

Restoring Stolen Futures: Exploring Possibilities for Reparations for High School Students Who Continuously Participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement Following the 2021 Myanmar Military Coup

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Abstract

High school students who have continuously participated in the civil disobedience movement (CDM) since the 2021 Myanmar military coup have been diverted from their formal education journey, and their future dreams have been disrupted due to the prolonged coup. While these young students' resistance to the oppressive authoritarian regime has been supportive to the sustained non-violent movement and their right to liberty and security has been violated, their experiences and the impact of their actions are underexplored and often overlooked. The resistance government has demonstrated a strong commitment to transitional justice for CDMers, including implementing reparations to acknowledge and address harm done. Thus far, policies have focused only on CDM civil servants with little attention given to CDM students. This research aims to explore perceptions and attitudes towards reparations for CDM high school students. To achieve this, it will explore CDM students' awareness of reparations and expectations of support now and after the return of a free and fair civilian government. In addition, the research will provide preliminary insight into policymakers' attitudes towards CDM high school students regarding their perceptions of students as CDMers and the possibility of reparations for them. This qualitative study will conduct 6-10 in-depth individual interviews with CDM high school students from different regions and states in Myanmar, and 2 former members of the National Unity Consultative Council who participated in drafting the recent CDM policy. The study seeks to amplify the voices of CDM students from diverse backgrounds by highlighting the types of harm they have experienced and their reparative needs. It will integrate students' and policymakers' voices to strengthen inclusion and participation in current and future transitional justice processes in Myanmar. It advocates for the importance of reparations for these students, our promising future generation, to create a just, secure, and prosperous country.