

Whisperings from the Seed

Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre

Youth Sparks Global Giving
Matching Funds Day



Save the Date! April 14th from 09:00am EDT until 23:59 EDT

We will be participating in a Youth Sparks campaign hosted on Global Giving during which time **your donations will be matched!**

The Youth Sparks campaign aims to support programming related to youth employment, education and entrepreneurship. The campaign comes at a perfect time when the Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre could use a boost in funding to fulfill its dreams of providing practical life skills training for Myanmar youth, primarily focused on girls from remote and ethnic backgrounds, rooted in principles of sustainability, preservation of traditional wisdom and positive social engagement.

Click here to support the project!!!

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

Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre

Right now is a very exciting time for Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre! Things seem to be falling into place; we are buying supplies and equipment, researching how to source local and sustainable food and materials, looking for our first young apprentices, and much more!



Aye Aung at the Yangon Bakehouse

Visit to Yangon Bakehouse

On a recent trip to Yangon with the Whispering Seed team, we visited the Yangon Bakehouse, a training café with the main purpose of providing female apprentices and interns with job skills and employment. One of the founders, a lovely Canadian woman named Cavelle, gave us a tour of their main baking facilities, then after the tour we visited their café space in downtown Yangon. It was very helpful to talk with Cavelle and see both of the spaces; the visit gave us great ideas on how to set up our own facilities and answered many questions on how to source products such as whole wheat flour, real butter, nuts and coffee. We were inspired to see such a successful bakery project built around providing training for local women, and will keep the door open for collaborations in the future.

Café Appliances and Supplies:

We are excited to report we have just bought an oven for the bakery, as well as an ice cream maker, a freezer and a smoothie blender! We are working on ordering a refrigerator and funding an espresso machine for the near future. Buying these appliances has been a long time in the planning, and they are all very important investments that will significantly help us to train local youth.

In the middle of March, Jim, his eldest daughter Aye Aung, and a volunteer Gracie flew to Bangkok for a busy three-day shopping and planning trip for Sprouting Seeds. We went to the famous Chatujak weekend market where we bought many supplies for the café, including our favorite find of the trip: beautiful pottery cups, bowls, plates, and serving dishes which fit the esthetic design of the café we were aiming for. The purchasing of supplies on this trip, as well as buying the appliances, has helped move Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre one step closer to the reality of supporting local ethic girls through social business trainings and internships.



Aye Aung and Gracie at Chatujak market, Bangkok shopping for pottery for cafe



Kachin Youth from Shalat Education and Resource Center come to Sprouting Seeds

In March we had our first official Sprouting Seeds Exchange and Training with our dear friends from Shalat Education and Resource Center. 10 students and one teacher traveled almost 30 hours from Upper Myanmar to Kalaw to live and learn with us for 2 ½ weeks.

One of the main focuses of the exchange was baking and cooking. The first project we did with the students was to teach them how to build a mud oven for baking. During this process the students gained more fine skills in mud building and cob finish that they can then put to use when they return to Kachin State.

While the students were with us we cooked a balance of Western food and traditional Burmese and Kachin recipes. We taught them French toast, gnocchi, pizza, muffins, cookies and cakes, red and white sauces, Indian curries and breads, salsa, and Kombucha. They taught us a variety of delicious traditional soups, salads, noodles and side dishes.

Some of the female students did an independent study in woodworking at Shalat and came ready to pass on their knowledge to us during their visit. We started a few projects and finished a sturdy, two-person bench that we will use as a prototype for the benches and tables in the café.

We hope to be able to make all of the café furniture ourselves by hand, and learn enough to teach woodworking to youth at the Training Centre.

A big part of the exchange was teaching a variety of different handy crafts. We worked on friendship bracelet making, scarf, sock and hat knitting, basket decoupage, handmade paper journals, dried flower wreaths, string lights decorated with real leaves, and crocheting. The students gained many skills through these hands on craft sessions, which they can now use for income generation for future projects and trips.



