



**2021**

# Testing Times



SUSTAIN PROJECTS  
MYANMAR

Annual Supporter Magazine

# Persevering in testing times

Dear Friends,

It's been another very tough year for Myanmar. Besides the devastating effects of a pandemic that the country's health system was ill equipped to handle, in February the military initiated a coup. The full effects of the military action are yet to be felt, but the civil unrest and brutal reprisals indicate that worse is yet to come. It's a devastating turn of events for a country that has basically been in civil war for 60 years. The Civil Disobedience Movement seems strong despite the extra judicial killings, and there are many civilians in government, the health system and even the police, who have protested the coup. We know from research that during on-going violence there are many innocent casualties, and civilian deaths usually outnumber direct military casualties several times over. When resources are spent on war they're not being spent on the important things like healthcare and education. This latest coup will take years to heal and just as long to restore the economic development lost. Whether the end result is the beginning of a new 'Myanmar Spring' is yet to be seen.

These two very sad events have had a significant adverse effect on the work that Mon, our expatriate midwife, and our partner TRAD (Earth Mission Asia) in Kyauukyi have been able to undertake. The students have moved to the jungle location with lessons being done by Zoom and there has also been a delay in the commencement of building the Birthing Unit. Thankfully some things have gone well despite the challenges. The first cohort of graduating students have started work in remote clinics. The competence level of those in training and out in the field is high and there is anecdotal evidence of many lives being saved. We've been able to provide some great new technology at the jungle clinic in the form of an ultrasound machine and a solar fridge that provide increased services to patients.

The work in the slum area with Community Care Myanmar (CCM) was also affected by COVID and the coup. Classes were cancelled and scholarships not taken up during the year due to lockdowns. It's been an extremely difficult and testing time.

So it has been a tough year and there is little sign that it is going to improve in the near future. But, along with Mon, CCM and EMA, we look forward in hope. Our hope and prayer is that the next generation of young, excited and positive leaders can help lead in genuine change in the country. We ask for God to give them wisdom and strength so that indeed AK47s will be turned into silos and the heart of the people will turn towards shalom.

**Rob Kilpatrick**  
**SPM Board Chair**

## WHO WE ARE

We are a community motivated and guided by the power of God's love in Jesus to see children, families and communities enjoying the benefits of sustainable development.

## OUR MISSION

To encourage community wholeness, well-being and transformation through sustainable development projects.

## OUR VISION

Transformed and empowered communities enjoying the results of their work in dignity and peace.



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# THE IMPACT OF THE FIRST 6 MONTHS OF 2021

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## T-RAD & MIDWIFE PROJECT



**782**  
ULTRASOUNDS

**12**  
PREGNANT WOMEN  
REFERRED FOR HIGHER  
LEVEL CARE

**5**  
BABIES RECEIVED  
TREATMENT AND VACCINE  
FOR HEPATITIS B



**36**  
STUDENTS ENROLLED  
IN THE PHYSICIAN  
ASSISTANT PROGRAM

**5,979**  
LAB TESTS PERFORMED



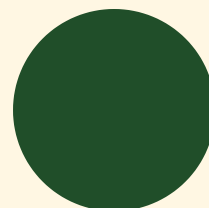
**5**  
PA GRADUATES  
WORKING IN REMOTE  
CLINICS

**4**  
BABIES RECEIVED MILK  
POWDER



## COMMUNITY CARE MYANMAR PROJECT

**1,537**  
HOUSEHOLDS IN YANGON SLUM  
PROVIDED WITH RICE, OIL,  
VEGES, TINNED FISH, SOAP AND  
FACEMASKS



# Antenatal care continues



I think it's fair to say that 2021 has not been the reprieve from 2020 that globally many people were hoping for. This year has been especially challenging in Myanmar with consideration to be given to a grossly deteriorated political environment. With the health system under overwhelming pressure, it has increased the need for the services our clinic offers. The more challenges thrown at us, the more creative and resourceful our team has become. We have seen an increase in numbers coming to the clinic, and people coming from even further afield to seek health care. It has become a challenge to ensure that pregnant women are given the necessary minimum care; minimum number of antenatal visits, vitamins, immunisations and consideration of each of their pregnancies. We have picked up the pieces from the broken state system and are able to contribute to the shortfall of antenatal care and advice for safe birth in the area.

