



# KWO 2011 - 2012

## Two Year Update

KWO is pleased to provide our 2011/12-update report including programs currently running in the community, challenges and successes, financial reports, KWO special activities and a Call to Action. One thing that remains true throughout KWO's 28 years of service is our commitment to the Empowerment, Equality, and Freedom of all Karen women. Thank you to KWO staff, leaders, members, volunteers, community members, partner organizations and funders who help make KWO successful!

The past two years have brought many changes to the peace process and the political situation in Burma. KWO has been deeply involved in observing and advocating around the new peace process and discussions of planning for the possibility of refugees returning to Burma. It is KWO's aim to increase the number of women actively involved in the peace process. In order for KWO to advance peace in Burma, we made the decision to end some of our smaller projects to "make more space for peace." At the same time we are standardizing and expanding our projects in Karen State such as Nursery Schools and Capacity Building and hoping to ensure a balance between services and skills. This is a time of incredible effort by all KWO members and leaders. KWO continues to support our community in a meaningful way, but we have added a focus on peace and related issues to our mission of Empowerment, Equality, and Freedom for the Karen community.

Warm Regards,  
Naw K'nyaw Paw  
KWO Secretary

*"Women's participation in any peace process, from consultation, to negotiation, to information sharing, is crucial to achieve a just and sustainable peace. Even the UN recognizes this in the UNSCR 1325, which requires women to be included at all stages as peace builders. Moreover Karen women are peace makers at home, and in every corner of the community. We are leaders in times of conflict for our people. So it will certainly be easier for us to share this responsibility in times of peace."* - Naw K'nyaw Paw, KWO Secretary

## KWO Special Activities



**Refugee Return:** KWO has been playing an active role in the refugee return preparedness. We have organized a refugee return exchange through our Capacity Building Project to help identify challenges and overcome them. In 2011/12 KWO released a Position Paper on refugee return. KWO works closely with other Karen CBOs to guarantee the voices of refugees are heard. As an advocate for the community KWO will continue to ensure that the voice of refugees is part of every step of any return preparation and process.

**SGBV Case Management:** KWO continues to run 11 Safe Houses in the seven refugee camps to protect and support victims of SGBV. We also provide care and support to many women and girls who have been victims of violence but do not need to stay in a Safe House. In 2011/12 KWO finalized our “SGBV Case Management Manual.” KWO Safe House Project staff distributed the manual to seven camps. In two years KWO Safe House staff, social welfare position holders, CBOs, Camp Committees, and camp security received SGBV Case Management training. Each year about 171 people received training or refresher training.

**Peace Process:** KWO is committed to playing an active role in ensuring women’s involvement in the peace process. In 2011/12 KWO participated in many meetings and events related to the peace process, providing feedback and recommendations; KWO also issued a statement calling for more women to be involved in the peace process. KWO leaders and members work every day to keep the Karen community and culture alive and intact despite the pressures and disruptions we have all suffered. The experience and perspective this gives us is essential to achieving lasting peace and reform.



**Emergency Assistance:** In 2011/12 KWO helped collect donations and provided physical and emotional support for the victims of flooding in Mae Ra Moe camp and U Wei Klo. With many other community groups, KWO responded to the fire in Umphiem with support and donations. It is KWO’s aim to provide emergency assistance to women and the wider community whenever an emergency takes place. KWO is able to utilize our wide network of support, organizations and funders to provide assistance when it is most needed.

### Administration

#### **KWO Resource Centers**

KWO Resource Centers provide **support** for all KWO programs and activities, through communication, project coordination, networking, and advocacy. Highlights of KWO’s Resource Center activities for 2011/12 included:

Issuing a statement calling for **greater involvement of women in the peace process**. As a result, KWO gained increased women’s participation in the peace process.

**Sending representatives** to regional and international meetings on peace, refugee return, and other issues affecting Karen communities.

KWO launched a **new and improved website** in February 2012.



