





FIRST WORD

We remember it well. Sitting with Pastor Swea Mya during the early morning in a small village on the border. We were sitting on a log in front of his house. A small fire was burning and we took turns poking at it with bamboo sticks.

Swea Mya shared with us two of his dreams: One was to keep building churches in the villages that had none. The other was to build a malaria clinic that his wife Sarah, a nurse, could run. If they just had \$1,000, they would be able to build the clinic.

Where could we get that much money? We prayed and wrote letters. Within weeks, Oddny's mom had raised more than the amount needed through a raffle sale in our community. What a happy day it was to give the money to Swea Mya and Sarah! Soon after they received the funds, the clinic was up and running. Malaria patients were treated daily. Lives were saved. Children didn't die.

There are many more stories like this one in the Partners history book. Stories of needs that seemed so overwhelming. Stories of gifts coming from where we least expected. Stories of prayers answered again and again. Most of all, stories of people whose lives were saved, improved, and were given a new start.

Our history book is also full of heroes. Heroes like Swea Mya and Sarah. Heroes like Rose who gave her life saving children. Heroes like Eh Muu Lah, Doh Say, Mary Luu and hundreds more who have been a part of Partners work.

Then there are the thousands of men, women, and children around the world who have faithfully supported our work for 20 years. People who have given \$30 a month for 20 years. Imagine all we have been able to do with that money! Think of the children who have sold lemonade and cookies or donated their birthday money so that they could give to Partners. Think of the men and women who have given sacrificially and generously time and time again. Where would we be without all of you? Most of all, we think of God who has not only put up with us, but who has given us the strength, wisdom, and grace to continue. He is ultimately our provider, and He has not let us down once.

As we write this, we are humbled. We never thought we would end up helping so many, reaching so far. We never, in our wildest dreams, thought that we would—or even could—help hundreds of thousands of people. We took one step at a time and responded when we encountered a need. Our commitment is to continue to do just that.

Thank you so much for being a part of our amazing journey.
Your friends,

STEVE & ODDNY GUMAER
Founders, Partners Relief & Development



1994
Steve & Oddny met Rose Mu for the 1st time!

1995
Our First Relief Mission ~ helping at Mo Po Ko after it burnt down.



1999
We had 14 local and international staff members



1998
Hser Gay Paw, Birte, and Sverre started our weaving project.



1999
Partners first website was up and running.

2000
Our very first fundraising and advocacy office opened. ~Partners USA.



2000
Elise's Christmas project started. Providing presents for hundreds of refugee children.



2001
Naw Moo Ka Paw was found in a pig pen and brought to the safety of Rose's orphanage. ~Partners Canada started.



2002
We helped 7,200 men, women & children. ~Partners Norway starts.

2003
The Mae Sot field office opened.

2005
1st trip to Shan State ~Partners Australia registered.

2006
Partners helped found the Karen State Education Assistance Group. Now 140,000+ children are educated each year.



Feb 2006
Partners surrogate grandparents, Dorothy and Marv Kahn joined the team and loved on us all.



I don't know if it is my imagination, but if I close my eyes I can clearly hear Rose Mu's laugh and see her face. It is strange since she died more than ten years ago, and I only saw her whenever we went to see the children in the refugee camp.



At times I wonder if I make up the stories and the images about her. Some of the details are hard to confirm, and my memory has played tricks on me before. I have talked about her so many times that the stories have become a part of me. Do I share what really happened, or do I share what I think I remember?

We met Rose 22 years ago. We were young, naïve, inexperienced and no experts in documenting facts. Did we care to get the details of the first girl we helped? (She was a toddler found in the jungle, and we gave \$30 to help her for a year.) No. We were just two idealistic young people who were excited to be able to help and who thought the world would be just as excited as we were about our efforts. Now Rose is gone. Her daughter doesn't remember that first child. The camp we went to has been leveled to the ground, and the other children and staff from the orphanage are now scattered. How many times I wish I had had the foresight to take a picture of that little girl! How many times I wish I had taken the time to write down all the details about her. But I didn't. All I can do is trust my memory of what happened and what was said.

