

Kachin Women's Association Thailand

Activity Report (2019- 2021)



Acknowledgement

Twenty-three years ago, on 9th September 1999, four pioneering women founded the Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT). The aim of the organization was to create a peaceful and safe Kachin society, with a particular focus on women and children. The desire to create a better community arose, as these women observed how the Kachin community and its basic needs and rights were being ignored by the central government of Myanmar. Consequently, KWAT was established and is now an important component of a benevolent civil society network, which currently provides fundamental services for many communities.

An example of our work has been through our highly successful empowerment and capacity building programmes. Through these initiatives, KWAT has been able to support and nurture women and youth leaders serving their own communities. KWAT's workload has grown exponentially over the years, reflecting the growing importance of the essential services and guidance we deliver daily. This would not be possible without the extraordinary work from our staff, and the indispensable aid and assistance our supporters (and readers like you) provide. It is our desire to continue performing this vital work for succeeding generations, now and into the future.

We thank you for standing with us as we work toward a just and equal society led by feminist values, and are grateful for your support and thrilled to share with you this 3-year activity report for the period 2019-2021.



Shirley Seng



Hkawn Tawng



Linda Lahtaw

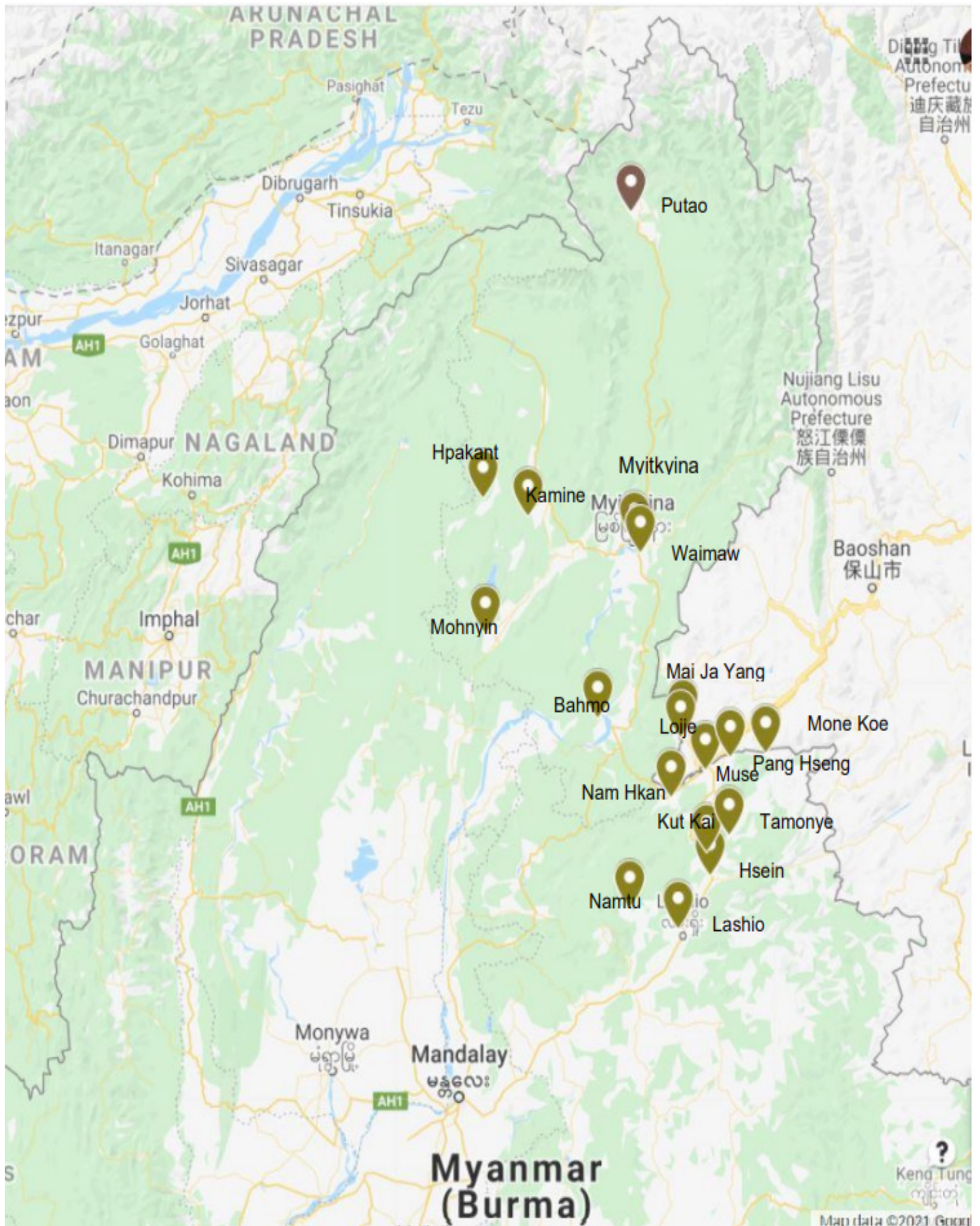


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KWAT: Focus Areas of our Humanitarian Aid and Assistance



BACKGROUND

Since Burma achieved independence in 1948, fighting has never fully stopped in its many ethnic states including in the areas of Kachin and Northern Shan. Kachin and other ethnic nationalities' claims for equal political rights was ignored by consecutive Myanmar leaders in power. The period of much celebrated democratic transition was also characterized by top-down political system where marginalized ethnic, religious and other minority communities continued to be excluded from decision making.

The offensive war launched by the Burmese Military has cost the Kachin community unknown number of innocent lives. Displacement caused by the war and land grabs by private businesses with close ties to those in power has robbed the future of tens of thousands of our children.

The impact of protracted intergenerational displacement is manifested in drug addiction, and loss of educational opportunities for our young generation - our future leaders.

Kachin state rich with natural resources, extraction of resources largely by the military affiliated private companies and people in power has led to forced land acquisitions, environmental degradation, and human rights violations.

