

A YEAR IN REVIEW

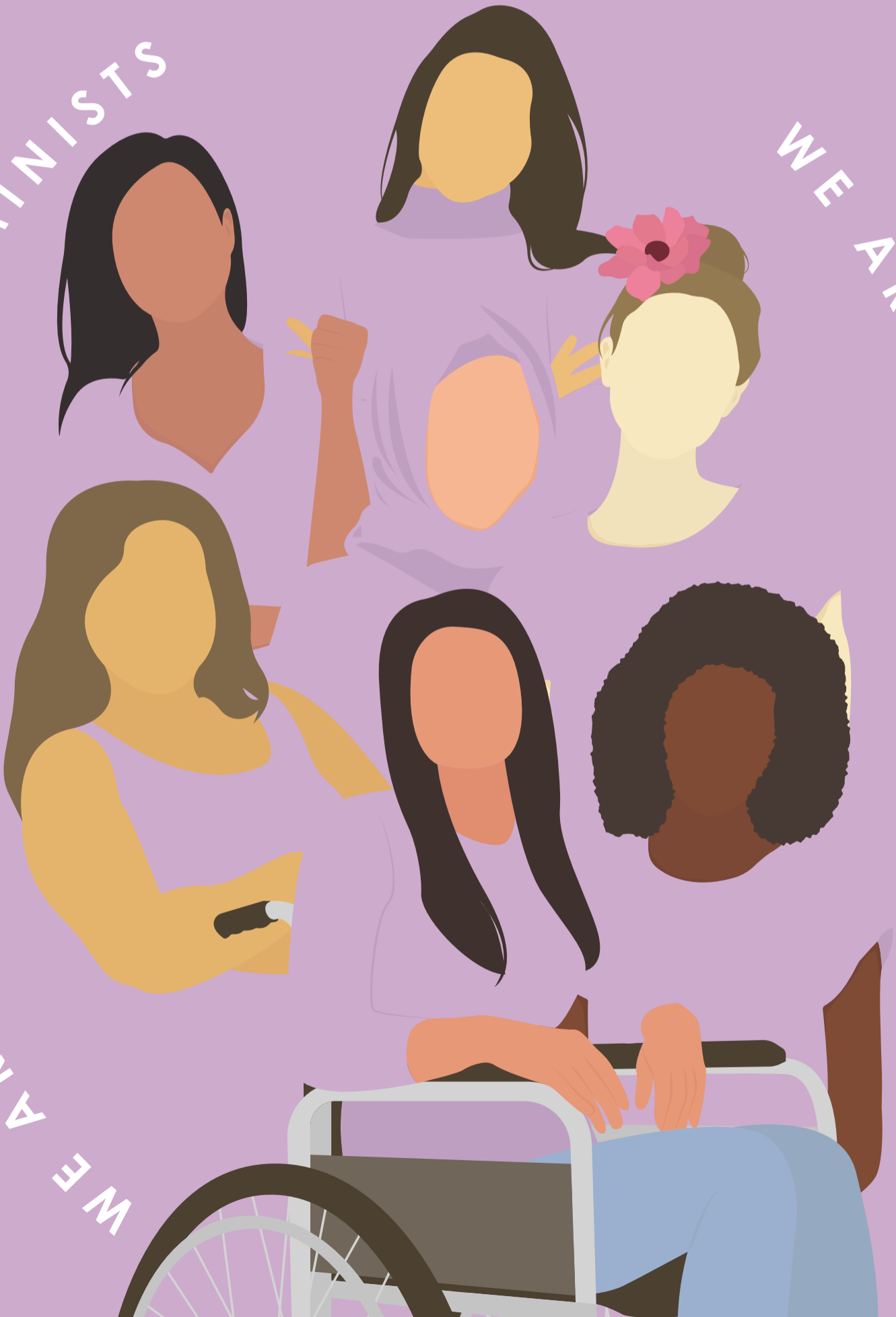
Issue number #001

Newsletter

Together we can build a better, fairer world.

The first step towards change is to accept that we have problems.

