

# 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

As a foundation, we have been supporting Phaung Daw Oo High School in the metropolis of Mandalay for thirteen years now. Until 1 July of last year, the school managed to keep corona out of the door. After that there was no escaping it. Normally, 8,500 children and young people receive free education every day at this school and 1,450 of them live permanently in the school compound. Since the lockdown on April

1, 2020, only 300 under-privileged children and young people, as well as about 50 staff members and teachers, live in the compound. In August, half of them were infected. The head monk U Nayaka has been quarantined as a precaution.

## Vaccinations

Two German foundations, which, like our foundation, have supported the PDO High School for many years, have provided vaccinations for all employees and all children over the age of 12. As a result, corona is now under control again and there are currently no new infections in the school compound.



The number of infections is also declining in the cities and in the countryside. But that can hardly be otherwise, because about three quarters of the population of Myanmar has now had corona. Currently, 13 million people have been vaccinated. That is about 24% of the population. Many old people have died from the effects of the virus. That cuts deep into families and local communities.

The PDO High School has now been closed for a year and nine months. Almost all schools in Myanmar have not yet opened their doors. Most schools wait until after the summer recess and start again on June 1. Like 2020-2021, the 2021-2022 school year is in many ways a lost year, not just for PDO High School, but for all schools in the country.



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The only ones who are lucky in a certain sense are the 300 children and young people who live permanently in the school compound due to circumstances. In the first two quarters of 2021 they were taught by the teachers present. In the third quarter, the lessons took place online and the children and young people lived in bubbles. Since the fourth quarter, classes have taken place again in the classrooms. It will take some time before all classrooms are filled and 8,500 students are walking around every day.

It is a good practice in Myanmar to feed monks and nuns. Buddhists believe this is good for their karma. Due to the lockdown, the 150 novices living in the school compound cannot walk through the streets with their rice bowl. They have been cooking for them at the Golden House for a year and nine months now.



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



The PDO High School has also run into financial difficulties. The school management could no longer pay the salaries of employees sitting at home in 2021. As a result, we were confronted with some harrowing cases in the private sphere of our staff members, teachers and students. Fortunately, as a foundation, we were able to help with money that was donated especially for these cases.

## Our position

Despite all the troubles in Myanmar, we as a foundation continue to focus on the projects at the PDO High School and we try to do that as well as possible. Working visits are currently not possible, but we are in close contact with the teachers, staff members and school management. The school has no government involvement and we, as a foundation, keep ourselves aloof from politics and the regime.

Chief monk U Nayaka has campaigned in recent years with a committee of monks for radical educational reforms. These innovations have now been implemented by the Ministry of



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Education. That was sorely needed. Too bad the schools are closed now. A project group is housed on the school grounds, which is committed to improving education at the monastic schools in Myanmar.

The approach is aimed at changing the mindset of school principals, teachers, students and parents. High-quality primary education is being developed that is accessible to everyone and a large e-learning network has been set up.



The PDO High School plays an important regional role. It is therefore a good place to invest. We do this as a foundation in good living and study conditions for the children, in (vocational) training and in offering young people a future perspective. The young people who have finished high school can learn a trade and participate in our supported English & Life Skill Program (Bridging). More on that later.

## The Golden House

Our support for the school started in May 2008 with the purchase of two houses on the edge of the school compound. A cyclone had ravaged the south of the country at the time, resulting in 100,000 deaths. We were able to take in 75 orphans from the disaster area. The school has grown tremendously since then. As a foundation, we can now offer good housing and the right care to 320 girls and 80 boys during a normal year.

Our boys live in a building on the north side of the compound. We call this accommodation The Hostel. During the corona crisis, this building was used as a quarantine center and our boys temporarily slept in another building.



The girls live in two buildings on the south side of the huge school grounds. We call this residential group the Golden House. The children came up with this name themselves in 2008.



About half of the population of The Golden House and The Hostel belongs to one of the 135 ethnic minorities. In the provinces, where population groups with a different culture, origin, language and religion live, there are often conflicts. Education is also less well organized. Because the children and young people can temporarily live at the PDO High School, they have the opportunity to finish secondary school.





The Golden House Family is a close-knit community on the school grounds. Due to the corona crisis, we are taking care of 150 instead of 400 children this school year.

## Other living groups

Normally 800 novices (young monks) and 250 older girls live on the school grounds, who share a dormitory in groups of eight and live more or less independently. Due to the lockdown, there are only 150 novices this school year. As mentioned, we have been cooking for them since the lockdown.

Currently about 300 children and young people currently live on the site. Normally there are about 1,450. During a regular school year, more than 7,000 children are added every day, who come to school on foot, by bicycle and by bus. All these 8,500 children receive free education at the school, which is the size of a village.

## Project objectives

As a foundation, we focus on four concrete objectives:

1. Improving living conditions;
2. Investing in staff and teachers;
3. Renewing and maintaining housing;
4. Facilitating the English & Life Skill Program.

