



AHTUTU ANNUAL REPORT 2018

HOW THE CHARITY STARTED

Ahtutu was born in March 2017, after my third visit to teach English in Pathein and a concentrated effort to fundraise to support Ayeyerwady Flood victims in September 2016. I devised the name as we work together with and through a local NGO, KMSS Pathein. Ahtutu means 'together' in Burmese. As the year progressed and ideas formed about what and how I wanted the charity to be and do, I was successful in fundraising and in gathering a team of volunteers which included students from Edinburgh Napier University. So successful was our fundraising that HMRC contacted us, as we neared the £5000 threshold between unregistered and registered charities, to confirm our purpose and after hasty application, HMRC accorded us charitable organisation status in February 2018 with the right to claim Gift Aid on donations and with Katie Betts and Stella Fox kindly offering their services as our first trustees.

2018

The team visit in January 2018 was successful and feedback shows that students and teachers enjoyed the lessons and the activities and made practical suggestions for improvement for the following year. I took to Myanmar active learning lessons which I had devised along with supplementary games and, almost by accident, we taught the students about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and demonstrated some of those in action through projects to improve the Family Home Orphanage where we put in place a new ceiling so that the boys could use their dormitory all year round. This, and our visit to Phan Khar Gone, cemented new relationships with the orphanage and a small village that needed our help. We left money to support the Early Years school there and in three other villages. After some discussion during my solo Trustee Visit in June, this money went towards establishing a feeding programme for the pre-schoolers. This June visit also introduced a rural hostel south of Pathein and north of Labutta that needs completely rebuilt and Fr Peter, director of KMSS, sent an estimate for us to plan this.

Early in 2018 Anthony Sigrist stood down as the second signatory on Ahtutu's account and Erica Utsi kindly agreed both to manage our finances and become a trustee along with Kate Durkacz and Kate McNeil. In March 2018, I built a website with a marketplace showing the kind of products we would like to fund in Myanmar - the website is very successful, the marketplace less so. This year it became uncertain (and is still so) as to whether a trust which supported us last year will continue to support. Sustained efforts in Autumn 2018 have raised almost as much as last year with St Etheldreda's parishioners being very supportive along with an anonymous supporter who has served as both an unofficial advisor and fundraiser in the background. Friends of Sacred Heart and St Margaret's in Scotland have supported with a donation which will secure the funding of bunk beds at the Family Home Orphanage and the feeding programme in PKG for a further year.

THE FUTURE

We have made many useful and enthusiastic contacts which I hope will sustain the future of Ahtutu. Salient points:

- I would like to revisit our aims and objectives in 2019, following our January visit, to ensure we are meeting them and to hone them a little;
- We applied for Charity Commission status in August 2018. The commission is so overwhelmed that they are still now considering applications from May 2018. We await their decision on our application. I contact them around once a month to check on what is happening.

- After some doubt, Napier have supported 2019's visit but we would need a much earlier and clearer picture as to whether this will continue and Kate D will take that forward. I have had many offers of volunteering with the team for 2020 and will look at this carefully as soon as I return in February 2019. DBS checking has been a sensible and necessary addition to our volunteer requirements;
- Fundraising has been exhausting for all - packed into the Autumn and fairly haphazard. I would like to create a Fundraising Team which can plan this more carefully. In addition I have made two contacts, one in Ely and one south of London, who would like to support us to get corporate and government subsidy if this is possible;
- I will work with Erica to ensure better use of the bank account so that each entry is transparent and more easily transferred to our financial statement. We also now need, for the first time, to pay for materials and cover our admin costs, enabling Ahtutu to be sustainable into the future;
- I have made overtures to both Ignite, the youth wing of the diocese, and two sixth form colleges in Cambridge for two reasons - firstly to gauge interest in supporting us or joining the team and secondly to begin to open up the idea of having a gap year student all year round in Pathein. There are some ideas for funding this project;
- Days for Girls (and to a lesser extent Grifaid Filters) have been super additions to our purpose. They are both visual and have captured people's imagination in a way I had never dreamed possible. Aaf Dawes in Ely has been simply amazing and has enthused so many others to join our team, Days for Girls East Angles, making sustainable feminine hygiene products for Myanmar, and this has raised our profile in the area.

Mary Durkacz, Founder Trustee

20th December 2018