*“Finding funding for KWO Resource Centers is very difficult. KWO does not receive all of the funds we need and we have to manage the Resource Centers with limited resources. Resource Centers are the backbone of KWO’s work inside Karen State and the refugee camps.” — Naw Ta Mla Saw, KWO Joint Secretary I*



## KWO Education Program

### Nursery School Project

Nursery Schools in Karen State and refugee camps provide much more than **stimulation, support and a reliable routine** for young children. Children receive supplementary food to ensure **proper nutrition** during their key developmental years and care from teachers who receive extensive training. Nursery Schools also involve parents and community members through **parent education and school committees**, as a way to keep them invested in the well-being and future of the children and schools. **KWO's Nursery Schools in the refugee camps and Karen State have been so successful that each year new schools request support and other communities are copying KWO's model!**



*"I have 3 small children going to nursery school. I am very happy to see that they were fed well with nutritious meals every day as I don't have money to buy and prepare it for them."*

**– Nursery School parent**



### Dormitory Project and Unaccompanied Children Project

KWO's Dormitory Project provides **emotional and physical support**, housing, hygiene items, clothing, assistance with studying, and extra food for children and youth in the dormitories. In addition to the children living in the dormitories, KWO supported other unaccompanied children living with their parents or family members in the camps and IDP districts so they could continue their education. Children are given the opportunity to participate in extra activities in camp and their villages as a way to feel like a **part of the greater community**.

**43 teachers/carers participated in  
"KWO Standard of Care" Capacity  
Building trainings in 2011!**

### Karen Young Women's Leadership School Project

KWO's KYWLS is a highly successful project that has received **great appreciation from its participants**. Students gain many **valuable skills** including language, gender awareness, public speaking, typing, sewing/weaving, event organizing, and how to conduct fieldwork in their communities. KYWLS students **empower themselves** by learning about issues affecting Karen people, human rights violations, and following current events that directly impact themselves and their community. For 2011/12 students participated in **extensive fieldwork**, through interviews

and research, on domestic violence and refugees' situations in camp. Through hands-on work in the community and a personal commitment to their future, graduates become **leaders in their communities** and beyond.

**30 graduates of the KYWLS were elected  
to leadership and decision-making  
positions in their communities in 2011/12.**



### Special Education Project

KWO's SE Project plays an important role in educating and **achieving basic rights** for children and youth with disabilities and their families in the seven refugee camps. Project staff have dedicated themselves to creating trusting relationships with SE students (through home visits, classroom support in mainstream schools, and various trainings) in order to make a **positive impact on their lives** and wellbeing. The SE Project provides **advocacy for positive change** in the community, helping to reduce the stigma associated with special needs and to help create a better understanding of the needs of the children and youth.

**In 2011/12 the project introduced two new activities: Training for Community Trainers and a Teachers Exchange. These activities made it easier for mainstream teachers to work with students with special needs!**

*"I don't want other people to look down on me. I have a chance to study and learn just as others do. Some people say, 'you are deaf. You can't do anything.' But that's not true. I can work in the community and help others. I can weave and sew." – SE Student*

## **KWO Education Program by the Numbers**

| Education Program                     | Students |       | Teachers/Carers |      |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-------|-----------------|------|
|                                       | 2011     | 2012  | 2011            | 2012 |
| Nursery School Project                | 3,738    | 4,297 | 211             | 274  |
| Dormitory Project                     | 625      | 648   | 24              | 29   |
| Unaccompanied Children Project        | 110      | 110   | 2               | 2    |
| Karen Young Women's Leadership School | 19       | 31    | 5               | 5    |
| Special Education Project             | 495      | 480   | 158             | 136  |

## **KWO Organizing and Information Sharing Program**

### **KWO Camp Support Project**

The Camp Support Project, assists elected KWO leaders in seven camps with monthly stipends, provides small funds to the KWO in-camp offices, and enables women to work more effectively in community management. Through this project, important services provided by KWO to the camp community can be maintained. The women in KWO offer leadership, stability and a place to turn to when problems arise.

| Year | # Of women who received stipends |
|------|----------------------------------|
| 2011 | 589                              |
| 2012 | 559                              |



**The Camp Support Project benefits women by supporting community leaders while they do their work. The whole community benefits when women are involved, more skilled and actively taking part in decision making.**



### **Organizing Trips**

Organizing Trips are a chance for the leadership of KWO to update women in the community on all of KWO's current activities and important issues in Burma and in the refugee communities, such as political changes in Burma and possible return or resettlement. The trips contribute to transparency and inclusivity within our organization.

