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

With over 130 national ethnic races while being ruled under a military dictatorship, the nation of Myanmar experiences a great lack of harmony in their extraordinary diversity, resulting in persistent conflicts and tensions, corruption, and regressions in social sectors and well-being (UNESCO, 2015). These relentless issues lead to extreme poverty, massive inequalities, abuses of fundamental rights, and education which plays a crucial role in reforms misses out on global advances and is of poor, if not non-existent, quality.

Particularly in remote rural communities, the majority of children and youth are disadvantaged with: lack of or no opportunities for higher education, lack of skills and capability for self-development. In addition, community leaders lack professional development, and management of community organisations lacks effective leadership, good 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
About MCAP

The mission of MCAP is to support Myanmar youth (aged at least 16), 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.

Having formed a unique network of quality post-secondary community academies, the three initial centres of MCAP are located in Myitkyina (Kachin State), Loikaw (Kayah State), and Hpa An (Kayin State). Since the MCAP network has been so successful, it was decided in 2017, to open yet another academy in Taunggyi (Shan State).

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 2018, a total of 142 students were enrolled in across all academies.

- The entire training course 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.
Budget

The total amount of the programme’s overall running costs of each academy is approx. **USD 85,000** for academic year 2019 (Jan – Dec).

Transfers from Child’s Dream to MCAP are made in four instalments (quarterly) during the financial year.

**Monitoring and Reporting**

Payment is proceeded quarterly at reception of narrative and photo reports as well as monthly financial & activity reports. Feedback is also obtained directly during regular visits by our local team.

We report to donor(s) on a semester basis and visits to the academy can easily be arranged.
Alumni Tracking

By end of 2018, 457 students have completed their training from the three initial academies – Myitkyina, Hpa An, and Loikaw - and become MCAP alumni.

After graduation, students returned to their communities, while others went for further studies. The majority 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 academies’ activities.