Welcome to Prospect Burma. From our modest beginnings in 1989 when we could only offer scholarships to one or two students, we now give over 90 young Burmese a year the chance to gain a worthwhile education at a foreign university. Given the still precarious situation at Burma’s own universities, our scholarships offer a truly life-changing chance to acquire the skills needed to help Burma’s social, democratic and economic development.

Prospect Burma also supports a number of in-country projects, ranging from English language courses to help bring students up to the level needed to study abroad, to computer and other vocational courses for former political prisoners and their families.

2016 has been a year of change and hope for Burma. After its win in the November 2015 elections, the National League for Democracy under its leader Aung San Suu Kyi has the difficult task of building peace and democracy after 50 years of military rule. We have been adapting to meet the new opportunities now emerging in the country. We are opening an office in Rangoon which will allow us to reach out to potential scholarship applicants from distant and disadvantaged areas, as well as help with the processing and monitoring of applications and programmes. In addition, our office staff will have close links with returning alumni enabling us to follow their progress as they start to make their own contribution to building an equitable, prosperous and just society. Since the democratic reforms began in 2011, increasing numbers of our students are returning to Burma after graduation.

Back in the UK, our team has moved to new offices, with new branding, a new website and an enthusiastic staff helped by much-valued volunteers. In February 2016, our founder patron Viscount Slim stepped down after 28 years with us, and we are delighted that HRH The Prince of Wales kindly agreed to become our new patron in June 2016.

Robert Gordon - Chairman of the Trustees, Prospect Burma
Our year in brief

Over 300 applications received from Burmese students pursuing further education abroad

94 scholarships awarded

10 fields of study including law, medicine and education

The impact of a Prospect Burma scholarship starts with our students and has far-reaching consequences, not just throughout the country but globally. Equipped with vital skills and expertise, our alumni go on to achieve incredible things, and to facilitate the transformation of Burma through the application of their skills in the country.

82% of our 2015 graduates have already returned to Burma

64% of our 2015 graduates have found employment in fields including education, health and journalism

The average cost of one year's scholarship is £4,000

Our students will take up places at Universities in 14 different countries in 2016-2017
Our history

Prospect Burma began life in 1989, following the pro-democracy uprising of the previous year (pictured above). The mass uprising, which was led by students, started on 8 August 1988 in Rangoon and spread throughout the country in reaction to the control of the military regime. Aung San Suu Kyi became the focus of Burmese people’s hopes, speaking out for human rights and multi-party elections, but demonstrations were violently quashed with large numbers of people killed. Martial law was imposed, universities and schools were closed down and thousands of Burmese people fled to the country’s borders. In response, supporters around the world began to raise money to send basic provisions, and Prospect Burma was born.

Prospect Burma was started by a group of passionate well-wishers, to provide support and relief to the refugees who had been forced to flee the country. We began raising funds for books and classes in refugee schools, and we awarded our first annual scholarship to an exiled Burmese student to attend university.

Since those early days we have grown exponentially, focussing on the provision of higher education to Burmese students. Today we provide scholarships for Burmese students to pursue tertiary education in highly regarded institutions around the world.

We believe that the future of Burma is best placed in the hands of its people, and access to higher education is the best way to ensure a brighter future for the country.

“Education is the only possession that cannot be taken away from us” - PB Scholar

What we do

Each year Prospect Burma awards over 90 scholarships focussing particularly on areas of study which will benefit the rebuilding of the country including education, health care, and science. To date we have awarded over 2,500 scholarships.

Today the work we do is more important than ever, as new democratic developments since 2011 are increasing the need for infrastructure and vital skills in Burma. Education is the key to a sustainable future for the country, and is at the heart of what we do. Our Scholarship Programme enables more Burmese students to gain vital skills and higher education qualifications to help build a brighter future for the country.

“A good education is as important as the air we breathe” - PB scholar

Our scholarships prioritise key developmental subjects, which include public health, education, the environment, human rights and public administration.

Our students come from a broad range of social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. In many cases, when our students return to the country their skills are unique within Burma, as they have gained expertise in areas which are continually developing, while the education system within Burma remains static, under-resourced and below global standards.

In 2015 we awarded 94 scholarships to students studying undergraduate, masters’ and PhD degrees in a huge variety of subjects, at universities around the world.

We have watched our alumni go on to realise their dreams of making a real difference to their country’s development.
Since we first started life as a direct action of the unrest of 1988, Prospect Burma has worked to give hope to generations of Burmese people denied higher education opportunities at home. To date we have enabled over 1,300 students to gain qualifications in fields such as public health, education, journalism, engineering, law and human rights. Our work is far from done, and each year we work to expand our scholarship programme, to attract applicants from more remote and underprivileged areas.

Nang Sein Nyunt

Nang Sein Nyunt (pictured) grew up in constant fear, terrified that the fighting between the Burmese Army and the Shan State Army in the conflict-ridden Southern Shan State of Burma would reach her village. The dangers of living in such a region took both an emotional and a financial toll, forcing her mother and elder sister to become migrant workers in Thailand.

Nang Sein Nyunt obtained a degree in Zoology from Taunggyi University in 2007. Unfortunately however, she says that “like many university graduates in Burma, I was subsequently unable to find employment”.