WE ARE FEMINISTS
WE ARE SISTERS
WE ARE CHANGE-MAKERS



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WORDS FROM DIRECTOR/ FOUNDER



Nandar
Director/ Founder of Purple Feminists Group

The word feminism is full of negative connotations in *Myanmar* and to start an organization with the word feminist in it was a big bold, loud step. The reason I did that was to normalize the word. Even though there were only two things I was could do in the beginning, writing, and workshop, along the way, I met people who support, assist me to grow the organization, slowly and steadily.

It is the solidarity and sisterhood spirit that have laid the strong foundation of **PFG**. Because of that powerful spirit and hardwork, we went from doing only training to creating podcasts, hosting events, talk shows and collaborating with both local and international organizations.

Today, I am pleasantly overwhelmed and surprised to look back and realize how much we have done in building feminists movement *Myanmar* even with such a small team. **PFG** arised and is happening because of young, strong, dedicated, badass feminists who come together to make a difference.

2020 has been a year of growth. It has taught us to approach issues, both new and old ones, in innovative and creative ways. To share, build trust, and learn collectively. Our priority for 2021 would be to focus on internal strengthening while doing external activities.

We are very happy and excited to share this *first annual newsletter* with you, to reflect on how challenging yet empowering it is to be a part of feminist movements in *Myanmar* and around the world. We recognize ourselves as a part of the global feminists' community who are amplifying women's and girls' voices.

I owe a huge amount of gratitude to all my feminist staff, volunteers, and contributors who over the years have been a constant support of **PFG** in bringing equality and justice. Thank you all for being a part of the **Purple Team** in different possible ways to bring positive change.

In Solidarity,
Nandar

» OUR STORY

Purple Feminist Group is a local feminist *NGO* led by young feminists from different backgrounds in Myanmar since early *2018*. We do our advocacy work creatively and innovatively through workshops, social media campaigns, feminist literature, and podcast to engage with different generations to focus on the gender issues that we want to highlight.

PFG is an organization empowered by the experiences and passion of young feminists from different backgrounds. We collectively and tirelessly work towards restoring dignity, justice, and equality while strengthening sisterhood. We are committed to changing and bettering the world with positive feminist energy.

» OUR MISSIONS

- To restore the dignity of menstruators
- To promote feminist literature in the local language
- To amplify women and girls' voices through podcast and artwork
- To educate on gender-based violence

» PAST EXPERIENCES

In the past, **Purple Feminists Group** have done several workshops, training, and

- Workshops
- Campaigns
- Podcasts
- Publications
- Collaborations: **Purple Feminists Group** actively partners and works with other women's organizations in Myanmar.

» OUR VISION

To build a world without
gender discriminations
sexism
and misogyny



RESTORING THE DIGNITY OF MENSTRUATORS:



MENSTRUATION IS NOT SHAMEFUL Campaign

Menstruation is a monthly challenge for billions of women and girls worldwide, physically, socially, and psychologically. In Myanmar, it is considered taboo, as it is in many other countries in the world. An estimated **80%** of young girls in Myanmar perceive menstruation as a shameful concept to not be discussed. Due to this concept, boys grew up believing that they are superior because they don't bleed. These attitudes and beliefs lead them to be ostracized by their family, friends, and communities. Women and girls across Myanmar face numerous barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive health rights (**SRHR**), including lack of information, limited access to menstrual hygiene products, and stigma. It can result in not only an adverse effect on their physical well-being but also impact their mental health.

These challenges and the negative impacts of menstrual taboos upon the physical and mental health of women and girls in Myanmar urges us to lead a campaign to tackle and eliminate the stigma around menstruation. The campaign also intends to take a step towards restoring the dignity of the menstruators. During the campaign, we challenge people's mindsets around menstruation in Myanmar by using the social media activism approach and storytelling.

Menstruation Is Not Shameful campaign started in *February 2020* and had continuously run until the end of *March 2020*. Using various media platforms, such as Facebook, radio, podcasts, etc., we had achieved our objectives of reaching out to the broader audience and changing community perspectives on



Menstrual Pad

video



#MENSTRUATIONISNOTSHAMEFUL

#PERIODISPOWERFUL

#DIGINIFIEDMENSTRUATION

The campaign includes the movement on digital media/social media:

- Public audiences participated by changing their profiles frame on Facebook and using hashtags such as, **#MenstruationIsNotShameful**, **#PeriodIsPowerful**, **#DiginifiedMenstruation**, to spread the campaign messages (reached **50,000+** people all around Myanmar and received **8000+** online engagements from audiences of all ages on our social media platform)

- 3 Video productions collaborating with local TV channel **Anyrev** which expressed and raised awareness for menstrual products, street people point of views (interviewing random people on street about their opinion, beliefs, perspectives upon menstruation) interviewing the activists, medical experts, and artists to share their point of views.

