering effects of PTSD and the constant fear of continuing violence.

FGD participants offered testimony regarding the paradoxes that have surrounded subordinate levels of the military and police forces of Myanmar. Some FGD participants who were former members of the military and police agencies chillingly described how they were ordered to murder their fellow citizens. They also described how they too experienced discrimination and oppression in a variety of forms including their superiors receiving preferential financial, medical, and legal treatment, illegal orders they were forced to follow to harm civilians, inadequate and lack of treatment for their injuries, restrictions against their participation in CDM activities, and forced continued military service after their enlistment contracts expired.

Beyond the overt violent oppression that they experienced from the Tatmadaw and other sources, across the FGDs respondents discussed the misery of every aspect of daily life. For instance, they frequently commented on the corruption, nepotism, and other exploitive and oppressive practices that they experienced in governmental jobs. Corrupt practices included common expectations that bribes must be paid for employment continuation or

job promotions and for the provision of basic public services. They offered their familiarity with preferential public service provision treatment for families and friends of members of the military. FGD participants' concerns regarding corruption were not limited to practices among agencies of the central government. They also saw it in the operation of ethnic administrative entities, village administration, the Buddhist hierarchy, and other societal settings.

Across social settings – the workplace, the community, education, etc. – respondents identified harassment, discrimination, and other forms of oppressive behaviour based upon identity, particularly ethnicity and sexual identity, to be common features of daily life. Interestingly, FGD participants also reported that they experienced classism and abuse of position extending into the CDM space. They also discussed how inter-ethnic bullying was not limited to Bamar majority bullying of members of other ethnic groups. It also involves bullying by dominant ethnic groups in states and regions of other ethnic groups.

As the FGD participants were all either immigrants or refugees living in Thailand, the issue of dislocation was also a frequent focus in our FGD/learning discussions. As a result of their participation in CDM and/or PDF activities, participants were forced to abandon their jobs, and flee their homes, communities, and often their families to escape violent reprisals from the military. The pattern reported by the participants included escaping to the countryside to be assisted by their families or other support networks and then fleeing Myanmar to Thailand. Their escapes typically represented abandoning careers, education, homes, other financial resources and all the social and financial components of their pre-coup and pre-resistance lives.

The harms identified by the FGD participants extended beyond these experiences of violence, discrimination, and dislocation. They saw the collapse of already weak institutions of governance after the coup as a result of the incompetence and corruption of the military regime that produced harm from the societal to the local level. Obviously, this picture of institutional collapse was exacerbated by the COVID-19 emergency. The governing incompetence of the regime was identified in matters as diverse as issuance of identity cards, distribution of oxygen, provision of education services, and water supply to rural villages.

Summarising participant comments

The following is a list of short phrases produced by the study's FGD analyst that summarise all comments made by participants in each FGD related to the theme of harm and injustices that they experienced.

FGD 1, Chiang Mai – NGO workers, students, professionals, ¼ activists

Starvation due to COVID-19 mismanagement; torture, murder, and sexual violence; Prison conditions; killing civilians; ethnic conflict; discrimination and Bamar dominance

FGD 2, Mae Sot – Former government employees, students; educator, ¾ activists

Arrests and incarceration in response to protest participation; Business destroyed; displacement from homes; from Myanmar; ethnic discrimination; arrest and imprisonment of children; separation from family; family and community members killed; hiring and employment issues because of CDM involvement; government fraud, bribery, and corruption – people pay for job placements, contract mismanagement; shot during protest – persistent pain; not allowed to fly; witnessing others getting shot; PTSD – lasting trauma of witnessing atrocities; lack of safety/security – surveillance; ethnic and religious oppression; government and media brainwashing re: ethnic and religious groups; sexual violence; assassinations by resistance groups and ethnic armed organizations

FGD 3, Mae Sot – students, NGO worker, educator, ¾ activists

Inability to complete studies because of the coup; military using criminal prisoners to violate people – feeding the prisoners stimulant drugs, rule & divide method; military shooting, murder of protestors; hiding in and fleeing Myanmar due to political/protest activities; Arrest, imprisonment; nepotism and/or old military regime influence in government positions; constitution is not followed or supported by law; medical issues as a result of being on frontline; bullying of ethnic minorities; wrongful assassination by resistance groups; bribery, corruption; centralized education system that is like an army; does not encourage critical thinking; freedom of thinking has been violated; military brainwashing, propaganda

FGD 4, Mae Sot – educator, other professionals, students, ½ activists

Lack of police response to crimes; bribery / buying votes; people do not trust in or believe their government; abuse of authority threatening people's businesses; ethnic, religious, language exclusion – bullying, trauma, loneliness; teacher bullying LGBT students

FGD 5, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Election fraud – personal experience with threats as election worker; fled township or Myanmar as a whole due to military threats, government repression re: political resistance activities; arrest and imprisonment for participation in political protest, safe houses; family separation; Rohingya / Muslim discrimination in custody; abuse of positional power even within CDM spaces, lack of structure – favoritism; forced to renounce CDM ties in exchange for prisoner release, medical support; suppression, murder, arrest of photojournalists; missing persons from their townships, communities; comrades in the revolution shot, killed

FGD 6, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, educators, 9/10 activists

Oppression on lower level staff in medical field (nurse has to do personal matters like cooking for doctor); no place to inform of medical field oppression because everyone sides with upper level; corruption, lack of concrete rules and regulation in government departments; no justice in every sector because government gives priority to military; military not allowing staff to leave the army; when captains retires, are sent to government office, and then military is able to control government sector; ward administrators are from the military, do not know human rights, how to improve the ward - they misuse the public budget; civilians not eligible for food support from NUG, only government staff; property and financial loss; family members arrested; upper level positions are only giving to majority ethnic group; educational oppression: people are banned from social media, don't know how to get information about governance and cannot participate, or are brainwashed; jailed for voting NLD even though the process was supposed to be private; village set on fire, killed people; families had to flee; media corruption and bribery; youth not allowed to resign from the military after their 5-year contract is over; significant gender discrimination in all spheres of society; corruption in NGO money distribution (only 30% going to target groups)

FGD 7, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, students, 9/10 activists

Denied land ownership rights; lack of educational services in remote areas; for land use certificates, governmental bias in favor of private businesses v. citizens; during COVID, relatives/friends of administrators received aid over general community/laborers; General Aung San/Burmese majoritarianism propaganda (Bogyoke Statue in Kayah State); Widespread bribery within military and police; inequality – the rich can afford

to send their children to private school, whereas others are starving, live in areas being bombed, have to flee their homes; EAO's have prohibited development in some areas (for example, by asking for a large sum from telecom company/town administration to build infrastructure); ethnic injustice, Bamar/Burmese control influences and confines other ethnic groups; township level budget mismanagement, not meeting constituent needs; murder and oppression of Rohingya population; religious oppression; torching of houses in Sagaing, Magway regions – people living in makeshift huts; limited/no computer lessons in government schools, no access to science labs; arrest of students not wearing uniforms; soldiers beating, arresting citizens during 2021 protests; witnessing military torture friends; military controlled internet connectivity – hid atrocities in Rakhine from rest of public; DASSK covered up genocidal commitments of the military; military does not follow procedure on handling of public protests; dehumanizing impact of being in conflict, war; ethnic “elite” exploiting least advantaged ethnic people, do not support least advantaged ethnic people, and some collaborate with Myanmar military (DKBA, BGF); EAO corruption – denying entry to people in certain geographic areas in exchange for money; government rejected white identity cards (for Rohingya people), then rejected the cards and killed them; teacher corruption – taking tips for better marks, threatening students who don't take teacher's private tuition course; rejection of sex education in classrooms; NLD failure to remove ex-military personnel serving as diplomats; 2008 Constitution bias toward military; weak Constitution that also means that United Nations cannot help; lack of law, jurisdiction in border area. Human life is not important in order area, there are many murders there; vicious circle of police corruption, bribery – inability to go against superiors

FGD 8, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, 4/6 activists

As a police officer, instructed to shoot at the public, against their training procedure; army not allowing people to resign after their contract is up; corruption in imported goods taxing; military staff allowed to transfer to work in government department without training; unfair pay for doctors, teachers, versus military officers; this leads to corruption, people's basic needs must be met; ethnic groups don't request their rights because of governance oppression & threats; difficulty of getting national registration card in Thailand; costs a lot or is impossible - this has impacts on travel, job opportunities, passport; government officials unwilling to answer interview questions from public media for fear of being sent to jail; soldiers who lost parts of their body do not get enough money to live on, while captains get large pensions

FGD 9, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Military threatening village heads with gun violence; during NLD government, still poor governance, corruption, military cooperation; military prohibiting use of revolution apps, VPN, Facebook; government informants in revolution spaces, organizations; widespread fear of freedom of expression, participating in revolutionary activities; deep mistrust; family members imprisoned, tortured for activism; military control of oxygen during COVID-19 pandemic; lead to people's deaths; inability to speak out on these deaths; unequal healthcare treatment – favouritism toward members of Parliament and army; military control of education system – widespread misinformation about politics

