



For over 20 years, with the generous support of thousands of Canadians and the Government of Canada, Inter Pares has collaborated with local groups in Burma and neighbouring countries. The capacity these groups have gained is now being applied to Burma's transition towards peace and democracy.

THE CURRENT CONTEXT

After decades of direct military rule, Burma began implementing reforms in 2011 which brought increased freedom of expression and movement, the release of some political prisoners, and some tentative ceasefire agreements with armed opposition groups.

Freedoms are increasing. This is true in urban areas, but unfortunately not as true in the ethnic states and regions that make up 60% of the country's territory. In these areas, the military still exerts power with impunity, human rights abuses persist, and people have little recourse to justice.

The guns are more quiet. But in Kachin and Shan States, heavy fighting continues. Ceasefires in other regions are tense and fragile. Peace talks have yet to address autonomy, development, or human rights issues. Religious persecution continues.

'Development' is coming. For many villagers in Burma, development means land confiscation, corruption, environmental destruction, and dispossession. Environmental and social protections are nonexistent or unenforced. Burma's natural resources are concentrated in ethnic regions, and local people want a say in their development.

Communities are creating solutions. At this juncture, efforts by communities to organize, articulate their concerns and claim their rights are crucial.

OUR IMPACT

Together with over 60 community organizations, Inter Pares has achieved impacts such as:

Increased access to healthcare. Training of thousands of health workers and provision of primary healthcare services to a conflict-affected population of over 560,000 people.

Stronger women's leadership. Prevention and response measures addressing military and domestic violence. Increased women's leadership in civil society. Research and awareness-raising by multi-ethnic coalitions of women's organizations.

Human rights and environment initiatives. Creation of community groups and state-wide farmers' networks that have successfully called for the suspension of destructive development projects, and the return of confiscated land.

Inclusive peacebuilding. Development of community-based policies which have brought civilian concerns to the ceasefire negotiation table for the first time.

Expanded and democratized media. Achievement of nationwide reach and recognition by independent ethnic media groups reporting on marginalized regions, in local languages and from a local perspective.

Empowered displaced people. Refugee-led humanitarian relief and self-reliance capacity building for over 200,000 refugees in Thailand and Malaysia, and internally displaced people in southeastern Burma.



Funding from the Government of Canada for Inter Pares' Burma program ends in early 2015. Inter Pares has submitted a five-year program proposal to develop a more stable and multicultural Burma with a vibrant civil society. Together with thirty-eight community-based organisations, Inter Pares will build foundations for **an inclusive democracy in Burma**. The proposed 2015-2020 program will:

1 Advance democracy

Document human rights abuse and build on local strategies to access justice.

Increase understanding of gender issues and support women's leadership.

Develop community-driven policies on issues such as resource management.

Increase access to local language news and news from ethnic areas.

2 Strengthen health systems

Provide comprehensive primary healthcare by local health workers to people in over 1,000 villages.

Reduce infant and under-five mortality rates and increase deliveries attended by skilled birth attendants.

Build upon existing community health systems towards national healthcare.

3 Build resilience

Support community ownership of the development processes that affect marginalized communities.

Increase capacities for refugees to build sustainable communities when it is appropriate for them to return.

Why is Canada's role critical?

As a multi-cultural and federal country, Canada has much experience to offer. Canadians and the Government of Canada can be proud of the role they have played in building the foundations for sustainable peace and democracy in Burma.

In a context of fragile ceasefires and continued conflict in ethnic areas, it is important that development in these regions be undertaken by locally-based organizations that are trusted by ethnic area populations. **Over the past twenty years, Inter Pares has built strong relationships, unique expertise, and efficient mechanisms, working with exactly these types of organizations. Their role in the democratization of Burma, and Canada's role as an ally, is critical.**