There were other children we met and helped: The little girl who was found sleeping with the pigs, the three siblings who lost both their parents and were later seen wandering the village begging for food, and the little boy who sat on

HER

BEAUTIFUL

Legacy



by Oddny Gumaer

the porch watching his parents get shot. Over the years, as the war continued, we lost track of many of them. I wish we hadn't.

But this is what I know for certain: Rose set an example for us that changed our lives. She loved children and gave them a new chance at life. She didn't sit around and wait for the world to get better. She made the world better. She didn't say that things couldn't be done. She proved that the impossible could happen.

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME, AND DO
NOT HINDER THEM, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
BELONGS TO SUCH AS THESE —*Matthew 19:14*

She saw Jesus in each child. She saw in each dirty, sick, lonely, afraid, hurt and hungry little child a person that was created by God, whose value was eternal, whose life mattered. She was willing to give her life for those children and, ultimately, she did.

I may have gotten some of the details wrong over the years, but these facts about Rose I didn't get wrong. The legacy of her life guides Partners even today. The values she promoted are what we believe as well.

*Meeting Rose Mu in Sho Khlo Refugee Camp was a catalyst that inspired Steve & Oddny to found Partners. Her example of God's love continues to inspire us today.
— To read more about Rose, read Oddny's book, *Picking Flowers on Dusty Roads*.*

continue her legacy
GIVE.PARTNERSWORLD.ORG



Burma

OR

Myanmar?

by Oddny Gumaer

The country we've been working in for 20 years, Burma, may appear to be struggling with its name. Anybody who is even the tiniest bit observant will have noticed that the country is referred to by two names, Burma and Myanmar. You will also have noticed that Partners has always referred to it as Burma.

While I am not a linguistic scholar myself, I am going to attempt to explain the differences in the two names and why some say Myanmar, and others, Burma.

If you were a Burman person, speaking the Burmese language (note that when I say Burman person, I don't refer to all the people living in Burma, but to the majority ethnic group that is called Burman) you would be calling your country Myanmar. That is the name of the nation when using the Burmese language. However, if you speak any of the other ethnic languages in the country (and there are hundreds of them), chances are you would be calling your nation Burma, or something like it, depending on your pronunciation.

Strangely, the two names, Myanmar and Burma, both come from the same root word. It appears that the people who entered the country in the ninth century referred to themselves as Mranma. Over time, the r in Mranma disappeared and was exchanged with a y. Then, as time passed further, the first syllable shortened, and the M became a B, and suddenly one had the word Bamah, or Burma.

So, it is right to say that both names originated from the name of the people who founded the Pagan Kingdom in 849 AD. Those are the people who we today call the Burman people, and who are the largest ethnic group in the country (note: there are 135 officially recognized ethnic groups within Burma).

When the British colonized the country they called it Burma. It was later (after independence from the British) called the Union of Burma. Then, after the military coup in 1962, it was changed again to the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma. However, in 1989 the military regime commissioned a committee to review all the names and places in Burma, making sure to remove any names that were influenced by the British. Unfortunately, the commission included only four linguistic scholars and the majority of the group was made up of military officials and civil servants with no linguistic skills.

After their work was done, it was decided that the proper English name for the nation was not Burma, but Myanmar. The reason for the change was **1.** It is the official name of the country in the Burmese language. **2.** The name Myanmar is more inclusive of the different ethnic groups in the country. **3.** The government was suspicious of the colloquial Burmese language, which they perceived as subversive.

Opponents of the change said that the name Myanmar was really just a more literary version of the name Burma. Besides, the new name, Myanmar, was actually disrespectful of the other ethnic groups, not more inclusive. Why? The ethnic minorities don't speak Burmese, and they have been using the name Burma in their languages for many generations. To them, the name change was purely a Burman name, reflecting a policy of domination by the ethnic Burman majority and the military regime. They also questioned the legitimacy of the name change made by an unelected military regime.

After the democratic reforms in the country in 2011 and 2012, more and more people from outside the country began using the name Myanmar. In a way it was seen as approving of the new government's efforts to make changes. There are still some countries that don't agree with the name change and still call the >>



country Burma. There are also a few news magazines and media outlets which still use the name Burma. Many NGOs have still not made the change as well.