FGD 10, Chiang Mai – college students, educators, one of eight was activist

Making sacrifices (career, family ties) to join the revolution; friends arrested, traumatized and punished in prison, suffer from PTSD; ethnic discrimination: majority treating other ethnic groups as lower; CDM staff unable to conduct business, blocked from certain jobs and residential areas; fear of participating in resistance/revolution because of potential

property destruction, arrest by military; military murder, sexual violence, setting fire to villages; NLD government neglected rights of LGBT and Rohingya in discussion of human rights; administrators exploit the public for self-interest; nepotism, corruption in hiring practices at all government levels; post-coup water access limited (village); corruption embedded in centralized government (need to pay gov't for identity cards, passports); ethnic, religious discrimination in school system; (structural) joblessness, unable to afford basic needs; ward level governance – preferential treatment toward military families (electricity, food, oil); family separation

FGD 11, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

Differing education system in Myanmar and Thailand has led to gaps in education when moving to Thailand; Issues because of lack of Thai nationality (for example, getting charged more for penalties; not being able to access education equally; healthcare; jobs); lack of job opportunities; Child labor and lack of regulations on labor generally; military detainment of CDM people and forcing them to pay them; military stealing food from villages; discrimination, including physical violence by teachers, in school in Myanmar; Military control of education sector and village governance; discrepancies in Thai policy on children of migrants parents versus actual implementation; for ethnic minorities, ethnic bullying from Burmese majority; discrimination from Thai children, education system; discrimination and corruption in Myanmar citizenship process based on religion, ethnicity

FGD 12, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

Educational background from Myanmar is useless in Thailand; the Coup halted progress on transfer education system between the two countries; racial (skin color) and education record discrimination in Thailand; visa issues coming to Thailand; Thai classmates did not want to be friends; family separation; In Myanmar, martial law at night; fled to Thailand due to political (PDF) involvement of family members; electricity shortages, expensive food and other goods prices; missed education because of COVID and the coup; difficulty finding jobs; military, war blocked transportation access; employment discrimination in Thailand – difficulty accessing jobs & lack of raises like Thai colleagues; in Thailand and Myanmar, government officials treating the public and elders poorly; bribery in ID card process in Myanmar; expensive costs associated with visas in Thailand.

Voices of participants

The following quotations from FGD/learning discussion participants exemplify how the research group has experienced a vast range of harms in forms of violence, injustice, and discrimination.¹

I clearly remembered that the day was March 15 when we heard of a village (Le' Pin) being burnt down in Paung Te township, Pyay District where I belong to. We planned to go for donation of rice to the CDM board members. (I have been still the board members of CDM in my township). On that day, my father was not feeling well and I could not go. My friend who went on my behalf was arrested and thus I was insecure to remain in my village since I had involved in some activities like protesting and helping other CDM colleagues who were fleeing to my villages by providing safe houses

I was filed and accused of communicating and helping “People Defense Forces”. Thus, I fled here, this side (Maesot, Thailand). When I arrived here, I thought to myself

1 Note that, in the interest of maximising protection of the identity of participants, neither the FGD session identification nor personal identifiers of the those quoted are provided.

that I did not do revolutionary activities anymore, rather, I would earn money for my parents and thus I intended to go to Bangkok. However, ill luck struck me. At once I stepped on the land of Maesot, I was under the custody for six days. After releasing, I lost my ways having no idea what to do. These young guys helped me during these days. I used to stay in their house. One month after my release from the custody, my father died and I could not go back. That's all my situation up to present.

As I was close to almost everyone, I decided to lead the strike. We went around Nay Pyi Taw with motorbikes and cars. After the last MICC II strike, the NCDMs who came to office organized a protest to do CDM. At that time, I did not know that Myanmar Now (Media) was broadcasting live. The next day, the local police asked me the direction of the strike, and I realised it. And I found out that my wife and I had an arrest warrant from my friend's husband from the military office. We had to run to my friend's house near the Pinyinmanar City to ask for help on the 14th. Our home business was also destroyed, and from then on, we had to move from place to place and run around Myanmar as a family. In the end, it didn't work at all, so we had to switch to Lay Kay Kaw (liberated city of Karen State). Although there are no "big" difficulties, it was "badly" difficult during Lay Kay Kaw battle. The family was trapped for about 10 days, and even my daughter started to panic and showed symptoms of a heart attack. It was pretty bad with heavy weapons being dropped every day, finally it didn't work anymore, so I had to come over here. Regarding Injustice, there is nothing "big" . . . we were discriminated against. Being a member of an ethnic group, I have been discriminated against . . .

As of my experience with detention procedure, it can be said that not serious at all but a small hurting. The territory in charge conducted the investigation. To say easily, it is a light detention that I experienced. There are people who experienced serious investigation in detention camps. When I conducted research, I met with two people of such kind. One of them is a well-known Saw Han Nway Oo. I had interviewed SHNO in detail of SHNO's experience. SHNO is a LGBT writer. Most of us, perhaps, have already known about SHNO. So, I don't say about SHNO much here. Another LGBT boy who had more seriously been suffered from the hardships of the detention conducts. He is a protestor. He was from protestor forces of Kyi Myin Daing township. Kyi Myin Daing protest is the group of protesting forces. He was the leader of one of these groups. He usually stationed in Kyi Myin Daing protest. One day, he was arrested and sent at once to Tarmwe police station notoriously known as station (4). He was arrested around 11:00 am on that day and the time he was raped in the police station was about 3:00 pm. Who raped? By the time his phone was investigated and those who investigated came to know that he is a gay. Once they knew him a gay, the one who started raping him was a soldier who came to the cell and raped him. Then, those asked to gung-rape him not just himself. Not only that, the one who was arrested for committing raping under age and another one for drug in the cell were asked to join the evil conduct. He said (as if a testimony accurately to me) that he was raped until bleeding from his organ. So, such cases do exist.

But when we say about injustice . . . it will go until village level. When we start very basic unit of community, if it is start at education field, it is school. School starts to emerge injustice in Myanmar. For example, when I was in high school, I attended at Military school. The situation is different from other school. It has the children of high rank officers in there. They always got favors or first priority even if they are not

qualified in their academic. Other outstanding students were always put aside or kept in back. This kind of injustice is always happened in the school. It starts the injustice. We all know this from the very long time ago. We cannot cut of this circle. I think this injustice start from tiny unit to the whole community. This kind of injustice emerge start from the school.

I want to share is to do with what I observed in times of COVID-19 response . . . in the wards (community level), where many basic classes of society who really needed did not receive the assistances but many of the relatives of those administers and those who were closed to the administers mainly received the aid . . . And there were times they could not go outside for their living due to the COVID and the coup. They are hand-to-mouth day labors. During such hardship, they would be fine if they received the aid. I observed that there were many such people living in a severe situation of starving but having inadequate assistances to them in the wards.

Theme 2: Reactions and responses to harms or injustices

Summary assessment

The participants in the FGDs in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot described their responses to the February 2021 coup and the military junta's systematic repression in ways that largely reflect those reported across Myanmar. These responses can be described in terms of a dichotomy of externally and internally directed action. By externally directed action we mean both spontaneous and carefully organised small- and large-scale forms of protest against and resistance to the junta's violent seizure of power and repression of the people of Myanmar. By internally directed action we mean micro and macro forms of capacity-building among a growing resistance movement to both continue the struggle against the military regime and address some of the basic needs of a people facing prolonged dire circumstances of day-to-day survival.

More than half of the participants in the FGDs self-described themselves as activists in the anti-military regime resistance movement. Many of them reported becoming early participants in the CDM movement and the emergence of the PDF across Myanmar. They also described their resistance actions as taking form in small ways such as joining resistance-oriented social media groups and participating in sticker campaigns. They reported on how they helped to memorialise resistance activities through the production of photo evidence and report writing. In addition to their descriptions of resistance actions, they expressed awareness of the characteristics of individual and collective forms of resistance actions taken by others.

The FGD participants reported how they contributed to capacity-building to not only resist the authoritarian military regime, but to also support the ability of Myanmar people to survive the daily challenges that they face in a society defined by failed institutions and inadequate services. They joined a variety of support groups and charity organisations and worked with human rights groups and other NGOs. They disseminated information regarding the rights of Myanmar people, the need for self-governance building, education reform, rejection of military regime propaganda, and critical thinking in general. One participant reported participating in an online start-up school associated with the NUG.

Summarising participant comments

The following is a list of short phrases produced by the study's FGD analyst that summarise all comments made by participants in each FGD related to the theme of

reactions and responses to harm or injustices.

