



Mid-Year Report for

Swiss School in Singapore

Project concerned

Karen State (Kayin State) Education Assistance Group (KSEAG)

This programme is about the provision of stationary for schools, which includes the purchase and delivery of school supplies (student learning materials and teaching materials) to Kayin State schools in Myanmar.

Implemented and funded by

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Executive Summary

We have successfully supported KSEAG since 2008. This report covers the first half of the 2017-18 academic cycle and its activities from 1 January to 30 June. During the reporting period, the materials were agreed upon, purchased and delivered to the schools. KSEAG is able to run this programme every year, supporting schools mainly in Kayin State but also some parts of Mon State, East Bago Division and Tanatharyi Division, with this year's supply chain coming exclusively from Myanmar.

1. Overview

Due to the improved political situation across Myanmar, the Karen Teacher Working Group (KTWG) and KED's (Karen Education Department) various partners had greater access to conduct education related activities in schools and communities. Hence, our parents and teachers become more and more interested in their children's education. Through more activities, they have further improved mutual respect between government and community teachers.

KSEAG has also improved their internal capacity building and has encountered much fewer database errors. Thus they are able to trace the number of students better and also no teacher in the system was left out from getting stipends. The material distribution for this year also went smoother than ever before.

The overall improvement of transportation systems within Kayin State also had a positive impact on activities such as material distribution and our mobile teacher trainers' ability to travel across the state. Simultaneously, advocacy with the government, primarily through the Karen State Education Stakeholders Group and direct advocacy efforts with the

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Karen State Education Department has yielded some positive changes in relation to the management and placement of government teachers.

However, there have been some challenges in the integration of community teachers into the government system. One reason is that government teachers receive more salary than community teachers, resulting in some community teachers searching for new jobs paying better salaries.

2. Operational Implementation

The educational cycle for schools in Kayin State runs roughly from June through March/April of the following year. Due to the difficult circumstances relating to security in conflict zones and accessibility of rural areas, materials are delivered in bulk only once per year. Materials are then used throughout the year by the schools, being monitored first by the school's leader or committee, then by the educational authority of the area.

The process begins with a request from KSEAG in December for the upcoming year. KSEAG bases the requests on the population of students and teachers from the previous academic year's statistics, allowing for a natural increase in population as the actual student enrolment numbers cannot be known until the start of the year, which is too late to place a stationary order. Depending on the level of students, each student will be allocated a certain number of supplies as different amounts are needed at different levels, for example, young students use less notebooks because they do a smaller volume of writing. Current materials that students receive are: notebooks, pens, pencils, and erasers. Teachers receive: chalk, A4-size paper, carbon paper, pens, staples, correction liquid and scissors.

We first check the request, confirm the supplies, and then KSEAG obtains quotations from stationary companies. Quotations are again checked by us first, then by KSEAG in order to ensure the correct supplies and quantities are ordered. The company with the most competitive quotation will be awarded the order. To further leverage our support as well as that of other smaller donors, we simultaneously negotiate the orders for sports and health equipment to secure lower prices, and further increase the impact of the funding for the education system.

At this point, we transfer funds to KSEAG to pay companies in Myanmar to compile the stationary order and also to deliver these supplies to all distribution sites. Two payments to stationary companies are made to reduce production and delivery risks: 50% is paid upon ordering, and the second 50% is paid upon confirmation of correct and timely delivery. The first payment usually takes place in January and the second in February.

KSEAG then checks the quality and quantity of materials at each of the distribution sites and upon successful confirmation to us, we release the final 50% stationary payment to KSEAG, which make the payment to the stationery companies.

To ensure that the materials purchased arrive at the schools, we further funds transportation of the materials from the distribution sites to the final destination at the schools inside Kayin State. Transportation usually involves a series of boats, motorcycles, busses, and/or ox carts, and many porters to personally carry the materials through the jungle to even the remotest schools. We pay this also in two instalments of 50% each: the first payment is when the materials are delivered by the company to the distribution sites and confirmed in good order, the second occurs when the final receipts of delivery are signed and returned to us from the school leaders. The first payment is in February, while the second is end of August.

In 2017, KSEAG still used a central coordination site for the distribution process, which enabled them to better coordinate the process. This also facilitated more direct communication with stakeholders ensuring key messages and logistics were communicated directly rather than being passed on between groups. As a result of having this centralised distribution site, the distribution ran much more smoothly.

