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Introduction

Myanmar goes through a period of transition from dictatorship to democracy. In 2011, a semi-civilian government under president U Thein Sein came to power after elections in November 2010. Even though the 2010 elections were generally considered to be flawed, the new government initiated reforms and enlarged the space for civil society. After a period of optimism, worry about the sincerity of the reform process increased as the government cracked down on students demonstrating against the Education law proposed in parliament; a growing number of activists (farmers, land- and civil rights activists) was sent to prison for peaceful demonstration or other protests, and journalists were harassed or sent to prison.

In October 2015, a ceasefire agreement (NCA) was signed between the government and 8 Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAO). Though this has been advertised as a significant step forward in the peace process, the NCA is controversial, as 11 EAO are not included. With a number of these EAO negotiations are still ongoing, and they are invited to join the NCA. However, some EAO are not recognized by the government and are banned from the negotiating process. In parts of Myanmar, notably Shan State and Kachin State, the civil war continues, causing villagers to flee and seek refuge in makeshift shelters without necessary care.

Even so, on January 2016, the government convened the first session of the National Political Dialogue, scheduled in the roadmap to peace to take place three months after the signing of the NCA, amidst civil society calling for an all-inclusive dialogue, an end to hostilities and fighting, and fair representation of all stakeholders and civil society.
The latter half of 2015 was dominated by the elections of November 8. In the run up to the elections there was concern about flawed voting lists and abuse of position by some candidates. In some parts of the country, elections were cancelled due to the civil war. Nevertheless, the elections were considered to be relatively free and fair. The National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, won an overwhelming victory, which was duly celebrated.

But many were worried for a repetition of events after the 1990 elections, when the NLD won a landslide victory which the military government ignored. A smooth transition of power thus became the leading issue in the Myanmar political arena. The lack of transparency about the negotiations between the NLD, the outgoing government and the army was tolerated because of the trauma of 1990, but was also regretted and caused concern with regard to the level of democracy within the NLD.

The landslide victory of the NLD meant that many ethnic political parties will not be represented in parliament. Even though ethnic groups and ethnic political parties recognize the results of the elections, and express support for the NLD government to be, there is a genuine worry about ethnic representation in decision making institutions.

The election result has raise the hope of the Myanmar people that democratic reform will be intensified and their lives will be improved. However, there is a growing awareness about the role of the army and the way the army’s influence is anchored in the Constitution of 2008. The army has 25% of seats in the parliament guaranteed to them and three ministries (Defence, Border Security and Home Affairs) are under direct control of the Commander in Chief of the Army. Especially the fact that the General Administrative Department, and thus all civil servants are under the Ministry of Home Affairs, has direct influence on governance on village and township level. The lack of implementation of laws, the lack of transparency in who holds authority and who is responsible for decisions made, throws many a shadow on the lives of local communities.
Land grabbing is a main issue in Myanmar, forcing farmers off their land to make space for mining companies, factories, gas pipelines, hotels and commercial agribusinesses. Seventy percent of the workforce depends on agriculture. Land registration processes lack transparency and proper implementation. The government has drafted a National Land Use Policy without proper consultation processes. Traditional farming methods and small scale livelihood farming, which are an important component of local culture and identity, are perceived to be under threat. The current land registration drive causes worry that many farmers will be unable to secure title or rights to their land, women could be dispossessed, and traditional land use is not given due attention. Many farmers report that they are denied the right to register their land, and redress for land grabbing during the years of dictatorship is not secure.

Licensed and unlicensed mining activities and unregulated industry are causing serious problems concerning health and livelihood of communities, and the environment suffers damage by uncontrolled and unsustainable development. Lack of laws safeguarding health and livelihood of communities and weak implementation of existing laws contribute to a general perception of immunity for mining and other companies. Lack of proper environmental and social impact assessments, as well as lack of benefit for local communities, contribute to a growing distrust of these private and state driven development projects. Development is implemented without equal participation of the ethnic groups, and without proper consultation of communities directly involved.

To address the issues of land, natural resources, development and governance from a community perspective, BCN has supported the creation of the Myanmar People’s Alliance (MPA), an alliance of civil society organisations, community based organisations, activists and concerned individuals. MPA caters to a growing need for information and awareness of laws, the democratic process and the role of people in decision making. Myanmar people at community level feel motivated to contribute to the transition happening in their society. They want to participate and have a part in shaping their future and the future of their children. MPA aims to
channels the anxiety based on neglect, and hitherto suppressed anger of communities about their fate, into non-violent activities to improve people’s capacity to engage constructively to improve their lives.

The new NLD dominated government will face many challenges due to the political and economic structure inherited from the time of dictatorship and not much reformed by the U Thein Sein government. To create the genuine democratic society that Myanmar people crave, and have a constructive dialogue on federalism, which is of major importance to the ethnic communities, fostering participation of people in the process of transition is of vital importance to establish sustainable peace.
About BCN and its work

Mission statement
BCN works towards all-inclusive democracy with respect for human rights and the environment in Myanmar. BCN considers strengthening of community based civil society, enlarging political capacity, stimulating local participation and development as well as facilitating a constructive ethnic and political dialogue crucial for a peaceful and sustainable future for Myanmar.

Origins and development
Burma Centrum Nederland was created in 1993 as a result of the perceived need of several Dutch NGO’s to establish a centre that would specifically focus on Myanmar. For several years BCN invested in building strong networks with a wide variety of ethnic and non-ethnic civil society groups and political actors in Myanmar. From the late 1990s, BCN has been realizing a civil society program that includes facilitating initiatives that foster independent thinking, strengthening of democratic structures and confidence building to provide participants with the tools to independently deal with their issues. Capacity strengthening activities are vital ingredients in this process of empowerment.

From 2008 onwards, BCN moved towards more actively engaging democratic actors and citizens in the political process, in response to requests from key organizations in its civil society program. In 2010, BCN chose to support the democratic political actors and parties that decided to participate in the elections, through trainings and capacity strengthening, and from 2011 onwards, continued its program to support democratic forces in the changing political landscape of Myanmar.

For some years, BCN was among only a few organization offering capacity strengthening and support for democratic forces inside Myanmar. Therefore, the organization is well established among civil society and ethnic groups in Myanmar.

BCN acts as a partner and coordinator, bringing together people from different backgrounds and facilitating the sharing of ideas and development of a common
agenda. BCN works demand driven and cooperates closely with Burmese partner organizations.

From 2012, BCN has intensified its cooperation with community based initiatives in democratization and participation in decentralization efforts and the peace process. Constructive engagement with (local) government bodies is fostered. With the NLD government, Myanmar enters a new period in the transition process. However, there still is a need to be cautious, as democratic structures in Myanmar are still weak and could collapse under unregulated tensions generated by the democratization processes.
Program 2015 – Decentralisation and participatory democracy

Introduction
BCN and partners focus on empowering communities to encourage participation in the transition to a genuine democratic Myanmar, sustainable peace, secure livelihood and the rule of law. Throughout the program, the implementing team shared information and raised awareness on the history and current situation of Myanmar in relation to established democratic processes and accepted human and civil rights. The team introduced, explained and practiced citizens’ skills for democratic participation. Activities were based on building and strengthening people’s skills for nonviolent participation in decision making, such as negotiation skills, finding common ground, consensus based decision making, collecting and presenting data and exploring policy alternatives and nonviolent advocacy to stakeholders. Supporting local activities and direct actions to solve real life problems people face are an integral part of the program.

