

Report 2015

Dear Friends,

In 2015, our foundation continued to help and support the disadvantaged and underprivileged children and youth in Myanmar. People In Need (PIN) completed building projects, continued its support for nursery schools, orphanages, and vocational training programs, and it followed up on our long-term strategy to enable people to earn their own livelihood. However in 2015, the foundation was also affected by the volatile political and social situation in Myanmar and we had to adjust our work accordingly.

A volatile year with unrealistic expectations about imminent political changes

The whole year was overshadowed by the preparation and implementation of the first democratic elections for 25 years; the Myanmar election took place on November 8, 2015. During the whole year the excitement and expectations of the people increased and – again and again – faced setbacks. Early in the year, the students staged a rare nationwide protest against the new education bill. The students marched to Yangon but were brutally stopped by police and were imprisoned. In an inconsistent development, the old quasi-civilian government released many political prisoners. All year the military continued to fight the ethnic minorities in the North and displaced thousands of civilians. Most of 2015, the Kokang region (northeastern Myanmar) was put under Martial Law. In June, the military blocked an amendment to the 2008 constitution which would have removed its parliamentary veto and blocked the elimination of the paragraph which bars the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from being elected President.

In the run-up to the election, the hardline Buddhist nationalist movement continued to agitate for the protection of Buddhist privileges and pushed for discrimination of the Muslim minority and urged to boycott Muslim businesses. In August, Parliament adopted four laws aimed at “protecting race and religion” which were proposed by the Buddhist nationalist groups. Among other things, the laws restrict interfaith marriages and religious conversions; they have been criticized internationally as being anti-women and anti-Muslim. Finally in November 2015, the National League of Democracy won the majority of seats in both Houses of the Parliament. However, the new government will only take office in April 2016. The months between election and change of government were characterized by indecision and uncertainty at all levels of the national and local administration. The old government took the opportunity to pass some last minute laws to guarantee impunity and to secure their pensions and benefits.

I. Our Ongoing Projects 2015

1. Nursery School for Less Fortunate Children, Yangon

Since 10 years we support a nursery school for about 60 children in the center of Yangon. The nursery is managed and run by the Catholic Sisters of the Good Shepherd and is fully funded by People in Need. The 60 children, who attend the nursery five days a week, are between three

and six years. They are taken care of by four licensed nursery teachers. The children are from poor and disadvantaged families and they rarely have enough food at home. Hence, we provide a free lunch at the daycare center which is prepared by our full-time cook.

Other than playing with the children, the nursery teachers provide social and medical care. The children learn basic Burmese and some English language skills. Combined with basic reading and writing skills they can get a head start in the government pre-school after completing our nursery school.

As in the prior years, one highlight of the year was our Christmas Party 2015, to which we invite parents and siblings.



Medical check-up for our children by government nurses



Christmas Party 2015 at the Nursery School

2. Vocational and Leadership Training Program for Girls, Yangon

In August 2015, we finished Class #9 of our vocational leadership training program for girls; in September 2015, we started Class #10 of the 12-months training for 18 girls. Since 2006, we have trained 18 - 20 girls annually. The leadership training program is fully funded by People In Need and managed by the Good Shepherd Sisters. Typically, the girls are between 17 and 22 years; they come from all across Myanmar and are of different ethnic nationalities and religions. In Yangon, they live together in a separate house in the Sisters' Convent, which we rented. The girls of Class #10 will attend professional training courses as nursery teachers, including Montessori seminars, or will learn dressmaking and sewing; all attend English and computer training classes and participate in ethics education and leadership formation sessions given by the Sisters.

At the end of August 2015, the 20 girls of Class #9 returned to their home villages. They had been trained as nurse aids (8), nursery teachers (6), and as seamstresses (6). In return for their free training in Yangon, the girls will engage in social work for 1 -2 years.



Graduation Ceremony of Class #9



Christmas Celebration of Class #10

In 2016, we will relocate the Vocational Leadership Training to Mandalay, the second biggest city in Myanmar. The vocational training program will become part of the new Empowerment Center for Young Women by the Good Shepherd Sisters.

3. Center for Empowerment of Young Women, Mandalay

In Mandalay, the Good Shepherd Sisters help young women in social crisis, abused and trafficked girls, and street children. After PIN had supported the Sisters in establishing the Healing & Drop-In Center for vulnerable girls, PIN helped the Sisters to build an Empowerment Center for Young Women.