Lack of peace and stability has been a primary push factor causing many Kachin to migrate to and seek refuge in foreign countries including to Thailand. The number of Kachin migrants to Thailand has increased every year, with women outnumbering men. Kachin migrants in Thailand have faced many hardships in terms of safety, shelter, job opportunities, and access to education, with women experiencing particular hardship, and requiring specific support.

KWAT's initiatives since 1999, has helped address the suffering and hardship of the Kachin people of Northern Myanmar as well as in neighboring Thailand. By providing these essential services including humanitarian support, empowerment programs and raise awareness on human rights and political issues, KWAT is now being recognized as a key stakeholder in both the Kachin community, and civil society organizations within the region.

Vision: The Kachin Women's Association Thailand envisions a peaceful and developed society, rooted in gender and social equality, free of discrimination and oppression.

Mission: The Kachin Women's Association Thailand is a non-profit organization which works to eliminate discrimination and violence against women. It does so, by enhancing the living standards of women, which enables them to participate in the decision-making processes at all levels, and strengthens the quest for social justice, peace, and development in the Kachin region.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Anti-Trafficking Program

A devastating outcome of the protracted conflict and displacement of people, has been the uncountable numbers of women trafficked as sex slaves into China from communities in the Kachin and Northern Shan States. This is the case for many Kachin women particularly under the age of 25 as they seek employment opportunities, primarily to support their parents and young siblings. While total numbers trafficked each year remain unknown, KWAT has been for the past twenty years working with authorities from both sides of the border in Myanmar and China, in rescuing survivors and providing psychological support as the survivors try and return some sense of normality to their lives.

Using the survivor-centered approach, KWAT provides the following services: Safe houses (shelter), Emergency Support including short-term and long-term Mental Health and Psychological support, legal support, consultation, livelihood support, survivors empowerment and capacity building, and community outreach. These KWAT led initiatives endeavor to prevent further human trafficking, and reducing stigmatization of the survivors within the community. In the last 3 years, KWAT has successfully implemented the following programme's.

485 survivors of human trafficking have received support such as shelter, food, transportation, MHPSS, Psycho-Social Support and livelihood.



MHPSS Awareness Session, 2021



Consultation Meeting, 2020

331 community leaders have been consulted about KWAT's work and Anti-Trafficking activities within their communities.



Regional Team Review Meeting, 2019

6 regional teams have been formed for local anti-trafficking protection and prevention mechanisms.

359 community members have received GBV TOT training and skills training.

6639 local people have received awareness-raising training on human trafficking and safe migration practices.