- Sharing the written content with storytelling regarding menstruation and its taboo through **Purple Feminists Group's** channels (3 from men and 7 from women)



Street Interviews

video



Activists & Artists POV

video

ABORTION IS A HUMAN RIGHT

» MYANMAR SPEAKS UP Campaign

Abortion is considered a social taboo and is an illegal subject in Myanmar. A significant portion of Myanmar's population is strongly against abortion. The goal of the campaign is to start a much-needed conversation about abortions in Myanmar. PFG ran the campaign in the collaboration with **HowToUseAbortionPill** which is an online community run by dedicated individuals who believe that all women, regardless of where they live, should have access to a safe abortion option.

[#MyanmarSpeaksUp](#)

[#AbortionInMyanmar](#)

[#AbortionIsHumanRight](#)



Despite being a sensitive topic, PFG believes that safe abortion should be accessible to everyone that needs it. That is the main drive that motivates the team to run such a challenging campaign in Myanmar. There are two parts to this collaboration. One is audio productions and two are video productions. For the audio productions, there was one episode in the Myanmar language where two medical experts and one medical student talks about challenges around abortions, and at the last part of the episode, there were some opinions notes from the listeners. For the English episode, PFG featured HTU to share about their experiences and challenges working with the global community.

The video production contained public opinions of 12 young people from different age groups and backgrounds who volunteer to share their perspectives on the criminalization of abortion in Myanmar. Later on, the interview was shared through **Purple Feminists Group's** digital channels where we witnessed engagement from the audiences from in and outside Myanmar.

The messages such as **“Safe abortion should be accessible to everybody”**, **“Abortion should be legal in Myanmar”** and **“Abortion is Human Right”**, are informed to the people of Myanmar through the campaign.

Interview with Myanmar Experts on Abortion

Burmese Podcast Link >>

<https://soundcloud.com/g-taw-zagar-wyne-podcast/why-we-need-to-know-about-abortion-burmese-htu-pfg>

Featuring HTU

No negativity in 2021 unless it is Covid or pregnancy tests. -Sneha Nair, *Communication Officer at HTU*

English Link >>

<https://anchor.fm/g-taw-zagar-wyne-podcast/episodes/Episode-2-We-Need-To-Talk-About-Abortion-Sneha-Nair-HTU-ef2pi5>

One Video Production Link >>

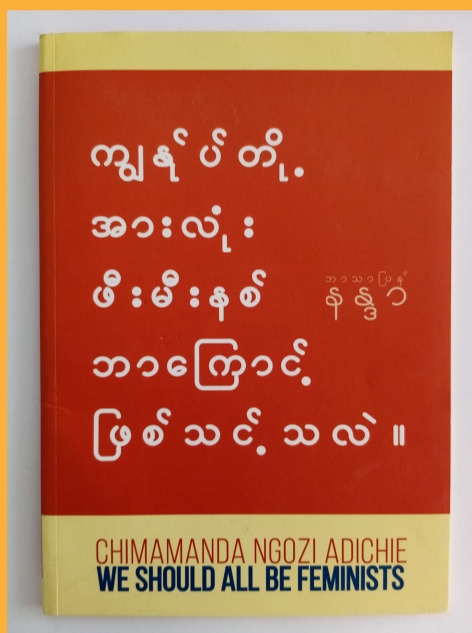
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHV3jNM0qx0>

PROMOTING FEMINIST LITERATURE

Feminist Book Translation Projects

As feminism becomes a popular or infamous topic in *Myanmar*, there is a dire need for more feminist literature, artwork, and interpretations in the **Burmese language**. In the past few years, **PFG** has published two feminist translation books, ***Why We Should All Be Feminists and Dear Ijeawele***, or ***A Feminist Manifesto in Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*** by *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie* with authorization from the author from the author.

