



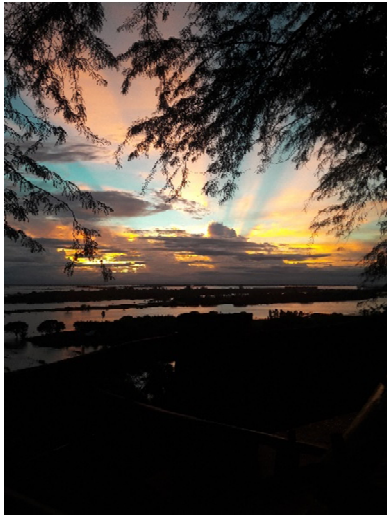
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14 October 2018 / Quarterly Report III / July - September 2018



Already, the year is three quarters gone...

It's been a time of heat, then rain and now we enjoy beautiful sunsets!

Contrary to the last report, in which I advised you about a surprising improvement of my health, this past quarter has again seen me dealing with multiple health complications. As a result, I spent some time in hospital in Mandalay. I would define the situation as erratic – a condition that has kept Zoe constantly in »alert« mode! (although she says I have been very brave about the challenges, crying all the time 😂😂😂) However I nevertheless had enough energy to preside over the assembly on some days and have been teaching English to the staff at the Guest House quite regularly.

Life at Light of Love has been going on quietly without any major events taking place and also with fewer volunteers, due to stricter regulations issued by the Ministry of Immigration in Magway Division.

Some school facts:

- Number of students currently enrolled: 181
- Number of paying students: 52
- Full-time teachers: 17
- Part-time teachers: 7
- Study guides, part-time: 4 (for special study class for 10th standard students as mentioned in QR II)
- The three girls that passed the high school exams will start college in October

Inspection:

- The school inspectors were back and checked our entire administrative system – they gave us positive feedback and announced that they would return in January 2019

New building:

- Construction is complete! The entire ground floor – 40 x 80 feet, is used for assembly, meetings and as a playground, above that there are five rooms in the building. Currently we are using two of the rooms for Grade 10 boarding students – one for boys and one for girls. The science lab will also move to one of the new rooms and the two others are for extra classrooms. The rooftop is where the solar panels are being mounted.



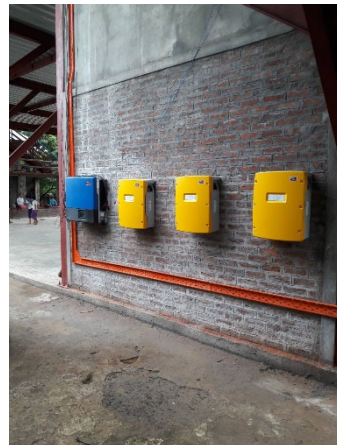
New building seen from the dispensary, terrace around the class rooms, a new room, ready for use!



One building, many uses: August birthdays celebration, morning assembly & recreation/sports

Solar installation:

- The significant solar project, largely funded by the RBF, Denmark (Responsible Business Fund) is progressing and at the time of writing, 70% of the work is done.



Events that make us sad:

- Mg Naing Aung Lin – a grade 2 student, died after being bitten by a rabid dog. Rabies is a vaccine-preventable viral disease which occurs in more than 150 countries, mainly in Asia and Africa. 40% of people bitten by suspect rabid animals are children under 15 years of age. It is tragic, that these avoidable deaths still occur!
- One of our cooks had an accident while carrying fire wood. She injured her back and her leg. We took her to a clinic in Magway and after a two-week period of convalescence she has returned to work.

Visitors:



- This man passed by, introduced himself and asked to be allowed to demonstrate paper craft! Even I was quite impressed and the children were definitely thrilled! Of course, he sold his instruction booklets for 1'000 Kyats each...but it will be nice for the children to learn
- Marie Christine, president of Enfants-de-Birmanie, the French association which supports LOL, visited us for a few days in August. She was accompanied by Stéphanie Feugère of DCC (La Délégation Catholique pour la Coopération) DCC is the international volunteer recruitment service of the Church in France. They engage volunteers for educational missions lasting three months to two years. Stéphanie is responsible for partner and volunteer relations in Asia. She wanted to personally visit the school so as to have first-hand information and therefore be in a better position to enlist two native English-speaking volunteers to teach English at LOL during the next school year. Marie Christine's facts, figures & feelings on page 5
- Belgian guests - Martine Diss and her family spent a few days at LOL. They organized some handcraft and painting activities with the students. Martine sent us a summary of her impressions in an illustrated report, which you will find at the end of this QR. We would like to thank Martine and her family for their active participation and personal engagement with the children.

Renovations

- This quarter we rebuilt Ma Su Mons home. This time we upgraded the construction by putting cement sheets instead of bamboo mats for walling. There will be no major maintenance for this house for many years to come!



Meanwhile at Lei Thar Gone Guest House...

The Guest House has again been very quiet for the past three months, although again not completely deserted. The hot/wet season is of course never our high season, but the main challenge is the general decline of tourists from Western countries due to the Rakhine Crisis.

For a deeper understanding of the issues, the following article, published in the Asia Times in May 2018 provides additional information.

<http://www.atimes.com/article/rakhine-crisis-takes-shine-off-myanmar-tourism/>

And the next article offers ideas for solutions.

