

# The Church of the Province of Myanmar

## Supporting children in rural Myanmar with their education



### Myanmar



Myanmar has a population of 51 million, with 70% living in rural areas<sup>1</sup>. In remote, rural areas children and young people often have to travel in small boats and walk or cycle for hours to reach schools or live in boarding houses away from their families. There is also a shortage of teachers in these areas, and they can lack the skills necessary to teach certain subjects through having limited access to training.

In addition, economic hardship, classroom overcrowding, and traditional rote-based instruction have seen children from weaker academic and socioeconomic backgrounds slip behind and drop out. 1 in 5 children age 6 to 10 years of age do not attend primary school<sup>2</sup>. The lack of attendance and the standard of education results in children and young people unequipped to meet the needs of a modern economy and unable to fulfil their potential.

Child development is also impacted by a lack of appropriate nutrition, which stunts growth. Myanmar has made some progress towards reducing stunting in children, but 29% of those under 5 years of age are still affected, which is higher than the average for Asia (21.8%)<sup>3</sup>.

### The CPM 'Myanmar Education Programme'

The Church of the Province of Myanmar (CPM) is a well-respected agency within the country and has already had substantial success running a Community Health Programme in rural areas. CPM are currently focussed on improving children's education with a new programme started in 2020, in partnership with USPG.

The programme aims to raise the standard of teaching, increase school attendance, and strengthen Church and community leadership in education. It is based in remote, rural communities within eight dioceses: Hp-an, Toungoo, Sittwe, Mandalay, Myitkyina, Pathein, Pyay, and Yangon.

CPM diocesan staff will have management oversight of the programme, while Education Co-ordinators will ensure its day-to-day delivery. CPM will also be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme including collecting quantitative and qualitative data. Supervision of the programme will be provided by USPG, who will ensure that all requirements are met, and reports submitted.

The dioceses' goal is to become self-reliant in supporting the education programme so that it is sustainable in the long-term and will create fundraising committees. However, it will be several years before they will be able to achieve this. Therefore, our support is vital in enabling them to develop the programme and help it to become established.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Population Fund, Myanmar Country Profile

<sup>2</sup> Myanmar Education Census, 2014

<sup>3</sup> Global Nutrition Report, Myanmar Country Nutrition Report

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#### Programme Activities

- Teacher training workshops will be held to increase their knowledge and skills.
- Learning materials and study guides will be provided to students in schools.
- Schools will be supplied with teaching aids such as blackboards.
- Students from families of a poorer economic background will be supported with tuition fees.
- Students will be provided with nutritious meals.
- Provide learning opportunities to students and communities leaders by opening learning centres.
- Leadership training workshops, and child protection training sessions will be held for Church and community members involved in education.

#### The beneficiaries

The programme will directly support 600 girls and 600 boys at 13 primary schools, and nine secondary schools, seven of which are boarding schools, across the dioceses. In addition, 300 adults will directly benefit including the training of teachers, priests, catechists, and church committee members and community members. Lastly, 5,000 family members of the students will indirectly benefit through having relatives with greater economic prospects.

#### Jin Won's Story



Jin Won is seventeen years old and the first boy from Khanti to pass his tenth standard exam in 20 years. He comes from the village of Karo Naunnu which is near the border of India. Jin said, *“Through kindergarten to the fourth standard, I was taught by one teacher alone. He could teach one standard for only two months of the year to finish all five standards. When I passed primary school and had to go and study in Lahai, a nearby town, I couldn't keep up with the fifth standard, so I had to study in the fourth standard again. But in 2019, our priest Thomas requested some teachers from a good tuition centre in the town to come and teach us for free. I learned well with their guidance. I can't describe how happy I was.*

*My father grows corn and rice in the village and couldn't support my education very well, but he gave me a lot of love. I will therefore return his love by guiding the students [at the boarding school in Khamti] with their studies. My village is very far from there. I ride on a bicycle for one day, spend one night in Lahai and then take one more day bicycle ride to get to Khamti.*

*My father wants me to become a government servant, but I want to be a businessman. I want to raise the living standard of my area. I thank everyone who has helped me make this achievement. Without their help, I wouldn't have made it this far.”*

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**Expected Outcomes**

**Short-term**

- Reduction in the number of students dropping out of education.
- Increase in students that are eligible to attend higher level education.
- Improved teaching methods and lesson preparation.
- Effective and efficient leadership of education within the Church and community.
- Improved health and well-being of children by the provision of nutritious meals at schools.

**Long-term**

- Better career opportunities and economic prospects for children and young people.
- Economic and community development through having a more educated population in rural areas.



**Why we need your support**

Education is a powerful tool for helping children and young people escape poverty and improve their quality of life. We need your help to ensure that those living in the remote, rural villages of Myanmar are not forgotten. It will allow more children to attend school and enable us to invest in learning materials for students, and well-trained teachers with the teaching aids to carry out their job effectively.

Furthermore, receiving nutritious meals at school will improve the general well-being of children and young people. It will also aid their development at a crucial age and enable them to focus more clearly on their lessons.

A gift from you will mean that these children and young people can fulfil career ambitions that previously would not have been possible. It will not only benefit them and their families but also future generations living in their communities. Young people such as Jin Won are returning to use their skills to help support and develop their communities.