You can order these books and MenstruationIsNotShameful Tshirt via Facebook page



Why We Should All Be Feminists

Author: **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

Translator: **Nandar**

Price: **2500 MMK**

About the book: In this personal essay which was initially a famous **TEDx** talk, *Adichie* offers a unique perspective and definition of feminism. Throughout the essay, she shares her anecdote eloquently to explain the needs of feminism in our world. The reason *Ma Nandar* translates this book is that because it not only resonates with her personal experiences but also it simplifies feminism for those who are unfamiliar with it.

Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions

Author: **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

Translator: **Nandar**

Price: **2500 MMK**

About the book: ***Dear Ijeawele*** was initially a response letter to a childhood friend who asked *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie* about how to raise her daughter to be a feminist. *Adichie* wrote her fifteen suggestions wryly funny, and perceptive for how to empower a daughter to become a strong, independent woman. The book is filled with compassionate guidance and advice, she also gets right to the heart of sexual education topics such as sex, menstruation, and women's bodies to starts a much-needed conversation about what it means to be a woman in the 21st century. The book offers practically useful suggestions to follow for anyone who wants to be a feminist or nurture someone to be a feminist.



LITERATURE COMPETITION FOR WOMXN

Literature Competition was initiated and launched in *July 2020*. Its purpose is to create opportunities for womxn in *Myanmar* (people who identify themselves as female) to create, speak, and express themselves through writing and artwork. This aims to make women writers feel empowered to voice out their opinions, stories, and artwork to the public.

The competition is recurring every *3 months* with different themes that are related to the lives of women and girls in Myanmar society and community. The competition accepts writings in the *Burmese Language* from anyone willing to write and share their stories.

The selection process is designed and confirmed by our contributors who act as judges for this competition. Our judges are the female author, the art curator, and the active youth leaders. All the submissions are processed through the marking schemes along with the finalization of the judges. Normally, 3 writers are selected as the **winners** of the competition followed by 5 to 7 writers that are chosen for the featured section. The **3 winners** are awarded prize money and gifts. All the writing of the selections (winners and featured selections) are published with the writers' consent through our social media pages and website.



The **1st round of Literature Competition** was opened in *July 2020* with the theme **ME & MY BODY**, which stimulates and motivates womxn to share the stories and perspectives about the relationship they have with their bodies, what pain and struggles their bodies have endured, and pleasure their bodies experienced. The total submission was over 60 from womxn writers of different age groups and a variety of careers and backgrounds, all around Myanmar.

The **2nd round of the Literature Competition** has occurred in *October 2020* with the theme of **Me & My**

Home to encourage womxn to express their definition of home and their experiences living in it. The total submissions were almost 50.

Hearing the feedback and comments from the writers is a motivation for us to keep doing the work and be better at it.

WORDS FROM WRITERS OF LITERATURE COMPETITIONS

“We must create a safe space and surroundings. The respect we give to each other, the empowerment and the compassion will play the key role of the movement of equality. The quality education is very basic and essential in raising the compassionate and respectful citizens. I want to conclude by saying that every man, woman and any other gender and identities shall own their own rights no matter what in life.”

- Aye Eaindray Maung, *1st Winner of ME AND MY BODY*

“Are we going to build more Glass Houses for our new generation? Instead, we can build a home where all of us can fly higher and as far as possible? We must create a world where women and girls are not constricted by saying, 'If the thorn falls the leaf is pierced; if the leaf falls the leaf is pierced.' but they are helped and supported even if they are pierced and scattered. Where we all accept the truth that a day will break and the sun will rise whether it is the cackle of the hen, or the crow of the cock!”

- Giselle Mae, *1st Winner of ME AND MY HOME*

“Writing gave me an enormous outlet to express myself and I am taking this chance to educate others, share opinions and positivity and be a part of the change we need to make.”

- Hnin Zaw Thu @Phoebe (*Me & My Body*)

“This is a very good competition for girls and women where we all can write our thoughts and ideas. And every reader can learn about feminists literature. I love the purpose of this Competition.”

- Khaing Wut Hmone Thin (*Me & My Home*)

AMPLIFYING VOICES: G-TAW ZAGAR WYNE PODCAST



One of the main objectives at **Purple Feminists Group** is to amplify women’s and girls’ voices through podcasts. **G-Taw Zagar Wyne Podcast** is created to be a platform for women and girls to voice out their intellect, experiences, and opinions to a larger audience so that they can be heard and integrated into critical sectors in society, such as politics, education, and healthcare. Moreover, it will be a learning platform for men and boys to listen and better understand the lives of women and girls and tackle toxic notions of masculinity that undermine the development and progress of society.