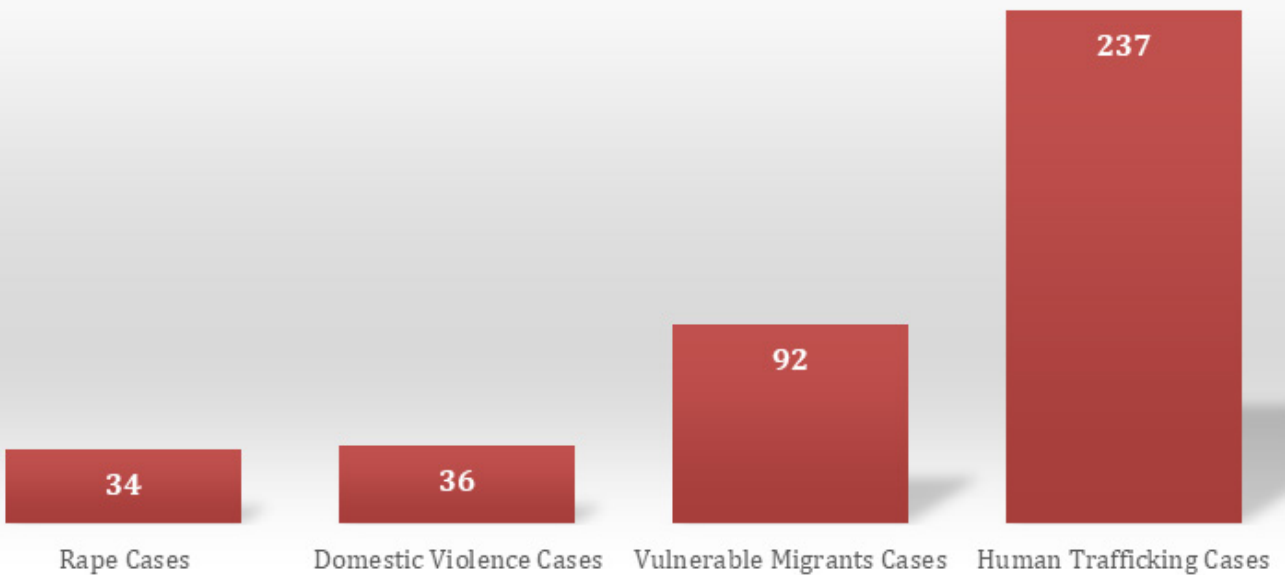
Two Day Trafficking Awareness Training, 2020



Orientation on Safe Migration, 2021

331 local people have participated on 'Stop VAW' day events, the 16 Day 'Awareness Raising Campaign' and 'International Obverse events days'.

Human Trafficking and other Exploitation Cases collected during 2019 and 2021



Participant Feedback

“There are huge obstacles in the rural areas and China-border areas. Since our village is located around the Burma-China Border, some parents want their daughters to marry Chinese men through cultural relations. It happens to almost every house, so it is a challenge for us to prevent forced marriage in our areas.”

“Owing to the Gender Based Violence and paralegal awareness raising training provided by KWAT, I have been able to use these knowledge and skills within my family and community. I learned extremely important emergency response such as getting medical attention for a victim of sexual violence within 72 hours to prevent an unwanted pregnancy. These are extremely useful for my community and also how I work with those in power around these issues.”



Political Empowerment Program

Recognizing the urgent need to nurture and support our future leaders, KWAT has been conducting 'Political Empowerment Programme's' for women and youth from Kachin and Northern Shan states for the past 10 years. KWAT's aim is to strengthen local communities through political awareness, so they can protect and lead their own communities. As a result of this program, which has focused on equipping participants with political knowledge and respecting and protecting the basic rights of all, in line with our feminist values and principles. Many graduates have become leading human and women rights activists at both a local and international level. The following are examples, of what KWAT has achieved over the last three years.



One Day Women Exchange, 2021

Conducted **86** consultation meeting's held with community leaders.

Youth Exchange on Politics were held with **362** future leaders.

Event Days: IWD and VAW Day events were held with more than **450** people attending.

Information seminars on the current political situation, were held with **138** youths, women, and community leaders.



International Women's Day Event in Muse, 2019

Women's forums and political debates held with **670** local women and leaders.

