

**PEOPLE IN NEED**  
**GERHARD BAUMGARD STIFTUNG**

**Report 2008: "So far so bad"**

2008 wasn't a good year for Burma: the oppression and the arrests after the 2007 "Saffron Revolution" continued unabated and in May the disastrous Cyclone Nargis hit the Ayeyarwady Delta and Yangon killing almost 150,000 officially. According to UN estimates the Delta will require more than 4 years to recover from the destruction of paddy fields, schools, hospitals and public infrastructure and the population in the remote areas faces a continuing hunger crisis. The government is paranoically focused on its 2010 election to cement military rule for the decades to come and does not care about the population despite the dramatic drop in export income from gas, timber, and gems. In the latter half of this year the junta sentenced the political activists and monks of the demonstrations in September 2007 to 65 and in single cases even up to 105 years in prison; some of the social activists who had done nothing more than helping their fellow countrymen in the Delta were put up to 59 years behind bars.

**I. Financial Activities 2008**

Last year's activities of PEOPLE IN NEED – GERHARD BAUMGARD STIFTUNG [PIN(D)]\* were overshadowed by the emergency relief after Cyclone Nargis. For the first time since being establish in 2004 PIN(D) asked for donations from third parties; the success was overwhelming and beyond our expectations. In the three months after the Cyclone hit on May 2/3 we received from Private Donors EURO 170,000 and Institutional Donors contributed EURO 275,000.

<b>PIN(D): Financial Activities 2008</b>		<b>Amounts in EURO</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Donations received by PIN(D)</b>	<b>445,000.00</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>Nargis Emergency Relief by PIN(D)</b>	
1	Emergency Relief Missions organized by PIN(D) (8)	32,000.00
2	Emergency Relief organized by Buddhist Monks	95,000.00
3	Emergency Relief organized by Catholic Priests	180,000.00
4	Repair and Reconstruction at Project Sites, Yangon	5,000.00
5	Medical and Psychological Relief through local NGOs	2,000.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>314,000.00</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>Rehabilitation Activities</b>	
1	Buildings for HIV/AIDS Patients and Monks at Buddhist Monastery	102,000.00
2	Nurseries Dala and Yangon	5.000.00
3	Vocational Training Yangon	5,000.00
4	Rehabilitation Program Eastern Shan State	25,000.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>137,000.00</b>
<b>IV</b>	<b>Other Financial Activities related to Cyclone Nargis</b>	
1	Short-term Liquidity Help to Local/International NGOs (repaid)	<b>205,000.00</b>
2	Third-Party Funding for Local NGOs arranged by PIN(D)	<b>398,000.00</b>

The money donated to PIN(D) was largely spent for relief missions to the remotest areas of the Delta where only a few international NGOs provided help opportunistically. Only in the first days after the Cyclone we could freely travel into

(\*): A Czech charity with almost identical name "People In Need (CZ)" also works in Myanmar. PEOPLE IN NEED – GERHARD BAUMGARD STIFTUNG and People in Need (CZ) are not related and operate independently. To avoid confusion we will use the full name and the abbreviation PIN(D) for our foundation.

the Delta area. Later, when the Myanmar Government restricted the movement of foreigners PIN(D) had to run most of its relief efforts "on remote control" with Burmese nationals who were free to travel. We conducted our relief efforts and the relief missions into the Delta with the help of Buddhist Monks and Christian Priests.

**After Cyclone Nargis: Everybody waited for food ...**



... in the Delta



... in remote villages



... and in Yangon on the streets

Positively, being kept away from the Delta, we could spend time to arrange donations for relief and rehabilitation projects of local NGOs. In addition to the EURO 445,000 raised for PIN(D) we could arrange about EUR 400,000 from German private sector foundations for emergency relief, medical care and rebuilding of boarding houses and orphanages. EURO 145,000 continue to support 800 school children and orphans to spend another year (2008/09) in school; they are from Delta villages where the schools had completely been destroyed, about 250 of them had been orphaned by the Cyclone. Furthermore, in the first weeks after the Cyclone PIN(D) provided short-term loans for the relief efforts of International and local NGOs which could not get money into Myanmar quickly; these interest-free loans were all repaid within 2 – 5 weeks.



Destroyed 2-storey School close to Yangon



Orphans and Schoolchildren in Delta



Provisional School buildings in the Delta (September 2008)

In September 2008 Myanmar PIN(D) moved away from the emergency relief and focuses on rehabilitation and its existing projects in the country.

