



2nd National Conference on Communities and Tourism

13 & 14 June 2017
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Conference Report



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Executive Summary

Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB), Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute (MRTI), and Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) co-hosted a second Communities and Tourism Conference in Naypyidaw on 13/14 June. Over 120 participants joined including existing community tourism projects and new initiatives, tour companies, international experts, and around 15 Members of Parliament (MPs) from areas where communities had expressed interest in participating in tourism.

The conference was a follow-up to one held in December 2015, which concluded that community tourism initiatives will not succeed without communities being mobilized and supported over a long period to help them understand and access the market, and that, like other small businesses, CIT projects needed simple, 'light touch' regulation and basic training. Another conclusion was that monitoring results, sharing lessons and networking with other projects was valuable.

For this reason, this second conference was arranged 18 months later to promote learning from successful projects which are already up and running, and inspire the development of new community tourism products, as well as to build links between them and their target markets. This conference was also intended to highlight the challenges faced by projects, including regulatory hurdles, skills gaps, and marketing. The opportunities and

challenges of promoting tourism in areas affected by conflict were also touched on.

As in the December 2015 conference, participants were polled on factors influencing success and failure of community tourism ventures. By far the most important factor identified as necessary for a community tourism project to be successful was 'Community organization and management support' (39% up from 21% in 2015) followed by 'Tourism product development according to the market needs' (17% up from 14%). As for causes of failure, the main one identified was a 'Top-down approach by development partner and/or private sector partner in which the needs and ideas of the community are not taken into consideration' (24% up from 17%) followed by 'Lack of mobilisation and involvement of the community' and 'An unstable political situation'. These findings highlight the need for communities – or some members of them - to be interested in, and active in owning the tourism products they put on the market.

The six community tourism initiatives, which presented at the first conference in December 2015 (Myaing, Indawgyi, Pa-O region, Kayah State, Upper Ayeyarwady dolphin project, and Thandaunggyi) spoke about their successful experiences of the last couple of years, some of them even winning international awards. However, although they had all seen a growth in visitors, including Myanmar tourists, and some increases in community income from tourism, all faced challenges in marketing the product.

Other common challenges included continued restrictions on access and overnight stays by foreigners which reduced local earning potential, lack of skilled human resources and lack of local knowledge about what foreign tourists want and how they behave. All the projects highlighted the importance to the community tourism experience of promoting environmental awareness, and protecting and building pride in and knowledge of local culture which was particularly interesting to foreign visitors. The importance of the growing Asian tourist market was highlighted, as well as domestic visitors.

Participants also expressed optimism about Myanmar's potential for community-based tourism in many tourism destinations in Myanmar. New destinations and products discussed at the conference included Myeik

archipelago, trekking in Danu regions in Shan State, Ngayokekaung, Gwa, tours in the Yangon area, Tamarind Lake Village near Sale, and Bagan area.

The conference also discussed updates on marketing and technology which could be used to promote community tourism, as well as networking initiatives and Facebook pages which had been launched since the last conference, to help initiatives share their experience and skills. Also presented were a number of products from crafts and souvenir enterprises through panel discussion and stalls.

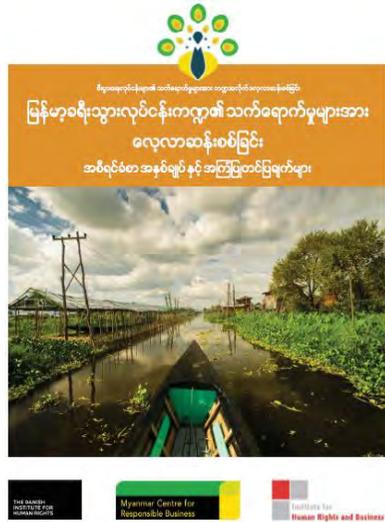
Dr. Nicole Haeusler, adviser to GIZ and Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute explained that terminology such as Community Based Tourism (CBT) tended to involve projects in communities such as tours and overnight stays. However, Community Involved Tourism (CIT) on which the Myanmar government adopted a policy in 2013 with the support of HSF, could be regarded as both CBT and communities producing items for the tourism supply chain, such as food, hotel furnishings and souvenirs. However, whatever the term used, whether CIT or CBT, the most important factor for sustainable success was genuine community participation and entrepreneurship, and not a top-down approach. Over ongoing 30 CBT/CIT projects were listed and mapped by conference participants.



The agenda, workshop presentations and press release are available at:
http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/pdf/2017-06-Agenda-Conference-on-Communities-and-Tourism_en.pdf
<http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/news/communities-and-tourism-conference-2017.html>
http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/pdf/2017-06-14-Communities-and-Tourism-Conference_en.pdf

Opening Remarks

Vicky Bowman, Director, Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) welcomed participants to the workshop and gave a brief overview of MCRB's activities including the 2015 Sector-Wide Impact Assessment on Tourism which had highlighted the importance of ensuring the participation of communities in tourism, including through implementation of the government's Policy on Community Involvement in Tourism, and also the need for capacity building activities with civil society and communities, and for the value of multistakeholder dialogue.



Vicky identified a number of activities which MCRB had undertaken with Hanns Seidel Foundation to pursue these objectives including the October 2015 workshop on responsible tourism in Nay Pyi Taw and the first Conference on Community Based Tourism in Naypyidaw in December 2015, and two multistakeholder workshops in Ngapali in May 2016 and May 2017 with HSF and MRTI. Additionally, MCRB and Fauna & Flora International had organised three multistakeholder workshops in Tanintharyi.

Vicky also identified some of the other initiatives which had been organised to support community involvement in tourism, including the Community Tourism Teashop on Facebook and the regular meetings of the Community Based Tourism network, as well as activities to support community-based tourism in Thandaunggyi and Karen State by HSF, MRTI and Peace Nexus.



U Nyunt Win Naing, Chairman, Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute (MRTI) introduced the activities of MRTI, a local non-profit organization founded in 2016, aiming to support responsible tourism development in Myanmar. He discussed how community based tourism (CBT) benefits local communities through income generation, and its strong potential in Myanmar, building on the hospitality of Myanmar people. U Nyunt Win Naing invited active and open participation in the conference, and hoped that it would promote coordination between all stakeholders to make community tourism a success.



