As Patron, it gives me particular pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations to Prospect Burma on the happy occasion of the charity’s thirtieth anniversary.

Those of us who care deeply for Burma and its people have watched it undergo enormous turmoil in the last thirty years. The country has reached a new era of fledgling democracy, but the future remains uncertain.

To ensure that future is bright, investment in education is clearly vital, so that Burma’s young people have the chance to build the skills, insights and new ideas they need to play their part in their country’s development. Prospect Burma plays its part in this regard, each year supporting around eighty students who undertake courses vital to the future of the country at overseas universities. They have a high rate of return, and many of the students go on to make a vital difference when they return home.

I am proud to be the Patron of Prospect Burma, and of the work that the charity does to secure a better future for people of all ethnicities and faiths. The impact of this work is seen in the lives of their alumni, and in the thirty years they have been operating they have transformed the lives of over 1,400 people through international education.

The future of Burma is in the hands of its young people and education can equip them to shape that future. Prospect Burma is right to want to do more to help them, and to bring this hope to the lives of many. This is why I am delighted to commend and support its efforts in this special anniversary year.
Thirty Years of Prospect Burma

For thirty years, we have been working to change the future for Myanmar

Historic or political events

8 August 1988
The 8888 student uprising, as it comes to be known, is a mobilisation of people around Myanmar speaking out against the military dictatorship. It is to become a key date in Myanmar’s history.

June 1989
The armed forces, known as the Tatmadaw, violently shut down pro-democracy protests, re-assuming military control. All universities are closed, many students and teachers arrested, and 10,000 people flee into the ethnic borderlands. Several thousand people die in the repression and political violence.

June 1994
The first PB scholarship is granted, to Pwint Htun, who undertook a BSc in Electrical Engineering at the University of Washington. Today, she is a leading communications specialist and was instrumental in revolutionising the mobile communications industry within Myanmar.

January 1998
We establish English classes at the New Delhi school, for people from Myanmar living in India. We identify that English language is a vital requirement for overseas study, as many courses are taught in English. We have been helping people to gain internationally recognised language qualifications ever since.

May 2000
From 2000-2005 our scholarship programme expands, and we are able to offer support to over 100 students annually. We are additionally able to support training for teachers from Myanmar working in Thailand. We launch our “Adopt a scholarship” scheme, allowing supporters to offer direct support to a student throughout their course.

May 2008
The worst recorded natural disaster in Myanmar’s history, Cyclone Nargis, devastates the country. Over 130,000 people were killed or lost in the destruction. Community-based groups respond in providing emergency aid, reflecting the revival of civil society activism in the country. In its aftermath, the government continues with a referendum to introduce a new constitution and system of quasi-civilian democracy.

March 2016
The National League for Democracy wins office.

June 2016
Prospect Burma opens an office in Yangon, giving us a presence in country for the first time since we started.

Prospect Burma’s actions

March 1989
A group of sympathetic British supporters gather to respond to the continuing emergency. They raise vital funds to help students who are fleeing the country to avoid imprisonment.

December 1989
The British group of supporters formalise their mission, and Prospect Burma is born.

June 1995
Our scholarships programme is launched, with the aim of helping exiled students undertake higher education abroad. We also fund computer, vocational and women-specific training courses in Kachin State, aiming to support the most marginalised members of society.

May 2011
After over two decades in office, the military government steps down. The Tatmadaw retains a leading role in national politics. But bridges start to be built with the National League for Democracy whose leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, was released in November 2010 after nearly 15 years under house arrest.

2019
Prospect Burma celebrates 30 years. We expand the scope of our programmes in order to support many more people from Myanmar, and launch our Bridging Programme, opening education opportunities to students from remote and underserved regions.

For a more comprehensive timeline spanning our 30 years, take a look at our website
www.prospectburma.org/thirty-years-of-prospect-burma
Our programmes - the year in numbers

Access to Learning
- 133 Total scholarships awarded
- 12 ethnicities
- 63 female students
- 38 male students

Learning to Leadership
- 71 Total scholarships awarded
- 308 Learning to Leadership applications received
- 1,139 students attended outreach sessions

Change in the Community
- 41 alumni attended our conference
- £280 The amount donated by our alumni this year; the first that we have encouraged alumni to give back to the next generation of change makers
- 1,400* total people supported since we began life in 1989

*approximate figure
STUDENT JOURNEY - We actively recruit a diverse student body. We provide ongoing support for students, from pre-university preparatory training, to networking support following graduation.

PROSPECT BURMA’S PATH - Our combination of skills, experience and expertise mean we are uniquely placed to offer support at every stage of the student’s journey.

