



Annual Report of the Institute for Peace and Social Justice 2025

March 01, 2026

Executive Summary

Overview and Strategic Context

The year 2025 marked a decisive transition for IPSJ. Moving beyond emergency adaptation necessitated by Myanmar's post-coup crisis, IPSJ entered a phase of structured institutional reform, strategic consolidation, and programmatic deepening. Operating amid protracted conflict, political fragmentation, and governance collapse, IPSJ positioned itself as a locally led, adaptive civic institution supporting democratic resilience, federal transformation, and rights-based governance in conflict-affected and liberated areas of Myanmar.

IPSJ's core mission—to promote democracy, human rights, and peace through civic education, policy research, and inclusive dialogue—remained constant. However, in 2025 the organization strengthened its ability to deliver on this mission through institutional development, decentralized implementation models, and evidence-based policy engagement. The year was characterized by three mutually reinforcing shifts: (1) internal governance and organizational reform, (2) the maturation of locally led hybrid civic education models, and (3) expanded policy-relevant research on rule of law, federalism, education governance, and resource rights.

Institutional Development and Organizational Strengthening

In 2025, IPSJ undertook significant internal restructuring to enhance long-term sustainability, accountability, and strategic coherence. IPSJ launched a formal Organizational Development and Reform Process (2025–2027), focusing on governance, leadership, and management systems. The Board of Directors was reorganized to strengthen strategic oversight and transparency, while the Executive Committee was reinforced to improve institutional planning and financial management. The recruitment of two highly respected senior figures from Myanmar's political and civic landscape further enhanced IPSJ's leadership credibility and strategic depth.

Human resource development advanced in parallel. IPSJ began formalizing a clearer internal structure with dedicated thematic teams covering civic education, research and policy, finance and planning, and external relations. Staff capacities were strengthened in remote coordination, digital security, cybersecurity awareness, and policy-oriented research—critical competencies for operating under conditions of conflict, displacement, and surveillance.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems, while still evolving, were consolidated through regular partner reporting and institutional reviews conducted quarterly, mid-term, and annually. These mechanisms supported evidence-informed program adjustments, financial oversight, and accountability to partners, constituencies, and donors.



Core Program Activities Implemented in 2025

Capacity-building initiatives constituted a central component of IPSJ’s program implementation during the 2025 fiscal year. These activities primarily targeted youth leaders, civic actors, educators, and other key stakeholders engaged in democratic and community development processes.

In total, IPSJ implemented nine major program activities during 2025 reaching 800 participants across Myanmar and abroad (Figure 1). These activities included civic education training, policy dialogue platforms, research dissemination workshops, and thematic capacity-building programs under the organization’s three strategic pillars.

