



Annual Report 2024

Dear sponsors, donors and interested parties...

We start this annual report of our project with a summary of the current situation in Myanmar. Part of the text comes from an article that the Dutch journalist, writer and Myanmar expert Minka Nijhuis wrote in March 2024 for MO*. This is a non-profit media project that brings courageous, human and global stories.

We have supplemented our report with recent developments. It is anything but a happy story, but it must be told and shows that our help is needed more than ever.



Civil War or Popular Uprising?

Myanmar is a patchwork of ethnic minorities and has a history of conflict. But the armed struggle that has erupted since the military coup of February 2021 is anything but a civil war. It is a popular uprising! Old and new resistance groups are fighting - partly united - against a common enemy: the Myanmar army, which violently suppresses all protests.

Back in time

Myanmar suffered under a military dictatorship for almost fifty years. Periods of ceasefire and war alternated regularly. Until 2010, when political reforms began and Myanmar came under the leadership of a partly civilian government of ex-military personnel. After the elections of 2015, a democratically elected government took office, led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi.

However, the three most powerful ministries remained under the control of the military. Relations with minorities remained tense. Nevertheless, Myanmar experienced a period of fragile freedom until the coup in 2021.

The power of collaboration

The new civilian militias largely consist of members of the Burmese majority from Central Myanmar. They are trained by ethnic minorities who have been fighting for autonomy and freedom for a long time. This despite a complex and fraught past. With little outside support, the militias have become more professional and coordination has improved. For the first time in Myanmar's history, almost the entire population is in revolt at the same time and in such large numbers.

The junta has now lost control in an increasing part of the country. In December, an important victory was reported in the west of the country. The 270 km long border with Bangladesh is now completely under the control of the Arakan Army. The junta has a shortage of troops because it has to fight on too many fronts at the same time. That is why conscription was reintroduced in February 2024. But many young adults refuse to fight against their own people.

Humanitarian disaster

The United Nations estimates that there are 2.6 million displaced people in Myanmar, of whom 2.3 million have fled since the coup, with tens of thousands seeking safety in neighbouring countries.



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In the countryside, there is little aid, because the junta is blocking the goods. Supplies are arriving in small doses via alternative routes. Civilians are staying in makeshift shelters all over the region.



Fear of airstrikes prevents people from returning home. The military continues to sow death and destruction from the air with bombers, attack helicopters, artillery and drones. Villages, hospitals and schools are being bombed all over the country as punishment for supporting the uprising. China and Russia are the main suppliers of weapons. The price of resistance is high. Health care and education have collapsed and food prices have skyrocketed. The World Food Programme (WFP) reports that a third of the population needs humanitarian aid.

According to official figures, the junta has already killed 4,400 civilians since the coup, but the real number is many times higher. For decades, the junta has operated with total impunity. One silver lining is that in November the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Myanmar's military leader, Min Aung Hlaing, for crimes against humanity committed against Rohingya Muslims since 2017. But it remains to be seen whether he and his fellow generals will ever be brought to justice.

Federal government

Across the country, the resistance groups are trying to establish a new state. They are under the command of the Government of National Unity (NUG). This government was established by a group of deposed MPs and their supporters after Aung San Suu Kyi and her colleagues were detained by the military. The NUG consists of 17 ministries, which are spread across the country. Some operate from the states, others from neighbouring countries or from the West.

The new president, Duwa Lashi La, resides in a liberated area in the north of Myanmar.

The NUG is hardly known internationally. There are representatives in the West, but without official diplomatic status. The NUG receives modest advice and training from Western organizations and experts. The most important source of income is the sale of real estate, which the military appropriated.



A federal state will be difficult to achieve in practice. Older politicians from Aung San Suu Kyi's party consider themselves the most important leaders and show little willingness to cooperate and engage in democratic consultation. In the past, many young people and ethnic minorities have lost confidence in Aung San Suu Kyi's party for this reason.

'Winning is the easiest part of the battle. The hardest time comes after that', says an activist in Minka Nijhuis' article. He fears division, a lack of democratic institutions and a lack of credible leadership. 'We have to prepare for this now. We are already late.'

Spiral of poverty

The military coup and popular uprising have plunged the country into a spiral of poverty. Factories and shops were forced to close, hotels and restaurants had no guests, rural people were no longer allowed to trade their agricultural products in the city, and so on. Many of the day laborers in Myanmar have had little income in the past four years. Theft is currently the order of the day. Support from international aid organizations is under pressure. The military controls the trade routes, the money flows, the energy supply and the internet. The population has been left to its fate. In short: Forgotten people in a forgotten country!



