

Mapping UNSW Impact Global Development

Primary SDG	16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
Broad theme	Good governance in Myanmar
Research	Training legal stakeholders to influence Myanmar's constitutional reform and peace processes
Impact region	Myanmar
Faculty	Law
School/Institute	Law
Academics	Dr Melissa Crouch, Professor Martin Krygier, Professor Theunis Roux
Project partners	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; Australia Myanmar Constitutional Democracy Project; core legal institutions in Myanmar (courts, parliament, government, civil society)
Related SDGs	10: Reduced Inequalities

Elevator pitch

UNSW is training key legal stakeholders in Myanmar - including local members of parliament, lawyers, civil society, ethnic leaders, and judges - to contribute to dialogue on constitutional reform and the peace process, helping the country transition to democracy.

The Challenge: As Myanmar reforms its constitution, it needs broad and informed input

In the past, discussion and debate about constitutional reform in Myanmar was criminalised. The military regime led a controlled constitution drafting process in the 1990s-2000s. The result is the 2008 Constitution, which includes the military in the governance of the country.

The challenge now is how to ensure the Constitution can facilitate a transition to democracy as well as cement a settlement to decades of civil war. This reform process requires a wide range of stakeholders to be given the opportunity to make informed and strategic submissions. Only with broad based public participation will the Constitution represent the will of the people. To participate effectively in the debate, both high level elites and local communities need to have an awareness of key constitutional issues and options for a peaceful future.

UNSW's solution: Research the constitutional principles of Myanmar, train legal stakeholders

Since 2013, Melissa, Martin and Theunis have delivered a series of annual workshops on constitutional law in Myanmar to key legal stakeholders. The workshops are based on their constitutional law expertise from Indonesia, South Africa, India, and Central and Eastern Europe. This program was established at the request of Aung San Suu Kyi, and has since built a strong and credible reputation in Myanmar of facilitating meaningful discussions and dialogue on constitutional democracy with a wide-range of key actors. In addition to the continuation of these workshops in Myanmar, a new Visiting Scholars Fellowship program will take place at UNSW Law.

Melissa has also written a book on Myanmar's transition, *The Constitution of Myanmar* (available in English and Burmese), that will be made available to the public, government, academics and students. Melissa reads Burmese, and has travelled extensively to Myanmar for a range of educational and research initiatives. Support is required to fund the Burmese translation of the book, and its subsequent printing and distribution for use in future training initiatives. There is also further scope to expand the Distinguished Visiting Scholars program for Burmese academics and advocates to UNSW Law, and the constitutional democracy workshops in Myanmar.

The Impact: Increase constitutional literacy, advance Myanmar's constitutional system

The project is equipping local actors - like academics, local members of parliament and civil organisations - to participate in and inform debates on constitutional reform, peace and democracy. The workshops, book and other educational materials provided by the project will enhance constitutional literacy in Myanmar, inform the strategies of influential actors, and educate a generation of students. As a result of the project, local Myanmar actors will understand the connection between the peace process and the need for constitutional reform.

Researchers

Dr Melissa Crouch is the Myanmar co-Academic Lead of the IGD and she is the author of the forthcoming book, *The Constitution of Myanmar*. She has comparative research expertise in Southeast Asia, and has contributed to numerous initiatives on constitutional and legal reform in Myanmar.

Professor Martin Krygier is the Gordon Samuels Professor of Law and Social Theory, and Co-Director of the Network for Interdisciplinary Studies of Law at UNSW. He is an expert on the rule of law. He is also an Honorary Professor at RegNet.

Theunis Roux is Professor of Law and expert in the field of comparative constitutional law. He was previously the founding director of the South African Institute for Advanced Constitutional, Public, Human Rights and International Law (SAIFAC).