

## Helping The Burmese Delta Annual Report 2023 - 24



## A message from the Founders



We're pleased to introduce our Report for the year July 2023 – June 2024.

The unrest in the country has deepened into civil war, with the junta losing control in much of the country, and due to the numbers of soldiers deserting, conscription has been introduced. The economy is in a very poor state, and poverty has deepened.

Despite this difficult background, our team has implemented an impressive range of vocational training projects, which we describe in this report.

Handwritten signature of May Tha-Hla in black ink.

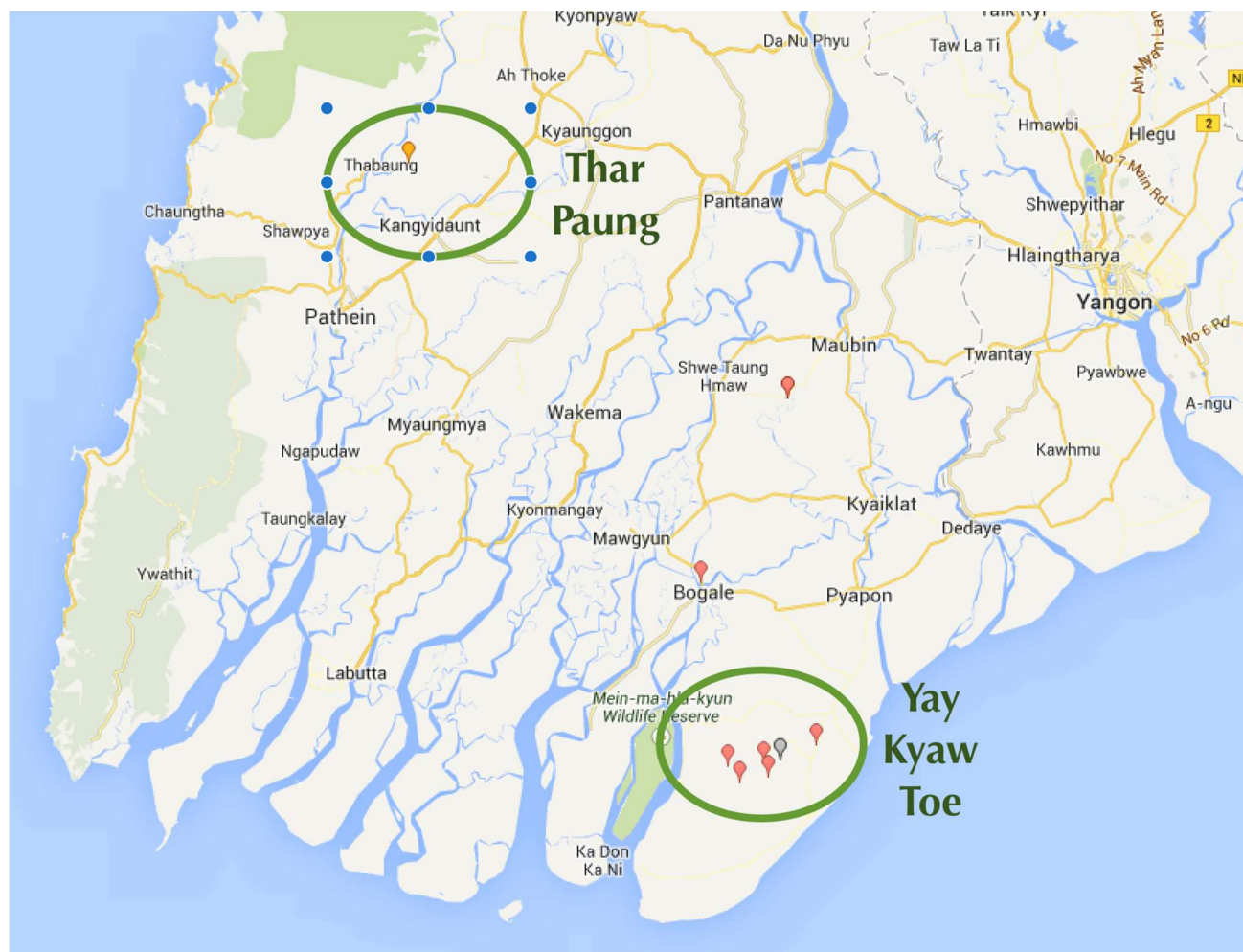
May Tha-Hla

Handwritten signature of Jon Wilkinson in black ink.

