

# Safeguarding the Tradition of Myanmar Marionette and Performing Arts

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## Abstract

This is a reprint of the August 2016 project report concerning Safeguarding the Tradition of Myanmar marionettes and related performing arts during the period from the 1st of July 2015 through July 2nd, 2016 funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation – SDC and implemented by Myanmar Upper Land – MUL.

**Keywords:** *Safeguarding Traditions, Myanmar, Marionette, Performing Arts*

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## Contents

- (1) Background of the Project
- (2) The objectives of the project
- (3) A brief description of the input to the project
  - a) Human resource personnel and Technical support
  - b) Methods used
  - c) Equipment and materials
  - d) Financial contributions
- (4) Activities carried out to achieve the objectives
  - a. Activity 1: Learning Material Development
  - b. Activity 2: Skills Transfer Training
  - c. Activity 3: Awareness raising in safeguarding of traditional Myanmar Marionettes
  - d. Activity 4: Strengthening learning and networking capacity
- (5) The outcomes of the project
  - a) Skills transfer to the trainees
  - b) Awareness raising
  - c) Innovations
- (6) Future plans and possible spinoffs
- (7) New contacts through the implementation of the project
- (8) Attention of the press
- (9) Sustainability of the project
- (10) The difference made by the Swiss Development Cooperation
- (11) Conclusions and recommendations

## 1 Background of the Project

The project - Safeguarding the tradition of Myanmar Marionette and Performing Arts - was implemented by Myanmar Upper Land (MUL), with the fund provided by Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). The project's aim was to promote the traditional Myanmar marionette performing arts beyond the touristic audience and create performance capacity and awareness in the different regions and states of Myanmar, and to safeguard all its aspects, which include the method of manipulating and making Myanmar marionettes (string puppets), dancing, music, sculpture, sequin embroidery and painting.

Direct beneficiaries of the project were Myanmar traditional artists who are unable to attend the formal training school or universities, students of the schools of fine arts and universities of Culture, ethnic community members, researchers and policy makers who are interested/involved in traditional performing arts and culture.

Participants in the project were national and international researchers and experts such as from Myanmar Marionettes Organization (MMO), Myanmar Theatrical Associations, 'Goethe Institut' (Myanmar); lecturers, researchers from the National Universities of Arts and Culture in Yangon and Mandalay (NUAC - Y/M); Universities of Culture from Mandalay and Yangon; students and lecturers from the Myanmar fine arts schools and culture universities, and private marionettes troops from Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand.

The activities of the project were successfully implemented as planned during the period of 1st July 2015 until 2nd July 2016 in close collaboration with 'Goethe Institut' (Myanmar) and MMO.

Overall, the project intended to bridge the past with the future and to overcome social exclusion, and build new skills and capabilities in the Myanmar traditional artist communities and modify its traditional approaches to cope with today challenges and opportunities.

## 2 The Objectives of the Project

The project set the following objectives:

1. Provide innovative solutions in preserving the uniqueness of cultural traditions in Myanmar marionette;
2. Transfer the skills of traditional Myanmar puppetry – manipulating, making, dancing, music, sculpture, sequin embroidery and painting– to a younger generation of male and female puppeteers of different ethnic groups:
  - a. promote traditional puppetry as means for ethical and aesthetic education and preserve various techniques that existed in the traditional theatre performance;
  - b. promote the use of puppetry performance as means of advocating issues related to modern society (in schools, communities, etc);
3. Exchange knowledge and experience between Myanmar, ASEAN and international artists; then to create an annual international marionette/puppet festival in Myanmar;
4. Strengthen learning and networking capacity among Myanmar puppeteers artists.

The project involved four main activities to achieve the objectives set above. By way of expert panel discussions, training sessions, workshops, seminars, performances, transfer project development and awarding, the project sought ways to provide innovative learning and knowledge sharing with those who are working in the traditional theatrical field associated with the performing arts in Myanmar.

## 3 A Brief Description of the Input to the Project

### a) Human resource personnel and technical support

- National and international researchers, experts and writers on Myanmar traditional culture,
- Trainees, lecturers and professors from National Universities of Arts and Culture in Yangon and Mandalay and from the Mandalay Fine Arts School,
- Technical expertise from MUL in close cooperation with MMO,

### b) Methods Used

Workshops, seminars and meetings

1. Myanmar Marionette DVD-Rom MM DVD-ROM development workshop in Mandalay at 1st & 2nd August 2015.
2. MM DVD-Rom development workshop in Yangon at 15th & 16th August 2015.
3. Workshop of developing the course guideline for the Myanmar marionette

training and setting up the steering committees of the project in Mandalay at 12th & 13th September 2015.