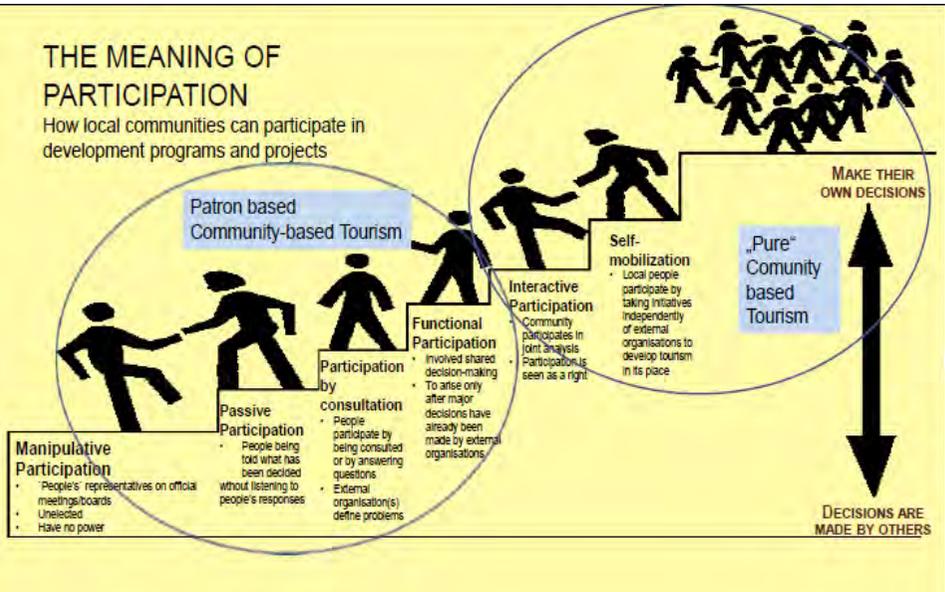
Achim Munz, Country Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) introduced HSF which has worked in the Myanmar tourism sector since 2012 including on the 2013 policy for Community Involvement in Tourism. He hoped the conference would showcase how much product development there has been in community tourism in recent years. He highlighted that it is often the interface between communities and tourism that helps new tourism destinations to emerge. While 'CBT' needs a definition, it is also important to look at the wider picture. CBT really means business development, entrepreneurship, and income generation in communities. He thanked participants for travelling to Nay Pyi Taw from all over the country and hoped for a rewarding discussion and sharing of information and innovation.

Tourism and Communities - Definitions, Concepts, Objectives

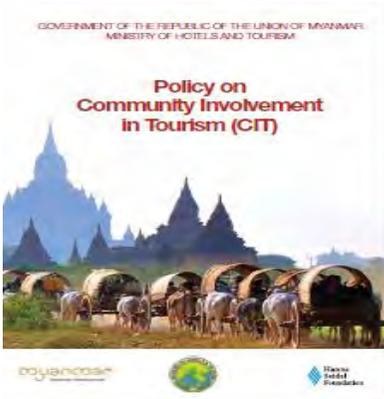


Dr. Nicole Haeusler, Consultant, Tourism and Organisational Development, GIZ Private Sector Development / PEM spoke about the meaning of Community Based Tourism (CBT), Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT) and Participation in the Myanmar context. She described how the 2013 Policy had been developed. In 2013, a pure CBT model was not possible, which led to a discussion of what community involvement in tourism could be.

Nicole presented the definition of CBT in the ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standards, Jakarta, 2016 as ‘tourism activity, **community owned and operated**, and **managed or coordinated at the community level** that contributes to the **well-being of communities** through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valued socio-cultural traditions and natural and cultural heritage resources’. This ASEAN definition was heavily focussed on activities at the community level, ideally managed by a community tourism committee.



Regardless of the precise definition of CBT, the nature of participation and consultation was important. **Patron-based CBT** where all or most decisions were taken by the government, tour operator, NGO or donor was at one end of the spectrum. At the other end was pure CBT where the majority of decisions are taken by the community.



As for the distinction between CBT and CIT, Nicole proposed an explanation of the difference whereby **CBT + Supply Chain = CIT**. In her view, CIT encompasses a broader range of activities that involves any creation of wealth through tourism for a local community, including food, souvenirs and guiding. CBT, in which tourism takes place in the community, is therefore considered part of CIT. However, as long as local communities are involved, the core concept is fulfilled, whatever it is called. In

the ensuing discussion, it was agreed that there was a need for Myanmar to come up with its own definition of community tourism, for example in a revised CIT/CBT policy.

2015 Pilot Projects – Two Years on

Daw Winnie Mai, Assistant Project Coordinator, presented on the **ITC Inclusive Tourism Project in Kayah State**. This focusses not only on CBT, but on a supply-chain approach that involves skills training and assistance for the communities. The aim is that tourists should not only photograph the communities but also experience and understand their way of living. Local guides are used and visitors can participate in cultural activities (e.g. making of Kayah sausage). Winnie offered advice for others in developing CBT projects and defined success as increased job opportunities; a wider range of CBT / local products and experiences; and increased skills and confidence of local community members, inter alia.

Overall advice for stakeholders developing CBT



1. Developing tourism in partnership with communities requires **step by step trust building / training / coaching + respect**, sufficient time and flexibility.
2. **Supply chain approach**: strategic capacity building all along the chain: at destination, B2B hubs, market.
3. **Building trusting relationships** should be part of the whole process. Harness all opportunities to invite tour operators to visit communities, share ideas, earn trust, form relationships.
4. **Build partnerships at destination level** (e.g. : ground handlers, guides, community, DMOs, **VOLUNTEERS**)

NTF III Myanmar Project
Inclusive Tourism Focussing
on Kayah State

myanmar
OFFICE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

International
Trade
Centre

CBI
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Netherlands

U Thant Zin, Ecotourism Manager, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)



presented on the work of WCS along the Ayeyarwady River in an area with around 60 Ayeyarwady dolphins north of Mandalay. WCS has consulted the community and cooperated with authorities to create a tourism product involving dolphin-watching. He presented the governance of the project (see Powerpoint) and the growth in tourists from 35 to 70 between 2015 and 2016. One success of this project has been a Training of Trainers (ToT) with community members from nine villages. The biggest challenges are pollution of the river; river traffic; electrofishing and

fishing concessions overfishing; lack of collaboration between communities and local travel companies.

