



Annual Report 2021

Dear donors and sponsors,

Myanmar has been hit by a double crisis in the past year. In this annual report you can read what this means for the country, the people and our projects.

First crisis

The first crisis is caused by the coronavirus. The country was hit hard during the second wave in July and August 2021. The infection started in the big cities and quickly spread to the countryside, where almost everyone became infected in many villages. The health care system in Myanmar was totally unprepared for this and there was not yet a national vaccination program.



As a result, hospitals were unable to cope with the influx of sick patients. The public hospitals did not have enough materials to offer their employees the right protection, which also resulted in the majority of the staff being infected.

The lockdown

Our foundation was established in 2002 to support a girls' orphanage in the town of Minethouk at the Inle Lake in Myanmar. From January 2008, the nearby boys' orphanage was also added. In the past year we have managed to keep corona out of the door. That is a great achievement, because in July and August the second corona wave caused an incredible number of infections in Myanmar.

Almost all schools in Myanmar were closed for the whole of 2021 and many schools have been closed since April 1, 2020. The school in Minethouk was open for several weeks in July and December in 2021. The Omicron variant of the virus is currently circulating and many schools are temporarily closing their doors again. The summer holiday starts around April 1 of this year. It is therefore questionable whether schools will reopen before the summer recess. If exams take place in March, it is almost certain that no one will pass. Like 2020-2021, the 2021-2022 school year has also been lost in many ways.

For the 54 girls and 22 boys in our orphanages, 2021 was a little less of a lost year than for many other children and youngsters in Myanmar. In the orphanages, our staff members ensure that the children and youngsters can still be busy with their studies. More on that later.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are available in Myanmar, but are usually not free, as is the case in the Netherlands. One vaccination costs about € 85, which is half a month's salary for many people. 20 million people in Myanmar have now been fully vaccinated. That is about 36% of the population. Fortunately, the staff and youngsters in the orphanages have all been vaccinated.

In the cities and rural areas, the number of infections had declined by the end of 2021. But that could hardly be otherwise, because about three quarters of the population of Myanmar had already had corona. Many old people died in 2020 and 2021 from the effects of the virus. That cuts deep into families and local communities.



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Second crisis

The second crisis in Myanmar is caused by the military coup, which took place on February 1, 2021. President Win Myint, political leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other senior members of the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) party were detained by military officials. Since that time, it has been restless in Myanmar.

Myanmar was a military dictatorship from 1962 to 2011. Then came the return to a civil government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi. This Nobel laureate had been campaigning for democratization since the late 1980s and had spent years under house arrest. The military continued to exert a great deal of influence. For example, a large part of the seats in the Myanmar parliament is reserved for the military.

Mass protests erupted immediately after the coup on February 1, 2021, which escalated further in the two weeks after. Hundreds of thousands of protesters demanded the release of their leaders and the restoration of the civil government.



The army has been cracking down on the protesters ever since. Based on local witnesses, international news agencies report that soldiers are firing live ammunition at demonstrators. The death toll is estimated at 1,000 and tens of thousands have been arrested in the past year. A curfew has been imposed and the military junta regularly shuts down the internet or shuts off the power.

How is that coup justified by the military? Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD won a monster victory in the parliamentary elections in November 2020, with more than 80 percent of the seats to be allocated. The Tatmadaw, as the armed forces in Myanmar are called, had rallied behind the opposition, alleging large-scale fraud. According to the Myanmar electoral council and international observers, that was nonsense.

Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing now says that the Tatmadaw wants to organize new elections, in order to hand over power to the winner. But so far, that promise has come to nothing.

Meanwhile, the rebel armies of the various ethnic groups in Myanmar have joined forces and the national army is being fought hard. The Tatmadaw in turn destroys entire villages and people are simply shot or imprisoned. A large influx of refugees has also started.



The coup has been widely condemned in the West. Also by the Netherlands, where former foreign minister Stef Blok called for the "immediate release of all democratically elected politicians and representatives of civil society". UN Secretary-General António Guterres said he was deeply concerned about the use of "unacceptable force" against Myanmar civilian protesters.

Unfortunately, international action against the junta in Myanmar is difficult, because the country is seen by China as its own backyard and Russia is supplying the junta with weapons.

Spiral of Poverty

It doesn't look like a solution will be forthcoming. It seems a hopeless situation for the people of Myanmar, who are now also suffering from the economic consequences of all this. The twin crisis has pushed the country back into the spiral of poverty. Orders for (clothing) factories were cancelled, companies and shops were forced to close their doors, hotels and restaurants no longer had guests, rural people were no longer allowed to trade their agricultural products in the city and so on. For many of the day laborers in Myanmar this meant that they no longer had an income, with all the consequences that entailed. International aid was still offered in 2020, but since the military coup in 2021 that is no longer the case.