**In 2011, KWO visited 5 of the 7 camps and 5 districts in Karen State on Organizing Trips. In 2012, KWO visited 6 of the 7 camps and 5 districts in Karen State on Organizing Trips.**

**4,000 participants were engaged via KWO Organizing Trips in 2012!**

### **Documentation and Publication**

The Documentation and Publication Project works to document human rights violations, debate current issues, and to raise awareness within the Karen community and internationally. In order to keep the community informed on KWO activities and other issues affecting the Karen community and women, **KWO produced and distributed quarterly magazines and briefing papers.**

To encourage more women to participate in the peace process and to educate the Karen community on conditions regarding refugee return, in 2011/12 KWO distributed many "Call To Action" documents. **To find out more about KWO's and other Karen organizations' views on the peace process and refugee return, visit [www.karenwomen.org](http://www.karenwomen.org).**



### **Capacity Building Project**

The Capacity Building Project supports and strengthens KWO's capacity to provide essential services to Karen refugee and Karen communities inside Karen State.

**The organization and the community have benefited greatly from the activities and trainings offered through the Capacity Building Project. Some of these activities for 2011/12 included:**

**Seven sessions of Capacity Building Training for 60 KWO Central staff**





**600 KWO position holders** received 50 training sessions on project and community management.

**Conducted** the first preliminary survey of refugees to determine their views about the changes in Burma and under what conditions they would return to Burma.

**Local ceasefire monitoring training** with 32 participants.

**Refugee return exchange meeting** with 48 participants from KCBOs, KWO, NGOs, and UNHCR.

*“Since I started working with KWO, I have the opportunity to attend training, have more knowledge, and I can apply this not only to KWO and my work but also to my personal life and family. Information such as women’s protection is also helpful in my daily life in my family.” – KWO staff member*

## **KWO Social Welfare Program**

### **Safe House Project**

The Safe House Project provides **safe shelter and support services** within the Karen refugee camps for women and children who have suffered violence. In addition to the 11 Safe Houses, in seven camps, KWO offers **support and services** to SGBV victims who choose to stay in their own homes. KWO provides advocacy and education to camp residents and Karen State communities about SGBV and access to justice. For 2011/12 the project provided assistance to the community through publications, campaigns, and workshops. Project staff conducted **“In-Camp Safe House Support Network Workshop”** with 379 participants. These participants worked to build networks among



| Year | # Of Women and Children Protected Inside Safe Houses | # Of Women and Children Supported in Own Home |
|------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 2011 | 160                                                  | 114                                           |
| 2012 | 118                                                  | 131                                           |

local structures and groups to **enable a better understanding of SGBV response and prevention**. In addition, the project hosted a **“Safe House Management and Skills Exchange”** where Safe House staff from several camps shared experience and information about their Safe Houses and reviewed the Safe House Guidelines. All of these trainings and workshops are put in place to see that victims and their families receive the best possible care.

