



STUDER TRUST

Respect the Spirit of Helping

2021/2022

ANNUAL REPORT



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



As the recently elected Chairman of the Studer Trust I would like to extend my personal best wishes - and those of the Board and our hard-working team in Mandalay - to all our friends and supporters. The last few years have been challenging in so many ways, but particularly for the Studer Trust and other NGOs working in Myanmar. In addition to conducting our operations within the constraints imposed by Covid and the security situation, our team in Mandalay has had to work without the direction of an Executive Director for much of the last two years. They are to be commended for their dedication, and the imaginative way they have surmounted the many difficulties they have had to confront. This Annual Report effectively covers our programme of work over the last two years. Although 2020 was a barren year for construction due to draconian Covid regulations, we started work again in 2021 and have steadily increased the scope of work despite the ever-threatening security

situation. You will read of positive news in this report, of problems overcome and of opportunities that are still being created - for students and teachers alike - and you will read of the manner in which our staff have managed to deliver their services despite the multiple obstacles placed in their path.

I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor Cho Cho Lwin - who due to commitments in the United States has asked to step down as Chairlady. Happily, she will remain as a Trustee (Operations) and continue to offer her invaluable advice from her time both as Country Director and Chairlady. Jocelyn Chu is also stepping down due to changing personal commitments and we thank Jocelyn for her sage advice and support with fundraising. We have been fortunate to sign up an excellent replacement in John Leigh, a Hong Kong based lawyer who also has experience as a Trustee of the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation, in which role he has visited various Studer Trust projects in the past.

The Studer Trust remain totally focussed on continuing to realise Peter Gautschi's vision of providing the best possible opportunities in education for the children in Myanmar. I hope you will enjoy reading this report and continue to support our endeavours in these challenging times.

With my best wishes,

Christopher Lavender
Chairman

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE!

Myanmar has wrestled with many challenges over the last three years. Covid-19 had a major impact on the way people lived and worked, and in 2020 the government imposed a nationwide ban on gatherings of five or more people and stay-at-home orders to control the spread of virus. As a result, our construction projects were limited in 2020. On 1st February 2021, the Myanmar military staged a coup against the civilian government. The military takeover destroyed the hopes of democratic progress in the country and sparked nationwide protests, which led later to regional armed conflicts.

While the security situation, and to a lesser extent Covid, restricted our ability to implement our construction programme in 2020, we all know that a good education is essential to the future of any country and its people, and school infrastructure is an essential first step in meeting this requirement. Although restrictions and armed conflicts continue to occur nationwide, in 2021/2022 the team managed to reach out to communities across the country and discussed applications for school constructions, follow-up visits and support. By using different communication channels, the construction team was able to implement the following projects located in nine Regions and States:

1. Construction of nine school buildings
2. Major maintenance work on nine further school buildings (walls, ceilings, roofs, floors, doors and windows)
3. Minor maintenance on six school buildings (painting etc.)
4. School playground improvements at seven schools
5. Equipping of two school computer centres
6. Sanitation improvements at many schools
7. Conducting three Summer School programmes
8. Drinking water improvements at four schools
9. Construction and distribution of 12 outdoor benches



Renovated Pauk Par School, Inle Lake



Renovated Bon Pyan School, Mandalay



Kyaung Ywa School drinking water, Bago



Aung Mingalar School Building, Taninthary



Namiyupi School playground, Nagaland



Sakar Inn School outdoor bench, Mandalay

Looking back it is surprising that we managed to achieve so much while armed conflicts continued in many areas. Our personal safety was of paramount concern, but we also had to deal with travel restrictions, regular lack of internet and mobile connection, a shortage of local building materials and a fluctuating exchange rate.

One community leader said, *"It is amazing that the Studer Trust could build a school for our remote village during this difficult time."*

A student noted: *"We have a great school playground but no other school around us has it. I am so happy."*

Tai Lynn
Construction Manager

Map of Myanmar



School Building in Nagaland

In identifying schools that requested construction projects we visited areas in the Shan and Chin States, and the Naga Autonomous Region of Sagaing in the latter part of 2021 to 2022 - before the conflict intensified. However, as a result of the remoteness of these areas, the delivery of construction materials was delayed due to roadblocks and check points. The construction crew was invariably required to turn around at check points and look for an alternate route to reach the building sites. This resulted in serious delays to the building schedule, and hardships were acute due to the pandemic, widespread violence, poor communication systems, poor banking systems, travel restrictions and other adverse conditions.