Nang Sein Nyunt moved to Thailand and worked with her sister in a noodle shop, but by night she learned English at the Migrant Learning Centre and began working on their advocacy activities. She ended up assisting with the running of 13 schools with responsibility for over 2000 students on the Thai-Burma border and in conflict-affected areas of Shan State. She also helped to run the first ever Woman and Peace Forum in 2014.

She is now studying Educational Administration and says she plans to:

“return to my community as a teacher and trainer, able to promote participatory, quality education.”

Moe Moe Aye

Moe Moe Aye completed a Master of Public Health degree in 2015, at the James P Grant School of Public Health, with a Prospect Burma scholarship. The course focussed on the study of different health systems from countries around the world. Moe Moe Aye told us:

“One of the strengths of the course is there are international students from ten countries, so I learned different perceptions on the same issue.”

Because of this diversity she was able to focus on Burma’s health system in comparison with others.

Moe Moe Aye is originally from Rangoon and studying in Bangkok presented many challenges, including the language barrier which meant that field work had to be carried out with the help of a translator, and the food which she took time to adjust to. Moe Moe Aye has now graduated and has already returned to Burma, where she is working in Rangoon at international NGO the Clinton Health Access Initiative. Her long term goal is to establish an internationally recognised non-government research institute in Burma. She told us:

“We haven’t had a strong research institute in Myanmar and it is critically needed for the country’s development.”

In 2016 we received over 300 applications for the year’s scholarship competition which closed in early April. We awarded 94 students a grant for the 2015/16 academic year. The recipients are undertaking studies in fields including education, law, and medical science. We were delighted to receive so many high quality applications. Of the 18 students who graduated in 2016 so far, 66% of them have already returned to the country and 50% have already found employment.
Our projects

Kachin Intensive English School

The Kachin Intensive English School (IEP), in the remote Mai Ja Yang village on the Chinese border in Kachin State, provides residential English language classes, computer studies and teacher training to approximately 90 students each year. The majority of students come from poor farming families and others from orphaned or one-parent backgrounds. Due to the ongoing conflict in Kachin State, many of these students would otherwise not have access to further education. Prospect Burma funding pays for lecturers at the school.

Sky Age

Sky Age provides education to the most under-served youth, mostly coming from rural areas of Burma. Since education programmes in rural areas are very limited and quasi non-existent, Sky Age has designed a programme to promote English, computer and civic education. The focus is on English and concentrates on speaking, reading, writing, grammar and translation. Prospect Burma receives funding from the US State Department to support Sky Age.

English language courses are a vital component of higher education, either to support a university application abroad or to improve career options. International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is an internationally recognised qualification that is required for university applications. It also significantly improves employability within Burma. Prospect Burma supports students to attend English Language courses at the British Council in Rangoon as well as other smaller programmes. In the coming years Prospect Burma will focus more on providing IELTS access to potential students, especially those who are from more remote regions or disadvantaged backgrounds. This will enable many more students to be able to access higher-education abroad.
Burma’s recent history of education is tied up with political prisoners and the struggle to find freedom and justice. Following the 1988 uprising many students were arrested and Prospect Burma is working to support political prisoners and their families in their quest to receive a life- and country-changing education. Prospect Burma receives funding from the US State Department specifically for our political prisoner projects, allowing us to focus our fundraising activities on our scholarships programme.

**OMI** The Open Myanmar Initiative (OMI) is a non-political NGO, think tank and research centre as well as education and training centre. In 2015/16 PB funded English Language and economics courses specifically aimed to meet the needs of ex-political prisoners.

**FPPS** The former Political Prisoners Society (FPPS) was formed in December 2011 with the intention to call for the release of all remaining political prisoners and help the rehabilitation of former political prisoners in their struggle to reintegrate with society after spending several years in prisons. In 2015/16 PB funded a small number of ex-political prisoner family members to attend vocational, English and computing courses.

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**Our supporters**

Every year we award over £300,000 in scholarships and we would be unable to do this without the generosity of our supporters. We are enormously grateful to all of our supporters from individual donors, guests at our events, trusts and foundations, and corporate partners.

**Thank you**

**Trusts and Foundations**

H.B. Allen Charitable Trust, the Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust, the Educational and General Charitable Trust, the Fulmer Charitable Trust, the G C Gibson Charitable Settlement Trust, the Green Centre for World Art, Hoare and Co Trust, M J Samuel trust, the Melville Charitable Trust, and the Eleanor Rathbone Trust in addition to gifts from trusts and organisations who wish to remain anonymous. We are most grateful to all of these for their support.

Thank you for your support
In 2015-2016 88% of our expenditure was spent on our charitable activities

*For full accounts please visit our website www.prospectburma.org/about/key-documents/

The cost of an average scholarship in 2015-16 was £4,000. Our students use the funds primarily for course fees, books and living costs.

Of this around 86% is spent on our scholarship programme.

12% supports our projects with released political prisoners.

The remaining 2% goes on other education projects.

Our income comes from various sources, primarily grant-making bodies (45%) and individual donors (43%).

Pictograms are illustrative only.