FGD 1, Chiang Mai – NGO workers, students, professionals, ¼ activists

Educational advocacy

FGD 2, Mae Sot – Former government employees, students; educator, ¾ activists

Join the PDF; Protest; self-education; joining charity orgs; resisting news propaganda; filing complaints

FGD 3, Mae Sot – students, NGO worker, educator, ¾ activists

Gen Z leading the revolution, motivating others; organizing uses online apps like viber group; organizing around electoral process during general election; starting up a small online school with NUG; pursuing and disseminating education about rights, governance; demonstrations; Sticker campaign; Join/support the PDF; education system reform to encourage critical thinking

FGD 4, Mae Sot – educator, other professionals, students, ½ activists

Educational advocacy

FGD 5, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Protesting, joining CDM, leadership in local CDMs; social services organization volunteer supporting protestors as drivers, night guards, food providers, arrange safe houses; promoting minority community voice and rights; photo documentation, journalist re: protests; research support; direct support for minority religious and ethnic communities

FGD 6, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, educators, 9/10 activists

Donating money directly to those in need to avoid corruption of NGOs

FGD 7, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, students, 9/10 activists

Participation in CDM, going into hiding; joining armed resistance, work for revolution

FGD 8, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, 4/6 activists

Participation in CDM; book publishing, public speaking about rape & sexual violence towards women; ethnic armed groups are not necessarily fighting for their ethnicity, but for own self-interest; rely on solving issues at the ground level versus going to the police; educate people about police corruption, communication

FGD 9, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

No responses

FGD 10, Chiang Mai – college students, educators, one of eight was an activist

Participating in the CDM; Working with human rights groups

FGD 11, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

In post-coup, with military oppression, Burmese majority gained understanding of how ethnic minorities had been oppressed

FGD 12, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

Organizations working to address educational disparity between Myanmar and Thailand; learning Thai to participate in educational system

Voices of participants

The following quotations from FGD/learning discussion participants reflect the collective experiences of the study participants in terms of how they reacted and responded to harms or injustices.

I remember that, before leaving Nay Pyi Taw, they called all the announcers and said there is no one to read the news. Ko Kyaw Thet Lin and others have done CDM. All of you are employees and must read the news. With that, I said just one word, I will do it, I don't insure myself. I will read whatever I want. There, they were quite lost and no more words to me. I came out immediately. When I returned, I protested. Protest all the way. The neighbourhood saw it. What's worse is the ward office in front of our house. I left in the morning with a gas mask and a hat then came back in the evening. They saw everything. Not long after, both police and military vehicles came looking for me. People at home asked me to run.

I am Shan ethnic . . . I worked at the Shan women association in 10 years ago. So, I had communication experience with them. We published the book "License to rape" which was about the raped women . . . As soon as being the coup . . . Southern Shan organized with many ethnics such as Shan, Paoh and so on. So, they are fighting each other until now. The unfair matter has everywhere in Shan. Actually, all armed group made injustice matter to the public too . . .

I am and I am 29 years old. I am one of the youth activists supporting other activists with food and also took responsibility of self-initiated night guard services during the protesting. When our youth group camp was raided by the military and our leaders names were known to public. Then, the State Administration Council, filed arbitrarily us under the article 505 (a). When my house was raided, my father-in-law was taken and redeemed him (unofficially) with 5 lakhs (500000 MMK). I was therefore not able to stay around and fled to Maesot . . .

I had had [police] service of more than 18 years (going to be 20 years soon) . . . I know that once I started to join CDM, a secure place for hiding would be highly important. Thus, I took a delay and could not join the CDM immediately after the coup. I could manage to circumvent in March, a month after the coup when high time of protesting. Since I had been in the police force, I knew that the force would search first in my house and then search in neighboring places. However, due to the high rise of protesting, they would not be able to as much concentrate as it should be on searching and arresting me. Thus, I hid in the place nearby for about one year. There, I reported for night-check on visitor lists of households with a fake name and stayed in a compound . . ."

Theme 3: Reactions to the goals and processes of transitional justice

Summary assessment

The research team's approach to treating the FGDs as "learning discussions" included its facilitators leading a discussion on the characteristics of transitional justice juxtaposed with the context of Myanmar. As the FGD respondents are generally well-educated, with many engaged in public affairs, it is not surprising that they were highly engaged with this framing of TJ and offered interesting analyses. The comment summaries offer evidence of

the extent of the participants' engagement and interesting ideas that they brought to the FGD discussions.

Several participants were sufficiently familiar with TJ theory and practice around the world that they offered examples that Myanmar could draw upon and specific ways that it could learn from the international TJ evidence. In applying their TJ understandings to the Myanmar experience, participants collectively offered a nuanced approach that looked far beyond the culpability of the military leadership, the atrocities committed by the Tatmadaw, and the brutality of the regime's jailors. They considered how other actors that have contributed to the suffering of the nation, including EAOs, CSOs, the media, and national celebrities should be held to account. They focused on the importance of prevention involving changes in societal conditions such that a violent coup cannot happen in the future.

Participants made it clear that the perpetrators of violence and other forms of injustice against the people of Myanmar should be held accountable in a revitalised system of justice and punished for their wrongdoing. Yet, they invested roughly an equal amount of attention on the importance of transforming the structures and processes of governance as the means for controlling the abuses of power exercised by the military and other Myanmar elites. They emphasised the importance of changing the mindset of military leaders and public administrators to make them reflect the democratic ambitions of the people and reject historic authoritarian and militaristic tendencies.

The individual and societal level emotional and psychological impacts of the coup and the subsequent military regime were also highlighted by the participants. While justice in the form of accountability and punishment for wrongdoing must be pursued, our participants argued that equal attention should be directed to addressing the trauma experienced by the people of Myanmar through long-term provision of mental health services. In addition, individual level restorative justice should be extended to all who have experienced oppression and personal loss. Mention was also made by participants of a need to consider self-governance by ethnic groups as part of transitional justice.

Our FGD participants focused more on the need for deep and long-term institutional change to support justice-seeking than on the truth commissions and judicial proceedings that might be popularly associated with TJ. For instance, respondents saw reform of the nation's education system to be essential to instilling a sustainable approach to justice-seeking across generations. The process of justice education should extend beyond the classroom to become embedded in what might be labelled as public civics education with the objective of helping citizens understand their rights and the responsibility of public institutions to respect those rights.

Consistent with the formulation of MTJ presented in this report, the FGD participants discussed how the habits of justice-seeking must be embedded in society beginning at the grassroots and involve co-learning across ethnic and other identities. And, again consistent with an approach that links grassroots governance-building with MTJ, participants considered the relationship between building common understandings regarding justice-seeking and reconstructing the governance of Myanmar from the grassroots upward. They also emphasised the importance of public debate and deliberation across identities and interests, including different factions of the CDM, to make governance and justice-seeking work.

Summarising participant comments

The following is a list of short phrases produced by the study's FGD analyst that summarise all comments made by participants in each FGD related to the theme of reactions to the goals and processes of transitional justice.

FGD 1, Chiang Mai – NGO workers, students, professionals, ¼ activists

Holding people and institutions accountable (Military, Myanmar gov't and gov't institutions, Ethnic Armed Organizations, CSO, media and celebrities); prevention: shifting the conditions so that a coup cannot happen again; Providing mental health support to address people's trauma; Acknowledgement: hearing what happened; Building public trust; Public apology; Judicial action; Nonviolent; Public monuments/memorialization; truth commissions (reference to South Africa); Public awareness of history and current conditions; Education system reform; Public debates; promote TJ via teachers and education system; attract international attention; training and mobilize the next generation on transitional justice

FGD 2, Mae Sot – Former government employees, students; educator, ¾ activists

CDMs to get their rights back; Cut salary from non-CDM employees and redistribute money to those suffering; remove non-CDM employee seniority; look at example of Khmers in Cambodia taking action for transitional justice; starting from the bottom as a more realistic approach; strong judicial fairness; peaceful coexistence of ethnicities, races, religions; changing the mindset of the army and administrators; raising awareness; repairing the army first, and then other armed organizations; collaborate and training on how to solve each other's problems; public education about transitional justice; removing people from power; addressing mindsets of people who have been brainwashed under military dictatorship; continued mutual discussions between CDM participants with differing views; equality of ethnic groups

FGD 3, Mae Sot – students, NGO worker, educator, ¾ activists

Eliminate old military regime control of administrators; Educate people about governance at the village level; recording those who died, establishing a Heroes Museum; push forward with the revolution, and resistance groups can apologize later for murders, investigations can happen after revolution; In case of resistance groups murdering others, investigation must happen and perpetrator must acknowledge the harm; education reform, civic education in curriculum - educate the public on public administration, governance, citizen rights; not revenge, instead want to change people's mindset, freedom of thinking; Self-change

Start with individual communication for micro-transitional justice; educate the public on election norms and voting; Apologies and words are not enough; skepticism of human rights commission processes; education on what "human rights" are so that people can ask for their rights, understand when they are violated; should come from grassroots voice; breaking the tradition of not believing leadership; develop a new custom and tradition of perpetrators admitting their violations and committing for their action; apologies only acceptable for small harms; Important to share the truth, and share feelings out to people, the next generation; caring for the victims; people need to know the truth, and also need to have a mindset shift towards sympathy; include injustice as one of policies in the transitional period. Justice needs to be defined; balance between revolutionary and human rights approaches

FGD 5, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Arbitrament of a people's tribunal; do not violate human rights or kill those who caused harm (no "tig for tug"); military public apology and removal; guarantee rights of self-administered zones to self-administer; punishments for the military, not too serious; memorial to honor and remember those who lost their lives, children; money cannot buy forgiveness; financial support for those who gave their lives up in the revolution – equal to

support received from NUG to well-known families; resign/retire those who do not accept educational change

FGD 6, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, educators, 9/10 activists

Do not take action against non-CDM without inspection of their case; military should give public apology, be removed from positions, if in line with international policy; punishment should only be for military (not basic level staff), and not be serious; punishment of basic level staff will prevent negotiation in future; all people should get equal chance

FGD 7, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, students, 9/10 activists

More responsibility and accountability; investigate the truth of disappeared people in the jungle – submitted a list of comrades to the Ministry of Defense (NUG) – current thought is to investigate justice for comrades; combat common enemies first; need to make a record of the suffering; charge non-CDM people who harmed CDM people

FGD 8, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, 4/6 activists

Give families a chance to express the loss of their family members; if direct perpetrators of violence/murder cannot be found, take action on their commander; money cannot substitute the loss of victim's family; victims/family must not be told to forget. Can implement legislation like in Cambodia to address injustice

FGD 9, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Figuring out what course of action to take with non-CDM people; punish non-CDM people in line with the law, even if that means killing them; need to consider the role of forgiveness in the future; ignore smaller cases, but take action on more significant cases, when incidents are committed by organizations purposefully for personal interest

FGD 10, Chiang Mai – college students, educators, one of eight was activist

Education, repairing people's minds; Dismiss, punish, boycott people who participated in the injustices / non-CDM people; Classify people as supporting people and participating people (in CDM); Persuade, not punish, people who did not participate in CDM to come to the side of the revolution; Sympathy, mutual understanding and collaboration is needed – justice for just one group will not work; Justice according to the level of oppression; Address community conflict between different religious, ethnic groups

FGD 11, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

No responses

FGD 12, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

No responses

Voices of participants

The following quotations from FGD/learning discussion participants reflect the collective experiences and ideas of the study participants in terms of how they reacted to the goals and processes of transitional justice.

