

Report 2019

Over fifteen years ago, People In Need – Gerhard Baumgard Stiftung (PIN) was started with meaningful purpose and focus, and a simple mission, to support underprivileged and socially disadvantaged youth in Myanmar – to make their lives and the lives of their families better.

Throughout these years we have witnessed first-hand the ups and downs of domestic politics and economic development within the country. Myanmar has moved from a military dictatorship towards a democratic country, yet the military remains very powerful. Today, Myanmar faces once again, an uncertain future with upcoming national elections at the end of 2020 and legal proceedings at the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court because of accused human rights violations by the Myanmar military.¹⁾

People in Need will stand by its projects in Myanmar and will be able to continue because we work and cooperate exclusively with local civil society organizations such as community-based associations and Buddhist and Christian organizations. Our ability to work with and through the local communities has proven to be very effective in navigating and upholding our projects regardless of external instabilities. Since 2004, we have implemented and supported education and vocational training projects, built orphanage houses, boarding schools and kindergartens. PIN helped with the aftermath of natural disasters as cyclone, flooding and earthquake and we have assisted the victims of man-made disasters such as fighting and violence.



St. Bruno Boarding School for Boys, Pathein



St. Mary Orphanage, Pathein

Throughout all these years, we cooperate and work with the Catholic Good Shepherd Sisters Myanmar who care for the well-being of the most vulnerable and in particular have a special concern for the needs of women and girls. From 2005 to 2011, we worked with the Sisters in an education and rehabilitation project in the so-called Golden Triangle between

¹⁾ See Appendix: What will 2020 bring? Elections and Legal Proceedings at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court

Myanmar, Thailand and China. In the Golden Triangle we built and supported 2 kindergartens with 110 children, a boarding school with 80 school girls and a sewing and handicraft program for 12 girls. Over the time, the rehabilitation project grew to provide health care, educational support and vocational training to 14 villages with 2,364 persons in 463 households. And from 2006 until 2016, we financed 2 kindergartens with over 100 children with the Good Shepherd Sisters in Yangon. Our work with the Good Shepherd Sisters in Myanmar continues to this day.

As People In Need starts its sixteenth year in Myanmar, our hope remains that our work and projects will provide help and support for many people in need.

1. Leadership and Vocational Training Program

In June 2019, 44 young women completed the 3rd Class of the 12-month Leadership and Vocational Training Program at the Rose Virginie Women Empowerment Center in Mandalay Myothit. The students graduated from their classes in Sewing, English, Computer and Hairdressing and Make-Up.



Graduation Ceremony June 2019

The program is run by the Good Shepherd Sisters and taught by local teachers and professionals. It provides students with life skills training including empowerment and confidence, human rights and trafficking, gender awareness, and health education.

Together with the Good Shepherd Sisters, in 2006, we started the Leadership and Vocational Training to empower girls and young vulnerable women in Yangon. Up to 2016, about 220 girls had attended the first 10 classes of the 12-month program in Yangon. They graduated with the core skills in English, in computer science and in tailoring, plus training as nurse aids and as kindergarten teachers. In 2016, the Leadership and Vocational Training Program moved to the new “Rose Virginie Women Empowerment Center” in Mandalay. The four-story building provides a larger place for training and accommodations. The Center provides accommodations for 50 young women, class rooms and space for Sisters, counselors, and trainers.

In 2017, we added a brick building for a Beauty Salon which was donated by the German Haircare Company Schwarzkopf. Now, the Good Shepherd Sisters can offer Beauty Classes for students to learn haircutting and make-up and skincare. The Beauty Course is very popular as it offers students the opportunity to find long-term employment and earn a stable income.

In Yangon and Mandalay combined, 367 young women completed their training in the Leadership and Vocational Training Program and received a certificate from 2006 – 2019. Through their trainings and studies, the young women help contribute to the wellbeing of their families in their home communities. They acquire a sense of self-worth, dignity and self-respect. 367 families benefited directly, and in turn an additional number of men, women, girls, and children benefitted indirectly.

In July 2019, 41 young women from all across Myanmar joined the 4th Class of the Leadership and Vocational Training Program in Mandalay. 15 students will join the Sewing Class, 20 students will get Computer and English lessons and 6 trainees will participate in the Beauty Class.

