

Peace and Myanmar's Civil War: A Social Media Campaign

Location: United States

Nominating College, University, or Institution:

International House, Columbia University, Manhattan School of Music, United Nations Refugee Agency

Project Leaders:

Peng Guan, Manhattan School of Music

Eren Yağmuroğlu, Grammy's Recording Academy

Kyaw Tune, Myanmar Permanent Mission, United Nations

Zhechen Wu, Columbia University

Thu Thu, Columbia University

A two-sentence summary of the goals of your project:

Our project is a series of campaigns for Myanmar in order to raise awareness for the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. We have collaborated with influential artists and institutions to hold the campaigns together during the summer of 2022.

How did you decide what issue(s) you wanted to address and what approach(es) or strategies you chose to implement in your project?

After consulting Myanmar professionals and scholars, we want to address Burmese population underrepresented and hate speech issues in Myanmar. Burmese communities leaders and other institutional influential figures have addressed the potential political issues involved with the advocacy for Myanmar, so we decided to advocate peace for Myanmar through a non-political way by using arts.

Why did you choose your host site? In what ways did local relationships support you or contribute to the project?

We decided to hold onsite and online campaigns. Our online advocacy campaign was held on website, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc. In this way, we can reach a wide range of global audiences and raise awareness of Myanmar internal conflicts.

The onsite campaign location is at Davis Hall of International House New York City. The International House leadership team has offered generous support and donated the Davis Hall to hold the campaign.

Since the International House is close to Columbia University and Manhattan School of Music, we were able to invite professors from these 2 prestigious institutions to participate in the campaign as performers and guest speakers.

What changes or adjustments did you make to your original plans, and why?

We have added an onsite campaign in addition to the online campaign, which allows us to engage local organizations and individuals. What's more, we plan to approach influential artists instead of policymakers because Facebook has done a lot of hate speech regulation already, and there is a large enough population advocating for hate speech regulation. The most crucial point is let more people be aware of the tragic consequences of the hate speeches,

Did other fundraising efforts contribute to your project? What were they?

International House has contributed in-kind donation by donating the Davis Hall.

Are there opportunities for continuing your work on this issue? If so, please describe.

Yes, we are still running online Myanmar campaigns to reach out to diverse communities and organizations. We also plan to utilize Artificial Intelligence and Myanmar related data to create appealing artwork to raise more awareness. In addition, we are exploring new ways to educate people about Myanmar's current situations and more donation methods like crypto donations.

How do you define peace?

A mutual harmony between people and groups

In what ways might your project contribute to peace? What changes occurred? Short-term? Long-term?

People start to pay attention to Myanmar and know more about what's happening in Myanmar.

Short term: We have reached 64,178 impressions by September 15, 2022, which is more than 6 times to our original goal.

Long term: We let more people learn about Myanmar through an artistic way. We have collaborated with artists and preserved the Myanmar related speeches, music recording and artworks on the cloud and blockchain. We also plan to do an art exhibition in NYC in 2023 to ensure the long term impact.

What did you learn about the dilemmas, challenges, or conflicts that underlie the targeted issues or utilized approaches/strategies?

The conflicts underlie the target issues is discrimination. Facebook has been used to propagate hate speech or incite violence which cause genocide and racial discrimination.

Has your project changed the way you think about the world? How has the project changed, challenged, or inspired you?

The project makes me aware of the importance of diversity inclusion. A society cannot be peaceful when groups within experience persistent and targeted forms of violence and discrimination.

A brief statement, suitable for use as a quotation, addressing the value of this project and what you have learned. Indicate the student's name (yours or your teammates') for quote attribution.

When we open our hearts and eliminate discrimination, the beauty inside every human being start to shin.
(Peng Guan)