Thant Zin's practical advice to communities interested in tourism was: Have a unique and charismatic product (e.g. Cooperative fishing between man and dolphins in Ayeyarwady)



1. Understand the needs of the tourist you target
2. Cooperate with government administration to ensure governance support
3. Cooperate with private tour operators to ensure they all follow rules and regulations
4. Develop clear rules and regulations with consensus of all villagers and authorities
5. Work together as a team and provide support to the leaders
6. Ensure there are Village Development Funds for income generation
7. Regularly report progress to village and authorities
8. Keep proper records of tourists visiting village and inform authorities.
9. Keep a tourist feedback book for tourists
10. Explain or keep information boards informing tourists clearly about products being sold

U Saw Bo Thar of the Thandaunggyi Tourism Development Working



Group (TTDWG) presented on the community tourism initiatives in Thandaunggyi, northern Kayin State. Before 2014, travellers to Thandaunggyi were mainly pilgrims. Since the peace agreement between the KNU and authorities, tourism, both foreign and domestic, had grown, supported by Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) and Peace Nexus. This has been facilitated by accommodation in Thandaunggyi receiving B&B licences, better infrastructure, food hygiene in restaurants, and more sites to visit.

Years	Domestic	Foreigner	Total
2016	672	89	761
2017(May)	1684	110	1794

The biggest challenges in Thandaunggyi are telecommunications, the problems of operating in a mixed control/ceasefire area, and difficulty in finding skilled employees



5. Being Involved In Tourism Is “NOT”

- To Harm or destroy our culture.
- To reduce or bread our morality.
- To leave behind or forget about our tradition.

U Zwe Zaw Zaw Hein, Chairman, Inn-chit-thu Social Development and Ecotourism Group presented on their work around Indawgyi Lake, Kachin State. The main income of the 17 villages surrounding Indawgyi Lake comes through agriculture and fishing. The Innchitthu Group was established in 2013, and now has 65 members. Their vision is to support CBT development and environmental protection in Indawgyi region. Their projects include ecotourism (kayaking, renting bicycles), community development, and collecting trash in villages. The main partner is Fauna & Flora International.



Other partners include Indawgyi Wildlife Sanctuary (Forest Department), Moehnyin Township Fisheries Department, Chance for Nature (Germany), Critical Ecosystem Protection Fund (CEPF), Indawgyi Nature Conservation and Development Association (INCDA) and Buddhist Youth (BY).

There has been a large increase in tourism over the last years, with over 600 foreigners visiting in 2016, twice as many as 2014 and 2015, and therefore more income from tourism. Inn-Chit-thu membership had increased by 30, 3 members received regional guide licenses, and they had registered at the

Township as a CSO and now had 2 full time staff and a Permanent Office. There were now three homestay opportunities and better meal provision (breakfast, coffee). They had facilitated with a boat association and collaborated with other villages (Tonsanhka), and were now operating tour products such as gibbon watching and trekking including for domestic tourists. Tourism at the Lake had featured on German TV (DW).

Their greatest challenges are limited management experience; language barriers; political instability in the region; and the seasonal nature of tourism.



U Khun Htun Oo, Manager, Community Involved Tourism in Pa-O Region (CITPAR) gave an overview of CITPAR and recent developments.

Its mission is to promote CBT that protects the environment and natural resources, to collaborate with regional authorities, and ensure rural villages in Shan State benefit from tourism. Another aim is to maintain the customs of Shan State and revive traditional cultural activities. There were about 800 visitors in Pa-O region in 2016-2017. CITPAR successes have been due to their strong team as well as their partners. They emphasise transparency –

65% of income goes back to the community.

The activities of CITPAR



U Aung Min Naing, Regional Manager, ActionAid Myanmar and U Chetry Win Tin, Journeys Adventure Travel presented on their CBT pilot project in Myaing. The project in Myaing is unique due to the partnership between ActionAid and a tour operator (Journeys) to create a tourism product in which the communities feel empowerment and ownership. The tour operator assisted the community to get started in CBT. Visitors interact with the community and have a local experience which generates local income. Up to December 2016, the project received 830 overnight visitors (mostly from anglophone countries) and 200 students from Denmark and Australia who had stayed two nights in the lodge. The project employed 4 women from 4 communities to look after the accommodation and meals. Breakfast and lunch are taken at villages. There are two local caretakers.

Accommodation



Creation of Tourism Product



Successes for the project have included obtaining support for water and tube wells from the Magwe Chief Minister and a Primary school funded by the Myanmar tourism Federation, good cooperation with local authorities, income for local villagers from food, cultural performances, bicycle guiding,

souvenir and fruit selling, and a changed mindset by villagers to focus more on education.

Lessons learned and advice for other projects include:

- Partnership with NGO and support from government is crucial for success.
- It is very important to empower the community before start of CBT to ensure communities are able to protect themselves from potential harm.
- Sustainability of CBT depends on empowering a community led process to identify what good culture can be promoted.
- Planting trees, caring about environment, respecting and promoting local culture is a part of sustainable CBT.

Discussion after these presentations focused on advice for aspiring community tourism projects, and identifying the target market.

New Community Tourism Products



U Myo Kyaw Thu, Project Director, Arakan Nature Lodge presented the development of the eco-lodge near Gwa, Rakhine State, located about three hours drive from Thandwe (Ngapali) airport. It was built using sustainable materials, and will be run sustainably by aiming to minimise use of electricity, use solar power, produce their own drinking water from a well, and use biodegradable amenities. 90% of staff will be from the vicinity of the lodge. There have been close consultations with the local community in

order to involve them in the project from the beginning. The goal is to show that community tourism can be a win-win situation for all parties involved and to be a role model for eco-lodges in Myanmar.

In harmony with nature's generous gifts



Daw Myat Myat Moe, Technical Expert, Sustainable Tourism, GIZ gave an overview of the Community Based Tourism (CBT) in the **Danu Self-Administered Region, in Pindaya and Ywa-ngan townships**. The product includes development of a Danu Trail (Oct 2014 – June 2016), trekking through beautiful scenery, either as a day return or with a night stop, including a green tea factory, local astrologer, drum making and weaving. One of the aims is to preserve these tradition crafts.

GIZ has held community consultations and raised awareness of CBT among the community. The main challenge has been local capacity, but there has been strong support and enthusiasm from local communities the Danu SAZ government, Shan State government, and the Ministry of Hotels & Tourism.

