

Painting by Seng Htoi, Hpun Lum Yang Camp



airavati
Summary Annual Report
01 April 2018 – 31 March 2019

Airavati

was founded in 2014 to ensure that the Ayeyarwady River flows freely for all time. This entails preserving the environment, culture, and way of life of the diverse communities that flourish along the Ayeyarwady's path – from its watershed in Kachin State to its delta in the Ayeyarwady Region. Project activities aim at developing better livelihood options, while also providing a platform for peace building.

Vision

Airavati is a Sanskrit word for the elephant river adopted by the great Ayeyarwady River that flows more than 2,000 kilometers from north to south through Myanmar. The elephant's ears help control the temperature of its body. Elephants are herbivorous and can be found in different habitats including savannahs, forests, deserts and marshes. They prefer to stay near water. They are considered to be keystone species due to their impact on their environments. Airavati's vision seeks to ensure that the elephant's habitats continue to exist along the Ayeyarwady River.

Mission

To cooperate with local communities based on their culture, customs and resources and shared values when implementing environmental conservation and community development across the country.

Uniqueness

To focus on the 20 million people living in the Ayeyarwady River basin by providing humanitarian, environmental and community mobilising. Airavati values inclusion, embraces diversity, equality and transparency, and promotes rich cultures that define our identities across the different ethnic nationals that compose the mosaic of the Union of Myanmar.



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Legal Status as a National NGO
Registration Number. 1/Local/0003,
Ministry of Home Affairs 25 November 2015
Tax exemption status:
Ministry of Finance, 16 January 2015

Thanks

Airavati thanks all local partners, donors and supporters together empowering local ownership of programme components.

INTRODUCTION

Airavati continues to support project communities to meet their self-prioritised needs. This fiscal year focused on supporting Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Kachin State and Communities at Myitsone disrupted by the proposed dam. Airavati activates its mission with the following cross cutting themes

- Empowering local people as key change agents
- Mobilizing communities for self-reliant actions
- Fostering effective partnerships with CSOs and other organisations with similar visions
- Strengthening organisational operation systems and procedures for both Airavati and partners

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Project Components	Donor	Amount Received
1 Community Resilience in the Confluence	YUNDI	MMK 32,290,000
2 Children's Art Project in IDP Camps	Catholic Central Agency for Development (KZE)	EUR 252,000
	Misereor	EUR 30,000
3 Peace Building	Misereor	EUR 10,000
	Euro Burma Office	MMK 15,000,000
4 Vision 2020	Misereor	MMK 7,464,676
	Norwegian Burma Committee	NOK 100,000
Total funds received		USD 190,105



