



A message from the Founders



We're pleased to introduce our Report for the year July 2022 – June 2023, although this was a very mixed time for us.

The Junta's voiding of the February 2021 election results, leading to the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the formation of the National Unity Government, has had deep and continuing effects. We have seen armed rebellion against the military in several regions.

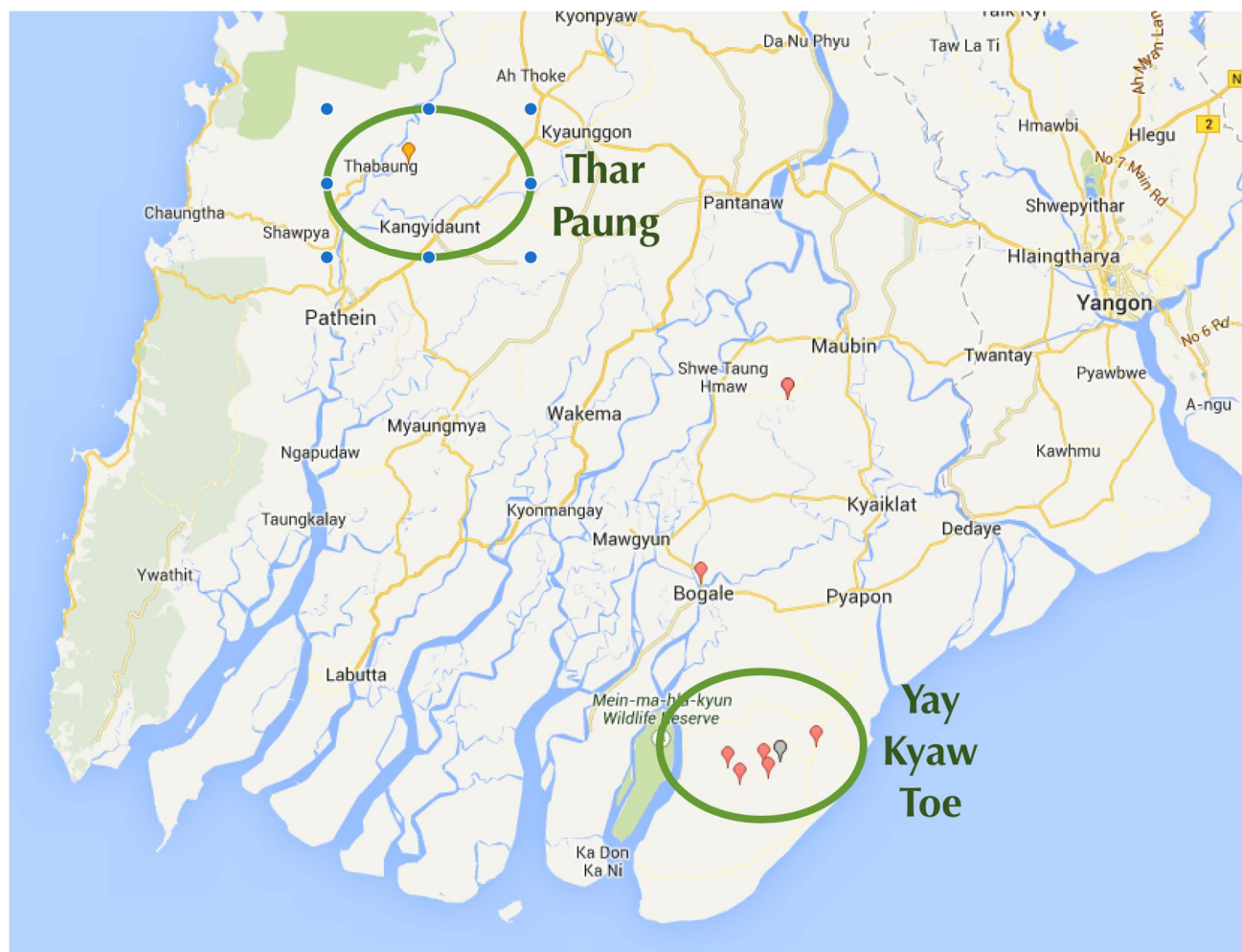
The relative isolation of our High School has shielded it from the worst of the unrest.