4. Steering committee members meeting for the selection of trainees in Mandalay at 23th Oct. 2015. (For a detailed list of selection criteria for the trainees see in the Annex.)
5. Seminar of the German modern puppeteer on the training session of the Myanmar Marionette trainees in Mandalay at 28th November 2015.
6. Pre-fact finding meeting of Mandalay's steering members for the forthcoming 28th Feb 2016 workshop at 24th January 2016 in Mandalay.
7. On 28th February 2016, workshop of steering committee members meeting to design the four small projects of the trainees and preparing the Myanmar and International Marionette Festival.
8. Prize selection meeting for four small projects of steering committee members and Awarding ceremony at 2nd July 2016.

Expert panel discussions conducted in the Myanmar and International marionette festival at 2nd & 3rd April 2016.

#### Training sessions

1. Two weeks skill transfer training (First Phase) of traditional Myanmar marionette to 24 trainees from 15th November 2016 to 28th November 2016,
2. Two weeks skill transfer training (Second Phase) of traditional Myanmar marionette to 22 trainees from 20th March 2016 to 1st April 2016,

#### Exhibitions

Arts and local handicrafts exhibitions were organized during:

1. 2-3 April 2015: the marionette festival.
2. 13 May 2016: Exhibition of MMO together with performances of The Ishara Puppet Theatre Trust, from New Delhi, India as part of the "India Pwe-festival". The Indian Consulate General in Mandalay invited this group. All logistical and other necessary arrangements in connection with this were done by MUL. (Remark: this exhibition was not included in the project proposal; it was organised in cooperation with Mr Dadi Pudumjee, a leading puppeteer in India and the founder of The Ishara Puppet Theatre Trust).

#### Performances

1. Outstanding traditional marionette troupes from Yangon and Mandalay together with live orchestra and the German modern puppeteer performed at 28th November 2015.
2. Puppet troupes from Indonesia and Thailand, national outstanding traditional marionette troupes from Yangon and Mandalay along with the live Myanmar orchestra, four troupes of trainees, U Ye Dway, patron of MMO and a famous old veteran puppeteer of Myanmar performed on the "Myanmar and International Marionette festival" at 2nd & 3rd April 2016.
3. As the out-door performances of the festival at 2nd & 3rd April 2016, traditional Kyauk Se's elephant dance, Dance of "two bodies one soul" and International human-puppet troupe from Thailand made performances for the community members from Mandalay.

### c) Learning materials

- The MM DVD-ROM and its printed version (book) were used for training sessions.
- Project promotional materials were provided for over 40 professional puppets.

### d) Financial contributions

- Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) was the main financial provider of this entire project.
- 'Goethe Institute' (Yangon, Myanmar) contributed the followings, but no financial support.
  1. Enabling an international artist group to participate in the two-day Myanmar and international festival from 2-3 April 2016. This group was the Indonesian 'Paper moon Puppet Theatre' and not only performed but also gave also training sessions and joined discussion about the sustainability of these art forms.
  2. Enabling a one-day participation of Ms. Anne Klatt, a German modern puppeteer at the two-week training course in Nov-2015. Apart from giving a lecture about modern puppetry, she also gave a performance, accompanied by the Myanmar traditional live orchestra.
- MUL implemented and organised the entire project and contributed to the logistical support, like the transportation of people to and from the project sites in Mandalay and office facilities as in 18% of the total budget of the project.