*“I felt that even though I am mentally ill, KWO Safe House staff treated me in the same way as other victims. I am very happy that they do not look down on me even though lots of people do.”*

**17y/o mentally disabled SGBV victim**

### **Income Generation Project**



The KWO Income Generation Project **empowers Karen refugee women** to generate income for themselves and their families by helping them sell the woven products they have made. The project also **encourages** women to preserve Karen tradition through traditional practices and designs in the products. In 2011/12 many skilled women decided to resettle to other countries. To help **promote the importance of Karen tradition and culture**, KWO will explore new ways to develop and promote our Income Generation shop throughout 2013/14.

| Year | Number of women weavers, sewers and embroiders |
|------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2011 | 185                                            |
| 2012 | 125                                            |

### **Elderly Care Project**

The Elderly Care Project supports and cares for the elderly in Eh Tu Hta camp. KWO staff and members offer **physical support and encouragement** to the elderly. Elders receive nutritious food and hygiene packs from KWO project staff. The elderly in the camp show **great appreciation** for this project as it provides them with items they may not receive without the support of the program.

| Year | # Of Elders Served |
|------|--------------------|
| 2011 | 169                |
| 2012 | 175                |

## KWO Health Program

### Baby Kit Project

The Baby Kit Project helps to **improve the health** and well-being of mothers and newborn babies in Karen State. The kits are comprised of basic physical needs for the mother and child within the first few months after birth. KWO also provides them with information on family and reproductive health issues.

| Year | # Of Kits Distributed |
|------|-----------------------|
| 2011 | 5,950                 |
| 2012 | 6,200                 |



Baby Kits are of **great benefit to mothers and their babies**, they have improved the overall health of many women and children inside Karen State. KWO regularly receives **appreciation and requests** for more baby kits.

*"After getting the kit I felt like the whole family also benefits from it as they had a clean and healthy environment around the house which is good. I also know more about how to keep my baby clean and healthy through the health message that was included in the baby kit package." – Baby Kit Recipient*

### Women's Health Program (Traditional Birth Attendants)



The Women's Health Program provides **direct physical assistance** and training to TBAs to ensure a safe and comfortable birth for mothers and children in two Karen refugee camps.

The TBA program continues to listen to and **address the needs** of Karen women and children in Ma La Oon and Mae Ra Moe camps. The safety and health of these women and children have improved through the popular activities of this program including:

**Health Awareness Sessions for Women**, with over 7,187 women participating in 50 sessions

**Distribution of TBA and Maternity Kits**

Development of a new

TBA Training curriculum in Karen language to support higher quality training of TBAs.

**In two years, 110 TBAs assisted in 610 safe home deliveries using KWO maternity and TBA kits each time.**

### Networking and Advocacy

KWO plays a very important role in supporting Karen women and the Karen community as a whole. In addition to providing services through funded projects, KWO fulfills needs that do not receive funding or are not supported by other organizations. KWO staff and members are a part of the communities we serve, and have a thorough understanding of the needs of our communities.

Although the work is not always funded, KWO:

- Advocates for women in the camp justice systems

- Awareness giving and prevention on issues facing women and children

- Works with Women's League of Burma (WLB) to produce advocacy campaigns and support the involvement of women in the peace process and political decision-making

- Partners with other Karen CBOs, focusing on refugee return, emergency issues, and IDP issues

KWO works tirelessly to expand our network with other community groups and structures, International agencies, and donors. Our relationships and networks help unite and strengthen the Karen community.