Sand-mining is damaging the Ayerwaddy watershed

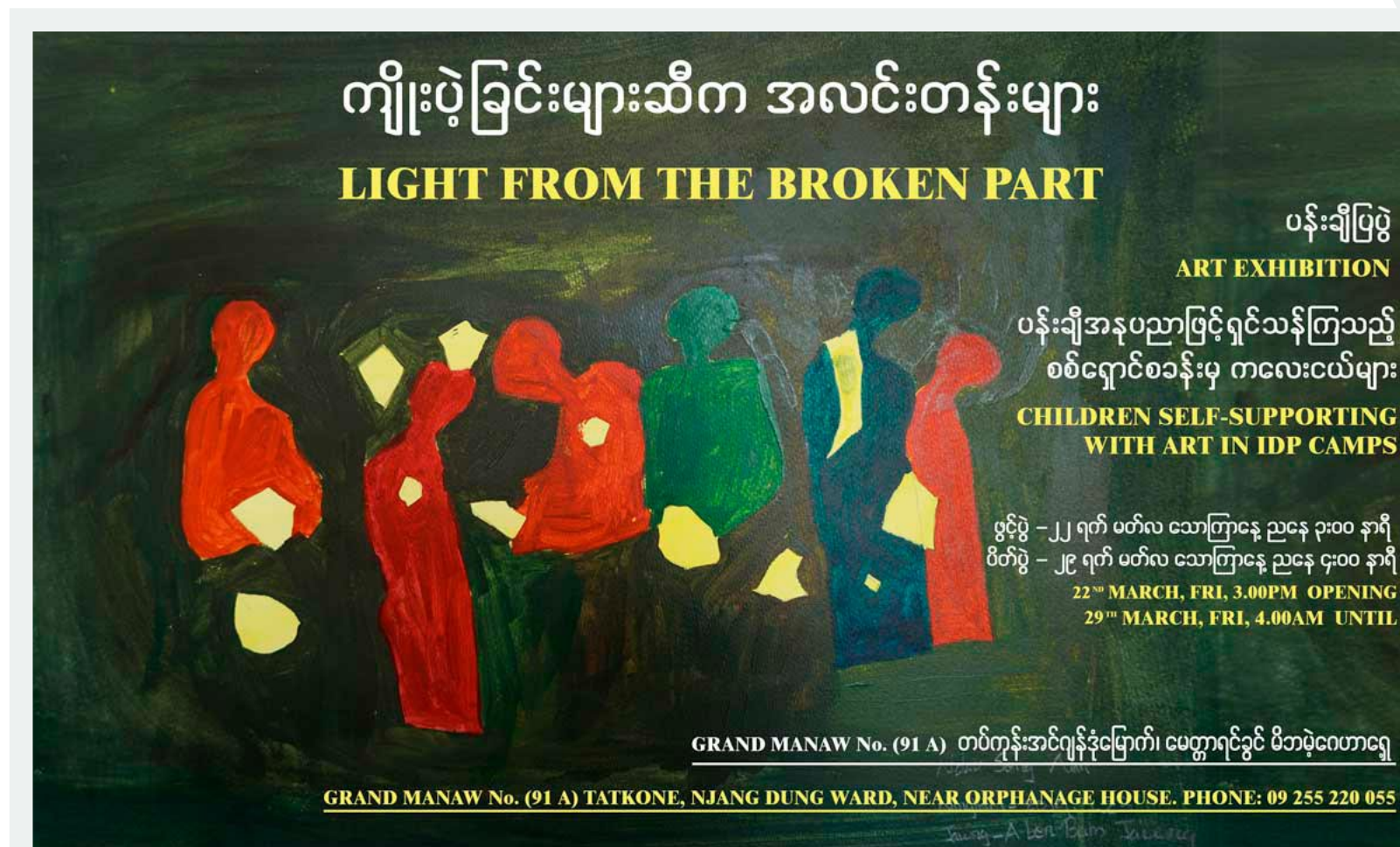


KEY SUCCESSES

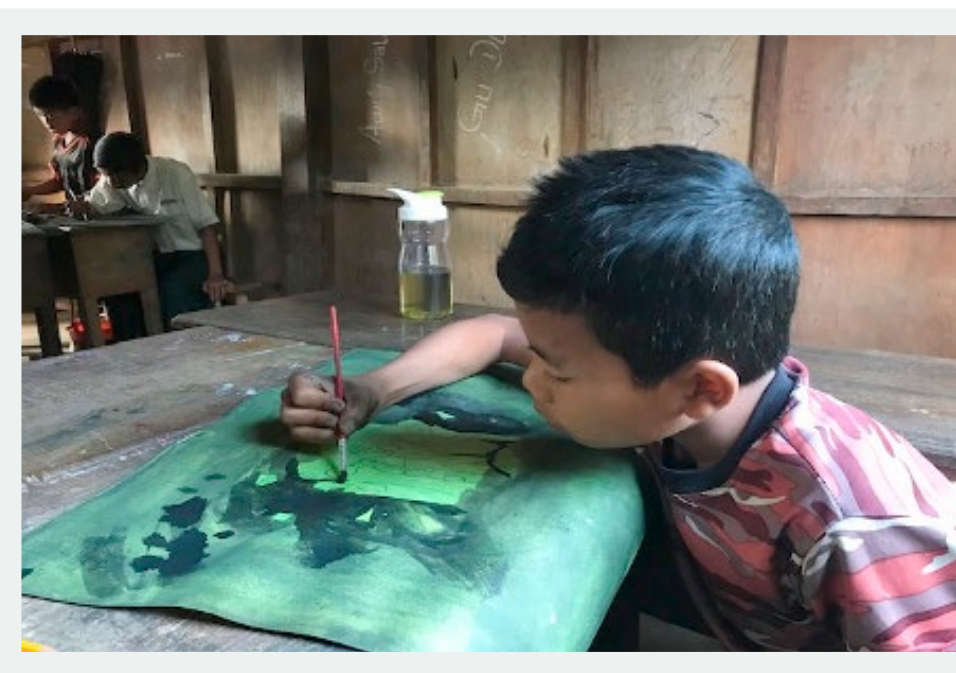
Community Resilience Component—has supported four ongoing largely locally funded ECCD schools in Tanghphe, Mazup, Lahpe and Dawng Pan benefiting 374 children (191M/182F). There are now vibrant Micro Credit Union in target villages in Myitsone area supporting livelihood activities. Inspiring riverside stories have been collected in the Airavati headwaters in Kachin State illustrating cultural, tradition and heritage and practices of village communities who are living and relying on natural resources.