## 4 Activities Carried Out to Achieve the Objectives

### Activity 1: Learning Material Development: Myanmar Marionettes-DVD-Rom Digital Version and Printed Version

The purpose was to validate and upgrade the content of the MM DVD-Rom (which was first developed in 2009) and to create a book based on this. Both, book and MM DVD-ROM are for teaching purposes and for the sustainability of tradition of Myanmar marionette art. Developing this learning material was by:

- way of expert review workshops in Mandalay and Yangon;
- collecting more data about Myanmar Marionette during the workshops and adding this to the MM DVD-Rom and book;
- In particular, music and video files were added at the MM DVD-Rom;
- testing during the project the new draft version among the group of artists to test user friendliness and usability as learning materials used;
- Dr. Tin Maung Kyi, a freelance researcher (especially in Myanmar Puppetry) to edit the English version part of the MM DVD-Rom and book;
- Innovative learning materials (i.e. MM DVD-Rom digital version and printed version on marionette history, technique, challenges and lesson learnt) was developed and distributed among private and public schools/ trainings as means to improve ways of learning and teaching within the traditional theatrical performing artist communities.
- The final versions of (both in digital and printed versions) was launched during the two-day Symposium organized at 2-3 April 2016, and donated to the Myanmar culture universities and school of fine arts for their academic use.

This activity was therefore implemented in the following steps:

1. 5 day workshop (2 - days expert review / validation and 3 days for developing a pedagogical approach)
2. Technical adjustment of MM DVD-Rom (Programming)
3. User testing (together with experts and trainers)
4. Producing a learning book (Printed version of MM DVD-Rom).
5. Launching of MM DVD-Rom and a learning book at the symposium.



Figure 1. DVD images.

## Activity 2: Skills Transfer Training on Myanmar Marionettes Performance Including Project Development and Awarding of the Good Practices

The objective of this activity was to establish a training programme in two phases targeting for artists/students (Semi-professional level) from Yangon, Mandalay and other regions. Each phase of the training session will take two weeks and the entire training programme would include two phases, i.e.,

Phase 1 as professional level and

Phase 2 as transfer project development level.

Through these phases, the purpose was not only to promote traditional puppetry as means for ethical and aesthetic education and preserve various techniques that existed in the traditional theatre performance but also to promote the use of puppetry performance as means of advocating issues related to modern society (in schools, communities, etc).

The training programme was primarily meant for those who cannot afford to take part in the training programmes to learn systematically about Myanmar Marionettes as well as for those who are familiar with Myanmar marionette along with traditional dance and music from regions and states. During each phase of the training programme, experienced puppet masters from MMO were requested as trainers. Puppets and related materials were also supplied by the project for learners to practice during the training sessions. The focus was on various learn-

ing aspects, from making of professional marionettes to manipulation, this last accompanied by the Myanmar orchestra.

#### Phase 1 (15–28 Oct 2015)

The two weeks training session was provided for 24 young selected artists from different parts of Myanmar (some were graduated at one of the NUAC - Y/M and some were from other university graduates). During the phase one, the programme included the knowledge sharing and exchange activity and therefore the international participants were invited for two days to take part in the programme.

Methods used and trainers involved:

1. Two days' workshop for course designing, concept/guidelines and selection criteria development for trainers and trainees;
2. Final Selection of trainers and trainees;
3. Two weeks training programme (professional level - phase 1) including the assignment for a project idea development which can be implemented in their respective regions \_ school/community level;
4. Training sessions were conducted by experienced Myanmar traditional puppet masters from MMO, leading academics, historians, researchers, famous Myanmar authors, professors and lectures from NUAC - Y/M and Ms. Anne Klatt, a German modern puppeteer;
5. The focus of these training sessions was on various puppetry aspects, from making and how to handle them; how to attract the audience and when relevant was supported by the Myanmar orchestra, supervised by the master of musicians to understand the importance of different tempo and beats of traditional Myanmar music.

#### Phase 2 (20 March 2016 -1 April 2016)

The follow up two weeks training session was provided with the same trainees. Two weeks training programme (transfer project development level – phase 2) included the presentations and proposals for project development by the trainees with the themes, such as Creation; Media; Performing Art; Education.

Methods used and trainers involved:

- by using the course guideline
- by experienced Myanmar traditional puppet masters and some Myanmar authors
- The focus of these training sessions was on various advanced puppetry aspects, from making and how to handle them, how to attract the audience, how to decorate the stage and lighting in the traditional ways;
- Educating about script writing on Myanmar classical stories, about traditional stage decoration and lighting by the old professions and when relevant supported by the Myanmar orchestra, supervised by the master of musicians

- Teaching the trainees, the audience point of view on performing arts, by famous Myanmar authors who have a background of Myanmar culture
- The four groups of trainees presented their transfer project ideas and implementation plans to the Steering Committees of the project for feedback and received 1,000,000 Myanmar Kyat each for implementation
- Inauguration ceremony of Myanmar and international Marionette Festival 1 April 2016



Figure 2. Trainees during learning sessions.