### 1. Improving living conditions

Since the start of our project in 2008, we have made a lot of improvements to the living conditions of the children. Items such as healthy food, clothing, sleeping materials, school supplies and toiletries require an annual investment from our foundation. The money we need for this is largely raised by our private sponsors. The Eekhoorn Foundation also helped us with this in 2021. At the moment, 9 children have a sponsor. In addition, we have 7 child sponsors, who are not linked to a specific child. Naturally, the sponsorship money is spent on the basic facilities of the entire residential group. We don't want to make a distinction here.

The sponsor parents and the sponsored children can keep in touch by email. Both parties like that very much.



Together with our new partner, the FriendShifts Foundation, we are going to breathe new life into the child sponsorship program. It will be redesigned and made more accessible and personal. We think this form of sponsoring is important, because it creates nice contacts. FriendShifts Foundation organizes contact between students in Myanmar and students from schools in the Netherlands and France. Small sponsor campaigns are also being set up and the proceeds will continue to ensure basic facilities for the entire residential group in the future.

### 2. Investing in staff and teachers

As a foundation you can only function well if you can rely on the school management, the staff members and the teachers on site.

We consider ourselves fortunate that this cooperation has been excellent for twelve years. The girls and boys of the Golden House and The Hostel are under the inspiring leadership of Yi Mon, Cho Cho and Nyein Chan.



They are assisted by a number of junior staff members. Together they provide the necessary structure and regularity. The staff members cook for the children and help with their studies. Without them our project would not function.



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Normally we would also invest in staff training with the support of our sponsors. Young people who choose to become a junior staff member at the Golden House or the Hostel after their graduation are then trained in leadership, responsibility, communication, empowerment and children's rights. In this way we create involvement and responsibility. These young people also participate in our English & Life Skill Program (Bridging).

When the young adults eventually find a good job in or out of school, or get into a relationship, they leave the Golden House. You could call that a shame about the investment, but that is precisely what our aim is now: to lead these young people to an independent existence.

## Own teachers

In order to ensure that the PDO High School can retain qualified staff and to ensure that more graduates pass their exams, we have been paying the salaries of a number of teachers since 2018. This has led to a higher success rate and to more structure and regularity in the study of the young people. We have not paid teacher salaries in 2021, because no final exam candidates have been staying in our residential groups since the lockdown.

## 3. Renewing and maintaining housing

Our maintenance and new construction plans in 2021 were as follows:

### Painting the buildings

We would have liked to repaint the residential buildings. Due to the lockdown, it was not wise to allow painters on the school grounds. The painting job will start at the beginning of 2022.

### Rebuild House 1

In 2019, the Pandaw House got two extra floors and we renovated the Hostel. In the future we would like to rebuild House 1. Our project started twelve years ago with the pur-

chase of this house.

It is still used for cooking, but is no longer inhabited. We would like to replace the building with a large kitchen, workspace and office space in due course.

### Current situation

Our 400 children and 20 staff members who normally live in our residential groups live in good conditions. During the lockdown there is even more than enough space to eat, study and recreate. Only the kitchen and meeting facilities therefore need an update.



## 4. Facilitating the English & Life Skill Program

In 2014 we developed plans to start a small-scale training institute for good English education at the school. That was given the name Bridging Program. With the support of Wilde Ganzen, a modern classroom was set up.





## English lessons

During a normal school year, about 150 young people take English lessons every day and do self-study. In addition to young people from the Golden House and the Hostel, young people from other residential groups also participate in the program. This also applies to teachers and staff members of the PDO High School. This gives a positive impulse to English education throughout the school. Local teachers and foreign volunteers provide the lessons. There are three levels of teaching and preparatory classes. For the language lessons we use the Cambridge method and the young people take an official exam.

In schools, in tourism and in business, the demand for good English speakers is high. With the certificates in hand, the chance of a good job is much larger. Also, about 25 Bridging students are selected each year for the Pre College Program at PDO High School. These young adults receive full-time lessons for a year in all kinds of subjects that are useful during an international exchange. They also receive help with applying for a scholarship.

## Personal Development Training

In addition to the pillar of good English education, Bridging has a second pillar: During the year various training courses are given that are valuable for the personal development of young adults. In the Netherlands it is quite normal that you develop talents at school, work on self-confidence, learn to think critically, learn to express yourself well, as well as develop a sense of responsibility and ownership. This is not self-evident in Myanmar.



The young people who have finished secondary school do not have these skills and run into these shortcomings during their further studies and work. That is why we provide intensive training. They are very popular with the young people. With this we meet an enormous need and receive all the support from the management of the school, because personal growth is seen in the young people. This is reflected in their work. Our English & Life Skill Program is a good breeding ground.