I am interested in transitional justice. I am not an educated, but I have known this word since 2016. For example, in Columbia, people did not accept peaceful according to the vote because it is not enough the word only “sorry” for the people who suffered the struggles along the revolution for 50 years. The famous negotiator from Norway, he is a former foreign minister during his trip to Myanmar said that “it is easy to make peace, but the perpetrator has to confess their mistake to the public, then make

commitment". I have also the personal loss during the revolution. So, if the revolution end with the word peace only, I cannot accept for my loss.

I think at this time, transitional justice is needed. People need to aware with this word. For example- in National League for Democracy (NLD) government period, they formed human right commission, in my personal point of view, they only took the entity, and they did nothing. Everyone need to know what is human right regardless of it is important or not.

NUG announced for the punishment of non CDM in the future. This is very harmful for the politic because in this time we have to persuade them to come our side. The educator must be more patient. We need a lot of people on our side in this revolution. As I mean regard with punishment, non CDM will be punished in the future, for example resignation or boycott. But our revolution will not be success without the point of view from the grass root level people. We have to proceed with the mass of the grass root people. On the other hand, they are not support the junta although they are not CDM. They have their own stance. For example, the hidden strike from the San Chaung Street, people warmly welcome at first, but later, the military detain the people near the protest if they cannot arrest the leader of the protestor. And they destroy their property too. So, people participation reduces more and more later. Because people have to earn for their livings everyday even though they keep it in their mind totally. Although they fully support the revolution but they did not collaborate because if they collaborate to them, they afraid the impact of it. So, this will be problem for both sides. The protestor also think that people will be harm because of them. Military want to be like that. Therefore, this kind of people should not be punished. The front-line member should think and consult deeply this problem until to get the right policy.

When the students asked to Ko Jimmy why he does not revenge for justice, he replied it will be happened turn by turn. Although people say about CDM and Non CDM case, I think it cannot be implemented in reality. Non CDM people may have their own reason. Some people participated in the revolution with their way. So, we cannot take action for Non CDM without inspection their case. For the military, as you said they should give public apology, remove from the position if these are in line with the international policy. It will be better. If punishment seem like revenge among the basic level staff, it will not be acceptable. The better way is to negotiate each other in the future. It will take long time to restructure the country because we have a lot of armed groups and they want their self-owned region. We need to do so many things in the future. So, punishment should be only on the military and not be seriously. We lost our life but there are so many people who are worsen than us. So, we should consider for their remedy. In Yangon, most of the family are turmoil during this period. For example, I lived in 54 street at Botataung near the navy. My family did not ok to stay in there. I had to transferred them to another safe place. My brother also be an activist who was a former supervisor from the company but he has to restart his life now. I don't want run away here because of my mother 's health but I cannot do nothing. This kind of problem occurred in many families so I want them to resolved soon

Theme 4: Ideas regarding the future of governance

Summary assessment

As with their consideration of transitional justice in the context of Myanmar, the FGD participants offered clear and substantive ideas regarding the future of their nation's governance. In that our participants have relatively high levels of education attainment and include former civil servants and educators, this is not surprising. In summary, the participants assess that governance in Myanmar must be completely transformed. The ideas they offered can be grouped into five categories: 1) good governance; 2) federalism; 3) local governance; 4) emphasis of governance over government; and 5) education.

The participants' assessment of pre- and post-coup government in Myanmar reflect commonplace understandings: that almost nothing about it could be classified as representing "good governance". They argued that to transform government into a responsive, accountable, transparent, and effective part of Myanmar society, it must be essentially reconstructed in every imaginable way. A prominent international example of what they perceive as a model of good government is Singapore. They emphasised the importance of politically unbiased government and rebalancing the civil – military relationship such that responsiveness to the popular will through democratic structures and processes is given primacy. In effect, they argued that the military should play no future role in government leadership. Participants also emphasised how electoral reform, including control of electoral corruption, must be considered.

A popular topic among elite Myanmar politicians and academics and international interests involved in Myanmar affairs is the importance of federalism in terms of the roles and relationships between the national government and the states and regions. While our participants acknowledged federalism according to these terms, they focused much more on the importance of decentralisation of governmental authority and the development of effective local government – at the district level and below – in Myanmar's future. Rather than serving as an instrument of the will of the central government via the General Administration Department as in the past, they argued that government at the township level should reflect the will of the people expressed through elective township administrators and democratic processes at the grassroots level based on broad and inclusive participation. They further suggested that democratic local decision-making should be supported by administrative professionalisation from the village level up. In terms of what they see as international examples of effective local government, the participants pointed to the United States with its high level of citizen participation and professionalisation among local administrators. Some of our participants also suggested that consideration should be given to allowing ethnic groups autonomy to govern at the local level.

A major emphasis in the discussion among our FGD participants regarding the future of governance in Myanmar involved prioritising the nurturance of governance over the role of government. They argued that the only way that the governance needs of Myanmar can be met in the future is through collective inter-sectoral action that involves civil society organisations, NGOs, the business community, religious organisations, and the people working together in inclusive deliberative democratic processes. The participants were familiar with examples over the past decade wherein this model of governance has been introduced at the grassroots level in Myanmar and produced promising results.

Another focus across the FGDs regarding governance involved the importance of education. Our participants considered education both in terms of how it should be organised and operate and what it should produce among students and other community members who are exposed to it. They discussed how central to the transformation

of education in Myanmar is a need to shift from a focus on educational content to the development of critical thinking. To support justice-seeking and governance-building objectives, the education system should include training on human rights and respect for all ethnic and cultural identities. The FGD participants also examined the importance of assuring that the education system produced the practical capabilities needed to support the grassroots economic needs of the nation. For instance, they considered the importance of providing vocational training. To support their ambitions for Myanmar's future system of education, the participants argued that education must be given higher priority in governmental policymaking and budgeting.

FGD participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in our "learning discussions." They also indicated that these learning discussions should be continued in the future to further inform the direction of governance-building and the civic education that will be needed to support it.

Summarising participant comments

The following is a list of short phrases produced by the study's FGD analyst that summarise all comments made by participants in each FGD related to the theme of ideas regarding the future of governance.

FGD 1, Chiang Mai – NGO workers, students, professionals, ¼ activists

No responses

FGD 2, Mae Sot – Former government employees, students; educator, ¾ activists

Singapore government as a model; Establishing a sound, good, politically unbiased government; Revisiting 2015-2020 (pre-coup) policies about role and structural location of district administrators; Look to example of U.S. local government administration; Action 8 (American NGO) model village pilot focused on government administration training, decision-making structure and processes, and problem-solving; Decentralization; Changing mindset of army and current administrators; Removing retirees from community administration; Do not ignore indigenous people in villages; Continue this FGD research process

FGD 3, Mae Sot – students, NGO worker, educator, ¾ activists

Need to include the voices and practices of ethnic people in the federal system; Translating ethnic languages to Burmese about ethnic customs; Publishing the Constitution and laws in other ethnic language in addition to Burmese; Elected township/village administrators instead of General Administration Department rule; Establish civil-military relations; Genuine farmer representation for farmer organizations. If (a farmer) is uneducated or has language barriers, can recruit a proxy; Military education system influencing access to knowledge about rights; creating doubt about revolution; Education system reform – away from "content" to "critical thinking"; Distinguish the role of the military in the Constitution; Training for village/ward administrators; Rule of law, military must follow the Constitution; Resist dictatorship, even within PDF and resistance groups; Democratic education system; Representative for 1) grassroots people; 2) education; 3) political affairs; 4) administration expert; 5) management expert should be included in village/ward administration; Administrators must have good attitudes and community sympathy; Including young change makers and education stakeholders in ward and village administration; Horizontal education system – Horizontal governance system; Leadership as more important than expertise forward and village administrators; Include the roles and rights of household families in administration structure; Basic human rights and humanity is critical. Freedom of thinking, expression, association