The Empowerment Center will be a training center to instruct and energize women with a fresh vision, which should bring a sense of empowerment to their lives. It will provide vocational training and accommodation for 50 girls who have lived in fear of abuse, trafficking, and other dangers. After having received care and spiritual support in the Healing & Drop-In Center for about one year, the girls will join the Empowerment Center and participate in sewing and handicraft training and other educational and professional classes.

A large international donor and PIN jointly funded the new four-storey building for the Empowerment Center in the Mandalay Myothit (New Town). Here, the Good Shepherd Sisters had previously run a boarding house, which will be integrated into the new Center. The construction of the new four-storey building was completed in March 2016.



Girls living at the Healing and Drop-In Center



Empowerment Center for Young Women (new building)

The Empowerment Center will be the new Center of Excellence of the Myanmar Good Shepherd Sisters for the training of girls and young women. As a consequence, we will relocate our Vocational and Leadership Training Program from Yangon to Mandalay in mid-2016.

4. Don Bosco Youth Center (DBYC), Mandalay

Since about 10 years, the Salesian Brothers – Don Bosco cater for the needs of vulnerable youth and street children in the Don Bosco Youth Center in Mandalay. DBYC provides education and vocational training to enable the youth to earn an own living. The training center accommodates 25 boys “at risk”. The boys receive an informal school education, moral guidance and vocational training courses: electric and electronics, computer skills and languages, and motor bike repair. In addition, DBYC operates a drop-in-center and night shelter for street children (mostly boys). The night shelter has a capacity of 50 children.

To help the education and training of the street children we donated the hardware for a mini-bakery and for ice-cream production to DBYC. Two street boys have attended bakery training and learned to make ice-cream: Now, the DBYC operates a coffee shop with a bakery for bread, rolls, and cakes and sells ice-cream successfully. In a next step, the street children will sell ice-cream and bakery products on Mandalay streets.



The new Coffee Shop at DBYC Mandalay.



Inside the Coffee Shop



Boys at work in the Mini Bakery

5. Ye Lai Buddhist Monastery for Patients Living with HIV/AIDS, Yangon

One of PIN's long-term projects is the support for the Buddhist Ye Lai Monastery in North Okkalapa Township, Yangon. Here, patients living with HIV/AIDS find temporary accommodation and food when visiting Yangon for medical checks and medicine.

After our close cooperation during the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in 2008, we donated two concrete, two-storey buildings to accommodate HIV-patients. PIN continues to be a regular donor for the Buddhist Monastery and its patients. After a complete refurbishment of the buildings in 2014, we intend to help the monastery in building new washrooms and toilet facilities.



Ye Lai Monastery: Patients' Building



Patients



Young Buddhist Monks at lunch

6. New Orphanage Building in Shwe Bo, Sagaing Division

The Anglican Diocese of Mandalay operates the Naga and Nationalities Orphanage in the center of Mandalay since 35 years. The orphanage used to accommodate 40 – 50 boys from the remote and poor area of the Naga Hills in the Northwest of Myanmar, close to the border with India.

Over the years, the condition of the building on 80th Street in Mandalay deteriorated dramatically and occupancy decreased to 15 boys in 2015. Without any possibility to expand in the small compound, the Anglican Church wants to move the orphanage to their large compound in Shwe Bo, about 80 miles to the northwest of Mandalay.

After trying for several years, we finally found an international donor who will share in the cost of building a new orphans' house in Shwe Bo. We started the construction of the new house in 2015 and it will be finished for the new schoolyear starting in June 2016. In Shwe Bo, the children will attend the government primary, middle, and high schools which are adjacent to the orphanage property. In contrast to Mandalay, the new compound has enough space to run vocational training courses, such as farming and gardening, poultry and pig breeding, arts, and mechanical engineering activities.



The new orphanage in Shwe Bo (building shell at yearend)



The second floor under construction

II. Completing 2014 Projects

1. Vocational Training Center in Hlaing Thayar, Yangon

In 2015, the Salesian Brothers – Don Bosco – could finish their new vocational training center in Hlaing Thayar, a poor industrial suburb west of Yangon. The training center will help 45 – 50 youths between 18 and 25 years to get a basic education and to learn professional trades 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-storey vocational training center includes training facilities, classrooms, study hall, dormitory, offices, and a recreational room. The training courses will commence in 2016.

PIN helped the Salesian Brothers to find a donor for the large building (200 feet by 50 feet).