We have trained **16** Kachin women who are working for respected community



International Humanitarian Law Training to Women Study School Training Students, 2021

Participant Feedback

"We were not familiar with the term Human Rights in the past. Therefore, having a chance to learn Human Rights was such a value for us, especially for youths. So that, we can practically apply our knowledge when we speak for our rights".



Democratic Leadership & Voter Education Training, 2020

Political and Human Rights ToT (Training of Trainer) to **88** local youth members.

Political Awareness-raising were attended by **746** local people, youth, women, and community leaders.

Documentation and Research Program

As a researched-based organization, our Documentation and Research Program is the foundation for collecting and analyzing human rights violations taking place across Kachin communities. This program has enabled us to undertake evidence-based advocacy, and more importantly organizing immediate support for survivors and their family members, who have been injured and or traumatized by the abuse they have suffered. The support includes creating safe spaces and platforms for the survivors to speak the truth, and to connect with others who have gone through similar experiences.

In the last 3 years, KWAT has been successful in achieving our goals by providing the following services:



PAR Session, 2019

Provided Human Rights Documentation Training to **484** community stakeholders.

Provided Gender Training to **125** community youths.

Conducted consultation meeting with **49** community leaders.

Organized International Day in Support of 'Victims of Torture' event , where **180** members of the public attended.



Event Day, 2020

Formed 20 women's groups in the IDPs camps for GBV prevention including a response, and referral service.

Provided 21st skills and vocational training to 129 women including survivors.



21ST Skills Training to IDP Women, 2021



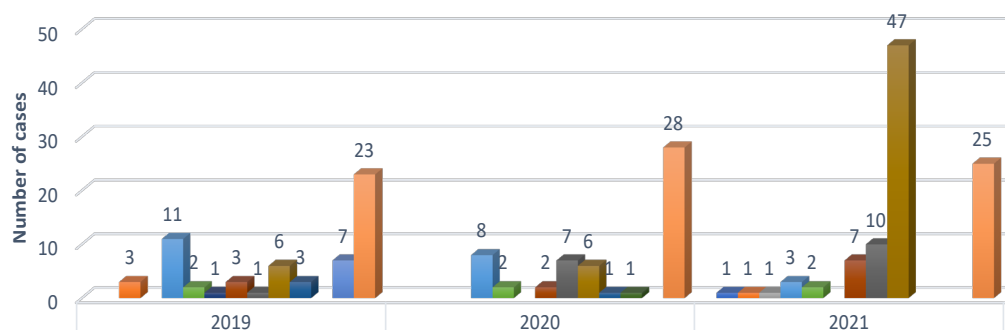
Vocational Training, 2021

Participant Feedback

"From KWAT, we have received human rights knowledge, survivor mental health care support and livelihood support that empower us to speak out our stories for justice."

Below graph shows human rights violation (HRV) cases that KWAT has collected in 2019, 2020 and 2021. These HRV cases have happened in Kachin and Northern Shan state. According to the graph, KWAT has collected total 60 cases in 2019, 55 in 2020 and 97 in 2021. Types of cases that KWAT has collected includes lootings, freedom of religious, extortion, torture and ill-treatment, rape, sexual abuse, killing, forced labor/Porter, arbitrary arrest and detention, disappearances, land confiscation/destruction of culture and property, the right to freedom of assembly and other cases.

Human Rights Violation collected case from Kachin State and Northern Shan State



	2019	2020	2021
Lootings	11	8	3
Freedom of religious	3		1
Extortion			1
Torture and ill-treatment	2	2	2
Rape	1		
Sexual Abuse	3	2	7
Killing	1	7	10
Force labor/Porter	6	6	47
Arbitrary arrest and detention	3	1	
Disappearances		1	
Land confiscation/ destruction of culture and property			
The right to freedom of assembly	7		
Other (Arbitrary- shooting, shelling, etc.)	23	28	25

KWAT's health program workers have been working around the clock to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities for more than ten years. There are many areas of Kachin and Northern Shan states, that the Central authority has never managed to control historically, but which has been administered by Kachin Independence Organization. KWAT's health program was initiated in 2003, and after 2011 and the resumption of civil war that the requirement for greater health care forced KWAT into expanding health care services further across Kachin and Northern Shan States, in areas inaccessible or unattended by the KIO or Central government. The situation became especially urgent, after the Central authority ordered international non-profit organizations to evacuate from Kachin-controlled territory. As the war intensified, KWAT has become the sole and essential health service provider to many communities, including those residing in Internally Displaced Camps. Today, more than 20,000 people, mostly women and children, rely on KWAT's health services which continues to expand.

