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September 13th 2025 / Trimester Report II / May - August 2025

In June, a global campaign honouring Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 80th birthday culminated in a remarkable achievement: more than **80,000 video messages** were gathered in just over two weeks, earning a Guinness World Record for the most birthday greetings compiled for a single person. This achievement - together with the slogan "*For her we can, For Myanmar we must*" emerged as a powerful symbol of her lasting legacy and of Myanmar's unshakable resolve to fight for democracy.

Yet by September, reports of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's deteriorating heart condition in a junta jail offered a chilling reminder: conflicts are increasing and the crisis is deepening.

For Myanmar we must. This stark contrast between global hope and grim reality deepens our commitment and underscores the urgency of our engagement. We stand firm and continue working to further education and build resilience within our community.

As we carry this spirit of hope forward, Zoe would like to share her thoughts and feelings of gratitude that honour your generosity, making it all possible.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

in these challenging times, your unwavering support has been a steady stream of hope for us. Because of your generosity, we've been able to continue our mission - providing education, shelter, basic needs, and care to the children who need it most.

Your kindness allows us to keep our doors open, our classrooms active, and our hearts to understand human values. We are deeply grateful for your belief in our work and your commitment to standing with us.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are making a hopeful and better future for the children.

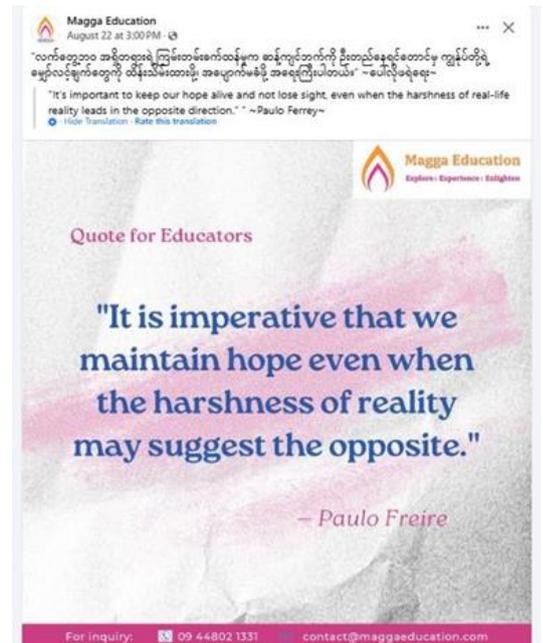
With heartfelt appreciation,

Zoe, on behalf of our children, teachers, and community

- Paolo Freire, was a renowned Brazilian educator and the author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, who taught that education must empower communities to rise above oppression and build a more just future. This quote from Paulo Freire reflects his lifelong belief that education is a path toward human dignity, liberation, and transformation.

- Magga Education, a not-for-profit organisation, provides quality education and training for youth and educators in Myanmar. Their vision: an educational journey that nurtures children with hope, resilience, and values, even in the face of life’s hardships. Zoe has enrolled in the **Educators Development Club** and regularly participates in the offered webinars.

- **Zoe’s words echo the same vision!** Together, Freire’s philosophy, Magga’s mission, and the gratitude expressed by our school community form a single, shared truth: hope must be nurtured through education, and when combined with compassion and solidarity, it becomes the foundation for a brighter and more caring future.



Still regarding our core subject of education – three thrilling events:

Zoe officially finished her training and received her Certificate in Teacher Education

Khaing Mi Mi San and Noe Zin Hmwe both former students at LOL, also completed their training & were overjoyed!

Hard work and perseverance brought you all across the finish line!

Congratulations, Zoe!

**Congratulations Khaing Mi Mi San!
Congratulations Noe Zin Hmwe**



Final preparations...the Pre-School soon ready to welcome the first children....





The three Montessori Pre-School teachers – also prepared and ready for the little children

Before the new year starts, the teachers are explaining the Montessori teaching method to parents and guardians - sharing their vision, expectations and ideas with them...



Everything is ready.....



June 2, 2025 – the new school year begins....

As you see the smiling faces and read about the many positive developments at LOL —teacher training, the book club, silent reading, the mini shop—please remember that **none of this can be taken for granted**. The reality in Myanmar remains dramatic: fighting is moving closer to Yenangyaung, gunshots and fighter planes can be heard daily, a nearby village was bombed, damaging a government school & clinic and the burning of villages in Magway division is becoming frequent. As a result, 36 government schools alone in Yenangyaung Township were unable to open in June. But, in compliance with the law, all private schools had to open and must remain so. I admire the courage, perseverance, and resilience of Zoe and her team, who continue to provide education and hope for the children despite these challenging conditions.