## II. Cyclone Nargis and Its Aftermath

The category 3 Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008, making landfall in the Ayeyarwady Division, approximately 250 km southwest of Yangon, and affecting more than 50 townships, mainly in Yangon and Ayeyarwady Divisions, including Yangon, the country's largest city. With wind speeds of up to 200 km/h accompanied by heavy rain, the damage was most severe in the Delta region, where the effects of the extreme winds were compounded by an up to 15 feet (4.5 meter) storm surge.

The scale of human loss and suffering was vast. According to the official figures, nearly 140,000 persons were either dead or "missing" and nearly 20,000 had been injured. Some 2.4 million people were severely affected – equivalent to more than a third of the population of 7.3 million in the affected Townships – with up to 800,000 people displaced from their homes. Over 450,000 homes were destroyed and an additional 350,000 houses were damaged. Floods inundated over 600,000 hectares of agricultural land, killing up to 50 percent of draught animals. 75 percent of the health facilities and up to 60 percent of public schools in the affected areas were destroyed or severely damaged. The impact on the Ayeyarwady Delta, a remote area, heavily populated and difficult to access, was particularly devastating: in addition to the lives and livelihoods lost, the timing and extent of the natural disaster greatly affected the critical planting season in what is Myanmar's breadbasket region, with significant quantities of seeds and harvested crops lost.

Cyclone Nargis was the worst natural disaster in the history of Myanmar, and the most devastating cyclone to strike Asia since the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh. The scale of impact of the cyclone in Myanmar is comparable to that of the Indian Ocean Tsunami in Indonesia in 2004. The UN estimates that at least US\$ 1 billion is needed to cover the recovery needs of the affected areas over the next four years in the areas of food assistance, agriculture, housing, basic services and support to communities to restore their livelihoods and rebuild assets. The total damage caused by Cyclone Nargis is officially estimated at US\$ 4 billion.

## III. Emergency Relief Aid Missions

In May and June 2008 PIN(D) organized eight emergency relief missions to remote villages in Delta, each mission lasting between one and five days. We provided food,



cooking gear, clothing, blankets, shelter materials, medicine and in some cases seeds and diesel to the villagers. Our own relief missions benefitted about 12,000 survivors directly.

In addition to organizing own emergency relief missions, PIN(D) supported emergency aid of Buddhist monks and Buddhist monasteries with EURO 95,000. The money was used to buy supplies for cyclone victims and to rebuild monasteries as shelters for the displaced refugees. A big share of the donations went to Christian parishes in the Ayeyarwady Delta. In the first days after the Cyclone Christian priests and lay persons went out by boat to bring survivors from the remote villages at the southern Delta coast to four evacuation camps on safe ground inland. At the peak the camps accommodated a couple of thousand refugees and our donations provided daily food, water, shelter, medicine and security. In addition, through Catholic priests we continuously supported 8 remote villages with about 7,600 inhabitants for about three months. Just as the Buddhist monks the aid by the Catholic Church was provided to everybody in need, irrespective of confession or ethnicity and in many cases Christian churches and Buddhist monks undertook aid efforts jointly.



After the Cyclone Monks distributed food



... and clothing

Still in September 2009 (more than 4 months after the Cyclone)



... many depended on donations



## Repairs

In Yangon we repaired the cyclone damages at the boarding house of a monastery which shelters HIV/Aids patients; PIN(D) already supported this monastery before the cyclone. Similarly, PIN(D) repaired and expanded the nursery for children from poor families in Downtown Yangon. The storm had left many families homeless and the parents appreciated the opportunity to send their children to our free day-nursery where we also provide food for the children. The extension building was finished in August and the nursery capacity is now doubled from 30 to 60 children. After the cyclone we also opened a branch of the Yangon nursery in Dala Township on the other bank of the Yangon River. Since July 1, 2008 we operate a new nursery for more than

50 children in an unused building; the nursery also provides food and is free; occasionally the parents contribute rice and vegetables on a voluntary basis.

### Trauma-Healing

In 2007 PIN(D) had started to support a local NGO which provides psychiatric care to ex-political prisoners and their families who suffered from Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. In wake of Cyclone Nargis we extended the program to include psychiatric and medical support for cyclone victims. The volunteers - under guidance of experienced doctors - visited the worst-hit villages in townships across the Delta and provided counseling and arranged for professional psychiatric treatment of the severe cases.