May Tha-Hla

Jon Wilkinson

Helping The Burmese Delta

We were formed in the aftermath of the catastrophic Cyclone Nargis, which devastated the Delta of the Irrawaddy River in 2008, and our strategy has developed since that time. We began by distributing emergency aid, but soon realised that the areas in which we were working, suffered from enduring poverty and great deprivation.



As a small charity, we needed to specialise, and we decided to focus geographically on an especially remote district (the Yay Kyaw Toe Village Tract). This was an area with many small villages, no roads, no healthcare, its schools largely destroyed by the storm, severe shortages of clean water, and very few livelihood options other than paddy farming. In 2014, we opened another area in the North of the Delta in Thar Paung township, again extremely poor, but also subject to severe flooding.

Education

Our core activity remains **Education**. We started by rebuilding Primary Schools destroyed by Nargis, and in 2013 built and opened an almost unique Social High School which for the first time gave poor local children

the chance to complete their school education and qualify for University and Training Colleges. We also run scholarship programmes both for the academically best performers, and for the especially needy.

When we build a primary school, and the village supplies 3 acres of land, and labour to assist our carpenters, it can apply to the local authority to be adopted. All of our schools have been successful, and then receive at least one qualified teacher. The building becomes the property of the school.

Health

Even now, there are no doctors or hospitals within several hours' travel, and the villagers are too poor to afford the boat fares. The only possible solution was to train suitable villagers as health workers. We have adapted training solutions widely used in the developing world, and have carried out general paramedic programmes, and training of Traditional Birth Attendants. These have been given by a combination of local doctors and nurses, and midwives from the UK.

As mentioned above, many health problems arise from the lack of clean water, and great ignorance about hygiene. We therefore instituted a programme to drill tube wells for the villages, and where needed, storage for rain water from the monsoon season.

Objectives

Our formal objectives are:

"To relieve poverty and sickness, to preserve and protect health, and to advance education, among the people of Myanmar who are in need."

Impact

Total people helped since 2008: Over 70,000

Education

We have built 35 primary and middle schools, and 1 high school.

We estimate that we have educated about 6900 children in total, with over 400 completing high school. The results from the very testing matriculation exam have been extraordinary, given the background poverty of these students. In our best year we achieved a pass rate of 75%, against a national average of 35%

Health

We have trained 49 Community Health Workers, and 104 Traditional Birth Attendants. Since clean water is a requirement for good health, we have drilled wells in 26 villages. Facial clefts are sadly quite common in children, and we have obtained help for 7 of them.

Livelihoods

Under this heading we include such things as the provision of rice seeds for 115 small farmers whose stocks were destroyed by flooding, but an attempt to encourage villagers to breed pigs did not succeed, despite it being potentially greatly increasing their incomes.

Emergency Aid

Apart from the initial aid we distributed after the Cyclone, we also faced an analogous situation in the Tharpaung district in both 2015 and 2016, where severe flooding left people with little or no food or water. Our best estimate is that in total we have provided aid for about 45000 people.

Review of the year 2022 - 2023

The effects of the military coup, and the outrage it evoked, have continued. There has been war between the military and ethnic armies in several regions of the country, and extensive civil disobedience. The economy is in tatters, and poverty has risen sharply.

Against this rather depressing background, HTBD have sought to remain steadfast friends and supporters to our communities in the Delta region in whichever ways we are able.

Education

Traditionally, the system had been based on rote learning, and High School education finished at age 16. The matriculation exam was notoriously tough, with national pass rates only 30% or so. There had for some time been a plan to move towards a Western style approach, based on teaching the use of research, critical thinking, and creativity.

This would also involve two additional years of schooling, with a leaving age of 18, consistent with the age of legal employment. The original plan was to start to train teachers and children in the new approach at kindergarden level, thus gradually moving up through the age groups in a steady and manageable fashion. However, the military government opted to change the entire system at once, leading to a severe shortage of trained teachers, especially as the new syllabus included nine subjects.