KWAT administers three clinics in the Mai Ja Yang and Loi Je-Seng Ja IDP Camps in Kachin State, and also in Kut Kai, Northern Shan State. By providing general medical treatment, maternal and child health care, laboratory services, and school health services including adolescent reproductive health training across 60 schools. Thus, KWAT staff are providing a wide range of essential services to villagers, particularly those residing in remote areas.

KWAT also collects family planning data in targeted villages and camps annually, to identify high health-risk situations. For example, since 2021, KWAT has been working in these districts for two reasons. First, to strengthen the local health system; second, to promote health awareness and provide basic treatment, especially in Maternal and Child Health treatment. Although it may be said, educating the parents of teenagers about reproductive health has been a challenge, it can also an opportunity. Our campaign is often met with skepticism or perceived as encouraging early sexual activity among the youth by local residents. However, KWAT's programs have worked effectively in raising awareness of teenage pregnancies, and the risks involved of terminating and the very real possibility of serious medical complications as a result of a termination.

Being a respected women's organization and service provider for the Kachin community, we are fortunate to be in a situation we have been given the opportunity to engage the community who trust us with their care. We do so with, warmth, patience, and cultural sensitivity. We are changing the hearts and minds of parents and leaders, and confident we are changing the way the Kachin community looks at sex education. Not as a taboo subject, but as a positive demonstration of how informed family planning advice can lead to positive outcomes.

During the past three years KWAT has completed the following :

Trained **20** community Health Workers from rural communities.

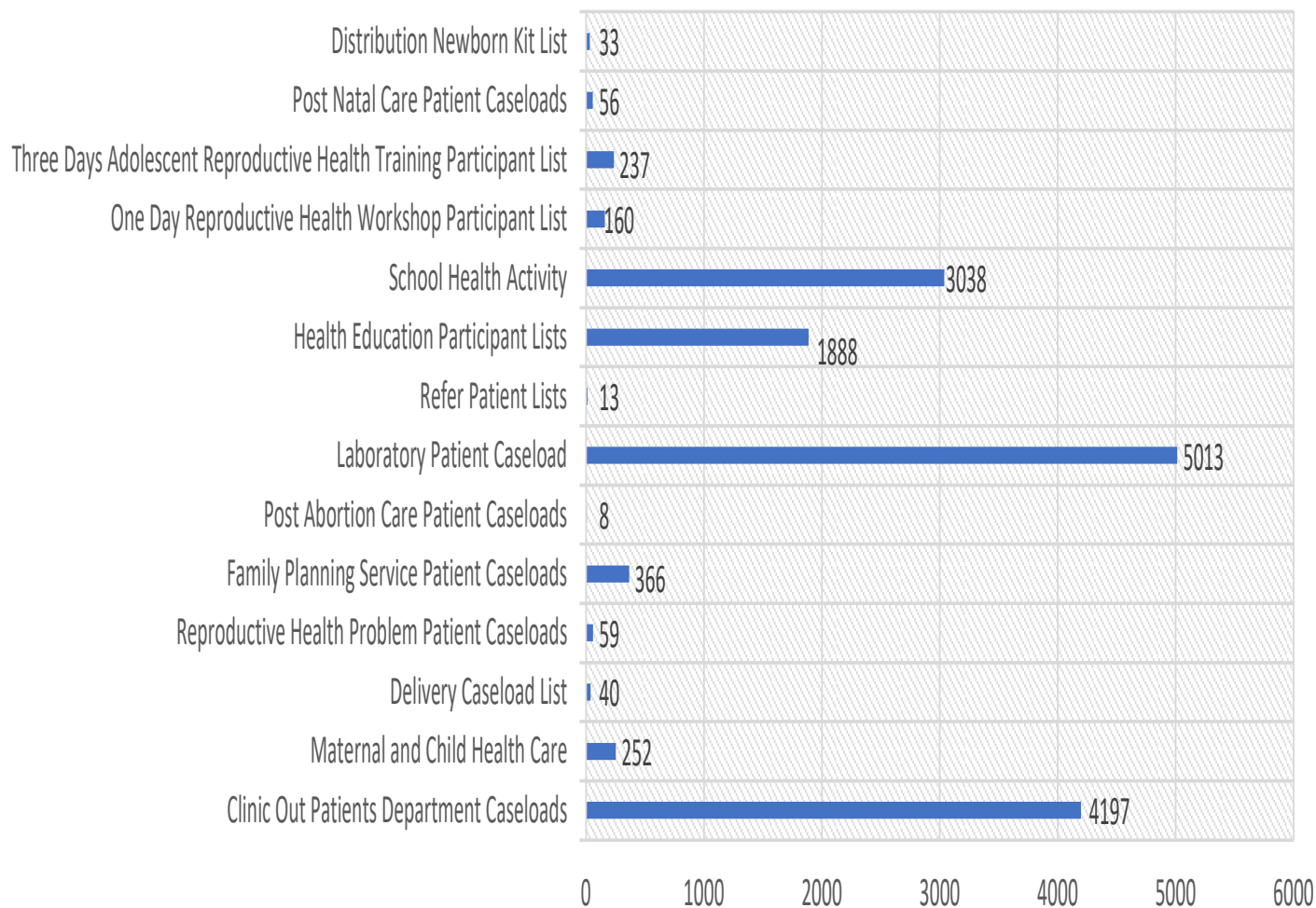
Trained **21** Village Health Volunteers from rural communities.