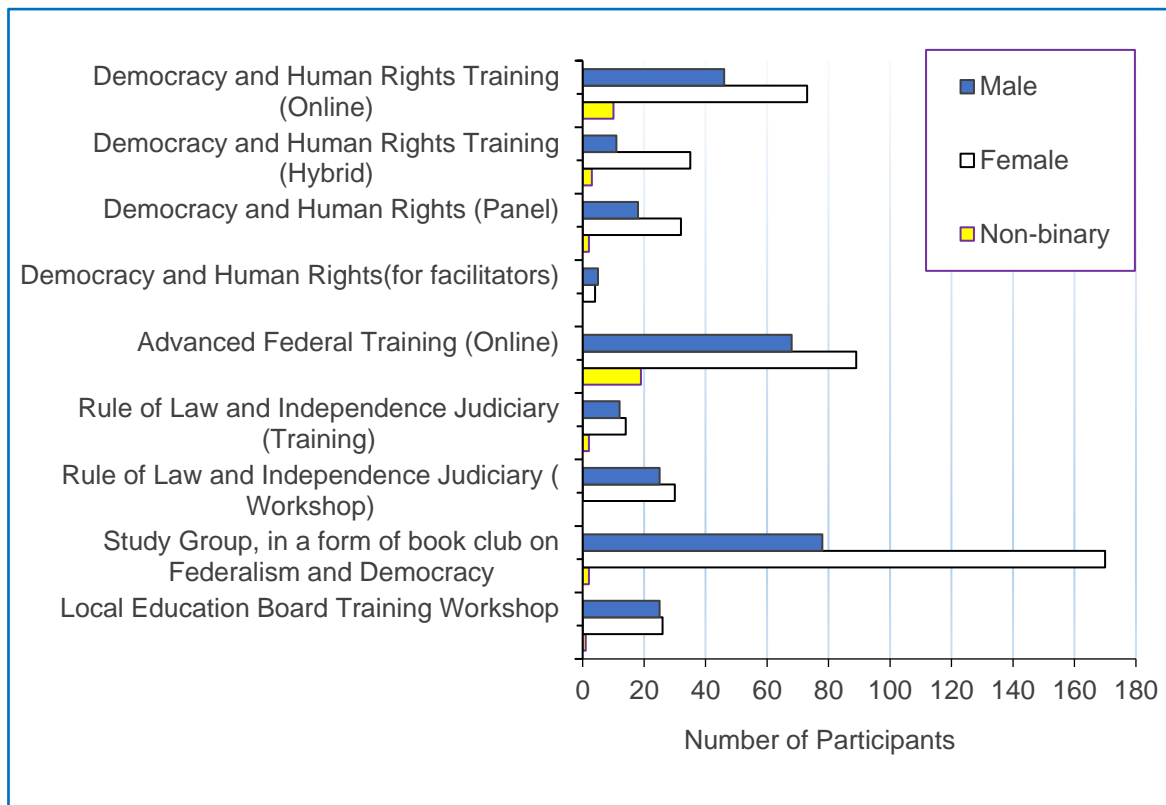


Figure 1. Main program activities implemented by IPSJ during the 2025 fiscal year.

Women comprised approximately two-thirds of total participants, while men and non-binary participants accounted for 36% and 5%, respectively (Figures 2a). This distribution reflects IPSJ’s sustained commitment to inclusive participation and the promotion of gender equity across all program activities. The participant group also reflected religious diversity. The majority identified as Buddhist (77%), followed by Christian (12 %), Muslim (1.4%), Hindu (0.3%), and other religious affiliations (0.8%). A total of 70 participants (9 %) preferred not to disclose their religious identity.

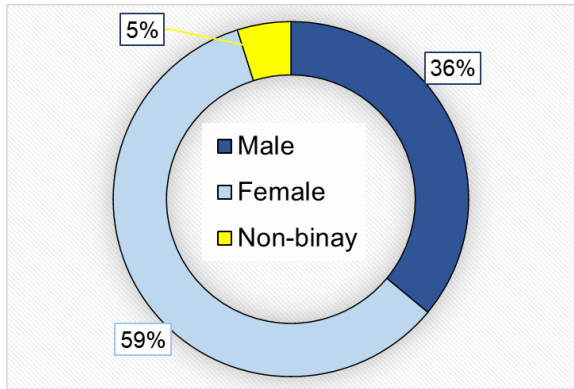


Figure 2(a) Participants by gender.

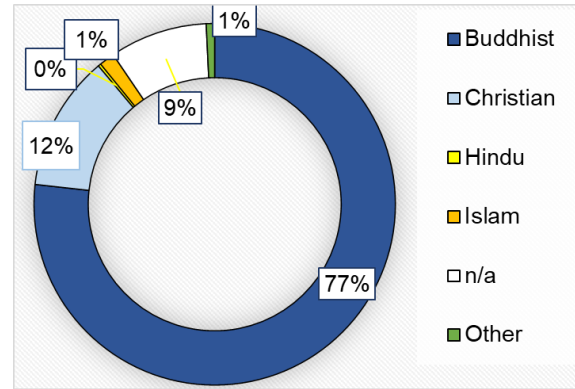


Figure 2(b) Distribution of participants by religious background.

Participants represented all States and Regions of Myanmar, demonstrating broad national reach. The highest levels of participation were recorded from Magway Region, Sagaing Region, and Karenni State. In addition, 41 participants joined from outside Myanmar, primarily from Thai-Burma Border (Figure 3), indicating engagement with Myanmar communities in cross-border contexts.