Perhaps one of the most satisfying projects was Khar Lel School, one of three school buildings constructed in Nagaland, the other two being in Ga Hone and Lon Khin villages. Nagaland is situated in the remote northwest region and self-administrative area of Myanmar. It is one of the least visited locations in Asia and it also has one of the lowest educational levels in Myanmar. Home to the Naga people, tribes of which also inhabit northeast India, Nagaland has a varied landscape of rugged hills and lush jungle. For centuries, the Nagas engaged in headhunting, a practice now outlawed.



Village scenes in Nagaland



Tai Lynn with Khar Lel kindergarten students

Education levels in Nagaland still lag far behind those in most other parts of the country. Although about nine percent of the national budget was allocated to the education sector before the coup, many difficulties still remain; particularly a shortage of classrooms and teachers.

Khar Lel Middle School is located in Lahe Township, Nagaland. It has a population of 952 with a total of 131 households. The community's main source of income is farming. They mainly grow rice and various vegetables, such as chillies and beans. The school was founded in 1985 by the Ministry of Education in order to provide local children with access to basic education. The school provides education for 228 students from Kindergarten (5+) to Grade 7 (12+) with seven teachers.



Traditional school buildings in Nagaland

Many students in Myanmar's rural communities drop out after Grade 4 or Grade 7 because there is no higher grade and a lack of classrooms in their community. For this reason, Studer Trust tries to promote rural middle schools across the country.

In order to provide a suitable and safe learning environment, the Studer Trust realized that all three village schools needed well-built and weatherproof additional classrooms. With the intention of rebuilding the schools in the summer holidays (March to May 2022) the construction team put in place all the necessary arrangements in November 2021. As the schools are located 1,145 km from Mandalay (a 1 hour flight, plus an additional 4 hour drive from Khamti town) the team were aware of the huge challenges inherent in transporting construction materials and construction crews. Construction materials, except local products such as wood, bricks, sand and gravel, were procured from Yangon and Mandalay, and the only transportation method for such commodities was by barge navigating the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers.



Studer Trust's typical new school building

Tai Lynn
Construction Manager

Ground-breaking

Ground-breaking is an initial step for a new school building and very much involves the assistance of the community. After the ground-breaking process, the community follow the lines indicated by digging a trench in the soil about 2 feet wide by 2.5 feet deep for the foundations.



The community helps with digging the foundations.

According to our plan, the ground-breaking for the three schools in Nagaland should have been conducted in February or March 2022. Unfortunately, it was delayed as the materials were being transported from Mandalay to Khamti by barges on the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers. The barges need to navigate downstream on the Irrawaddy River and upstream on the Chindwin River, a journey that usually takes about one month to reach Khamti. The Chindwin River flows hard and fast during the rainy season, but slow and shallow during the cold months. The barges were filled with materials from Mandalay, Monywa and Homalin respectively. Often other boats came alongside the barges as they navigated the Chindwin River causing inevitable delays.



Loading and unloading construction materials to and from the barges

The security situation caused additional problems, with either the Myanmar security forces or rebel armed groups issuing instructions, screening the local population, watching movements, and imposing taxes on boats carrying goods and/or suspected of carrying equipment to the opposing side. The cost of materials to be transported to the upper Chindwin River area thus increased, but of greater concern was that the barges had taken five months to transport the materials to Khamti.

The construction process was very difficult in Nagaland due to the mountainous terrain and the poor condition of the roads - which become almost impassable when the heavy rains arrive. So, construction needed to be completed before the rains arrived. We were unsure of the condition of the cement bags that had been transported on the river for five months, so as soon as the barge docked the head mason and field coordinator flew up and checked it out. Fortunately, the materials were not damaged. The next hurdle to surmount was the shortage of trucks in the remote hills of Nagaland to deliver the construction materials to the construction sites - but with local support the situation was resolved, and we acquired the use of two trucks. Villagers from Khar Lel and the other villages contributed labour and a good deal more in support of the construction of the new school buildings. The Village Head, School Committee and villagers responded positively whenever the construction team needed assistance, such as in collecting gravel, offloading construction materials from the trucks, excavation works and filling works.

