

Pathways to Recovery: Digital Innovation, Gender Inclusion, and Community-Led Development in Post-Crisis Myanmar

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Abstract

Myanmar today faces the challenge of rebuilding an economy and society fractured by conflict, displacement, and economic contraction. This paper situates Myanmar's crisis within a broader comparative framework by examining four cases of national recovery: Vietnam's Đổi Mới reforms, South Korea's New Village Movement, Rwanda's Vision 2020, and Cuba's National Literacy Campaign. Alongside these campaigns, Myanmar's current development is also taken into consideration to recommend effective pathways that were previously built and need strengthening. The research findings in this paper highlight the importance of local communities, digital literacy, infrastructure investments, and the significant role that women play. By drawing on these comparative experiences, the paper argues that Myanmar's path to recovery depends not only on economic growth but also on rebuilding social cohesion and trust.

1. Introduction

In the aftermath of crisis, nations face the challenge of rebuilding their economies while also repairing the social fabric of their societies. Myanmar today stands at a crossroad between economic rebuilding and structural rebuilding, both needing attention due to recent events. In 2021, due to political and economic factors, Myanmar's economy reported an 18% decrease in economic growth and a 3.64 inflation rate. In 2022, the economy went back to its upwards trend of a 1.97 GDP growth rate but inflation still not adjusting at a concerning rate of 16.23% (Global Finance Magazine, 2023). These trends have continued with GDP growth growing stagnant and inflation adjusting slowly. In 2024, the UNHCR reported approximately 9,195 people fleeing the country by boat (UNHCR, 2025). Taking these factors into account (and understanding that there is minimal data on unemployment rates, international funding, aid, government initiatives done to resurrect the economy,...), Myanmar is witnessing prolonged economic instability caused by sudden external factors. In this paper, I will examine four cases where societies in and near the South East Asian have navigated economic turmoil.

In Vietnam, the Đổi Mới reforms in 1986 marked a deviation from sole government monitoring and economic planning, with land reforms, foreign investment, and administrative prevention laying the foundation for sustained growth (Hong Anh Tuan, 2010; To, Mahanty and Wells-Dang, 2019; Le, 2022; Lorne Carr-Ellison, 2021). In South Korea, the Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement) encouraged rural communities through state support and grassroots initiatives which raised agricultural productivity and strengthened village life (Douglass, 2014). In Rwanda, post genocide recovery was represented by Vision 2020, which emphasize the importance of investments in human capital and advocated for women's participation in nation rebuilding (Ansoms and Rostagno, 2012; Wallace, C., Haerpfer, C. and Abbott, P., 2008; Time, 2024). In Cuba, the 1961 Literacy Campaign saw hundreds of thousands of volunteers, most of them young women, who fought to eradicate illiteracy, emphasizing the importance of education and national identity to economic growth (Hernández Acosta, 2021; Abendroth, M., 2010).

Despite different contexts, these examples hold fundamental similarities to the economic situation in Myanmar. These movements all focus on the roles of the state in steering reform, mobilizing grassroot groups, investment in human capital, and social inclusion in nation rebuilding strategies. Together, they illustrate that recovery is not only about policy or economics but also about reimagining the relationship between people, communities, and nations.

Reports have shown that methods used from these reforms have gradually been adopted in Myanmar. Applications have been designed to boost agriculture, equip farmers with necessary tools and resources, and connect farmers with local and international donors (Tin, S., 2025). Myanmar's digital economy has grown, bringing with it opportunities for women to find work, digital literacy, and policies that support women's ownership of land (Bo, M., 2024). Efforts to educate and develop human capital have emerged in Myanmar (Borgen Magazine, 2020). However, it remains to be seen whether these efforts can be sustained and developed further. Given the economic and political changes that took place in 2021, it is now more important than ever to sustain innovation efforts and learn from past experiences to drive Myanmar's economic growth. This paper examines the economic strategies adopted by other countries and analyzes how Myanmar has implemented similar approaches to strengthen its economy.

