

# Emerging Scholarship on Chin State and Beyond: Diversity, Transformation, and Continuity.

2nd International Conference on  
**BURMA/MYANMAR  
STUDIES**

**CALL FOR PANEL PAPERS**

Chin State and Beyond:  
Diversity, Transformation,  
and Continuity

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**16-18 FEBRUARY 2018**  
*University of Mandalay*



2nd International Conference on Burma/Myanmar Studies  
February 17, 2018  
University of Mandalay, Mandalay, Myanmar

## **Panel Conveners**

Ms. Sena Galazzi (SOAS)  
Mr. Sang Hnin Lian (Mahidol)



The Chin State Academic Research Network (CSARN)  
TheHILLS Education

## CHIN STATE PANEL SERIES

### Panel 1: History and Social Memory: Identity, Diversity, and Borderlands of Chin State.

- 'Cartography of Self-Assertion': Rethinking Community and Relationships among Transborder Peoples in the Indo-Burma Borderlands. By Dr Pum Khan Pau
- Highlands Gospel: Baptist Christianity in Myanmar's Chin State, a Visual and Narrative Projection. By Aria Danaparamita

### Panel 2: Climate Change, Water, Land, and Disaster Management

- Post-disaster Recovery in Chin State, Myanmar: Analyzing the Building Codes for Disaster Risk Reduction in Built Environment. By Hlawn Tin Cuai
- Climate Justice: Employing Feminist Participatory Action Research in Hakha. By Flora Bawi Nei Mawi and Rose Par Bawi Zi
- Water insecurity in Hakha Town, Chin State, Myanmar: Structural violence and the production of water scarcity. By Dr. Carl Middleton

### Panel 3: Development and Transitions in Chin State

- Finding a Middle Way: Touring Theatre, Migration, and Cultural Politics in Chin State. By Dr. Matthew Yoxall and Thila Min
- Treading Lightly: Changing Aid Spaces in Chin State. By Sena Galazzi Lian
- Kaladan Project: The Impact of India's Regionalisation and Act East Policy on Chin People. By June Nilian Sang
- The Role of Civil Society and Chin Non-Governmental Institutions in Chin State's Democratic Transition. By Lian Bawi Thang

### Panel 4: Education and Access to Knowledge

- Educational Needs and Barriers for Marginalized Chin Students in India. By Sang Hnin Lian and Sui Meng Par
- How Important is using mother tongue in public to the Chin Community in Myanmar? By Nicola Edwards
- Social Media Use among Hakha Youth: Does it Enhance the Acquisition of Political Knowledge? By Philip Nun Uk Thang

## Event Description

This first-of-its-kind multi panel series entirely focused on Chin State and surrounding areas is presented at the **2nd International Conference on Burma/Myanmar Studies**, Mandalay University, February 17th, 2018 will open with a first panel on History and Social Memory, where presenters will discuss identity, diversity, and belonging in Chin State. The second panel will focus on Climate Justice, Water, and post-disaster recovery. The third panel will focus on Development and Transitions. The fourth panel will address Education and Access to Education. The aim of this event is to bring together for the first time a number of academics, early career scholars, and young civil society researchers who are currently involved (or interested in getting involved) in scholarly discussions on Chin State. At the Panel Series, the event convenors will also launch the Chin State Academic Research Network.

## Panel Details

### **Panel 1: History and Social Memory: Identity, Diversity, and Borderlands of Chin State.**

#### **Panel Chair/Discussant: Dr Mandy Sadan**

Dr Mandy Sadan is Reader in the History of South East Asia at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Although she teaches and researches the history of south east Asia, her interests also extend into north east India, China and beyond. She is particularly interested in the study of borderlands and has spent most of her recent academic life trying to understand the borderlands of Burma/Myanmar and issues relating to conflict in the region. Most of her research and writing is connected with the Singpho/Kachin/Jingpo region, but she also uses this as an entry point for trying to understand a wide range of issues around social inclusion and exclusion, and the difficulties of trying to learn about the histories of places and communities that are 'hidden'.

