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 Myanmar



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July 20 / Quarterly Report II / April – June 2018



with my grandson Julian

Especially on Sundays I like to sit peacefully and reflect... and today I have much to be thankful for. I can say my health has dramatically improved. Again, by the grace of God I am brought back to life. There is a slight feeling for food returning, I have been able to do some swimming and I now can walk five times around the compound. One mile!!! And not even out of breath.

I pray my health will hold to be able to experience the moments of joy that life still holds for me.

Again, just like last year there was only one month of school in the entire quarter – June. And again, the summer heat was relentless in April and May, but general renovation was carried out. Children from the higher grades helped us with the work and were »rewarded« with lunch at the Guest House.

- Red floors in all classrooms were repainted.
- Broken school desks were repaired and repainted.
- Exterior walls were refurbished and repainted.

The work was somewhat hindered by the construction of the new school building which began on 5 March, as I mentioned in the last report.

In fact, construction of the new building has been a central issue this past quarter, often needing our attention and consuming my energy. Due to frequent rain, construction was quite often delayed and the building was not finished by the beginning of the new school year. However, we have already used the ground floor for assembly and other events. It is a huge gain to be able to address all the children together in a place that is always dry and out of the scorching sun.

To give you an impression of the scale of the construction:



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Heavy loads up and down many steps...



The new building as seen from the Guest House

- At the construction site, work on small error details for welding and cement works are being fixed. Painting of the building began on 30 June and power lines for the class rooms are also being installed. I expect the construction to be completely finished by the end of July.
- On 10 April I received a call from RBF (Responsible Business Fund – a Danish foundation) that our proposal for the Solar Project had been approved. That was very good news! The contract was signed on 28 April after a bit of tedious clarification on reporting details and rules for the disbursement of the grant. Two days later, on 30 April, I signed the contract with Mandalay Yoma, the service provider that will deliver the solar system and handle the installation. The 28.9 kWp system with 86.4 kWh of battery capacity designed by Mandalay Yoma will produce 50 to 70% of LTG/LOL average monthly electricity consumption. 100% of the solar electricity production will be consumed thanks to the 24h availability of the solar electricity output. This project will advocate renewable energy and more particularly solar solutions in Myanmar and showcase responsible practices in the Magway Division. Total installation cost will be approx. 90'000'000 MMK, of this our contribution is 35% - a very substantial amount but definitely an investment for the future!

Meanwhile at LOL...

- With the dismal tenth standard result this year (only one of five students passed), lack of private study is the reason. They do not do homework. Consolation is all passed the English subject when many failed due to weakness in English in other schools. I am however so filled with thankfulness for my extended life, that I feel no disappointment nor anger towards the children or the teachers. Now we will have a special study class for the ten 10th standard students this year. They will study till 11pm strictly monitored and helped by guides, sleep after 11pm and up at six am to study till school bell rings and then return to their normal classroom.
- New students: 24 in pre-school, 8 in kindergarten, 1 in 8th grade, 1 in 10th grade. I do not encourage or invite accepting high grade students who come with no basic knowledge.
- There were 16 children born in June that celebrated their birthday on the 25th. Mohinga was the choice of the occasion.
- During the second week of June, school was closed for 4 days & weekend due to continuous rain with storms for almost a week. There was noticeable erosion and in some parts of Yenangyaung trees and houses were destroyed by the storm. Thankfully, LOL and LTG were not affected, apart from frequent electricity cuts.
- Volunteer: Sarah Grossenbacher was with us from 3 June to 13 July. She received her assignment from the French organisation Enfants-de-Birmanie. Sarah is French and before her stay, she worked as a trained nurse in Switzerland. Her assignment was to record and compile health booklets for all new students, update the existing booklets and treat minor injuries and infections. Above and beyond her duties Sarah also gave way over 20 swimming lessons. We would like to thank Sarah for her contribution to the children of LOL and wish her all the best for her future.



Meanwhile at Lei Thar Gone Guest House...

- The Guest House has been very quiet for the past three months, although not deserted as it used to be. I'm very happy to say that our revenue for these three months – the slowest of the year – at least covered the costs and paid for the staff salaries. For this we are very thankful!
- After all the hard work during January & February, I treated the staff to an excursion to Mandalay, Pyin Oo Lwin and Mingun. Uncle James, Zoes uncle was a great guide and showed them all the highlights in the three towns. Here in the Kan Daw Gyi Botanical Garden in Pyin Oo Lwin.



- In April a Korean motor cyclist stayed for one night. I watched him and his physical ease of movement, handling his large motorcycle with great envy!

- Early morning of 20 April saw the Lei Thar Gone family living out true Myanmar generosity “ahlu yay sat lat nae ma kwar” – literally meaning “your hands are always close to offering donations” by giving an AHLU (meaning a gift/donation) at the Sharin Yoe villages, just below the Guest House, by dishing out generous portions of Mohinga to all.



- It seems the loudspeakers are back... so much for the respect for law in this country! Short-lived relief it would seem...
- MaThu broke her left arm in April, luckily there were no guests and now the fracture has healed.
- We had a huge crop of mangos. They were all picked, stored in Room 4 and left to ripen. As they are always ripe outside the high season, we decided to make mango “coulis” – the word the French use, meaning sauce. This involved peeling, mixing, straining and adding a touch of sugar before freezing in zip lock bags to use in drinks and desserts later in the year. MaThu and her team were very diligent and processed 36kg of mangos this way!



This report was compiled and written by Therese, on behalf of Eric & Zoe.