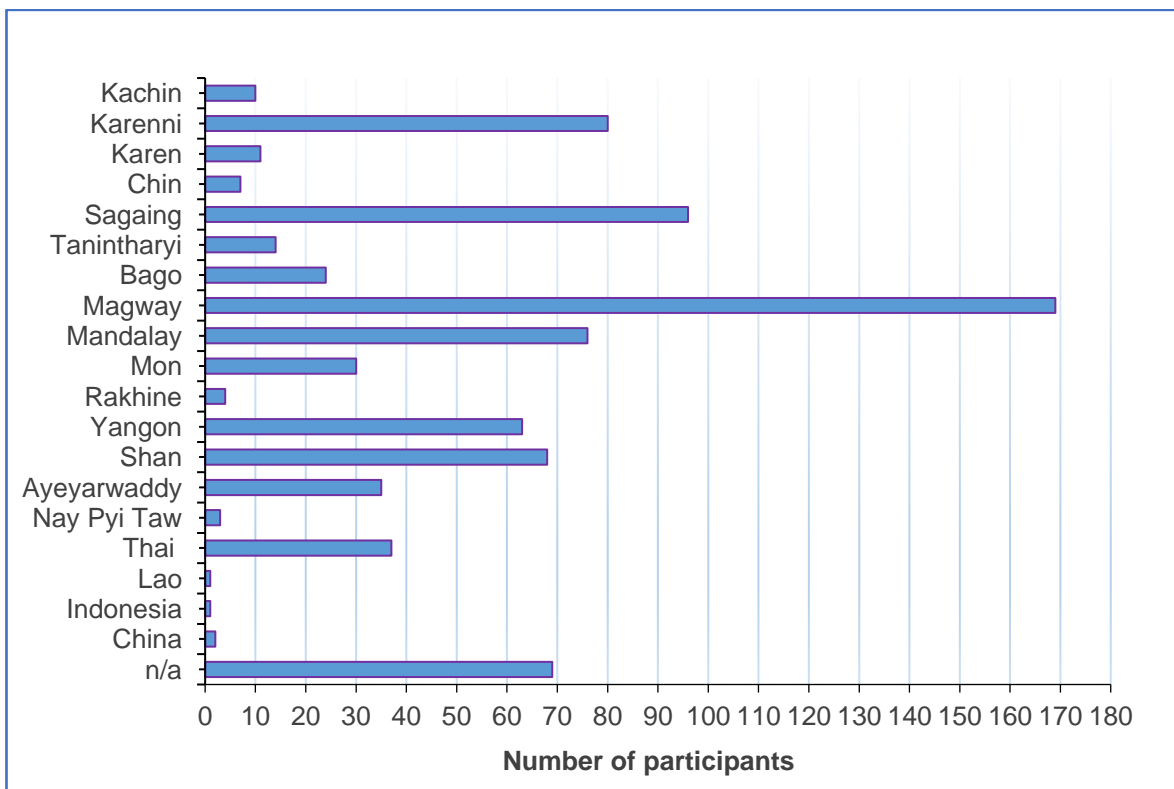


Figure 3. Geographic distribution of participants by State/Region.

In terms of professional background, most participants were civic activists, including members of student unions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs). A significant proportion were also members of the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), including civil servants and educators (Figure 4). This composition highlights IPSJ's



continued engagement with frontline democratic actors and emerging local leadership networks.

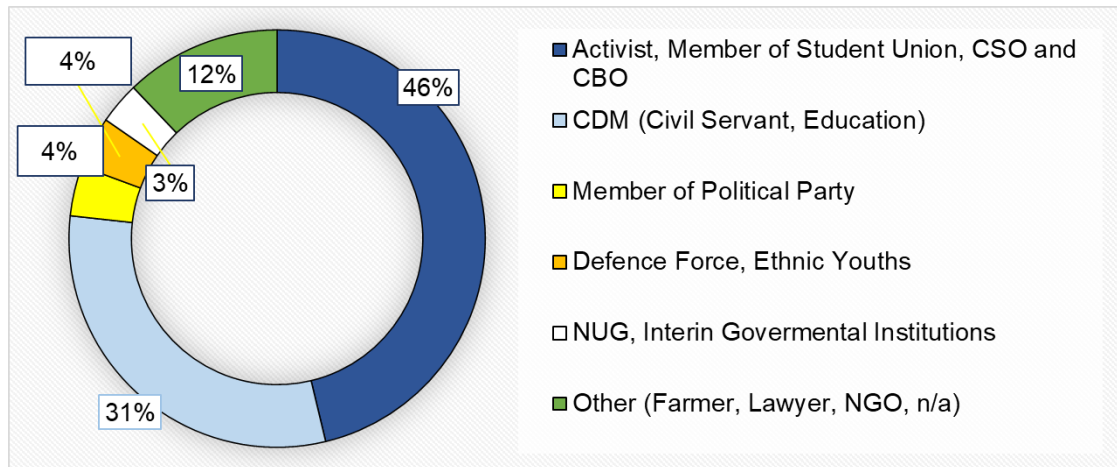


Figure 4. Distribution of participants by professional background.

