

Report 2016

**The Long and Rocky Road to a Free Society**

Myanmar's urban centers in Yangon, Mandalay and Naypyidaw show rapid economic progress. The numerous industrial zones and three Special Economic Zones benefit from an increased inflow of Foreign Direct Investments. The demand for cheap labor increases and unskilled workers stream into the urban areas and the number of squatter homes in the suburbs explodes.

With newly-found riches the number of Yangon registered cars doubled after the government relaxed the import rules in 2011. Yangon traffic has become jammed by private cars and by 60,000 registered taxis. Inner-city traffic is frequently close to a total collapse as the use of motorbikes is still prohibited in Yangon and driving with bicycles is severely restricted.



Yangon afternoon traffic



Taxis abound, but no motorbikes

While Yangon and Mandalay create the impression of a country on the fast track to economic prosperity, the contrast to the rural areas is stark. Outside the major cities, ox carts and the lack of electricity signal a widening development gap between the urban centers and the mostly agricultural country.



In the country: Bad infrastructure ...



... and old-fashioned transport

The transition from the former military dictatorship to a democratic society is painfully slow and full of disappointments. The civilian government of the NLD (National League for Democracy) under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi is not able to counteract the influence of the strong military. The Myanmar Armed Forces command large parts of the economy and control all

security related aspects of Myanmar life. The Military is in charge of the Ministries of Interior, Border Areas, and Defense and they have a blocking veto in Parliament.

Given this scenario it is not surprising, that the fighting between Government Military and Ethnic armies continues unabated with devastating effects on the livelihood of the civilian population. In the North more than 100,000 civilians are displaced by heavy fighting and 150,000 refugees still living in Thai camps since 30 years cannot return because of security concerns. In the West at the border to Bangladesh the Police and Army continue to prosecute the Muslim Rohingya minority. The Military has locked up more than 120,000 Rohingyas in 40 internment camps and an estimated 350,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh.

An end of the ongoing fighting and continued human rights violations is not in sight. Nobody is interested to tackle the complicated mix of ethnicities, religions, and rights to natural resources. As long as the influence of the Armed Forces cannot be restrained, the NLD government will be too weak to secure a long-lasting peace.

## I. Our New Projects 2016

### 1. Myinttamon Nursery for HIV-affected children

In Mandalay, we donated a new nursery building to the Good Shepherd Sisters in time for the Myanmar schoolyear (June to March). The new kindergarten is dedicated to children affected with HIV and children from HIV-affected parents. The Sisters manage the nursery and People In Need will pay for the running expenses. The children are between 3 and 6 years old and require intensive care and support; they are taken care of by three nursery teachers and a helper.

As the children live all across Mandalay, we need to collect the children by car and to drive them back in the afternoon. The children arrive around nine o'clock in the nursery. They spend the day playing, singing, and learning; we provide a daily lunch and essential medical care.



Myinttamon Nursery, Mandalay



Listening attentively



With the onset of the dry season we had to put up a sunroof over the playground of Myinttamon Nursery. The sun had gotten too hot for the children to play outside without a shade.



Myinttamon Nursery: Playground



Playground with Sunroof

## 2. Empowerment Program for Young Women, Mandalay

To empower young girls and women, we had started together with the Catholic sisters of the ROSE VIRGINIE GOOD SHEPHERD ASSOCIATION (RVGSA) a Leadership and Vocational Training for young vulnerable women. Since 2006, we trained about 200 girls in 12 month classes in Yangon. We saw the positive effects of the young educated and trained women when returning home to their respective home areas. They can manage their own livelihood with dignity and respect and support their family and the community.

The Sisters saw the urgent need to expand the empowerment program and suggested to move the Leadership and Vocational Center from Yangon to a new building in the more centrally located Mandalay. People In Need together with a major international donor built a new house for the Vocational and Leadership Training in Mandalay Myothit. The “Rose Virginie Women Empowerment Center” was completed in 2016 and was officially registered with the Myanmar Government. In July we could start the 11<sup>th</sup> Class of the Leadership and Vocational Training Program in Mandalay Myothit.

In Mandalay, we follow the same format as with the successful program in Yangon. 20 girls with different ethnic roots and from different Myanmar areas live and study together in Mandalay Myothit. This year, 9 young women are trained in English language and Computer skills and 11 young women get sewing training. The young women originate from Irrawaddy, Mandalay, and Sagaing Divisions, and Kachin, Kayah and Shan States. They are trained by qualified English teachers, computer experts and sewing teachers. Three Sisters see to the young women and manage the Center. Volunteers, friends, and the staff of the Good Shepherd Sisters support the girls and the program actively.

**The Rose Virginie  
Women Empowerment  
Center**

**Mandalay Myothit**



In addition to the professional trainings, the young women attend seminars and awareness programs on Migration and Human Trafficking, HIV/AIDS, Leadership and Management, Ethical Values, and communications skills. The young women celebrate birthdays, religious feasts, national days and special occasions together and learn to respect and value different religions and cultural values. In exposure programs they learn to build relationships and to network. Towards the end of the study year the young women will practise and enhance their skills as trainees in companies and NGOs.



Computer training



Sewing training

People In Need contributes most of the operating expenses of the Leadership Training Program. To the extent possible the girls and their parents give a small contribution for the 12 month program. However, People In Need had to provide additional scholarships for five students. With the help of Childaid Network, Königstein, we could upgrade and complement the computer and sewing equipment with additional laptops and special purpose sewing machines.

Next year the Sisters want to start a training course for Hair Cutting and Hair Styling, and Makeup Skills. We will need to build a small Beauty Parlour to conduct an orderly training.