#### **‘Cartography of Self-Assertion’: Rethinking Community and Relationships among Transborder Peoples in the Indo-Burma Borderlands. By Dr Pum Khan Pau**

**Dr. Pum Khan Pau** is Assistant Professor, Department of History, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India. His areas of research interest include the Indo-Burma borderlands with reference to the Chin, Kuki, Mizo, Zomi communities during colonial and postcolonial periods. His PhD thesis was entitled: “The Chins and the British, 1835-1935”, awarded by North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India. He has published several articles in international, national and regional journals.

#### **Abstract**

Several maps showing the geographical areas, transcending man-made borders, of people of the same ethnic community have emerged in the Indo-Burma borderlands in the postcolonial period. Such development, which may be called ‘cartography of self-assertion’, aims not only to counter state borders that divide people of the same ethnic community but also seeks to assert the historical connect and ethnic commonality of divided transborder people.

On the one hand, the paper seeks to analyse to what extent borders creates 'difference' and 'otherness' among the Zo people. How did border reconfigure an indigenous space and leave a huge impact on the socio-cultural lives of the people? Apart from the territorial division, to what extent have borders destroyed Zo ethnic solidarity and also impinged on the psychology and relations of the people? On the other hand, the paper also seeks to probe how the people, who have not been reconciled to state borders, attempts to reestablish their relations across the border through socio-cultural interactions and exchange. The paper argues that terms such as Chin, Kuki, Mizo, Zomi are broad categories, either imposed or indigenized, being used for the same people in different contexts and the failure to arrive at a common name for these people is itself a legacy of colonial and postcolonial border.

Looking at Chin state and its adjoining areas through the perspective of the 'people', the paper would like to argue that there is a significant change in the way the indigenous Zo people looks at the border today and this has great implications on their relationships across the border. Today, the Indo-Burma border remains the same, nevertheless, its meaning has changed: from a 'divider' to a 'unifier', from an imaginary line that created 'otherness' to an imaginary line that facilitates 'dialogue' and 'interactions'.

### **Highlands Gospel: Baptist Christianity in Myanmar's Chin State, a Visual and Narrative Projection. By Aria Danaparamita**

**Aria Danaparamita** recently completed her MA in History of Art at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London. She holds a BA in History from Wesleyan University. Her research revolves around colonial networks of knowledge and art production related to archaeological practices during the 19th century in South and Southeast Asia, with a focus on British-ruled Burma and Java. She has also worked as a journalist and photographer covering politics, human rights, as well as art and culture in Southeast Asia, contributing to publications including *Al Jazeera*, *Foreign Policy*, and *The Diplomat*. She previously served as Weekend Editor at *The Cambodia Daily*, which was recently nominated for the 2017 Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Prize.

#### **Abstract**

Highlands Gospel is a photography project that presents a portrait of Baptist life in Chin State, Myanmar. The project is based on fieldwork in March-April 2016 in communities around Falam and Hakka. In these communities, Christianity lies at the heart of cultural production, social life, economic/welfare systems, and politics. The portraits offer insight into people's individual relationship to Christianity, based on photographs, interviews, and observations of church services, gospel choir, bible studies, funerals, and weddings. This approach is informed by research on the history of the Baptist mission and critical theories on performance and ethnogenesis. Yet rather than impose an analytical narrative, the project foregrounds those personal stories as avenues to explore the historical and cultural impact of the Baptist mission, whilst gesturing towards broader themes of historiography, ethnicity, and collective memory.

