

Social Circus Myanmar Report 2019-20 Dry Season

December 4th 2019 – February 9th 2020

Report for Donors and Supporters.

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Social Circus Myanmar

Overview

Project Manager Jules arrived in Yangon Dec 4th 2019 and left Yangon on Feb 4th 2020.

The first workshop took place on Dec 6th and delivery continued until Feb 9th, with two further single sessions on Feb 15th and 21st. Ko Than Htut no longer lived in Yangon so moved to town specifically for our project.



Local team

Ko Than Htut – professional Actor and our lead Myanmar circus tutor. Ko Thaw Zin – professional taxi driver and our trainee circus tutor. Jules Howarth (UK) Project Manager and Lead Circus Tutor/Trainer.

Since last season's project Ko Pho Ke has passed away and both Julien Ariza and Jean-Noel Walkowiak moved to France.

Our regular delivery team consisted of Jules Howarth, Ko Than Htut and Ko Thaw Zin.

Living and base of operations

After 4 nights in a simple hotel on arrival and a fast hunt for a place to rent we were able to find a short-term rent of a 2nd floor apartment with two bedrooms and a storage space on the ground floor in a disused office, for a reasonable price, so Ko Than Htut and Jules moved in on 8th Dec. The team then moved all the circus equipment from its unsafe storage at Burbrit brewery to a dusty and dirty, dilapidated, disused room on the ground floor of the building where we rented the apartment. It's

quite a challenge to find a short-term rent at a reasonable price (for Yangon) which has access and storage for our circus equipment. The day after we moved in building work started in the road outside the building, laying the first foundations for a new road bridge across the mile-wide river from Yangon to Dala.



Key information

This project's delivery lasted 10 weeks at 10 different locations. We engaged with children and young people 1652 times, making a weekly average of 165.

We delivered 70 workshop sessions.

Our age range is on average from 6 years old to 17 years old.

We engage with children and young people that can be categorised as disadvantaged, marginalised, living with disability. They are children of migrant workers; children living in special schools/hostels/orphanages/attending day-care centres; and (working with PTT) we engaged in the street with street kids and children of migrant workers.

We work with children and young people from diverse religious – Buddhist, Christian, Islamic - and several ethnic backgrounds and roughly 60% male and 40% female.



This season we worked with...

We were delighted to continue working with previous partners:

Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, Ahlon.

Eden Centre for Disabled Children, Insein.

Parami Monastery School, South Dagon.

Nyein Chan Thar Yar Islamic School, Thaketa.

Girls Islamic Centre, Thein Phyu Road.

We were able to re-start work with the Taung Thu Gone Karen Hostel, Insein.

We formed new partnerships with Sonne Social Organisation (SSO) and Pyit Tain Taung - Play for Life Foundation (PTT).



We tried again but were unable to return to Thanlyin Boys Training Centre, Thanlyin. We found out what had happened to prevent access: there had been a breakout in 2019 and many boys had run away; some staff had been punished by relocation to Rakine state and the centre was under a strict regime.

Unfortunately, Yadana Foster Home decided they didn't want to do circus anymore and cancelled our weekly visit. We persuaded the director to let us visit once, to say goodbye to the 30 young people we had worked with over the last three seasons. Without that weekly session our small group from S4SK, Hlegu were also left without a session.



Updates

We re-started our effort to register a non-for-profit company in Myanmar. A new Board of Directors was brought together, company documents re-written and paperwork gathered. We used the on-line registration method provided by D.I.C.A. (Directorate of Investment and Company Administration) and completed the application and paid the fee on 23rd January 2020. We still haven't received our registration number and papers; we have tried to contact DICA, but the Pandemic seems to have brought the process to a halt.

Our Board of Directors: Daw May Pearl Thwe, Daw Phyu Phyu Mar, U Kyaw Oo, Ko Than Htut, Ko Kyaw Min Soe. The registered address is the house of U Kyaw Oo in Insein.



Key Developments

Our new partnership with Sonne Social Organisation (SSO) has allowed us to bring circus play to 3 of their day-centre schools – in Thaketa, Innwa Housing and at their newly constructed Children's Centre in South Dagon. SSO work with children of migrant workers and provide education, food and support to some of the most disadvantaged families in Yangon.