This has been an issue we at Partners have grappled with over the last year. Should we or should we not make the change? Part of us resents it. Will it make us look like we are siding with the government? Will it make it look like we have given up the fight for freedom for the people of Burma? Will it make people respect us less? Will we compromise what is right and true?

We have asked all these questions while realizing that we are fighting a losing battle. It is very unlikely that the official name of Myanmar will ever be Burma again. It is also likely that, as time marches on, more and more people will be referring to the country as Myanmar, not Burma.

We have decided that what we do is too important to get hung up on a name. If, by changing the way we refer to the country we have learned to love from Burma to Myanmar means we will be more effective in our work, then we are willing to do so. And, like Mark Farmaner from Burma Campaign UK has said, "But really, it is not so important. Who cares what people call the country. It is human rights abuses that matter."

So in 2015, we will make the change. For a while you will see us writing Myanmar/Burma. And then, little, by little, we will be just writing Myanmar.

We hope you will understand and respect this decision. If you have any questions or comments, please write and let us know. Just remember that our work hasn't changed. Our commitment to the people is the same whether we say they live in a country called Burma or Myanmar.

SOURCES <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7013943.stm> + http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_Burma

GIVE.PARTNERSWORLD.ORG





2008

1st medical training in Chin State.

2008

The Mae Jo Development Training Center opened.

~Partners New Zealand started.



2010

The Village Health Worker program started, bringing vital care to remote Karen villages.

Now some clinic caseloads are reduced by 50%.



2011

Shan Sustainable Schools pilot program began. After 4 years, there are 29 projects under way.



2014

We grew significantly, and had 47 staff members.



2007

~ Partners UK started

May 2008

Cyclone Nargis devastated the Irrawaddy Delta and 138,366 people die. We helped with food, shelter and medicine.



2009

Shan State Medical training began. Since then 247 community health workers & 114 medics have graduated.



June 2011

Communal violence broke out in Rakhine State. More than 140,000 Rohingya remain displaced and living in horrific poverty.

2013

Naw Moo Ka Paw was finally reunited with her family after 12 years apart.



2015

20 years later, we now have the capacity to help more than a QUARTER OF A MILLION people each year. Thank you for helping to make a difference.



» **HELP CELEBRATE OUR 20TH BIRTHDAY**

And help change the world

DONATE
your
BIRTHDAY

THIS



20



Pledge your big day.

It starts by creating a fundraising page and asking your friends to mark your birthday by giving to projects that provide children in conflict areas with the best start to life.



Organise a party.

Planning a party as well? Download the birthday invite and other resources from our website to let your guests know about your big day and tell them about the cause.

BIRTHDAY, BY DONATING YOURS ≡

change a child's life!

CELEBRATE Your BIRTHDAY

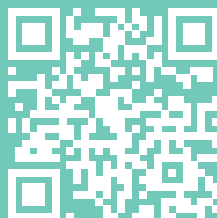
 YEAR

15



Spread the word.

Go to birthday.partnersworld.org to tell your friends how to give the gift of helping children affected by conflict reach their full potential.



birthday.partnersworld.org



Holistic Love in action

by Claire & Doug Gibbons

holistic *adjective* \hō-'lis-tik\

1. characterized by the belief that the parts of something are intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole.

Many things have changed over the past 20 years. Partners work has evolved and grown. Many more things have stayed the same. At the heart of who we are remains our absolute commitment. Through partnership with local communities and our supporters around the world to care for children affected by conflict, oppression and exploitation. Together we have helped hundreds of thousands of children and their families to meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

One of the clearest examples of this is our work in Kachin State where Partners works closely with two Kachin-run community based organizations to provide a holistic response to the needs of displaced communities. There are many different organizations working in this area. Most specialize in doing one thing and then repeating it in a different area. Partners has always worked to be led by local communities, listening to what each community wants and seeking partnerships with local groups. This is key to being able to identify what is needed by the people we are trying to help. When fighting started in Kachin State in 2012 we were able to respond quickly and provide aid before most organizations became involved.

When some larger, well-funded organizations started doing more in the areas we were helping, we talked again to our partners about what they needed and initiated trainings for Kachin leaders to be able to respond to the psycho-social and trauma-related problems that were occurring.

