Myanmar Community Academies Programme (MCAP)
Empowering young adults with skills to develop civil society through education
The Situation

Despite the positive changes in Myanmar’s capital and in some major cities, the situation in remote communities stays largely the same: lack of opportunities for higher education, lack of skills and capacity, and low quality of education. Serious tensions remain over political freedoms and ethnic nationality rights. Even though ceasefires were offered by the government to ethnic opposition forces, many minority groups have expressed concerns that their people will be marginalised during another time of political and economic change.

Provincial students lack access to further education and youth and community leaders lack professional development. In addition, management of community organisations lacks good leadership, management and community engagement skills.

MCAP addresses these issues by providing an intensive academic programme focusing on

✓ management and leadership
✓ intercultural and interreligious cooperation
✓ English, Social Science, Community Development, Numeracy and Information Technology
Myanmar Community Academies Programme (MCAP)

The Mission of MCAP is to support Myanmar youth, who have the potential to be actively engaged, and who represent a diverse range of backgrounds, to develop the skills and abilities they need to make a positive change in their local communities.

The three academies of MCAP are located in Myitkyina (Kachin State), Loikaw (Kayah State), and Hpa An (Kayin State). The MCAP network is successful and is, therefore, expanding. In 2017, the three principals have chosen a new academy in Taunggyi (Shan State) for their expansion plan.

We have been supporting the MCAP programme since the 2012 academic year.
How it Works

- Student recruitment at each academy is divided broadly into four phases:
  - Outreach and application
  - Testing and interviews
  - Selection
  - Notification

Each year in January roughly 30 new students are accepted into each of the four academies. In 2017 a total of 218 students were admitted in three academies.

- The entire training takes two years. The first three semesters focus on academic classes and each semester builds on the previous one. Semester 4 is the practical work placement (internship), which serves as a chance for students to gain real-world experience working for the community, while preparing them for their post-graduation goals.
How it Works

- Courses taught in the first three semesters fall into six broad content categories, which include English, Social Science, Community Development, Learning Skills, Numeracy and Information Technology. Courses aim to build subject knowledge, relevant skills and personal capacities.

- Additional activities continuously supplement the learning in class:
  - Student Governance and Activities
  - Student Mentoring Services
  - Community Leader Support Committee
  - Activities and events with community groups

- The students who fulfil the full requirements graduate and receive a diploma. E.g. in the year 2016, 98 students completed their training.
Budget, Monitoring and Reporting

The annual budget covers staff salaries, school equipment and stationery, as well as office and administration costs. The total annual amount of approx. **USD 90,000** per academy includes our monitoring (3%) and overhead costs (7%).

Conditions for our payments to MCAP are quarterly narrative reports, quarterly financial & activity reports, as well as photo reports four times a year. Feedback is also obtained by us directly during regular visits to the project locations.

As with all our programmes, reporting to donors will be provided on a semester basis.
Alumni Tracking

Three batches from three academies successfully graduated in 2013 (in that year, we changed MCAP from a one year to a two year programme), 2015 and 2016. After graduation, students returned to their communities, some went for further study, and some are now working in CBOs, NGOs, INGOs, local and family businesses, and as freelancers or volunteers. Alumni often have a strong connection to the academies and regularly participate in some of the academies’ activities.