



YayGyiYar Centre for Positive Change

How We Work

Problem Statement

Since the February 2021 military coup, Myanmar's conflicts and political crisis have led to the forced displacement of millions of people within and outside of the country. The ongoing violence has escalated into a profound, nationwide collective trauma.

The Myanmar population is not unique in its response to conflict. Trauma is a psychological and emotional response to an event or series of events that are deeply distressing or disturbing, overwhelming a person's ability to cope. Across the world, the mental health consequences of conflict has a deep weight into the engagement, participation and belonging of people that have lived through it.

Recognising and addressing the mental health and well-being impacts of violence is an important task. It has also been well documented that peace is not possible if people's needs, resulting from loss and trauma, are not considered. The psychological burdens of war affect society. It disrupts social cohesion within communities and wider groups. Therefore, addressing this trauma is essential for creating the social conditions for trust and hope to be present, and to enable communities to find emotional regulation.

Who We Are

YayGyiYar is a non-profit organisation that is deeply concerned with mental health, or the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of displaced populations. We know that individual mental health affects how we think, feel, act, handle stress, relate to others, and make choices, as well as our ability to form meaningful relationships at individual and community level.

Our name derives from the Myanmar proverb “**Yaygyi Yar myeq nu ya**”, “the place where young grass grows and water is clear”. For us, water signifies peace: Its existence allows people to rest and create a space to take care of their wellbeing and to support others.

We see our work as a contributor to a long-term social process. Addressing the impact of conflict requires us to work on transforming the relationships, structures, and cultures that create and sustain violence. Rather than just "solving" the conflict, we want to transform relationships. This is what we understand conflict transformation:

- Create safe spaces for dialogue, mental wellbeing and growth.

- Facilitating processes that allow people to share experiences, perspectives.
- Supporting community-led processes rather than imposing external solutions.
- Addressing both individual recovery and structural change within communities.
- Building local capacity for ongoing conflict transformation through shifts in inter-personal relationships.

YayGyiYar operates as a collective: We build networks and collaborations among individuals, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) service providers. Together, we become energised, learn skills, grow, connect, rest and have the support to go and serve the conflict-affected communities. Most importantly, we share skills focusing on community-based wellbeing to help them continue their work.

Our Mission: To build networks that strengthen and equip Myanmar organisations, individuals, and communities through capacity building, collaboration, and research to promote community wellbeing and conflict transformation.

Our Vision: Conflict-affected people flourishing together through meaningful connections, collaborative trust cultures, stronger relations, and collective resilience for shared wellbeing.

Our Values: YayGyiYar five core values reflect feminist, queer and decolonial traditions and inform both programmatic work and governance.

Safety: We are committed to creating spaces free from harm where everyone can thrive.

Accountability: We hold ourselves to the highest standards of integrity and responsibility.

Autonomy: We believe in empowering individuals and communities to make their own choices.

Collaboration: We recognize that addressing mental health challenges requires collective and interdisciplinary effort.

Creativity: We embrace innovation and fresh thinking in the work we do, and the way we interact with people.

Learning: We believe that learning is a critical strategy for building evidence-based products, fostering psychological safety, and innovative care for conflict-affected populations.

How We Work

YayGyiYar advances the mental health-conflict transformation nexus primarily through network collaboration and strengthening, and through conflict transformation via changes in inter-personal relationships prioritising shifts in attitudes, perceptions, and interaction patterns over mere resolution of disputes. YayGyiYar's programmatic work is organized into three interconnected programmatic pillars of work.

Program Area 1: Building Networks & Practice

YayGyiYar's core approach is collaborating with and strengthening networks that connect organizations, practitioners, and communities working at the mental health-conflict transformation nexus. This work aims to amplify reach, build collective capacity, create sustained systemic change, and advance integrated approaches across diverse contexts.

Activities:

- Training and workshop on ACT, PFA, counseling, supervision, group therapy, trauma sensitivity, creating safe spaces
- Workshops and capacity building on communication, self- and co-regulation, dialogue, trustbuilding for organisations and individuals that are part of our network.

Program Area 2: Co-creating Safe Spaces for Individuals, Groups & Communities

Culturally responsive, trauma-informed therapeutic services that honor Myanmar cultural perspectives while utilizing evidence-based psychological interventions. Mental health therapeutic services are co-created and delivered both directly and through network partners, enabling broader reach and sustained local capacity.

Activities:

- Somatic therapy sessions
- Yoga classes
- ACT training and supervision
- Theatre and Art Therapy sessions
- Non-violent communication sessions
- Relation-based conflict transformation sessions

Program Area 3: Research & Knowledge Building

Research, advocacy, and methodology development documenting culturally integrated approaches that bridge mental health and conflict transformation. Knowledge is co-created with network partners and disseminated through networks.

Activities:

- Creating a living curriculum drawn from your network's collective expertise across different contexts.
- Cross-regional learning exchanges between MHPSS practitioners.
- Translating field knowledge into accessible formats: guides, frameworks, podcasts, for other organisations working at this nexus.
- Building resources in multiple languages that centre survivor knowledge rather than academic or institutional knowledge.

Get Involved

YayGyiYar is a collective — which means there is a place for you in it. Whether you are a practitioner, a researcher, a donor, a partner organisation, or someone who simply shares our belief that healing and peace belong together, we would love to hear from you.

Volunteer	Partner With Us	Support Our Work	Get in Touch
Join our volunteer network as a practitioner, researcher, facilitator, or supporter. Your skills and solidarity matter.	We welcome partnerships with civil society organisations, academic institutions, and MHPSS networks working in Myanmar, the diaspora or the wider humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) field.	Donor support enables us to sustain and grow our network. Every contribution goes towards community programmes.	Whether you have a question, a collaboration idea, or simply want to learn more, we would love to hear from you at info@yaygyiyar.org

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