Provided medical treatment services to **26506** patients from IDPs, as well as students and community members.

Provided Basic Health Care Service to **12398** students and Communities.

Provided Health Education to **3522** IDPs, students, teachers, and community members.

Helath Program activity in 2021





Health Education in Hu Hpyek, 2019



Incision tumor in Ja Reng Yang clinic, 2019

Participant Feedback

“Our village is located in hard-to-reach areas and we are very glad that KWAT reached out to us and provides basic essential health care support.”



Implant Insert in Ja Reng Yang clinic, 2020



World Aids Day activity at Mai Ja Yan, 2021

Income Generation Project

As of 1999, KWAT's income generation project, based mainly in Chiang Mai, Thailand, offers vocational training to Kachin women who have been recently rescued from trafficking. The participants make these products by hand, and KWAT markets them. This program provides these women with an opportunity to earn their own independent income for themselves and their children, whilst fostering their self-confidence and self-esteem. They also make a valuable contribution towards the funding of a number of KWAT programs in both Thailand, and Kachin State. Profits from selling these products raise funds for female survivors of trafficking.



Learning hand-made soap



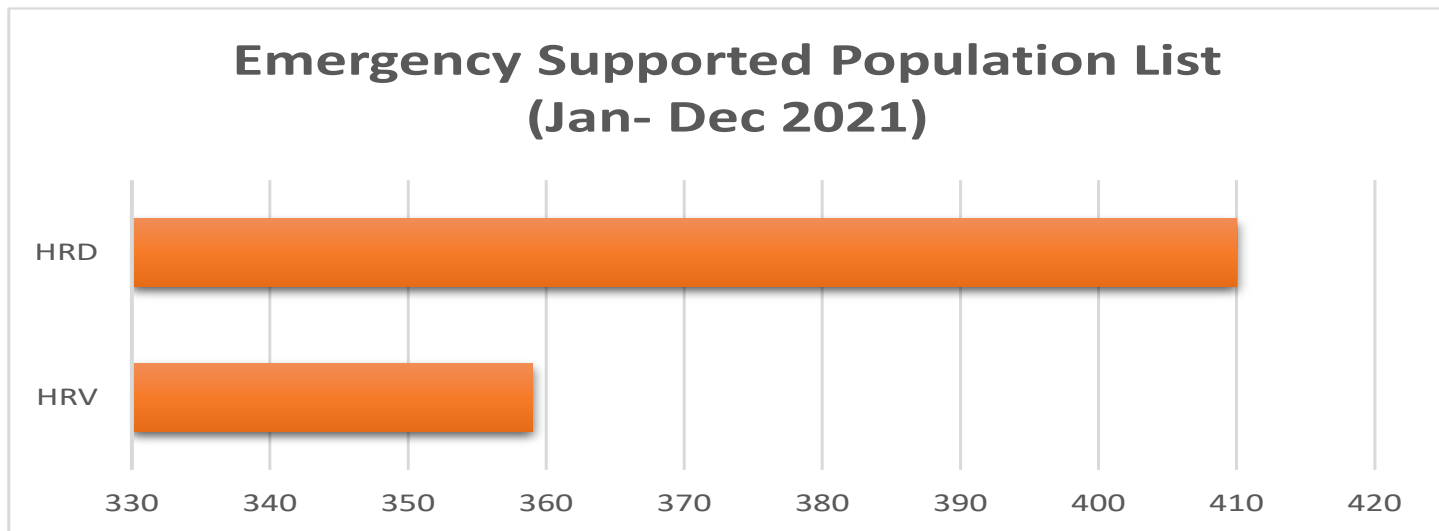
Learning hand-made products



Learning hand-made soap

Emergency Support and Covid Response

Emergency Support in response to the 2021 Military coup: Emergency assistant given to a total of **769** Human Rights Defenders (HRD), Human Rights Violation Survivors (HRV) and Civilian Disobedience Movement (CDM) Staff in the communities of Kachin and Northern Shan State.



KWAT has provided Covid-19 support to **4422** community households including IDPs and **7069** individual beneficiaries residing in Kachin and Northern Shan State in 2020 and 2021.



Basic Food Support in IDP camp, 2021



Food Support in IDP camp, 2021

Support Items

- Covid-19 Protection Materials
- Basic Food Support
- Hygiene Kits
- Nutrition Support
- COVID - 19 Test Kits
- Covid Awareness Material
- Materials for Quarantine Centers

