

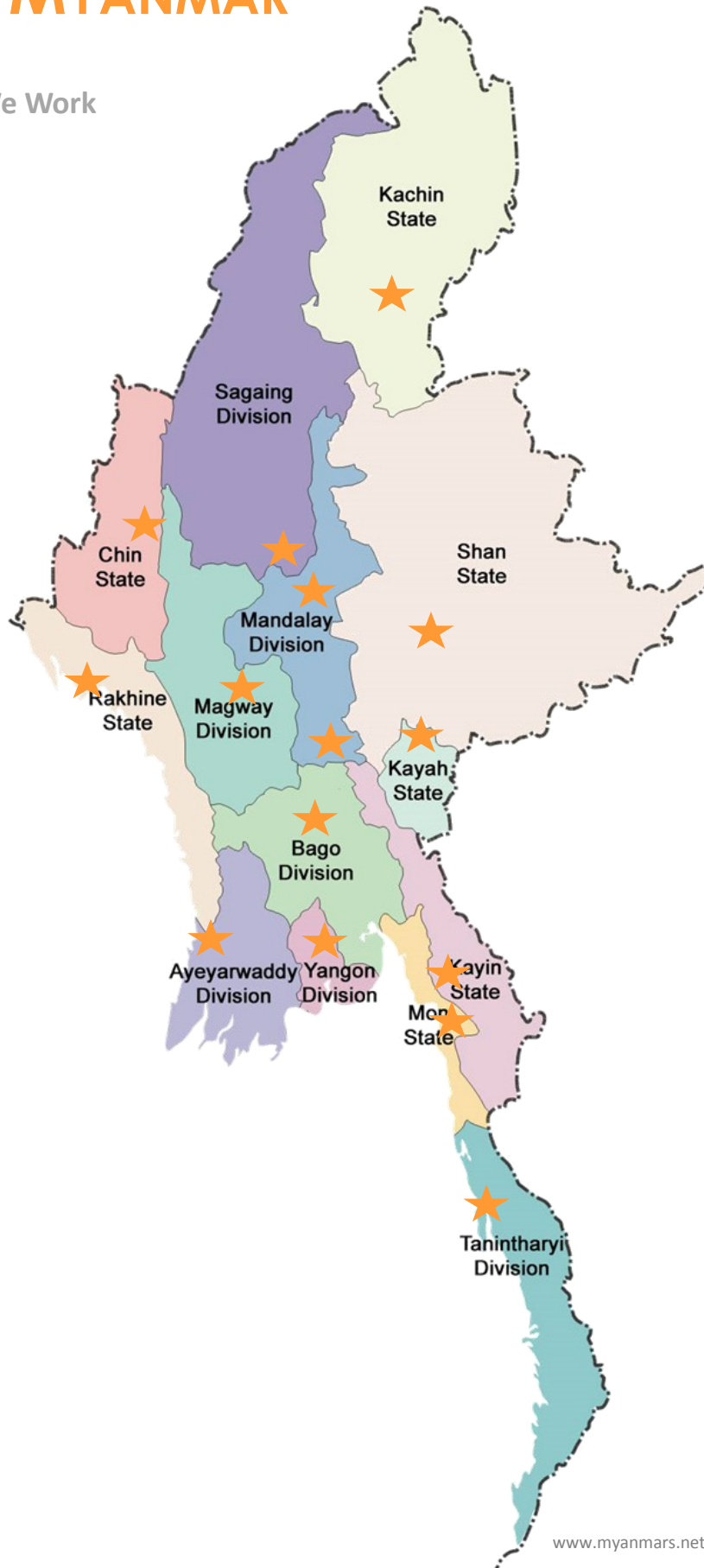
# ANNUAL REPORT 2014



# MAP OF MYANMAR



Where We Work




[www.myanmars.net](http://www.myanmars.net)

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



***“Although these old and new challenges exist and we do not know which direction the transition will go, it is our solid belief that through continuing human rights work and advocacy, there will be a new hope for the people of Myanmar towards creating a culture of human rights for all.”***

***-Executive Director, Aung Myo Min***



### It is with great pride that I sit down and reflect over EQMM's

accomplishments this past year. The commitment, passion and hard work displayed by our staff, trainers, partners and beneficiaries towards promoting a culture of human rights in Myanmar has been inspiring.