3. Project Performance

Effectiveness:

The following objectives have been achieved this year:

- A total of **1,540** schools in Myanmar are currently being supplied with stationary. The KSEAG school number has decreased from 1,549 in the year 2016 to 1,540 schools for 2017. Reason for this is better data collection, which enabled KSEAG to take some schools out of the programme which already got support from other donors. Hence, the risk of support duplication was eliminated.
- In these schools the direct beneficiaries are students and teachers: currently we support **175,075** students (76,951 in lower primary, 62,417 in upper primary, 26,899 in middle school, and 8,808 in high school) and **11,061** teachers.
- KSEAG was able to build one new High School in Lu Thaw Township in Kayin State through the cooperation with local leaders and PFE-PWF.
- The education system becomes increasingly more stable. Due to providing supplies not usually seen in these communities, students become more interested in education and the profile of the schools in the communities becomes higher. This in turn attracts more teachers who stay in their jobs for longer. Also, more parents understand the importance of education and support their children in their studies, as the political situation is increasingly becoming more stable.
- By increasing the educational retention rate of students in schools, children become more literate, more aware of their situation, and, therefore, are better able to assess their situation and create solutions to problems as they mature.
- Benefits of education are spread to more children, across income brackets and urban/rural and ethnic divides as support is offered across all groups where it is not already present. This eventually empowers people to interact on the same level with others to shape their future as they wish in a more equitable society.
- This group is multi-ethnic and focuses on Kayin State because capacity in local organisations exists and delivery mechanisms are in place.

Efficiency:

- KSEAG knows the communities in Kayin State in great depth and is, therefore, able to organise the extensive system of thousands of porters and others involved in the transport and distribution of supplies by themselves.
- We have more leverage and experience in negotiating large orders and are better suited to secure larger discounts of supplies, getting the best for the funds to have a greater impact for more beneficiaries.

- From us, payments are made directly to those doing the work and not through multiple levels of administration: to the company for producing stationary and to KSEAG for organising transportation in Myanmar. This results in a process that is simple, efficient and transparent.
- Monitoring is done at the same time as delivery activities take place, which minimises the expenses. In Myanmar, communities are eager to receive supplies for schools. The communities themselves monitor the delivery and usage of the materials. The stationary company can deliver closer to some of the main sites because roads are getting better. The communities are now also using motorbikes since more motorbikes are available.
- The ordering process is easy and requires little time to complete. Most of the ordering and negotiating stage is completed in a period of two to three weeks, requiring few human resources from our organisation.

Sustainability:

- The programme should be viewed largely as emergency relief to support schools in conflict areas (or schools with restricted accessibility due to conflict), and not as a long-term or indefinite solution to education. Although Kayin State represents a protracted conflict situation, measures are in place to encourage sustainability as much as possible and promote empowerment for a transition to an increasingly peaceful situation.
- Creating systems is necessary to carry out a programme on such a large scale. There are currently systems in place, which involve all levels of local authorities and school officials to ensure that materials are distributed as needs dictate. These systems for assessment, allocation and distribution will be able to be carried out regardless of the donors as the communities themselves implement them.
- Primary supporters include: KRCEE/KED, KTWG, Partners Relief and Development, as well as a large system of porters and district and village leaders, all of whom provide assistance and/or funding.

4. Project Chronology

The following list gives a brief overview of the stationary delivery process:

- A. The academic year runs from June to March/April of the following year.
- B. In December, a request for stationary support is made to us by KSEAG.
- C. In December-January we review and clarify the request and begin obtaining quotations from stationary companies.
- D. January-February: Quotations are checked and confirmed by us and KSEAG.
- E. End January-early February: the order is placed and the first payment of 50% of the order is made.
- F. February: the stationary is delivered to all distribution sites; the quality and quantity of the order is confirmed by KSEAG and then we release the remaining payments to the stationery companies and the first 50% payment to KSEAG for local delivery fees.
- G. February-May: materials are delivered to schools; school statistics used for the next year's order are collected along with signed receipts from schools stating the stationary has been received satisfactorily.
- H. June: Materials are already delivered to the schools before the start of the academic year.
- I. June-July: all statistics are compiled and unclear information is clarified by KSEAG and communities and compiled into an extensive report for us.
- J. July-August: upon receiving the school receipts of stationary, the second, final payment of 50% of delivery fees for KSEAG will be released.

5. Budget vs. Expenditure

All payments for the 2017-18 academic year have been made. Please find the details below.



Financial Report

KSEAG Myanmar - KSEAG Myanmar 2017

Budget Fx 1.00

Expenses Fx 1.00

Financial overview

		In budget currency (USD)		
Account item	Account sub-item	Budget	Actual cost	Deviation
Programme costs	Stationery and Uniform	0.00	0.00	0.00
Programme costs	Supplies	244,045.66	244,045.66	0.00
Programme costs	Travel & transportation	75,954.34	75,954.28	0.06
	Project subtotal	320,000.00	319,999.94	0.06
	Monitoring costs (DPA)	3,232.32	3,200.02	32.30
	Admin overhead	24,329.31	24,329.31	0.00
	TOTAL	347,561.64	347,529.28	32.36

6. Photographs



Day Bu No High School



Mixed school teachers



Subsidy distribution



School data collection at a government school



Capacity building training for local leaders at Day Bu Noh High School



Typical village road during the rainy season



Government teachers



KED students



Mixed school students



Data collection group in the field

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for your support and trust. Together we were once again able to make a significant impact on many children's lives.

Your help is supporting tens of thousands of children in Kayin State to get the education they deserve.

We truly hope to be able to rely on your great support also in the future. Many thanks!

Chiang Mai, 31st August 2017

Child's Dream Association

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