The two trucks made 10 return trips up into the mountains to the three site locations: Khar Lel, Ga Hone and Lon Khin. All three schools are situated near Lahe, the principal town, with different road conditions and altitudes. The team journeyed through mountains and forests the whole night and eventually reached Ga Hone village the next morning before proceeding to Khar Lel!



Community unloading construction materials from the truck to the school

We carried out the ground-breaking ceremony at all three villages with some students, parents and the monks. The villagers were happy and helped us by unloading the materials from the truck, and then showed us the gravel they had collected as their contribution to the school building.

Despite their tiredness from unloading the materials their happiness, gratitude and commitment was clear to see and there was no doubt that we would receive all the cooperation we needed to construct the school.

The outcome of this collective effort in Khar Lel, Ga Hone and Lon Khin was an 80ft x 30ft concrete school building comprising four furnished classrooms, four sanitation facilities and a concrete water storage tank. One villager in Khar Lel noted, *"The school building structure looks great and the strongest that I have ever seen"*, and a student added, *"We are going to study in this new building, cool!"*

The Studer Trust is justifiably happy to have provided three school buildings in one of the remotest and neediest parts of the country.

Thank you to our generous donors!



Tai Lynn
Le Le Thein
Naing Min Oo (Kathar)

Construction Manager
Logistics Coordinator
Field Coordinator

Teacher Training - It was tough, but we did it!

The coup and Covid created as many problems for the teacher training programme as for the construction team. With gatherings of more than five people restricted, we were unable to use the facilities at the Teacher Training Centre (TTC). As a result, we decided to introduce online training and ran the following courses:

- A Summer Online Course
- Four alumni on-line courses
- English teachers online training
- Two lesson plan training sessions
- One online cohort training

The Summer Online Workshop (SOW) in 2020 was the first online course for TTC. We normally conduct the SOW in April, inviting outside trainers for the alumni. However, because of Covid we decided to deliver an online SOW over six weeks, with six topics for which we enrolled 116 trainee teachers.

There were many challenges in conducting these online workshops. The biggest was a technical issue. We had difficulty choosing the best social platform as teachers do not have good quality phones and stable internet connections. In response TTC decided to create video lessons to allow teachers to learn whenever they had access to the internet. They completed the assignments by watching the video lessons that TTC shared with them. Creating and editing the lesson videos took considerable time as we lacked the technical knowledge – but our video making and editing skills improved over time and the result was well worth the effort.

Another problem was access to a reliable electricity supply. Even in city areas, there were frequent power shortages. The solution was to provide the trainees with a power bank which they could switch to when there was no electricity.

We have been very pleased that feedback from the trainees indicates that the online courses were very helpful and supported their teaching careers.

Hnin Hnin Htwe
TTC Programme Manager

The Wai Yin Association's 40th Anniversary

The Wai Yin Association has been one of the Studer Trust's longest and most generous donors. On 10th December 2022, they had their own special 40th anniversary TV show in Hong Kong. We were honoured to be invited to participate in this spectacular event.



STUDER TRUST
Respect the Spirit of Giving

Dear Ellen,
Thank you for your generous donations over the last 10 years. Your donation does not only go to the building of 10 schools, the courses for training teachers, the computer centers, student dormitories and school playgrounds in remote villages of the country but more importantly, it means so much to the future of the people in Myanmar.
Thank you once again.

Sincerely,
Studer Trust Myanmar team

Roland Jossi, Studer Trust's Accounting Manager, presenting a 'Thank You' letter from our Myanmar team.

English Teacher Training

Despite the many problems already mentioned we also managed to keep up our English training course. We had 25 participants who attended the course and had to deal with the same challenges for normal teacher training online. On some days, we practiced English conversation over the phone, with the participants practicing vocabulary by sending messages. The course lasted longer due to these logistic challenges, but we finally completed the training and met the course objectives.

“Problems became opportunities”.