FGD 4, Mae Sot – educator, other professionals, students, ½ activists

Collective action – taking care of security as a community; Focus on different agendas – LGBT, Civil Society Organizations, NGOS, Monks; Sharing out proper information about administrators earlier in life so that people are aware and can participate; Education system needs to teach critical thinking; teach respect and understanding of other cultures; Practical and equitable (resources, staffing) education policy; Cooperation and discussion amongst “community” and “employees” on the business side can lead to good policy; Cannot necessarily use ideas from other countries, such as Thailand’s drug crime policy, due to specific circumstances of Myanmar, like people owning multiple identity cards; Focus on developing research and databases to address identity fraud issues, challenge of ethnic diversity (“gather to the the same”), and knowledge sharing. Research professionals can be more in touch with on the ground population; Adopt other surrounding countries’ systems; Working on bottom-up education reform starting at the school management level, then township. Township needs to participate in curriculum, teacher shortage, equipment issues; Use research to figure out what principles will work for all ethnic groups; Invest more in education / educational budget

FGD 5, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Laws enacted to prevent vote buying and corruption; need for educational reform to include life skills, moral lessons, manners and parenting education; serve teachers - teachers will serve the community; uproot the whole system; increasing government salaries to avoid corruption in trying to make outside money through bribery and corruption; change attitudes, disciplines and wisdom (knowledge) as a starting point; education about rights and laws from a young age; develop new constitution to replace 2008 one; focusing on the three pillars (executive, legislative, judiciary) – controlling laws & rules such as salary, installing and enforcing reward and punish systems; conduct research and use bottom up approach; direct vs. representative democracy, particularly to avoid elite representation of minority ethnic groups

FGD 6, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, educators, 9/10 activists

Ward administrators need training in human rights, how to improve their ward, negotiation skills; government needs to fix understaffing issue at hospitals; more youth participation in ward administration; more public participation in wards; ward administrator salary should shift away from being dependent on their ward; equal chances / not advantages for some; armed ethnic groups must actually represent their ethnicities; education/awareness programs to distant regions, including computer training and speaking classes; more salary to government staff to avoid corruption; Government budget should have more allocated for education than military; modify curriculum and teaching methods in education system; NUG should support CDM people, could convince more people to come on CDM side; catch up to international education system; change curriculum

FGD 7, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, students, 9/10 activists

No military involvement in government administration; ward, village, township, district, region/state government should be accountable to their ward/village etc, not focused on elections; vote based upon policy, not party; use internet to disseminate knowledge to people living in wards and villages; shift mindset of ordinary citizens away from bribery / negotiation to get ahead; invest in improved education, transportation and health systems; don’t put more money in Yangon, Mandalay, developed places; formulate law for township administrators – must meet the needs of their township/village; elect representatives

based on ethnic diversity – all should have a right to representation in parliament; draft new constitution first. Focus on better laws. Then education, health, ethnic issues later; citizens need to pay taxes to avoid civil servant corruption and develop strong economic governance; strong rule of law will lead to developing economy, will encourage citizens to be more knowledgeable, grassroots people will be encouraged, ethnic people will benefit for natural resources; top leadership needs check, recheck, counter check system; police or GAD is impossible to reform; funds should flow directly and effectively to the jungle areas; businessmen are essential participants in the building of the future state – business sector needs to be developed; village infrastructure development; school discipline flourishing

FGD 8, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, 4/6 activists

Modify the practice of tax corruption; change should happen at the ward administrator level first because they inform upper levels; training for ward administrators on protecting and communicating with the public; need change at the national government level first, because basic level administrators are faithful to them, even when they received training; need laws on how and where to inform government of when ward administrators treat public poorly; need to consider how to fulfill people's needs (salary) to remove corruption; if military staff want to enter government department, they must release their pension, which will allow for budget surplus; if military personnel transfer to government departments, they should enter from lower/basic level; the basic level must be strong and not submit to upper level; ward administrators should only be allowed to participate in the election after being trained how to treat the village; ward administrator office should have at least one staff; adopt Thailand's system of health and education. In Thailand they show parents how to treat children, need to shift individual mindset of children and parents; Police should get freedom from the military; military should be controlled by the public; Media freedom, media rights; fight both military dictatorship and democracy dictatorship; government that respects minorities, not majority influence; hope that 2008 constitution will be invalid; abolish the view that if children go to private school, they'll get a better education; government who listens to the voice of the public and changes policy; state should get own authority for themselves, while sharing the whole GDP; citizens should know their constitution; government to give equal opportunity to all ethnics; need a strong third party (not just UNDP and NLD)

FGD 9, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Daily teaching about human rights and voting; grassroots political education; government that prioritizes giving people their human rights regardless of whether people are educated on what their human rights are; Develop strong laws around governance, can conduct everything according to those laws; Every sector or department has to have protection policy for staff and cooperation policy with organizations; Need to simultaneously conduct fight for revolution and for legislation; Religious leaders in villages can be major barrier for governance / more powerful than head of village; Defense department should not enter the governance sector; All-inclusive educational system that is not corrupted by military involvement; Must focus on root causes of issues; Higher ranks in revolution need to know about political science, but comrades do not need to know (chain of command)

FGD 10, Chiang Mai – college students, educators, one of eight was activist

Equality for all ethnic groups; Need to include grassroots level people, grassroots workers and blue workers; Intense discussion of discrimination with intersectional approach (different ethnicities, men and women, skin color) – understanding that oppression faced is different among groups. Social learning can help facilitate this; Advocate for acceptance of women and young people as ward administrators; Education and socioeconomic

promotion for grassroots people; Government should support (subsidiary) NGOs and CSOs trying to foster mutual respect among community; Change education system by promoting different cultures through curriculum or classroom; Educational change as a priority; Allow ethnic groups to separate if they wish with bloodshed (comparison to US state system); Priority on building schools in village (vs. city); Increase vocational school opportunities (skills)

FGD 11, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

Teaching human rights to people in villages; Primary education should be free; Plan for education and identity card / nationality status of children who have grown up in Thailand; Build more understanding between Thailand and Myanmar people / vanish hatred & discrimination; Right for healthcare; Myanmar citizenship process reform

FGD 12, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

Hope for Myanmar democracy and business sector improvement; Myanmar needs shifts in mindset, education, health

Voices of participants

The following quotations from FGD/learning discussion participants reflect the collective experiences and ideas of the study participants in terms of their ideas regarding the future of governance.

I have two hopes. First one hope is that we have discontent between us. I hope to solve this kind of discontent. I did not mean to negotiate with the military, I mean misunderstanding among ethnics each other in the community. I hope this kind of misunderstanding will be reconciled. The next one is that, I want all the people to feel that this land concern with us and we all own this land. This is my hope. I want them to try to get this kind of feeling because there are the people who derive from India and China in our country. I think they are visitor since I was in childhood, and also these people did not feel they concerned with this land. Because they did not receive anything from this country except discrimination, oppression and bullying. We can see this case especially in Muslim community. I want to remove this kind of discontent and all will be equal and concern in the country. I always hope the community with the people feel all are equal in the country.

There are a lot of the people in the village who did not know that they lost their human rights. They need to know their rights properly.

Education must be freedom and used to born the good citizen. The duty of education is not to produce the product but right now education produce the yes man. To summarize, I like bottom to up system. I want this system at education as well as the governance. To form this system the lower-level people, have capacity but their voice did not reach to the right place. So, they disappointed for that. If the system goes step by step until to the policy maker, all-inclusive problem will be explained. We have to think to include all groups right now only if it is a small group. For example, there are 100 seats, our country has great diversity, we have 100 seats to set up the policy, some are represented for 2 or more groups. This representative may not express their voice at that time “If we go from the community step by step, we can get different voice from them. If they can show the real fact, the governance mechanism will be effective. If we say local, it may be different. For example, a typical Buddhist village has the monastery, school and liquor shop, that all. There are on other religious buildings or other ethnics

groups. So the headmaster is Buddhist, most of the student are also Buddhist and all the villagers follow the instruction of the monk from the village monastery. The management style of this village may be different from other. Otherwise, if there have some other ethnics group then, other groups are minority and Buddhist are majority, then the management style will be other types. As much as I know in the civil law case, there have to negotiate with religion instruction. Other ethnic groups have their own tradition and custom. We cannot ignore that. So that kind of group community has different style of management. They need to reach the upper level that I think. So I accept the abovementioned argument. The bottom-up approach may be good, more effective and may reduce the representative problem. The voice from the lower level may reach to the upper level. This voice need not to loss during the process. So, we will go step by step such as local, state and union. It may be 3 steps. Among these 3 steps, if the final step can reach to the policy maker, this method will be more effective. There may be easy to arrange in education and health because there are easier to connect within each other in the local. It is not appropriate to submit with so many steps to get a school. For example, the teacher cannot calculate the ratio for the construction. They have to hire the professional with pay. They have so many problems for that. If we can conduct in the local stage, the process will be more effective because people will do more for their hometown including the infrastructure.

As for me, I have been in the jungle for armed resistance. I worked for revolution. How I view the old generation is that I want them to responsible and accountable in any organization. I want good leadership if I were a follower. For example, leadership is important in a battle. Likewise, leadership is important in organization. Regarding the justice, I want more responsible and accountable.