The core of our work to deliver high quality human rights education (HRE) continued to be strengthened throughout as we aimed to increase our reach to more people and build the capacity of human rights educators all over the country. Our unique methodology and participatory approach has spread human rights knowledge, thinking and skills to communities we did not reach previously.

Striving to balance the work of HRE and advocacy, 2014 was a year of ramping up effective advocacy, civil society organization collaboration and government engagement. EQMM dedicated its efforts to build a strong civil society that can effectively collaborate and conduct

advocacy at the local, national and regional level.

While Myanmar has gone through a wide variety of changes and some may say positive steps towards development, the government in many ways has moved backwards in terms of respecting and promoting human rights in Myanmar. EQMM has worked alongside CSOs to monitor the performance of the government while intensifying joint advocacy efforts to address human rights issues, particularly those affecting women and minority groups.

Although these old and new challenges exist and we do not know which direction the transition will go, it is our solid belief that through continuing human rights work and advocacy, there will be a new hope for the people of Myanmar towards creating a culture of human rights for all. On behalf of EQMM, thank you for your support and action towards achieving this common goal.

In Solidarity, Aung Myo Min



***“In 2014, we were able to conduct more activities all over the country. We have continued our process of learning by doing to spread the human rights message throughout Myanmar, particularly in challenging and hard-to-reach areas and communities. I feel very proud of what we achieved this year!”***

*-EQMM Program Coordinator and Trainer, Nine Nine*

# 2014 HIGHLIGHTS BY NUMBERS

In 2014 Equality Myanmar implemented 152 activities that benefited over 24,000 people, strengthening human rights across Myanmar.

Over **20,000** people's awareness raised through human rights day events in **20** communities around the country

**31** basic human rights trainings built the knowledge of **775** participants around human rights issues and concepts, providing practical tools for advocacy at the local and national level

**1,000** people reached through external requests for human rights trainings and capacity building

**25** newly trained human rights educators conducted **10** basic human rights trainings in their communities building the knowledge of **250** participants

**11** CSOs technical and managerial capacity strengthened to implement rights-based projects in their communities

**300** participants gained in-depth knowledge into a specific human rights topic or skill through **15** workshops, enhancing their ability to advocate and mobilize

# ABOUT EQUALITY MYANMAR

**Through human rights education, awareness raising and advocacy, EQMM empowers people to engage in social transformation and promote a culture of human rights in Myanmar.**

## VISION

A peaceful, tolerant and democratic society built on respect for dignity and human rights for all in Myanmar.

## OBJECTIVES

To raise awareness of human rights through participatory education and to empower people to access their rights utilizing community, network and human rights-based actions through capacity building and mentoring.

## WHO WE ARE

Equality Myanmar (EQMM), formerly known as the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB), is an NGO based in Myanmar that works in all seven states and divisions. EQMM began its work in 2000 from the Thai-Myanmar

border, and moved its operations inside Myanmar in 2012. EQMM implements a broad range of human rights trainings, advocacy programs, and research and documentation projects supporting civil society organizations (CSOs) and grass-roots communities to better understand their rights and hold duty bearers accountable. EQMM's strategic selection of target groups empowers community level CSOs that have potential to promote change within their communities and constituencies. EQMM also strengthens civil society participation within larger networks to increase CSO coordination and collaboration for rights-based solutions, stronger advocacy and government engagement at the local, national and international level.





# THE HUMAN RIGHTS ENVIRONMENT

**The growing space for civil society presents opportunities and challenges to addressing human rights concerns in Myanmar.**

While the Myanmar government's democratic reforms of the past four years have brought with them welcomed changes such as greater space for an active civil society, many challenges persist, including ongoing regional and ethnic conflicts, restrictions on religious, civil and political freedoms, violations of economic and social rights, and the failure to establish rule of law.

Examples of these restrictions have come in many forms. The conservative religious group, the Ma Ba Tha, has pushed forward several "Race and religion" laws that outline new regulations on religious conversion, interfaith marriage, population control and monogamy. It is widely recognized by civil society that these laws fundamentally threaten women's reproductive rights, freedom of religion, and will be used to target minority ethnic groups. 2014 has also seen a continuation of forced relocations and land confiscation cases. Tensions surrounding land grabbing have been further exacerbated by violent crackdowns and the arrest and imprisonment of land rights activists, contributing to a new generation of political prisoners. NGOs have identified that 200 people have been arrested in

2014 (journalists, peaceful demonstrators, students), and say that between 500-1000 are still behind bars for working on land that was confiscated by the military, the government or private companies. Additionally the government has used violent crackdowns and arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders to terminate peaceful protests by using ambiguously worded laws such as the Unlawful Associations Act and Article 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law. These examples are a small illustration of the myriad of violations that currently threaten the validity of Myanmar's transition to democracy.