Community consultation / involvement methods

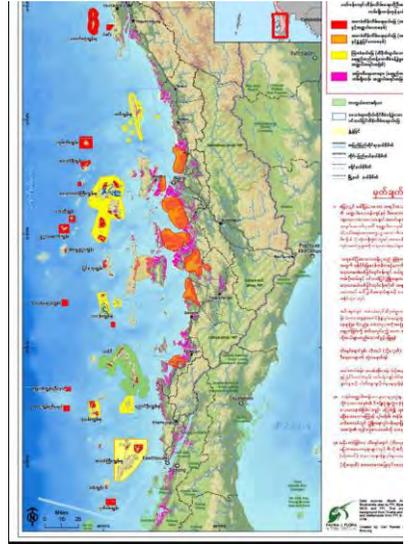
- ❑ Closely coordination with Shan State Government, Danu SAZ, MoHT, MHA (Southern Shan State),
- ❑ Community consultation and agreement of CBT
- ❑ CBT Awareness & Facilliator training to DTDSO , July, 2016
- ❑ CBT Awareness Raising to the villagers facilitated by DTDSO
 - ❖ Village mapping, seasonal calendar, village history, confirmation
 - ❖ Rule & Regulation, combine with existing R&R from MoHT,
 - ❖ R&R confirmation, present to the Danu SAZ,
 - ❖ Present to the Shan State Government
 - ❖ Cultural Group forming & Training
 - ❖ Business Eye's Opening training
 - ❖ Finance Training
 - ❖ Cultural Group follow up
 - ❖ Kick off opening in September



Frank Momberg and U Zau Lunn, Fauna & Flora International (FFI) and U Myo Oo, Green Network, Tanintharyi Region presented on community tourism potential in Myeik Archipelago.

FFI has undertaken coral reef surveys in Myeik and mapped the most sensitive areas. The reefs and other marine ecosystems including seagrass and mangroves are under pressure from deforestation, dynamite fishing and development.

Raising awareness of these issues and working closely with local communities is essential. CBT has a role and FFI is looking into a CBT pilot site on the Langan island group and on Daung islands. But there are currently multiple challenges for CBT in Myeik archipelago, including: no inclusion of local communities except on Lampi island; no opportunities for tourists to stay at community accommodation; no tourism overnight stay permitted on the islands without permission; and tourism revenues not reaching local communities. ‘Moken tourism’ already has some negative impacts.



Recommendations for Langan island group

- No hotel development on the islands (except dive resort)
- No development in locally managed marine area/ LMMA (except mooring buoys, diving/ snorkelling, and community-managed lodge)

Recommendations for the next 2 years:

- Development of community-based (LMMA) diving/ snorkelling tourism
 - Train local guides on Moken culture and responsible snorkelling
 - Promote live-on-board dive operations
 - Establish mooring buoys to avoid anchorage damage
 - Manage snorkelling to avoid damage to shallow corals
 - Regulate visitor numbers
 - Dive/ cruise operators pay entrance fee/ donation to LMMA for community-based coral reef protection
 - Assess feasibility for community-managed lodge
 - Develop sustainable financing mechanism for LMMAs through tourism fees from cruise operations



Recommendations Thayawthadangyi/ Daung islands

- Identify beach tourism sites for picnic/ swimming day trips
 - identify CBT opportunities
 - identify short forest treks
 - provide shelters for shade
 - establish waste collection system by tourism operators
 - train community guides
 - regulate visitor numbers and collect license/ entrance fees in support of park protection (LMMA/ no take zones)
 - Identify safe boat access to the beach without impacting coral reefs
- Potential hotel development on beautiful beaches (without coral reefs)
 - establish waste collection system by hotel operators
 - collect entrance/ license fees in support of LMMAs

U Myo Oo introduced the **Green Network**, which works together with FFI in Myeik and presented some of the natural beauty of the area, both onshore and in the archipelago. He emphasised that the people of the Myeik archipelago depend on the environment, which is why sustainable tourism development to conserve it is so important.

U Kaung Htet Win, Marketing & Programme Coordinator, Tamarind Lake Village Homes gave an overview of the community tourism product near Salay, in Chauk township, one hour's drive from Bagan, which had won a Business Innovation Facility (BIF) PPIC Grant in 2016 and started operation in October. The product involved 32 community members, mostly women. Visitors can experience a variety of activities ranging from staying in an authentic local house, eating and cooking traditional foods, village walk and farm visits, bullock cart riding, visit to Salay (Konbaung dynasty wooden monastery), traditional music and local festivals.



Challenges faced by the project have included the mind-set of the local communities; socio-cultural impacts; income distribution; limited capacity and language barriers. In the next two years, they hope to achieve higher living standards in the community and to increase job opportunities, and eventually have the village manage the project without outside support.



U Zaw Min Oo @ Jack, of Green Season Travel talked about the CBT tour that they organise to see **Village Life Along the Old Dhammazed Road**. The tour, which was a winner of a 2015 BIF PPIC grant, is available as a day trip from Yangon. Visitors experience Myanmar village life (in an area near Bago where Jack grew up), see the countryside and get exercise on bicycles.



Before organising this tour, Green Season Travel met with local communities to consult them on tourism, in order to maximise benefits for the local community. Opportunities have included increased income, language and cultural exchange, and contributions from the tour company to community development e.g. a well. Jack described the main logistical challenges they had encountered which had led them to adapt the tour.

The **Q&A** for this session focused on managing risk in new community tourism projects. All projects agreed that risks need to be identified and taken into account when starting a community tourism project.

Panel: How to Increase local Participation in Tourism

Daw Thi Thi Thein, Independent Researcher moderated a panel on local participation in tourism.



Daw Mu Lon, CBT Coordinator, Pan Pet Community Based Tourism Group explained how she had become involved in the CBT project in Kayah State after attending ITC training. She highlighted that it was difficult for her

as she had never seen a foreigner before, but regular encounters with foreigners and training have helped.

Speaking from an NGO perspective, **U Aung Min Naing, Regional Manager, ActionAid Myanmar** emphasised that small things go a long way in community tourism. It took years to build trust with the community, but it has paid off. Since ActionAid already had contact with the community in Myaing, this had provided a structure to engage on CBT.

Peter Richards, Consultant on Cultural Tourism and Market Access was asked how ITC had ensured community participation in Kayah state. He noted that it is very rare that a whole community will want to participate, particularly at the start. But a project needs to ensure it is working with all of those who are keen to be involved. Like U Aung Min Naing, he also highlighted the importance of building trust over years, although project/funding deadlines can be a problem for this. Additionally, the community members need to be seen as colleagues instead of recipients of an act of poverty alleviation. It is important to work together, for example by going back to the community and presenting results to the community. In Kayah State, regional guides go into the field with the ITC team as often as possible without the pressure of having other tour guides and tour operators there. This was another way of building trust among the various stakeholders.

Daw Khin San Aye, Chair of the HRD Subcommittee, Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA) shared her view on CBT and the responsibilities of each stakeholder. She highlighted the importance of giving information to both the community and the tourists, and being aware of the differences between the different tourist markets (e.g. differences in nationality, age).