Regarding with the ward administrator, they played the main role in the coup. They know who is activist or CDM in the ward. I had this knowledge in person because they know what I have done in the ward. They informed to the upper level who cannot know what I had done in the ward. I think the basic level must be changed first as the main point.

We need to adopt the law how to apply these. For example, if the public was treated badly, he can easily inform for it and this treatment must be took action. When I went to the government office, I was treated badly but I don't have a place to inform that. If I can inform about it, they dare not treat me like that again. The public also should respect to the staff and the public should not misuse the suggestion box. They all should have mutual respect each other

Theme 5: Assessment of barriers to governance change and transitional justice

Summary assessment

The barriers to creating change in governance and pursuing transitional justice identified by the FGD participants in Mae Sot and Chiang Mai are embedded in the societal tensions in Myanmar that resulted in the violence and oppression described in relation to Theme 1. Perhaps the most obvious barrier is the unwillingness of the military to relinquish power and desist from utilizing violence and the structures of control that protect its hold on power. The participants also see the military's hold on power as interwoven with other historic societal tensions in Myanmar, particularly those associated with inter-ethnic

tensions and the Bamar ethnic majority's continuing control of societal institutions, including government. The view of our participants is that these historic tensions serve as major deterrents to finding the trust and bases for understanding needed to both transform governance and create an environment conducive to TJ. The FGD participants also indicated that the long-established pattern of corruption at all levels will be a barrier to governance change and a TJ process. This continuing corruption is seen in areas such as distribution of international relief aid.

As a result of military dominance of all public institutions, the participants said it will be difficult to find a trusted entity within Myanmar to facilitate a TJ process. They indicate that the desire for revenge as opposed to justice, competition and blame assignment among resistance groups and their leaders, and lack of attention and accountability from the international community also serve as roadblocks to commencing this process. Societal divisions including rural versus urban interests, elites (including NUG leadership) versus common people, and religious and ethnic divides further threaten the development of trust and understanding needed for a TJ process and the reformation of governance in Myanmar. In addition to impeding good governance-building, the traditional top-down approach to Myanmar government is also seen as a barrier to developing the bottom-up understandings of the harms endured by the Myanmar people needed to support successful TJ.

Summarising participant comments

The following is a list of short phrases produced by the study's FGD analyst that summarise all comments made by participants in each FGD related to the theme of assessment of barriers to governance change and transitional justice.

FGD 1, Chiang Mai – NGO workers, students, professionals, ¼ activists

Finding a trusted body to manage the TJ process; University environment is dominated by military families; Impunity of military courts; Desire for revenge as respond to severe trauma (reference to genocide in Cambodia); Shifting landscape and actors – who exactly should be held accountable?; Urban / rural divide; Media and celebrity misinformation and corruption; Requires a complete mindset shift; Poverty and inability to educate and involve poorest people

FGD 2, Mae Sot – Former government employees, students; educator, ¾ activists

Dominant ideology of racism; It is easier for national government to govern with top-down approach; unwillingness to participate in bottom-up process; Lack of international attention and accountability from the international community; Access to information (people don't know where to start, where to go for information, what information to get); Negotiating between multiple different opinions and conflicts / complexity

FGD 3, Mae Sot – students, NGO worker, educator, ¾ activists

Budget constraints; Military will never give up; Nepotism, bias, abuse of power (military, religious leaders, administrators); Religion and politics mixing / power of religious leaders; Massacres, dictatorships within resistance groups; Mistrust and blame amongst resistance groups; Individual egos (such as administrators); Lack of education / easier to govern if people are not educated; Terminology and lack of understanding or consensus on words (for example, the word "federal"); Gender inequality; Religious and ethnic conflicts

FGD 4, Mae Sot – educator, other professionals, students, ½ activists

Tackling theft crimes that have increased in Yangon; Conflicts between ideologies in post-revolution era; Difficulty of pleasing all the victims for mass atrocities

FGD 5, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Lack of sustained support from CDM; corruption is deeply embedded in the way that government staff have been trained; difficulties of unifying and developing treaties between different states; impossible to achieve democracy without bloodshed; corruption in aid distribution (UNICEF for example)

FGD 6, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, educators, 9/10 activists

Custom of respecting elders can lead to elders only giving back favors to specific individuals; difficulty of abolishing the 2008 constitution, which favors the military; lack of participation of the public in political processes, campaigns

FGD 7, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, students, 9/10 activists

Older generation – no attention to improving education for the younger generation as they faced the same issues themselves; cultural considerations – Salon people, for example, live at the sea and cannot be forced against their culture to live in villages on land; no free and fair jurisdiction, there is impunity – they have law but no jurisdiction and therefore cannot get justice

FGD 8, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, 4/6 activists

Ethnic groups don't request their rights because of governance oppression & threats; military impunity through the court system

FGD 9, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Fear of joining revolutionary efforts - loss of jobs (in the military, police, army) and community; Need checks and balances system for police, better communication between police and public; Most people are weak in political knowledge – this could negatively impact post-revolution building; For transitional justice, how to handle people's emotions or eye-for-an-eye mentality to address injustices

FGD 10, Chiang Mai – college students, educators, one of eight was activist

Military informants within revolution spaces; Who gets to decide what justice looks like (the right "offset" of the crime). Who gives permission for reconciliation? Conflict re: diversity of people in governance v. qualifications of people; Ethnic bias in creating educational curriculum; Handing over the legacy of the older generation to younger generation; and generational bias; Small, on-the-ground groups don't have funding compared to NUG; NUG disproportionate influence, lack of adding voice from CSOs, NGOs on the ground; People's basic needs are not being met – difficult to participate in CDM, revolution

FGD 11, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

No responses

FGD 12, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

Difficulty negotiating between different armed groups fighting the government

Voices of participants

The following quotations from FGD/learning discussion participants reflect the collective experiences and ideas of the study participants in terms of assessment of barriers to governance change and transitional justice.

Women cannot get the position among the community. It is because women participation is less than men. My friend wants his ward to recognize as the town so he tried to do so much. He persuades women to participant in his campaign. At the end, he had to run away like that because of lack of participation of the public. Public participation is important. There is no cooperation for the public.

I think Myanmar has a lot of armed groups who are fighting the government. So, after they fight back to the government, it may difficult to negotiate each other.

There has been a conflict between men and adults about their believe and concept. The conflict will be grown in the future. The next part is that. So many ward administrators have been changed in my town anonymously. So many military informers have been assassinated in the villages. So, the hatred will grow among the people. There are so many issues at the grassroots level. The people from the management of post transitional period should aware this kind of issue. Although there is a good policy, the people who will implement the policy didn't have awareness regarding the problem, the policy will be useless and unsuccessful. So according to my experience, trauma, and clashes are associated with the revolution. I think that it will become a big issue. The conflicts will be happened between men who are influenced by conservative concepts and adults.

In my place, accessibility to basic education is lack and thus we are to go to the nearest town which is one of the reasons why many students drop out. Another reason is that poverty. Those students from the families living in the poverty have to help their parents on the agricultural fields . . . and thus inevitably drop out of school. In my case, I was lucky to continue my education. However, many such students lose their rights and opportunities to access and attain education in schools. The village administrator . . . does not take care resulting many such students in those communities live on idle life having plenty of time but nothing to do much to improve their lives. The older people including many such administrator take it for granted to reasoning themselves that they also lived in the same situation in the past and thus paid no or less attention to improving access to education for young generation. Perhaps it means those adults lived once in such inadequacy seem to be complacency with existing situation since they have had no such exposures and insights from improvements and advancements that the outside world has had today.

We have no free and fair jurisdiction. Thus, why there is impunity. We have law but no jurisdiction. Therefore, we cannot get justice. We are weak in jurisdiction.

I cannot accept the handover of the generation. The elder handover the legacy to the younger. I am worry whether that process will be limitation the ability of learning for the next generation. In the recent days, although they keep a place for the young generation, they want the young generation to cooperate the innovation of the young and the experience of the elder. I think their experience come from their era, so it cannot cooperate every time. I worry about it; I can be done like that when I will get the age. I can say like that while I was young age. I may be done nonsense things when I am getting the age. I think the concept of handover the legacy may be a barrier. There may have many good things to learn. We can learn how to overcome when we

face the same situation with same experience. The next generation should resolve with the guidance depend on the problem. I don't mean to neglect them we will accept some. We should learn from our own experience, lead our generation by ourselves and record our own history. This is the responsibility of the generation.

Theme 6: Perceptions regarding an approach that links grassroots governance-building and MTJ

Summary assessment

The FGD participants did not offer any detailed analysis or critique of the conceptualisations of grassroots governance-building, MTJ, and linking the two together as represented in this report. However, they offered substantial agreement with the general concepts of bottom-top governance, emphasis on inclusive participatory grassroots decision-making processes, and strengthening administrative competence and capacity at the village level. They also emphasised that inter-identity understanding and trust-building at the grassroots level was essential to prepare the ground for a transitional justice process. Thus, they demonstrated substantial understanding of and support for the general concepts that gave rise to the approach governance-building and justice-seeking approach presented in this report.