The podcast was launched with a story of young local author/poet *Ma Pyae Sone Win* who shared her life story as a female author/poet in Myanmar over a year ago. There are 15 Burmese episodes available on SoundCloud, Website, and Facebook channels. The topics varied from talking about abortions, family violence,

literature, to art and business.

In 2020, the **G-Taw Zagar Wyne podcast** in the English language was started to extend our audiences worldwide. The guests for the English channel are from all over the world who work as a different professional in different sectors of Myanmar society (i.e. a psychologist, a healthcare specialist, a laborer, a politician, a mother, a student, etc). The topics for each episode addresses important issues faced by women and girls in Myanmar and around the world.



The **G-Taw Zagar Wyne podcasts** emphasize solutions and shed light on how women are already striving to improve not only their lives but better the path for the next generation of women and girls.

You can check and listen to our podcasts here:

Burmese Podcast Channel >> <https://soundcloud.com/g-taw-zagar-wyne-podcast>

English Podcast Channel >> <https://anchor.fm/g-taw-zagar-wyne-podcast>

Here we love to present one Burmese podcast and one English podcast with all of you:

English Podcast check out [here](#)

In this podcast, *Dr.Thet Su Htwe* shares her life as a medical doctor and her work of spreading knowledge on sexuality as a tool for gender justice, humanist and feminist values among people in Myanmar.

"My dream is to educate people on what is necessary for all mankind."

Burmese Podcast check out [here](#)

In this podcast, *Hnaung Moe Thae* shared her story and her work as a Digital Safety Officer in the Digital Rights Team at MIDO(Myanmar ICT for Development Organization) in Myanmar.

"Don't be discouraged to work in the ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) field. Everyone, of any sex and any identity, anyone can be an ICT Professionals."

TRAINING AND WEBINARS LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

PFG has trained over 5000 women/girls, men/boys including **LGBTQI+** inside and outside Myanmar on gender, violence, self-defense, feminism, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, sexual reproductive health rights education, and leadership.

1. Training at Sagaing University of Education

(Sagaing Region, Myanmar)



The training for teaching Feminism to the young people and students, was organized in Sagaing Region, upper Myanmar. *Ma Nandar*, founder and director of **Purple Feminists Group**, shared about **Feminism** to the students of *Sagaing University of Education*.

2. Online webinars

PFG has organized an online virtual webinar to share the knowledge related with mental health in *May 2020* during **COVID-19** pandemic. *Ma Su Su Maung* who is the founder, CEO and Principal Consultant of *Citta Consultancy* has contributed her time to share to our community with the topic, **Why Mental Health Matters?**. The online webinar was streamed *LIVE* on facebook and shared to the public.

During the *LIVE* discussion around 1 hour and 25 minutes, *Ma Su Su Maung* shared the important and useful techniques to deal with the pressure and stress while in lockdown and stay-at-home period during the pandemic. The webinar was a very interactive session with the question and answers with our *LIVE* audiences.



During 2020, **PFG** and work of **PFG** appeared on a number of talk shows and webinars. **PFG** has done **28 talks and workshops within Myanmar**, and in total **12 talks and workshops internationally**.



1.

Campaign

- 3 Campaigns: **Menstruation Is Not Shameful**
Myanmar Speaks Up: **Abortion is Human Right**

- **1,500,000+** people reached online

- **80,000+** people interact during the campaign

2.

Training and Events (online/offline)

- Offline in-person training (*Sagaing training, Live Podcast, ..*)

- Online virtual pieces of training and events (*Mental Health, Sexual Self-Care, ..*)

- **200 to 500** attendees (online/offline)



3.

Awareness Visuals

- Touching the current gender-based issues and problems in Myanmar with visual and online written contents

- **8 to 12** Visual Contents per month

- **21,000+** Audiences Online





4.

Audio Podcasts

- **15** Burmese (*Native Language of Myanmar*) Episodes
- **6** English Episodes
- **3000 to 5000** people listened to our podcasts
- Listeners have a variety of genders and identities



5.