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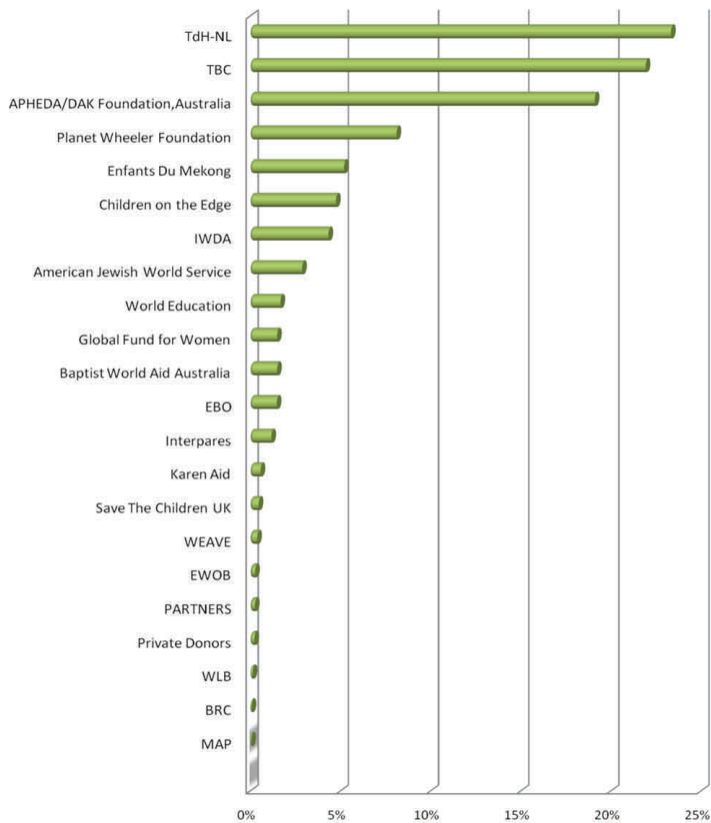
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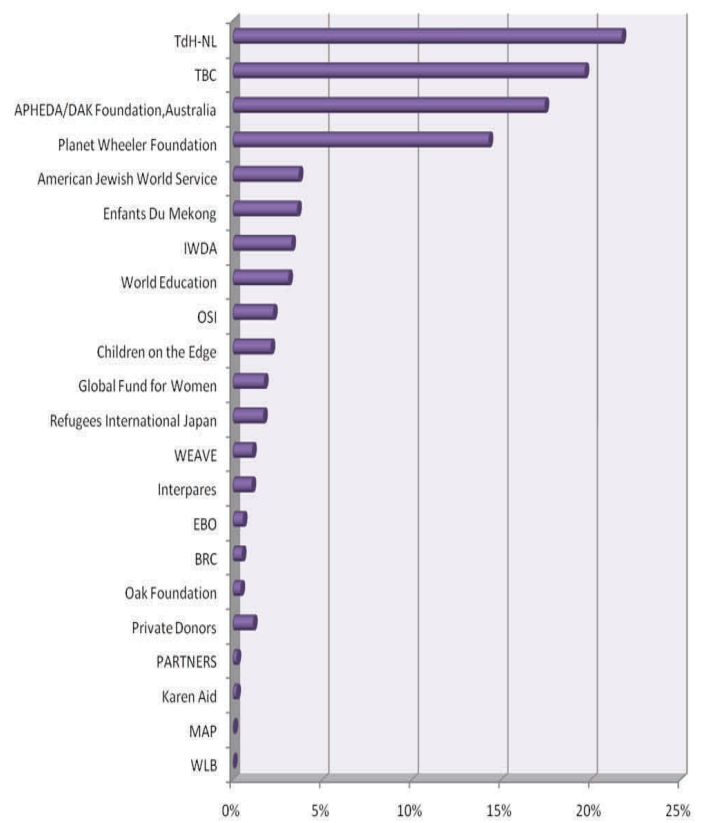
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# KWO Budget 2011 & 2012

