

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Dear donor or sponsor,

This is our thirteenth progress report since the establishment of our foundation in 2002. This letter concerns our work in 2014 for the boys and girls orphanage in Minethouk, Burma.

Development in Burma

Since the inauguration of President Thein Sein in 2011, Burma has seen major reforms. Restrictions on the media have decreased, opposition parties now have a say in political discussions, political prisoners have been released, and the country has adopted a more open attitude towards the West. The borders have been opened for foreign investments for example. As a result, investments increased from € 250 million in 2009-2010 to more than € 16 billion in 2013.

However, in the area of human rights, Burma must make a lot more progress. International human rights organizations still regularly report about human rights violations in Burma.

Furthermore, the country's infrastructure is very poor and the working skills of the people are limited.

External education of our children up until high school

At the moment (December 2014), we have 65 girls and 40 boys in our orphanages. They all attend the school in Minethouk (near the orphanages). This school is a combination of the Dutch primary school and elementary school and has about 300 students. In Burma, it is compulsory to attend school from age five until age ten. Education is free up until middle school and the government also funds books and stationary.

The school in Minethouk can be divided into:

- Primary school, this includes grades 1 - 5. The children are 5 to 10 years old.
- Middle school, this includes grades 6 - 9. The children are 10 to 14 years old. From grade 9 onwards, the children must take exams in order to be admitted to high school.
- High school, this includes grades 10 and 11 and is meant for 14 to 17-year-olds, depending on how long it takes them to complete primary and middle school.

The children may choose from two specializations:

- Bio-line: mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, Burmese language, and English.
- Eco-line: mathematics, chemistry, physics, economy, Burmese language, and English.

Since the level of education at the school in Minethouk is very low, we have offered to send some educational experts from the Netherlands to Burma (at our expense) to provide didactic training. The management of the school politely refused this offer, partly because of the fact that education throughout Burma is rather homogenized and such a matter must be authorized by the inspection of education first.

In November 2013, minister Ploumen (Foreign Trade and Development) told the authorities in Burma that the Netherlands will support Burma in the education field. Through the so-called NICHE program (Netherlands Initiative for Capacity Development in Higher Education), training will be offered through several Dutch educational institutes. It is not yet clear whether this will lead to any short-term developments for the school in Minethouk.

Education after high school

Higher education is not something that children in Burma are really aware of, seeing as it does not fit into their environment. When finishing high school, most children find it more important to look for a job in order to support their family.

After high school, there are several opportunities for further study, such as a teacher training course, nurse training, technological courses, or attending university. However, these courses are only open to students who greatly succeed in the high school national finals. The children are always required to wait one year before they can continue their education. Hence, there are always a few children who work and live as volunteers in the orphanages while awaiting their placement. At the moment, this includes three girls and one boy, who perform various jobs.

Children in our orphanages who can and want to continue studying usually do this at the university in Taunggyi, a town approximately 50 kilometers east of the orphanages. The university offers two variants: a daily university and a so-called 'distance' university. Our children usually join the distance variant: this includes two months of lectures/courses. During the remaining months, the students must complete several tasks. The benefit for the children is that they can work for eight months and thus have an income. At present, nine girls and one boy are following courses at the distance university. The course will take about four years. Those who graduate will receive the title Bachelor of Science.

Unfortunately, completing a university course does not guarantee a steady job, but those who speak good English have a better chance at finding a job in the tourist industry.

Internal training

Vocational

In the fourth quarter of 2014, construction began on a small vocational classroom (approx. 150m²) next to the boy's orphanage. All of this was possible thanks to the 'Glazenhuis' campaign (a Serious Request action) from the JEM-id software company in Honselersdijk (a small place in Holland) in December 2013. It is our intention to teach children about the knowledge and skills required for professions such as carpenter, plumber, bricklayer, etc. Several retired professionals have already agreed to take part in the project as teachers. Crucial will be whether we will succeed in finding enough placements for the students. The building is expected to be completed in mid-2015.

Tutoring

Outside of school hours, all children receive tutoring in English, mathematics, and IT. With the help of educational experts in the Netherlands, we will offer English language tutorials.

Volunteers

In July, two volunteers (Gerlieke and Cornee, both professional musicians) visited the orphanages. For three weeks, they provided music and dance classes. Through music and dance, the children learn new skills and discover their musical talents. Creating and listening to music has a positive effect on their school performance. Several musical instruments were purchased in Burma, which the kids use for practicing. The highlight was the final musical performance in which all of the children participated (the video is available on www.careforchildren.nu).

Gerlieke has offered to continue working on the music project in the Netherlands (as an ambassador), so that in the future structured music lessons may be given.

In November, two volunteers from Australia (Fern and Anne) visited the orphanages. They worked there for two weeks. They taught English lessons to the staff and children, and sought to improve pronunciation in particular. They also taught IT lessons and solved several technical issues regarding the computers.

In 2015, more volunteers will visit from Germany, Australia, and the UK.

Finances

Besides the regular periodic donations - used for all the basic necessities and salaries - we received a large donation from Switzerland and a large bequest from the Netherlands. This means that 2014 was a positive financial year.

Plans for the coming years

It is our goal to complete the following projects in the coming years:

- The completion of the vocational classroom, furnishing thereof, and implementation of training programs.
- The construction of a small anthropological classroom with a separate classroom attached next to the girl's orphanage for providing music lessons, music performances, dance performances, lectures, etc.

The Board

Sadly Anemoon van Dijk has informed us that she is too busy to properly perform her Board duties. We'd like to thank Anemoon for her tremendous commitment to the foundation. Anemoon will remain part of the foundation as a consultant.

Hanny Kuiper will take over Anemoon's responsibilities in January 2015. She will be part of the Board. Hanny is an education expert and works for the University of Applied Sciences in Nijmegen. During the past years, she has visited our orphanages three times. She also volunteered for three weeks in the orphanages in 2011.

Special thanks

We are extremely grateful for all the support we received in 2014 from you, all of the donors, (private) companies, churches, and volunteers. Thank you very much!

The Board: Fons Huijerman (chairman), Robert Schuil (member), Gerrit Jan Muller (member), Hanny Kuiper (communications advisor), and Simon Goede (secretary/treasurer).

Simon Goede
Secretary/Treasurer

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