



DIPLOMACY TRAINING PROGRAM

AFFILIATED WITH THE FACULTY OF LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
A training program for peoples of the Asia-Pacific region

Building Social Inclusion, Human Rights, and Gender Equality in Myanmar

Australian Fellows Program

Program Concept Note

1.1 Summary

This Fellowship will be an important Australian investment in promoting social inclusion and gender equality as integral to a future sustainable and inclusive democracy in Myanmar. This Fellowship will build the knowledge, skills and networks of carefully selected individuals who will be involved in developing Myanmar's democratic governance and institutions following the current civil conflict and humanitarian emergency. It will do so by enabling key individuals who are currently in exile to learn from Australian experience and approaches on promoting and supporting multiculturalism, recognising the rights of Indigenous peoples, and respecting religious diversity as well as strategies and programs on gender equality and implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other human rights treaties.

It will contribute to DFAT's priority development area of promoting social inclusion and gender equality. It will bring to Australia key individuals involved in shaping the new Myanmar democracy as the country looks past the conflict arising from the attempted military coup in 2021. The program will enable knowledge sharing and build relationships between these individuals and individuals, organisations, and institutions in Australia. It will strengthen links with Myanmar diaspora communities in Australia that will play a key role in Myanmar's future.

1.2 Project Dates and Location

The program will be conducted from the 14th of October 2024 to the 4th of December 2024. This will include 21 days within Australia.

1.3 Project Participants

The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) and its counterpart organisations will select 15 key individuals to participate, with the goal of building their capacity, facilitating knowledge exchange, and initiating lasting relationships between individuals and organisations in Myanmar and Australia. Linkages with diaspora communities will be nurtured acknowledging the positive and continuing role that diasporas play in development.

1.4 Background/Context

After over 70 years of civil conflict, Myanmar faces severe challenges related to social inclusion, including racial and religious harmony, gender-based discrimination and violence. Myanmar stands at a pivotal moment in its political history. Atrocity crimes of the Myanmar military against the majority Burman population, have fostered new empathy between the majority and minority communities. There is a new consensus that ending recurrent military dictatorships is crucial for Myanmar's future

and peace. There is interest in learning models of federalism, multi-cultural democracy, and how to promote gender equality and address discrimination against persons with a disability.

Myanmar's citizens will collaboratively craft a new constitution for their federal democratic state. Equipping key individuals and future leaders with the knowledge, skills, and networks to contribute to framing and building an inclusive democracy is the aim of this proposal. Learning from Australian practice and building links with Australian institutions and practitioners is the focus.

There is a great interest in learning how to build social inclusion, racial harmony, women's rights and empowerment, human rights, and ethnic rights, and ensure respect for minorities, including ethnic and religious minorities. The Fellows will actively engage with these vital topics, exchanging with key individuals and institutions, building on existing linkages and making new ones.

1.5 Outcomes

While their histories are very different both Australia and Myanmar are home to diverse Indigenous peoples, ethnic groups, and a rich cultural heritage. Diaspora communities from Myanmar now living in Australia are important to both countries. The proposed Fellowship Program will be a valuable initiative in investing in Myanmar's future and people to people links between the two countries. The program will build on existing relationships and deliver outcomes through a carefully constructed program of knowledge and skill building and exchange in Australia between the Fellows and carefully selected Australian individuals and institutions.

Myanmar's democracy movements see the relevance of studying Australia's successful multiculturalism and its approaches to promoting gender equality and the rights of persons with disability within a federal system. Australian legal and policy frameworks can help to inform those involved in building Myanmar's democracy following the current conflict. Australians are interested in contributing to Myanmar's democratic future.

Understanding Australia's comprehensive anti-discrimination and anti-hate speech laws, formulated by federal and state authorities, will provide valuable insights for Myanmar's future governance frameworks. Myanmar's democracy movements see the importance of embedding social inclusion and action against discrimination into healthcare, education, public administration, law enforcement, regulation and other areas of policy and practice. Australia's federal system and rich policy landscape of elected representatives at three levels of government, universities, think tanks and respect for the voices of civil society has important lessons.

Leaders from Myanmar want to gain knowledge and insights into Australia's policies, systems, and practices that support inclusive democracy, multiculturalism, and social inclusion. Through the learning and exchange process in this program they will develop relationships that will continue beyond the program. They will develop skills in policy development and stakeholder engagement. The knowledge and skills gained will enable them to better contribute to shaping Myanmar's future in the areas of social inclusion, racial harmony, and gender equality.

There will be time spent on theory, as well as visits and exchanges with organisations in Sydney, Canberra, and Melbourne. Gaining insights into the role of the Department of Social Services

and the NDIS and their engagement with private and civil society sectors in Australia would equip Myanmar fellows with lessons to apply. There will be sessions with parliamentarians at Federal and State level, with parliamentary committees and government departments including DFAT. Through linking with the Australian Human Rights Commission and other institutions and statutory authorities addressing equality and anti-discrimination, opportunities will be explored for future collaboration with Myanmar's Ministry of Human Rights and ethnic and civil society organisations. Learning about the Australian Multi-cultural Advisory Council (AMAC), and Indigenous organisations can pave the way for the establishment of similar bodies in Myanmar, bolstering multiculturalism efforts.

Building on a rich history of relationships, this program will open avenues for new partnerships between individuals and organisations in the two nations. This program will reinforce the trust, respect, and appreciation that already exists between Australia and Myanmar and lay the foundation for continued partnership and collaboration between future leaders and institutions in both countries.

1.6 Activities

During the initial week of the course, experts will introduce the Myanmar fellows to the development of Australia's multiculturalism and federalism. They will emphasise the importance of various stakeholders in this process. Using these presentations as a foundation, participants will engage in discussions exploring how Myanmar can draw valuable lessons from Australia's experiences.

In the second week, the fellows are scheduled to embark on 11 study tours in Sydney, Canberra, and Melbourne. These tours will include visits to institutions such as the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Multicultural Commission, providing insights on the role of institutions in promoting inclusiveness and addressing discrimination. Additionally, they will engage officials in government departments like Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Social Services, developing understanding of the role these departments play in implementing laws and policies on discrimination and inclusiveness. Visits to Parliaments and institutions engaged in researching and providing recommendations for Australia's multicultural system will be included.

Building upon the knowledge acquired in the initial weeks, participants will initiate guided discussions on the practical application of the Australian experience in areas such as disability inclusion, gender equality, reconciliation, First Nations policy and creating an inclusive society in Myanmar. To support these discussions, experts will deliver presentations on UN conventions, international treaties, and strategies related to implementation.

Based on the dialogues with experts and reflective learning sessions, the fellows will compile the discussion points and prepare a report that highlights lessons from Australia's experiences in building multiculturalism and their relevance to Myanmar.

1.7 Contact

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