## Spring 2021

Normally, 150 young adults participate part-time in our English & Life Skill Program for a period of three years. At the same time, they work at the school or outside of it. Due to the lockdown, about 30 students were given the opportunity to complete all modules in one year in the spring of 2021:

- Module 1: Self Awareness & Inner Growth
- Module 2: Philosophical Reasoning
- Module 3: Active Citizenship
- Module 4: Social Studies
- Module 5: Environment & Sustainability
- Module 6: Buddhism & Modern Society
- Module 7: Compassionate Communication
- Module 8: Language Proficiency Course

## Fall 2021

Due to the large number of infections on the school compound, no lessons could be given in June, July and August.

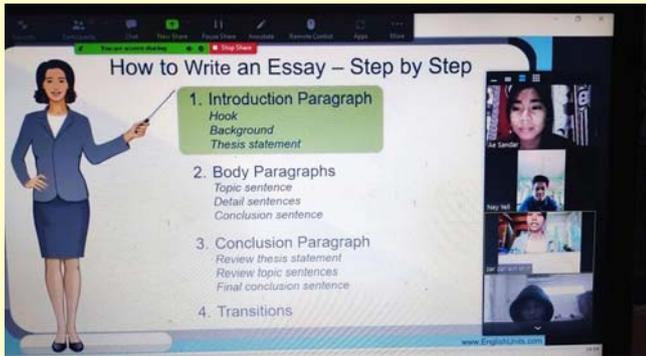


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From September, the teachers have provided online English lessons. This happened on three levels. A total of 45 students followed the lessons on the laptops of the Bridging program or of the school. This happened individually or in small groups (bubbles).



## English lesson for The Golden House

The children and young people of the Golden House and the Hostel were able to participate in English classes in November and December.



Because there have been no new corona cases on the school grounds since October, these lessons took place in the Bridging classroom. This is to the delight of the children and young people, who, just like their peers in the Netherlands, are completely done with the lockdown.

## Financing the program

Since 2016, Marcus Foundation from the Netherlands has been willing to provide structural financial support for the project. In 2021 we also received support from the Friendshifts Foundation. In addition, money is used from sponsor campaigns that we set up as a foundation in the Netherlands.

## Our sponsor activities

The year 2021 was slightly less successful in terms of sponsorship activities than previous years. That has two reasons. On the one hand, Myanmar has been in the news negatively for more than four years. This makes it difficult to find schools in the Netherlands willing to set up sponsorship campaigns. On the other hand, the corona crisis has shifted the focus of supporting the less fortunate from developing countries to our own country. That makes sense. Fortunately, as a foundation, we have a number of loyal donors and sponsors who are well aware of our work and how they spend their money locally.

## A brief overview:

- Our child sponsors provided a constant source of income.
- Dozens of private individuals made small and large donations in 2021.
- We received one-off and annual gifts from foundations, organizations and companies, such as the Care for Children Foundation, the Friendshifts Foundation, the Eekhoorn Foundation, the Frangipani Foundation, Molkenboer and Van der Kolk Advocaten and the Diaconie of the SOW Church of Berlicum-Rosmalen.
- Marcus Foundation supported the Bridging Program for the seventh consecutive year and granted an additional request for staff costs and own teachers.



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In 2021 we spent more than € 8,000 on the Bridging Program and transferred some €4,000 for the salaries and professionalization of the staff. In addition, we carried out maintenance for about € 700 and the staff bought about € 1,300 in school supplies, sleeping gear, clothing, slippers and toiletries on site.



As a foundation, we are always looking for new donors and sponsors. We are happy with a one-time gift or an annual donation. Structural sponsorship of a child is also possible, for example for an amount of € 10 per month.

But we have also been greatly helped by valuable contacts for project applications and sponsor campaigns. Think of a primary school, secondary school, foundation, Rotary or Lions Club, women's association, deaconie group, Vincentius association, sports association or bank fund. Please get in touch with us!

## Our method

There is plenty of work to be done for the World Child Care foundation in the coming years. We can do this thanks to the support of child sponsors and private donors on the one hand and schools, churches, foundations and organizations on the other. It is good to know that we spend 100% of your sponsorship money on site. Because our foundation is run by enthusiastic volunteers, we have no salary costs, no travel costs and hardly any overhead costs. The board itself bears the costs for the management of the foundation and the travel costs for the working visits, as secretary Nico Schoen-

makers brought to the project in February 2020. We try to keep it as transparent as possible for you. Each donated euro 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 we purchase everything locally. The school itself only works with local businesses that are not governmental. Thank you in advance for your support and interest in 2022.

## Our belief

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 and our wish for the coming year. We wish you and all our other donors, sponsors and interested parties a healthy, inspiring and carefree 2022!



**BECOME A DONOR TOO**

As a foundation, we depend on one-off and structural donations from individuals, foundations, organizations and companies. Any contribution, small or large, is welcome!

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