These ongoing rights violations highlight the fact that the current political development and transition period are both fragile and reversible. As more human rights defenders, activists and CSOs take action against the perpetration of rights violations, raising widespread awareness of rights—civil and political, and economic, social, and cultural—remains essential. Building a movement for political change and developing sustainable cultures of justice and equality can only successfully be done if based on strong foundations of human rights awareness.

Through human rights education, people can begin to claim their rights while learning methods for holding duty bearers accountable. Human rights education must present practical applications in tandem with theory, particularly in outlining avenues through which individuals can follow-up on human rights violations once they have been identified. Being exposed to concepts of human rights allows people inside Myanmar to recognize the abuses being committed against them as human rights violations and take action to protect and defend their rights.



# HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

**EQMM's learner-centered and non-formal approach delivers creative and participatory HRE trainings and empowers participants to identify and analyze social problems present in their communities and initiate rights-based solutions in response.**

Through our HRE program, consisting of five day Basic Human Rights training and three day targeted issue-based workshops, people learn what their basic rights are and how to access these rights in a way that holds duty bearers accountable. Based on models of best practice in HRE, our curriculum presents practical applications in tandem with theoretical awareness raising, particularly in outlining avenues through which individuals can follow-up on human rights violations once they have been identified.

Rooted in the belief that the development of a human rights-based perspective is critical for the promotion of equality and justice in Myanmar, EQMM continued to deliver high quality HRE trainings to a wide demographic of beneficiaries in 2014. This year EQMM expanded our reach to underserved communities with little access to HRE, building the knowledge and skills of 2,289 participants in all 7 states and divisions of Myanmar. This training empowered individuals to serve as change agents within their organizations and communities, as well as equipped them with the

tools to develop rights-based solutions to respond to issues in their local context.

The trainings were organized in collaboration with CSOs and carried out in response to the needs of local communities and organizations. The trainings and workshops targeted civil society actors that can integrate human rights information in their areas of work, such as NGO and CSO staff, local human rights defenders, and political activists as well as communities that can benefit from increased awareness of rights systems, standards and monitoring. Five day training modules covered basic human rights, providing an introduction to human rights history, concepts and institutions. In-depth workshops on human rights topics offered greater coverage of a specific issue or skill including child rights, women's rights, land rights, advocacy, community organizing, freedoms of expression, assembly, and association, freedom of religion and belief, voter education, human rights documentation, rights-based approaches and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).



***“I had no idea about human rights before I came to this training. I want to change my attitude to respect other people’s rights while I enjoy my rights. I have learnt more about respect for women and that they should be treated equal. It is very valuable to gain knowledge on this.”***

***-EQMM HRE Training Participant, Minepyat, Mandalay***

### *HRE Training Outcomes*

Participants indicated a marked improvement in knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, and scored positively towards changing their behavior to incorporate what they learned in their daily lives. Nearly all participants said they will share their new knowledge with others and EQMM took note of follow-up trainings requested to deepen participants' human rights knowledge and skills further. Moreover, participants expressed that the training introduced new ways of thinking about human rights, prejudice and the Myanmar constitution that they had not been previously exposed to.





### *Community Snapshot*

During a basic human rights training in conflict and resource-rich Kachin State, participants acknowledged having little knowledge of human rights concepts, initially believing human rights was only applicable to western cultures. However, through presenting human rights issues as it relates to their local context, the participants brought up specific concerns such as the extraction of resources and the occurrence of land grabbing and arbitrary arrests, realizing that these were in fact human rights issues. Following the training, a group of participants from Nantmoon Village formed a youth group to raise awareness of the increase in substance abuse in relation to youth working in jade mines. The group continues to meet and mobilize together to raise issues in their village, utilizing the skills learned to advocate for change and press for rights-based solutions.