2. Literature Review

Research on economic and social transformation examines important insights for countries facing crises after war or policy change. Vietnam's Đổi Mới reforms, launched in 1986, are known for its effective policies in land reform, focusing on empowering farmers and redistributing their land from the ownership of “địa chủ” (landlords) (To, Mahanty and Wells-Dang, 2019; Braumiller Law Group, 2019). These policies returned ownership and use rights to farming households, legal changes such as the 1993 Land Law, and the opening to foreign investment and trade that allowed Vietnam to become a major exporter (To, Mahanty and Wells-Dang, 2019; Braumiller Law Group, 2019; Hong Anh Tuan, 2010).

The Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement) in South Korea highlighted the importance of collaborating between the state and local communities. This collaboration in the 1970s raised rural incomes and modernized infrastructure which became a powerful method of economic rebuilding. The movement pushed for community unity but also revealed the risks of differences between rural and urban development (Douglass, 2014).

Rwanda's Vision 2020 highlights how government reforms and investments in human capital pushed recovery after the 1994 genocide. The role of women was highlighted in passing inclusive policymaking and reshaping national identity (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012; Burnet, 2011; UN Women, 2018).

Human capital was deemed one of the most important focuses for Cuba's 1961 National Literacy Campaign. With more than 250,000 volunteers (many of which were women), this campaign decreased illiteracy rates significantly and strengthened bonds between urban and rural areas (Hernández Acosta, 2021; Abendroth, M., 2010).

For Myanmar, most of these initiatives have been adopted in recent years. With national and international interest in Myanmar's agricultural rigor, the country has been seeing a lot of focus regarding this area. Agricultural focused applications such as the "Htwet Toe App" and "Golden Paddy App" have been built to assist farmers and deliver information such as real time market updates, weather forecasts, and more (Tin, S., 2025). However, with digital innovations, digital literacy should also be considered for the effectiveness of these platforms. With literacy rates being low for women, especially in rural areas and with varying languages being spoken and taught across Myanmar, focusing solely on digital innovation to solve agricultural problems may not be the answer (TNI, 2015). Infrastructure also introduces further limitations in adopting existing platforms with only 37% of Myanmar households having access to electricity (Scott, S., 2017). Furthermore, Citizens in Myanmar tend to favor mobile interfaces to desktop interfaces, suggesting the effectiveness of mobile apps may be more dominant in interest (StatCounter, 2025). However, much of this paper is focused on the importance of gender equality when addressing success in post-conflict efforts which faces challenges with a 28% gap in mobile ownership between men and women (Scott, S., 2017). The 2021 military coup combined with Covid-19 has set back progress for Myanmar, especially smaller regions such as Rakhine with some digital uses for entrepreneurship but opportunities varying significantly between rural and urban areas of the state (Bo, M., 2024). All of these facts taken into account, the pursuit of economic rebuilding is facing drastic challenges, even in the modern world where technology can be of assistance, and needs clear navigation in terms of what can and should be implemented to stimulate economic growth. These facts suggest that Myanmar's road to economic rebuilding must combine techniques from preceding movements while also implementing modern tools effectively and with caution.

3. Case studies

3.1.1. Vietnam : From Central Planning to Market Socialism

The Đổi Mới reform happened in a time of severe stagnation, food shortages, and international isolation. The country introduced policies that were more open and market-oriented which connected Vietnam to national and international opportunities (Hong Anh Tuan, 2010).