Change in the Community - our network of change makers building a brighter future for Myanmar. When they return home, they will reach out to their own networks to let others know about the work of PB, often inviting us to outreach activities in their own communities.

Graduation - PB often supports students throughout the entirety of their course and celebrates their graduation.

Outreach activities - focussing on a diverse ethnic, geographical and gendered spread

Access to Learning - pre-training for higher education or better employment

Learning to leadership - Higher education at international universities leading to a competitive qualification and skills

A student’s journey with PB
“In the five years that I have led Prospect Burma, I have personally seen the country undergo huge changes.

The work that Prospect Burma does is etched into the story of the country’s development over the last 30 years. Where infrastructure has been implemented, and positive change has taken place, our change makers have often been there at the heart, working to build a better future for themselves and their country. Effective and lasting change is slow to achieve however, and political advances in the last five years have brought as much upheaval as they have progress. In the coming years we plan to further expand our programmes, to reach more people in Myanmar than ever before.”  

Hannah Marcazzo, Executive Director

With the Myanmar office now well-established, outreach activities have been handed over allowing the UK office to focus on governance, fundraising and operations.

With a shift in global perceptions of Aung San Suu Kyi and the failures of the democratically elected Myanmar governing party, it has been a difficult period for those of us working in Myanmar. Because of this, the UK office is focusing on fundraising from new and more diverse sources, in order to support many more students, and continue to extend our programmatic scope.

We have been looking at the full cycle of education, and how we can support a wider range of people to achieve higher education. The UK office’s focus for the next year will be particularly on our third programme, Change in the Community. We aim to re-connect with as many of our alumni as we can, creating a sustainable and mutually beneficial community for sharing valuable skills and experience within Myanmar. We hope to strengthen our network of change makers, and help them to access further development opportunities, such as internships or other in-house training programmes, job opportunities and skills sharing. This year was the first time we encouraged our alumni to think about giving back to the organisation, in order for them to pay it forward to the next generation of students, and we received a small amount of alumni donations.

We are also working on expanding our Access to Learning programme, to enable us to reach out to more remote and harder to reach areas of the country. These areas will be particularly affected by the lack of education opportunities and we plan on partnering with local organisations to help reach more people than ever before. We have plans underway with partners in remote corners of the country, and the further development of our outreach work will help information sharing and awareness raising of our different programmes.
“With two years in Yangon under our belt, Prospect Burma is expanding its reach like never before.

Since I joined the charity at the end of 2018 I have already witnessed the development of exciting new projects for PB. Early in 2019 we delivered the first iteration of our Bridging Programme, offering students from very rural areas the opportunity to study English Language skills in Yangon. Over the coming years, we look forward to our reach extending further into the country, focussing our efforts on reaching conflict areas and minority groups. It is an exciting time to be a part of Prospect Burma. At a turbulent time for the country, our work is more vital and more urgent than ever before.” Lalfak Mawia, Country Manager

In the past year we have worked to expand the reach of our programmes. With the Myanmar office now well-established, we are well placed to extend our programmes throughout the country. Prospect Burma has always been a deliberately diverse organisation, and we have always supported people from around Myanmar, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or gender. With an established in-country office, we are now able to travel more extensively throughout the country, to go and meet with students and demonstrate to them the opportunities available to them through Prospect Burma.

This year we have focussed on building capacity of our Access to Learning programme, which included launching a new English language training course. We have been developing this Bridging Programme for some time, with the aim of creating education opportunities for students from rural and remote regions. Most English language and further training courses in Myanmar take place in cities and are therefore often too far away or expensive for students from farther afield to undertake. The Bridging Programme will allow these students to undertake further study with a view to opening international education opportunities to them, by offering IELTS training, as well as accommodation and support in Yangon for the duration of their study. Our first students undertook an intensive English Language course in Yangon early this spring, and are currently awaiting their results. In the 2018-19 period we also worked to increase our funding for this area, to enable us to expand and grow it as much as possible.

This year we also looked at the development of our Change in the Community programme. We held our 2nd alumni conference, inviting our past students to re-engage with our community, share expertise and network. In the 2019-20 period our focus will be on further developing this programme and increasing capacity in this area.
Students of our first Bridging Programme intake at the PB Yangon office
Creating opportunities

How can you access higher education if you don’t have the qualifications, and how do you even think about studying abroad if you don’t know what opportunities are available to you? Our Access to Learning programme seeks to solve these problems, and more.