Based on the Land and Law, EITI Awareness and citizens’ rights workshops, follow up meetings, Decentralization & Democracy workshops, special trainings and network meetings, the Myanmar People’s Alliance (MPA), an alliance of community based organizations, local civil society based organizations, activists and concerned individuals, was founded at the end of 2014. MPA envisions a peaceful and genuine democratic society where all citizens can benefit from the wealth of Myanmar and have the feeling that they belong to a nation that creates equal chances for all citizens under full protection of just laws and policies that are supported by the people. MPA believes a future Myanmar needs to be a federal state within the framework of the Union to make sure that the diversity of the country is protected and sustainable peace can be build. The core issues of concern for MPA are land related issues, natural resource extraction and management, protection of livelihood and environment, and governance.
Throughout 2015, BCN has worked closely with MPA’s core team and the network in Shan State towards translating common grievances of communities with regards to land rights, civil rights, natural resources and governance towards input for the National Political Dialogue, reflecting the needs and wishes of the Myanmar people in support of sustainable peace and local security. By collecting issue based experiences on community level, proposals for change based on consensus and direct needs of the people were developed. This resulted in the publication of `the Voice of the People of Shan State for Peace and Transition to Democracy’, which was presented in a Shan State Forum, held in December in Taunggyi. BCN supported a similar process of sharing information, collecting data and generating policy proposals based on and supported by communities from the Union of Karenni State Youth (UKSY) in Kayah State. This resulted in the publication of ‘Echo of Peace’ in December 2015.
What we have done

Land and Law, EITI Awareness and citizens’ rights

January 3-4, Aung Ban, Shan State- Land and Law, EITI Awareness and citizens’ rights training.

122 participants gathered for a two day workshop on Land and Law, EITI Awareness and citizens’ rights. On the first day a lawyer explained the citizen rights (Act on Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens) and the Myanmar laws that are related to land: the 1963 Protection Law for farmers; the Vacant, Fallow, Virgin Land Management law; the Agricultural law; the Forestry law and the Land law of 2012. A member of the Shan State EITI team shared the standard of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and how communities can use this standard to get access to information on mining companies. Since mining companies in Shan State create difficulties for the local communities, this information is of great value to them. On the second day the lawyer explained how farmers can register their land according to the rules and regulations, how to regain occupied (grabbed) land or how to apply for compensation in case their land is grabbed. Participants appreciated this information very much and were grateful for the legal advice. The participants felt empowered and more knowledgeable on their rights.

The following workshops followed the same pattern as the Land and Law, EITI Awareness and citizens’ rights workshop in Aung Ban.

- January 24-25, Kaw Thaung, Tenasserin region - 123 participants
- January 31- February 1, Nam Sang Township, Middle Shan State - 158 participants
- March 7-8, Wun Tho Township, Sagain Region - 209 participants
- March 14-15, Kyaut Pa Taung Township, Mandalay Region, Dry Zone - 95 participants
- March 28-29, Moe Nyin Township, Kachin State - 310 participants
May 10-11, Pin Laung, Pao area, Shan State - Democracy and development (D&D) / law awareness workshop

97 participants gathered for a two day workshop, organized in the PaO self-administered zone. The workshop started with explanation of the Citizen Rights (Act on Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens). The resource person explained that according to this Act, organising a workshop is a lawful activity. After introduction of the concepts of democracy, decentralization and development, the government structure was explained. Participants made an inventory of the local issues. Through a system of voting, which was a good way to share some basic voter education, five issues were selected that were analysed by using the tool of the ‘problem tree’, with the trunk representing the issue, the roots representing the causes and the leaves representing the effects of the issue. Since many issues were related to land, the Myanmar laws related to land were shared, as well as the way to register land. BCN staff shared experiences with democratic participation in the Netherlands and the ways companies in the Netherlands solve problems with communities. At the end of day two, the participants wrote a letter to the local authorities about their issues. In this letter the participants asked the local authorities to solve their problems according to the law. For most participants it was the first workshop on democracy, decentralisation and law awareness. They felt empowered by it and less fearful. They appreciated the workshop and most participants joined the Network. The workshop ended with a solidarity night, where a group of traditional PaO musicians and Shan dancers performed together.

Village books

For the village book process, a local team supervised by one of BCN’s partners starts by prospecting potential villages. While selecting villages, special attention is given to selecting representative villages, making sure that all ethnic groups in the area are included.
The first step is the introduction of the process after which the villagers are asked to give their consent. The villagers are trained to collect data that are analysed and summarized in a draft village book. The village books have a social map, seasonal calendar, and problem tree that explains the current situation of the village from the point of view from the villagers. It also contains spider maps and Venn diagrams to identify vulnerable groups and power dynamics in the village. A dream map and action plan is included that feature the programs or projects proposed by the villagers.

After a presentation of the draft, villagers are asked to give their approval of the information presented in the village book. Thus approved profiles of villages are used as input for D&D and Law Awareness workshops. The village books also serve as resource material for developing other programs.

In 2015 village books were made in:
- **Moe Nyin**, Kachin state: 12 villages
- **Pin Long Township**, Shan state: 2 villages
- **Pindaya**, Shan state: 11 villages
- **Ywar Nyan**, Shan state: 12 villages
- **Kyauk Padaung Township** – Mandalay division: 10 villages
- **Meikhtila Township**, Mandalay division: 12 villages
- **Won Thu Township**, Sagaing division: 12 villages
- **Nat Maunk Township**, Magway division: 12 villages

**Network Trainings and meetings**

*February 7, Loikaw, Kayah State – Recap Cambodia exposure.*

In Loikaw, a one day workshop to recap the Cambodia exposure (in 2014) was held for 17 participants from the exposure and some members of Kayah civil society who were not able to join the exposure trip (due to a car accident.) The day was spend on the concepts of decentralisation and democracy. We talked about the
Cambodian model, the good points and the setbacks and compared it to the Myanmar structure of governance and decentralization. After the recap the participants had a good understanding of decentralization and democracy, which served as a theoretical foundation for the coming year.

**February, 8-12, Loikaw, Kayah State – ToT for MPA and UKSY.**
39 participants from the Shan State grassroots network and the UKSY came together for a Training of Trainers (ToT). With this training we aimed to capacitate the focal persons of the network to execute local trainings, workshops and meetings with their communities to disseminate tools for activities within a framework of nonviolent actions supporting democratic development. On the first day the concept of nonviolence was shared. A short introduction was given on nonviolent ways of resolving conflicts, skills and ideas to be further explored in the coming days. On day two negotiation skills were explained and during group work the participants had ample opportunity to practice. The group work was lively, participants enjoyed the exercises. During the evaluation of the negotiation exercise, the participants expressed how much they had learned, especially from the input on the preparation stage of the negotiation. On the third day the concept of democracy, the role of the citizen and ways to influence the decision making process were discussed. Special attention was given to the role of women in this process. The fourth day was spent on advocacy and how to collect data to support the advocacy. Practical tips on data collection were shared. This was considered very useful, especially with regard to the ‘collecting the voices of the people’ projects under way in Kayah and Shan States to generate community based input for the National Dialogue.

On the fifth day ways to share information with the communities were explored. Practical advice, tools and knowledge were exchanged. The group work and debates were very lively. After a long and interesting Q&A session, the participants felt ready for their work. Everybody was enthusiastic and eager to go back to the communities to share the acquired skills and knowledge.
February 17-18, Lashio, Shan State - Northern Shan State MPA network analyses training.