Photographer: Aria Danaparamita (MA History of Art, SOAS University of London)  
 Sound recordist: Julius Bjornson (BA Ethnomusicology, Wesleyan University)  
 Fixer/primary translator: Sang Te (Graduate of Chin Institute of Social Science)

## **Panel 2: Climate Change, Water, Land, and Disaster Management**

### **Panel Chair/Discussant: Dr Naruemon Thabchumpon**

**Dr. Naruemon Thabchumpon** is Assistant professor in Politics at the Faculty of Political Science of Chulalongkorn University. She is the program Director of the Master of Arts in International Development Studies ([www.maids-chula.org](http://www.maids-chula.org)) and the Director of the Asian Research Center for Migration ([www.arcmtailand.com](http://www.arcmtailand.com)). She received her MA and PhD from the School of Politics and International Studies at the University of Leeds of United Kingdom. She is currently researching on the critical connections between human rights, human development and human security in ASEAN focusing on the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries. She is the author of numerous publications. Her recent publication is entitled 'Temporary Shelters and Surrounding Communities: Livelihood Opportunities, the Labor Market, Social Welfare and Social Security, published with Springer subseries on Migration Studies and a book chapter on the Thai case in "Living with Floods in a Mobile Southeast Asia", published with Routledge Studies in Development, Mobility and Migration.

### **Post-disaster Recovery in Chin State, Myanmar: Analyzing the Building Codes for Disaster Risk Reduction in Built Environment. By Hlawn Tin Cuai**

**Hlawn Tin Cuai** is a current MA Candidate in Architecture Design at Chulalongkorn University currently working on her thesis "Design for Post-Disaster Recovery: A Case Study of Temporary Shelter in Chin State, Myanmar". During her Masters, she took a one year break to work as Operations Manager for the Hakha Rescue Committee (HRC) for rescue and rehabilitation works in Hakha, Chin State, following devastation and landslides caused by cyclone Komen in 2015. She also served as Architect of Technical support group in Chin Committee for Emergency and Relief and Rehabilitation (CCERR). Cuai previously earned a BA in Architecture from Mandalay Technological University (2003), after which she worked as graduate architect at the Ministry of Construction, Chin State, for one year. She then joined Architect M. Thaw & Associates as Architect for seven years supervising on design and construction site of residential, public and office buildings in Yangon, Naypyitaw, and Hakha.

### **Abstract**

As disasters are inevitable, unpredictable and as they significantly impact the communities and the built environments, disaster management in responding and preparing for mitigation is very important for future resilience. In order to recover better and to make contingency planning, both union and local working groups need to link and work together in accordance with the disaster management law in the affected area. In 2015, some parts of the country were devastated by cyclone Komen of which Chin State was one of the most severely affected state of its built environment and infrastructure. Even before the disaster, Chin State was the poorest region of the country and geographically isolated area where development took place slower than other places. As the link between poverty and vulnerability remains very close, earlier assessments of needs, relief, response and disaster management were only able to access small number of villages which led to inadequate responses and rehabilitation. Moreover, the vulnerability increased when the damaged built environment and infrastructure were still in the process of repairing while the resettlement area also had many issues related with building codes and unskilled local building construction practices.

In order to reduce disaster risks and vulnerabilities in the future, there is a need to address existing challenges and prepare for future ones by focusing on assessing and understanding disaster risk and mitigation in building construction. There are some studies

on disaster management of infrastructure but need to explore more on how the building codes will mitigate the risks of the damaged inbuilt environments. This paper tries to find the vulnerability in built environments influenced by the existing building codes and practices, and propose recommendations which should be considered in preparedness for disaster resilience in Chin state of Myanmar.

**Climate Justice: Employing Feminist Participatory Action Research in Hakha. By Flora Bawi Nei Mawi and Rose Par Bawi Zi**

**Flora Bawi Nei Mawi** holds an MA in Social Science (Development Studies) from Chiang Mai University, Regional Centre for Social Sciences and Sustainable Development, where her thesis focused bride price practices in Southern Chin State. Together with her colleague **Rose Par Bawi Zi** they are paired with a young woman researcher and a mentor at Community Care for Emergency Response and Rehabilitation (CCERR) in conducting the research “Climate Justice – Feminist Participatory Action Research” with the grant support of Asia Pacific Women, Law and Development (APLWD).