Locally Led and Adaptive Civic Education in Conflict-Affected Areas

A central achievement in 2025 was the further consolidation of IPSJ’s locally led, adaptive civic education model. Initially launched in 2023 as an online study group program on federalism and democracy, the initiative gradually evolved in response to security risks, participant feedback, and contextual constraints. The program was subsequently rebranded as the *Thuta Yatwon (Realm of Knowledge Hub) Reading Club*, adopting a neutral identity while continuing to advance its civic education objectives.

Since its inception, the study group program has completed 18 batches, delivering approximately 198 sessions and engaging around 375 participants across multiple States and Regions. In 2025 alone, 250 participants joined the program, primarily consisting of Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) educators, students, civil servants, and members of emerging local governance structures. Responding to alumni demand, IPSJ also introduced community-based, in-person reading clubs at seven locations to complement ongoing online learning activities. This hybrid approach improved accessibility, strengthened local ownership, and ensured program continuity despite insecurity, internet disruptions, and mobility limitations.

Beyond knowledge dissemination, the study group program also functioned as a network-building platform. Sustained engagement among CDM educators and civic actors supported the localization of civic education content to reflect local realities and contributed to the development of decentralized facilitation capacity. The resulting trust and social capital enabled IPSJ to pilot a hybrid Democracy and Human Rights (DHR) training model, combining secure online lectures with in-person, facilitator-led group learning in conflict-affected areas such as Karenni State and Magway Region.

The hybrid DHR model demonstrated that structured civic education can be delivered safely and effectively in active conflict settings when grounded in local partnerships and conflict-sensitive program design. Trained local facilitators—many of whom were IPSJ alumni—



played a critical role in implementation by reducing operational risks while enhancing sustainability and contextual relevance.

Programmatic Achievements and Democratic Impact

In 2025, IPSJ implemented programs across three interlinked thematic pillars: Democracy and Human Rights, Just Transition, and Peace and Dialogue.

Civic Capacity Building:

IPSJ delivered basic and advanced training on democracy, human rights, federalism, and local governance through online and hybrid formats. These programs reached diverse constituencies, including ethnic youth, CDM teachers, civil society leaders, farmers' representatives, and members of political and ethnic organizations. Training emphasized inclusive participation, with a minimum 50:50 gender balance target consistently achieved and often exceeded.

Rule of Law and Judicial Reform:

IPSJ advanced evidence-based policy research on rule of law and judicial sector reform, producing two major bilingual research publications addressing judicial independence and federal legal frameworks. These outputs were strengthened through external peer review and disseminated to key national and international stakeholders, including justice sector actors, ethnic organizations, and human rights mechanisms. The work enhanced coordinated advocacy and contributed practical analytical frameworks for post-conflict judicial reform.

Bottom-Up Federal Education Governance:

Through participatory action research, IPSJ examined the feasibility of Autonomous Local Education Boards (ALEBs) in areas administered by Ethnic Resistance Organizations and resistance forces. Workshops, focal meetings, and interviews across Karenni, Sagaing, Magway, and Mon generated evidence-based policy recommendations grounded in local practice. This research positioned education governance as a strategic entry point for advancing federal democratic transition.

Farmers' Rights and Resource Governance:

IPSJ supported the revitalization of farmers' unions disrupted after the 2021 coup, focusing on organizational strengthening, youth engagement, and equitable resource governance. Parallel initiatives addressed environmental governance and land rights by providing youth training on international environmental frameworks and by facilitating the Land Sector Conversation Group, an inclusive dialogue platform examining land policy, customary practices, and reform needs.

Cross-Cutting Commitments and Key Learning

Across all activities, IPSJ integrated gender equality, non-discrimination, conflict sensitivity, and environmental perspectives. Women's leadership and participation were actively promoted in training, governance, and staffing. Conflict-sensitive implementation ensured participant safety and program continuity, while environmental governance and climate resilience were embedded within civic education and policy dialogue.



The key institutional learning from 2025 is that locally led networks, flexible delivery models, and incremental adaptation are essential to sustaining democratic learning and civic engagement amid protracted conflict. IPSJ's experience demonstrates that bottom-up civic education and policy engagement can contribute meaningfully to democratic resilience and federal transformation, even in the absence of formal state institutions.