This initial need then morphed into setting up a Community Support Network. Built on the foundation of Mark 12:31 "Love your neighbor", this system now has 180 volunteers who coordinate care and assistance to the most vulnerable including the sick, single mothers, and children. 10,000 displaced Kachin are

supported by these volunteers in five displaced people camps throughout Kachin State. Together, the Kachin volunteers are loving their neighbors through this system that simply organizes and structures the community to better take care of one another. This foundation of relationship has continued to flourish and has flowed through to other areas like supporting sustainable agriculture programs in camps, support for a boarding school and provide Partners access to remote outposts where few others are helping.

All of this work came through our relationships with key people and key local organizations. It led to programs which are community-based, community-run and holistic. Not only have we provided for immediate needs but also the long term physical, emotional and spiritual health of Kachin communities.



Khon Mai is 32 years old. Last year her husband was away fighting for the Kachin resistance while she was pregnant with twins . She was also caring for her three other children. At the small clinic in the camp where she lives, the staff weren't equipped to cope with the birth of twins. They told her that unless she was able to organize transport to a hospital a few hours away then they didn't think they would be able to safely deliver the twins. The cost of transport for the trip was about \$30 but Khon Mai had no income and no way of getting that money. She was distraught at the thought of losing her babies. Soon after, one of the community support coordinators met with her and told other volunteers of her situation. Together they organized to collect money from the community.

The people in the camp are also very poor but they gave what little they had and amazingly managed to scrape together enough to pay for Khon Mai's transport to the hospital. Through their generosity, Khon Mai was able to go to the hospital and have the twins without any complications. Khon Mai shared of how grateful she was for the support of the community support workers without whom she may have lost her precious twins. She said that, while it was not a large amount of money, it meant the world to her.

Being LO NG

SIGHTED

by Sarah Armitage

In November 2010, the first Myanmar/Burma election in 20 years took place. We have seen the civilian—but military backed—Union Solidarity & Development Party (USDP) come to power and Myanmar's President Thein Sein has been busy cleaning house ever since.

Since coming to power he has taken more steps toward reform than any president/ruler since Ne Win's military coup d'état in 1962. By allowing Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy to return to the political stage, by ending restrictions on freedom of press, by releasing prominent political prisoners and conducting cease-fire talks with ethnic resistance groups, Thein Sein has been polishing silver, plumping cushions and blowing away some of the cobwebs left by the former military regime. On the surface, things are looking good. But now, with another election coming up at the end of this year, we need to keep in mind the question, 'What has been swept under the carpet?'

Thein Sein was not new to the rule of Myanmar/Burma. He became a General of the SPDC (State Peace & Development Council) in 2003 and promoted to Prime Minister in 2007. We mustn't forget that the elections which saw Thein Sein come to power were called a 'sham' by the international community after severe restrictions were put on other parties and candidates. And there were widespread allegations of intimidation and bribery. We mustn't forget that the new parliament and constitution were designed specifically to legalize the transition from a military to civilian dictatorship. We mustn't forget that the current, and likely future, leaders of Myanmar/Burma are still the same men who, until recently, led a brutal, military government that had been repeatedly condemned by many around the world.

If Thein Sein is serious about reform, he must recognise and admit that the crimes against humanity undertaken by the military regime of which he was a part, headed by General Than Shwe, were wrong and that all involved must be brought



to justice for their actions. And he must ensure that any ongoing human rights abuses against ethnic groups are halted.

We know that the government has pushed for and undertaken new talks with ethnic groups and has formed a peace committee to help resolve the conflicts – but while there are reports of cease-fire agreements, it's fragile and there is a long way to go. The Myanmar/Burma Army is continuing to launch offensives against ethnic armed groups in Shan, Karen and most notably Kachin State. The conflict within Rakhine State increases daily, with thousands of Rohingya refugees left without their basic needs being met.

The reality is that there is little evidence of the reforms touching any of the many desperate and oppressed people in the ethnic regions of Myanmar/Burma.

This year, on the 19th January, two female Kachin teachers were brutally raped and killed, allegedly by Myanmar/Burma Army soldiers. Marah Lu Ra (20) and Tangbau Hkawn Nan Tsin (21) were in their village in Northern Shan State when the attack took place. There has been an international call to the government to investigate, but according to local sources the police have not yet taken any action. Since 2011, when the 17-year Kachin ceasefire was broken, over 70 cases of rape and sexual violence by Myanmar/Burma Army soldiers have been documented.