During the 2022 – 23 year, we had 52 students in total, 28 of whom were studying the old syllabus, and remarkably all of them passed. The adjacent state school had insufficient teachers, leading the new syllabus students to seek education in larger towns.

Given that the new syllabus could not be taught successfully, it was decided to change our approach, and use the premises for Vocational Training. Beginning in June 2023, we started a programme of Computer/IT training, to better equip the students to seek jobs in the city.

We successfully renovated one of our old timber primary schools, which had become damaged by monsoon storms.

Healthcare training

Since the start of the coup on 1st February 2021, with travel both tightly restricted and dangerous, HTBD have deemed it too hazardous to continue our work training traditional birth attendants, but we hope to be able to resume this when things are calmer.

Our Team

This consists of:

U Phyo Hlaing Bwa, Country Director

U Kyaw Zeya, Education Officer

U Aung Chan Myae Hlaing, Health Officer

There are no paid staff in the UK.

Financial Review

In the 2022 - 2023 year we received total income of £15,126 (2021 – 22 £35,192), and our expenditure was £35,336 (2021 – 22 £3,096). At the end of the 2022 -2023 year our cash funds totalled £67,524.

Reserves Policy

We retain an operational reserve of unrestricted funds in order to mitigate risks defined in the Risk Register, and the amount of this is reviewed annually. Our target for this is currently £40,000.

There are other restricted funds which are not part of the policy, but which refer to those dedicated to specific projects (for instance building a school or drilling wells). These are carried forward until the completion of the project.

The Year Ahead

The current challenges have decimated the economy in Myanmar, and the need of Myanmar people in the Delta region for our support is far greater than ever.

Our current thinking is that we should move to offering vocational training, which will help the young people obtain decent jobs, and we hope to be able to resume Traditional Birth Attendant training.

We are sponsoring a very bright girl to attend teacher training college.

Key Policies

Risk management

There are a multitude of potential risks in operating in remote areas in a country like Myanmar, and we believe the best protection against these is to work with reliable partners who are regularly supervised. We phase funding against agreed detailed budgets, and always inspect the work. All timber is purchased from official sources. Wherever possible payments are made by direct bank transfer. In 2016 – 17 we developed a formal risk register. Each risk is reviewed annually by the Board, and the last review took place in 2022.

Fundraising

We aim to do all our fundraising in a respectful manner. We never share contact details with third parties, and communicate very largely electronically, and with limited frequency. We do not contact people from cold lists. We implemented the changes required by GDPR.

Our funds have been raised through various sources.

We have built a database of individuals, many existing personal and business contacts of the founders, and progressively many more donors and friends who have come into contact through the website, events, and word-of-mouth.

In addition to these many individual supporters, the following are current or past Corporate, Trust, Governmental, and other organisational supporters.

Acumen	Laura Case Trust
Amazon Papyrus	Meetings Industry UK
Australian Embassy, Yangon	Northwick Trust
Bonamy Finch	Oldfield Partners
Building Schools for Burma	Omidyar Network
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi Trust	Panoramic Journeys
Educational Empowerment	Ravenscourt Park Prep School
Incite	St Ives
Just Trust	The Sausage Man
Kantar	Western Union Foundation

We have raised funds through the holding of Burmese Food, Crafts, and Entertainment Fairs in London and Oxford.

We have enjoyed the proceeds of sponsored activities, such as marathons, triathlons, and climbing the Three Peaks and Kilimanjaro.

We have participated in The Big Give's matched funding challenge in most years from 2009, and also received a grant from The Funding Network.

Governance and Management

Helping The Burmese Delta is constituted as a Trust, with the deed dated 24th June 2008. It is registered with the Charity Commission (no. 1124774). The first Trustees were the two founders of the charity, Jonathan Wilkinson and May Tha-Hla, and Roger Banks, a retired senior businessman with extensive experience of Asia. Roger Banks resigned from the Board on December 28th, 2018.