Christmas Celebration with the girls, Sisters, teachers, and staff in Mandalay Myothit

### 3. Hla Day – A Social Enterprise to Support Myanmar Cottage Industries

Finally, last year we could advance our dream of a high quality market place where our projects could sell some of their handmade articles. People In Need became a partner and supporter of Hla Day, Yangon ([hlaydaymyanmar.org](http://hlaydaymyanmar.org)). Hla Day is a not-for-profit social enterprise. It works with Myanmar artisans, disadvantaged groups and small family businesses to design, develop and sell quality handmade products with a contemporary twist. Hla Day’s team provides a sustainable market place, skill trainings, and creative designs to support the livelihoods of more than 40 producers, many of whom are struggling to overcome disability, exclusion and poverty. Hla Day aims to capture the unique flavors of Myanmar design by locally sourcing all materials and celebrating traditional skills. Hla Day’s empowering approach allows customers and producers to enjoy and benefit from unique Myanmar handicrafts.



Hla Day featured in “Travel & Leisure” Magazine



Hand-woven Silk and Cotton Textiles

## II. Our Ongoing Projects

### 1. Nursery School for Less Fortunate Children, Yangon

For 10 years we support a nursery school for about 60 children in Downtown Yangon. The nursery is managed and run by the Catholic Sisters of the Good Shepherd and is funded by People in Need. The children attend the nursery on five days a week; they are between three and six years. Four licensed nursery teachers and a helper look after the children. The children are from poor and disadvantaged families; they rarely have enough food at home. Hence, our full-time cook provides free food at the daycare center.

Other than playing with the children, the nursery teachers provide social and medical care. The children learn basic reading and writing skills which will give them a head start in the government school after completing our nursery school. As in the prior years, one highlight was our Christmas Party 2016, to which we invited parents and siblings.



Christmas Party 2016

### 2. Leadership Training Program, Yangon

In August 2016 we finished Class #10 of our vocational training program in Yangon which we ran jointly with the Good Shepherd Sisters. 18 girls completed the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the 12-month training before the Leadership Training Program moved to the “Rose Virginie Women Empowerment Center” in Mandalay Myothit (see paragraph I.2. above).

The girls of Class #10 had lived for one year in their own house in the compound of the Good Shepherd Sisters in Yangon. The young women between 17 and 25 years completed professional training courses as nursery teachers, including Montessori training, or learned dressmaking and sewing. All girls attended English language and computer training classes and participated in ethics education and leadership formation seminars. After graduation at the end of August 2016 the students of Class 10 returned to their home villages in Irrawaddy and Mandalay Divisions,

and in Kachin, Kayah, and Shan States. They will engage in social work with NGOs and social organizations.



Graduation Ceremony of Class #10

### 3. New Orphanage Building in Shwebo, Sagaing Division

The Anglican Diocese of Mandalay operated the Naga and Nationalities Orphanage in the center of Mandalay for 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 80<sup>th</sup> Street in Mandalay had deteriorated dramatically and occupancy decreased to 15 boys in 2015. Without any possibility to expand in the small compound in Mandalay, the Anglican Church wanted to move the orphanage to their large compound in Shwebo, about 80 miles to the northwest of Mandalay.

After trying for several years, we finally found an international donor who shared the building cost of the new orphans’ house in Shwebo. We finished the building in time for the schoolyear 2016 and the Anglican Bishop of Mandalay blessed and opened the building officially in May. In Shwebo, the children will attend the nearby government primary, middle, and high schools. 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.



New Orphanage in Shwebo



The Anglican Bishop of Mandalay opened the House



#### 4. Don Bosco Youth Center (DBYC), Mandalay

People In Need supports the Salesian Brothers – Don Bosco in Mandalay who look after the needs of vulnerable youth and street children. The Don Bosco Youth Center (DBYC) provides education and vocational training to enable the boys to earn their own living. The training center accommodates 25 boys “at risk”. The boys receive an informal school education, moral guidance and attend vocational training courses: electric and electronics, computer skills and languages, and motor bike repair. In addition, DBYC operates a drop-in-center and a night shelter for street children. 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. After bakery training and learning to make ice-cream, the street children operate a coffee shop with a bakery for bread, rolls, and cakes and sell ice-cream successfully.



The Coffee & Ice Cream Shop



Preparing a cake in the Bakery

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

One of PIN’s long-term programs 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 hospitals for medical tests and checks and medicines.

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 want to help the monastery with building new washrooms and toilet facilities.





Ye Lay Monastery in North Okkalapa



The Chief Monk plans for new facilities

### 6. St. John's Private High School, Pathein opened in 2016

The Catholic St. John's Private High School in Pathein, Irrawaddy Division, opened its door for students in June 2016. It is the first Catholic high school since the government had nationalized all Christian schools in 1964. PIN assisted the Catholic Diocese of Pathein to find an international donor for the building and part of the equipment. When in full operation, the school will have 200 – 300 students. The school is open for poverty-stricken, talented students of different backgrounds, religions, ethnic groups, and areas.



The Bishop, school teachers and the first students



St. John's Private High School, Pathein

### Note of Gratitude

With the unceasing help of our friends and supporters and with lots of good fortune, People In Need continued its work in Myanmar in 2016. We would like to express our gratitude to our friends, supporters, and donors for your continuous support and interest in our work in Myanmar. On behalf of the children, youth, orphans and other beneficiaries of the projects and initiatives of People In Need we would like to thank you wholeheartedly for your generosity and contribution towards the foundation.

If you want to contribute to our projects and help the disadvantaged children, girls and boys in Myanmar please donate to People In Need.

PEOPLE IN NEED – GERHARD BAUMGARD STIFTUNG is a registered charity in Hessen (Germany). PIN issues donation receipts which are tax-deductible in Germany. For more information see [www.peopleinneed.de](http://www.peopleinneed.de).

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