As in the prior year Schwarzkopf Professional's social initiative Shaping Futures sent two German professional hairstylists to train the hairdressing students. In September, they taught hair cutting and the different steps of hair coloring and built up self-esteem and confidence of students.



Hairdressing Class 2019



Make-Up Practise

2. Empowering Girls and Young Women: Gender-Based Violence Program

We continued to support the program of the Good Shepherd Myanmar Foundation in Yangon against Gender-Based Violence. The goal is to restore the dignity and rights of women and girls in crisis and those experiencing sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) and to promote advocacy for systemic changes within Myanmar.

The project aims to improve the protection for girls and women experiencing sexual gender-based violence and to enhance preventive public awareness for gender-based violence. The Good Shepherd Sisters aim to increase the networking with other NGOs, faith-based organizations and government authorities about the sexual gender-based violence among women and girls. The Sisters coordinate all activities with the Gender Equality Network Myanmar and the Union Ministry of Social Welfare.

The project provides safe shelter facilities for girls and women in crisis, including counseling and medical and psycho-social-support, educational and skill-training opportunities and family and society reintegration. In 2019, the project assisted 26 women and 14 babies. The Sisters provided safe shelter to 20 women and 8 babies while the other women and children stayed in their own place and were taken care of by the project's outreach program.

The 26 cases included 6 rape cases of minors, 2 cases of physical domestic abuse, one case of incest. In the other cases the women were sexually abused by their partners. All program participants received counseling and psycho-social support and could be reintegrated with their families. Through this program, the women and girls learn income generating skills and handicrafts such as sewing paper bags and tea packages for Hla Day (see No. 4) and making shampoo, hand creme and liquid soap.

3. Myinttamon Kindergarten for HIV-affected Children

In Mandalay we continue to operate a kindergarten which cares for children from HIV-affected families. In 2016, PIN leased a plot of land at the compound of the Methodist Theological College Mandalay close to Mandalay's City Hall. Here we built a 1,700 square feet building and a playground for the kindergarten. The kindergarten is managed by the Good Shepherd Sisters Mandalay and PIN provides the running cost including the lease payments for the land.

In June 2019, we started the fourth year of the kindergarten year with 26 children. The children, between the ages of 3 and 6, are from socially disadvantaged and poor families who are affected by HIV. We employ three kindergarten teachers and one cook/helper to take care of the children. The teachers have completed a private Montessori training and received the nursery teacher license from the government; the kindergarten follows a child-centered education.

The kindergarten children live in different quarters of Mandalay, too far away to reach the kindergarten easily. Therefore, we collect the children with a small truck in the morning and we drive them back to their homes after close of the kindergarten. 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. At noon the children enjoy the free meal which our cook prepares daily, and after lunch the children take rest and sleep. 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 for the long Myanmar school holidays from Mid-March to May.



'Our' Children Visiting Mahamuni Pagoda



Christmas Party 2019

4. HLA DAY: Shop for Handicraft and Artisan Products

People In Need supports and advises the social enterprise Hla Day in Yangon. Hla Day is a shop which sells quality contemporary and traditional Burmese handicrafts. The shop is run as a commercial company but the profits are not distributed to shareholders and owners but rather benefit the handicraft producers and artisans by generating income and providing market access, knowledge, skill trainings and creative design.

Hla Day sells the products of more than 50 socially disadvantaged producers and artisans who struggle to overcome disabilities, discrimination, exclusion and poverty. The products are designed and produced locally in Yangon Division and Rakhine, Chin, Kayah and Shan States.

Hla Day's suppliers employ more than 600 workers and artisans in their houses and workshops. For about 75% of those workshops Hla Day provides the main source of income and secures the livelihood of their families.

Furthermore, Hla Day supports the income generation efforts of charitable handicraft and sewing projects such as the Project against Gender-Based Violence of the Good Shepherd Sisters (see No. 2) and the shop offers jobs and income to the graduates of PIN's Leadership and Vocational Training Program in Mandalay (see No. 1).

In 2019 Hla Day seized the opportunity to double the floor space of its shop from 2,000 square feet to 4,000 square feet. This expansion offers new opportunities above and beyond expanding sales. For example, Hla Day can now entertain exhibitions and handicraft workshops for customers.