So how serious is Thein Sein about true reform and democracy as he heads towards a possible second term? Only time will tell. In the meantime, Partners will continue to do what it does best, helping the most vulnerable and in need.



MARGARET

In 2004, Margaret Purvis sat surrounded by children in Mae La refugee camp. "What are your hopes and dreams?" she asked. She was overwhelmed when they all responded the same way, "We want to get an education, go home, and help our families." The future the children imagined compelled Margaret to return to the States and raise awareness for what was happening in Myanmar/Burma.

"I found Partners when I was in Thailand for a conference. I was looking for a way to expand the prayer ministry I am part of. We wanted to begin to pray for the children of Myanmar/Burma."

With each new year, Margaret learned more about Partners. She shared her experience with her church, First Presbyterian of Midland, and they began to contribute to the work in Myanmar/Burma. Individuals from the church began to visit Partners in Thailand. Margaret has returned to Thailand four times since that first trip. When asked to describe Partners in a few sentences she says, "You can count on them to do what they say they're doing. I know that they show the love of Christ through their work with honesty. It has been a blessing to see them grow from a small organization to a large, impactful group of people who are following the vision."

The PILLARS OF

PARTNERS

Today, we reflect and recognize that we would not be where we are without the support of our advocates and donors. People around the world have resonated with Myanmar/Burma and the work we are doing. We would like to say a special thank you to a few individuals who have joined us on this journey.



CHRIS

Chris Jennings joined the work of Partners after he helped to edit a human rights report documenting abuses against children in Myanmar/Burma. He was a member of the board from 2010–2013.

He said the following about Partners, *“Part of the desire to get connected came from the people who are already involved. It wasn’t about the problem that needed to be solved, it was that the people behind the problem were very committed, passionate and focused. They didn’t have all the answers. They didn’t understand all the politics but they were willing to do what other organizations wouldn’t do in some areas. They get into the jungle face-to-face with the problem and those who are impacted by the problem. Their structured approach is very thoughtful and Biblical. They provide emergency assistance where needed, which Jesus Christ did throughout His life. This is coupled with reaching the long-term goal. They aren’t driven to count people as born again and then just walk away. They aren’t looking for individualistic salvation as the end goal. The long-term goal is to see that people enter into the right relationship with their Creator through His Son, but that long term goal doesn’t get in the way of meeting the short-term physical needs of those that they serve.”*



FRITZ & CINDY

Fritz & Cindy Polk discovered Partners after their daughter met Steve in Chiang Mai. They began to receive newsletters and they felt compelled to do more. Cindy organized a group at their church to make quilts for refugees. They originally planned to send them to Thailand, but Cindy wanted it to be more personal. They decided to deliver the quilts in person. In 2004, they took a trip with eight other people to Thailand. This first trip started a movement at Animas Valley Church. Soon, they were going to Thailand every year with a team of people to meet the friends they had made in the refugee camps.

When asked to describe Partners in a few sentences, Fritz said, *“...there are snapshots of words that can attempt to describe their work: radical, real, relational, crazy, sacrificial, sold-out, being like Jesus, Biblical, genuine, and ultimately, the two great commandments. Steve loves God with all his heart, mind, and soul and he leads Partners to love the children who are affected by war...”*

Cindy adds to Fritz’s statement saying, *“On a mission trip your intention is to go and serve and encourage, but it always ends up to be the other way around. We always return blessed and humbled by the humility of the Karen people, their sweet spirits in suffering, and their hope in the Lord, not on their circumstances.”*

Hello's

& GOODBYES



JEFF & SHERRI WALL

Jeff and Sherri are founding members of the Partners team. They have served in various roles and have raised substantial funds for Partners over the years. Jeff has joined the Partners USA team, speaking in churches and helping to raise the funds needed to bring freedom and fullness to the children we help.



FRAN & LORI DEROCHE

Fran & Lori began their international journey back in 1991 when they joined Mission Aviation Fellowship. They have served primarily in Africa, but feel God is calling them to make a move to Partners. Fran will be working with short-term volunteers and teams, while Lori will be working in our finance team.



