



## **Southern Shan State Community Consultation**

January 30<sup>th</sup> to February 6<sup>th</sup>

*De-briefing Report*

### **Summary**

Quite intense and quite productive community consultation trip to Southern Shan state (Nyaungshwe and Inle lake region) where we have built solid ground for very positive future collaborations. This was an important milestone for MBE's activities, towards supporting and being involved durably with projects outside of Yangon and Delta region, looking at contributing elsewhere in the country with a long term perspective.

Two programs have been identified and discussed with local partners:

- 1) A microfinance and livelihood program in collaboration with Shwe Inn Thu organization (very successful microfinance/women empowerment program, working in 33 villages of North East of Inle lake) and Partnership for Change as supporting partner.
- 2) A responsible business development program in collaboration with Partnership for Change/Inle Speaks (Inle Speaks is a local center created by PfC and through which it does all of its activities in Shan state and also in other places of the country) where we will work with a selected group of businesses willing to develop responsible practices in the region and provide them with training and potentially low interest loans.

### **Meetings held**

- Many meetings with Partnership for Change
  - > Planning logistics and meetings of community consultation
  - > Look into collaboration possibilities
- Meeting with two researchers from Australian Business Volunteers
  - > Learned about weaving and tourism industry
- Meeting with Inle Tour guides group
  - > Discussed tourism context, opportunity and experience on microfinance
- Two meetings with Hla Lone Hla Maung Mae organization
  - > Environmental youth group from all around Inle lake
  - > Volunteering, environmental education and local projects (exhibits, planting trees, training bamboo carpenters...)
- Meeting with Shwe Inn Thu and its manager, Hnin Hnin Ohn

- > Exchange on MBE and SHT's activities
- > Look into collaboration possibilities
- Day in Pa-O community with Shwe Inn Thu and Partnership For Change
  - > Looking at possibility of working with Pa-O
  - > Also further discuss potential collaboration with MBE
- Meeting with PNO (Pa-O National Office) head U Khin Aung
  - > Understanding the time and requirements needed to work in Ho Phone or Se Saing
- Meeting with Ho Phone community and village leaders
  - > Understanding the context, activities and need of Ho Phone community
- Meeting with Su Su Twe, weaving and craft “model” shop
  - > Getting the reaction of a local business for the responsible business promotion program

## **2 projects identified**

### **1) Microfinance and livelihood program with Shwe Inn Thu – and Partnership for Change as supporting partner**

Microfinance and livelihood program working with Shwe Inn Thu (Partnership for Change will also be part of the project as supporting partner, helping logistics and monitoring of the project)

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## **QUICK DESCRIPTION**

Swhe Inn Thu was created in 2009 by Hnin Hnin Ohn, who formally worked for various development program in the region and for 15 years for UNDP.

They have created a very impressive self help group micro-finance program, with the mission to empower women and empower self help savings and loans group (program only for women but in the end helps everyone, loans are always done by women, but sometimes for their brother or husband etc). The are now working with 33 villages in North East Inle lake, and now employing 14 staffs. The program have been funded by Danish cooperation, DDH Netherlands and the UN Democracy Fund.

Shwe Inn Thu and MBE have very similar ways to work (very community-oriented, working with local community self help group system, combining it with training on microfinance, business development and other capacity development themes).

MBE will come as a collaborator to expend the organization funding, look into working with new villages but also share on experience and potential training activities and other projects.

## 2) Responsible business promotion (RBP) program with Partnership for Change/Inle Speaks

(Inle Speaks is the local centre through which PfC does all of its activities in Inle region, but also occasionally around the country)

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### QUICK DESCRIPTION

Partnership for Change was created in 2010, it is a Norwegian nonprofit dedicated at supporting innovative solutions to today's problems and enable change makers for sustainable local development. Their first country of activity was Myanmar where they have been working for two years. They started Inle Speaks center which already has been quite successful in promoting innovative projects and initiatives supporting local economy and livelihood with a long term perspective and an emphasis on education and sustainability.

This RBP program will aim at identifying and helping businesses in Inle region who want to work through responsible practices and promote them, for the better of the local environment and community.

PfC will help identify local “champions” who MBE will meet and who will then be helped by ongoing support, free consultation, training and the offering of low interest loans if it suits their situation.

Applicants for the RBP program will propose their business and will meet with PfC and MBE. We want this process to be easier (small document 4-5 pages) and more personal than regular “business plan competitions”. Business will then either be enrolled in program, or followed and helped to reach the necessary requirements. Enrolment will depend on the needs, objectives and current capacity and financial readiness of the business (and on the program's budget as well).

MBE will help provide training in Inle (around a minimum of once or twice a year) and in Yangon as selected businesses will be offered a week of intensive training there (funded under PFC Fund)

--- Application document requirements (draft list) ---

- > Mission (what do you want to do with this business) and Vision (How do you see this business helping the community and how do you see the community in a few years with help of your business)
- > Description of your activities
- > SWAT Analysis (Strengths, Weakness of your company, Opportunity and Threats from the economic market for your business)
- > Target market (who do you want your customers to be)
- > Potential Partners or agreement
- > Assets (building, equipment, stock)
- > Financial capacity

--- Businesses selected will be offered (draft list) ---

- 1 week (maybe extend to 10 days) training in Yangon with hotel, accommodation and high level training with some of the top business executives in Yangon (some of our best MBE member trainers)
- Business training once or twice a year with MBE member in Inle region (probably Nyaungshwe)
- Free visit and consultancy from MBE member once or twice a year
- Low interest loan possibility (2.5% monthly, amount depending on capacity and context of business)

Already 2 early candidates have approached us for the RBP program:

a) Hla Lone Hla Maung Mae – Youth Environmental Group

- > Environmental education to the public.
- > Volunteer
- > Planting trees,
- > Environmental education, exhibit
- > Training Bamboo - Local carpenter (also some handy craft)

They have been thinking of starting a business supporting the community and promoting environmentally friendly practices (bar mixed with arts and crafts store and training center)

b) Ma Kyi Kyi Win – Traditional Costume Shop

- > Very well regarded and successful clothing and weaving craft shop
- > Wanting to promote fair trade in weaving sector as well as environmental practices (such as the use of natural material, avoiding destruction of the lake by the dumping of chemical products)

### **Next Steps**

- By February 20<sup>th</sup> : Elaborate a description of the responsible business promotion (RBP) program
- By February 27<sup>th</sup> (draft by February 20<sup>th</sup>) : Elaborate and sign MoU with Partnership for Change (PfC)
- By February 27<sup>th</sup> : Elaborate tools for RBP program (application form as well as promotional tools - flyer/poster)
- Fix date by February 27<sup>th</sup> - Trip dates around end of March or April 2015: Plan visit of MBE to Nyaungshwe, discussion on elaboration of partnership with Shwe Inn Thu (including visit of selected villages), meeting with PfC, visits of RBP program first applicants and potentially training session

*Note: Under PFC fund for which MBE applied through Cuso International and was approved for helping the launching of these projects, MBE will be able to fund one other trip and potentially part or the total number of training given to the first cohort of the program.*

### **Budget - PFC fund for launching of MBE Southern Shan Projects**

MBE has been approved a 1 305 000 Myanmar Kyats Funding for helping start new projects in Shan state. Out of the budget allowed for the first community consultation trip 190 776 kyats have been saved in order to better support the projects future steps (such as next trip and RBP program selected business training trip to Yangon). Right now almost 889 526 kyats are remaining for such purposes. (For more details look at attached budget).

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