Rose and Flora are Chin women who believe in challenging the structure that hinder the voices of their fellow Chin women. Both of them are currently conducting research with community women researchers and setting up alternative livelihood handicraft programs for women in *Hakha Thar* resettlement area in Hakha, Chin state. CCERR is looking to build on its successes to help make real its vision of humanity, development and peace for Chin people, never at the expense of other groups, and grounded in humanitarian need alone. Our research and analysis is driven by extensive, community-powered data: from the village-level up.

**Abstract**

Myanmar is the second most vulnerable country in the world with regards to vulnerability from extreme weather events related to climate change, as confirmed by the Global Risk Index 2016. At both global and regional level, although Myanmar’s CO2 emissions are relatively low, the commitment to set the milestone for the implementation of INDC submitted to UNFCCC in 2015 into NDC are encouraging but arguably ambitious. At the same time, the implementation of NDC at the local level is highly critical as the participation of women in its political transition as well as the suppressive governance structure for women. This research examines the case of post landslide relocation in Hakha, the capital town of Chin State in Myanmar. Chin State was hit by Cyclone Komen in 2015 which is the most extreme natural disaster in local living memory. With the management of the government and multi-stakeholders’ initiatives, its recovery was addressed but the meaningful participation of local residents remained ambiguous.

By employing a feminist participatory action research, the paper tries to reveal how Chin women have been disproportionately affected by the landslide and challenge the structure that hinder their participation in decision making process for pre- and post- landslide relocation. Most importantly, the paper attempts to take into account actions that contribute not only to a solution at the local level but also for the global discussion on the element of climate change.

**Water insecurity in Hakha Town, Chin State, Myanmar: Structural violence and the production of water scarcity. By Dr. Carl Middleton**

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Carl Middleton** is Deputy Director for Research Affairs on the MA in International Development Studies (MAIDS) Program, and Director of the Center for Social Development Studies (CSDS), in the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. His research interests orientate around the politics and policy of the environment in Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on environmental justice and the political ecology of water and energy. He presents research carried out alongside **Asst. Prof. Dr. Naruemon Thabchumpon**, and **Van Bawi Lian**

**Abstract**

In recent years, the population of Hakha Town, Chin State has faced growing water insecurity. This paper examines the underlying factors that have produced water insecurity. Our research involved two rounds of in-depth interviews and focus groups in Hahaha town in May 2015 and June 2016 with state, civil society, and community representatives. We situate our research within the fields of political ecology and peace studies, with a focus on water security.

With a growing population, demand for water is rising. However, water insecurity due to population growth is not the complete picture. Hakha's water sources have also become less productive due to watershed degradation and deforestation. This has resulted from road construction, agriculture expansion, house construction, and the establishment of two military bases on top of the Rung Mountain. As the town expanded into the watershed, there has been little watershed and urban planning. At present, Hakha town does not have a municipal water supply. In its absence, the population manage water through a combination of community water groups and small-scale private activities. Whilst broadly meeting basic needs, new migrant arrivals to the town in particular can struggle to access water. The upcoming commissioning of the Timit Dam will certainly help alleviate water shortages, but many questions remain towards the price of water and how it will be allocated.

We argue that the circumstances that precipitate water insecurity in Hakha town have in part emerged from deeper forms of structural violence. Thus, addressing water insecurity should not only be engaged at the level of technical planning, or even water governance, but also from a viewpoint of ensuring justice. We suggest that the transition to a quasi-civilian government, and sub-national governance reform, offers new opportunities for urban and watershed planning to address water insecurity.

### **Panel 3: Development and Transitions in Chin State:**

#### **Panel Chair & Discussant: Mai Rosalinn Zahau**

**Rosalinn Zahau** is a Chin woman. She is a Program Specialist with Open Society Myanmar Foundation, the Yangon-based affiliate of the Open Society Foundations network. Rosalinn previously worked with the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) in India. Her work at CHRO included conducting research on the conditions of Myanmar refugees in India, and documenting the human rights situation faced by the Chin society, and conducting advocacy. She represented CHRO and testified at the United Nations on Religious Freedom in Myanmar, and participated in the first European Parliament hearing about the human rights situation facing the Chin. Prior to joining CHRO, she was with the Euro-Burma Office for over a year. She has an extensive experience working with sexual and gender based violence survivors in the Chin community in India. She also volunteered and worked with various community based organizations in the Chin Community in India for many years on activities related to youth and women capacity building and fund raising. Rosalinn holds a Bachelor of Arts with honors in English literature from Hindu College, Delhi University and a Bachelor of Law degree from the Faculty of Law, Delhi University. She is fluent in Chin, English, Burmese and spoken Hindi. Views and opinions expressed in the conference will be based on her personal take on the issues as a Chin woman.