At the start of the 2022 – 23 year, the Board comprised:

Sally Macdonald, Yew Tree House, 1, Silver Street, Stevington, Bedfordshire, MK43 7QN

Jeremy Ogden, Three Gables, Kings Saltern Road, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 3QH

May Tha-Hla, 7, Harvard Road, London W4 4EA

Nyein Torley, 21 Hobart Crescent, Willen Park, Milton Keynes, MK15 9HH

Jon Wilkinson, 7, Harvard Road, London W4 4EA

Sally Macdonald resigned from the Board on December 9th, 2022.

The Trustees meet at least three times a year and are in regular phone/email communication in between. In the past, the founders visited Myanmar to inspect the projects and plan new ones, at least twice a year, but usually in practice made three or four trips. The current tragic conditions in Myanmar make it impossible to visit, and project control is under our local team. We are in contact with them at least twice a week, and a local senior lawyer, under our instructions, controls funds in Myanmar. Our objective is to be the most efficient and effective charity possible. The founders handle the day-to-day management of the charity. They work closely with a number of volunteers in the UK who assist particularly with fundraising, PR, and design.

Registration in Myanmar

We have officially registered a local charity in Myanmar, under the name Pyin Nyar Tha Hla Social Welfare Organisation. Pyin Nyar means 'education'. This can receive donations from foreign organisations for projects. There is a local Board which manages its affairs under our guidance. Further details of PNTH are available on request.

Thanks

The Trustees would like to thank the many people who have given their time and efforts to help in our work. We would particularly mention:

- The staff of HTBD Myanmar/Pyin Nyar Tha Hla for so successfully managing our projects
- Daw Tin Ohnmar Tun for acting as Chair of Pyin Nyar Tha Hla
- www.34sp.com for hosting the website gratis
- Ma Aye Mon Thu, Ko Khin Maung Htay, and others for their help with fundraising

Declaration

The Trustees have approved this Report and Accounts on April 10th 2024.

Jon Wilkinson

Chair of the Trustees

**Independent examiner's report
to the trustees of
Helping The Burmese Delta**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 30th June 2023 which are set out on pages 11 to 12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Christy Lau FCCA CTA DChA
Slade & Cooper Limited, Chartered Certified Accountants
Beehive Mill, Jersey Street
Ancoats Manchester, M4 6JG

Date 22/04/2024

Helping the Burmese Delta
Receipts and Payments Accounts
for the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Receipts		
Donations		
Donations - UK Individuals and Corporate	13,457	31,743
Donations - Overseas Corporate	-	2,700
Donations - Overseas Other	32	-
Restricted income (Project Upstream)	720	-
Income tax repayments	648	742
Investment interest	269	7
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total receipts	15,126	35,192
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Payments		
	2023	2022
Direct		
Education	5,000	3,000
Myanmar Salaries & Costs	28,714	-
Restricted expenditure (Project Upstream)	720	-
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	34,434	3,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Support		
Insurance Trustees Liability	600	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	600	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Finance		
Bank Fees	302	96
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	302	96
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total payments	35,336	3,096
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Net receipts / (payments) for the year	(20,210)	32,096
Bank and cash balances at start of year	87,734	55,638
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Bank and cash balances at end of year	67,524	87,734
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Helping the Burmese Delta
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
for the year ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Bank and cash balances		67,524	87,734
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Investment assets			
Manchester Building Society (Restricted fund)		1,918	1,880
One Savings Bank (Restricted fund)		2,824	2,835
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		4,742	4,715
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Notes

- a) The investment assets were given to the charity so that the interest can be used to fund an annual scholarship for children from the delta region to attend the Ye Kyaw Toe high school. The income from them is restricted for this use. However, during the period of closure due to COVID and the coup, the income has, with agreement with the donor, been used to benefit the school, its staff and pupils by whatever means has been possible in these extraordinary times.
- b) The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. As a lower-income charity under section 133 of the 2011 Act, the trustees have elected to prepare the charity's financial statements using the Receipts & Payments basis.

Approved by the trustees on April 10th 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

May Tha-Hla (Trustee)