

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Dear donors and sponsors...

We begin this annual report with a summary of the situation in Myanmar. This introduction draws from various sources, including articles by Minka Nijhuis and information from the websites of Amnesty International, Stichting Vluchteling, and the UN. We've supplemented our report with recent developments. It's anything but a cheerful story, but it must be told and demonstrates that our help is needed more than ever.



Brief history

In 1962, the military seized power in Myanmar and ruled with an iron fist until 2011. During the uprisings of 1988, Aung San Suu Kyi emerged. When the junta organized elections in 1990, her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), won by a large majority. The junta did not recognize the election results and placed her under house arrest. She became a figurehead of freedom and democracy.

In 2010, the NLD won again, and a government under her leadership was established. From that point on, things improved in Myanmar. Although the military still held sway behind the scenes, there was more freedom. The previously closed country opened up: more tourists came, foreign companies invested, and the younger generation grew up with more freedom and opportunities.

In 2020, the NLD won again by a landslide, but the military feared losing power. Therefore, they staged a coup on February

1, 2021. Suu Kyi and other politicians were imprisoned. General Min Aung Hlaing declared himself leader of the country. He is also responsible for the persecution of the Rohingya and other ethnic groups in Myanmar.



Civil war or popular uprising?

The younger generation, in particular, who had briefly tasted some freedom and democracy, rose up in revolt. The peaceful protests were brutally suppressed.

Although Myanmar is a patchwork of ethnic minorities and has a history of conflict, the armed conflict that erupted is anything but a civil war. It is a popular uprising! Old and new resistance groups are fighting - some united - against a common enemy: the Myanmar military.

Humanitarian crisis

The armed conflict led to a humanitarian crisis. The economy collapsed, resulting in a severe food crisis. The healthcare system is under severe strain due to outbreaks of diseases like COVID-19 and cholera.

In early 2025, a major earthquake struck the country in the Mandalay and Sagaing regions. According to the UN, 3,800 people were killed and 5,000 injured. 50,000 buildings and homes were severely damaged, and 200,000 people were left homeless. Many still live in makeshift shelters.



CURRENT SITUATION

2

The combination of violence, poverty, disease, and the natural disaster makes the situation in Myanmar more dire than ever. Some facts at a glance:

- 22 of the 55 million inhabitants are dependent on aid;
- 4.3 million people are internally displaced;
- 1.5 million people are fleeing (including to Bangladesh and Thailand).



The battle moves

Myanmar's ruling class is supported by its allies, China and Russia. They provide the junta with financial and military support, for example, by launching airstrikes on civilian targets like schools and hospitals.

However, the military no longer has the upper hand everywhere. The countryside is largely in the hands of armed resistance groups. Fighting is increasingly taking place around the major cities.

The power of collaboration

After Suu Kyi and her colleagues were imprisoned by the military, the resistance groups established a new state. The Government of National Unity (NUG) was formed by a group of deposed representatives and their supporters. The government consists of 17 ministries. Some operate from within the states, others from neighbouring countries or from the West. President Duwa Lashi La resides in a liberated area in the north. The NUG is largely unknown internationally. Representatives exist in the West, but without official diplomatic status.



A federal state will be difficult to achieve in the future.

Former politicians from Suu Kyi's party consider themselves the true leaders and show little willingness to cooperate and engage in democratic dialogue. This is why many young people and ethnic minorities have already lost faith in the NLD, Suu Kyi's party.



"Winning is the easiest part of the fight. The hardest part comes afterward," an activist writes in an article by Minka Nijhuis. He fears division, a lack of democratic institutions, and a lack of credible leadership. "We have to prepare for this now. We're already late."

Elections

Myanmar is currently holding elections. This should be the moment for the people to make their voices heard and change the regime. But in reality, there's no electable counter-narrative to the junta. The NLD is banned, the NUG is unrecognized, and the smaller parties are powerless to make a difference. Moreover, the law stipulates that 25% of the vote goes to the military. So voting is pointless.

However, the military government is pressuring the population to vote anyway and bringing busloads of people to the polling stations. Employees of government organizations must be able to prove they voted, otherwise they'll be fired. And criticizing the elections is a criminal offense. A hopeless situation!