Counseling and Medical Care in a Delta Monastery

## IV. Rehabilitation Projects

### 1. Care of HIV/AIDS patients at a Monastery in Yangon

Since 2006 PIN(D) supports the only Buddhist monastery in Yangon which in 2008 continued to accommodate and care for HIV/AIDS patients while all other monasteries caring for HIV/AIDS sick were closed down and locked by the government after the "Saffron Revolution" of September 2007. The chief monk arranged a network of local and international NGOs and individual Burmese donors who provide food, antiretroviral medicines (ARV), medicines for opportunistic infections (e.g. TB, Hepatitis), counseling for the HIV/AIDS patients and a place to stay close to the government HIV/AIDS-hospital.

After the Cyclone the number of patients seeking shelter in the monastery increased by sick persons arriving from the Delta in search of treatment and antiretroviral medicines (ARV). The number of patients rose to 35 patients plus more than 10 un-infected family members.



HIV+ family in Monastery



HIV+ Girl (2½) from Labutta (Delta)



### **Emergency Measure: Private House for HIV/AIDS patients**

After the cyclone the public health system in the Delta collapsed and many HIV/AIDS patients travelled to Yangon for help. Faced with the increased demand for ARV-drugs the government hospitals restricted medication and free service to patients living and being registered in Yangon. The monastery also had new arrivals from the disaster area; these patients are not registered in Yangon and hence do not qualify for free treatment with life-saving ARV-drugs. A total of 18 HIV-positive patients in the Monastery are not registered in Yangon and cannot apply for free treatment. To help these sick persons PIN(D) bought a small house in the vicinity of the monastery and registered it in the name of a private Burmese owner. With this house address the patients can properly transfer their registrations to Yangon and can enter the hospital's waiting list for ARV-drugs.



**Private House for HIV/AIDS Patients**

### **New Boarding House for HIV/AIDS patients**

The old two-storey bamboo boarding house had been damaged during the Cyclone and – with the new arrivals from the Delta – had become overcrowded with long-term patients and family members who take care of their HIV-positive siblings or relatives. In September 2008 - after the end of the monsoon season – PIN(D) started to build a concrete two-storey boarding house with a total floor space of 3,600 square feet (about 325 square meters) to replace the existing bamboo one. The new boarding house will be ready in March 2009.



**New Boarding House for HIV+ patients at Yangon Monastery**

### **Home for HIV/AIDS Buddhist monks:**

In various monasteries in Yangon live about 15 HIV+ Buddhist monks; they receive ARV-medicines from a Buddhist NGO. However, the care and accommodation of individual HIV+ monks in their home monasteries is difficult and insufficient. On request of the other Buddhist monasteries "our" HIV/AIDS-Monastery want to provide accommodation,

care and counseling for the sick monks. PIN(D) agreed to support the monastery with a building for sick monks. In September 2008 we started the construction of a two-storey concrete house, toilets and washrooms with a total floor space of 2,400 square feet (about 215 square meters). The building will be completed in February 2009.



**The House for HIV+ Monks is almost finished**

## **2. Nursery for socially disadvantaged children, Downtown Yangon**

Two years PIN(D) started with Catholic nuns to operate a nursery in Downtown Yangon for 25 -30 children. The children mostly come from one of the poorest Yangon neighborhoods: Dala Township across the Yangon River. After most of Dala had been devastated by the cyclone the Sisters were overrun by new applications to join the Downtown nursery which is free and provides food and clothing for the children. To double the capacity of the nursery to 50 – 60 children we built an extension building to the current nursery. The extension was completed in August 2008 and now 56 children are registered in the nursery in Downtown Yangon.



**Children at Yangon Nursery**

## **3. Nursery for socially disadvantaged children, Dala Township, Yangon Division**

We had long tried to get a foothold in Dala Township itself; we wanted to open a branch of the Yangon nursery there. Up to the cyclone the authorities were dismissive but their attitude changed after the destruction of most of the township. Many parents wanted their children to be taken care of instead of them hanging around in the broken houses. Given this demand the authorities accepted our offer to care for children and it tacitly consented to the opening of a nursery. The nursery was opened on July 1, and is currently put up in a municipal house which is not used during daytime. 52 children between 3 ½ and 6 years are now registered. We provide the same services as in Downtown Yangon, i.e. free food and free nursery care. The nursery is run by three experienced, non-clerical nursery teachers.



Dala BEFORE the Cyclone



The Dala Nursery opened in July 2008

#### 4. Vocational Training and Leadership Program for Young Women

Since 2006 PIN(D) ran with the help of Catholic a vocational training program for 10 young women from different parts of Myanmar. The one year program comprises a theoretical and practical training of professional skills, English language classes, and leadership formation. The second program ended in August 2008; the training courses for the 13 young women between 17 and 27 years were sewing (6), accounting and English (2), nurse aid (3), and nursery teacher (2).