We are also bringing circus play techniques to Pyit Tain Taung - Play for Life Foundation (PTT). PTT is the first and only organisation in Myanmar providing training in Play skills to young Myanmar teachers and social workers. We joined their 'play caravans' for regular sessions, these 'caravans' happen in the street and are open to whichever kids turn up. We added our circus to the play and games that they already provide. Their play workers are volunteers, but have real jobs as teachers. Three of them started to help out at a couple of our other workshops so we could train them in circus and theatre skills. Here, for the first time, we have started to train new 'circus tutors' and to pay them. This is a development which we have wanted and needed to happen for a long time.

At the end of project, we stored our circus equipment at the Sonne Social Organisation's new Children's Centre in South Dagon. This is a great relief as storage is a big issue for us.



Challenges

We continue to struggle to register a n-f-p company in Myanmar and thus other opportunities for funding are limited. Once our Company is registered, the Myanmar Board of Directors have plans and energy to seek out funding locally in Myanmar and internationally. We have a strong Board, we have filed the correct papers and have paid the fee – we don't see why a Company won't be registered eventually. But this is Myanmar and...



Comments

Crowdfunding gathered significantly fewer donors than in previous years. This maybe because the project has not developed sufficiently over the years – not yet registered as a local Company, not training new tutors in Yangon, not finding local sponsors/donors. However we were fortunate to have two big donations from individuals who work in the world of social circus. Ash Perrin from The Flying Seagull Project and Guillaume Vermette (aka Clown Humaniare) made substantial personal donations.

We are really happy to have established working partnerships with SSO and PPT and to have begun to train new circus tutors. PTT has an agenda for Play which is a core element of SCM's philosophy and practice. SSO has the care, support and development of highly disadvantaged children at its core mission and by working with them SCM intends to use Play as a complimentary personal and social development tool.

Overall, we succeeded in forging new partnerships with social and play organisations, we started to train new tutors in our skill-sets, we engaged with more young people than previously whilst keeping our costs under control.



Financial Report

(SCM = Social Circus Myanmar. SCI = Social Circus International)

International colleagues/workers do not receive any fee for their work.

We do pay our Myanmar colleagues/workers.

The Project Manager's flights, visa, travel, accommodation, food and subsistence costs are covered.

The majority of the funds we generate go on project delivery costs.

Expenses

Expenses (outside Myanmar): £ 1340

Banking costs and fees: £ 184.40

Expenses (inside Myanmar): £ 2490

Total expenses: £4,015

A full breakdown of costs is available on request. Receipts are maintained and available for inspection.

Income

Earned income/donations in Yangon this season: £ 391

Crowd-funding and donations: £ 3422

Total Income: £ 3813

Operating profit/loss this season: - £201

Notes:

Funds are raised through Crowdfunding, donations on-line through our website, earned-income in Yangon (circus play at events and parties or for international schools).

We receive Crowdfunding and donations in USD, NZD, AUD, GBP and EUR all of which is converted in GBP and paid into an account run by Social Circus International (registered UK company, limited by guarantee - i.e. not-for-profit)

Social Circus International (SCI) funds the Social Circus Myanmar (SCM) project.

SCM withdraws cash from ATM in Yangon from the SCI account.

SCM Reports and prepares book-keeping to show to SCI, to check that the funds have been spent correctly.

Note: Jules founded SCI and is a Director; he also runs the SCM project. This dual interest has been identified to SCI and SCM Boards.

SCM is based in Myanmar and is still in process of registering as a not-for-profit or local NGO. This process is almost in its third year and has not yet succeeded. SCM has a constitution and a board of 6 people and meets to review its work.

Because SCM is not registered legally as a company it cannot open a company bank account in Myanmar.

Jules Howarth controls SCM finances, prepares book-keeping and accounts, pays workers and costs.

Due to the fact that Crowdfunding income arrives after the project begins Jules has to use his own money to cover costs and then claim back the money. Costs include - flights, insurance, Visas, UK travel, accommodation in Yangon.

Paper receipts are gathered in Yangon whenever possible; a day-book of all costs is kept and updated daily; all GBP payments are receipted; bank transactions details are provided. SCI checks and reviews SCM accounts. SCI Board Member Martin Goode acts as SCI Treasurer.

Paperwork is maintained and secured by Jules Howarth and is available for inspection.



Any questions please contact: info@socialcircusmyanmar.com www.socialcircusmyanmar.com



Thank you for your support, donations, shares and belief that Play can be a useful personal and social development tool and that everyone needs to have fun!