A two day workshop was organized in Northern Shan State for 22 network members representing Northern Shan States CBO’s and CSO’s. The workshop started with a short recap on the D&D and the Land and Law, EITI Awareness and citizens rights training. Participants shared what had happened after the workshops. The role of a network of grassroots organizations in democracy, decentralization and development was discussed. The first day ended with a context analysis. The participants mapped the factors, people and institutions that influence their working environment. On the second day the participants were asked to make a risk analysis and a network capacity analysis. Special attention was given to systematic planning, data collection and letter writing, activities that all participants include in their work. The members participated actively and all expressed the intention to work together with the Shan State MPA network.

February 24-25, Aung Ban, Shan State - Follow up Southern- and Middle MPA Shan State Network meeting.

17 members from the network from Southern - and Middle Shan State gathered for a two day network meeting. Participants shared their experiences after they attended the D&D- and network workshop in Pindaya (December 2014). They shared several stories of successful activities within their communities that resulted in grabbed land returned to farmers and mining companies held accountable for their actions. A resource person analysed why not all activities were successful. The need for democratic institutions, Rule of Law and citizens’ rights were addressed. A new letter writing campaign was designed and letters to authorities were written on land registration. The participants agreed to work together on data collection on three topics: land, mining and governance. The workshop was closed with a solidarity night. The participants appreciated the meeting: they liked the opportunity to meet other members of the network and all stated they learned a lot by sharing experiences. Everybody expressed the intention to work together and to strengthen the network.
April 19-21, Aung Ban, Shan State - Southern- and Middle Shan State MPA Network meeting.

The first day started with exchanging the experiences in the field with collecting data (on land and mining/factories). The 19 network members present were able to collect many data on land registration. Many farmers had applied for Form number 1, necessary for the registration of their land, but hardly anybody had actually received this form. It proved to be difficult to collect data on mining companies. A member of the Shan State EITI team shared the information on how to find out whether a mining company has a license.

The remains of the morning were spent on the structure and responsibilities of the network.

In the afternoon participants debated actively on the common goal of the MPA Network. There was a wide consensus of opinion that people should be able to be the masters of their own lives.

The resource persons reflected on the sharing of experiences in the morning. They shared information on data analysis and evidence. After a lively Q&A, the participants got homework for the next day about data and evidence.

The second day started with presentations of the homework. All participants had worked hard and enthusiastically on the homework. Data collection proved complicated, so our team promised the participants to come assist and train them on the job in May/June.

The rest of the day was spent on ‘democracy’. An introduction on politics and democracy was shared. In group work the participants were asked to map the political situation in their area. The GAD structure was compared with a democratic structure, with its checks and balances. This interesting and inspiring day was concluded with an intense Q&A session.

On the third day we talked about the shared vision on a future Shan State. Input was given on Natural Resources sharing, with the examples of Norway, the Netherlands and East Timor. The model of India was shared as input on systems of federal governance.

Participants discussed their vision for Shan State in group work, which took longer than planned, since the participants had many ideas to share and discuss.
The workshop ended with elections of two focal persons who would assist coordinating the activities scheduled for the (near) future.

**April 23-26, Kyaung Tung, Eastern Shan State – MPA Network analysis and data collection training.**

A four day workshop was organized in Eastern Shan State for the network’s focal persons representing Eastern Shan States CBO’s and CSO’s and members, all together 37 persons.

Since we had not been back here after the D&D and the Land and Law, EITI Awareness and citizens’ rights training, we started with a short recap of those workshops. The first two days basically followed the agenda of the Northern Shan State network training, but since we had a group of young participants who had not attended the D&D and Land and Law, EITI Awareness and citizens’ rights workshop, we paid special attention on law awareness, the basic concepts of democracy and decentralisation and the government structure. The participants were asked to make a context analysis, which went very well. The third and fourth day we spent on data collection and the shared vision on the future of Shan State. Especially the part on natural resources management and the examples of Norway, the Netherlands and East Timor were highly appreciated as well as the Indian model for a federal governance structure. The examples were intended to encourage the participants to reflect on their own ideas of natural resources management and governance. At the end of the fourth day, two representatives were elected to assist coordinating the future activities of the Shan State Network. The participants were all determined to work together and to strengthen the network, to collect data and to consult their communities to talk about the shared vision on the future of Shan State.

**April 28-30, Lashio, Northern Shan State – MPA Network training.**

The Network training in Northern Shan State, with 21 participants, basically followed the same agenda as the training in Southern Shan State. In very interactive sessions the concepts of democracy, checks and balances, natural resource management, natural resource sharing and governance were introduced. Democratic skills like consensus based decision making were explained and practiced. At the end of the
A three-day workshop was held in May, where one participant was elected as the focal person of the Northern Shan State who will assist with future activities and communication. All participants expressed the intention to cooperate, collect data, and work with their communities to develop a shared vision on the future of Shan state.

**May 5-7, Aung Ban, Shan State – MPA Shan State Network training.**

The elected focal persons from the network (2 from the South, 2 from the East, 1 from the North and 1 from Middle Shan) and the members of the core team gathered for a three-day training. The training started with sharing experiences in the various parts of Shan State on land issues, mining and governance. Participants also shared their activities towards local authorities and results related to these issues.

The fruitful and inspiring sharing session was followed by a debate on Myanmar’s transition. The participants felt this process to be top down, dominated by the military, with little space for the people to influence the decision making. The participants pointed out they wanted to have more influence on the decisions made by the government. The concepts of representative democracy and participatory democracy were shared.

The next day started with a recap and Q&A session. In an interactive session the concept of participatory democracy on ground level was further explored as well as consensus-based decision making. This session was highly appreciated by the participants. They gained understanding of the role of a citizen in this process and they understood that if you want people to have influence on decisions made by their government, the government needs to know what people want. This was a good starting point to discuss ways of how to develop a shared vision on a future Shan State. Special attention was given to the importance of gender mainstreaming of the vision. Therefore, the concept of gender and gender mainstreaming were explained with accessible examples and an exercise. In a lively role play, the participants practised a community consultation on the shared common vision.

The third day started with a recap and a Q&A session. The participants requested guidelines for the community consultations and checklists for data collection. Apart
from the concept of data security, anger management was introduced and discussed in relation to nonviolence.
The afternoon was spent on systematic planning, defining target areas for data collection and the collection of the voices of the people for the shared vision, as well as an action plan for May-June.
The participants felt empowered by the network meeting. They were enthusiastic and eager to use the acquired knowledge and skills.

**July 7-9, Lashio, Northern Shan State – MPA Network training / workshop.**
This training cum workshop brought together 58 participants from Northern Shan State, focal persons and MPA members. In May and June the MPA core team went to the area to collect data on problems with land registration, natural resources and governance and to consult the communities for the White book (the working title for the shared vision on the future of Shan State). The workshop started with sharing experiences and an analysis of the situation in the region. Clashes between the Myanmar army and different armed groups increased the insecurity in the region. The risks were analysed and strategies to manage the risks were discussed. The afternoon was spent on data collection, data verification and the kind of evidence needed to support these data. Insight in different kinds of evidence (hard evidence and soft evidence) was shared, as well as helpful tips. Participants shared their experiences with data collection in the previous months. By taking their data as example and analysing them together, the gaps that still needed to be filled became clear. The second day was spent on the White book. The participants reflected critically on their experiences with consulting the communities on the White book. Based on these experiences, a BCN resource person explained the concept of the White book and shared ways of disseminating the information with communities and tools and best practices for consultation. In group work participants could practice. The feedback session on the group work was very profound and intense, which was highly appreciated by the participants and considered a very helpful learning experience. On the third day basic democratic skills such as finding common ground and negotiating were addressed. The participants discussed how they could use these skills in nonviolent lawful activities. In the afternoon action plans were
made. The evaluation received from the participants showed that they highly appreciated the interactive set up of the workshop. The information shared answered a lot of the questions they had, and provided a fresh perspective in approaching the community consultations.