Vocational Training Center in Hlaing Thayar



Father Andrew of Don Bosco (left) and his team

2. St. John Private High School, Pathein will open in 2016

PIN assisted the Catholic Diocese in Pathein, Irrawaddy Division, to find an international donor for the first Catholic High School in Myanmar. It will be the first Christian high school since the nationalization of all Burmese schools in 1964. The high school building in the center of Pathein was finished early 2016.

The Catholic private school will start to admit students for the classes 5 -7 in the academic year 2016/2017. Later when in full operation, the school should have 200 – 300 students. The school will be open for poverty-stricken, talented students of different backgrounds, religions, ethnic groups, and areas.



The new building of St. John's High School in Pathein

II. Other 2015 Activities

1. Vocational Training Center, Kalemmyo, Sagaing Division

At the foot of the Chin Hills in Kalemmyo, the Salesian Brothers – Don Bosco – help the youth of the underdeveloped and poorest division of Myanmar – Chin State – to get training and to acquire new skills. The Salesians built a new training center but lacked funds for the furnishings and training equipment. PIN assisted Don Bosco to obtain a sizeable donation from abroad to furnish the training center.



The Vocational Training Center in Kalemmyo



End of 2015: The VTC Kalemmyo awaiting furnishings

2. Learning Corner for Nursery School Children, Pathein

Since 10 years, PIN supports children and youth projects of the Diocese of Pathein. When a friendly German foundation approached us with a substantial donation for a Myanmar nursery school, we could arrange a project in Pathein. Here, a nursery school wanted to improve and upgrade its training facilities. By means of the donation, a new learning center could be realized which will improve creativity and ingenuity of the children.



Learning Corner at the Nursery School in Pathein



Promoting creativity with ease

3. Water Supply for a HIV-Orphanage, Tamu, Sagaing Division

Late 2014, we visited Tamu at the Myanmar border with India. Here the St. Joseph Sisters started a HIV-orphanage. However, the compound had little water and the semi-arid soil made gardening very difficult. We helped the Sisters by building a deep well which will not dry up during the Dry Season.



HIV-Orphanage of the St. Joseph Sisters, Tamu



Newly built well

4. Travel Assistance for Schoolchildren from Nagaland

Myanmar schoolchildren have a three-month holiday-break starting in March. In 2015, the 15 children of the Naga & Nationalities Orphanage could not finance their travels to the home villages in Nagaland. People In Need provided the travel expenses for the children's four-day trip home by bus and boat.



Naga & Nationalities Orphanage: Children from Nagaland

5. Flood Help in Magway Division and Irrawaddy Division

In the monsoon season Myanmar villages get frequently flooded. In 2015, flooding got very bad in Magway Division and Irrawaddy Division. Many organizations and individuals helped in solidarity with the flood victims. People In Need supported the rescue mission of Ye Lay monastery to Pwint Phyu Township in Magway Division and the mission of the Good Shepherd Sisters to the villages of Kyaung Khon District in Irrawaddy Division. Through Buddhist monks and Catholic Sisters, PIN provided food, drinking water, medicine, and large sleeping mats to the affected villagers.



Flooding in Irrawaddy Division



Good Shepherd Sisters distribute rice

IV. New Projects for 2016

Of course, we could not help all in need who asked for our support in 2015. To assist more children and youth, we will continue to look for small and large donations. In Myanmar a small donation goes a long way: 15 Euros (\$17) per month will pay for one child in our Nursery for the Less-Fortunate Children in Yangon.

In 2016, we will focus on vocational training for disadvantaged youth (street children, abused girls, school dropouts, orphans, etc.) and continue our work in the education of children with

social disadvantages or disabilities, such as children affected by HIV. We will also try hard to finally establish a handicraft shop as a sales outlet for our projects and other social programs.

Orphans

- Complete the new home for orphans from Nagaland in Shwe Bo.

Nursery for Children Living with HIV in Mandalay:

- A new building for a nursery school which will care for the children affected with HIV and from HIV-affected families.

Vocational Training for Youth in Mandalay

- Finding a donor for a new vocational training center at the Don Bosco Youth Center in Mandalay. The old building is too small and cannot meet the demand for vocational training courses.

Non-Profit Handicraft and Souvenir Shop

- Students and graduates of charitable projects manufacture souvenirs and handicraft products which can be sold to tourists and expats. We want to set up a sales outlet to benefit the local producers.

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