



Child's Dream Association

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Dedicated to empowering children,
youth and communities in the
Mekong Sub-Region

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Mid-year report

Project concerned

Karen State (Kayin State) Education Assistance Group (KSEAG)

This programme is about the provision of stationary for schools, which includes the purchase and delivery of school supplies (student learning materials and teaching materials) to Kayin State schools in Myanmar.

Implemented and funded by

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Executive Summary

Child's Dream has been supporting KSEAG for the past nine years. This report covers the 2016-17 academic cycle and the activities for the first semester of 2016 (January – June). During this semester the necessary supplies were determined, purchased and delivered to the schools.

KSEAG is able to run this programme every year, supporting schools in Kayin State as well as some part of Mon State, East Bago Division and Tanatharyi Division with a supply chain coming from both Thailand and Myanmar. As planned, we tried to reduce our orders in Thailand and increase those in Myanmar. For this year, we ordered 48.95% of the goods from Myanmar and 51.05% from Thailand.

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1. Overview

The result of the 2015 democratic election marked a historic milestone in the country's political and economic transition that began in 2011. The National League for Democracy (NLD) won the election by a landslide, leading to the first civilian parliament and president in decades. President Htin Kyaw was sworn into office and works in very close partnership with Aung San Suu Kyi, who currently serves as Minister of Foreign Affairs. We are very proud that the youngest member of the national parliament is a Child's Dream University Scholarship Alumni.



The political and economic reform process including decentralization provides opportunities for both NGOs and INGOs to work with the government and local CBOs (Community Based Organisations) to improve the educational standards in the country and to address beneficiaries needs more effectively. Furthermore, since the transition in 2011, transportation and telecommunication systems in Myanmar have dramatically improved making the work for NGOs like us finally easier.

Despite this positive development and significant political progress, many areas in Myanmar continue to suffer after decades of repression and are still structurally underfunded. The major development mostly takes place in the urban areas while the rural areas - especially in the ethnic states – are still heavily neglected. Moreover, children living in the black zones still have difficulties accessing proper educational services. Even today, it is hard for NGOs and INGOs to reach these areas because of the tensions and the restricted local accessibility of the organizations.

In terms of basic education, the government and other educational non-profit organizations (NGOs) have been trying to meet the needs of the students. However, not every student in the country gets the necessary support. We cooperate with KSEAG in Kayin State to support the students and schools which do not receive adequate teaching materials, thereby filling an essential educational gap. Our ultimate goal is to support the students until the government supplies the necessary teaching materials. We hope for more positive change in the near future as the newly elected government recognizes the value in properly funding the educational sector in these areas. As said before, KSEAG is and should only be a temporary intervention until the Myanmar government fully takes over.

2. Operational Implementation

The educational cycle for schools in Kayin State runs roughly from June through March/April of the following year. Due to the difficult circumstances relating to security in conflict zones and accessibility in rural areas, materials are delivered in bulk only once per year. Materials are then used throughout the year by the schools, being monitored first by the school's leader or the school committee, then by the educational authority of the area.

The process begins with a request from KSEAG in December for the upcoming year. KSEAG bases the requests on the population of students and teachers from the previous academic year's statistics, allowing for a natural increase in population as the actual student enrolment numbers cannot be known until the start of the academic year, which is too late to place a stationary order. Depending on the level of students, each student will be allocated a certain number of supplies as different amounts are needed at different levels. For example, young students use less notebooks because they do a smaller volume of writing. Current materials that students receive are: notebooks, pens, pencils, pen box, and erasers. Teachers receive: chalk, A4-sized paper, carbon paper, pens, staples, correction liquid and scissors.

Child's Dream checks the request, confirms the supplies and begins obtaining quotations from stationary companies. Quotations are checked by Child's Dream first, then by KSEAG secondly to ensure the correct supplies and quantities are ordered. The company with the most competitive quotation will be awarded the order. To further leverage our support as well as that of other smaller donors, Child's Dream simultaneously negotiates the orders for sports and health equipment as well to secure lower prices and further increase the impact of the funding for the education system.