<https://frontiermyanmar.net/en/rakhine-crisis-reinforces-tourism-industry-growing-pains>

Happily, the guests that did find their way to Yenangyaung were continuously enthusiastic about Lei Thar Gone as these quotes from reviews on TripAdvisor, AirBnb and Booking.com express:

- Great place to stay... We stayed at Lei Thar Gone for 3 nights and this place does not disappoint. The pool a lovely place to relax and the local village with market was great. Breakfast and dinner were always a treat!
- Lei Thar Gone guesthouse was the perfect place for us to relax and enjoy nature. We appreciated the beautiful garden and swimming pool and the sincere hospitality of the staff.
- I have to agree with the many fantastic reviews, this was a highlight of my trip to Myanmar. I only had one full day in Yenangyaung which I spent exploring the town by motorbike (which was arranged by the Guest House) and I have never seen so many smiling faces as I have in this town. Yangon, Mandalay, Bagan, and Inle Lake are all great, but full of tourists, if you want to see true Myanmar life I highly recommend coming here!



Plants growing in Eric's » nursery «....



MaThu, pleased with the desert of the day!

Facts, Figures & Feelings / © Marie - Christine Fievet-Bocquet

Dear all,

These are the new figures for the Academic school year 2018- 2019 which started on June 1st 2018 to end on February 28th 2019.



We have a total of 114 pupils in the Primary School:

Preschool: 23

Kindergarten: 24

Grade 1: 18

Grade 2: 24

Grade 3: 13

Grade 4: 12



52 pupils in the Middle School:

Grade 5: 13

Grade 6: 13

Grade 7: 16

Grade 8: 10

14 pupils in the High School:

Grade 9: 6

Grade 10: 8

Grand total of 180 students plus Khin Myat Thu*= 181

*the handicapped girl who has a different registration.



It was for me the discovery of this new building which is absolutely amazing. Moe Min Kyaw and the grade 10 students were very happy and proud, I must say, to show me their dormitories as they are now boarders at school to reinforce their study periods. They receive some extra tuition in the evenings, three times a week, sometimes more.

The solar panels which ought to be set on the roof top were not installed yet. That gave me the privilege of a unique view which I wanted to share with you.

The government is thinking of reintroducing Grades 11 and 12 within the coming two academic school years in order to reach the international standard. Students who pass their matriculation exam (end of G10 now and « A-levels » equivalent) would then be the same age as any student in the world, thus have the same expected maturity. In the case they stop school, they would also be more competitive to enter the job market. In the case they want to enter university, two extra years of education would raise their level of education to the same standard as the others worldwide.

To conclude, I must say I was also very impressed when the students recited their national anthem in Burmese and English on the Assembly day.

The team of teachers is very devoted and has almost not changed which also constitutes an element of social, affective and intellectual stability for the students.

Eric, Zoe and Eileen can be very proud of their achievements. Little by little, Light of Love High School has become a steady success.



A magnificent view at all times – one I never tire of!

Impressions / © Martine Diss

Last August, I visited Myanmar with my husband Philippe, my daughter Agathe, my sister Dominique, my friend Odile and her daughter Charlotte.

Thanks to Eric, we had an excellent journey throughout the country since he recommended us to travel with one of his relatives, James, who is a very nice and knowledgeable tour guide. Although it was the monsoon, we didn't suffer from the rain but had to adapt to the heat and humidity.



The highlight of our trip was definitely our stay in Yenangyaung. At Lei Thar Gone Guest House, we enjoyed the warm hospitality, the comfortable rooms, the beautiful view over the Irrawaddy river with the sounds of the village down the hill. During the day, you can see everybody at work, cleaning the pool, gardening, cooking ... but always welcoming you with a smile. At night, we discovered the talent of the cook and waiters who prepared very healthy and varied dishes; a very tasty combination of European and Asian fresh food! Since the internet was not working that well, we re-discovered the joy of reading, playing cards and usually went to bed early.



We spent five days in the Light of Love School where we received a very warm welcome from the children, teachers and all those who are working there, from the drivers to the gardener, the cooking team and the guardian. Our two girls, aged 15 and 16, mixed very easily with the children during their breaks. They were extremely impressed by the discipline in the school and during the classes! All the children look very motivated to learn and enjoy their days at school, which is not often the case in Europe!

We spent around one hour with each class to introduce ourselves and ask questions of each other. Philippe took group and individual pictures and since our return we have worked on a Yearbook that will give a nice idea of the life at school to all visitors and donors/sponsors.



We brought some handicraft and organized painting classes with the agreement of the teachers and the head mistress. Every child was invited to make a drawing with the purpose of selling these cards in Europe and to raise funds for new projects of Eric's choice. Both the imagination and talent to copy of the children were quite remarkable. It was particularly moving to see that all students from one class made beautiful cards for Eric's birthday!





Our daughters quickly made new friends who invited them to visit their home or meet their families and friends after school. These were very nice moments that they will remember for a long time!

My sister who is an English teacher in France could see the different methods of teaching English to students.



In the afternoon, Eric and Zoe also helped us to arrange visits of the surroundings on motorcycles. The excellent drivers took us around to different places where we created some kind of attraction. We enjoyed the colourful market and the temples that looked like in an Indiana Jones' movie.



We wish the very best to all those who are involved in this wonderful project and a very long life to Eric!