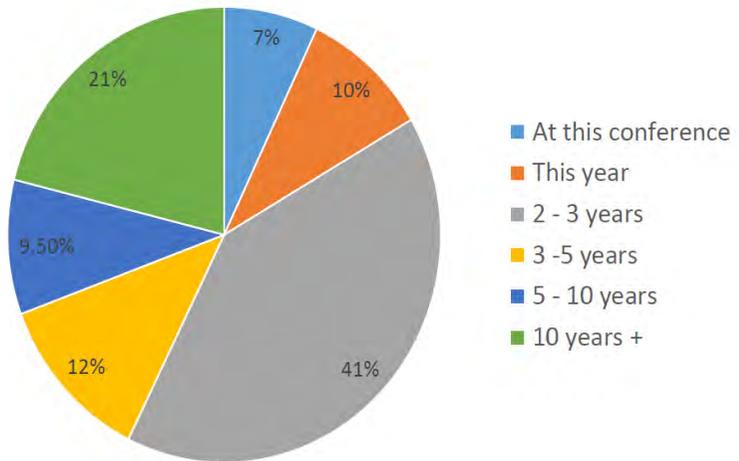
Discussion focussed on how to achieve a sustainable CBT project in the longer term. Panellists agreed that communities need to have ownership of the project and they need to find their own ways of running the project in order to be successful. Additionally, for a community project to be successful, there needs to be potential in the first place i.e. market potential, a functioning community.

Results from Polling, and Comparison with 2015

Participants were polled on their views on community based tourism, using the same questions as in 2015 to allow comparison of results, and how views had changed.

Participants were asked how long they had been aware of CBT, with most (41%) saying they had been aware of this term for 2-3 years.

How many years have you been aware of / known about Community Based Tourism (CBT) ?



The top three factors needed for **successful** community tourism projects were identified as:

1. Community organization & support (37%, up from 22% in 2015)
2. Product development to market needs (17%, up from 14% in 2015)
3. Better cultural & business sense understanding (13%, up from 6% in 2015)

The top three factors increasing risk of **failure** of a community tourism project were:

1. Top-down approach, needs of a community not taken into consideration (24%, up from 17% in 2015)
2. Lack of mobilization & involvement of a community (17%, as in 2015)

3. Unstable political situation (16%, as in to 2015)

These factors had also been brought out in the presentations of the existing and new projects.

Regarding the potential of CBT in Myanmar the participants were strongly convinced there is potential. Some saw it as restricted to a few destinations (14%), others saw it as relevant to main tourist destinations (20%) but most saw it as an option in many more destinations in Myanmar (32%).

Finally, the participants were asked where the main target market for CBT would be found within the next 4 years. A majority (53%) thought that the target market included everyone, around 25% saw it as focussed on a Western market, around 10% the domestic market, and slightly fewer the ASEAN market.

Full polling results are available on MCRB's website.

<http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/pdf/2017-06-Polling-Results-2nd-Communities-and-Tourism-Conference.pdf>

Panel: How to Access Markets for Community Tourism

Daw Wai Phy Myint, Manager – Regional Outreach, Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB)

facilitated a panel on marketing on community tourism. She emphasized that marketing is an aspect that communities often have difficulties with and encouraged the panellists to share their marketing techniques and recommendations.



Ameer Virani, Product Manager, EXO Travel noted that CBT is an aspect of responsible tourism and should be promoted as such. EXO Travel tries to give the client a local experience, with a community feeling. As product

manager, he is the bridge between clients in different countries. Exo Travel's marketing strategy is B2B (Business to Business) directly with agents in various countries to sell their tours. The most important factor is the content of the tour; experiences need to be able to sell themselves. He highlighted that 90% of business occurs in the top 4 destinations in Myanmar, but there are tourists who also want to go 'off the beaten track'. They want 'unique' experiences like the Kayah sausage-making or the GIZ Trekking Tour in Shan state. He saw a lot of potential for authentic CBT experience. He also noted growing demand especially amongst domestic tourists in Myanmar. CBT projects are relatively easy to market as to be holistic, local, responsible and authentic.

Chetry @ Win Tin, Executive Committee Member, Myanmar Tourism Marketing (MTM), recommended promoting CBT through:

- Social media, esp. Facebook as it is widespread and popular in Myanmar
- A designed brochure or pamphlet



He said that while CBT is more sensitive to its negative impacts than mass tourism, CBT projects also require a logistics such as water, food and other goods. This can disrupt local people's lives. Also, local cultures and the areas themselves are highly sensitive, so CBT projects need a small footprint. He also stressed the importance of domestic tourism. 70% of guests at his Kalaw Hill Lodge are locals and particularly the younger generation, and they are interested in CBT. CBT can therefore raise awareness of locals on environmental matters. Chetry believes domestic tourism will be the crucial driver for tourism in Myanmar in the next 2-5 years, especially at CBT sites.

Jens Uwe Parkitny, former Expedia Executive and Representative of Loikaw Lodge by the Lake, Kayah State talked about digital marketing, drawing on his Expedia experience. By 2020 the Asia-Pacific region will have attracted 37% of all online bookings. In 2016, the APAC tourist market is \$46 billion and growing. Many tourists search online while 'in-destination' on Google or TripAdvisor, Viator and localalike.com a specialist CBT site for Thailand (see also visit.org for 'authentic travel experiences with do-good organisations').



Jens’ recommendations included using an in-house travel agency to offer tours, involving the neighbours in collaboration with into community tourism projects and encouraging guests to give feedback. His experience was that guest feedback is consistently positive for CBT projects,

demonstrating how much tourists appreciate CBT projects and want sustainable tourism. There are many options with newly emerging online marketing platforms, but the project itself needs a website in order to present your product and attract interest, see for example loikawlodged.com.

Jeanette Scherzpenzeel, Manager, Asia Tourism Development Programme, Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI) spoke about the opportunities of linkages with the European market. The most important first step to market a product or a project is a clear target market. This could be either domestic, regional or e.g. European. To target the European market, B2B is important as mentioned by Ameer Virani. This can be done either through channels (tour operators), or directly to clients through online channels (direct marketing). When asked about the advantages or disadvantages that occur by an engagement with the European market instead of the Asian market she stressed that these markets are completely different in terms of time and money spent in the destinations respectively. European tourists are coming for the local experience which in turn favours CBT projects. She recommended keeping it simple at the beginning, to see how the project develops and how all stakeholders involved work together, after which marketing can expand.