**July 14-15, Kyaung Tung, Eastern Shan State – MPA Network training/workshop.**
31 participants gathered for a two day Network training/workshop. After an analysis of the situation in Eastern Shan State, the focal persons presented the data they collected after the previous workshop (May). After a short analysis, the resource person explained what was missing and what kind of supporting evidence was still needed. In group work the participants made a risk analysis and a context analysis. With this information a plan was made for the collection of data in the coming months. After presentation of the plans, the resource persons gave input. In the afternoon strategies for further activities to address the issues with the coalmine and the goldmines in the area were developed. Input was given on nonviolent action, law awareness and negotiating skills.

The second day was spent on the White book. After a discussion on the concept of the White book, participatory democratic principles and structures were shared by the resource persons. In group work participants shared their experiences in the field and made a first, very tentative, draft of the White book. The participants were enthusiastic about the White book. They appreciated the information shared because it gave them more knowledge and a better understanding of developing the White book.

**July 23-25, Yangon - MPA coordinator training/meeting.**
A three day training brought together the focal/coordinator persons of the different areas in the network as well as the MPA core team, all together 27 participants. On the first day experiences in the field were shared. Problems were discussed and strategies to overcome the problems were developed together. All agreed that the White book needed more explanation for most communities. Most participants asked for more input on data analysis and on consultation skills. The second day was spent on data analysis. BCN staff shared information and insights on data analysis. In
group work participants could practice by analysing data from several cases. After presenting the results, ways to encourage communities in collecting data were explored in an interactive session. The focus of the third day was on consultation skills. In order to be able to explain democracy and participatory democratic concepts to the communities, the participants expressed their need to better understand those concepts. Therefore the resource person from BCN explained these fundamental concepts in a very understandable way, with many examples. After the Q&A session, the participants discussed how to arouse the interest of communities that have never participated in a democratic process before. They identified elements of the consultation process necessary to stimulate communities to share their concerns and ideas for a future Shan State. A special session on how to engage women was included. After a long and intense day, the participants felt more self-confident. They felt eager to apply the knowledge in the field and consult the communities on their wishes and needs as a basis for democratic participation.

**September 28-29, Aung Ban, Southern Shan State – MPA Network workshop.**

Members of MPA from Southern Shan State, PaO and Danu areas gathered for a two day MPA network workshop. Experiences from the previous months were shared and strategies for further activities designed. BCN staff gave input on nonviolence and lawful action. Data that were collected in the previous month were examined and analysed. Stories for the Black book (the working title for the narrative on the issues selected) were drafted and evidence is checked. In group work participants shared input for the White book. The workshop was very fruitful, the participants expressed their enthusiasm for the White- and Black book, overcoming their initial hesitation.

**September 30 – 3 October Nang Cho, Kyaut Mae and Hispaw - MPA network workshop.**

Strong monsoon caused flooding and landslides in Middle, East and Northern Shan State in July and August. During the floods many roads were blocked and it was difficult to go to the communities to collect data and consult them. In October many participants were restoring their farms, and had little time to attend an MPA
network training. Therefore we decided to visit their villages to collect data and stories and to consult the communities on their vision of a future Shan State. We visited Nang Cho, Kyaut Mae, and Hispaw. Data were collected, evidence checked, and stories told. Activities to address the local issues were shared and strategies for new activities were developed. Laws applicable to the local issues were explained and the common vision for a future Shan State was discussed. The meetings were extremely well received. The villagers were happy that they could work together with the network and appreciated that we had found a solution to their problem with attending the workshop.

**October 3-4, Lashio, Northern Shan State – MPA network workshop.**

MPA members from Lashio and upper Lashio attended the two day workshop. This workshop mostly followed the agenda of the workshop in Aung Ban. Some participants were new members of the network and needed more basic information. They spoke a local language, which was a complicating factor. But at the end of the workshop we had good stories with strong evidence, input for the White book and good suggestions for further activities to address their issues, mainly land grabbing.

**October 7-8, Tachileik, Eastern Shan state – MPA Network workshop / meeting.**

Due to floods and bad road conditions, not all participants were able to attend the workshop. The core team split and 4 members of the core team went to the villages to collect their data and discuss follow up actions to solve their pressing problems with a goldmine. The workshop in Tachileik followed the same agenda as Aung Ban. Video footage of a meeting between the community, a mining company and the Minister of Mining of Shan State was analysed. Feedback was given and further action discussed. At the end of the workshop we had several stories with good evidence, a fair idea of the communities’ perspectives on the future of Shan State, and the community had new ideas and plans for follow up nonviolent activities within the framework of the law.
**October 14-16, Yangon - MPA Network workshop.**

A three day workshop was organized for 19 persons, the focal persons of the network and representatives of the communities to check and finalize the stories that they shared. The draft of the book ‘The Voice of the Shan State People for Peace and Transition to Democracy’ was discussed. The workshop was rather labour-intensive, but everybody was satisfied with the result of this joint endeavour.

**Network trainings, Community consultation and Data collection**

**May 20, Wan Hser Village, Tachileik Township - Eastern Shan State – Network training, community consultation and data collection.**

A one day consultation was organized for 55 participants to collect their voices for the common shared vision on the future of Shan State and to collect data on their issues related to land, natural resources and governance. The day started with an explanation of the civil rights. After a short introduction of the land law, democracy and the 2008 constitution, participants shared their issues. Based on their issues, the necessary data and how to collect them were discussed. Since many participants faced problems with land registration, a session on land registration was added. The afternoon was spent on creating a shared vision for the future of Shan State. After explaining the purpose of the consultation and how the findings would be used, input on democracy, federalism and natural resources was shared, to enable consultees to give an informed opinion and not simply an instant reaction. The process of consultation was very interactive, with ample opportunity for debate, discussions and questions. The consultees participated actively and helped each other in case of language problems.

**May 21, Tar Leh, Tachileik Township, Eastern Shan State: field survey.**

To conduct field research and assist collecting data, a day was spent at some sites related to the issues discussed the day before. Photos were taken as well as GPS points as part of the collection of evidence. A meeting between the community and...
the manager of a mine was organized, much to satisfaction of both the company and the community.

**Network training, community consultation and data collection meetings.**
The following workshops followed the same pattern as the workshop in Wan Hser Village:

- **May 23, Wan Taung Village, Kyaing Tong TSP, Eastern Shan State** - 26 participants
- **May 24, Kyaing Paung Village, Kyaing Tong TSP, Eastern Shan State** - 51 participants
- **May 28, Met Mom Mone Village, Namt San TSP, Middle Shan State** - 32 participants
- **May 29, No. 5 Village, Namt San TSP, Middle Shan** - 36 participants
- **May 30, Nam San TSP, Middle Shan State** - 38 participants
- **June 1, Moe Noe TSP, Middle Shan State** - 69 participants
- **June 3, Mine Tone TSP, Middle Shan State** - 29 participants
- **June 9, Yin Ku Village, Naung Cho TSP, Northern Shan State** - 44 participants
- **June 10, Kho Ohn Village, Kyauk Mae TSP, Northern Shan State** - 72 participants
- **June 18, Mine Kai TSP, Northern Shan State** - 141 participants
- **June 19, Nyain Pin Kyi (Naung Ta Yar), Northern Shan State** - 129 participants
- **June 20, Htamin Phong (Yaer Ngain), Northern Shan State** - 49 participants
- **June 26, Lachar, Middle Shan State** - 132 participants

**June 24 – 30 Yangon - data analysis.**
All data collected on the selected issues were processed, assessed and analysed by the core team. Stock was taken on the results of the data collecting and consultation process, and from this necessary further steps to be taken were designed. A first draft of the common vision was created on the basis of the then available data.