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Our position

Despite everything, we as a foundation continue to focus on our two orphanages in Minethouk and try to do that as well as possible. As a foundation, we have no government interference and we keep ourselves aloof from politics. In and around the nearby city of Nyaung Shwe, it is sometimes restless. More and more war refugees from the Kayan are coming there.

Bright spots

Fortunately, there is not only misery in Myanmar, but we also see bright spots. We see enormous resilience, survival instinct and willingness to help among the population. In contrast to many regions in Myanmar, it is relatively quiet around Inle Lake in the middle of the country. This also applies to the village of Minethouk, where our two orphanages are located. The government school there was open all year round in 2024, in contrast to many other government schools in Myanmar. This means that our 95 orphans were able to fully enjoy education. There were even opportunities for short excursions. More about that later. The children and the staff did not sit still in 2024.

Composition of the group

In our orphanages now live a total of 95 orphans, half-orphans and children from very poor families. That is 35 more than at the end of 2023. The popular uprising and the associated poverty have caused many more children to no longer be able to live at home. Sometimes parents have also been killed.



- Of the 52 girls in the girls' home, 20 are orphans and 25 are half-orphans. The other 7 have both parents, but their parents cannot care for them.
- Of the 43 boys in the boys' home, 19 are orphans and 14 are half-orphans. The other 10 have both parents, but their parents cannot care for them.



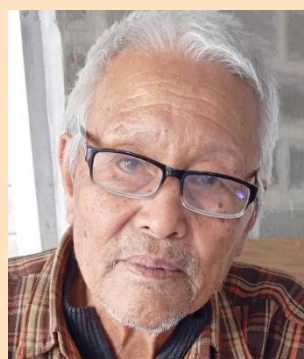
The girl group



The boys group

The staff

As a foundation, you can only function well if you can rely on the staff on site. We are fortunate that this collaboration is excellent. The girls and boys in the two orphanages form a warm and close community. Everything runs smoothly. There is discipline, but there is also time for fun. The children all have their tasks and help out well. The staff has consisted of the following people for years:



U Tet Tun
Orphanage father
and head of both houses



Daw Mya Sein
Cook for both houses



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U Bran Saing

Staff member boys' house
Tasks: computer teacher,
supervision and health



Daw Nilar Aye

Staff member girls' house
Tasks: math teacher,
supervision, health and garden



Project volunteers

Unfortunately, we have not been able to welcome any project volunteers since 2020. Due to the corona crisis and military coup, volunteers no longer come to Myanmar, because it is too dangerous. That is a pity, because they organized fun activities and developed new initiatives. For the children in the orphanages, their arrival was always a joyful moment. Hopefully this will be possible again in the future.

The girls' house

To give you an idea of the girls' house and the surroundings, we have added some images to this annual image. In the photo below you can see the girls' house in the distance.



The girls' house also has a kitchen, where they cook for the girls and boys every day. The older girls take turns helping our cook Daw Mya Sein. It's a fun time.

Rice, meat, fish and oil are bought at the local market, but many vegetables and fruits come from their own vegetable garden. There is plenty of space around the houses to grow these. Because the houses are on the shore of Inle Lake, the soil is fertile. The girls enjoy helping Daw Nilar Aye with the gardening. Their tasks are planting, weeding and harvesting.



The girls and boys all eat together in the evening in the large dining room. This is located next to the girls' house. Before the meal there is a moment of silence and the children give thanks for what is due to them. There are both Buddhist and Christian children living in the orphanages.



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The study room in the boys' house

The boys also help out in the vegetable garden. Their tasks are digging, weeding and watering the plants.



The boys' house

Tutoring

The girls and boys receive daily tutoring in subjects including English, reading, mathematics and computer use. There is a tutoring and computer room, where instruction can be given.



The boys' house is within walking distance of the girls' house. In terms of construction, both houses are very similar. The building has a number of large rooms where the boys can study, use the computer, relax and watch television. All children have their own storage case with clothing and personal belongings in the dormitories.

When the children go to the government school, they wear a school uniform. This is customary in all schools in Myanmar and ensures that everyone is equal and looks equally well-groomed. In the orphanages, the children wear casual clothes.

What is special in Myanmar is that the girls often speak slightly better English and are slightly less shy than the boys.



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Leisure activities and excursions

There is also time for leisure activities. The girls and boys enjoy football, swimming, gymnastics, singing, drawing, crafting, playing computer games and watching television. Of course, there is also attention for the children's birthdays.



If possible, the children also go on excursions. In 2024, they visited a famous temple in the area and were able to go to a playground.

As in 2023, the children also participated in an educational youth project on nature and the environment in 2024.



Vocational trainings

Normally, a number of older girls and boys join vocational trainings or work placement. Due to the unstable situation in the country, this was not possible in 2024.

Studying at university

Four girls have been attending university in the city of Taunggyi for several years and have also passed their exams in 2024. Since October 2024, one girl and two boys have been attending the medical university, the technical university and the part-time university respectively.