Land reform was a key factor in this movement. The policies were revolutionary in that they returned ownership and land-use rights to farming households, effectively stopping the "địa chủ" (landlord) regime previously held in Vietnam. The Land Law in 1993 granted long term land use right certificates that could be sold, inherited and rented out by land owners. This law allowed and incentivized production, specifically rice production, which reduced rural poverty and

positioned Vietnam as one of the main rice exporters (To, Mahanty and Wells-Dang, 2019). Additionally, in 1987, the Law on Foreign Investment boosted investments from multinational corporations. The openness to trade also introduced export opportunities for companies inside of Vietnam, encouraging private sectors to distribute their goods internationally. This opened up the opportunity for Vietnam to become an economic and technological hub. By 2019, over 340 economic and technology zones in Vietnam were thriving with support from infrastructure projects and policies that favored agricultural growth and trade (Braumiller Law Group, 2019).

This success continues today with what citizens are calling the “second Đổi Mới”. Political reforms continue, focusing on anti-corruption and improving efficiency in state institutions. The “Streamlining Revolution,” initiated through Resolution 18-NQ/TW in 2017, seeks to reduce overlapping jurisdictions, downsize ministries, and modernize governance. However, these changes on a state level could not have happened without the agricultural reforms and local focus of the first “Đổi Mới” movement and the essence of this previous movement is still being preserved today. Analysts argue that this second wave mirrors the reformist spirit of 1986, but with a focus on state restructuring to support Vietnam’s ambition of becoming a high-income economy by 2045 (Lorne Carr-Ellison, 2021).

For Myanmar, Vietnam’s experience illustrates the importance of sequencing reforms. The restoration of secure land rights in the 1990s created a foundation for food security and rural development. Only after securing agricultural reform, which Vietnam is still known for, did reforms regarding economics and government follow. Many of these patterns have already been present within Myanmar. Agriculture has been supported heavily, with new technology aiding farmers in growing crops, weather information, and sales (Tin, S., 2025). However, with the lack of electricity and unstable state of the country after the 2021 coup, it may be challenging to request state and local collaboration in implementing these policies. Learning from Vietnam's "Đổi Mới" reform, Myanmar should preserve and strengthen the networks that help expand its agricultural efforts nationally and internationally. Digital freight platforms like KoneSi demonstrate creative adaptation to Myanmar's infrastructure crisis, allowing farmers to coordinate transport despite damaged roads and connecting over 300 truckers with business operators to reduce empty backhauls. However, as data and our expert testimonial’s reveal, these technologies cannot substitute for fundamental investments in irrigation, electricity, and physical logistics. Technology can help communities survive the present crisis, but long-term recovery requires the same foundational reforms: land security, rural infrastructure, market access, that enabled Vietnam’s transformation. Currently, platforms like KoneSi reach only urban and semi-urban areas with electricity and mobile infrastructure. Expanding their reach to rural communities requires parallel investment in basic infrastructure before further digital development (Tin, S., 2025).

3.2 South Korea : Industrial Policy and Rural Modernization

In the 1970s, South Korea's Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement) decided to tackle its economic and nation rebuilding with what we can call a form of fiscal policy. The government funded projects to modernize rural areas in the country by providing construction material to villages and encouraging self help projects (Douglass, 2014). However, the program quickly expanded and became integrated with the Green Revolution in rice production, substantially improving rural livelihoods and food security (Douglass, 2014).

The project was a success with rural households incomes rising to closely approach urban levels. South Korea's urban areas had also achieved a near self-sufficient amount of rice production and village infrastructure had improved significantly. This was described by Douglass (2014) as a "snowball effect, where a village's success motivated neighboring ones to follow suit. The New Village Movement also functioned as a symbol of national identity, showcasing a unique blend between state planning and self sustaining efforts by citizens (Douglass, 2014).

However, this program did not come without its limitations. The program was closely tied to martial law, which made diversity in opinions rare and left out critical voices from grassroots groups and other marginalized groups (Douglass, 2014). Due to these limitations, development concentrated in the Seoul to Busan area, while rural areas began experiencing depopulation and minimal economic growth. By the 1980s, both the modernization and sustainability aspects of the New Village Movement had reached their limits. Subsidies were unsustainable, agricultural yields plateaued, and political turbulence eroded state support (Douglass, 2014).