**Network training, community consultation and data collection meetings – continued.**
The following workshops followed the same pattern as the workshop in Wan Hser Village:

- **August 24, Yae Pu village, Southern Shan** - 214 participants
August 25, Paung Taw Sike village, Southern Shan - 104 participants
August 26, Myoe Haung village, Southern Shan - 37 participants
August 27, Lin Lay Inn Village, Pindaya, Southern Shan - 306 participants
August 28, Yat Sauk TSP, Southern Shan - 51 participants
August 29, Ywar Nagan TSP, Dalapin Village, Southern Shan - 58 participants
August 30, Kalaw TSP, Naung Lway, Southern Shan - 31 participants
August 31, Baw Saing, Southern Shan State - 59 participants
September 2, Dalaima Village, Southern Shan - 38 participants
September 3, Moe Byae TSP, Paw Oo, Southern Shan - 168 participants
September 5, Pin Laung, Southern Shan - 69 participants
September 6, Naung Khar, Wan Pang Village, Southern Shan - 49 participants
September 7, Moe Nae, Middle Shan - 64 participants
September 14, Kyauk Taw Village, Northern Shan - 47 participants
September 15, Ohn Ma Khar Village, Northern Shan - 25 participants
September 16, Mar Nar TSP, Northern Shan - 165 participants
September 17, Thi Paw TSP, Northern Shan - 143 participants
September 18, Nant Hu Taung village, Northern Shan - 42 participants
September 19, Nant Phat Kar Village, Northern Shan - 20 participants

Consultation meetings - for approval of White book (the working title for the ‘proposals for a better future, part 2 of ‘The Voice of the Shan State People for Peace and Transition to Democracy’). Representatives of communities were presented with the final draft of the White book, final comments were invited and whom to delegate to the forum was discussed.

November 30, Pinlaung Township – Middle Shan - 32 participants
November 30, Tiggyit Township – Southern Shan - 20 participants
December 1, Kyaing Tung Township – Eastern Shan – 25 participants
December 4, Tachileik – Eastern Shan – 45 participants
December 5, Hta Min Paung, Danu area, Yuan Nyang - 20 participants
December 6, Pinlaung township – Middle Shan – 27 participants
December 7, Nam Sam Township – Middle Shan – 23 participants
• December 8, Mae Nae Township – Middle Shan – 36 participants

MPA core team and network focal persons prepared the agenda for the Forum and
the presentations for sharing ‘the Voice of the Shan State people for Peace and
transition to Democracy’. Tasks and responsibilities during the forum were discussed
and divided.

15-17 December – MPA Forum ‘the Voice of the Shan State people for Peace and
transition to Democracy’ - 375 participants.
During this three day forum, the MPA publication ‘the Voice of the Shan State
People for Peace and Transition to Democracy’ was launched: representatives of
communities presented the issues on land, natural resources and governance, the
activities they had undertaken to address these issues as well as their proposals for
a better future to invited stakeholders from Ethnic Armed Organisations, political
parties, MPs elect from State and Union level, local government and experts.
During the forum, MPA also launched its T-shirt campaign ‘Listen to our voice’ – we
want genuine peace, just laws, equal development.
Gender program

January 1-2, Naung Ka Yar, Shan State - Women mass meeting, Gender awareness.
123 participants gathered in Naung Ka Yar. The aim was to empower women, raise awareness on gender equality, violence against women and to reduce fear by informing the participants about their rights. After introduction of the concepts of gender, CEDAW was explained, followed by discussions on the use of these concepts in the everyday life of women in Shan State. Awareness was raised on gender based violence in conflict areas and women and security. The participants shared gender based issues. The women were invited to join the Shan State Women Peace Action Network.

February 7-8, Taunggyi, Shan State - Legal aid training.
The legal aid training was attended by 50, mostly female, participants. A lawyer explained the basic laws applicable to women and the women protection law. Case studies from women in the audience were discussed as well as ways of giving support to victims of gender based violence. The lawyer gave legal advice in several divorce - and domestic violence cases. The participants appreciated the legal aid training very much. They were very supportive of each other. They all expressed that the understanding of their rights will allow them to address issues of domestic violence and divorce.

In the course of the year, the Shan State Women and Peace Action Network was actively involved in drawing up frameworks for the National and State Based Political Dialogue (Shan State). They advocate at least 30 percent representation of women in all formal structures, and at least 50 percent female representation in informal discussion in the so called common space and on village-, township-, and district level. Furthermore, they propose gender mainstreaming of all policy proposals. The network expressed appreciation of BCN’s program, which gave them the skills and knowledge to be involved in the framework drafting process.
Karenni People’s Voices in the Peace Process

*February 2-9, Chiang Mai – Meeting with KNPP leaders.*

4 staff members of UKSY went to Chiang Mai to meet the KNPP. Although the KNPP is among the Ethnic Armed Organisations yet to sign the National Cease Fire agreement, they make preparations to take part in the National Dialogue. The focus of the meeting centred round collaboration of KNPP with UKSY’s project: ‘Bringing the Voice of the Karenni People in the Peace Process’. KNPP agreed on doing a state based dialogue, for which UKSY would draft the framework. They were very interested in the data UKSY was collecting from grassroots communities and agreed to present those during the National Dialogue. Since many communities that UKSY planned to visit for data collection are in the territory of KNPP, their endorsement is very important. The meeting was successful, KNPP approved the project and a solid foundation was laid for future cooperation in bringing the communities’ voices into the peace process.

*February 14, Loikaw, Kayah State – Preparation meeting project: Karenni People’s Voices in the Peace Process.*

The UKSY planned a ToT from February 14-22 to share basic knowledge with participants on subjects needed to collect the voices of the Karenni people in the peace process. On the first day of this training, BCN staff recapped the information given in the previous week (ToT for the network, see above). The program of the training was discussed, and input was given on nonviolent action, negotiation skills and data collection. Special attention was given to data reviewing.

*February 15-21, Loikaw, Kayah State – Peace ToT, Capacity building.*

24 participants from 7 organisations planned to go to the villages to collect the voice of the grassroots people and collect data. Before they went on the fieldtrips, a 7 day training was organized to prepare them well. Main subjects were: public speaking, documentation and an update on the peace process. In group exercises they practiced with sharing information. The feedback session were lively and very useful.
The participants are young and enthusiastic. They lack previous experience, but after the training they felt well equipped.

Consultation workshops, May – October.
One day workshops were organized in 49 villages in 9 townships. From 7 previous forums and workshops, 12 topics were selected on which input from the communities would be asked: Peace, Development, Education, Land Rights, Human Rights, Women and Child Rights, Drugs, Economics, Youth, Environment, Health and Job opportunities. After an explanation of the objectives of this project and the peace process, the 12 topics were introduced. In group work people express their needs, opinions and concerns on these topics. Discussions proved to be difficult sometimes, since many participants lack experience with (group) discussions. People had difficulties understanding the peace process, for most it was the first time they were informed. But nevertheless, the participants took the effort to raise their voices and to bring their needs and wishes to the fore. During the consultations, stories about human rights abuses, lack of social welfare support and experiences with political representatives were collected and documented. Even though people might not have understood everything, they participated enthusiastically. They wanted their voices to be heard and felt eager to participate in the peace process. 1896 people attended the workshops, all from grassroots level, including women and minorities.