This study's research design framed this series of FGDs in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot as more than an "objective" process of collecting evidence via qualitative means to answer a set of research questions. Rather, in line with the study's empowerment and advocacy missions, through these cross-generational learning discussions the research team sought to learn from the participants' experiences and perceptions, exchange ideas regarding how Myanmar might both build grassroots-oriented governance and create a sustainable pathway toward justice-seeking and stimulate reactions from the participants regarding these ideas. In other words, beyond its utility as a research tool, the FGD approach that was used in this study was intended to be a form of deliberation that would both mimic the model of deliberative democracy that MARG has proposed for Myanmar's future, but to also serve as a launching point for the implementation of that approach among the members of the Myanmar diaspora in Thailand. Among the strongest reactions that our participants offered regarding these ideas involved their positive embrace of this FGD/learning discussion approach as an instrument of deliberative democracy that they hope can continue to support a just and democratic vision for Myanmar's future.

Summarising participant comments

The following is a list of short phrases produced by the study's FGD analyst that summarise all comments made by participants in each FGD related to the theme of perceptions regarding an approach that links grassroots governance-building and MTJ.

FGD 1, Chiang Mai – NGO workers, students, professionals, ¼ activists

Interest in continued conversations on these topics

FGD 2, Mae Sot – Former government employees, students; educator, ¾ activists

FGD research process is useful and a means of listening to the voice of the people; More of these mutual discussion processes around differing views will allow for a positive result; Many benefits of this process – collecting more and better research and disseminating this information to the public will strengthen administrative system; These concepts and the FGD session provided new framing and ideas for justice for those who were wronged

FGD 3, Mae Sot – students, NGO worker, educator, ¾ activists

Interest in continuing to hold trainings and workshops

FGD 4, Mae Sot – educator, other professionals, students, ½ activists

“upper” level needs to listen to the “lower level” complaints; the focus should be on ending the local war and focusing on the federal, the revolution

FGD 5, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Focus on bottom or community level via teachers, who can then serve their community; need to take account of the voices from the ground – bottom up; There is strengthen in problem-solving in this roundtable setting, with people of different professions and lives

FGD 6, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, educators, 9/10 activists

In bottom-up system, all-inclusive is important – persuade people to come to NUG side versus separating

FGD 7, Mae Sot –former government employees, professionals, students, 9/10 activists

In rehabilitation period, consider broadly up to national level as well as micro level. National level government can address ethnic oppression, development in rural areas; sessions are opportunity to learn from each other, understanding something they didn’t know before

FGD 8, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, 4/6 activists

Change should happen at the ward administrator level first because they inform upper levels; training for ward administrators on protecting and communicating with the public; need change at the national government level first, because basic level administrators are faithful to them, even when they received training

FGD 9, Mae Sot – professionals, educators, former government employees, more than ½ activists

Need public participation as much as possible in restructuring period; Bottom-up system is necessary to win the revolution; Need top-down approach to transitional period using strong Law, then potentially transition to bottom-up

FGD 10, Chiang Mai – college students, educators, one of eight was activist

Injustice starts from the small/community level out, for example in education system

FGD 11, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

Good space to share personal experiences

FGD 12, Chiang Mai – all Gen Z students in Thailand, no self-identified activists

No responses

Voices of participants

The following quotations from FGD/learning discussion participants reflect the collective experiences and ideas of the study participants in terms of their perceptions regarding an approach that links grassroots governance-building and MTJ.

. . . if we say the country development, we should focus on the bottom or community level. As I am the teacher assigned in the villages, the more these teachers are effectively serviced, the more they will effectively serve and dutiful their services to the community.

We lost our justice in the whole of Myanmar because we didn't have transitional justice. Since we can't create this transitional justice, we meet injustice from micro level to institutional level.

. . . I want there to be justice for everyone . . . we can do this only if we can start from bottom like small villages. Because every state has its own problems so transitional justice can only be implemented from the bottom up, starting from the village level. All ethnic groups will be equal by the law . . . If it can be done in one place, it can be achieved if it spreads to all places. Because of that, the red tape system that we don't like may be changed.

Regarding . . . governance . . . It should be step by step such as village, township and so on. It will be better to reconstructed the governance mechanism. If the upper-level commands how to elect the ward administrator, it will not be easy.

Before attending this discussion, I want there to be justice for everyone. But when we discussed here, as we said here, we can do this only if we can start from bottom like small villages. Because every state has its own problems so transitional justice can only be implemented from the bottom up, starting from the village level. All ethnic groups will be equal by the law. I like this because this is something I didn't think about. I didn't know that the US was doing a pilot project in Karen, Kayah and Chin, but now I know. If it can be done in one place, it can be achieved if it spreads to all places. Because of that, the red tape system that we don't like may be changed. I like this workshop. I only want to do justice to those who have been wronged. I couldn't figure out how to do it, but now I can figure it out

VI. Assessment of findings and implications

This research was initiated with the objective of identifying correspondence between a set of grassroots governance-building and justice-seeking ideas and those of FGD participants from the Myanmar immigrant/refugee community in Thailand and a selected group of Myanmar service organisations. To complement the evidence that emerged from the FGDs the researchers also initiated conversations with a variety of Myanmar service organisations with offices in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot regarding MARG's conceptualisation of grassroots governance-building linked with micro-transitional justice. The evidence from the FGDs and conversations with the service organisations is that these governance-building and justice-seeking ideas respond to the needs that emerged from FGD participants' descriptions of their experiences of harms and their assessment of problems that must be addressed. These organisations also expressed interest in continuing conversations with MARG, with two of the organisations demonstrating their commitment to collaboration by providing material support for the FGDs in Chiang Mai.

Perhaps the most important implication that emerges from this evidence is that work concerning linking grassroots governance-building with MTJ is warranted and should be continued. The results of the FGD/learning discussions offer substantial support for the idea that these concepts might be an important platform for addressing Myanmar's systemic problems associated with inter-ethnic tensions, corruption, and lack of responsiveness, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in governance that are deeply rooted in every corner of the social and cultural lifeways of the nation.

The researchers assess that the study adhered to the suggestions for caution and care in conducting "inclusive analysis" regarding Myanmar presented by Haines and Buchanan (2023). In recruiting and interacting with the study's FGD/learning discussion participants the research team applied a perspective that recognised the intersectionality of identities. The voiced perspectives, experiences and ideas of the study's participants that cross gender, ethnicity, age, religion, and other identities clearly contributed to the emergent/adaptive conduct and ultimate evidence produced by the research. The researchers also assess that the study responded to and offered new evidence in relation to Chew and Jap's (2023) emphasis on the importance of understanding the attitudes of Myanmar's youth to the future of the nation's governance and inter-ethnic relations.

Guided by evidence that lends support for its ideas found via the FGD/learning discussions and its conversations with Myanmar service organisations, the researchers intend to continue to explore linking grassroots governance-building and MTJ and the interests of Myanmar service organisations in Thailand. MARG has been in conversations with the leadership and staff members of the following six organisations: Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) (AAPPB), Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR), BEAM Education Foundation, Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica (NLTA), Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) and the The Tea Leaf Center.

For a next phase of its research, MARG will organise a forum with these organisations to explore models of grassroots governance-building and MTJ. Other Myanmar service organisations, interest groups, and the Myanmar immigrant/refugee community living in Thailand will be invited to participate.

As education was a frequent focus of conversation among the FGD/learning discussion participants, following the forum, MARG will collaborate with other stakeholders such as BEAM Education Foundation to develop a governance-building and justice-seeking curriculum for community education. If it is found to be effective, this curriculum can become an important component of the approach to linking grassroots governance-building with MTJ for which it advocates.

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Appendix 1: Methodology

The researchers utilized the following qualitative research approach to accomplish its research objectives.

FGD approach

The researchers established a target of twelve FGDs to be conducted from a sample of the target population, with 8 to 12 participants for each FGD. This would require the recruitment of between 96 and 144 participants. In light of the activism role that it has played in response to the coup, and in anticipation of its future political and social leadership roles, the research team sought to overrepresent the Gen Z population in the FGDs. The approach that it used to realise this strategy was to conduct half of the FGDs as Gen Z only and half of the FGDs as half Gen Z participants and half age 35 and over participants. The researchers also sought to recruit a collective group of participants across the FGDs that was reasonably representative of the demographics of the target population in terms of gender, ethnicity, religion, education, and other characteristics.

The FGDs were facilitated by two or three members of the research team, with a lead facilitator, and one or two observers/note takers. The facilitators utilised a script to guide the “learning discussions.” The content of the script was constructed to stimulate conversation on each of the three objectives for Goal 1. The script appears as an appendix to this report. In the interest of stimulating maximum participation among each FGD’s participants, the facilitators were encouraged to adapt the script to stimulate responses. Additionally, based on what they learn from FGD to FGD, they were encouraged to further adapt the script to encourage participation, so long as the three objectives were addressed. In effect the approach used for the development and application of the FGD/learning

discussion approach intentionally mimicked ideas promoted by MARG for the future of governance in Myanmar: It should be based on deliberative processes based on learning across identities in grassroots settings.

A central concern regarding conducting the FGDs was security – for the facilitators and the participants. The Myanmar military regime has on-going interest in forcing members of the Myanmar community in Thailand to return to the country. Since it actively surveils northern Thailand to identify and act against some members of the research team and FGD participants, conducting the FGDs on a low-profile basis and taking other steps to protect the identity and visibility of participants and the facilitators was a continuous concern.