Myanmar's agricultural sector faces challenges similar to South Korea in the 1970s such as rural poverty and weak infrastructure. However, since 2018, private sector involvement has begun to address these challenges. Entrepreneurs incentivized by limited trade regulation have pushed domestic and international trade organically (Htay, M.W. and Lee, D.S. , 2021). These discoveries mirror both the New Village Movement and "Đổi Mới" movement in its community and agricultural focus. In order to develop these economic growth factors further, expansion of national and international trade needs to happen, starting at a small local scale to a bigger international scale. With the 2021 coup, private sectors can consider agriculture a worthwhile and necessary investment to push the economy and increase job opportunities so that communities can thrive without the involvement of the state. Technological applications such as the "Golden Paddy App" have effectively connected investors in the agricultural sector. Other applications such as the "MyFarmer App" have successfully implemented methods for crowd funding and enabled users to fund farmers for crop cycles (Tin, S., 2025). The scope of expansion for these projects must also be considered to ensure the equitable economic growth of all regions in Myanmar. With tools that can enhance and assist economic growth, it is crucial that

they be developed to reach all regions of Myanmar and be designed in an accessible manner that accounts for varying levels of infrastructure, literacy, and linguistic diversity across the country.

3.3 Rwanda : Reconciliation and Human Capital Investment

In 1994, Rwanda faced a horrific genocide where Hutu extremists killed around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in just 100 days (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016). This travesty impacted heavily on Rwanda's government and national unity, impacting heavily on the country's economic state. Post genocide, the newly established government implemented the Vision 2020 program which launched in the year 2000 and pushed for government reform, agricultural improvements, fiscal policy, and opening trade (Republic of Rwanda, 2012).

More than a decade after the program was implemented, poverty in Rwanda decreased from 60% to 38% and the country averaged 8% annual GDP growth (Republic of Rwanda, 2012). Many of the policies focused on human capital growth (education, job creation,...) and took on the form of fiscal policy with the government funding many ventures for infrastructure improvement and agricultural growth. However, many of these changes were implemented in and prioritized central and eastern regions of Rwanda due to the availability of infrastructure and security post-genocide. Ansoms and Rostagno (2012) argue that a strategy centered on maximum growth risks leaving behind equality when benefits are concentrated in the hands of a specific group or region. As an alternative, they point to a more inclusive model of growth that builds on existing strengths, particularly by enhancing the capacities of rural small-scale farmers. They argue that strengthening rural livelihoods would not only reduce poverty but also promote long-term stability in a country still marked by deep social scars. These points coincide directly with Vietnam and South Korea's efforts for economic and social reform.

A second defining feature of Rwanda's post-genocide recovery has been the extraordinary political participation of women. In Rwanda, women hold more than 60 percent of seats in parliament which is the highest number of women in parliament worldwide, a nod to their efforts in establishing gender equality and equitable national gender policies (UN Women, 2018; Republic of Rwanda, 2021). Burnet (2011) also notes that women's entry into politics after 1994 reshaped governance, helped advance social inclusion, and provided an alternative vision of national identity at a time when Rwanda was seeking to overcome its violent past. Women's leadership, in this sense, became central to both reconciliation and development. The importance of learning from past experiences as a nation has also been highlighted in Vision 2020, honoring the lives of those who passed and highlighting the importance of national identity and unity (Time, 2024).

Regarding Rwanda specifically, Myanmar can learn from the country's gender equality policies and its importance to economic growth. There also needs to be importance put on geographical inequalities, with a strong focus on distributing resources equitably between urban and rural areas. Much like Rwanda's abundance of different grassroots groups, Myanmar can focus on adopting policies that incorporate all of their voices equally, ensuring an equitable governing system. Just as Rwanda's modernization has been inseparable from its reckoning with the past, Myanmar's own long-term stability will depend on how effectively it addresses social divisions and builds trust among its diverse communities.