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Maintenance of the buildings

As a foundation, we believe it is important that both orphanages and the outbuildings remain in good condition. That is why we invest in minor and major maintenance. Because major maintenance was carried out in 2022, no significant minor maintenance had to be carried out in 2024. Two storage cabinets and a refrigerator were purchased.

Future plans

The orphanage father sends us his plans for the future and his dreams every year. Some things are feasible and others are unfortunately not possible.

Next year he wants to offer vocational training to the young people again. He would also like to build another oven to cook on. In addition, a few ceilings need to be replaced here and there and the wooden balconies need maintenance. These things are feasible.

He would also like to build extra living and sleeping space and hire two new staff members. Unfortunately, that is not realistic. As a foundation, we can still support the orphanages for a number of years, but we really have to limit the costs, because the income has not been in proportion to the expenditure for several years.

Board & Synergy

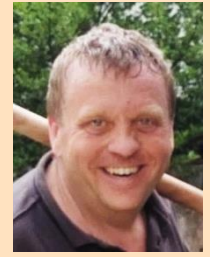
Early 2020 you were informed of the change of board at the Care for Children foundation. The new board members also support another foundation that is active in Myanmar, called the World Child Care foundation. Both foundations operate alongside each other. The current board consists of the following persons:



Lucas Harms
President



Nico Schoenmakers
Secretary



Camiel v.d. Heiden
Treasurer

The World Child Care Foundation has been active in the large city of Mandalay in Myanmar for 16 years. The foundation supports the Phaung Daw Oo High School. This is a huge Buddhist monastery school, where normally 8,500 children from poor families receive free education, from nursery school to secondary school. The foundation supervises two residential groups with a total of 500 girls and boys on the school grounds and has set up an English & Life Skills Program for young people who have finished secondary school.



For the young people in the orphanages in Minethouk, the collaboration offers future prospects. If the threat of war decreases, the World Child Care foundation can annually allow a number of young people to participate in the aforementioned English & Life Skills Program in Mandalay. The young people then learn to speak English well and participate in training in the areas of self-confidence, self-knowledge, critical thinking, debating, communication, citizenship and environmental awareness.

In education, healthcare, retail and ICT, there is a great demand for talented young people who speak English well. With the certificates in hand, the chance of a better job and an independent existence is much greater. For the time being, it is not possible to allow young people from Minethouk to study in Mandalay. That is why the World Child Care foundation has refunded the contribution received for this.



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Financial situation in 2024

It is becoming increasingly difficult to transfer money to Myanmar without the intervention of the military. The military is not happy that schools and orphanages receive donations from foreign NGOs. They are afraid that this will support the rebel army uprising. Fortunately, in 2024 we were able to transfer money to the foreign bank account of the PDO High School in Mandalay. The school then transferred it for us to the account of the orphanages of Care for Children.

Income

- Received from the regular sponsors € 3.135
- Received individual donations € 1.440
- Local income from tourists is zero € 0,00
- From Social Welfare Department € 3.500
- Interest on our bank accounts € 497
- **Total regular income in 2024** € **8.752**
- Return via World Child Care Foundation (exchange of students not possible) € 10.000
- Total income in 2024 € 18.752

Expenditure

- Total local costs for two orphanages (salaries, necessities, education) € 37.500
- Overhead costs € 675
- **Total expenditure in 2024** € **38.175**

Difference

- The difference between **regular income** and **expenditure** in 2024 amounted to € **29.423**. This amount was taken from the foundation's own capital.



Our working method

The Care for Children foundation has plenty of work to do in the coming years. We can do this thanks to the support of our regular sponsors on the one hand and our loyal donors on the other. It is good to know that we spend 98% of your contribution locally. Because our foundation is run by enthusiastic volunteers, we have no salary costs, no travel costs and low overhead costs. In this way, we try to keep it as transparent as possible for you. Every euro donated is no less than 98 cents on location. By spending the collected sponsorship money locally, we not only help the children, but also stimulate local entrepreneurs. Because everything in Myanmar is cheap by Western standards, we purchase everything locally. The local staff works with local companies that are not connected to the government. Thanks in advance for your support and interest in 2025.

Onze overtuiging

'Anne, the world is not beautiful, but you can make it a little more beautiful', sang Herman van Veen. And that applies to each of us. We cannot change the world, but on a small scale we can mean a lot to each other. And no, we cannot help everyone, but everyone can help someone.

That is our belief, our wish and our good intention for the new year. We wish you and all our other donors, sponsors and interested parties a healthy, inspiring and peaceful 2025!

Care for Children

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SUPPORT OUR PROJECT!

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

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to the Care for Children foundation in Rosmalen