Zin Thu Bo Bo
Training Specialist

Views from our Teacher Evaluators

Our two Teacher Evaluators are Ms Sandar Win and Ms Zin Maw Aye. They visit schools where the graduates of the TTC are teaching to evaluate and mentor the teachers in their continuing careers. At present with the difficulties in travelling further afield, they are supporting 63 alumni teachers in 10 schools around Mandalay to assist them in drawing up lesson plans.

Challenges in training teachers

Both Evaluators observed that teachers who have graduated from the TTC do not always apply the knowledge gained from the TTC as well as they might. This is partly understandable as most lack experience and it is only a 10-week course. The Evaluators decided to focus on the following areas that need attention:

- Many teachers have difficulty in drafting lesson plans, and this is an area we will be paying even more attention to in our future follow-up visits.
- Detailed preparation is essential, whether you are a teacher trainee or a teacher evaluator. All teachers must plan in advance to fully understand the subject matter.
- Having plenty of general knowledge is also useful in anticipating questions that could be raised by students.
- The use of teaching aids and applying creative and innovative methods to teaching is important as it helps to keep the interest level of the students.
- Most important of all is time management.

Sandar Win and Zin Maw Aye
Teacher Evaluators

Shwe Ku Computer Centre

Soe Lin Myat teaches basic computer skills to our teacher trainees at the Shwegu Computer Centre where he works. Shwegu is located in a Monastic school about 1.5 hours from Mandalay. In the early days of Covid, Soe Lin was able to offer computer classes three times a day, however from the second week of August 2020 the course was closed for two months due to township specific lockdowns.

Although lockdown restrictions were lifted after two months, movement restrictions were still in place, which made it very difficult for many people to go about their daily lives. Then the coup brought political instability as a result of which some participants could not attend the course regularly. There were serious power shortages in Shwegu so in order to continue providing computer classes the generator was used instead – until the price of diesel increased exponentially with the limited supply. Other means of communication were also very limited - including the internet which was infrequently 'down'. Despite these difficulties, many trainees wanted to continue attending computer classes and they donated money to buy diesel for the generator. As a result, since December 2020 we have been using the generator twice a day for computer training.

Executive Director - Plans for 2023 and beyond

As the interim Executive Director my first reflection is of how much of a privilege it is to be working with such a small, but reliable team.

You will have read of the challenges in the reports above, but rather than dwell on this I would like to give you a bit of an overview of what we hope to realistically achieve this year and our plans for 2024.

Educational Priorities

In consideration of the limitations and restrictions imposed by the security situation, and the likelihood that these will not change for the better within the next few years, we have had to reassess our priorities. While we believe our core activities - the construction of schools / school buildings and the training of teachers - remain the most effective method of improving the educational opportunities for children in Myanmar, we will take the following action to optimise the impact of our work:

Construction

The construction programme will be scaled down in the coming year and we will have to adopt a 'watch and see' approach to new constructions. We will try and select 'target areas' where the team can work without the threat of harassment and interference. This may mean working in less remote areas, which has been our policy over the last two years, but then savings will be made in transportation and other logistic expenses. We will be reviewing the school buildings and playgrounds already constructed and assess the need for extensions/improvements.

Teacher Training

We will concentrate on the recruitment of teachers in order to retain them after graduation. We will also direct our activities to benefit children of wider ethnic origin. The problems in Myanmar are largely ethnic and we should recognise the needs of these communities.

Probable Construction Sites for 2023

It was good to welcome Christopher (our new Chairman) in January 2022 when he made a field visit to meet the team. It was a very useful trip for both Christopher and the team, and I am happy to say that we managed to accomplish a great deal!



Chairman's visit to the Teacher Training Center (TTC) Mandalay



Chairman's visit to the Win Chan Monastic School, Mandalay

We also visited Sin Ywa Taw Monastic (Middle) School and the Win Chan Monastic (Middle) School both located in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay. These two schools are probable construction sites for this year - and both within a sufficiently close radius of Mandalay to be safe and fairly easy to construct. It is likely that the land for the Win Chan Monastic School will be donated by a villager and that both the schools will be on the construction programme for the 2023.