The panel facilitator summed up the main recommendations from the panel:

- Know your market in order to target it
- Integrate with tour operators (B2B)
- Ask for feedback of tourists on online platforms

Discussion highlighted that:

- Geography does not exist in online marketing
- Other stakeholders like universities should be involved
- Problems transferring money to Myanmar sometimes deter online bookings



Panel: How Communities can use Technology for Tourism

Thein Than Htay, Programme Associate, Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) moderated a panel on the impact of technological advances on the tourism market.



Ms. Tiffany Tang, Project Manager, iDiscover App & Map introduced the concept of iDiscover. Most cities across Asia are starting to have a similar look so there is a rising demand for distinguishing themselves through authenticity and heritage. iDiscover packages the local wealth of knowledge into an App&Map by working closely with locals. Tiffany emphasized that Myanmar's selling point is its diversity in terms of culture and ethnicity. As Myanmar is still an untapped market there is high potential for iDiscover and other technological products to promote different destinations.



U Aung Phyo Lwin, CEO, Ezstay Myanmar gave a short overview of his website ezstay.com.mm. This had started only with homestays and B&Bs for online booking purposes and the target group was exclusively foreigners. Nowadays, they increasingly attach importance to other target groups such as domestic travellers and students looking for budget accommodation. Upon registration on ezstay.com hoteliers are inserted in the database and can be booked by tourists. Ezstay therefore provides easy access to locals to book accommodation online as well as finding moderate priced accommodation.

U Nyunt Win Aung, CEO, GoP ('go-pi') presented GoPtour.com, a Burmese language internet platform where tourists can find a range of tour packages in one place and all information in one spot and increasing visibility to the wider audience. GoP could be used by CBT projects to showcase their products online to domestic tourists. He mentioned that they are reviewing traveller feedback and will announce the results soon.

When asked where they saw themselves in 10 years, all panellists agreed on the difficulty of predicting market developments, particularly when there are new competitors, new technology and new regulations. They all were highly motivated to support CBT products, and saw technology as a big opportunity for CBT.

Discussion focused on whether technology would compete with conventional products, e.g tour guides who might become obsolete through iDiscover Map. According to Tiffany, the websites/apps targetted different markets and therefore these newly emerging apps or websites do not pose a threat.



Panel: Products and Community Tourism

U Nyunt Win Naing, Chairman, MRTI moderated a discussion on products and linkages to community tourism with representatives of a number of the products showcased at the Conference (see pictures below).



Randi Wagner, Project Manager, Hla Day spoke about Hla Day's business model and new tool kit. Hla Day works with Myanmar craft producers on business and design training. The outcome is products from textiles, clay etc that are uniquely Myanmar with a bit of a twist. Most of Hla Day's producers are based in and around Yangon, but increasingly they are involving rural areas.

U Thet Zaw Htwe, Program Officer, Sustainable Tourism Hub explained that the Sustainable Tourism Hub (@STHubMyanmar) is a partnership between Australian Volunteers International and Intrepid Travel funded by the Australian government and supporting entrepreneurs and microbusinesses committed to sustainable tourism with business skills, financial and technical support, including for tourism in Yangon.

Natalie Ortiz, Crafts Program Manager, Turquoise Mountain explained the vision and current work of Turquoise Mountain, which works with the Suu Foundation to promote and preserve Myanmar traditional crafts by supporting artisans to develop their skills and connect to wider domestic and international markets to generate income. They have been producing higher-end products but will also diversify to a more affordable product range. They work with traditional goldsmiths in Ramree, Rakhine, and artisanal goldminers.

David Abrahamson, Program Manager, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Rural Development, Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development (MIID) described MIID's work near Inle Lake in Shan State on bamboo value chain development in local villages to increase incomes. Through support to forestry and crafts skills and marketing, villager income had increased by 25-30%. Challenges involve marketing, and involving women at the start of the programme.



In discussion, the panel noted that:

- Not every village can be part of a CBT project, but expansion increases opportunities.
- Resources of the village determine which handicrafts are being produced.
- Every village has different demands, skills, and resources.
- More value add creates more revenue but needs e.g. more electricity
- International partners need to be sensitive to local culture.

Display of local Souvenirs and Products from social Enterprises

Throughout the conference, products and crafts were displayed from community projects and social enterprises in Myanmar, to reinforce the idea that community involved tourism also involves communities in the supply chain for souvenirs etc. Producers who displayed included:



Souvenirs from the Pa-O Region
info@cit-paoregion.com



HlaDay
+959452241465
81 Pansodan Street, Lower Middle Block, 1st Floor, Yangon
info@hlaydaymyanmar.org
<https://www.facebook.com/hlaydaymyanmar/>



Third Story Project
+959799874843
thirdstorychildrenbooks@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/thirdstorychildrenbooks/>



YK Designs

+959970684281

185, Marlar Yone (1) Lane, 12 Quarter,
AungDaMa Yeikthar, Hlaing Township,
Yangon

ykcollectionsmyanmar@gmail.com

[https://www.facebook.com/
ykcollectionsmm/](https://www.facebook.com/ykcollectionsmm/)



Bamboo products from near Inle Lake

Mr. David Abrahamson (MIID)

dabrahamson@miiid.org



Flame Tree Sewing

[https://www.facebook.com/Flame-
Tree-Sewing-1729710713968609/](https://www.facebook.com/Flame-Tree-Sewing-1729710713968609/)



Turquoise Mountain Jewelry

sells at Hla Day (81 Pansodan Rd),
Belmond Governor's Residence Hotel,
Anawratha Cruise

sales@turquoisemountain.org

[https://www.facebook.com/
turquoisemountainmyanmar/](https://www.facebook.com/turquoisemountainmyanmar/)



Chu Chu

+959792582795

507, Khaye road, Dala township,
Yangon

chuchurecycle@gmail.com

[https://www.facebook.com/
ChuChuYangon/](https://www.facebook.com/ChuChuYangon/)



Pomelo for Myanmar

+951295358

89 Thein Phyu Road, Downtown
Yangon

pomelopartnerships@gmail.com

[https://www.facebook.com/
pomeloformyanmar/](https://www.facebook.com/pomeloformyanmar/)



Myanmar Responsible Tourism Awards

Johanna Pelikan for MRTI

[rtawards@myanmarresponsible
tourism.org](mailto:rtawards@myanmarresponsibletourism.org)

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/MyanmarResponsibleTourismAwards/)

[MyanmarResponsibleTourismAwards/](https://www.facebook.com/MyanmarResponsibleTourismAwards/)

CBT Network

U Zaw Min Oo @ Jack, Green Season Travels and Daw Thi Thi Thein, Independent Researcher & Consultant introduced the Community Based Tourism Network Group of which they are members. It was established in 2016 and now has 100 participants from different stakeholder groups committed to building partnerships and addressing challenges to successful CBT development in Myanmar. The network shares information in regular meetings and via email.

