

Report 2014

Dear Friends,

People In Need (PIN) continued its support for nursery schools, orphanages, and vocational training programs in Myanmar. We completed exciting new projects in education and professional training for socially disadvantaged children and youth.

Preface: All That Glitters Is Not Gold

The political opening of Myanmar and the influx of foreign investments has been disappointing for the majority of the population. It resulted in increased inequality between the rural countryside and the three major cities - Yangon, Mandalay, and Naypyidaw. The small and inexperienced public administration cannot cope with the multitude of political and social problems of this backward society. The insufficient energy supply, the broken infrastructure, and the disastrous state of education and professional training continue to obstruct the development of economy, civil society, and the fight against poverty. Ethnic and religious tensions further aggravate the current situation: In the North, the Kachin continue their armed fight for federal autonomy against the Burmese Army, and in the West, the ethnic minority of the Muslim Rohingyas faces persecution and violence by militant Buddhists, which UN, numerous governments and NGOs condemned sharply, but without tangible results. The Buddhists' intolerance also instigated several violent riots in Burmese central areas; it has culminated in introducing a Buddhist nationalistic law into parliament. This law will require prior approval by the local authorities to any change in religion and restrict interfaith marriage. President Thein Sein himself endorsed the discriminatory law; the parliament will debate it in early 2015.¹

People In Need indirectly benefitted from the increased interest of international donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to support social projects in Myanmar. Our years of experience in Myanmar and our strong network with local non-profit and humanitarian organizations helped us to establish project partnerships with international foundations.

I. Our Projects 2014

1. Nursery School in Kanyinthonesint

With the help of international donors, we could complete the building of a Nursery School in Kanyinthonesint. Here, in a farming village close to Pathein in the Irrawaddy Division up to 50 children will attend a nursery school for the first time in their life. The Catholic Sisters of Charity have started to receive children of poor paddy farmers and day laborers in July 2014.

¹ Myanmar newspapers hardly ever report about Germany. However, the government newspapers reported extensively about the anti-Islamic Pegida demonstrations in Germany.



Nursery School in Kanyinthonesint



Nursery school children

2. St. Bruno Orphanage for Boys, Pathein

In Pathein, the Catholic Bishop John Hsane Gyi blessed and opened the new building of the St. Bruno Orphanage for Boys on December 14, 2014. The 38 orphan boys, between 4 year and 24 years, happily moved into the new building the following day. During the last 15 years, the boys had lived in a small, increasingly unsafe house with decaying walls, floors and a leaking roof.

To secure the future food supply, the boys also started poultry farming with 500 donated chicken and intensified the gardening and pig-breeding.



The new building of St. Bruno



Bishop John and the boys

3. St. Mary Orphanage for Girls, Pathein

On Christmas Day, Bishop John Hsane Gyi blessed and opened the new, completely refurbished building of the girls' orphanage. The new house replaces a 100-year-old colonial house, which had deteriorated considerably due to poor maintenance and lack of money. The new building has the same outline as the old colonial house and fits homogeneously in the garden property. About half of the eighty-five girls and three sisters have moved into the new bright building.



New Building (blue roof)



St. Mary Orphanage (Portico)



Blessing by Bishop John

4. Vocational Training Center in Hlaing Thayar, Yangon

In Hlaing Thayar, a poor industrial suburb west of Yangon, we assist the Salesian Brothers – Don Bosco – in building a new vocational training center. The training center will help 45 – 50 youths between the ages of 18 and 25 to receive a basic education and to learn a professional trade such as mechanics, welding, engineering, computer technology, or printing. The education will be non-formal and will focus on street children and young adults who could not finish school because of poverty or because of discrimination due to race or religion. The large two-story training center (200 feet by 50 feet) will include training facilities, classrooms, study hall, dormitory, offices, and a recreational room.

The construction of the large two-storey vocational training center by the Salesians progresses rapidly. The outer shell of the building is almost done and the interior work is about to start.



Vocational Training Center in Hlaing Thayar

5. Ye Lai Buddhist Monastery for HIV/AIDS patients, Yangon

Since 2006, PIN supports the Buddhist Ye Lai Monastery for patients living with HIV/AIDS. After our good and extensive cooperation after Cyclone Nargis in 2008, we donated two concrete, two-storey buildings to accommodate HIV-patients.

After more than five years of intensive use by a continuous stream of HIV-patients the two houses urgently needed refurbishment – the roof leaked, and kitchen, toilets, and washrooms were run down. In March 2014, PIN completely renovated the two buildings dedicated to HIV-patients and their relatives.



Buddhist Ye Lai Monastery



The dormitory after renovation

6. St. John Private High School, Pathein

We helped the Catholic Diocese in Pathein, Irrawaddy Division, to obtain a large donation for the first Catholic High School in Myanmar. This school will be the first Christian high school since the nationalization of all schools in 1964. The government now loosened its grip on the education monopoly and the diocese applied for a license to operate a private middle and high school in Pathein. So far, the government in Naypyidaw has responded positively.

The Catholic private school will accommodate 200 – 300 students. The students will come from different backgrounds, religions, ethnic groups, and areas. The school will be open to poverty-stricken, talented students. The high school should start its operation in the Myanmar academic year 2016 (June 1, 2016). The lengthy process to obtain the necessary governmental authorizations and permits and raising additional funds has delayed the start of the construction.