3.4 Cuba : Literacy as National Rebuilding

Cuba launched one of the most influential linguistic movements in modern history in 1961. The National Literacy Campaign saw around 250,000 volunteers, mostly young women who had left their homes to move to rural areas and teach basic reading and writing. Many of these volunteers moved to places without electricity or water and familiarized themselves with the daily lives of farming families where they took on the role of both teacher and student (Rey, K.S., 2021). The campaign painted women as being at the forefront of national change, bringing literacy to isolated communities and challenging traditional gender norms, proving that women can be the most powerful pioneers of national change.

Before 1961, literacy in Cuba was uneven. Estimates made on literacy rates were between 60 and 76 percent, with rural areas falling far behind cities. When the National Literacy Campaign ended, literacy levels had reached near universal coverage across the country, placing Cuba among the most literate societies in Latin America (Rey, K.S., 2021). This outcome reflected a rapid shift in access to education and showed the effects of treating literacy as a national priority rather than an individual responsibility.

The campaign did more than raise literacy rates. Urban volunteers moved into rural homes and lived alongside farming families for months at a time. Many had never visited these regions before. Through shared living and daily work, social distance between urban and rural populations was reduced. The campaign created direct contact between groups that had long been separated by geography and class. These relationships played a role in rebuilding social trust after revolutionary change.

Abendroth, M. (2010) notes that literacy in Cuba was not viewed only as a skill. It was used as a way to bring people into public life. Rural and marginalized groups gained access to reading, writing, and state information that had previously been closed off to them. This allowed greater participation in community and political spaces. Literacy became tied to inclusion within the nation rather than education alone.

This pattern mirrors recovery strategies seen in other post-crisis countries. Education is often used to rebuild both capacity and cohesion at the same time. In Cuba, the literacy campaign

served this dual role by strengthening human capital while also reinforcing a shared national identity.

In the context of Myanmar, Cuba's literacy campaign offers lessons for addressing literacy gaps that currently limit economic participation. Myanmar is currently facing literacy challenges similar to Cuba in the early 1960s with rural areas being less developed to urban, literacy rates varying from 64.6% in Shan State to 16% for women in the Wa Self-Administrated Division (Scott, S., 2017). Furthermore, women face a 28% gap in mobile phone usage compared to men and are often excluded from public technology spaces like internet cafes (Scott, S., 2017). However, women are increasingly using digital platforms for e-commerce and trade, particularly through social media interfaces like Facebook in regions such as Rakhine State (Bo, M., 2024). Cuba treated literacy as a tool for national growth rather than individual growth. In the context of Myanmar, the country can also adopt literacy as a pathway to economic participation and cultural development. Programs can be implemented to have volunteers learn languages from ethnic minorities and vice versa, preserving the cultural diversity of Myanmar while building a shared foundation for economic opportunity (Scott, S., 2017). With Myanmar's pre-coup data showing 45.8% of landless households relying solely on agricultural employment experiencing poverty compared to 13.2% poverty from those with non-agricultural income sources, the importance of literacy and expansion of income opportunities is crucial to Myanmar's economic development (Borgen Magazine, 2020). Once basic literacy is established, this creates the foundation for accessing platforms and programs that can support non-agricultural income diversification that proved essential for poverty reduction such as social media and digital applications.

4. Expert Interviews

To complement the comparative case studies and collect real testimonials from people being affected by the recent military coup and economic contraction, this research draws on interviews with three individuals directly engaged in creative, social, and entrepreneurial initiatives in and outside of Myanmar. All of the experts featured in this paper were contacted through social media and referrals on channels such as Signal and Instagram. The feasibility of recruiting participants through these platforms reflects how social media has become crucial infrastructure for Myanmar's diaspora and entrepreneurial networks. For reasons of safety, all names are pseudonyms and any personal information has been concealed. These conversations address how communities outside and inside of Myanmar are navigating displacement, economic contraction, and general uncertainty.