#### **Finding a Middle Way: Touring Theatre, Migration, and Cultural Politics in Chin State. By Dr. Matthew Yoxall and Thila Min**

**Thila Min** is the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Thukhuma Khayeethe, which is a contemporary performance troupe, based in Yangon. He holds a BA (English) from East Yangon University and an AA (General Studies) from Indiana University. Thila specialises in youth development, transferring performance skills to different communities, and bringing entertainment opportunities to economically disadvantaged people across Myanmar. Thila Min has participated in many international festivals as director and performer, such as the Stockholm Arts Festival (2010) and Bangkok Theater Festival (2011). He has participated in the Culture Visitor Program organized by the US State Department in 2009. In 2012, he received an Asian Cultural Council (New York) Fellowship Award, and later studied forum theater techniques in Singapore.

**Dr. Matthew Yoxall** is a theatre-maker, development consultant, and academic researcher. Much of his work has related to forced migration and refugees. Matt has a PhD from the National University of Singapore and is currently Affiliate Researcher at the Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development - RCSD, at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. He is also a core member of the research collective After Performance.

#### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on a theatre project that was made in August to October 2017. A play was created by Thukhuma Khayeethe (Arts Traveller) Theatre Group from Yangon, with the Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO) based in Hakha. With a focus on safer migration practices, and the broader narratives of what migration does for and to Chin State, this paper walks the reader through the complex processes and cultural politics of making CHRO's *Thialkamnak Darama* (migration drama), entitled *Dam Thein Kan Khua?*, or, Farewell Our Village? Overall the paper questions the export of Thukhuma Khayeethe's collaborative approaches to theatre-making into the Chin, largely Christian, community, and at this moment of socio-political transition. Attention is also placed on the affects and effects of investment in the country from the international development industry. The

context of the project usefully acts to centralise Chin State's geo-cultural and linguistic diversity, rather than marginalising it, and attends to the impacts therein on creative and critical decision-making in this theatrical scenario.

The paper probes the basis under which thinking from within the Chin space can activate cross-fertilisation of thought and practices, providing new perspectives for Buddhist theatre-makers who are committed to equitable socially engaged processes, which ultimately aim to support public engagement with the broader issues related to migration, international development, and social change in Burma/Myanmar. The authors provide a reflexive account of their experiences of leading the above project, and in relation to their co-development of a notion of a theatre of the middle way, which aims to bring an appropriate Buddhist perspective to acts of collaborative theatre-making, enabling positive interactions across ethnic and religious lines in Burma/Myanmar.

### **Treading Lightly: Changing Aid Spaces in Chin State. By Sena Galazzi Lian**

**Sena Galazzi Lian** is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Between 2014-2016 Sena carried out field research in Myanmar for her doctoral thesis. For much of the past two years she has also worked on designing, planning, and then implementing a new project on Migration and Development in Chin State. Prior to starting her doctoral research, Sena worked at Amnesty International's Secretariat in London, and before that in Malaysia, Thailand, and Myanmar with several local, international, and UN organisations. Sena holds an MA with Distinction in International Law (2011), and a BA Honours in Development Studies and Politics (2007), both from SOAS. She is currently Affiliated Researcher at the Regional Centre for Social Sciences and Sustainable Development (RCSD), Chiang Mai University. At present, she is in the process of setting up a Chin State Academic Research Network.