ACTION PLANS

- ▶ Share information and lessons learnt
- ▶ Present new projects and approaches in Myanmar
- ▶ Understand the needs for capacity building
- ▶ Act as a platform for building partnerships
- ▶ Address the key challenges for CBT and identify potential solutions
- ▶ Provide support for policy formulation and advisory to TSWG & MOHT
- ▶ Invite key industry actors to present their approach to CBT
- ▶ Organize exchange visits and study tours

The network is expanding outreach to other stakeholders, arranging field visits, building capacity building and creating an online presence.

To join the CBT Network, please contact: Barbara Schott, schott.barbara@gmail.com or Andrea Valentin, andreavalentin77@gmail.com

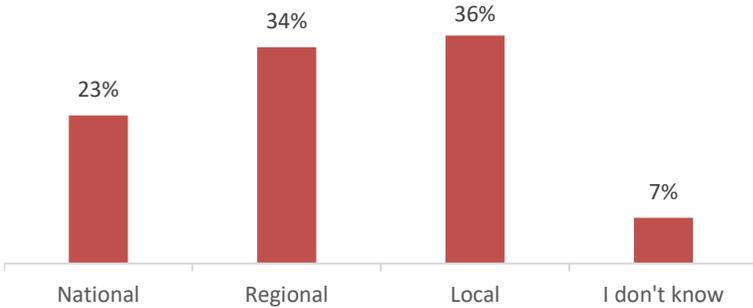
Final Questionnaire

At the end of the conference 71 participants completed a questionnaire in both Myanmar and English language in which they gave feedback on the Conference and were asked to identify one change or one idea that they would put into practice as a result of this workshop.

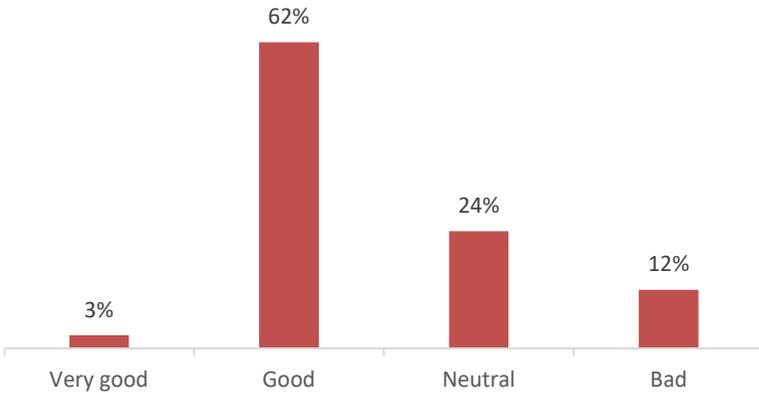
Their action points included:

- Linkages/ networks to follow up with
- Marketing and CBT, Marketing (online) of projects
- Intend to start a CBT business
- Companies who make use of a community approach are a good partner to work with
- Community participation as key for the implementation
- Consider “trust time” built into a CBT project planning

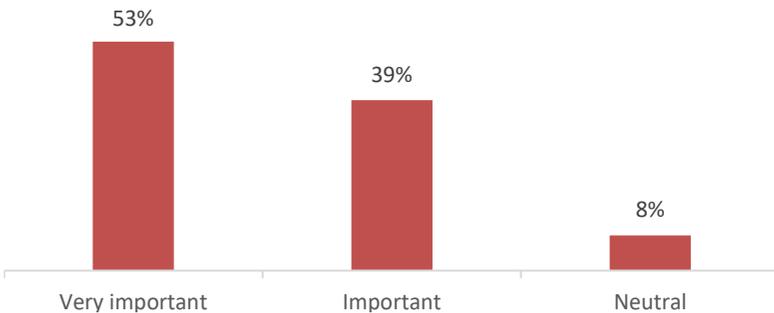
The questionnaire also asked their view on which level of government should be involved in CBT. Most respondents said either regional or local



Participants were asked their views of current tourism development in Myanmar, the majority (62%) rating it as Good.



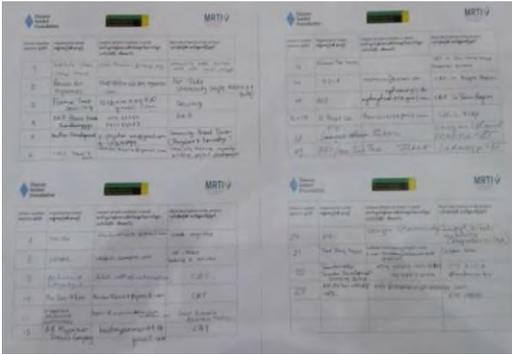
Finally, participants were asked how important CBT was for rural areas in Myanmar with 53% of the votes for 'Very Important', 39% for 'Important' and 8% 'Neutral'.



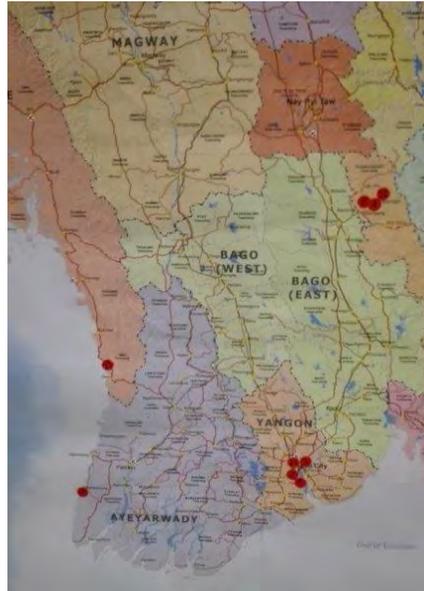
Mapping of CBT/CIT Projects and Contact Details

During the conference, participants were invited to identify current activities which could be considered CBT/CIT and add them to a map of Myanmar. Over 30 such activities were identified, many of which presented at the Conference. A list of these, and contact details, is provided online for download. The following link enables to download the contacts:

<https://goo.gl/qxiHkR>



The image shows four sheets of an Excel spreadsheet, each with a header 'MRTI-V'. The sheets contain columns for project details and contact information. The data is organized into rows, with some cells containing text and others containing numbers or symbols.