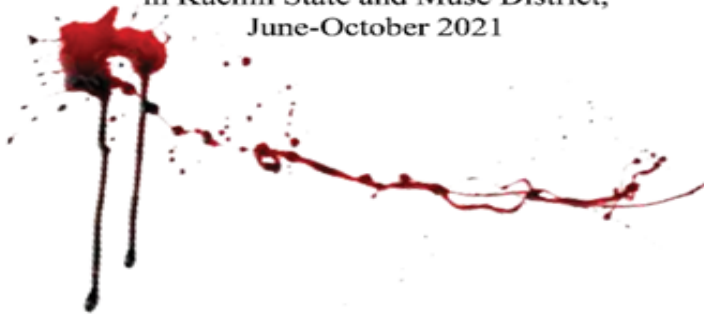


Materials Support for Mai Ja Yang Quarantine Center, 2021

Using evidence-based testimonies from its survivor-centered Research and Documentation Program, KWAT has been advocating for justice to bring closure for those who have suffered at the hands of the Burmese Military and ending the impunity of the perpetrators. KWAT engages on multiple levels with local, national and international policy makers for systemic change. This is done through media engagement, publication of human rights reports, and working together with other national, regional and international women and human rights organizations. The following reports were published in the last three years to give a voice to those who are often, silenced, marginalized, and persecuted.

JUSTICE HELD HOSTAGE

Human rights violations by regime forces
in Kachin State and Muse District,
June-October 2021



[Justice Held Hostage](#)

December 15, 2021
KWAT



[Deadly Reprisals: regime steps up attacks on
civilians in retaliation for conflict losses in
northern Burma](#)

June 16, 2021
KWAT

**DEADLY REPRISALS: REGIME STEPS UP ATTACKS
ON CIVILIANS IN RETALIATION FOR CONFLICT
LOSSES IN NORTHERN BURMA**





[Amid deadly crackdowns on urban protests,
regime's troops commit fresh war crimes in
Northern Burma](#)

April, 2021
KWAT

[Guarding Profits Not Lives](#)

September 2, 2020
KWAT



[Seeking Justice](#)

July 15, 2020
KWAT in partnership with AJAR



[There Is No One Who Does Not Miss Home](#)

June 20, 2019

KWAT in collaboration with partner Human Rights Organizations

[KWAT's 5 Year Activity Report \(2014-2018\)](#)

September 23, 2019
KWAT



ACRONYMS

KWAT	Kachin Women’s Association Thailand
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
PSS	Psycho Social Support
GBV	Gender Based Violence
VAW	Violence Against Women
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IWD	International Women’s Day
HRV	Human Rights Violation
HRD	Human Rights Defender
CDM	Civil Disobedience Movement
PAR	Participatory Action Research
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
TOT	Training of Trainer



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