#### **Abstract**

This paper looks at the expansion of international aid industry in Myanmar's Chin State, attempting to provide an initial sketch of what changing spaces of aid might mean for locally meaningful development in the region. The increasing international funding that is starting to become available is resulting in a number of already visible and palpable changes. A growing number of UN agencies and INGOs have opened new offices or enlarged their operations and projects in Chin State, and the number of professionally trained development workers is dramatically increasing, with notable impacts on local civil society and extensive pre-existing networks of local priorities and organisations. The paper provides an outline of what some of these changes might mean for people in Chin State, a place with a unique history and vibrant indigenous heritage that does not always fit in neatly with either development programming nor much neo-liberal capitalist modernity; a place where the Myanmar State's expansion is both limited but also growing and – importantly - entangled with a multi-faceted web of inter-ethnic and pan-nationalist diversity; a place with a complex and constantly evolving relationship with the 'International'.

The paper's theoretical framework locates these changes not merely within ongoing, globalising, transformations occurring in Myanmar as a whole, but very much as part of a locally centred process of historical-political continuity, where age-old relationships with the 'International' have been fluid, multi-faceted, and constantly in flux. The paper thus situates changing aid spaces in the context of this long-standing involvement of a variety of internal-external actors, and presents a special focus on the affective economy of these changes. It concludes by highlighting the necessity that Chin State's diversity and

complexity are not treated as an instance of translatable small print, including by cautioning the 'International' to avoid tokenistic-only engagements in emerging programming in the region.

**Kaladan Project: The Impact of India's Regionalisation and Act East Policy on Chin People. By June Nilian Sang**

**June Nilian Sang** is pursuing an M.A in Social Science (Development Studies) at Chiang Mai University. He completed a B.A. in English at Kalay University in Myanmar, and secondary high school in India majoring in Commerce. He recently worked at The Chinland Post as an editor since January 2013 until he started postgraduate study at Chiang Mai University. Specialising in the magazine section called Chin Digest, his role as an editor was to develop theme cover and cover story, reviewing articles, and deciding the publishable articles. He is also one of the Board Members at Fidi Foundation, which is the management pillar of The Chinland Post.

**Abstract:**

Diplomatic relations between India and Myanmar have been smooth since their independence. However, it is apparent that India is far from rivalling China's influence on Myanmar politics and economics along with other Southeast Asian countries. Starting in 1990s, the emergence of Look East Policy subsequently known as Act East Policy (AEP) is genuinely understood as India's attempt to counterbalance China's influence on Southeast Asia. With its geographical closeness, India's AEP had to take-off from Myanmar. Beginning in 2008, Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport (KMMTT) – the ever-largest Indian investment in Myanmar costing US \$ 214 millions – became part of AEP implementation. The objective of KMMTT project are varied; facilitating trade between heartland India and its Northeast is the priority, by connecting through Rakhine and Southern Chin State through economic cooperation and thus enabling trade with Myanmar; and eyeing to natural resources extraction.

From the regionalisation perspective in development, this paper argues that although India's stated priority is to boost its northeast regional economy, a high anticipation of economic benefits through KMMTT exists among Chin people regardless of the negative outcomes. The key theme of this paper is to explore both the negative and positive imminent impacts of the project on Chins with a question why Kaladan Project is important to Chin people. Based on the empirical findings and literature review results, the paper highlights how KMMTT has impacted livelihoods of local people along the implementing areas, and how local people have been marginalised in the decision-making process. In order to protect the rights of local people, the agency of local civil society is significant to claim responsible investments.

**The Role of Civil Society and Chin Non-Governmental Institutions in Chin State's Democratic Transition. By Lian Bawi Thang**

**Lian Bawi Thang** holds a Master of Arts in International Development Studies (MAIDS) from Chulalongkorn University in 2012. He previously worked for the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) and currently works at the United States Embassy in Yangon, Myanmar. The views expressed in this paper are his own private views and should not be taken as representative of the views of the United States Embassy.