Spiral of poverty

The military oppression and the resulting popular uprising have led the country to the brink of collapse. Factories and shops were forced to close, hotels and restaurants lost customers, rural people were no longer allowed to sell their agricultural products in the city, and so on. Many people are unemployed, and day labourers have barely had any income in the past five years. Theft has become commonplace, something that's hardly in the nature of a Buddhist. International aid is barely allowed. Trade routes, money flows, energy supplies, and the internet are under the junta's control. The population has been abandoned to its fate.

Bright spots

Despite all the misery in Myanmar, we fortunately also see some bright spots. The population is incredibly resilient, has a strong will to survive, works hard, and is willing to help. And although many government schools are closed because teachers refuse to work under a military regime, many monastic schools have remained open and continue to educate underprivileged youth. Civil society initiatives have also emerged to provide children with some form of education.

Phaung Daw Oo High School in the city of Mandalay, which we have supported through our foundation for seventeen years, is still operating at full capacity. At this Buddhist monastic school, 8,500 children and young people receive free education every day from over 300 teachers.



About 1,400 students live permanently on the school grounds. This includes 200 older girls, 700 novices (young monks), and 500 children and young people, mostly from ethnic minorities. The World Child Care Foundation cares for the latter group. They live in the residential groups The Golden House and The Hostel. Three meals a day are cooked for this group, but since the coup, also for the 300 youngest novices. Previously, they would go out with their rice bowls to collect food, but due to the poverty among the population, this is no longer possible.



Since the coronavirus crisis, PDO High School has been in dire financial straits. The deficits have become even greater since the military returned to power. Government support has disappeared and international aid has decreased. As a result, the school administration is struggling to keep operations afloat. Inflation has increased by 400 percent in five years. Teachers and staff members now receive only a portion of their original salaries. It's understandable that many teachers are trying to secure scholarships and leave for abroad. In 2025, we were again confronted with several distressing cases in the private lives of our staff, teachers, and students. Fortunately, we were able to help with funds donated specifically for these cases.

The school is under strict military surveillance. Spies monitor everything: the curriculum, exams, operations, finances, cash flows, and communications. The military is unhappy that the school receives numerous donations from foreign aid



CURRENT SITUATION



organizations. They fear this will support the rebel groups' uprising. Fortunately, so far we've been able to transfer money to the school to support our projects without any problems, without the military being able to withhold a percentage.

U Nayaka, the school's head monk, is under immense pressure and has many worries. Despite his respectable age (79), he has no intention of stopping his ideological and educational work. We repeat his powerful words: "The youth are the future. Peace and freedom are only one generation away. That's the generation going to school now!"



Our role and position

These words from U Nayaka encourage us to continue our work. Despite all the challenges, as a foundation, we remain focused on the projects at PDO High School, which thankfully is a convent school and not a government school. As a foundation, we steer clear of politics and the regime. Working visits haven't been possible for a while, but we maintain intensive online contact with the teachers, staff, and school administration.

The school plays an important regional role and is therefore a good place to invest. We do this by improving the living and study conditions for the children, and by improving their future prospects. Young people who have completed secondary school can participate in the English & Life Skills Program, which we support. More on that later.



The Golden House

Our support for the school began in May 2008 with the purchase of two houses on the edge of the school grounds. A cyclone had ravaged the south of the country at that time, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths. We were able to take in 75 orphans from the disaster area. The school has grown enormously since then. Now, seventeen years later, our foundation provides good housing, guidance, and care to 500 children.

The residential group where our boys live is called The Hostel. The building in the photo below currently houses 48 boys.



Our 456 girls live in two buildings on the south side of the grounds. We call this residential group The Golden House, a name the children themselves came up with in 2008. In front of the buildings is a huge covered area where they cook, eat, study, and relax.





The Golden House and The Hostel's population consists of children and young people from one of Myanmar's 135 ethnic groups, as well as disadvantaged children and young people from the city and surrounding area. The Golden House Family is a close-knit and dynamic community living on the school grounds.

Cooking three meals a day for the 500 children and young people in our residential groups, as well as for the 300 youngest novices, is a monumental task. Large rice cookers and pots are used for this. A dozen older girls take turns helping our cook, Yi.

The meals are expensive and often consist only of rice, beans, and vegetables. Only a few times a week are there eggs, meat, or fish. Sometimes local people come to prepare a nutritious meal. As a foundation, we ensure that the children regularly receive fruit.

