

Report 2018

Myanmar: The Work Does Not Stop

People In Need (PIN) continued its humanitarian work for socially and economically disadvantaged children and youth in Myanmar despite of all country specific problems and challenges¹. Our work does not stop: As the urban centers grow, there is an increasing number of young people who are left behind. PIN remains committed to our founding principles: To help and support those in need through programs that are supportive, educational, caring and sustainable for all.

PIN 2018 Activities

1. HLA DAY: Shop for Handicraft and Artisan Products

People In Need supports and advises the not-for-profit social enterprise Hla Day in Yangon. The shop sells quality contemporary and traditional Burmese handicrafts. The products are manufactured by about 55 socially disadvantaged producers who struggle to overcome disabilities, discrimination, exclusion and poverty. The shop only sells local products which are designed and produced in Myanmar. Hla Day offers a sustainable market for handicraft products and provides income, skill trainings and creative design for the local artisans from Yangon Division and Rakhine, Chin, Kayah and Shan States.

Furthermore, Hla Day helps to improve the income of charitable handicraft and sewing projects and to create long-term income generation possibilities for the graduates of People In Need's Leadership and Vocational Training Program in Mandalay.



Hla Day Shop, Yangon



Salesperson with Nila puppets

Hla Day's business is growing rapidly and this growth continues to benefit our 55 producer groups with approximately 300 members. For 2019, we plan to enlarge our shop space and expect to open the new, bigger Hla Day in mid-2019. Do not forget to visit us on Pansodan

¹ Appendix: Background - Myanmar's bumpy path to a brighter future

Road in Yangon at your next visit to Myanmar. For more up-to-date news, details and products of Hla Day www.hladaymyanmar.org, www.facebook.com/hladaymyanmar/

2. Empowering Girls and Young Women: Leadership and Vocational Training Program

Gender bias remains deeply entrenched in the Burmese society. Women often suffer violence. Discrimination hinders girls and young women to access basic education, health care, and to find decent work at fair wages. PIN has committed to assist the Catholic Good Shepherd Sisters in expanding their support for Vulnerable Girls and Young Women in Myanmar.

Together with the Good Shepherd Sisters, we started the Leadership and Vocational Training to empower girls and young vulnerable women in Yangon in 2006. Up to 2016, 220 girls had attended the first 10 classes of the 12-month training and had graduated in English, computer skills, tailoring, nurse aid, and nursery teacher courses. Then, in 2016, we moved the program to Mandalay with the 11th Class of the Leadership and Vocational Training Program to the “Rose Virginie Women Empowerment Center” of the Good Shepherd Sisters. The newly built four-story building increased our capacity for training and accommodation. The Center provides accommodation for 50 young women and space for sisters, counselors, and trainers. Additionally, the Empowerment Center offers day training activities and seminars for residents and vulnerable young women and girls from the neighboring areas.



**Rose Virginie Women
Empowerment Center
Mandalay**

In Mandalay, we follow the same format as in Yangon before: 20-30 girls with different ethnic roots and from different Myanmar areas live and study together for one year. PIN

contributes the major part of the operating expenses of the program. Whenever possible, the girls and their parents give a small, symbolic contribution for the 12-month training.

In 2017, we added a small Beauty Parlor donated by the German Haircare Company Schwarzkopf. Here, we started the 6-month Beauty Course, which was enthusiastically received by all. In the first half of the course, five students learn to cut and style hair and in the latter half students learn make-up and skincare skills.



The Beauty Parlor in Mandalay Myothit



Hairdressing Training

In June 2018, 25 girls graduated from Class 12 of the Leadership Program successfully. They had studied Tailoring, Computer and English or attended Beauty classes. Most of them returned to their home villages, some stayed on in Mandalay to improve their skills and gain professional experience.

Our current 12-month class (Class #13) started in July 2018. The 31 girls between 16 and 23 years come from villages and towns across Myanmar. Most are from Kachin State, others from Shan, Chin, Kayah, and Karen States, some from Sagaing, Ayeyarwaddy, Mandalay, Yangon and Bago Divisions and 1 girl from Naypyidaw. Some learn Tailoring, Computer and English, and others joined the Beauty class. 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 girls celebrate birthdays, religious feasts, national days and special occasions together and learn to respect and value different religions and cultural values. The girls also learn to build relationships and to network. Towards the end of the study year, the young women will practice and enhance their skills as trainees in companies and NGOs.



Beauty Students with Teachers



Christmas Party 2018

In September 2018, two professional Australian hairstylists visited our hairdressing programs as volunteer teachers. Schwarzkopf had organized the visit of the volunteers. It was an overwhelming success for teachers and students. Even Mandalay professionals joined the classes to learn more about Western hairstyles.

