

Whisperings from the Seed



Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre

End of the year challenge, help us reach our goal!



Your support is Needed Now on Global Giving!!!

Our end of the year campaign with Global Giving is already well underway! ***Our goal: TO RAISE \$3,000 from 30 donors by December 31st!*** Now is the time to help support the development of our new Learning Centre. Just visit the link below and show your support in whatever way you can. Your support will go to the initial start up costs of the centre so we can begin trainings right away. Help us to reach our goal so we can move forward in a positive direction for the beginning of the new year!

Warmest greetings as we come to the closing of another successful year!

Our campaign with Global Giving has already started but due to lack of internet in Northern Myanmar (Kachin State) where Jim has been teaching, we have not been able to get online. We need your support now to help us reach our goal for the end of 2014 for the establishment of Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre!

(December 2014)

What is the Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre?

Working and learning together is our model, a change for growth and bonding. Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre is the place for this kind of cooperative learning. Together with friends and partners we will build a small Bakery, Café and Eco-Shop which will serve primarily as a training centre for youth coming from remote and ethnic regions of the country. We have secured a space in the small pine forested mountain town of Kalaw in Southern Shan State. Please help us get the project going by supporting our end of the year campaign.

Click here to support the project!!!

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/sprouting-seeds-learning-centre/>

New Beginnings in Kalaw, Pine forests of Southern Shan State

New beginnings and new places seem to be the way of things here in Myanmar for us. In November we moved from our home in Pyin Oo Lwin to Kalaw, another, smaller former British hill station located in the pine forested hills of Southern Shan State not far from Inle Lake and Taunggyi. I continue my work with American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) and our Myanmar based Socially Engaged Monastic Schools (SEMS) and Center for Promotion of Monastic Schools (CPME).



Moving our giant aloe

We have been planning the opening of a small bakery, café and eco-shop to function as a training centre for several years. As we looked at possibilities in Pyin Oo Lwin, it seemed we would have better success and be able to reach more people from remote areas if we were to relocate in the small town of Kalaw. Here is the starting point for hiking to Inle Lake. It is a big tourist destination point which will give us a good chance with the business end of things.

We have settled in to our new home which will also serve at least temporarily as the base for the Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre. Already only just the beginning of the cold season and the temperature here has dropped to mid to high 30's and temperatures are said to get down to freezing towards the end of the month.



The new centre and our home in Kalaw

We have a huge space strategically located just at the edge of downtown (*a minutes walk*). There are many possibilities for us here in Kalaw but we are moving slowly as rules and laws seem different and there are still some uncertainties with the upcoming elections here in Myanmar scheduled for 2015. We are now ready and happy for friends and family to come and stay with us.

Sproutings Seeds Learning Centre: Going to Italy for Baking & Cooking Training!

During our program with Brighten Foundation and Youth Development Foundation in during the month of November, another friend from Italy came to learn about the projects. Gabriella Tognoli joined several of the trainings and offered courses and trainings to the youth and teachers in Pilates, similar to yoga. They all loved it and we are trying to integrate it into our training programs.



After meeting and discussing with Aye Aung, our eldest girl who will run the new centre, Gabriella invited Aye Aung for a visit to Italy within the next few months to learn baking and cooking! It is a very exciting opportunity for Aye Aung to gain many new skills. The skills she will be able to learn while in Italy she will then be able to bring back and directly implement here in the new centre and also she will be able to continue her teaching of these new skills which she just learned. It is a very

unique opportunity and we are thankful and excited and working towards getting things in order for her trip.



November in Myanmar with Brighten Foundation and Youth Development Foundation



In November we were once again visited from our friend Giuseppe Martegani from the Brighten Foundation based in New Zealand. For a 2nd year we ran programs in cooperation with Whispering Seed, Brighten Foundation and Youth Development Foundation (Myanmar).

Next we moved into Mandalay to work with our dear friend and colleague U Ye, from Youth Development Foundation. Here U Ye has been special working with English teaching, futbol training and especially working with youth from around the Mandalay region with mental and physical challenges.