Sampling and participant recruitment approach

In light of security concerns in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot, sampling and recruitment of members of the target population to participate in FGDs was extremely challenging. In fact, identifying and recruiting a representative sample was impossible. The researchers pursued a convenience and snowball sampling and recruitment approach to realise a collective participant profile across the FGDs as close as possible to that of that identified in the research design.

Due to its security concerns the research team could not pursue a publicly visible strategy of recruitment of participants. As a result, it relied upon its network of informal contacts with Myanmar related organisations and individuals in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot to identify and recruit participants.

Analysis approach

With the consent of FGD/learning discussion participants, each of the twelve FGDs was recorded. The recording of each FGD was translated from Burmese or Thai (many of the participants in the Gen Z FGDs in Chiang Mai primarily spoke Thai) to English. The English transcripts were analysed according to the following procedures:

1. Themes were identified to align with the topics identified in the learning discussion script (see appendix) and documentation regarding MARG's approach to grassroots governance and micro-transitional justice. Concepts associated with restorative justice (e.g., Zehr, 2015) were applied to compliment themes based on the research team's previous work to provide a coding framework. The restorative justice lens was particularly valuable in relation to critical questions that relate to developing specific, actionable solutions. These questions involve the purpose of a justice process, who is involved and impacted, who should be held accountable, and what accountability looks like for involved parties. The themes identified in this study echo these principles.

2. A codebook was created in Nvivo to include these core themes and then used to code the transcripts. As the transcripts were incrementally coded, the codebook was revised to reflect themes that were most consistently emerging across transcripts. For instance, the theme of “resistance or responses to harm and injustice” resulted from this emergent approach to analysis development. Acts of resistance identified by participants were deemed relevant to the concept of both grassroots governance and micro-transitional justice because they emphasize the myriad ways that Myanmar people are taking grassroots actions to generate collective change.

3. After coding each transcript with Nvivo, the analyst reviewed the coded narrative for each theme and created short summaries for a set of FGD coding notes. The coding notes provided guidance for the development of the analysis narrative that appears below.

4. The research team reviewed the resultant analysis and developed the higher-level analysis included in this report.

Appendix 2: FGD/Learning Discussion Script

The facilitator will introduce the Myanmar Advocacy Research Group – 4 minutes

Our group – MARG – was organized to develop and promote ideas that will guide Myanmar – or Burma, if you prefer – toward a democratic, inclusive, peaceful, and just future. Over the past year we have developed a model of community building that is based on deliberative democracy on the grassroots level.

The ideas that support our ideas regarding community building come from work that was done during the decade prior to the military coup d'état last year. We have used evidence from rural villages and urban neighborhoods where villagers and urban residents organized on an inclusive basis – including all identity groups (across genders, age groups, ethnic and linguistic identity, and religions) – to identify their community needs and actions needed to address those needs.

In the process that includes this learning discussion with you today, we are seeking to expand upon these ideas to consider the potential for developing a common identity among different groups that have experienced similar forms of injustice over the many years of conflict and instability in Myanmar.

Through sharing your experiences of injustice in the form of violence and other experiences of oppression and learning about the experiences of others, we hope that you and we together can develop ideas that can help us build our communities in the future and initiate a process of transitional justice. We think that meaningful transitional justice in the context of Myanmar and be best approached by building these understandings on the community level – through what we refer to as “micro transitional justice,” or “MTJ.”

MARG believes that this community level approach should be the basis of public decision-making and policymaking at the state or regional level and the national level in the future. Understanding the needs and injustice experiences of Myanmar people on the community level can contribute to a more effectively governed and more just nation in the future.

We believe that the community level is the most practical and realistic platform for different groups to work together to seek justice and stability in Myanmar.

1. The facilitator will summarize the learning session process – 4 minutes

In support of our vision for Myanmar's future, MARG is initiating a learning process with expatriate Myanmar people living in Thailand. The goals of this process include:

- Identifying the community building and justice priorities of Myanmar people.
- Introducing and initiating a dialogue concerning MARG's ideas regarding an inclusive and deliberative community-based form of governance that can serve as a foundation for building democratic and just institutions of governance in the future.
- Introducing and initiating a dialogue across identity groups regarding a realistic community-based approach to transitional justice that we refer to as “micro justice-building.”

This will involve three components:

1. An open forum of Myanmar people and others interested in a democratic, inclusive, peaceful, and just future for Myanmar to be conducted in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot.
2. A survey of Myanmar people and others interested in a democratic, inclusive, peaceful, and just future for Myanmar that will solicit their ideas concerning priorities for the future of governance and justice in Myanmar.
3. A series of focus group discussions (“FGDs”) that we refer to as “learning discussions”

in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot that will be facilitated by members of the MARG team. These are designed to clarify and build upon shared concerns and priorities of the participants and further engage with ideas regarding community building and “micro justice-building.”

Today’s learning discussion is one of these learning discussions.

2. The facilitator will introduce the idea of micro transitional justice – 4 minutes

Transitional justice includes formal and informal action by community, state, and international actors to provide accountability for gross human rights violations in societies transitioning away from legacies of internal conflict and state repression.

MARG believes Myanmar needs a transitional justice approach that includes the nation’s many identity groups to reconcile and learn more about the meaning of transitional justice and the importance of working together to accomplish its objectives.

Successful reconciliation requires “social learning” between groups that may have viewed each other as enemies in the past. This should involve an active process of redefinition or reinterpretation of reality—what people consider real, possible, and desirable – on the basis of new knowledge that they gain about other groups and their experiences of injustice in the past.

MARG believes that processes of sharing experiences and learning together such as this one provides practical opportunities for groups to understand each other to support reconciliation across groups and develop a common identity that will support a more just future for Myanmar.

Our view of transitional justice begins with these learning discussions where group participants share their localized experiences of injustice in their lives and what they think should be done to prevent these injustices in the future.

This localized or “micro” focus is why we refer to this as part of a “micro transitional justice” or “MJT” process. To MARG micro transitional justice means groups with different identities learning to live together in peace and shared respect.

3. The facilitator will introduce the idea of inclusive and deliberative community building – 4 minutes

MARG suggests that national governance-building toward democratic and sustainable governance in Myanmar at the national and state/provincial levels must be the result of a system of inclusive and deliberative democratic community building that begins at the rural village and urban neighbourhood level.

The governance logic that will guide Myanmar’s post-military regime future should be grounded in understandings of problems and collective action on the sub-district level.

We argue that Myanmar’s most pressing problems involve the daily survival needs of villagers and urban residents. There must be collective action taken to address community problems that is built on the community level and then projected into governance through the district level and up to the state/region and national levels of policymaking and administrative action.

MARG’s idea of inclusive and deliberative community governance is about diverse groups learning to work together to solve community problems in peace and with respect.

4. The facilitator will ask each participant to describe their experience with injustice in Myanmar – 32 minutes, 4 minutes for each participant

Please briefly share with the group your personal experiences of injustice in your community.

If you are willing, please discuss your experiences of injustice that include the Tatmadaw, other government agencies, ethnic armed organizations, or other groups in your community.

Prompt: How recent were these experiences?

Prompt: Do you know of members of groups that are different from you – in terms of age, ethnicity, language, religion, location, or gender – who have also experienced injustice?

5. The facilitator will ask each participant for their opinion regarding the idea of inclusive and deliberative community governance – 32 minutes, 4 minutes for each participant

What do each of you think of the idea of inclusive and deliberative governance on the community level – in your neighborhood or village?

Prompt: Do you think that is possible to work with different ethnic or linguistic or religious or gender or age groups to identify and prioritize community needs and things that should be done to address those needs?

6. Break – 20 minutes

7. The facilitator asks the group to discuss the relationship between micro transitional justice and inclusive and deliberative community building – 14 minutes

Do you agree with MARG’s analysis that inclusive and deliberative community building as we have described it can contribute to developing shared understandings and identity across group identities and support our idea of “micro transitional justice?”

Prompt: In other words, do you think that learning to work together for community building can help us learn to live together in peace and with mutual respect across identity groups?

Prompt: Why or why not?

8. The facilitator asks each participant to consider the concept of hope within a micro transitional justice framing – 32 minutes, 4 minutes for each participant

A concept that is important to the process of transitional justice is “hope.” Hope is a subjective concept – it means different things to different people.

In the context of this discussion, we could say that hope means that you think that it is possible to accomplish the community building and micro justice objectives that we have described here.

Do you think that it is possible? Do you have hope according to these terms?

Prompt: Do you define hope for the future of Myanmar is another way?

Prompt: If so, according to your definition of hope, do you see hope for the future of Myanmar?

9. The facilitator asks the group to reflect on the idea of making inclusive and deliberative community building as the platform of Myanmar's future governance system – 14 minutes

From our discussion thus far today, do you have additional reflections to offer to the group regarding the idea of making inclusive and deliberative community building the platform for future governance in Myanmar and supporting hope for the idea of micro transitional justice?

10. The facilitator asks the group to select two of its members to represent its ideas at a forum of expatriate Myanmar people – 20 minutes

MARG plans to have an open forum of Myanmar people living in Thailand.

We would like to have each of our learning discussion groups select two representatives to present your group's ideas on community building and micro transitional justice at the forum in Chiang Mai.

Do you as a group agree that this is a good idea?

If you agree, please select two members of this group to serve as your representatives.



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