The third wave of COVID saw the township hospitals struggling to continue and for a while there were too many staff with COVID at the Kyaukkyi hospital and they were forced to close for a short period. Our clinic continued. We have noticed that when changes occur there is often a sudden drop in patient numbers, but after a week or so people start coming out like normal to the clinic. When we found out that we had been exposed to 2 patients with covid, we were recommended to quarantine our staff for two weeks and close the clinic. We took this opportunity to break down dividing walls to enlarge exam rooms, change the flow of clinic and create a larger spread-out waiting area and screening/reception area. It also opened the area where blood is collected and reduced contact with the cashier.



We had local seamstresses sew more PPE for us, and we implemented a new working system. We broke our team into 2 groups and worked alternate weeks. Mid-week of our off week we would get a routine brain swizzling to test for covid! This has worked well at keeping our staff healthy and ensure we are not passing covid to our patients and reducing where possible the patients sharing covid to our staff. We continue to come into contact with patients who are covid positive, and our measures are limiting the passage of covid through us, but cannot eliminate all risk completely. It is a time of continually re-evaluating and thinking outside the box. This year has been a tragedy and our team are doing the best they can to keep things going in the face of extreme difficulty.

**Mon Parker**

**SPM Midwife and Co-ordinator of the Maternal Health Project**



Photos courtesy of Earth Mission Asia

## Pray with us

Now more than ever Myanmar needs our support and prayers. We long for the people of Myanmar to come through these testing times like a beautiful lotus flower emerging from the mud. The fibres of the lotus stem are strong and resilient and are used to make the most precious and costly thread. Our prayer is that justice, peace, mercy and freedom will soon return to this land and the people will be like the the lotus flower, once again standing strong and resilient with their heads held high. We pray that the people will not give up hope and that the international community will do all they can to see peace return.

**Isaiah 41 v 10 : Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**



# Testing times for children

Children in Myanmar have not been able to attend school since early 2020 when the COVID pandemic first hit. So sadly our partner CCM who work in one of Yangon's largest slum communities, have not been able to resume classes in the new school building. It has been a very difficult time for these children. The team however have continued to regularly visit the families of the students and other community members to check on their well-being. And in co-operation with community leaders the CCM team have done regular distributions of food and other essential items. A total of 1,537 households were provided with food rations during the first half of 2021 as funds and safety permitted.



In the past most of these families depended on day labouring jobs, or selling items at the market for their family income. Now with COVID and the Coup their ability to earn any sort of money has disappeared. Inflation is another consequence of the Coup and now the families are finding that they can buy much less for their Kyat (Myanmar currency). The United Nations Development Program has said that half of Myanmar's population could plunge into poverty by 2022, reversing economic gains made over the last 16 years. A bleak outlook for the people living in Yangon's slum communities, who were already among the most vulnerable.





# Partner with us

**BECOME ...**

## **A TRANSFORMER**

It begins with a \$30 monthly commitment to support our work regularly. Or you can give a one-off donation. It's easy - just visit our website: [www.sustainmyanmar.org/donate](http://www.sustainmyanmar.org/donate) or fill in, cut out, and send us your details using the form below.

## **A CHURCH AMBASSADOR**

Be the link between us and your church/prayer/missions ministry. We would value your church's prayer. Contact Joy at [info@sustainmyanmar.org](mailto:info@sustainmyanmar.org)

## **A TRANSFORMER BUSINESS PARTNER**

Sponsorship of \$5000 will get your business name and logo promoted on our website and other promotional materials. Contact [info@sustainmyanmar.org](mailto:info@sustainmyanmar.org) for more details.

## **A VOLUNTEER**

Whether it's helping out with administration, fundraising events, sharing our message on social media here in Australia, or using your skills in one of our Myanmar projects, we'd love you to become part of the team. Contact Joy at [info@sustainmyanmar.org](mailto:info@sustainmyanmar.org).

## **A BEQUEATHER**

A bequest to SUSTAIN Projects Myanmar is a gift to enable us to encourage community wholeness, well-being and transformation through sustainable development projects. Contact Joy at [info@sustainmyanmar.org](mailto:info@sustainmyanmar.org)

### **I want to be a Transformer**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to sign up for the monthly e-newsletter

I'd like to make a tax-deductible donation

I have enclosed a cheque to the value of \$\_\_\_\_\_ written to Sustain Projects Myanmar

I would like to make a one-off donation via my credit card \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name on Bankcard \_\_\_\_\_

Bankcard Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Tear out and send to PO BOX 102 Woy Woy NSW 2256  
or scan and email to [info@sustainmyanmar.org](mailto:info@sustainmyanmar.org)





Photo by Kerri Setch

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ACFID  
MEMBER

**Cover Photo by Kerri Setch:** Access to pathology testing, even in remote locations, is vital in the delivery of appropriate health care.

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