

Dear Members and Supporters,

We can hardly believe that 2011 has come and gone already, and so it is time for another Annual Report of activities and developments at **The Mandalay Projects Ltd** ("TMPL").

We seem to say this every year, but the past 12 months really have been our busiest ever. Our organisation continues to grow, in terms of both number of supporters and the scale and geographical reach of our project work.

Project work & site visits

As you know, an important element of our activities each year is our programme of visits to our project sites. These visits allow us to see at first-hand how each project is progressing, and to ensure that we are on track to achieving our objectives for the project. We also undertake visits to potential new project sites, and discuss with potential local partners (orphanages) how we might provide strategic support for their work. We are now averaging 3-4 trips a year, and we encourage members and supporters of TMPL to join us on these visits.



Happy days! Residents of the Pana Wady Girls' Orphanage.

In addition to the formal project work at each site, we always spend time interacting with the children, organising activities and playing games with them, which makes the whole trip

a rewarding and happy experience for all. These visits are funded personally by the travelling team, and TMPL is enormously grateful for this generous support.



Resident orphan and gardener Hmet Kyee, at work in the TMPL orchard at Mingalar Parahita Orphanage in Burma.

Finding impoverished orphanages in need of assistance is a relatively easy task. The more challenging aspect of our search for local partners is ensuring that any support project we might undertake meets our development criteria. Most crucial of these is our insistence that our project work must not create a dependency. On the contrary, we are seeking to *help the children to help themselves*, and we need to be confident that, when our project work is finished and TMPL walks away from the site, the benefits of our work will be self-sustaining. Our focus is therefore on development projects, with a heavy emphasis on education and vocational training.

In this context, our projects in **Burma** have continued to be very successful. We have discussed in previous newsletters our vocational training initiatives at a number of sites in the Irrawaddy Delta region of the country, and we're happy to report further progress in all of these in the past year.

Our light engineering training facility at the Boys' Orphanage in the village of Kani is operating well. The older boys who have been trained in welding, soldering, drilling and other metalworking skills are now providing a much-needed service to the agricultural community in the area. On one of our recent visits to the workshop, the chairman of the orphanage committee proudly showed us the draft accounts for the first 6 months of operation of the workshop - a small profit had been generated and reinvested in additional equipment. We met some of the boys who are now employed by the workshop - they told us that this was their only chance of a decent job in the local area, and they seemed quite proud that they had been given this opportunity.



Residents of the Kani Boys' Orphanage receiving tuition in the TMPL-sponsored workshop.

Our Tailoring Training initiative at the Pana Wady Girls' Orphanage in the town of Kyaiklat has perhaps been our most successful development project to date. You may recall that the founder of the orphanage, who is now elderly and frail, had always hoped that her girls would one day be given an opportunity to undergo some form of vocational training, to help them become more independent and to set up a new life beyond the orphanage. We believe the TMPL training project has done precisely that. The older resident girls are now accomplished seamstresses, and are able to pass on their

skills to the younger girls, without further involvement by external trainers.

The orphanage is now regularly winning tailoring contracts from local schools and businesses, mainly to produce uniforms. In addition to providing employment for the girls, this initiative is now generating a modest stream of net income which is being reinvested in the workshop.



TMPL team members Debbie, Jenny, Linda, Sue, Heather, Fiona and Marie at the opening ceremony of the Pana Wady Tailoring Centre.

The self-sustainability of this project is clear, but was confirmed for us by one final piece of news. The Burmese authorities recently introduced a ruling that all schools and orphanages must send (at the institution's own expense) a set number of students to a government centre for "craft training". The authorities in Kyaiklat decided that the TMPL workshop at the orphanage is of a sufficiently high standard that the girls won't need to go to the government training centre. The savings on time, hassle and cost are good news for the orphanage and for the girls.

One of the most significant developments in 2011 was the launch of our project work in **Laos**. The similarities between Burma and Laos are striking. Both countries have had a complicated and troubled history. Both languish near the bottom of most international league tables of wealth, health, security, human rights, and so on. Partly as a result of all this, there are significant numbers of orphaned children in both countries, and those numbers continue to rise.