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Meanwhile, the international companies have withdrawn and economic sanctions have been imposed. That leads to even more poverty.



In the first half of 2021, it was not possible to transfer money to Myanmar because all bank employees were on strike. When more and more people became financially distressed, the banks reopened. Fortunately, our orphanages did not run into problems, because we were able to sell a piece of land that was already nominated to be sold. More on that later.

Our position

As a foundation, we continue to focus on our two orphanages in Minethouk and try to do that as well as possible. As a foundation we have no government involvement and we keep ourselves aloof from politics. Demonstrations against the military regime often take place in the larger cities. It is also restless in and around the nearby city of Nyaung Shwe and people are fleeing to the city. Fortunately, we do not notice much of the disturbances at the orphanages.



About the kids

Fortunately, it is not all doom and gloom. Our 54 girls and 22 boys are doing well. The staff has so far succeeded in keeping corona out. In the meantime, the good work in our orphanages continues:

- The staff of the orphanages provide language, mathematics and computer lessons for the girls and the boys.
- The children and youngsters have studied hard under the supervision of the staff.
- A number of grade 11 students have followed online classes, which were provided by teachers from the capital Yangon.
- Unfortunately, the government school in Minethouk was unable to offer online classes during the corona lockdown.
- 2 boys have worked in a car repair garage in the past year.
- 2 boys and 3 girls can study at the part-time university, but it was closed due to the corona crisis.



Composition of the group

It is often the case in Myanmar that if one of the parents dies, the other parent can no longer take care of the children. That parent has to work extra hard to earn a living. Therefore in our houses we have orphans and half-orphans:

- Of the 54 girls in the girls home, 23 are orphans and 25 are half orphans. The other 6 have both parents, but those parents cannot take care of them.
- Of the 22 boys in the boys home, 10 are orphans and 9 are half orphans. The other 3 have both parents, but those parents cannot take care of them.
- Of the 76 children, 9 come from very poor families.



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The staff

During working visits to our orphanages we see again and again what a warm and close-knit community the groups form and how disciplined everything goes. The staff of the orphanages consists of the following persons:



U Tet Tun

Orphanage father
and head of both homes



Daw Mya Sein

Cook for both homes



U Bran Saing

Head of the boys home
Tasks: computer teacher,
supervision and care



Daw Nilar Aye

Head of the girls home
Tasks: math teacher,
supervision, care and garden

Project volunteers

During a normal year, volunteers from abroad regularly visit our orphanages. They then stay in a guesthouse in the city of Nyaung Shwe and do all kinds of activities with the children after school. That is a wonderful experience for both parties. The volunteers make a valuable contribution to the lives of the orphans and that of the staff members. Volunteers are often sent out by the board of the Care for Children foundation. Their feedback is interesting to us. Due to the twin crisis in Myanmar, we were unable to welcome volunteers in 2021.

The girls home



To give you an idea of the girls home and its surroundings, we have added some images to this annual report. At the girls home is the kitchen, where daily cooking is done for the girls and the boys. The older girls take turns helping our cook Daw Mya Sein. They enjoy that!



Rice, meat, fish and oil are bought in the local market, but many of the vegetables come from the vegetable garden. There is a lot of space around the buildings to grow vegetables. Because the homes are located on the shore of the Inle Lake, the soil is fertile. The children enjoy helping Daw Nilar Aye with the gardening.



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The boys home



The boys home is within walking distance of the girls home. In terms of construction, both buildings are very similar. The boys home has a number of large halls where the boys can study, recreate and watch television.



When the children go to government school, they wear a school uniform. This is customary at all schools in Myanmar and helps to ensure that everyone is equal and looks well cared for.



Remarkable in Myanmar is that the boys are often a more shy than the girls. You notice that at almost all schools.

Maintenance of the buildings

Every year we carry out maintenance on both houses and the outbuildings. We find it important to keep these in good condition. In 2021 we renewed the roof of the cooking area, the wood storage and the seating area in the kitchen of the girls' orphanage. We have also renovated one of the wood-fired ovens.



In addition, the main kitchen building has been given a new roof. The girls can now eat, study and recreate dry again. In the rainy season, it can rain for days on end at the Inle Lake.



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Future plans

We don't know how long the lockdown will last. U Tet Tun and his staff had all kinds of plans for 2021, which we were forced to postpone to 2022.

One of the plans is to keep the children and youngsters active and to teach them skills for the future. We call this vocational training. Think of lessons in the field of sewing, making clothes, gardening and carpentry. Those are skills that will be useful for the rest of their lives.

It is also important that the children become digitally skilled. Each house has a computer lab. In order to allow more children to participate in the computer lessons of U Bran Saing at the same time, there is a wish to be able to purchase two extra laptops per house.