In order to study abroad you first need to know how to get there, and in a divided country obtaining the right qualifications and skills can seem impossible. Our Access to Learning programme focuses on building core skills, including critical thinking, computer literacy, and English language qualifications, all of which are vital to pursuing international higher education. We partner with select organisations which are uniquely placed to deliver quality teaching, and over the coming years we are expanding our reach to more remote, underserved regions. When they graduate, our Access to Learning scholars are able to apply for international study, or pursue better, more lucrative careers at home.

For students living outside of urban centres where the majority of the education facilities are based, accessing opportunities can be incredibly difficult. Enormous distances, lack of infrastructure and information about available opportunities are all huge barriers. Our new Bridging Programme was launched this year, to enable students from across the country to study in Yangon. In February a diverse group of 20 young people from five different states (Rakhine, Shan, Kachin, Kayin and Kayah) undertook an intensive English Language course at the British Council, and sat their IELTS (International English Language Test System) exam. 85% achieved scores of 5.0 or greater, which is sufficient to apply to University in Thailand and they are encouraged to apply to our Learning to Leadership programme.

The Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences (ILAS) is based in Kachin. ILAS was established in 2001, originally to address a chronic need for proficiency in English in Mai Ja Yang region, Kachin State, particularly aimed at Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and other disadvantaged young people. Each year ILAS provides education to over 220 students, including approximately 80 residential participants; the school offers full accommodation to students from marginalized IDP families. Emphasis is placed on developing confidence, self-reliance, raising civic education among the community, the peace building process and improving critical and creative thinking. Quality teachers are fundamental to the provision of a good education, and each year we ensure that the cohort of ILAS receives the support of well trained, well qualified teachers.

We partner with in-country organisations who are best placed to reach their communities. Sky Age is based in Yangon, and teaches vital skills to students between 18-26 years of age. Sky Age students live on site during the seven months of their study, and when they graduate they return home with better career prospects, or education aspirations. Sky Age provides English, computer skills and civic education to students from underserved rural areas with little or no access to free education. They offer free education to children of former political prisoners whose families are often discriminated against, making it increasingly difficult for them to find work. Graduates not only significantly improve their English Language, computing and critical thinking skills, but gain opportunities they previously did not think possible.

The Bridging Programme was launched this year. In the first year of the course:

- £1,210 average cost of funding per student
- 20 students
- 5 diverse states

Prospect Burma has supported ILAS for over a decade. In the past year we have provided:

- £7,500 of funding
- 60 students supported
- 4 teachers funded

Prospect Burma has supported Sky Age for 5 years. In the past year we have provided:

- £20,510 of funding
- 41 students supported
Our Learning to Leadership programme is our longest running programme, and enables us to support dedicated and visionary people from Myanmar who have a real plan for making a difference in their country. We set priority subjects each year, which favour areas of urgent growth for the country. In recent years this has included ecology and environmental engineering, and STEM subjects. We reach out to remote as well as conflict-affected regions, to help prospective students select the right course for their future. We offer support during their studies, this year offering peer-to-peer mentoring for the first time. Studying abroad is an incredibly daunting prospect for many people who may not have left their villages before, let alone boarded a plane to a distant country. Many of the people we support have experienced unimaginable hardship in their lives, from civil war and devastating natural disasters to childhood poverty, and as a result they have a deep and passionate desire to change their country for the better. The time they spend abroad exposes them to different cultures, and different ways of thinking. It provides them an opportunity to engage, work and live with people from other religions, faiths and cultures. Through our Learning to Leadership programme they become change makers who go on to create positive and lasting change in Myanmar.

Bei Cho Tha’s story

Bei Cho Tha was born in a small village in the remote region of Chin State, in the west of Myanmar, in 1991. He was the second son, born into a large family with a teacher father whose job led the family to relocate from a small rural village to Hakha, the capital of Chin State. Living off the government-assigned salary of a teacher was difficult for a large family and Bei Cho Tha worked in his school holidays to supplement the family income. Growing up in such a remote area, in one of the poorest regions of Myanmar, Bei Cho Tha identified some of the issues facing people who lived there:

“Many people are left without any help in the medical area, it is a big barrier when treatment is received from a person or doctor who speaks languages other than their language. They urgently need a doctor who is from their native place.”

Realising this, Bei Cho Tha decided that he wanted to become a doctor, and serve his native community.

Prospect Burma has supported Bei Cho Tha since 2010/11 when we sponsored his English language training at the British Council in Yangon. When he successfully completed this course, he applied to us for funding to undertake a PhD in medical sciences at Bicon Christian University in the Philippines, to help him attain his ambition of becoming a doctor. In the middle of his studies in 2013 his university was affected by Typhoon Hayian, one of the most powerful tropical cyclones ever recorded, but the worst of the storm missed their location and he was able to complete the semester.