August 12-13, Loikow – Mid term Peace trip evaluation workshop - 27 participants.
A two day workshop was organized with participants that had been to the communities to collect the voice of the people. The data were analysed. Overall the data collected were very useful and many stories, photos and testimonies were gathered to support the data. Based on the data, a first draft of policy proposals was developed.

September 22-24, Loikow - Forum - 106 participants.
Grassroots people and local CSO’s were invited for consultation on the policy proposals. During the forum the policy proposals based on the collected data were
presented. The policy proposals were adapted according to the feedback from the participants. The review process concluded with the adoption of 163 policy proposals covering all 12 issues.

The framework for the State based dialogue was shared, so participants could understand how the issues will be presented. Among the participants members of political parties and Ethnic Armed Organisations were present as observers. The political parties promised to raise the voice of the people in parliament and the peace process and to lobby for the policy proposals.

After the forum the book ‘Echo of Peace’, expressing the voice of the grassroots communities and a tool for advocacy in the peace process, could be made ready for publication.

**September 30, Loikow - Network meeting.**
A network meeting with 40 participants is organized to discuss the advocacy strategy and approaches for the policy proposals. Members of political parties will advocate for the proposals during the campaign for the upcoming elections, the policy proposals were taken into consideration during the drafting of the framework of the National- and State Based Dialogue, and CSO’s will lobby for the proposals. Drafts of the book ‘Echo of Peace’ were distributed. Everybody is enthusiastic about the project and feels it validates the voice of the grassroots people.

**December 2015: Publication and presentation of ‘Echo of Peace’, the book with the policy proposals based on the voice of the people of Karenni State.**

**Core team training and planning meetings.**

The BCN/MPA core team regularly met together to discuss progress, design and adapt strategy and analyse the program’s progress. In these meetings, attention was given to the situation in Myanmar, risk analyses were made as well as context analyses. Evaluations of team members, network and program were incorporated in these meetings.
February 19-22, Aung Ban, Shan State - Core Team training and planning meeting
The focus of the training cum planning meeting was the role of our network in building a democratic society. What is a democratic society; what is the role of the citizen in a democratic society, and which democratic skills are needed, were among the topics explored. The role of the network in building a democratic society was discussed. Myanmar’s transition away from military rule towards democratic reform was analysed with special attention to the role grassroots movements can play in this process. Since the members of the network have no practice nor experience with democracy, the core team concluded it is very important to share the basic concept of democracy, civil rights and the role of citizens in decision making in a democracy combined with capacity building of the enabling skills. Grievances will be addressed through direct actions, and data to substantiate the grievances as well as the solutions will be collected. A positive, shared vision on the future of Shan State will be developed.

February 27-March 2, Yangon - Planning meeting with the core team.
After an in-depth analysis and evaluation of the network meeting, the team decided to make some formats that would be helpful and supporting for the network activities. Formats for data collection were made for land issues (grabbing and registration), for issues related to mining and factories, and for data on governance. The team also designed sample letter formats for the letter writing campaigns. The formats were distributed among the members of the network. Guidelines on how to consult local communities on a common vision on future Shan State were developed.

April 7-11, Chiang Mai, Thailand - Team training / strategy meeting.
In April and May the team planned many activities. Due to visa restrictions of the BCN staff and the Thingyan festival in Myanmar, we decided to do the team training/strategy meeting in Chiang Mai.
The training started with an analysis of the political landscape. An update on the process of the nationwide cease fire and the political dialogue was shared, as well as an analysis of the elections scheduled later in the year. The overall conclusion of this
analysis was that at this stage, the political landscape is very uncertain and unfortunately there is yet no guarantee for a meaningful political dialogue, nor for considerable political reform in the near future.

The analysis was followed by a lively debate on how to empower the people to find their own way to peace and justice. The team concluded that by sharing information on laws, development and civil rights in an interactive way, connected with the daily lives of the people, MPA network members will be enabled to become active participants in their communities. Capacity strengthening and information dissemination on democratic processes on grassroots level will contribute to sustainable peace.

On the third day, data collection and the possibilities of a common vision on the future of Shan state collected through meetings with the communities and consultations, were further explored. A session on community organizing for consultation and consultation skills was provided by BCN staff as well as a session on tools for feedback sessions within the communities.

Upon request from the team members, the last day was spent on the concepts of democracy, democratic processes on grassroots level, democratic leadership and participatory democracy.

The meeting in Chiang Mai was very fruitful and valued by all participants.

May 1-4, Aung Ban, Shan State – Analysis and Strategy meeting core team.

After the intense network trainings throughout the whole Shan state, the team made a SWOT analysis of the network focal persons. Most members were considered very active and dedicated, even though some of them have overloaded agendas, since they are also involved in various other activities like EITI and the farmer movement.

From a thorough evaluation of the curriculum, we decided that repeated attention should be given to the concept of democracy in future trainings. Data collection and collecting usable evidence will be trained on the job in May. Community consultation will be addressed in Shan State network training. On request of the team, BCN shared information on ‘gender’ and gender mainstreaming. The aim is to gender mainstream the policy proposals that will be generated.
June 27-30 Bangkok - Strategy and planning meeting.
Two members of the Myanmar team travelled to Bangkok to have a strategy and planning meeting with BCN’s project manager. This meeting was held in Bangkok, and was combined with a fruitful meeting on the program with the Dutch Embassy in Bangkok.
A thorough analysis of the current situation was made, special attention was given to the peace process and the upcoming elections. Based on this analysis a strategy was developed for the upcoming period.
On request of the Myanmar team, a well-known, Bangkok based photographer gave a training on how to use photographs as evidence and for documenting issues. This training was highly appreciated.

July 14-17, Nay Pyi Taw - Core team meeting Blackbook / Whitebook.
The core team evaluated the previous workshops. From all the information and sheets from the group-work a draft was made for the White – and Blackbook. Strong points and weak points were identified, problems analysed and strategies for further steps developed. BCN staff shared how to construct stories from data analyses.

August 4-13, Phnom Penh - Siem Reap, Exposure trip to Cambodia – 10 participants.
A 7 day intensive exposure to Cambodia for members of the MPA core team. Issues addressed and explored were: the Cambodian recent history and political situation; laws, legal system and governance in Cambodia; comparisons with the situation in Myanmar; risks and challenges for human rights defenders and mitigating measures; fieldtrips to communities facing land grabbing, forced evictions and resettlement; a visit to the national assembly. Meetings with local cso, political activists and MPs.
This exposure was evaluated as highly useful, not in the least because the program was directly organised by BCN staff and tailor made to the learning and knowledge needs of the participants, and the gained insights could be directly applied in the program execution.
**October 19 – 25, Chiang Mai - Core team meeting Blackbook / Whitebook.**

From the data and stories, the final draft of the book ‘The voice of the Shan State People for Peace and Transition to Democracy’ was composed. After an intense week of discussing, analysing, writing, and debating, the book manuscript was ready for the final round of community consultation for their approval. The lay out of the book was designed, illustrations chosen, supporting evidence selected and other design considerations included, like preface, foreword, chapter headings and cover design.

**October 26-27, Bangkok – Strategy meeting.**

A two day strategy meeting was held in Bangkok with the strategy unit. Short term strategy and long term strategy were discussed, analysis of the Myanmar situation made and future plans developed. The team tasks were analysed and learning needs investigated. Ideas to fill the gaps were explored. The strategy meeting ended with a promising donor meeting.