After the Cyclone the girl trainees went to the destroyed townships and helped the victims; they looked after injured people, provided emergency aid, gave mental support and in one village they dug a new fresh water pond. In addition to this real life leadership education, the girls were educated in topics such as self awareness, human trafficking, HIV/AIDS, accountability and responsibility.

As previously the girls stayed at the Christian Convent and received their theoretical and practical training in- and outside of the Convent. In August 2008 the girls graduated from the program and returned to their home towns and villages all across Myanmar.

In September 2008 we started a new one year program. This time we admitted 20 girls including 8 girls from the Delta who lost parents and homes. In contrast to our normal requirement of a high-school education these 8 girls have 4 years of primary school education only. It is an interesting experiment to have a very diverse group living and studying together. Due to the lack of school education the girls from the Delta will attend sewing and hair dressing classes (8); the training classes for the other 12 girls are accounting (5), nurse aid (5) and nursery teacher (2).

#### 5. Rehabilitation Program in Eastern Shan State

PIN(D) continues to support a rehabilitation and education project for hill-tribes in Eastern Shan State, Myanmar close to the Thai Border. The project for an ethnic minority hill-tribe had been started by Catholic nuns in 2001 as a rehabilitation project for drug users and villagers with HIV/AIDS: Historically, the villagers sold their daughters into prostitution to Thailand and took the money to buy and smoke opium. Many of the villagers were drug-addicted, HIV-positive and worst of all the young generation was gone – the boys didn't stay long after the girls had left. Since four years PIN(D) finances the operational cost of the project.





Hill-tribe Villages

The project coverage has grown to 19 villages with 864 households comprising 3,464 villagers of which 1,077 are younger than 18 years. 4 Sisters, 12 project staff and 9 volunteers take care of

- two nurseries with 98 children,
- a personal hygiene and food program for more than 50 children between 3 and 13 years of age
- supplemental school education for about 50 pupils of primary and middle school,
- a boarding house for 38 girls attending primary and middle schools, the new boarding house was finished in 2007,
- a 12 months vocational training program (sewing and handicrafts) for 11 girls living in a separate boarding house at the compound,
- a clinic with an experienced full-time nurse, who in 2008 treated about 1,500 patients and sent more than 90 patients for further treatment to hospitals in Thailand,
- a counseling and support program for HIV/Aids patients with free HIV-treatment at Chiang Saen Hospital at the border in Thailand,
- seminars and workshops for drug users, HIV-AIDS patients, hygiene and for community development topics, which are attended by more by than 4,600 participants annually,
- a sewing and handicraft workshop to generate income opportunities for more than 100 women and girls in the surrounding villages.



Nursery I



Nursery II



**Nutritional Program**



**Sewing Program**

In addition, PIN supports 21 high-school students from the villages who attend High-Schools in the neighboring and farther away cities of Myanmar; PIN pays for the boarding and school fees.



**The new Boarding House opened in 2008**



**Primary and Middle School Children**

## **V. Future Projects**

As mentioned in the cover letter the HIV/AIDS patients at the Yangon monastery have been forcefully removed by the Government. The new buildings for HIV+ monks and for HIV+ patients are almost completed but are empty. Similarly, the trauma-healing program by the Burmese doctor and his volunteers had been prohibited by the authorities. The future for humanitarian project in Burma looks bleak. I hope my Burmese friends are right that the generals will be less paranoid and nervous once they are "legitimized" by the 2010 election.

Witnessing the many cyclone orphans in the Delta and the thousands of street children in Yangon PIN(D) will not give-up yet. Despite the less than positive environment we continue to try to help the children in need. We have asked local NGOs to front for an orphanage house and to provide cover for us to open a "Drop-in Center" for street children. Let's hope the local NGOs are brave and courageous enough.





Given the hostility of the Military Junta to foreign donations we do not want to endanger the safety of our Burmese beneficiaries by putting PIN(D)'s projects on a public internet page. Still, we could not prevent that some of our Cyclone Nargis updates to friends and donors popped up on the internet and in print publications with names and locations. In future, we will be more careful; naming the projects will not be beneficial to the cyclone survivors as the Government would no doubt retaliate against them.

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**Note:**

Given the hostility of the Military Junta to foreign donations we do not want to endanger the safety of our Burmese beneficiaries by putting PIN(D)'s projects on a internet page. As we could not prevent that some of our Cyclone Nargis updates to friends and donors appeared on the internet and in print publications with names and locations of our Burmese helpers we stopped to name projects and individuals in our reports.