Natalie, a creative working with displaced communities, voiced her opinions on how art and culture should be tools that not only advocate for the Myanmar people but also preserve their legacy. She touches on how creatives are at the forefront of activism, using any medium possible to communicate their ideas to the general public. She explained that creative work in exile functions simultaneously as a livelihood strategy and as a form of political engagement:

“Even though members want to wear the cap of creatives, they are the frontline defenders and activists. They don’t like to use those words but there is a harsh relationship with donors.”

She amplifies the need for artists to find jobs other than art to sustain their work and the collective movement. However, she also echoes their desire to be able to receive funding from their work as creators, not just receive support from being activists. She described how cultural events bring together exiled communities and generate income to sustain their organization:

“People think artists can do it pro bono. They are often in exile, they can’t legally work. How can we create an economic system within this community?”

For Natalie, rebuilding is not about waiting for a political transition but about sustaining people’s ability to survive and maintain identity in the present. She saw grassroots economic creativity as essential to any long-term recovery. She believes that what people need most is not just financial support but also recognition for their work. The most sustainable and impactful support the organization has received has been through digital channels such as social media (Instagram, Facebook,...) and exhibitions in foreign countries. The collective she is a part of honors and supports artists and activists seeking a voice and enabling those who cannot speak to speak through them. This kind of cooperation and collaboration is what drives sustainable communities that will be able to support each other in the long run. In the process of rebuilding economically, this type of collaboration is crucial in building small economies and small communities. Natalie believes that the influence of art, combined with the scope of reach from digital platforms will enable expats to operate effectively and sustainably. She echoes the need for further development of secure and far-reaching forms of digital applications that can empower artists and activists that make impactful work. For expats that live outside of Myanmar and are passionate about contributing or returning home, it is crucial that they receive financial support and platforms to secure funds. Similar models to agricultural investment platforms could potentially be adapted to support creative work and cultural initiatives, particularly for diaspora communities with reliable internet access.

Caroline, an entrepreneur running a small community-based business, highlighted the importance of sustainability and trust in local enterprises. She criticized donor-driven projects for being unsustainable and detached from real community needs:

“People don’t believe me that it is a sustainable social business. There’s a lot of NGO money that goes into gift shops but they aren’t sustainable.”

Many of Caroline's sales happen on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook in Thailand. She exports goods from local entrepreneurs and creators inside of Myanmar and runs her non-profit to raise funds for individuals being impacted. She also works with other creators, such as Kyle, to generate jobs for women in Myanmar and brings their products to a global audience.

"Women are worshiped as mothers but asked to bleed to death for the people around them. This is a barrier I want to take down."

Caroline argued that women-led initiatives bring different values to economic life, focusing on community cohesion and ethical practice, but also require recognition, support, and compensation. She strives to create and aid sustainable business models, typically shying away from organizations or initiatives to "help" that don't have clear business strategies and are using funds in impractical ways. Not only that, she also believes that initiatives to rebuild should also come with inclusive morals. She supports organizations that honor and treat women fairly, something that has not been emphasized in the past. She believes this is crucial for Myanmar's nation rebuilding. Her enterprise does not receive funding from NGOs or other organizations, running sustainably with the profits she makes from her online and offline shop in Thailand. Her business is an example of sustainable economic growth provided by digital technologies and a tight knit local community. However, Caroline frequently faces difficulties in finding a safe and reliable means of transportation to receive products within Myanmar. This highlights the ongoing need for solutions like KoneSi to connect business owners with secure and reliable means of transportation for products, though such platforms face challenges in conflict-affected regions where physical infrastructure remains unstable.