Before the start of the new school year, our teachers gathered to discuss plans and prepare for the months ahead. They also received refresher Training of Teachers (TOT) sessions from Helen and Zoe. This training helped them step back and see «the big picture,» reconnect with the LOL vision, and reflect on how their daily work contributes to that mission. It also served to encourage and equip them to embrace the required teaching standards, ensuring quality and consistency in the classroom.

The new school year in numbers:

Total number of students: 157, including 32 paying students

30 Students walk to school, the other 127 are collected by two buses, one of which has to do two rounds of collecting.

«Be A Light» - Living our Values in Action

After last year's theme «UNITY» which encouraged cooperation and togetherness, this year's theme «Be A Light» highlights the importance of personal responsibility and everyday actions.

***You can help and serve somebody you know, share your light and love wherever you go
For life can be blessed and bright when you choose to be a light.****

The song reminds students that each of them has the ability to make a positive difference. To “be a light” means choosing kindness, offering help, and treating others with respect. Even small gestures—like a friendly word, or patience during a disagreement—can brighten the lives of those around them. In this way, the children learn that influence begins not with grand actions, but with consistent choices made daily. The lyrics also encourage humility and forgiveness, teaching students to let go of anger, to avoid judgment, and to show care even when it is challenging. These qualities strengthen both character and resilience, helping them to grow not only as learners but also as thoughtful members of their community.

(*entire song «Be a Light» on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/8pERumt3wCk?si=DkcEjLGI7MghesJx>)

The Pre-School has come to life.....



Learning more than words and numbers...

Loving, caring, sharing, playing, laughing!



The Mini Snack Shop at LOL, run by the student council, is a success! It's more than just food – it's a thoughtful step toward using less plastic, growing stronger leadership and encouraging everyone to speak more English!

In a meeting Zoe and the PSIE teachers defined the choice of snacks, the opening times of the shop and how to improve the selection and sustainability of products offered. They decided to reduce the use of plastic packaging by 80%, instead using natural materials, like leaves, as plates. Standard snacks include chips, tamarind flakes, water melon and yogurt. **New:** there is a special salad on offer every Wednesday. This salad – for example Mango with prawns and tea leaf - is served on small re-usable plates, which are then washed by the students, increasing their duties and thus involving them in extra-curricular activities within the LOL community. This new offer is very popular – the salad is prepared by the members of the student council and the in-charge teachers and always sells out fast! During the last school year, the shop made 1 lakh profit (approx. \$50) The students decided to donate the entire amount to the school library for the purchase of new books. So generous!



Also NEW this year: Language Club

Three times per week the children have extra English during Language Club. Unlike the formal classroom setting, the club creates a relaxed space where students can practice speaking and listening with confidence. Through songs, games, storytelling, and simple conversations, the children experience English as something fun and practical. This approach not only strengthens their skills but also builds enthusiasm and motivation, giving them valuable opportunities to use the language beyond their textbooks.



Students taking an exam to determine at which level they will attend the Language Club



Silent reading: every school day, after the lunch break, students take a book and read quietly on their own for 20 minutes. This calm routine helps children develop focus, build confidence in reading, and discover the joy of stories. For Middle and High School students this experience is rounded off by a **Book Club, twice a semester**. In small groups they share ideas, thoughts, new knowledge and reflections, based on the books they read during silent reading. Guided questions are provided and there is a teacher present in each group for facilitation and observation.

😊 **Board Games**
Activities:
Play hard 🦵,
Sharpen your mind 🧠
Think smart 🧐
Have fun! 🍷❤️



«Teacher of the month»

Honouring Outstanding Teachers

We believe in celebrating the dedication and perseverance of our teachers. While not every month sees a recognition; teachers are honoured when they meet our set criteria. These include consistency, patience, professional development, and the effort to apply new and effective teaching methods in their classrooms. Teachers who demonstrate these qualities receive recognition, a certificate, and a small financial gift as a token of appreciation.



In June, we were delighted to honour **Teacher Thi Thi Win**, our Physics and Mathematics teacher, as *Teacher of the Month*. Her perseverance, consistency, and willingness to embrace new teaching strategies have set an inspiring example for both colleagues and students. We warmly congratulate her and thank her for making our school a better place.

«A special birthday celebration»

As on the 25th of each month, we celebrate all students and teachers with birthdays in that month. The whole school sings «Happy Birthday,» and each birthday «child» is given a small gift. In a touching tradition, every student and teacher then passes by to shake hands and personally congratulate them. For many children, this is the only recognition of their birthday they ever receive, making it a really treasured moment.