He has spent the last year of his studies undertaking clinical work at the Emilio Agualaldo College Medical Center Hospital in Cavite City. He successfully completed undergraduate medical degrees and clinical studies in the Philippines, and at the end of the 2017/18 academic year completed his clinical internship. He has now returned to Laiyenpi township, the isolated area of western Chin State where he was born and where he is now working in a community clinic. This will enable Bei Cho Tha to complete his local medical registration and ensure his international qualification is recognised in Myanmar. In addition to his clinical work, Bei Cho Tha is volunteering in local schools, supporting and mentoring 10th grade science students.

Bei Cho Tha told us: “I would like to express my highest gratitude to Prospect Burma. I truly believe that without you I wouldn’t be able to get the position I’m in today.”
LEARNING TO LEADERSHIP
CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY
After graduation, it can be very overwhelming for returning students to know how to put their skills and enthusiasm to best use, and make their visions for changing Myanmar a reality. A very high percentage of our change makers return to Myanmar after graduating; over 75% of our 2016 graduates returned to Burma within a year of completing their studies. Those who don’t return often go on to contribute to their country in other ways, and can be found working at International Non-Government Organisations or influencing international policy. Upon their return, we introduce graduates to our network of change makers, helping them form vital contacts and find career opportunities. We carefully monitor their progress which helps inform our future planning and enables us to offer them the support they need to make their ideas a reality. In a country so lacking in skilled and educated people, our change makers go on to become leaders in their communities and the growing cohort of Prospect Burma alumni has had an profound effect around the country in the last three decades. This year, we held our 2nd alumni conference, inviting our past students to re-engage with our community, share expertise and network. In the coming year we will develop this programme further by offering support to graduates returning to the country through networking opportunities and re-engaging with our wider alumni body.

*2019 figures

19 students graduated

90% Of these graduates have already returned to Myanmar

41 alumni attended our conference

Nan Aye Zar Chi Htun’s story

Nan Aye Zar Chi Htun was born in Karen State, and grew up during a time that the area was classified as a Brown Region, denoting an area of active conflict. Clashes between the Tatmadaw and local rebel armies were common.

As Nan grew up, she developed a passion for teaching. She would often support her fellow students, organising her own teaching sessions, and felt a great sense of pride in helping them to accomplish goals. From an early age, she knew she wanted to be a teacher. However, she knew that the style of teaching she was experiencing at first hand was not productive or useful, and decided that she needed to go abroad. At an overseas university, she anticipated learning different teaching styles to the monotonous and ultimately fruitless rote learning she experienced at home.

Nan undertook a masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Assumption University in Bangkok, with the support of Prospect Burma. When she returned to her home in Karen state, she worked for a while at the Education Gathering Group (EGG), a progressive education centre which is also run by a Prospect Burma alumnus. She decided that she wanted to be able to offer support to people from her village, and began teaching classes from her home in Hpa-An.

Nan Aye Zar Chi Htun now teaches English to young, primary school age students after school, and also pre-university skills to students who wish to study abroad. As well as English language, she teaches other skills which are not taught in Myanmar schools, such as presentation skills, speaking in public, critical thinking and questioning skills.
Our year in numbers

Us.
Prospect Burma is a small organisation with a big impact. Over thirty years we have become one of the leading UK-based charities working solely in Myanmar, and we do it as cost effectively as we can. We are passionate about creating lasting change in Myanmar, and in ensuring your donation goes to the people who really need it. We are reliant upon a small but incredible and dedicated group of volunteers, who give their time every week to support our work.

3    Number of full-time staff in the Myanmar office
4    Number of part-time staff in the UK office
12   Number of volunteers in the UK office

Our work.
£448,634 Cost of the Learning to Leadership programme
52    Continuing students supported
19    New students supported
12    Different ethnicities represented
45%   Of people supported are women
£4,610 Avg. Learning to Leadership award per student
£104,275 Spent on Access to Learning and Change in the Community projects

For full accounts and more information on our income, please take a look at our annual report on https://prospectburma.org/what-we-do/governance/
Our income

Prospect Burma is indebted to generous institutions, charitable trusts and foundations, as well as individual donors and their legacies. Without your support, we simply could not continue our work of building a better future for Myanmar.

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The breakdown of our income this year

£70,871 - Income from corporates

£81,774 - Income from individual donors

£361,532 - Income from Grants and Trusts

£45,428 - Other income

Our corporate partners

Our trustees

Prospect Burma is immensely grateful to our Board of Trustees for their support and work throughout the year.

Chairman: Dr. Michael Marrett-Crosby
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