Project objectives

As a foundation, we focus on four specific objectives:

1. Improving living conditions;
2. Investing in staff and teachers;
3. Renovating and maintaining housing;
4. Facilitating the English & Life Skills Program (Bridging).

1. Improving living conditions

Since our project began in 2008, we've significantly improved the children's living conditions. Things like healthy food, clothing, bedding, school supplies, and toiletries require an annual investment from our foundation. This funding is partly raised by our private sponsors. Sponsored parents and sponsored children can communicate by email, which is beneficial for both parties.



Together with our partner, the FriendShifts Foundation, we organize an exchange program between students in Myanmar and students from schools in the Netherlands and France.

Letters, videos, and drawings are exchanged, and regular online meetings are held. FriendShifts organizes fundraising campaigns in collaboration with the schools. The proceeds will ensure the living groups continue to have basic necessities.

2. Investing in staff and teachers

Our projects in Myanmar are successful because we can rely on the school administration, staff, and teachers on site. We are fortunate that this collaboration has been excellent for seventeen years. The girls and boys at The Golden House and The Hostel are under the inspiring leadership of three staff members. Yi Mon (left) is in charge of daily management, monitors hygiene, school activities, and attendance, and coaches the junior staff members and vulnerable girls.



Cho Cho (r) assists in the evenings and on weekends and encourages the girls to complete their assigned tasks. Together with Yi Mon (r), she meets with the junior staff members and organizes sports and games.

Nyein Chan (m) is in charge of the day-to-day running of The Hostel and has the same responsibilities as his colleagues. He is also responsible for the maintenance of our living groups. And then, of course, there's Yi, the cook, who was mentioned earlier and isn't pictured here.

Our staff is supported by several junior staff members. Together, they provide the necessary structure and regularity.



CURRENT SITUATION

6

They cook for the children and help them with their studies. Without our staff, our project wouldn't function. Every year, with the support of our sponsors, we also invest in staff training. Young people who choose to become junior staff members at The Golden House after graduating receive additional training in leadership, self-reflection, collaboration, communication, and empowerment. This fosters engagement and responsibility. Below are the girls who were junior staff members until the summer recess.



A new group has been formed for the 2025-2026 school year. These young adults will also participate in our English & Life Skills Program. Most of these young adults eventually find jobs, either at school or elsewhere. At that point, they leave The Golden House. You might consider this a waste of investment, but that's precisely what we're here for: guiding these young people toward an independent life.

3. Renovation and maintenance of housing

In the field of maintenance and new construction we have undertaken the following:

Reconstruction of House 1

Between the two large buildings of The Golden House residential group stood a former house, where we began caring for 75 orphans in May 2008. This house became uninhabitable due to the earthquake of March 28, 2025, and was demolished. However, due to the large influx of children in the 2023-2024 school year, it was forced to be used as a dormitory again.



With additional support from friendly foundations and private donors, we were able to build a new residential building for 90 girls.





At the end of 2025, we attempted to thank all our generous donors for their support. If you haven't received a message, we would like to express our sincere gratitude. Without your contribution and that of many others, this project would not have been possible. The total cost of the new construction was €23,500. This was largely raised by three foundations with which we collaborate and by a significant number of donors. The repair of the damage to the school buildings and the head monk's office was funded by two German foundations.

4. Facilitating the English & Life Skills Program

In 2014, we developed plans to establish a small-scale training institute for high-quality English education at the school. This was called the Bridging Program. With support from Wilde Ganzen, a modern classroom was set up.

English classes

Around 150 teenagers and young adults attend English classes annually. Most of them have finished secondary school. Young people from The Golden House, The Hostel, and other residential groups also participate in the program. Some of the students are teachers and staff members from PDO High School and elsewhere.



Our well-trained local teachers teach the lessons. Lessons are offered at three levels. We use the Cambridge Method for language lessons, and exams are held. Bridging positively impacts English education throughout the school. With a certificate, your chances of finding a job or pursuing further

education are significantly increased. Due to the political situation in Myanmar, many young people currently dream of studying abroad. Internationally recognized diplomas are crucial in this regard. Each year, approximately 25 Bridging students are selected for the Pre-College Program at PDO High School. These young adults receive full-time instruction for a year in subjects relevant to international exchanges. They also receive assistance with applying for scholarships.