**Abstract:**

After he took power by coup-d'etat in 1962, General Ne Win restricted the operations of strong Chin civil society and non-governmental institutions. However, some non-governmental organizations survived to play a major role in promoting democratic values in Myanmar's poorest and most isolated state. Historically, there were three major types of non-governmental institutions: (1) religious institutions (mainly Christian); (2) university student unions; and (3) political parties. In every Chin society, religious institutions are core to the promotion of indigenous cultures and languages: until 2010, religious institutions issued the majority of Chin-language publications. Churches are the heart of villages, and the communities' robust financial support allows members to discuss a broad range of social issues within the church. That said, in the case of political issues, university student institutions hold more sway than do the churches. Due to restrictions on political parties, politicians aligned behind student institutions --sometimes secretly-- and encouraged the student unions to engage with local authority on core political issues.

The political liberalizations started under the President Thein Sein government from 2010 to 2015 allowed Chin political parties to emerge publicly to take a lead role in both social and political issues. Since then, many types of non-governmental institutions have grown in size and capacity, and a more modern era of mass-mobilization is now emerging in Chin State politics. However, the state's rough geography remains a key challenge to CSO and NGO growth and coordination. Without the development of those non-governmental institutions, promoting democracy and human rights will still remain a major challenge in Chin State.

## **Panel 4: Education and Access to Knowledge**

### **Panel Chair/Discussant: Dr. Matthew Yoxall**

**Dr. Matthew Yoxall** is a theatre-maker, development consultant, and academic researcher. Much of his work has related to forced migration and refugees. Matt has a PhD from the National University of Singapore and is currently Affiliate Researcher at the Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development - RCSD, at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. He is also a core member of the research collective After Performance.

### **Educational Needs and Barriers for Marginalized Chin Students in India. By Sang Hnin Lian and Sui Meng Par**

**Sang Hnin Lian** studied Political Science at Kirori Mal College, Delhi University. Currently, he is a Master's Candidate degree in Human Rights (International Program) at the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand. His master's thesis is on the religious freedom of the Christian Chins in Burma/Myanmar. His recently published papers include 'The Implementation of India's Look East Policy and Its Impact on Burmese Refugees in 1990s' and 'Gender Gap and Women Political Participation in Burma/Myanmar'. He is currently teaching a number of Human Rights courses at the Chin Christian University in Hakha.

**Sui Meng Par** recently finished a Diploma of Human Rights Implementation course specializing in Business and Human Rights at Lucerne University, Switzerland and holds a Bachelor Degree in English (Hons.) from Delhi University, India. She served as the president of Chin Students' Union while studying in Delhi University and works as a volunteer interpreter for the Burmese refugees' community in Delhi, India.

### **Abstract**

This paper addresses the educational status of Chin students in Indian schools, and the legal instruments and soft law available in India. Chin students from Burma/Myanmar enter India on often 'irregular' immigration status, and as a result have little legal protection. They are often subjected to discrimination as when the educational laws and policies do not explicitly protect them from discrimination (its collateral such as bullying) in schools. Their educational barriers are exacerbated from the switch to an Indian curriculum thereby the Chin face tremendous challenges in competing for their education. This is one of the factors associated with high dropout rates in secondary education, as witnessed up-close by the authors during their research. This paper suggests that the government of India should consider putting in place targeted support for Chin students to bridge the gap in their education, and deal with the legal and transcripts hurdles in getting admission in Indian schools; deal with the inappropriate curriculum planning with respect to the Chin students, which impede the provision of their educational needs. The Indian legal system cannot deliver appropriate legal services to the Chin students as most are of irregular immigration status, which further impacts financial support available for their children. Therefore, this paper argues that Chin children and youth in Delhi are among the most vulnerable sections of society in terms of education, be it vocational or higher education. Although they cross border hoping betterment, the educational context they encounter is in fact not much better than conditions in their country of origin.

### **How Important is using mother tongue in public to the Chin Community in Myanmar? By Nicola Edwards**

Nicola Edwards is a teacher, teacher trainer, and education consultant based in Yangon. She currently works for the University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand, on their academic preparation programme for Myanmar students. She has over seven years' experience of working for local NGOs in Myanmar and on the Thai/Myanmar border and has worked for the British Council in Myanmar and Sri Lanka. She has worked in teaching or educational management in South and South-East Asia for almost fifteen years. She has an LLB (Bachelor of Law), Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults, and an MA in Education and International Development from the Institute of Education, University College London. Her research interests include Myanmar, education, education in emergencies, and child rights.