# TRAINING OF TRAINERS

**Through ongoing mentorship and skill-building, EQMM supports human rights educators to effectively educate, raise awareness, and conduct outreach and community mobilization activities at the grassroots level through an intensive month long Training of Trainers (ToT) course.**

Utilizing a holistic approach, EQMM trains grassroots human rights educators with the skills necessary for delivering high quality human rights trainings and using rights-based approaches in their areas of work. As 2013 ToT participants represented a wide area of lower Myanmar, in early 2014, EQMM conducted a month long ToT course to build the technical and material capacity of 25 newly recruited trainers (13 men, 12 women) from upper Myanmar with participants from Kachin, Shan, Chin and Rakhine States and Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions.

Working together in small groups through participatory and interactive exercises, the participants widened and deepened their knowledge of human rights history and context; international, regional, and national human rights mechanisms; facilitation skills; and multiplier training planning and management. Training participants took part in activities that allowed them to expand

their facilitation skills to become more effective and confident trainers. Following the ToT, the participants put their new skills into action through conducting basic human rights trainings and organizing human rights day events in their local communities.

EQMM is committed to sustainable and long-term efforts to build effective human rights educators, providing ongoing mentorship and continuing education to our ToT alumni. In addition to facilitating their own human rights trainings in their communities, we support participants to take part in a refresher course which provides the opportunity to share their experiences as facilitators and further deepen their skills through collaborative learning.

Additional capacity building opportunities are provided to ToT alumni including internship opportunities at EQMM's Yangon and Mandalay offices to shadow experienced trainers and gain on-the-job experience.



***“This training makes us realize that it is not so easy to become a trainer. It requires sound preparation to become one. The training is very systematic and we have become aware of each step required with the help of useful teaching tools. This training also greatly improved our presentation and creativity skills.” -EQMM ToT Participant, Mandalay***





### **ToT Alumni Implement Rights-Based Solutions**

Following the ToT, participants also organized additional follow-up activities in their communities. One ToT participant from Chin State started an organization focusing on human dignity and welfare. He is also a local organizer, actively involved in conducting human rights trainings for members of his community. The ToT alumnus frequently links with EQMM for networking and continues to request EQMM's user-friendly Information Education Communication (IEC) materials to support community outreach initiatives.

As an ILO representative in her local community, this ToT alumnus focuses on raising awareness around child soldier issues and forced labor. She also organized a women's worker group and facilitates trainings on women's rights

and labor rights, leading negotiations with employers to advocate for improved working conditions and salaries.

### **Training of Trainer Outcomes**

- ⇒ 100% of training participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they would apply their ToT knowledge and skills acquired in their areas of work
- ⇒ 100% of ToT alumni participants agreed or strongly agreed that they became more accepting of diversity
- ⇒ 87% of participants agreed or strongly agreed having a good grasp of the HRE training curriculum and 96% of participants said they agreed or strongly agreed that their facilitation skills improved after the month-long training



### *The Multiplier Effect of the ToT*

As part of the comprehensive training program, ToT training participants put their facilitation skills and human rights knowledge into action through ten practicum style “Multiplier Trainings” held in communities across Myanmar reaching 250 participants. The trainers used EQMM’s HRE curriculum and IEC materials to support trainings they conduct in their communities. Throughout the process, senior EQMM trainers mentored and supported the ToT alumni and provided feedback on their facilitation skills.



# BUILDING CSO CAPACITY TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT RIGHTS-BASED SOLUTIONS



**EQMM strengthens the organizational and technical capacity of local CSOs to identify pressing issues, develop project strategies and implement rights-based projects that address the specific needs of the grassroots communities we serve.**

Increasing the long-term impact of our HRE trainings and workshops, EQMM initiated a Community Mobilizing Project in 2014 which oversaw 11 small sub-granting projects initiated by local CSOs around Myanmar, some of whom had never received donor funding before. The projects were tailored to the local needs of the community to develop solutions to issues including land rights, child rights, substance abuse and women's rights. EQMM built the technical, operational and management skills of the CSOs throughout the project lifecycle, ensuring CSOs enhanced capacity to implement specific projects, and to manage day-to-day operations more effectively, strengthening their viability to receive funding in the future.

These sub-granting projects were led by EQMM's training alumni who have taken part in 6-day Community Organizing workshops. The workshop participants formed groups and took part in in-depth discussions of outreach projects to implement in their communities. The 11 teams continued developing their

ideas by conducting local needs assessments and developing sub-grant proposal documents. The groups created structured plans and project activities to implement to address various human rights issues in their local context such as: community events; local advocacy campaigns; human rights violations case monitoring, reporting and documentation; education opportunities; material development and distribution; protection mechanisms; engagement with local schools, shelters, hospitals or other institutions; discussion forums and seminars and other forms of awareness-raising.