The 2018 year ended with a large Christmas celebration that included singing, dancing, and special holiday food. The students, Sisters, teachers, helpers, guests and the girls from the Mandalay drop-in center of the Good Shepherd Sisters attended the festivities.

3. Empowering Girls and Young Women: Gender Based Violence Program

In 2018, we started to support girls and women who experienced and suffered from gender based violence (GBV). Good Shepherd Myanmar Foundation manages the program in Yangon. It aims to restore the dignity and rights of women and girls in crisis, empower the victims and reintegrate GBV victims and survivors into their families and home communities.

The project helped 22 women; 18 women moved into a Safe House and 4 women received support through the outreach program. Of the 22 women four women had been raped, eleven were sexually abused by their partners, five suffered from physical abuse (domestic violence), one woman was the victim of incest and one woman had worked as a prostitute.

Although the women did not have the courage to report the men to the police, they learned to accept their situation, forgive themselves and reintegrate with their family through a process of counseling and psychosocial support.



The girls and women of the GBV Program stay anonymous.

With the support of the Sisters, all pregnant women kept their babies after reflecting on all the consequences of a future life as a single mother. No baby was given up for adoption and all 13 babies lived with their mothers in the safe house. The mothers receive extra support for the babies and help in preparing for living on their own or for returning to their families.

As part of this project, the Sisters also raise public awareness for gender based violence topics through public events in and outside of Yangon. The Sisters coordinate all activities with the Gender Equality Network Myanmar and the Union Ministry of Social Welfare.

4. Myinttamon Kindergarten for HIV-affected Children

In Mandalay we continued to operate a Kindergarten which cares for children from HIV-affected families. 3 years ago PIN leased a plot of land from the Methodist Theological College Mandalay in the center of town and built the new kindergarten. The kindergarten is managed by the Good Shepherd Sisters, Mandalay and PIN takes care of the operating expenses including the lease of the land.



Myinttamon Kindergarten, Mandalay



In the Morning the Children Arrive by Car

In June 2018, we started the third Kindergarten year with 21 children. The children are between 3 and 6 years old and are from socially disadvantaged and poor families. At the

nursery, three nursery teachers and one cook/helper care for and support the children. The teachers have completed a private Montessori training and hold a license from the government; they practice child-centered education.

The Kindergarten children live throughout Mandalay. In the morning, we collect the children by car and we drive them back to their homes in the afternoon. Upon arrival, the children start the day with singing, drawing and painting. After a short meditation session, they learn English, practice nursery rhymes and writing, play music and dance. After the free lunch, which our cook prepares daily, the children sleep and rest. In the afternoon the children play games in the house or outside on the playground. The Kindergarten is open 5 days a week and closes during the long Myanmar school holidays in March – May.



Playing Outside



Lunchtime

At the end of each Kindergarten year, we hold a graduation ceremony and bid farewell to the older children who will join the Government Primary School in June. The graduation ceremony is a happy and enjoyable event with singing and dancing. All parents and siblings dress up and attend the celebration, which ends with a common lunch.



Ready for Dancing



Children and Parents

5. Ye Lai Buddhist Monastery

Since 2006, PIN supports the Buddhist Ye Lai Monastery in North Okalappa Township of Yangon. The Monastery with about 50 Buddhist monks cares for patients living with HIV/AIDS irrespective of gender, race or religions.

Today, medications against HIV/Aids and opportunistic infections are available in the larger Myanmar cities. However, the health care sector outside of the main cities is still underfunded and underdeveloped. To get the proper medication and to avoid the social stigma within small village communities, persons affected with HIV travel to Yangon or other major cities. When patients visit Yangon hospitals and clinics for medical tests and to replenish their medicines they can stay free at the Ye Lai Monastery. The monks will take care of the food by sharing alms, which they collect in the early mornings from devotees and neighbors.



Ye Lai Monastery: Two Houses for HIV/AIDS Patients



Monks at Lunch

10 years ago, PIN donated and built two 2-storey-buildings for the HIV patients at the Monastery. PIN continues to assist the Monastery with the major tasks and challenges. In 2018, we replaced and renewed the leaking roof of the 60 x 40 feet building. Moreover, after the monsoon season we renovated the room ceiling that had been damaged by prior water leakages.



Repairing the Gutter



Patient Family at the Monastery

6. Don Bosco Youth Center

PIN supports the Salesian Brothers – Don Bosco in Mandalay, who care for vulnerable boys and street children. The Don Bosco Youth Center (DBYC) provides shelter and education to 50 street children who live in the night shelter of the drop-in center in the compound.



Drop-in Center for Street Boys



Mini-Bakery

We had started income generating activities at DBYC by providing bakery and ice-cream equipment. Now, the street children operate a coffee shop with fresh bread, rolls, and cakes and homemade ice cream.