We visited Aung Myay Oo Monastic School with the Teacher Training Team. Aung Myay Oo Monastic School in Sagaing (an area with many monasteries) had 3,600 students - Primary and High School with a predominance of female students. The deputy Abbot had actually worked for the Studer Trust for five years as the 'Follow Up/Field Manager' before our current Field Coordinator. We met with several graduates of the TTC and asked them about their experiences and thoughts. Most teachers who attend the TTC have no other educational experience since they left school at Grade 10. They teach the government curriculum in their schools, but TTC teaches them about the methodology of instruction using a 'child focused' approach. The teachers we met appeared to be bright and thoughtful - but there is considerable scope for introducing more 'informal education' into our 10-week courses, life skills, community issues, art, music and handicrafts.



Christopher greeting the Abbot of Aung Myay Oo School



Christopher meeting with the students at Aung Myay Oo School



Christopher's visit to Aung Myay Oo School

Community Model School PILOT Project

We will be discussing using the Win Chan Monastic School construction project as a 'Community Model School PILOT Project' embracing construction, hygiene and sanitation, garbage recycling (including the provision of an incinerator), life skills, art, music and scholarships. This would involve both the construction and teacher training teams. We will focus on training the teachers, but also involving the monks and the community in adopting this more holistic approach.

The TTC currently funds two model schools in the Nay Pyi Taw area. This is mainly because it was not possible to run teacher training at the TTC in 2021 and 2022. These projects involve the Teacher Training Team visiting these schools on a regular basis promoting the relationship between the Abbot and teachers as well as improving teaching methods. Now that the TTC has re-opened, we will be delivering one teacher training course in September and then increasing up to three courses in 2024.

The Model School programme will therefore slowly come to an end this year as we put more emphasis into the 'Community Model School PILOT Project' in 2024.

Jayzubar! (Thank you)

Khaing Tun
Executive Director Myanmar

Financials in our Annual Report

Donations and Investments

Get involved

(All numbers in US\$ 1,000)

Year	Donations	Investments
2005	259	258
2006	104	106
2007	297	143
2008	317	285
2009	402	368
2010	153	230
2011	347	203
2012	351	372
2013	361	215
2014	325	362
2015	279	226
2016	349	268
2017	355	394
2018	221	317
2019	436	288
2020	262	258
2021	255	217
2022	22	257
Total	5,096	4,765
Investment by Country		
Myanmar	3,540	74%
China	1,124	24%
Philippines	57	1%
Others	44	1%
Total	4,765	100%
Nature of Investments		
Schools	2,588	54%
Education	958	20%
Maintenance	419	9%
Scholarships	229	5%
Water	188	4%
Rescue	143	3%
Medical	67	1%
Walkways	44	1%
Vocational	53	1%
Aged Homes	27	1%
Others	49	1%
Total	4,765	100%

Sponsor a Child

Middle school: 1 student for 4 years	US\$ 360
High school: 1 student for 2 years	US\$ 240
University: 1 student for 4 years	US\$ 800

Sponsor a School

A new school building in Myanmar costs around US\$ 50,000 which includes financing the follow-up programme for 4 years. Donations for all or part of the total are welcome. A commemorative plaque is displayed at the school for sole donors.

Sponsor a Classroom

Most classrooms in Myanmar have limited access to everyday school supplies and resources. A donation of US\$ 250 will provide 1 classroom with sustainable school supplies, such as student-sized whiteboards, encyclopaedias, teaching learning and aids, books and various other supplies that can be used for multiple years.

Donations

Beneficiary: Studer Trust

Hong Kong local bank transfer:

HSBC

Bank code: 004

US Dollar Account: 741-333579-838

HK Dollar Account: 741-333579-838

FPS donations@studertrust.org

Overseas Bank Transfer:

Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited

No.1 Queen's Road, Central, Hong Kong

SWIFT Code: HSBCHKHCHK

US Dollar Account: 741-333579-838

HK Dollar Account: 741-333579-838

Donations in Switzerland

Beneficiary: Studer Trust Switzerland

Luzerner Kantonalbank AG

Pilatusstrasse 12, Postfach, CH-6002 Luzern

IBAN: CH08 0077 8210 5918 0200 1

BIC/ SWIFT Code: LUKBCH2260A

Currency: CHF – Swiss Francs

By cheque:

Studer Trust

Unit 909, Tower 1, Silvercord

30 Canton Road, Tsim Sha Tsui

Kowloon, Hong Kong

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Kindly scan our QR-Code to visit our website
www.studertrust.org