KATIE PHAM

Katie and her husband Johnny have lived in Denver, Colorado for three years. They are blessed to work full time with the growing number of refugees from Myanmar/Burma. They are passionate about helping to create healthy, joyful, and self sustaining lives for refugees. Katie now works part-time for Partners processing donations and sending receipts.



CLAIRE RUSSELL

Claire Russell joined the Partners team in Chiang Mai in 2012 to work in medical projects with a particular focus on our work in Shan State and Chiang Mai. Over the past three years we have been blessed to have her intentional care and deep friendship in our community. While we will miss her, she isn't going far and is looking at being based in Yangon later this year.



THE FETTERS FAMILY

Matt, Liz, Savannah, Cassie and Katie joined Partners in 2006. Matt worked in the areas of hydro-power, animal husbandry and organic farming to equip farmers and technical workers along the border and in Karen State. Liz home schooled her girls and was involved in the local community. Matt & Liz also started a home church for Mae Sot residents, which has been running for many years. We will miss them greatly and wish them all the best as they return to the States as Savannah and Cassie start college.



PARTNERS ADVOCATE

*Become an advocate and be a voice
for the children of Myanmar/Burma.*

We are a small non-profit, so Partners Advocates have an important role in helping spread awareness and generating opportunities for advocacy and fundraising beyond the reach of our current in-house resources.

SIGN UP TODAY!
advocate.partnersworld.org



PARTNERS
FORCHANGE

IT ALL BEGINS WITH A SMALL MONTHLY GIFT.

Partners started with a **\$30** commitment and we now support thousands of people in refugee camps and displaced across Myanmar/Burma. We need your help to change the lives of even more and remind them that they are loved and not forgotten.

*Join Partners for Change today by committing
a minimum of \$30 a month to support our work*

To show your support please fill in the enclosed response form and return it to our office.



Partners Relief & Development
PO Box 912418
Denver, Colorado 80291-2418

info@partnersworld.org
www.partnersworld.org



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

Change Service Requested

**FREE, FULL LIVES FOR
CHILDREN AFFECTED BY
CONFLICT & OPPRESSION**

CONTRIBUTORS Steve & Oddny Gumaer, Doug & Claire Gibbons, Sarah Armitage, Katie Pham, Dorothy Kahn and Ruth Corlett.

PHOTOGRAPHY Amos Ling, Sacha Olson, and Steve Gumaer

DESIGN Sacha Olson **EDITOR** Claire Gibbons

Partners Relief & Development is a registered charity in the USA, Canada, UK, Australia, Norway, New Zealand and Thailand

NORWAY

Partners Norway
Staffeldtsgate 4
0166 Oslo
Norway
Telephone +4799 301 919
info@partnersnorge.no
www.partnersnorge.no

CANADA

Partners Relief & Development
33130 Springbank Road
Calgary, Alberta T3Z 2L9
Canada
Telephone 403 538 2870
info@partnersworld.ca
www.partnersworld.ca

NEW ZEALAND

Partners Relief & Development NZ
PO Box 40284
Upper Hutt 5140
New Zealand
Telephone 027 587 2865
info@partnersworld.org.nz
www.partnersworld.org.nz

USA

Partners Relief & Development
PO Box 912418
Denver, Colorado 80291-2418
USA
Telephone 909 748 5810
info@partnersworld.org
www.partnersworld.org

AUSTRALIA

Partners Relief & Development
PO Box 4117
Narre Warren Sth VIC 3805
Australia
Telephone +61 3 9013 7676
info@partnersworld.org.au
www.partnersworld.org.au

UK

Partners Relief & Development UK
PO Box 557
Mexborough
S63 3EN
Telephone +44 (0) 1709 578904
info@partnersworld.org.uk
www.partnersworld.org.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS For a free subscription to Partners magazine and for information on how you can help us in our mission, please contact us.

NONPROFIT STATUS NOTICE Partners Relief & Development (Partners) is a nonprofit organization with a 501(c) (3) federal tax exempt status. Any contributions given to Partners are tax deductible for U.S. taxpayers.

DISCLAIMER In the event of a particular project being over subscribed, Partners Relief & Development will redirect your donation to other needs of the same community project, or to an equally worthwhile project.