PIN helped DBYC to push for a new vocational training center as the current building is too small and can only run courses for 25 boys. In 2018, Don Bosco Mondo in Bonn approached the German Ministry for International Cooperation (BMZ) for funding. Don Bosco Mondo will submit a formal project proposal and funding request to the German Ministry soon.

7. Other Activities 2018

PIN continues to support past projects opportunistically:

1. *St. Bruno Orphanage for Boys, Pathein*: PIN helped the boys to start a small service shop for motorbikes to generate income for the orphanage. We donated a mobile petrol pump to start selling petrol to local motorcycle riders.
2. *St. Mary Orphanage for Girls, Pathein*: PIN continues its long-standing relationship with St. Mary by supporting the education and vocational training of the girls.
3. *Kindergarten Kanyinthonesint*: In 2014, PIN donated the building of the first Kindergarten in the village tract in Ayeyarwaddy Division. Now, we replaced the wooden flooring, which had been severely damaged by white ants (termites).

8. 2019 Challenge: A look to the Future

As the foundation looks to 2019, our goal is to make certain that the Vocational and Leadership Training program for Girls is able to operate financially independent, i.e. it should become self-sustainable. We continue to discuss strategies and explore possibilities with the Good Shepard Sisters in order to realize a self-sufficient / self-managed program. This goal is important for the long-term success and sustainability of the Leadership program for the years to come.

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 2018. 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.

March 2019

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9. Appendix: Background - Myanmar's bumpy path to a brighter future



Overland Transport in Rural Areas



Local Transport in Provincial Towns

Myanmar's ruling party, the National League for Democracy, continues with its reforms towards economic liberalization, but the progress on political reforms is and will be limited ahead of the 2020 elections. Moreover, Myanmar's humanitarian problems and challenges of poverty, internally displaced people and refugees are likely to remain unresolved.

In 2018, Myanmar enforced a new Companies Law to replace the colonial-era Myanmar Companies Act of 1914. Now, foreign investors can hold up to 35 percent of shares in a local company. The new modern Companies Law follows the Australian model and requires all Myanmar companies to register online in a new company registration system. It appears that the registration process continued smoothly into 2019. However, the centuries-old administrative structure of cities and municipalities does not change easily and contradictions and inconsistencies are plentiful.

The Myanmar government also addresses the extremely low educational standards at schools, which are far below the other Asian countries. With the help of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), educational quality standards are harmonized. In fact, the Myanmar school education will be extended from 10 to 12 years before young students may qualify for university. With a massive investment by the German Government, Myanmar wants to expand its technical and vocational training (TVET) opportunities to tackle the countrywide lack of skilled labor. According to the OECD just 0.5% of Myanmar upper secondary students are enrolled in TVET courses at Government Technical High Schools compared to more than 40% in China and Indonesia and 35% in Thailand.

The humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State and at the border with Bangladesh has deepened. About 730,000 Rohingyas have fled Myanmar to neighboring Bangladesh since August 2017. The government continues to deny any major abuses by the Myanmar security forces and does not allow independent investigators to visit Rakhine State. Two local Reuters journalists received harsh prison sentences for reporting on military abuses in Rakhine State. Although Myanmar and Bangladesh signed a memorandum about the repatriation of the Rohingyas

from Bangladesh to Rakhine State, up to now no Rohingya has been officially repatriated. People do not want to return, as the signed memorandum does not give any guarantee of citizenship for the Rohingyas.

In August 2018 the UN Human Rights Council stated that a UN-mandated fact finding mission found patterns of gross human rights violations and abuses committed in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan States that “undoubtedly amount to the gravest crimes under international law”, principally by Myanmar’s military, the Tatmadaw, but also by other security forces.

The fighting between Myanmar’s military and ethnic armed groups intensified over the course of 2018 in Kachin, Shan, and Karen States. It is fueled by large controversial infrastructure projects and disputes over natural resources. The fighting displaced another 30,000 civilians in Kachin and Shan States adding to the 106,000 IDPs in the long-term displacement camps. The supply situation in the ethnic areas continues to remain tense as the Myanmar authorities bar UN and international organizations from delivering aid to the areas under the control of ethnic armed forces.

While Myanmar State Counsellor and de facto Prime Minister Aung San Suu Kyi is harshly criticized internationally for her refusal to speak out against human rights violation and crimes by the Myanmar’s military, the domestic population stands steadfast with Aung San Suu Kyi. The domestic decades-long resentment of the Rohingya population, coupled with the international critique of Myanmar have galvanized the old foes: Aung San Suu Kyi, democracy movement and Myanmar military forces.