**November 24-29 – MPA core team meeting – Yangon.**

Analyses of the current situation, results of the elections and implications for CSO and MPA program were made and thoroughly discussed. The first preparation for forum and draft agenda were made. The list of invitees for the forum was prepared. The English translation of the book was drafted. The website was designed. From GPS points maps were made and photos were selected for a photo show at the forum. The book manuscript was refined to attain the final edited version prior to printing.
Other activities

January 24-26, Phae Kone Shan State - Election Workshop – 32 participants
The three day workshop with 32 participants was organized by Comreg, one of BCN’s partners, to expand the knowledge of the community in relation to the upcoming elections. Concepts of democracy, elections, parliament and elections were explored. Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences with previous elections, the casting of their votes and their representatives in parliament. On the last day participants identified qualifications of candidates. The participants were satisfied with the workshop: they knew better how to select the right candidates for their constituencies and how to mobilize their communities to engage in selecting candidates for a meaningful transition to democracy.

February 12-13, Mandalay – Organizational reflection and Planning workshop – 26 participants.
Two days workshops were organized by Comreg for partner Civil Society Organizations.
During this workshops strategies to support reflective practice were shared, strong and weak points identified and leadership and decision making processes addressed. Steps towards a well-structured organization were explored and future activities as well as network opportunities discussed. Participants all agreed to the need of organizations to be well-structured.
Looking towards 2016

The election results of November have shaken the political landscape in Myanmar. Many expected the NLD to win, but hardly anyone could have foreseen the landslide victory. Though many greeted the victory of the NLD, especially the ethnic political parties and their constituencies were unsatisfied and feared even further marginalisation. The role of parliament and elected government in relation to the position of power of the military was hotly debated in many places. The Nationwide Cease Fire, signed in October, even though considered to be a step forward on the road to peace, was also widely considered not to be nationwide at all, as only a minority of Ethnic Armed Organisation signed the agreement. Nevertheless, the old government pushed on with the National Political Dialogue, which first session (the Union Peace Conference) was convened in January 2016, following the schedule of the roadmap to peace. Meanwhile, the civil war continued, with fighting taking place in Shan State and Kachin State, which cast doubt on the intention of the authorities to create sustainable peace in Myanmar. Ethnic communities are worried for their future; they raise concerns about their representation by the new NLD dominated government, which is regularly identified as a Burman nationality dominated party. The voice of the ethnic people for a federal state and more self-determination becomes louder and more articulated, as awareness of their rights and their role in a democratic society is growing.

Against this background, on community level, people are still facing many direct problems that affect their livelihood, wellbeing and violate their civil and human rights. Local government is dominated by the General Administrative Department, falling under the Ministry of Home Affairs, which falls directly under the Commander in Chief of the Myanmar Army, thus being outside of direct democratic oversight. Laws are not systematically implemented, rules are unclear, authorities and civil servants can act seemingly according to personal insights without reprimand. Other laws are used to suppress dissent and freedom of expression, organisation and lawful actions.
As people gain insight in the role of citizens and the rights and duties of people and government associated with democratic development, they are motivated to change their situation.

Using the knowledge gained through the trainings of the BCN program, participants feel empowered to address their issues. But a general neglect of authorities for their needs also gives rise to dissatisfaction, which can evolve into anger that could harm the still fragile process of transformation.

BCN plans to continue working according to the strategy developed during the implementation of the program “Building Political Literacy”, which ran from end of 2012 to the end of December 2015. In close cooperation with the core team of its main partner MPA (Myanmar People’s Alliance), and based on the needs and wishes of the community based members of the alliance, BCN has developed a follow up program, focussed on expanding the knowledge and skills for participatory democracy of grassroots communities. The program consists of awareness workshops, meetings, seminars and forums on democratic principles and people’s participation, and is firmly based in the conviction that only non-violent activities will contribute to genuine and sustainable democratic change.

As the transition process in Myanmar enters a new phase, BCN and MPA consider it of vital importance to include the people in this process of change. Genuine, sustainable peace is needed, through an all-inclusive nationwide ceasefire followed by a National Political Dialogue that includes cso and creates space for people’s involvement.

BCN/MPA’s program centres around organising people on community level to be able to address their issues independently by sharing knowledge, skills, tools and concepts that supports them to gain understanding of the causes of their situation. Ways to connect with the local government and authorities, remedies for unwanted situations and activities towards a better future are designed and supported within the framework of participatory democracy and non-violence.
In the past year, BCN has focused mainly on Shan State and Kayah State, and developed a model for community involvement in problem solving, engagement in decision making and connecting with the local government. This resulted in the publications of ‘the Voice of the People of Shan State for Peace and Transition to Democracy’ and ‘Echo of Peace’. These publications were based on awareness raising, consultation and direct activities in close cooperation with the communities involved. We plan to expand our program in 2016 to the areas bordering on Shan State (Monyin, Sagaing and Mandalay) to forge networks between the minorities and the majority nationalities, stimulate participation in decision making and connect local people to their local government. We aim to generate input for the National Political Dialogue based on the needs and wishes of the people for a peaceful and sustainable future for all in Myanmar.
Message from the board regarding BCN’s 2015 financial report

Again, BCN has worked well beyond the limits of the program to support the transition in Myanmar. We are proud of the strong and dedicated Myanmar team that has worked tirelessly for the execution of the program and expanded the support base in Myanmar to a well-functioning network. Support from SIDA for the ‘Building Political Literacy’ program continued, and additional funding was secured through the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the ‘Bringing the voice of the Shan State people into the National Political Dialogue to support the peace process,’ a sub program integrated into the ‘Building Political Literacy’ program. We are grateful to Cafod for the core funding accorded to BCN for 2015. Core funding is meant to support the execution of the programs of BCN, and covers part of the expenses towards operating the office and provides for research and program development. Core funding remains essential in maintaining an operational basis and to cover costs that are not covered by project grants.

On request of the staff, the board has decided to allocate the special purpose fund to the continuity reserve of BCN, and to close the special purpose fund.

The working budget for 2016 is:

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<td>(including Myanmar staff)</td>
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<td>Organizational costs</td>
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<td>Activities</td>
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<td>----------------------------</td>
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All activity costs for 2016 are related to the BCN/MPA program ‘Participation in Practice: connecting marginalized communities and government to advance development of participatory democracy in Myanmar’, which will start in 2016 and will run till 2019. Securing full working budget for 2016 is in progress.
We understand that the current situation in Myanmar after the election victory of the NLD and the uncertainties that accompany the transfer of power to the new government (scheduled for April 1, 2016) has influenced the donor community in Myanmar. Donor organisations also face the challenge of having to meet funding demands related to the current refugee crisis in Europe. Reacting to this situation, BCN has set up a minimum scenario to cover the organizational costs and the strictly necessary other operational costs for 2016. These minimum costs will be covered by the reserves and the grants still receivable in 2016.

Additionally, BCN is granted project funding for 2016 from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to continue its program in Shan State, and is negotiating proposals with several donors. Based on the reactions to BCNs proposed program, which are positive and encouraging, we expect to be able to secure project funding to start implementing ‘Participation in practise’ in the first half of 2016.
Financial Statement 2015
Burma Centrum Nederland
### Balance as of 31 December 2015

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**Records of Receipts and Expenditure over 2015**

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<td>451.090</td>
<td>374.879</td>
<td>366.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td>590.573</td>
<td>517.705</td>
<td>525.377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordinary result</strong></td>
<td>(8.685)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse costs, or from previous years</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total result**

(8.642) 0 12.490

**Allocation to / withdrawal from continuity reserve**

6.933 - (8.960)

**Allocation to Special Purpose Fund**

1.709 - (3.530)
Explanatory notes to the Balance sheet and the record of Receipts and Expenditure

Accounting principles applied to the valuation and determination of the result

Assets and liabilities are stated at face value unless indicated otherwise. Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the purchase rate as derived from actual exchange transactions during the reported period.