Talkshows and Webinars

- **28** Talkshows in Myanmar (*Locally*)
- **12** International Webinars



6.

Building Community and Sisterhood

- **44+** Community: Close Group with a working team and contributors
- **21,000+** Community : Social Media (Facebook)

FUTURE PLAN: *FULFILLING THE ORGANIZATION'S OBJECTIVES*

Purple Feminists Group has accomplished in implementing several campaigns, programs, and projects that created impacts on the lives of men, women, and other identities within the past 3 years. The **PFG** community is growing, and the sisterhood is getting stronger within the community.

In solidarity, **PFG** is trying to achieve its goals and objectives by doing different campaigns, programs, and projects including the awareness-raising on gender-based violence with digital content with visual graphics through social media channels. In the upcoming years, slight changes in the work **PFG** of may happen but many projects will go on to educate the people in Myanmar on feminism.

G-Taw Zagar Wyne Podcast Program 2021: The podcast will continue with the seasoning method where a theme is dedicated for each season. Each season may have from 6-12 episodes where we invite different experts and contributors to speak on the designated theme. The most requested topics from the audiences are abortions, sexuality education, legal information regarding gender-based violence, and racism.

Literature Competition Program 20201: As part of the feminist literature promoter, we aim to run the literature competition quarterly with a more engaging theme for young women writers.

Internal Strengthening: In 2021, **PFG** is going to focus on internal strengthening and capacity building such as having organizational development workshops and training to build **MEL, Policies, Management Level, Strategic Plannings** as well as **Financial Management** to build a stronger foundation for the organization.

Training & Workshop: Depending on the outside circumstances, **PFG** will arrange training and workshops (online or in-person) to engage with the public directly to provide education on gender-based violence, sexuality education, self-defense, feminism, media, and CEDAW.

Campaign on Men/Boys Inclusion in Feminism: In this past, **PFG** has run several campaigns targeting mainly on girls and women to educate them on specific subjects such as menstruation or abortion. Next year, **PFG** aims to develop campaigns or program which can increase men participation and inclusion in feminist movements.



MEDIA COVERAGE

▲ **#PeriodisPowerful: Myanmar Activists Challenge Menstrual Taboos**

<https://myanmarmix.com/en/articles/periodispowerful-myanmar-activists-challenge-menstrual-taboos>

▲ **This 25-year-old Podcaster is Myanmar's Leading Voice for Gender Equality**

<https://www.splicemedia.com/nandar-25-year-old-podcaster-myanmar-gender-equality/>

▲ **Podcasting Gender Activist Nandar on Tearing Up Taboos As A 'Nosy Auntie'**

<https://coconuts.co/yangon/features/podcasting-gender-activist-nandar-on-tearing-up-taboos-as-a-nosy-auntie/>

▲ **G-Taw Zagar Wyne | Live Podcast Recording**

<https://www.ifbirmanie.org/event/g-taw-zagar-wyne-live-podcast-recording/>

▲ **Myanmar's Trailblazing Podcaster**

<https://newnaratif.com/podcast/myanmars-trailblazing-podcaster/>

OUR TEAM, OUR ENERGY



Nandar
Director



Ei Thinzar Phyo
Project Assistant



Myint Zu
Intern



Yupa Tun
Finance



Moe Thandar Aung
Graphic Designer

Volunteers/ Contributors

May Thin Kyu, Phoo Myat Thwe, Myo Khant, Pyait Sone Win, Hnin Oo Lwin

Contact Us

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Audio Podcasts Channels

Anchor:
<https://anchor.fm/g-taw-zagar-wyne-podcast>

Soundcloud:
<https://soundcloud.com/g-taw-zagar-wyne-podcast>

Instagram -
<https://www.instagram.com/purplefeminists/>

LinkedIn -
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/purplefeminists/>

Twitter -
<https://twitter.com/purpleofmyanmar>

Youtube -
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpxuvNYhPTgxRcS7JNZSOzw>

Facebook

Purple Feminists Group:
<https://www.facebook.com/purplefeminists>

G-Taw Zagar Wyne:
<https://www.facebook.com/gtawzagarwyne>

Feminist Literature in Myanmar:
<https://www.facebook.com/feministliteraturemm>

Reach Out To Us

Website - <https://purplefeminist.org/>