At this point, Child's Dream pays companies in Thailand and Myanmar to produce the stationary order and also to deliver these supplies to major distribution sites. Two payments to stationary companies are made to reduce risk: only 50% is paid upon ordering and the second 50% is paid upon confirmation of correct and timely delivery. The first payment takes place in January and the second in February.

KSEAG checks the quality and quantity of materials at each of the major distribution sites and upon successful confirmation to Child's Dream, we release the final 50% stationary payment to the stationery companies. Further spot checks are performed by our team.

To ensure that the materials purchased arrive at the schools, Child's Dream also funds the transportation of materials from the major distribution sites to the final destination at the schools in Kayin State directly to KSEAG. Transportation usually involves a series of boats, motorcycles, busses, and/or ox carts, and usually a series of porters to personally carry the materials through the jungle to remote schools. Child's Dream also pays for this delivery in two instalments of 50% each: the first is when the materials are delivered by the company to the border and confirmed in good order, the second occurs when the final receipts of delivery are signed and returned to us from the school leaders. The first payment is in February, while the second is end of September or beginning of October.

This year, KSEAG used a central coordination site for the distribution process, which enabled them to better coordinate the process. This also facilitated more direct communication with stakeholders ensuring key messages and logistics were communicated directly rather than being passed on between groups. As a result of this centralised distribution site, the distribution ran much more smoothly this year. We are very happy and pleased with this new approach.

3. Project Performance

Effectiveness:

The following objectives have been or are expected to be achieved by this programme; actual school beneficiary numbers are only reported later in the second half of 2016, numbers shown here are targets and orders:

- A total of 1,514 schools in Myanmar are currently being supplied with stationary. The KSEAG schools numbers have increased from 1,396 schools in the year 2015 year to 1,514 schools for 2016. KSEAG reported that they were able to access more schools because the ceasefire process is progressing, which makes it easier to travel to any area in Kayin State.
- In these schools the direct beneficiaries are students and teachers. There are currently 166,066 students (76,337 in lower primary, 58,995 in upper primary, 24,096 in middle school, and 6,638 in high school) and 10,525 teachers. A total number of 90,292 students received their stationary from Thailand, while 75,774 students received deliveries via the Myanmar supply chain.
- For this academic year, KSEAG supported 10,525 teachers. Teachers also get support from communities for rations and some cash for their daily livelihood. They also started providing teaching uniforms this year.
- KSEAG was also able to build one high school in Mone Ts, Kler Lwee Htoo District in Kayin State with the cooperation of local leaders and a financial donor.
- The education system becomes more stable. Due to providing supplies not usually seen in these communities, students become more interested in education, and the profile of the school in the community increases. This in turn attracts more teachers who stay in their jobs for longer. Also more parents understand the importance of education and support their children with their studies.
- By increasing the educational retention rate of students and teachers in schools, children become increasingly more literate and more numerate, more aware of their situation and, therefore, are better able to assess their situation and create solutions as they mature.

- Benefits of education are spread to more children, across income brackets and across urban-rural and ethnic divides as support is offered across all groups where it is not already present. This eventually empowers people to interact on the same level with others to shape their future as they wish in a more equitable society.
- This group is multi-ethnic and focuses on Kayin State because capacity in local organisations exists and delivery mechanisms are in place for many years already.