The Excel chart consists of 2 Sheets:

1. all the data / contact details collected at the conference.
2. Data adjusted to the following criteria according to MRTI:

Fosters opportunities at the community level for local people wishing to participate more fully in the tourism industry

At least half a day is spent in the community

Is run with the involvement and consent of the local community

A fair share of profits returns back to the community

Involves communities rather than individuals

Environmental sustainability

Media Reports about the Conference

<http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/business/26416-marketing-main-roadblock-for-community-tourism.html>

<http://www.mizzima.com/news-features/central-myanmar-traditional-crafts-help-boost-income>

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Business



Two entrepreneurs in Bagan work with the Government and Tourism Companies based in Yangon to market their products.

Marketing main roadblock for community tourism

BY ANTHONY DAVY

COMMUNITY tourism is a growing industry in Myanmar, but it is still in its infancy. The main roadblock to its growth is the lack of marketing and promotion. Many entrepreneurs in the sector are struggling to find ways to reach their target audience.

One entrepreneur in Bagan, Myanmar, has found a way to overcome this challenge. She has established a community tourism business that focuses on showcasing the local culture and heritage of the region.

She has worked closely with the Government and Tourism Companies based in Yangon to develop marketing strategies and promote her business to a wider audience.

Her success has inspired other entrepreneurs in the sector to explore similar models. They are now working together to create a network of community tourism businesses that can benefit from each other's marketing efforts.

The Myanmar Government has also taken steps to support the growth of community tourism. It has established a dedicated department to oversee and promote these initiatives, ensuring that they are sustainable and beneficial to the local community.

While the industry is still in its early stages, there is a growing sense of optimism among entrepreneurs. They believe that with the right marketing and support, community tourism can become a significant part of Myanmar's tourism sector.

One of the key challenges facing the industry is the lack of infrastructure and services in rural areas. This makes it difficult for tourists to visit and enjoy the local culture and heritage.

Entrepreneurs are working to address these challenges by investing in infrastructure and services. They are also collaborating with the Government to improve the overall tourism environment.

As the industry continues to grow, it is expected that community tourism will become a major attraction for tourists. This will not only benefit the local economy but also help to preserve and promote Myanmar's rich cultural heritage.

IN CENTRAL MYANMAR, TRADITIONAL CRAFTS HELP BOOST INCOME

The low level of income of weaving A patchwork and embroidery fill the house in Chin village, a rural community in Bagan Region's Thaketa Township in central Myanmar.

In 2010, 20-year-old Ma Tin began her hands and legs skillfully as the women think through a loom, creating handcrafted traditional clothes.

The mother of two sells woven traditional clothes in the early hours of the morning, and she is working for the rest of the day to loose her income.

In the past, I earned about 30,000 kyats (US\$3) each month. However, my monthly income has increased to 100,000 kyats (US\$10) from both jobs," she said in an interview in mid-May.

With help from NGOs in the area, women of traditional, hand-crafted clothing are breaking into a market flooded by cheap imports from abroad.

Women in Bagan, Myanmar (Chin, Padoke and Mying townships) are at the forefront of the effort, while international non-profit ActionAid has conducted training courses for 2,500 locals from 14 villages since 2011.

The organization helps locate raw materials for the goods and find markets for them, said May Tinmar Kwee, coordinator of the Socio-Economic Development Network project under ActionAid.

The finished clothes are popular among tourists and other visitors, May Tinmar Kwee said and there is more to the added benefit of not losing touch with tradition.

As part of the project, the Women Producer Support Group (WPSG) was formed in 2013 with 700 members in 10 villages, the trade

association helped local residents in the township earn a total of 70 million kyats (US\$7) in 2012.

Despite the lag in tourism around the 2013 election period and issues stemming from flooding, the Socio-Economic Development Network (SEDN) project implemented by ActionAid in Myanmar has never been interrupted.

Under the project, a handicraft shop known as M South opened in Yangon. The township, hoping to attract visitors coming to see Myanmar's famed Bagan temples and pagodas. The crafts are now sold at hotels and other shops in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar's new capital.

They include pillow and cushion cases, clothes and bags. M South's director, Mying Aye, said that the township has received orders from buyers for the total value of goods before transferring the orders to producers.

The first phase of SEDN projects started in 2011 and continued last year, but it has been extended another three years until 2015. After that, the SEDN is scheduled to hand over the business, including M South, to WPSG, the women's trade group. ActionAid, however, will continue offering training on manufacturing their goods.

Mying Aye, a resident of Mying Township, had worked in making palm sugar collecting, firewood and wooding. She earned about 600 kyats (US\$) each day at the time. But from weaving she makes about 4,000 kyats (US\$400).

"I do not need to worry about making a living any more. She said in the past most of the young people in her village moved to a major city for work, such as Yangon and Mandalay. Others went further afield to China. But the new opportunities in the cottage industry have allowed some of the migration.

"Both male and female adults had to find jobs in other areas. This situation does not happen any more," she said. "My life is now."

Mying Aye said that the township has received orders from buyers for the total value of goods before transferring the orders to producers.

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Source: Myanmar Now

www.mizzima.com

July 22, 2013

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About the organisers

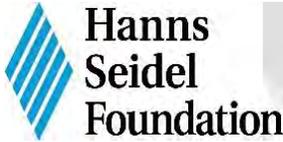


Myanmar Centre for
Responsible Business

The Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) was set up in 2013 by the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) and the Danish Institute

for Human Rights (DIHR) with funding from the UK, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Switzerland and Ireland. Based in Yangon, it aims to provide a trusted and impartial platform for the creation of knowledge, capacity, and dialogue amongst businesses, civil society organisations and governments to encourage responsible business conduct throughout Myanmar. Responsible business means business conduct that works for the long-term interests of Myanmar and its people, based on responsible social and environmental performance within the context of international standards.

<https://www.facebook.com/myanmar.responsible.business/>



The Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) aims to contribute in an active and effective way to international cooperation and understanding with its programmes and projects in Myanmar. Its first involvement to provide development assistance in

Myanmar dates back to 1994 with capacity building activities for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the time when Myanmar was preparing to apply for membership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Foundation has had a representative office in Yangon since October 2012 and was the first German political foundation to establish a representative office in Myanmar.

<https://www.facebook.com/HSF.Myanmar/>



Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute (MRTI) is a non-profit organisation set up in 2016 aiming to support responsible tourism development in Myanmar through knowledge sharing, training, and research. MRTI envisions Myanmar as a leading

responsible tourism destination, which empowers local communities, strives for livelihood creation and respects environmental sustainability.

<https://www.facebook.com/myanmarresponsibletourism/>