While every monthly celebration is joyful, the one on August 25th holds special meaning as it marks the birthday of Eric, fondly remembered as Baba, whose vision, as you know, gave life to Light of Love and Lei Thar Gone. And his legacy lives on. This year, Zoe taught her fifth-grade class to sing «Amazing Grace» Eric's favourite song.

The day also included a special lunch chosen by the birthday children and prepared for everyone. And, as a special treat, ice cream for dessert. It was a celebration not only of birthdays, but also of gratitude, remembrance, and the spirit of community that Eric inspired.



Lei Thar Gone Guest House News

Lyon's responsibility for managing the Guest House is similarly demanding to Zoe's leadership at LOL, though the challenges he faces are different. Whereas the school continues to buzz with daily life, the Guest House has grown quiet and has stood largely empty because of the political situation. The departure of the only long-term guests has meant a loss of income. Nevertheless, the buildings require constant maintenance, made even more challenging by climate change – erosion is a major problem - and the devastating March earthquake.

Lyon also faces the daily challenge of working with staff members who often have little or no formal education. Many left schools after only a few years, often out of necessity. They would need training to develop both professionally and personally, but opportunities for such guidance are very limited. Added to this are modern problems such as smartphone overuse, the lure of social media, and the serious risk of debt.

Despite these obstacles, Lyon continues to keep the Guest House running, handling technical issues, coping with ever-shifting and sometimes absurd regulations, and guiding his team with perseverance. His commitment, though perhaps less visible, is vital to sustaining the broader mission.

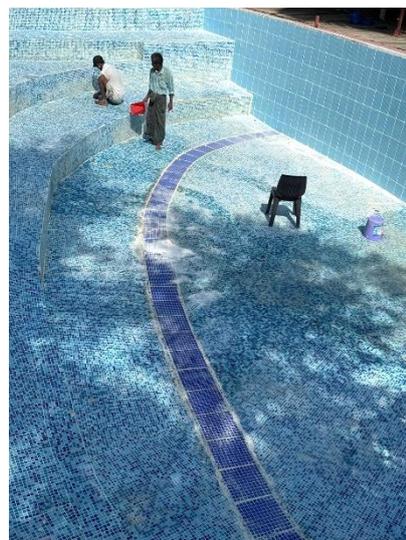
Reflections on the 2nd Trimester 2025, by Lyon Trutwein

Introduction

The second trimester of 2025 was a period of recovery and transition for Lei Thar Gone Guest House. After overcoming the earthquake damage earlier in the year, important repairs were completed. While the solar power system continued to provide stable operations, the departure of long-term guests in July brought renewed financial challenges.

1. Post-Earthquake Repairs Completed

- Structural damages caused by the Mandalay earthquake were successfully repaired during this trimester.
- Key areas restored included:
 - Swimming pool base secured and refilled
 - Room 1 staircase stabilized
 - Room 5 supporting beams reinforced
- These restorations brought the Guest House infrastructure back to a safe and functional state.



2. Departure of Long-Term Guests

- In July, the group of Chinese engineers who had provided steady income since February checked out.
- Their departure was due to the completion of their project, as tides made further work impossible.
- With their exit, the Guest House once again faced a complete absence of income, highlighting the ongoing volatility of tourism and guest bookings in the region.

3. Solar Power as a Lifeline

- The restored solar power system remained a crucial asset throughout the trimester.
- Key benefits included:
 - Reliable, 24-hour electricity for both the Guest House and LOL High School
 - Significant cost savings by avoiding daily diesel generator use
 - Emergency readiness with the generator now reserved for backup only
 - Solar energy ensured uninterrupted operations even during a period of no income.

Conclusion

The May–August 2025 trimester underscored both the resilience and vulnerability of Lei Thar Gone Guest House. While earthquake damage was fully repaired and infrastructure stabilized, the departure of long-term guests once again left operations without revenue. The continued success of the solar power system stands out as a major achievement, securing basic stability amidst financial uncertainty.



Thanks to Lyon's dedication, the Guest House always looks inviting: the grounds are well kept, flowers are in bloom, the pool is blue, lawns are neatly trimmed, cars kept in working order, and rooms carefully maintained. His efforts ensure that the Guest House remains a place of beauty and hospitality, true to Eric's original vision.

This report was written by Therese, Zoe and Lyon and the final version, with photos, compiled by Therese