Grace pulling her first strawberry muffins from mud brick oven! Jung Ja from Myitkyina teaching Jim wood working skills.

Training of Trainers and Earthen Building Kindergarten in Myitkyina

In December we facilitated a Teachers Training of Trainers in Upper Burma, Kachin State. As a follow up to that workshop, Jim traveled again to Myitkyina in January to offer further training in child development, brain development and early childhood psychology to the teachers.

Almost 40 Kachin teachers from various backgrounds attended the training. Together we explored how holistic education could be integrated into Kachin schools, culture and society.

There is an enormous interest in holistic education in and around the Myitkyina area, and together with local partners we are creating further trainings, the development of resources (currently creating a Handbook of Holistic Education) and international exposure trips (India and Thailand) to extend their knowledge and experience of holistic models of education.



At the end of the training we also continued an earthen building training to build 2 kindergarten classrooms. We trained a team of young Kachin youth, included the 5 girls from Shalat School who then came and taught us woodworking here in Kalaw. We will be heading back up to help finish the 2 classrooms with earthen plaster and paints, as well as to help with permaculture design on the land. We will also go to Shalat's new campus to work with the students on the design of their new school, as they will be the ones building it! We have many other groups that are very interested in earthen building around Kachin State and are looking forward to all the potential projects in the area. We are planning our next trip up to Myitkyina within the next few

Kalaw Training

At the end of March we collaborated with our friends at Youth Social Development Program to host a life skills training in Kalaw. We taught a broad spectrum of subjects, including English language through games, leadership and personal development, football (soccer) strategy, traditional massage, sports exercise, basic first aid, knitting, holistic education theory, and yoga. One of the goals of the training was for us to introduce ourselves to our new community; we were able to meet and form new connections with people in our area, and we hope to continue to form relationships by hosting more Kalaw trainings in the future.



Southern Shan State Senior Abbot Retreat

In April, Naung Taung Monastic School near Taunggyi in Southern Shan State, hosted an Abbot Retreat for 3 days. The retreat was a key time for bringing a core group of senior abbots from all over Southern Shan State in Easter Myanmar together to share experiences, network and begin collaborations together. It was also a key time to expose them to new ideas around holistic education and sustainability.



Spider Web game to support networking

With the senior abbots approval, the teachers can then be trained and begin implementation of new teaching methods and models within their classrooms. The brief gathering inspired the group of abbots and they are already making plans for themselves and their teachers to gain further training.



Inspired monk ready to “green” his monastery

Southern Shan State Monastic Schools Teacher Training Program



Naung Taung Monastic School organized a training of teachers from monastic schools in Southern Shan State. During this time, we offered support in facilitation of holistic education, child development and practical life skills.



The teachers came from all over Southern Shan State to join in the training. The team from Naung Taung is now able to host and facilitate these trainings without much external support, which is exactly what we had been aiming for them to do.

Throughout the next few months, we will be traveling back to Naung Taung for another Training of Trainers, earthen building workshops and a very exciting bamboo building, preservation and propagation workshop with one of the top bamboo experts. It is all very exciting!

Youth Sparks Global Giving Fundraising Day



April 14th We Need Your Support!

This is a great opportunity to make your contribution go twice as far!

We are excited for this moment to raise funds for Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre, as the project is at a pivotal stage of realization, and we hope you can be a part of it!

Click here to support the project!!!

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A Note From Jim

It is coming into the Burmese New Year water festival of Thingyan, a time of new beginnings. Here at Whispering Seed we are feeling more settled and we are ready to take off with some of our new projects.

Sprouting Seeds Learning Centre and the Café, Bakery and Eco-Shop is at a unique and critical time, our doors are almost ready to open and we are excited about the upcoming projects and programs we will be able to engage with in the very near future. We thank you for all of your ongoing support!!!

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