7. Center for Empowerment of Women, Good Shepherd Sisters, Mandalay

In Mandalay, PIN continues to assist the Good Shepherd Sisters in their support for young women in social crisis, abused and trafficked girls, and street children. After helping the Sisters in establishing a Healing and Drop-In Center for vulnerable girls, PIN will help the Sisters to set up an Empowerment Center for Young Women.

The Empowerment Center will be a training center to instruct and energize women with a fresh vision that brings a sense of empowerment to their lives. The new program will provide vocational training and accommodation for 50 girls who have lived in fear of abuse, trafficking, and other dangers. After receiving care and spiritual

support in the Healing and Drop-In Center for about a year, the girls will be able to transfer to the new Empowerment Center and participate in sewing and handicraft training and other educational and professional classes.

PIN succeeded to raise the money for a new four-storey building at the Mandalay Myothit (New Town) property of the Good Shepherd Sisters. Here, the Sisters already run a boarding house, which will be integrated into the new Empowerment Center. The construction of the four-storey building in Mandalay Myothit will start in March 2015.



Boarding house in Mandalay Myothit



Sewing and handicraft training has started

8. Grace Haven Orphanage, Pyin Oo Lwin

In Pyin Oo Lwin, a Lisu pastor and her husband run an orphanage for 80 boys and girls of different religions. The orphanage is largely dependent on their own rice and vegetable farming and pig-breeding. When the orphanage faced a severe water problem, PIN helped to find financing for the improvement of the water supply and an upgrade of the agricultural land.



Grace Haven Orphanage



Farm land of the Orphanage

II. Our Ongoing projects

PIN continued to support the Nursery School and the Vocational and Leadership Training Program in Yangon.

9. “Jewel Ray” Nursery School for Less Fortunate Children, Yangon

In 2006, we started a nursery school for poor children in Yangon. It is fully funded by PIN and run by the Good Shepherd Sisters. 50 - 60 children, between three and six years, attended the nursery daily. Here, they are taken care of by four licensed nursery teacher and receive a free lunch which is prepared by a full-time helper. In 2014, we had to undertake major renovations. We replaced the concrete floor, repaired the roof, exchanged the electrical wiring, and repainted the nursery.

Just as in prior years, we hosted a Christmas Party for the nursery children, their parents and siblings. All children enjoyed singing, dancing, presents, and free food and drinks.



Christmas Party 2014



Our nursery school in Yangon

10. Vocational and Leadership Training Program, Yangon

In September 2014, we started Class #9 of the vocational training program for 20 girls between 17 and 23 years. The program lasts twelve months and is paid by PIN and managed by the Good Shepherd Sisters in Yangon. The girls are from different parts of Myanmar, of different ethnic races, and of different religions. In Yangon, the girls attend professional training courses of nurse aide and pharmacology, nursery teacher or dressmaking and sewing; all attend English and computer training classes and participate in ethics education and leadership formation sessions by the Sisters.

In August 2014, 19 girls of Class #8 returned to their home villages, where they will engage in social work.



Graduation Ceremony Class#8



Christmas Party Class#9



Casual get-together Class#9

III. Other Events 2014

More Christmas Parties

One of the highlights of 2014 was again the Christmas Party for 160 orphan girls and boys in **Pathein**, which we sponsored for the second year. We celebrated under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop John Hsane Gyi.



Boys and girls crowd the stage



The kids enjoy the party

In **Magyikwin**, a small village about 3 hours north of Yangon, we hosted the Christmas Party at the nursery school with 50 children.



Nursery children



Nursery school at Magyikwin

For the first time for years, we were allowed to visit the Nursery School in **Dala**, across the river from Yangon Downtown. After Cyclone Nargis (2008), the township authorities had prohibited us from visiting the nursery, which we had supported the prior years. This year, the authorities did not object PIN to attend the Christmas Party in one of poorest neighborhoods of Yangon.



Dala Nursery School



Santa Claus in Myanmar

IV. New Projects for 2015

Of course, we could not help all needy who asked for support in 2014. To assist more children and youth, we will continue to look for small and large donations. As you know, in Myanmar, a small donation goes a long way: 8 Euros (\$10) per month pay for one child in our Nursery for Less-Fortunate Children in Yangon.

However, some projects are simply too big to be taken on by People In Need alone. We will not give up and continue our strategy to look for co-sponsors who share our vision and who are willing to share in the financing of the projects.

In 2015, we will focus on vocational training for disadvantaged youth (street children, abused girls, school dropouts, orphans, etc.) and continue our work in early childhood education.

Some of the most pressing projects are:

Street Children in Mandalay:

- A larger building for the Drop-In Center at the Don Bosco Youth Center (DBYC) in Mandalay.
- Income Generation for street children: Equipment for a mini-bakery and ice-cream production at DBYC, Mandalay.

Vocational Training for Youth in Chin State

- Equipment for the Vocational Training Center of Don Bosco in Kalay (Kalemyo); the building is structurally complete, but in-door work and machinery is needed.

Education for Children

- New building to replace the old, ramshackle wooden house of the Magyikwin Nursery School (see photo above in III.).

Orphans

- The Anglican Bishop of Mandalay plans to build a new home for orphans from Nagaland, a very poor and backward region at the Indian border.
- Water supply (tube well) for a HIV orphanage by St. Joseph Sisters in Tamu at the Indian border.

With best wishes for a healthy and prosperous year.

Gerhard

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