EQMM continues to promote collaboration and sustainability of the Community Mobilizing Projects by strengthening their connection to wider networks. For example, child rights group, United Against Child Trafficking are now connected with the National Child Rights Working Group (NCRWG) and have solidified a strategic partnership to continue to advocate for children's rights through child-led and child-focused initiatives.



### **Youth and Community Awareness of Drug Abuse in Sagaing Division**

In response to increasing levels of drug abuse and violence in communities in Sagaing Division, the seven-member Nyein Chan Garunar and Dasoung Youth group were selected to implement their project activities in 5 villages of Kathar City. Gaining support by the community and local authorities, the project reached a total of 966 youth aged 10-18 as well as additional community members through awareness raising campaigns calling for stronger protection mechanisms at the grassroots level.

#### **Following the project:**

- ⇒ 15 cases were taken by anti-drug police force to address drug distribution
- ⇒ One anti-drug center has opened
- ⇒ Villages in Kathar City reached out to have the project replicated in their communities

# CSO NETWORK STRENGTHENING AND STRATEGIC ADVOCACY

**EQMM builds a strong network of organizations and activists across different sectors and levels of Myanmar society to conduct effective advocacy, networking and government engagement.**

The recent reforms have created opportunities for organizations with HRE experience to engage more directly with decision makers inside the country at the local, national and regional levels. Over the last year, EQMM strengthened its efforts to effectively channel grassroots level concerns and issues raised during the course of our participatory education into spheres of authority by empowering civil society actors to engage with authorities in Myanmar and with UN agencies and international human rights advocates.

Advocacy and networking activities on women's rights, Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights, children's rights, the enabling law, the inter-faith marriage law, intellectual property law, national education laws, HRE and on raising awareness about the UPR focused on furthering collaboration among civil society groups and

increasing dialogue with political stakeholders.

## *Advocacy at Work*

In November, 2014, President Barack Obama convened a CSO roundtable discussion during his historic visit to Myanmar with 14 CSO representatives, including Aung Myo Min, EQMM's Executive Director. Aung Myo Min and fellow CSO leaders

directly delivered a carefully crafted message about human rights in Myanmar developed during a CSO Forum held in October. As a result of the CSO Forum, a CSO Forum Steering Committee was established, of which EQMM is a leading member. EQMM along with fellow CSOs continue to develop joint advocacy statements and recommendations for addressing pressing human rights concerns in the country, while also working towards increasing the space for government engagement and dialogue.



# LGBT RIGHTS

**Through targeted human rights education, awareness raising, networking and advocacy, we empower LGBT civil society to be advocates for LGBT rights and promote non-discrimination.**

Colors Rainbow (CRB), EQMM's LGBT Rights Program, has significantly strengthened its organizational capacity and is now well on its way to becoming an independent LGBT rights organization. Throughout 2014, CRB addressed the significant lack of awareness of LGBT rights and the weak capacity of LGBT CSOs to effectively network and conduct advocacy. CRB also brought LGBT issues to a wider audience through large-scale community events, including the first ever LGBT photo competition and by taking part in organizing the first ever LGBT Film Festival, &PROUD.

Serving as the driving force and secretariat of the Myanmar LGBT Rights Network, which currently has 35 local LGBT CSOs, CRB strengthened the capacity of network organizations to better connect with partners and political stakeholders to address LGBT issues throughout the country.

CRB built a foundation for responding effectively and efficiently to the abuse and discrimination routinely faced by My-

anmar's LGBT community, increasing future protection for LGBT people by creating a draft action plan employing a combined approach of awareness raising, advocacy efforts and legal action. A new project for promoting rule of law for the LGBT community was initiated in October 2014, training 24 paralegals from Pyay, Yangon and Mawlamyaing to help vulnerable people gain their rights through access to legal services. The documentation and data analysis from this project will lead to broader national level advocacy and lobbying work for Myanmar LGBT Rights Network.

The LGBT rights movement is gaining greater traction within the larger human rights movement where in the past it has been often sidelined or overlooked. This year CRB-led research on the impact of Section 377 of the Myanmar Penal Code on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was published in English and Myanmar languages and distributed to stakeholders, network members, donors and implementing





partners. This research, providing much needed insight into challenges faced by the LGBT community, will be used to inform advocacy efforts to reform discriminatory laws and procedures and strengthen rule of law.