Hla Day's Cool Team



Creative Workshops

Do not forget to visit Hla Day on Pansodan Road in Yangon at your next visit to Myanmar. For more up-to-date news, details and products of Hla Day www.hladaymyamar.org, www.facebook.com/hladaymyanmar/

5. Ye Lai Buddhist Monastery

We continue our support for the Buddhist Ye Lai Monastery in North Okalappa Township of Yangon. The Monastery cares for patients living with HIV/AIDS irrespective of gender, race or religions. The HIV patients from outside villages and towns will stay at the monastery temporarily while they visit hospitals and clinics in Yangon.

On average, 30 patients temporarily stay with their relatives in a separate house at the monastery. The 50 resident monks take care of the food by sharing alms, which they collect in the early mornings in the neighborhood of the monastery.



Monks at Lunch



Maintenance and Repair

6. Don Bosco Youth Center

PIN supports the Salesian Brothers – Don Bosco in Mandalay, who care for vulnerable boys and street children. The Salesians provide shelter and education to about 50 street boys who use the drop-in center at the Don Bosco Youth Center (DBYC).

Our continuing efforts to establish a new vocational training center at the DBYC unfortunately did not materialize yet. The application for funding is detained between Don Bosco Mondo in Bonn, Germany and the German Ministry for International Cooperation (BMZ) in Berlin.



Temporary Shelter for Street Children

7. 2020 Challenge: A look to the Future

For 2020, we will work on our long-term goal of making the Vocational and Leadership Training program for Girls in Mandalay financially independent, i.e. to make it self-sustainable and viable. Our discussions with the Good Shepard Sisters for a new Vocational Training Center in Loikaw have not reached a final conclusion yet. As a first step into Loikaw we have committed to finance an extension of the Kindergarten which is overcrowded and needs urgent renovation. We will continue to strive to bring comfort and hope to all those who are touched by our projects.

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 2019. 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.

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Appendix: What will 2020 bring? Elections and Legal Proceedings at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.

Myanmar's long-term economic prospects continue to be favorable given its strategic location in one of the fastest growing regions of the world. However, decades of isolation and economic sanctions under military rule keep holding the country back. Although the National League of Democracy (NLD) under Aung San Suu Kyi won the first democratic election in 2015 with more than 80% of the votes, the military is still largely in command. In a power-sharing agreement between the NLD and the self-governing military, the generals kept the control of the crucial ministries of defense, home (interior) and border affairs and the control of a huge part of the economy.

Similar to its neighbors in East Asia, Myanmar's real GDP is expected to grow in 2020 by about 6.5%. The inflation rate is estimated to reach 7%. However, in Myanmar the private sector development is constrained by the lack of skilled labor, the limited availability of finance and the poor infrastructure, most notably the access to reliable electricity.

The upcoming elections at the end of 2020 will add an additional element of uncertainty to the instability in the border and ethnic areas. The violence and forced displacement of the Rohingyas, the trafficking of Myanmar women to China and the ethnic conflicts and displacements in Kachin, Karen and Shan States don't bode well for a smooth development of the country. Still today, the access to about one-third of Myanmar is restricted as a result of security concerns and armed conflicts between the Myanmar Military and ethnic armies and militias.

In 2019 an UN-mandated Fact-Finding Mission found sufficient evidence to call for an investigation for crimes against humanity and genocide against the Rohingya Muslims. The defiance of the Myanmar government to seriously investigate the human rights violations in Shan, Kachin, Karen and Rakhine States had a very negative effect on tourism. The Myanmar tourist arrivals in 2018 were only about 3.5 million, down 25% from the record 4.7 million arrivals in 2015. While 2019 arrivals are up again, it remains to be seen how the legal proceedings against Myanmar at the United Nations' top court, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the start of investigations at the International Criminal Court (ICC) will affect tourism in 2020.

Most international observers cannot understand why the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and de-facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi's appeared in front of the ICJ in Den Hague in December and denied any crimes against humanity by the Myanmar Military. In contrast to the outside world, Aung San Suu Kyi is domestically idolized as a hero who upholds and fights for the honor of the country. Nationwide thousands joined solidarity demonstrations to show their support before her departure to Den Hague.



Demonstrations in Yangon (REUTERS Photo)



Billboard in Hpa-An (AFP Photo)

Latest: The ICJ ruled in January 2020 that Myanmar must implement emergency measures to protect Rohingya Muslims against violence and preserve evidence of possible genocide.