Grants are recognized as income in the statement of income and expenditure in proportions of the progress of the project as well as project expenditure.

Differences in grant revenue from the final subsidy determination are recognized in the year in which the donor has finalized the grant. In the explanatory notes is mentioned which donors have formally determined their subsidy and which donors have not.

Income and expenditure are recorded in the period to which they relate.

A possible positive result is designated to an allocated reserve for the purpose of continuity of the organization. The allocated reserve for continuity is restricted to a maximum for covering half a year of salary and organization costs. The basis of allocation every year is a decision of the board.

Survey tangible fixed assets

The tangible fixed assets are stated at acquisition cost, less straight-line depreciation.
The depreciation is calculated on the basis of acquisition cost less residual value and the estimated useful life of the related asset.

**Special Purpose Fund**

The Special Purpose Fund will be used to the discretion of the program coordinator for special projects in Myanmar, related to but not covered by the funding received for the programs in Myanmar. The Special Purpose Fund of 2014 has been transferred to 2015.
Explanatory notes to the BALANCE sheet as of 31 December 2015

ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Office equipment</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book value on 1st of January</td>
<td>€3,966</td>
<td>€4,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition during this financial year</td>
<td>€700</td>
<td>€3,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation this year</td>
<td>(€4,666)</td>
<td>(€3,967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Book value on 31 December</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>€3,966</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Current assets**     |        |        |
| a. Grants receivable  | €16,000| €3,000.00 |
| b. Advancements projects | €21,601| €69,968 |
| c. Other amounts receivable | €681   | €1,052  |
| d. Bank and cash balances | €74,907| €141,452|
| *Total current assets* | €113,189| €215,472|

The advances relate to activities that will take place early 2016 for the BCN-program.

c. Interest | €242   | €614   |
Credit invoice - 438
Prepayment 438 -

d. ING Bank 3,536 3,789
ABN-AMRO Bank 4,390 1,686
ASN Bank (2 accounts) 24,911 24,600
Triodos Bank 41,934 45,025
Triodos Rendement 135 60,833
Foreign cash - 5,519
-----------
Total bank and cash balances 74,907 141,452

The amounts on all the bank accounts are immediately payable.

LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Creditors</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Grants prepaid</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>83,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Accrued salaries of staff</td>
<td>3,526</td>
<td>6,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Other liabilities</td>
<td>7,543</td>
<td>10,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total current liabilities</strong></td>
<td>11,069</td>
<td>108,675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Ministry of Foreign Affairs -
SIDA 2 - 83,340

c. Income tax December - 2,712
Holiday pay 3,526 4,037

d. Administration office - 2,239
Auditors fees 7,087 6,500
Office & diverse costs 456 1,627
RESERVES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuity reserve</strong> at January 1st</td>
<td>85.026</td>
<td>76.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result allocated</td>
<td>(6.933)</td>
<td>8.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuity reserve at December 31</strong></td>
<td>78.092</td>
<td>85.026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FUNDS**

| **Special Purpose Fund** at January 1st | 25.737     | 22.207     |
| Costs paid from SP Fund (see activity costs) | (1.709)    |            |
| Result allocated                  | (1.709)    | 3.530      |
| **Special Purpose Fund at December 31** | 24.028     | 25.737     |
### Specification of the record of Receipts and Expenditure in the calendar year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RECEIPTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants SIDA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA-2</td>
<td>486.623</td>
<td>16.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total grants SIDA</td>
<td>486.623</td>
<td>516.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAFOD</td>
<td>13.800</td>
<td>12.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>81.095</td>
<td>8.348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total other grants</td>
<td>94.895</td>
<td>20.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total grants</strong></td>
<td>581.518</td>
<td>537.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other receipts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total other receipts</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total receipts</strong></td>
<td>581.888</td>
<td>537.864</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel expenses BCN staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Salaries</td>
<td>82.587</td>
<td>86.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Social security</td>
<td>12.280</td>
<td>12.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Insurance &amp; other personnel costs</td>
<td>10.585</td>
<td>13.835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total personnel expenses BCN staff</td>
<td>105.452</td>
<td>113.607</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note on staff, volunteers and board

Paid staff at the end of 2015: 2 x 0,6 fte and 1 x 0,3 fte

The highest salary paid is € 38.024 for 0,6 fte. BCN’s board members work unsalaried.

Other organization costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Office accommodation</td>
<td>16.739</td>
<td>16.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Accounting and auditing costs</td>
<td>8.006</td>
<td>18.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Depreciation</td>
<td>4.666</td>
<td>3.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. General office costs</td>
<td>4.620</td>
<td>6.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total other organization costs</td>
<td>34.031</td>
<td>45.444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Accounting            | 1.006 | 3.958 |
Auditing                | 7.000 | 14.641 |
Activity costs

a. Human resources (local) 75,067 56,623
b. Travel costs Europe-Burma 18,195 16,404
c. Workshop & training costs.. 356,119 290,729
d. Payments from Special Purpose Fund 1,709 2,570

Total activity costs 451,090 366,326

a. Local trainers 17,120 8,666
Local organizing fee 50,657 36,375
International trainers - 2,667
Interpreters and translators 7,290 8,915

c. Travel in Asia 2,305 23,076
Per diems and other accommodation costs 242,449 186,898
Costs of conferences and seminars 111,365 80,755

Costs from previous years, or extraordinary costs

Receipts
Diverse income 43 44

Expenses
Diverse costs - (41)

Total of costs from previous years, or extraordinary costs - 433
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT

To: the board of Stichting Burma Centrum Nederland, Amsterdam.

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Stichting Burma Centrum Nederland, Amsterdam, which comprise the balance sheet as at 31 December 2015, the statement of income and expenditure for the year then ended and the notes, comprising a summary of the accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Board’s responsibility
The board is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements and for the preparation of the board report, both in accordance with the Guidelines for annual reporting of the Dutch Accounting Standard Board, especially Guideline 640 “Not-for-profit organizations”. Furthermore the board is responsible for such internal control as it determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor’s responsibility
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Dutch law, including the Dutch Standards on Auditing. This requires that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor’s judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the foundation’s preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the foundation’s internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion
In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Stichting Burma Centrum Nederland as at 31 December 2015 and of its result for the year then ended in accordance with the Guidelines for annual reporting of the Dutch Accounting Standard Board, especially Guideline 640 “Not-for-profit organizations”.

Amsterdam, 29 March 2016

Dubois & Co. Registeraccountants

Signed on original by:
G. Visser RA
Colophon

BCN Annual report 2015

Board
Doutje Lettinga, chair
Namalie d’Abrew, treasurer
Monique Muller, secretary
Nathalie Noach, member

Staff
Saskia Kunst, managing director / program coordinator
Rikje Jansen, program officer
Wim van Schie, financial officer

Volunteer
Simon Schagen

This Annual Report is written and compiled by
Rikje Jansen, Saskia Kunst, and Wim van Schie.

Format and layout, Simon Schagen, Saskia Kunst.

Photographs: MPA and BCN

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All information is subject to errors and omissions.