CRB and LGBT Rights Network members continued to engage political stakeholders and government in effective dialogue to raise awareness of LGBT issues, advocate for increasing protection mechanisms of LGBT people and influencing legal reform. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC), which is responsible for accepting complaints of human rights violations occurring at the national level, has paid special attention to CRB's work, showing receptiveness and commitment to follow-up on cases of LGBT-based discrimination.





# MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES & IEC MATERIALS

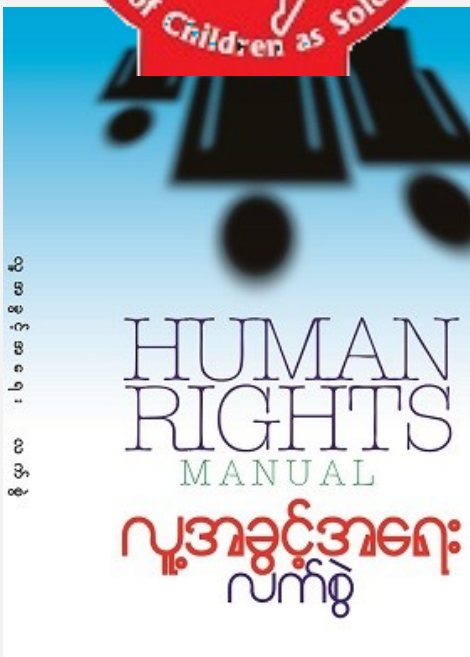
**EQMM increases access to creative and user-friendly human rights multimedia and educational materials to empower people to be agents of change and promote human rights for all in Myanmar.**

Over the past 15 years of operating human rights trainings and advocacy programs, EQMM has developed a number of multimedia human rights education materials and teaching tools to increase access to rights-focused materials. Through these tools, EQMM broadens its reach to fill in the historical lack of access to rights-focused resources and information by the people of Myanmar.

EQMM's educational materials present human rights concepts in an accessible, learner-centered format. The approach aims to encourage people from all ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic groups to engage with the resources, thus bridging social and ethnic divides by building a diverse community based on rights awareness.

By developing and distributing multimedia educational materials throughout

Myanmar, EQMM has been able to spread the ideas of human rights to a wider audience, beyond those who can attend trainings. The dissemination of human rights concepts allows for the expansion and strengthening of a network within Myanmar society which possesses a critical human rights consciousness. As such, the distribution of multimedia materials serves to promote and support EQMM's goal of creating a Myanmar culture in which people are aware of their rights and are empowered to take action in upholding them. During 2014, our highly-skilled Audio/Visual Department developed a wide variety of bi-weekly human rights-themed television episodes and short videos which were aired at trainings, on the DVB network TV channel and online as well as raising awareness of landmines through the production of land mine awareness songs and a music video.



## HRE TV EPISODE AND VIDEO TOPICS IN 2014

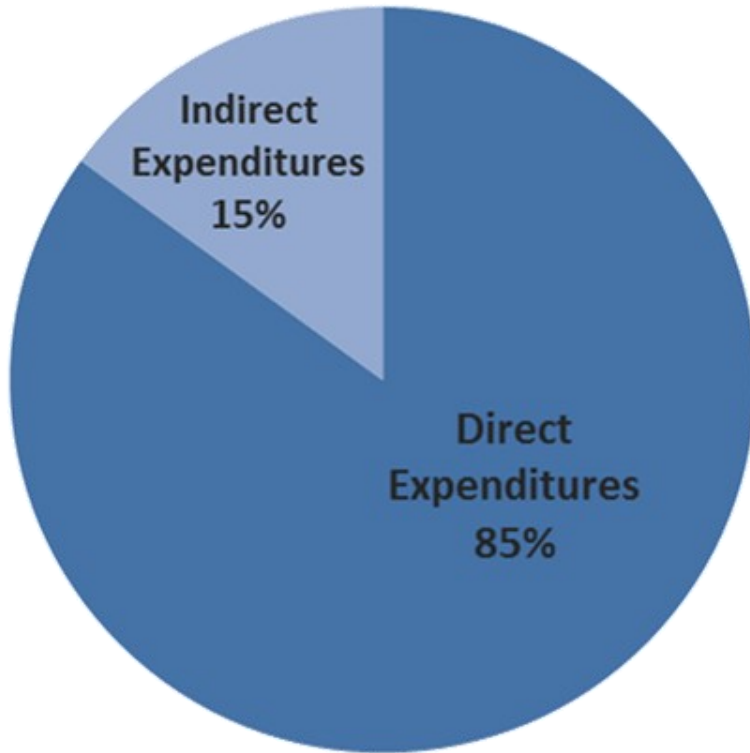
- ⇒ HR-Based Critique and the Constitution
- ⇒ Human Rights and Business
- ⇒ Child Soldier Rehabilitation
- ⇒ International Labor Organization Resolution 182
- ⇒ Draft Association Law
- ⇒ Draft Enabling Law of the MNHRC
- ⇒ International Convention Against Torture
- ⇒ Women in Politics
- ⇒ Hate Speech
- ⇒ Transparency of Extractive Industries
- ⇒ Children in Conflict
- ⇒ Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ⇒ Children on the Move
- ⇒ Debating and Discussing Violence Against Women Law