Communities rely on the Ayerwaddy River for food



Children's Art Project Component—has supported 3200 children in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Kachin state to acknowledge and work with inner feelings about displacement. Its unique approach supports the psychosocial process of healing for displaced children to find expression through creative arts. The project has reached 3200 children in IDP camps and trained 63 IDP camp teachers. Exhibitions of the Children's work have been held in Myitkyina and Yangon. It is a unique, inspiring, viable cause.



*Photos from the Children's Art Project
"Finding Light from the Broken Part"*

Peace Fund—Myanmar has many on-going complex and inter-related issues including armed conflict, displacement, poverty, migration, ecological damage and trafficking in drugs. This component has strengthened CSOs and encouraged dialog among community, religious and political leadership. It has also raised awareness in local communities how lives and ecosystems are damaged by displacement, land grabbing, forced relocation, dam constructions, mining businesses, environmental pollution, and deforestation. Airavati has established ongoing relationships with social workers, activists, businesswomen and religious leaders from Kachin, Shan, Rakhine and Central Myanmar. Further activities have mobilised leaders and increased their capacity to contribute to national Peace Forums.

Vision 2020—has introduced a participatory, community led, collaborative approach to politics and the peace process. The “Vision of Kachin Society Conference” was attended by around 400 Kachin nationals from diverse backgrounds. As a result, four Kachin parties agreed to merge into one with the remaining three as alliance parties. Through facilitation and advocacy with local communities, woman groups and multi-ethnic community leaders the communities realized the uniqueness of local cultural, ecological system, environmental process and social system that impacts their life. Channels for grassroot-voices to be heard has been achieved through CSO representation in political forums.



Top: Proposed Chinese Infrastructure Project Myitsone Dam, Kachin State
Bottom: Relocated villagers protest against the Myitsone Dam

KEY CHALLENGES

Poor Governance—Governance is highly centralized, current policies do not serve the local communities and policy makers are under the influence of China that control many large infrastructure projects. Human rights abuses are increasing and there are many people still in IDP camps in Kachin State. There is no rule of law, lack of accountability and government administrators are not skillful. There are few opportunities and challenges in areas with ongoing armed conflict. This impacts on effective running of all components.

Village Management Committees—Financial management of the micro credit unions needs to be upgraded for transparency and simplicity.

Funding Gaps—There is a funding gap particularly to continue the Eco Leadership training. This has impacted on the community resilience component and activities have been curtailed.

Basic Infrastructure in IDP Camps—Information, resources and support are very limited in IDP camps under KIO administration. There is instability of staff in IDP schools that has caused challenges for effective implementation of the art project.

Revised Focus Vision 2020—This component aimed to facilitate strategic alliance of the main Kachin Political Parties' positions in the 2020 election. Whilst there has been some success in collaborations most parties are not fully ready to go in that direction. Thus, the Vision 2020 team has revised the focus to engaging and empowering CSOs in the political electoral process towards 2020.

Community resilience supports self determination for local villagers

Organisational—To increase effectiveness and efficiency the Airavati team needs to gain capacity in report writing and financial management as well as to improve programme/staff orientation. Staff policies and procedures have been drafted although they need to be finalized and steps taken to ensure all the team members are familiar with them.



FOUNDERS & BOARD MEMBERS

Airavati Board members actively engage in supporting Airavati Programmes

Lahpai Seng Raw – Board Chairperson (2014 to 2019) is the co-founder of the Metta Development Foundation (Metta) where she was the Executive Director until 2011. Airavati's seed funds were donated from the monetary award she received as recipient of the 2013 Ramon Magsaysay Award. Seng Raw is from Myitkyina, Kachin state where the Ayeyarwady River originates and has a strong connection to preserving the river.