Personal Development Training

In addition to the pillar of good English education, Bridging has a second pillar: training that is valuable for the personal development of young adults. In the Netherlands, it's common practice to develop talents, build self-confidence, learn to think critically, express yourself effectively, reflect on yourself, and develop a sense of responsibility and ownership at school.

In Myanmar, this isn't a given. When young people graduate from secondary school, they lack these skills and face all sorts of challenges during their further studies and careers. The intensive training we provide is very popular with young people. We meet a huge need and receive full support from the school administration. Our English & Life Skills Program is a great breeding ground.



In 2025, only part-time teacher Aye Sandar was able to teach English. Full-time teacher Shwe Yee Oo was pregnant, gave birth to a healthy son, and was on maternity leave



CURRENT SITUATION

8

until the end of the year. Full-time teacher Nann Myint and part-time teacher Yi Mon provided an impressive range of training sessions in 2025.

Workshop	Number of times	Target group	Participants
Earthquake trauma	4	All students	421
Heart Circle	5	Golden House students	50
Heart Circle	5	Dhamma School students	112
Heart Circle	6	NTTC students	182
Heart Circle	3	Main Stream students	257
Mental Health & Care	1	Students under 12	36



A long-term course entitled Self-awareness & Inner-Growth also started in October 2025.

Course	Period	Participants	Number
Self-awareness & Inner-Growth	Oct '25 May '26	Students, staff and teachers	25

In May 2026, the English & Life Skills Program mentioned on page 5 will start again!



Extra English Lessons

For five years, middle school students at The Golden House and The Hostel have been taking extra English lessons. This is so that these students will eventually be exposed to textbooks written in English in Years 10, 11, and 12. To increase their pass rate and chances of success, they receive an hour of tutoring every day. This is offered at three levels. The lessons are partly taught by teachers from our English & Life Skills Program and partly by other teachers. Funding is provided in part by other foundations.



The Bridging Teachers

The lessons, workshops, and training sessions are led by our dedicated local team of teachers. From left to right, they are:

- Yi Mon | Skills for Life
- Shwe Yee Oo | English
- Aye Sandar | English
- Nann Myint (manager) | Self-awareness & Inner-growth



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

9

Program Funding

Since 2016, the Dutch Marcus Foundation has been willing to provide structural financial support to the project.

Our sponsorship activities

Our foundation's income sources are under pressure. This is due to two reasons. Firstly, Myanmar has been receiving negative publicity for over eight years. This makes it difficult to find schools in the Netherlands willing to set up fundraising campaigns. Secondly, the wars in Europe have shifted the focus of supporting people in need from developing countries to Europe. This is understandable. Fortunately, we have a number of loyal foundations, donors, and sponsors who continue to support our work. A brief overview:

Income:

Child sponsors	€ 3.410
General donations (incl. related to earthquake)	€ 7.140
Bank interest	€ 1.225
Foundations and funds	€ 18.923
Other donations	€ 4.985

Total	€ 35.683

Expenses:

Nutrition and personal care	€ 8.300
Additional staff salary + English lessons	€ 3.535
English & Life Skill Program + Trainings	€ 11.671
Purchase of household items	€ 0
Staff costs	€ 6.740
Building maintenance + Reconstruction House 1	€ 23.604
Overhead costs	€ 1.207
Expenditures from reserve fund	€ 1.800

Total	€ 56.857

As a foundation, we are always looking for new donors and sponsors. We appreciate a one-time gift or an annual donation. Regular sponsorship of a child is also possible. You also help us tremendously by providing valuable contacts for project applications and fundraising campaigns.

Our working method

There's still plenty of work to be done for our foundation in the coming years. We can only do this with the support of child sponsors and private donors on the one hand, and schools, churches, foundations, and organizations on the other. It's good to know that 98% of your sponsorship money is spent locally. Because our foundation is run by enthusiastic volunteers, we have no salary costs, no travel expenses, and minimal overhead. This makes it transparent for you. Every euro donated is worth 98 cents on site. By spending the raised sponsorship money locally, we not only help the children but also support local businesses. We purchase everything locally from local, non-governmental businesses. Thank you in advance for your support in 2026!

Our conviction

Unfortunately, we can't change the world, but on a small scale, we can make a significant difference for our fellow human beings. And no, we can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone. That's our belief, our wish, and our resolution for the new year. We wish you a healthy, inspiring, and peaceful 2026!



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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