### **Abstract**

According to UNESCO (2011, p11) said protecting diversity is one of the world's most important challenges. The Chin community in Myanmar consist of approximately 53 different 'tribes' or ethnic groups and possibly over 70 dialects (Sang, 2014). They are fighting to preserve their language, culture, history and identity for their children. This paper examines how important using mother tongue is to Chin communities in Myanmar (both in Chin State and Chin living outside Chin State) and how essential mother tongue is for preserving linguistic, historical and cultural identity. It investigates mother tongue education in Chin communities in Myanmar and how religious organisations, private organisations such as literature and cultural committees, or the government, are supporting this. It questions whether there may be links between low rates of Chin students' academic achievement compared to other students in Myanmar and mother tongue education after reviewing global academic research on mother tongue, mother tongue-based and multilingual education.

Research conducted over a period of 4 weeks in October 2016 covered Chin State towns of Falam, Hakha, Mindat, and Kanpetlet; Chin communities based in Kalaymyo and Pakokku; and Asho Chin, Matu and Khumi representatives in Yangon.

The original dissertation covered the contentious issue of agreeing a common Chin language of communication but this part of the research has not been included in this paper.

### **Social Media Use among Hakha Youth: Does it Enhance the Acquisition of Political Knowledge? By Philip Nun Uk Thang**

**Philip Nun Uk Thang** holds a Bachelor of Science in Development Communication from the College of Arts and Sciences, Central Luzon State University, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, Philippines. Prior to that, he took a Mechanical Engineering course at the Government Technological College, KalayMyo (GTC), Sagaing Region, Myanmar. He then transferred to Tech Training Center where he finished a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering course. He later enrolled in Gallent Training Center where he was awarded an Advanced Diploma in Mechanical Engineering.

Philip was born in Congthia Village, Thantlang Township, Chin State, Myanmar. He is the fifth son of U KhuaPian and Pi SaiMeng. Under the leadership of his late parents, he was spiritually and morally nourished until his middle school at Congthia Village, his birthplace. After middle school, he enrolled in No. 3 Basic Education High School, Pyaedawtha Block, Hakha Town, Chin State where he accomplished Grade 10 (third year high school). For grade 11 (fourth year high school), which is also known as pre-University, he enrolled in No 1. Basic Education High School in Hakha, Chin State. He passed the required matriculation (Grade 11) which was a pre-university examination in 2007.

**Abstract**

This paper uses quantitative methods to analyse social media use among Hakha youths, with focus on whether it enhances acquisition of political knowledge. The study was conducted in Hakha, the capital of Chin State. Seventy youths served as the sample of the study, selected using random sampling. The majority of respondents were single males, age ranging from 18 to 24, Christian, and high school graduates. Most respondents signed in to social media once daily, for one hour. Their main purpose of using social media was to communicate with family. The majority agreed that social media provided them with political knowledge.

Using the Chi Square Test, the frequency of the respondents' daily signing-in and hours spent on social media, political knowledge acquisition, and level of agreement whether social media serves as source of political knowledge were assessed. According to the results, there was no significant association between frequency of the respondents' daily signing-in and number of hours spent on social media, political knowledge acquisition, and level of agreement whether social media serves as source of political knowledge.

The majority of Hakha youths are well aware of political issues in Myanmar and Chin State, but their political knowledge is mostly acquired via other sources. There was also a considerable portion of respondents who were not aware of basic political facts and news. The research shows that social media is not the sole source of enhancing political knowledge for Hakha youth, particularly as it is not yet fully utilized by Hakha youth for political purposes. The study recommends that Hakha youth should be given information materials which can teach them how they can fully use social media for a variety of purposes including educational advancement, political advocacy or acquisition of political knowledge, among others.

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