Maw Htun Aung – Board Chairperson (2019 to August 2020) is former Natural Resource Governance Institute's Myanmar Officer as well as founder of the local public policy think-tank, "Another Development". His experience is in sustainable development and his educational background computer science, social policy and social development, and public administration. He resigned from the Board in August 2020 to focus on his political career.

Dr Nwet Kay Khaing – Board Chairperson (since August 2020) is a researcher in migration, environment and media studies. She is a resource person on sustainability and governance issues and contributes regularly to several newspapers and magazines. She is active in advocacy for reviving the "Commons" as a vision for natural resource management in a sustainable way. She is from the lower Ayeyarwady.

Dr Myint Zaw has worked with artistic and literary circles for peace and sustainability in Myanmar. He curates environmental photography and arts exhibitions on conservation issues part of civil society movement against mega dams in the critical watershed area of Ayeyarwady River. He published several public policy books in Burmese. He is also a co-founder and programme manager of "Ju Foundation".

Maung Hla Thaung is an architect who focuses on natural buildings designed to complement the surrounding environment. He consults with many of Myanmar's local NGOs providing expertise in environmentally friendly designs, as well as integrating the use of recycled materials.

Beatrice Lu Ja is from Myitkyina, Kachin State. As a veterinarian, she mobilises people in agriculture and livestock. She is a co-founder of Metta and former Metta's Myitkyina Branch Office Coordinator. Her strong leadership as a community worker led to the establishment of Metta's first living and learning centre – the "Centre of Action Research and Demonstration". Another area of expertise is as an HIV and AIDS educator.

Saw Min Naing – His background is in veterinary sciences and international development. He is a co-founder of Metta and was one of the first staff sent into areas to form relationships in new communities where Metta had not worked before. He is a strong community mobiliser who has supported Metta from the beginning in a leadership role.

Sai Sam Kham was executive director of Metta Development Foundation (until 2019). He is from Shan State where he volunteered for Metta and became Metta's second executive director in 2011.

Nyi Nyi Zaw is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with vast experience in areas of business and finance and is currently Metta's Financial Controller. He is very committed to eliminating poverty throughout Myanmar and works in specific communities helping children improve their lives.

Kyaw Thu, a trained dentist, is the founder and current director of Paung Ku, a Myanmar NGO recognized for strengthening civil society. Dr. Kyaw Thu has deep commitment and vast experience in equitable environmentally sustainable development, together with peace and social justice across the nation.

Dr Ohnmar Khaing is Programme Manager of Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. She has 21 years of experience in food security, agricultural development and rural livelihoods, with special focus on science-policy interface; project design, development and management; capacity-building and raising public awareness. She has an extensive national and international network, including cultivation of strategic partnerships with government, donors, civil society organisations and the private sector.

SUPPORTING AIRAVATI ORGANISATION

Airavati is grateful to each individual for their kind assistance.

Yangon & International

1. Jane Rasbash, Luz Anni, Pracha Hutauwatra, Sue Walker and Maung Day for Programme development and consultation.
2. Nyi Nyi Zaw, Financial Advisor
3. Naw Ja Ding Rin and Si Si Htun for HRM and Organisational development.
4. Pann Ei Ei Zaw for internal auditing.

Myitkyinal

1. Ja Bu (Human Resources)
2. Seng Lat Maw as financial controller
3. Dan Hkrawng as accountant and
4. Chang Nam as Admin and Logistic
5. Nan Raw as organizer of beneficiaries

Laiza

1. Anais Rolland - University Student from France
2. Sidd Hartha Joag – Visual artist from USA
3. Deng Kaiji, Xushuang – Photographers from China
4. Zheng Mingli – Documentary film maker from China

Airavati's work is made possible through collaborating with local & international partners. Donations can be made by directly depositing funds into:

Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank Address: 80/86, Mahabandoola Garden St., Yangon,
Swift Code: MFTBMMMY
Telex No: 21300 BANKFE BM 21348 BANKFE BM

USD Account Name:
Airavati Organisation Hlaing Township
Account No: 1 DA – 03 – 00177

EUR Account Name:
Airavati Organisation Hlaing Township
Account No: 1 EA – 03 – 00013

MMK Account Name:
Airavati Organisation Hlaing Township
Account No: 0211230003068,
Kanbawza Bank, Kamayut Branch, Yangon