Maintenance of the buildings

It is time for some wooden floors in the houses to be renewed. Some concrete floors here and there also need to be repaired and rainwater drains replaced. We would also like to purchase a number of stainless steel clothes racks, on which the children can hang their clothes to dry.



Board Members & Synergy

At the beginning of 2020 you were informed about the change of board at the Care for Children foundation. The current board consists of the following persons:



Lucas Harms
Chairman
Nuenen



Nico Schoenmakers
Secretary
Berlicum



Camiel v.d. Heiden
Treasurer
Rosmalen

The three board members also support another foundation that is active in Myanmar, namely the World Child Care foundation. Both foundations function side by side.

The World Child Care Foundation has been active for 13 years in the metropolis of Mandalay in Myanmar. The foundation supports the Phaung Daw Oo High School. This is a huge Buddhist monastery school, where normally 8,500 children from poor families receive free education, from kindergarten to secondary school. The foundation supervises two residential groups with a total of 400 girls and boys on the school grounds and has set up an English & Life Skill Program for youngsters who have finished secondary school.

For the youngsters in the orphanages in Minethouk, the collaboration offers future prospects. When the corona crisis is over, the World Child Care Foundation can annually allow a number of youngsters to participate in the aforementioned English & Life Skill Program in Mandalay. The students learn to speak good English, obtain a Cambridge certificate and participate in training in self-confidence, self-knowledge, critical thinking, debating, communication, active citizenship and environmental awareness.

In education, health care, ICT, business and tourism, the demand for talented and good English speaking youngsters is high. With the certificates in hand, the chance of a good job and an independent existence is a lot greater. The Care for Children Foundation supports the World Child Care Foundation



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in a modest way to create a study and workplace in Mandalay for a number of youngsters from Minethouk. It is good to know that this was still approved by the old board during the period when both foundations started working together. As soon as possible, a number of students from Minethouk will go to Mandalay.

Financial situation in 2021

Due to the bank staff strike in the first half of 2021, all banks in Myanmar were closed. Transferring money via Western Union also did not work. Due to the political situation, we were unable to transfer money from the Netherlands in 2021. This caused acute problems in January and February. The orphanage father U Tet Tun temporarily had to borrow money from friends in order to meet the obligations.

The orphanage still owned a piece of unused land. In February 2021, U Tet Tun was able to sell this land for an amount of € 21,300. He used 75% of this from February to December for monthly expenses. The remaining money is enough to be able to move forward for another three months in 2022.

Now that banking is possible again, we as a foundation are investigating how we can get money to U Tet Tun in a safe way.

Income:

- Due to the lockdown, local revenue from tourists was only € 130 for the whole year.
- No subsidy was received from the local Social Welfare Department in 2021.
- The Care for Children Foundation received an amount of € 3,478 from its regular sponsors.
- € 10,523 was received in individual donations.
- € 4,100 was received after submitting a project proposal for maintenance, as mentioned earlier.
- The total income thus came to € 18,231.

Expenditure:

- The annual local costs for the two orphanages, salaries, necessities and education amounted to approximately € 17,000 (covered by selling the land).
- Banking and printing costs amounted to € 818.
- The contribution for the World Child Care foundation amounted to € 5000.
- The investment in a new website amounted to € 3,200.
- The total expenditure thus came to € 9,018.

Website Care for Children

In 2021, our attention was focused on the contacts with U Tet Tun and his staff, the ongoing projects and the extra work that the corona crisis entailed. Behind the scenes we have been working hard on a new website, which will go live in the spring of 2022. We think it is important that our foundation has a professional appearance. Hopefully this annual report will also provide the necessary confidence that we as a board have our affairs in order.

Our method

There is plenty of work to be done for the Care for Children foundation in the coming years. We can do this thanks to the support of our regular sponsors on the one hand and our loyal donors on the other. It is good to know that we spend 100% of your contribution on site. Because our foundation is run by enthusiastic volunteers, we have no salary and travel costs and hardly any overhead costs. In this way we try to keep it as transparent as possible for you. Every euro donated is one euro on location. By spending the collected sponsorship money on site, we not only help the children, but we also encourage local entrepreneurs. Because everything in Myanmar is relatively cheap, we never take (used) materials or items with us, but purchase everything locally. The local staff works with local businesses that are not affiliated with the government. Thank you in advance for your support and interest in 2022.

Our vision

We cannot change the world, but on a small scale we can mean a lot to each other. Or to put it in the words of the Dalai Lama: **True friendship is based on closeness, solidarity and the willingness to share everything with each other.** That is our conviction, our wish and our good intention for the new year. We wish all our donors and sponsors a healthy, inspiring and carefree 2022!

Care for Children

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