Our experience in Burma has undoubtedly helped us in launching operations in Laos, as has the support of our local partner, *Andrew Brown*. Based in Luang Prabang, Andrew has helped us to navigate some legal and cultural issues specific to Laos, as well as helping to steer our project work to a successful conclusion. In November, just 6 months after our initial site visit to the Deak Kum Pa School and Orphanage, outside Luang Prabang, we completed work there on a new educational facility for infants.



The new TMPL infants' facility at the Deak Kum Pa School & Orphanage in Luang Prabang, Laos.

The management of the School & Orphanage had previously felt that they did not have the appropriate resources to deal with children younger than 7 years of age. As a result, there were many younger orphans in the community, many of whom were living in unhealthy and insecure conditions, and none of whom was receiving an education.

The new TMPL-sponsored facility, complete with specialist teachers and carers, will now become a safe and secure home and school to around 35 young boys and girls. In our view, this development project has significantly reduced the vulnerability of these children to exploitation.

We have been impressed by the quality of the management team at the orphanage, and we look forward to discussing additional potential projects with them in 2012.



Residents of Deak Kum Pa celebrate the opening of the new infants' facility and send their thanks to TMPL and our supporters.

Fund-raising

Our growing band of members and supporters - in Australia and around the world - continue to do an incredible job of organising fund-raising events, the proceeds of which are donated to TMPL. We always respect the privacy of individual donors, but we're equally keen to applaud publicly the efforts of groups who make a special effort on our behalf.

In March, a schoolgirl in Western Australia, *Mia Egerton-Warburton*, organised a function to raise funds for TMPL, as part of her school curriculum to undertake a social welfare project. Approximately 150 guests attended the function, which raised a sizeable sum of money and broadened awareness of the work of TMPL in the local community.



Mia (second from left) and friends at their "Night for Burma"

In November, the annual Quiz Night organised by Fiona and Mark Barton and the rest of the Singapore-based supporters of TMPL was once again a great success. This event always generates a lot of interest, and this proved to be no exception, with the evening again raising a substantial sum which has been donated to TMPL.

In December, we had a wonderful example of TMPL's growing international reputation, when two Dutch ladies organised a sponsored trip to one of the orphanages we support. Chris and Natasja had discovered TMPL's work via the internet and were inspired to do something to support our projects. Challenged to do so by colleagues and friends in Holland, they set about organising a day of games and activities for the children at the orphanage, near the town of Twante, in Burma. The day was a great success - the children had fun and the sponsors back in Holland committed a generous donation to TMPL.

Administration

An information evening for supporters was hosted by TMPL Chairman Ian Love and his family in Perth, WA in November, and many new associations were made as a result of this event.

TMPL held its second Annual General Meeting in Perth in December, and has filed audited accounts for fiscal 2011.

Members of the TMPL community regularly post news items, comments, project reports and photos on our Facebook page. This is the easiest way for members and supporters to keep abreast of what we're up to, so please do sign up as a friend of TMPL on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=6514612309> or visit our website www.themandalayprojects.net

Thank you! TMPL is a community-based organisation and we simply could not do what we do, without the support of a large number of very generous people.

We are grateful to our local representatives in Burma and Laos, who continue to provide an amazing level of commitment to TMPL.

Thanks also to our numerous pro-bono service providers, and to everyone who has helped to organise events in the past year, or has generously donated prizes and other items for associated raffles and auctions.

Finally, a big thank-you to those of you who have made donations directly to TMPL in the past year. You know this already, but it's perhaps worth reiterating that TMPL has an extremely low cost: income ratio, and you can therefore be confident that substantially every dollar you donate goes directly to support our field work.

We hope that 2012 will be a great year for you and your families.

Best wishes from the TMPL team,

David Gibson

Co-founder & CEO

The Mandalay Projects Limited

8 January 2012



David with some of the tailoring students at Pana Wady and the beautifully hand-stitched flag which the girls had made as a surprise gift.