Together we hosted several programs for local youth and teachers in the Dry Zone.

Shwenadi Monastic School-Kyaubadaung
Our first program started in the Dry Zone with over 450 ethnic children from Chin State along the Indian border. Here we offered several days of Teacher Training, Youth Empowerment and Futbol (soccer) training to local youth. We did several special session for the girls in the school. It was a great start to the program.

Look at the shoes for playing!!!

Together we again offered teacher training, futbol And youth empowerment to a monastery with 400 ethnic Palaung children. Through the trainings, our new friend Gabriella Tognoli from Italy also joined and offered the students and teachers training in Pilates, similar to yoga. They loved it!!!



Interfaith Exposure Trip and Democratic Education Conference in South Korea



In August, with support from American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Spirit in Education Movement and local partners in South Korea, we took an interfaith group of educators from Myanmar to South Korea for the 24th International Democratic Education Conference and Exposure Tour for Democratic Education. The group was a mixed group of senior abbots from Karen, Pa-O, Bama and a group of Catholic and Baptist teachers, students, policy makers and a Catholic priest from Kachin State.



We travelled to the southern part of the island to stay in an 1,000 year old Zen Buddhist monastery which also had a democratic school and its own alternative university. Here we met with the Zen monks and shared experiences and discussed education.

The trip was partially sponsored by several schools in South Korea, the Rainbow School, the Jeonchon Gandhi School, Silsang-sa temple and IDEC committee.



who raised the money to support our groups for our entire stay while in South Korea.



We had wonderful visits and exchanges with our host schools and are in the process of planning further exchange visits for students and teachers from South Korea to come to Myanmar in the coming year, as well as another trip to Korea.

We also were able to visit an amazing project in Seoul called the Haja Center. 14 years ago I met these 2 guys from Haja Center and they came to live with Whispering Seed during the first few months on our farm in Sangklaburi in 2004. It was amazing to meet them again and finally visit Haja Center after many years of working with visitors from there.

We are discussing another trip to Haja Center in the near future to learn more from them.





Inter-Cultural Education Training with Pestalozzi Children's Foundation

In October, along with Socially Engaged Monastic Schools (SEMS) we worked to support an Inter-Cultural Education (ICE) Advanced Training for Pestalozzi Children's Foundation (PCF) and their teams from Switzerland, Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. The training focused on ICE and included Non-Violent Communication (NVC), holistic education and sustainability.



Playing the Stone Game

At all of our trainings lately we have been teaching hands on learning and activities. Some of these include knitting, crochet, friendship bracelets and juggling! The training was a huge success and we are excited with the opportunity to work with PCF in the future.



Kachin Teacher Training in Upper Myanmar and Earthen Building Kindergarten

During the trip to Korea, participants from the Kachin group requested further support in the form of an Advanced Training of Trainers to be held in Myitkyina, Kachin State in Upper Myanmar. The group organized the training while we were in Korea and invited me to join them in early December. I just returned from an amazing trip and the networking and collaborations as well as energy of the people are very inspiring!



Mud bricks ready for the new kindergarten!

The training was a huge success and we started designing and making preparation for an earthen building kindergarten. Besides the training and building projects, we have started several different points of collaboration to work together for educational trainings and awareness raising in Kachin State over the next few months.

I will be traveling back up to Kachin State in January to continue another TOT focusing more on Child Development and to work more on the new kindergarten project. We will also continue the knitting projects and focus on making hats and socks this time. It is very exciting partnership!

GLOBAL GIVING Year End Campaign

Support Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre through the end of the Year campaign. Now we need your help, with only 2 weeks left in the year, we need your support to help us reach our goal of \$3,000 from over 30 donors in 30 days.

We are off to a very late start due to horrible internet connections in Myanmar and have just 2 weeks left to reach our goal!!

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/sprouting-seeds-learning-centre/>



View of downtown Kalaw from new house and outdoor space for new learning centre



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