Efficiency:

- KSEAG knows the communities in Kayin State in great depth and is, therefore, able to organise the extensive system of thousands of porters and others involved in the transportation and distribution of supplies by themselves.
- Child's Dream has more leverage and experience in negotiating large orders and is better suited to secure larger discounts of supplies and getting the best value for money.
- From Child's Dream, payments are made directly to those doing the actual work and not through multiple levels of administration: to the company for producing stationary and to KSEAG for organising transportation in Myanmar. This results in a process that is simple, efficient and transparent.
- Monitoring is done at the same time as delivery activities take place, which minimises expenses. In Myanmar, communities are eager to receive supplies for schools and the communities themselves monitor the delivery and usage of the materials. Stationary companies can deliver supplies to the distribution sites more easily because of improved road conditions. The communities are also using motorbikes because more motorbikes are available today.
- The ordering process is straightforward and requires little time to complete. Most of the ordering and negotiating is completed in a period of two to three weeks, requiring few human resources from our organisation.

Sustainability:

- The programme should be viewed largely as emergency relief to support schools in conflict areas (or schools with restricted accessibility due to conflict), and not as a long-term or indefinite solution to education. Despite the ongoing conflict in Kayin State, measures are in place to encourage sustainability as much as possible and promote empowerment for a transition to a fully peaceful situation in the future.
- Creating systems is necessary to carry out a programme on such a large scale. There are currently systems in place, which involve all levels of local authorities and school officials to ensure that materials are distributed as needs dictate. These systems for assessment, allocation and distribution will be able to be carried out regardless of the donors as the communities themselves implement them.
- Primary supporters include: KRCEE/KED, KTWG, Partners Relief and Development, as well as a large system of porters, and district and village leaders, all of whom provide assistance and/or some funding.
- The Myanmar government provides more and more support to education, which is a good start towards sustainable education policies. Child's Dream as a donor can step back and reduce support slowly year by year but at the same time encourage/pressure KED (Karen Education Department) and KSEAG to cooperate with the Myanmar Ministry of Education.

4. Project Chronology

The following list gives a brief overview of the stationary delivery process:

- A. The academic year runs from June to March/April of the following year.

- B. In December, a request for stationary support is made to us by KSEAG.
- C. December-January we review and clarify the request and begin obtaining quotations from stationary companies.
- D. January-February: Quotations are checked and confirmed by Child's Dream and KSEAG.
- E. End January-early February: the order is placed, and the first payment of 70% of the order is paid for the Myanmar order, and for the Thai order the first payment is 50%.
- F. February: the stationary is delivered to the main distribution sites; the quality and quantity of the order is confirmed by KSEAG and then Child's Dream releases the second 30% respectively 50% payment to the stationery companies and the first 50% payment to KSEAG for local delivery fees.
- G. February-May: materials are taken across the border and delivered to schools; school statistics used for the following year's order are collected along with signed receipts from schools stating the stationary has been received satisfactorily and in right order and quality.
- H. June: materials are already delivered to the schools before the start of the academic year.
- I. June-July: all the statistics are compiled, relevant questions are clarified by KSEAG and communities and compiled into a report for Child's Dream.
- J. July-August: upon receiving the school receipts of stationary, the second and final payment of 50% of delivery fees for KSEAG will be released.

5. Budget vs. Expenditure

Final payments yet to be made are: second 50% porter fees for Thailand and Myanmar as well as the monitoring cost bookings. We expect these payments to be made in September/October 2016.

The final financial reconciliation will only be provided in the final report due at the end of February 2017.

The Myanmar as well as the Thailand part of the programme have a combined 2016 budget of USD 470,071.26 of which we have used USD 439,795.61 as of today. We are confident that we will be able to complete the programme within budget for this year.

6. Project Photos



Students from remote areas
in Kayin State



Moon High School Opening Ceremony



KSEAG team stationary
distribution process



KSEAG team data collecting in action



KSEAG database team in action



KSEAG staff in one of the schools



Map of a receiving school and village area



Training in action



Locations of distribution sites

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for your support and trust. Together we were able to make a significant impact on many children's lives. Your support for this programme is essential to us in order to keep children interested in education and teachers at schools.

We truly hope to be able to rely on your support also going forward. Many thanks !

Chiang Mai, 15th August 2016

Child's Dream Association

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