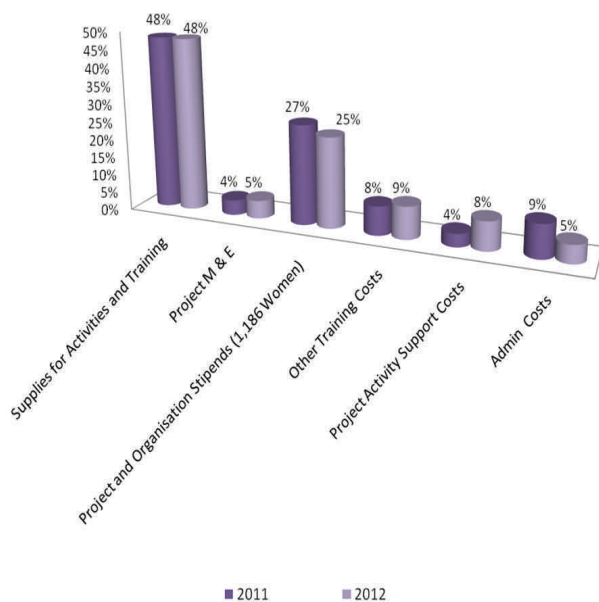
## KWO DONORS 2011



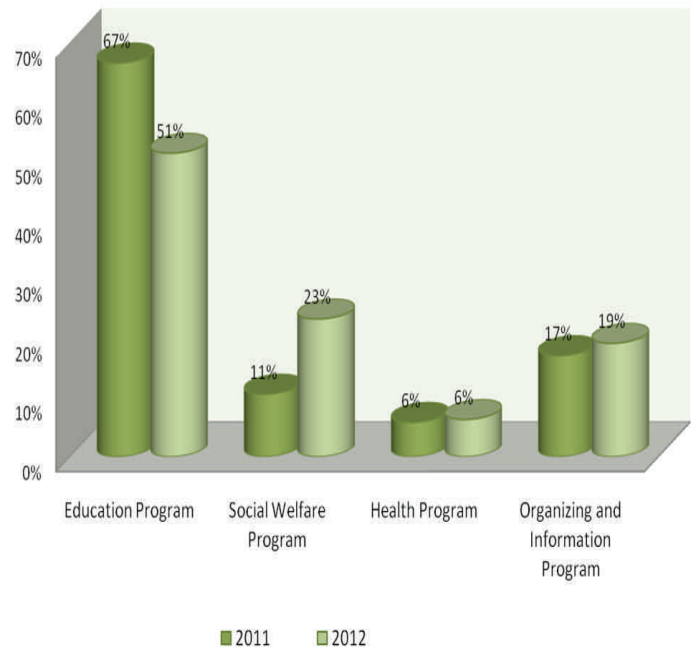
## KWO DONORS 2012



## Breakdown of Expenses.2011 & 2012



## Summary by KWO Programs 2011 & 2012





## Organizational Challenges

**Human Resources:** KWO continues to face the challenge of losing staff to resettlement. In addition, KWO has seen staff members leave because they need to return to their homes to support their families. It has become apparent that the more experienced staff members are the ones who are resettling or leaving to care for their families. This causes many challenges; KWO must find replacement staff and train them, while keeping all the programs running.

**Community Ownership:** Ensuring community ownership for refugees and villagers is a big challenge. As return and peace become more of a possibility, community ownership is essential. Unfortunately KWO has experienced a number of International Agencies not as supporters in this process, but as obstacles. KWO has to spend too much time and too many resources working to prevent duplication of community owned programs and by-passing of community decision-making structures. It is KWO's job to represent the community, and community representation will continue to be our priority in the future.

**Security:** Every day, KWO members risk their freedom and wellbeing in order to find ways to continue doing the works of KWO. Members face many security challenges when travelling and working in Karen State and along the Thailand/Burma border. KWO members are regularly direct witnesses of human rights violations. Our organization works hard to reduce or respond to security and safety challenges so that all women can be healthy, safe, and able to continue working for the Karen people.



*"Recognition of community structure is necessary in order for all agencies to work together in reaching community goals. KWO was established in 1949, it is a very powerful organization and has advocated for the Karen community and women from Burma since 1985. The Karen community has our own community leaders and structure to lead the community and it is important to work with our Karen culture and environment. Whenever NGOs or outside agencies commit to work for our community they should value and recognize community leadership and management to build on and strengthen our work." — Nan Dah Eh Kler  
KWO Chairperson*

## Call To Action

**As KWO continues our mission to provide Empowerment, Equality, and Freedom to women and the wider community in Karen State and refugee camps on the Thai/Burma border we need YOUR support to help ensure our success.**

**KWO looks to the future with a commitment to positive change and peace in Burma. It is OUR responsibility to step up and support the voices of Karen women and the community as a whole. DONATE to KWO's mission of Empowerment, Equality and Freedom for Karen women and children by visiting [www.karenwomen.org](http://www.karenwomen.org) and clicking the DONATE button. True change begins at the community level, please support KWO in achieving meaningful change, now!**