Kyle, a small-scale manufacturer employing farmers and women workers, focused on the structural challenges of operating in Myanmar. He shared that repeated displacements caused by conflict and economic shocks placed enormous strain on small businesses:

"Covid, coup, and natural disaster created challenges one after another. We had to relocate three times in that time. We can't afford to move again. Our first priority is to find a way to continue operations."

Being the owner of a manufacturing company that is responsible for creating the product, packaging the product and growing crops, Kyle struggles to keep his business sustainable and thriving. Working with women who are mothers and struggling to provide for their families, he puts their well-being at the fore-front, ensuring that they receive the necessary aid they need to come into work. His business is an example of models struggling to operate within Myanmar, with difficulties related to governing uncertainties and Covid-19. He also voices his concerns on

inflation and the rising costs of owning a local business, particularly for agriculture due to its seasonal nature.

In terms of key policies proposed, such as land reform, Kyle has valid concerns. He stressed that land reform alone is not enough without parallel investments in infrastructure:

“Redistribution will help rural communities, but that isn’t enough. It is near the Irrawaddy river, but they rely on the rain, so why can’t farmers access the river water?”

His perspective pointed to the need for long-term investment in irrigation, power supply, and fair market systems if rural livelihoods are to be sustainable. These initiatives have been present in Myanmar, where apps like Golden Paddy aim to mitigate the damage done during the military coup to 30% of Myanmar’s irrigation system by using satellites to give farmers crop tips and fix yield problems without water fixes (Tin, S., 2025). He believes that common methods in nation rebuilding, such as land redistribution, is not the only thing that needs to change in order to have a positive impact on agriculture. He believes that policy, cooperation at the grassroots level and structural reform must happen in order to give farmers access to more sustainable and organic means of agriculture. Many of these initiatives to help Myanmar must intertwine in order to come up with policies that don’t clash from one industry to another. To do this, state and local reform must happen.

All three of our experts' interviews reinforced what we had seen across multiple nations: rebuilding is not only about economics, it's also about local support, good infrastructure, and accessibility to modern technologies. In practice, real recovery comes from grassroots work, small and sustainable business ventures, and strong community bonds as opposed to donor-driven, short-term aid. Their focus is on survival based on creating jobs, income, and local systems that can function despite instability, with women at the center of this process. They highlight the importance of women in rebuilding the country economically and voice their support in ensuring that women continue to be protected and nurtured. One of the main tools used by women and entrepreneurs are digital platforms that are compatible with selling goods, raising funds, building audiences, and staying connected internationally. At the same time, our three experts also point to hard limits. Weak infrastructure, from electricity to transportation and irrigation, slows progress in ways technology alone cannot fix. Across art, business, and farming, they agree on one final point: rebuilding is not only about economics. It is about trust, digital accessibility, and local communities.

6. Conclusion

The experiences of Vietnam, South Korea, Rwanda, and Cuba demonstrate that rebuilding after crisis is neither linear nor uniform, but rather an ever-changing and adaptive process that integrates economic policy, social cohesion, and inclusive governance. Each case reveals that

sustainable recovery requires more than growth: it must also address inequality, empower marginalized groups, digital literacy and foster trust between state and society.

The comparative evidence provided in this paper suggests the need for Myanmar to prioritize interconnected strategies. It highlights the importance of close-knit communities, grass-roots involvement, infrastructure investment, digital literacy, and most importantly, women involvement.

Insights from expert interviews reinforce these points. Individuals working on the ground stress that rebuilding must begin now, even in exile or under conflict. Their perspectives highlight that cultural work, women-led enterprises, and community-based initiatives are essential to survival and long-term transformation. Like the global cases studied, their experiences show that recovery is both an economic and a social project, requiring structural reforms alongside grassroots creativity.

Ultimately, Myanmar's future will depend on weaving together these lessons into a phased, context-specific strategy. By sequencing reforms, investing in people, developing and using the right tools, and ensuring inclusion, Myanmar can transform crisis into an opportunity for building not just a stronger economy but also a more cohesive, just, and resilient society.

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