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.

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## **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."

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## **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.

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## **Review of the year 2023 - 2024**

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. Fortunately, the area where we work is sufficiently remote to have avoided conflict.

## **Education**

As indicated in last year's report, we have switched from running a high school, to a programme of vocational training. The local PTA has funded 7 teachers to provide high school classes, and we have hosted both these teachers, and all boarding students from outlying villages, in our hostels, at no charge.

The vocational training programme has included:

### **Computer/IT Training**

This continues to be welcomed by trainees, not just for the computer skills, but also for advice on CV and interview preparation. Graduates are either in jobs, or at university. We had 70 students this year.

### **Mushroom Farming Training for valuable extra income**

This took place in April, and provided two days of lectures on the principles and techniques of mushroom cultivation, followed by three days of practical training in smaller groups. There were 12 trainees in total.

### **Traditional Birth Attendant Training**

This was a refresher for the group trained last year, and at the same time we also trained a fresh group of TBA's. This will ensure that the majority of villages in our district have at least one trained birth attendant, and this should help to lower infant mortality rates. We also ran a free clinic for local people.



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## Our Team

This consists of:

U Phyo Hlaing Bwa, Country Director

U Aung Chan Myae Hlaing, Health Officer

There are no paid staff in the UK.

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## Financial Review

In the 2023 - 2024 year we received total income of £25,377 (2022 – 23 £15,126), and our expenditure was £20,439 (2022 – 23 £35,336). At the end of the 2023 -2024 year our cash funds totalled £72,462.

### 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.

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## 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 continue to offer vocational training, which will help the young people obtain decent jobs, and we hope to be able to resume Traditional Birth Attendant training.

We hope that the parents will continue to support High School education, and we will provide hostel accommodation.

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

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## 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 2024.

### 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

During the 2023 – 24 year, the Board comprised:

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

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](http://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 27/ 04/ 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Wilkinson', with a stylized, cursive script.

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 2024 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

**Helping the Burmese Delta**  
**Receipts and Payments Accounts**  
**for the year ended 30 June 2024**

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Receipts</b>		
Donations		
Donations - UK Individuals and Corporate	23,541	13,457
Donations - Overseas Corporate and Other	1,156	32
Restricted income (Project Upstream)	-	720
Income tax repayments	371	648
Investment interest	309	269
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total receipts</b>	25,377	15,126
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Payments</b>		
	2024	2023
<b>Direct</b>		
Education	1,500	5,000
Myanmar Salaries & Costs	18,000	28,714
Restricted expenditure (Project Upstream)	-	720
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	19,500	34,434
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Support</b>		
Insurance Trustees Liability	643	600
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	643	600
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Finance</b>		
Bank Fees	296	302
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	296	302
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total payments</b>	20,439	35,336
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net receipts / (payments) for the year</b>	4,938	(20,210)
Bank and cash balances at start of year	67,524	87,734
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<b>Bank and cash balances at end of year</b>	72,462	67,524
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**Helping the Burmese Delta  
Statement of Assets and Liabilities  
for the year ended 30 June 2024**

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Bank and cash balances</b>		72,462	67,524
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Other monetary assets</b>			
Monies held in local currency in Burma		5,057	4,086
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Investment assets</b>			
Manchester Building Society (Restricted fund)		1,935	1,918
One Savings Bank (Restricted fund)		3,000	2,824
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		4,935	4,742
		<hr/>	<hr/>

**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 27/ 04/ 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



May Tha-Hla (Trustee)