### Our multimedia and IEC materials include:

- ⇒ EQMM Human Rights Manual
- ⇒ Human Rights Training Materials
- ⇒ HREIB Human Rights Pocket Booklet
- ⇒ HRE TV Episodes and Animations

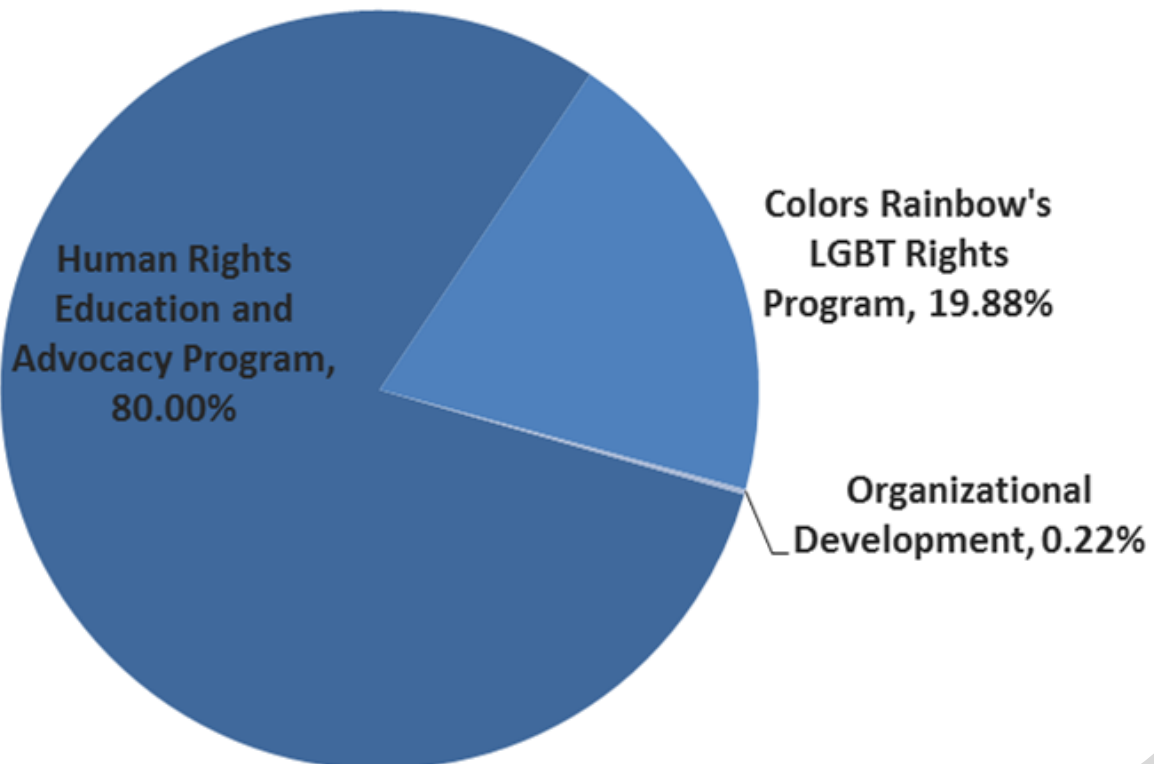
# FINANCIAL INFORMATION



**Total Operational Budget in 2014:**

**\$ 956,835.00**

## *Income by Program*



# DONORS

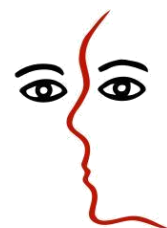
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