### Transfer Projects Themes and Implementation

The activities of the four small projects did have the following themes which were proposed by the trainees:

- Creation
- Media
- Performing Arts
- Education

- With the fund by SDC, the four groups of trainees started their activities in the Mandalay region, Yangon and Pegu from 20 April 2016 until 15 June 2016.
- The activity reports of the projects including the list of objectives, list of result and outputs, list of activities and their suggestions on the future of Myanmar Marionette and MMO to MUL on 15 June 2016.
- The reports were reviewed by the members of the steering committee and the feedback session was conducted as well as the first prize winner project was announced on 2 July 2016.
- The first prize was awarded to the project – Media, which showcased Media's work in promoting Myanmar marionette to the next generation of



marionette players, artists and journalists. The team met several project criteria set by the steering committee.

- The activities on each project submitted by the team are documented as follows:

#### *A. Activities of the Creation Project –*

The project team was supervised by experienced and longstanding professional marionette players like U Ye Dawe, U Tun Kyi, U Shwe Kyi (master puppeteers from Yangon) for developing ideas and techniques, they produce the following:

- one of the contemporary puppets of Roker puppet that can play guitar, sing and dance;
- an Indian puppet “Pantwar” which can dance like an Indian girl;
- modern contemporary racial puppets of (1) Padawn (2) Salyai (3) Kayin (4) Mg Poe puppets;
- Tiger and Rabbit puppets by using Myanmar traditional technique.

There was more audience than expected when they performed. The audience was most interested in the dance of “Pantwar” Indian puppet and the trainees received several requests for more performances. Other outcomes and activities of their project in brief, they:

- ... cooperated with Mingalarbar Dance & Marionettes and Kyaw Myint Htun Puppet troupe.
- ... attended to an event of Our Beloved World workshop, Yangon gallery and created art from trash which was held 7 May 2016.
- ... attended to the Puppets & Passages’ Workshop which was held in Laurel Art Academy, Yangon at 8-9 May 2016.
- ... attended to the Indian Pew workshop and performance, which were held in Mandalay 13-14 May 2016.
- ... watched and studied websites, Facebook, YouTube of the international puppet organization to create the innovative puppet arts.

#### *Places of this Project Activities –*

Performed together with the newly created Marionettes at

- Old people house in Thanlyin, Yangon Division
- Orphanage school in East Dagon Myo Thit, Yangon Division
- Lan Pya Kyal private primary school, Hlay Sinn village, Za-Lun Township, Ayeyarwaddy Division.
- Monastic Education in Maung Htaung village, Mon State
- EC Private high school in Pegu Division

#### *Media Impact of this Project –*

- Several TV stations (Skynet TV, MNTV, MWD TV, MNTV – Documentary Film) made interviews and documentary films.
- Estimated audiences in all above performance locations – 650



Figure 3. Project team puppets produced for performances.

#### B. Activities of the Media Project –

The trainees started their project at 25th May 2016 by conducting a meeting with MMO and teachers from NUAC - Y/M for guidance and suggestions on their idea and activities.

- Step 1. On 7th May 2016 on different locations, like on Mandalay Hill (in the morning) and on the U Bein Bridge (in the evening) information about Myanmar Marionette was distributed and public (Myanmar & foreigners) was entertained, flyers, T-shirts and journals were distributed.
- Step 2. Advertisements were put in in the Mandalay's Yadanabon News Paper on 25th May 2016, Tatthitsa News Paper on 26th May 2016, Myanmar Light & Moemakha News Paper on 27th May 2016 about the availability of free entertainment and free learning class of Myanmar Marionette for the purpose of the development of Myanmar marionette.
- Step 3. From 25–26 May 2016, a large signboard (9 feet x20 feet) was erected on the 78th St, between 40th & 41st to get the attention of the objectives of their project.
- Step 4. On 1st May 2016 establishing a page on Facebook about safeguarding the tradition of Myanmar Marionettes and about the activities of all four groups.
- By associating with the performing groups, the trainees collected information, shared knowledge and distributed a calendar with marionette pictures to the audiences.

Ms. War War Htet Maung, member of Media project group also shared information with the trainees and afterwards performed with Myanmar marionettes at the SETGA Symposium held in Indonesia at 2nd June 2016. Ms. War War Htet Maung is a tourist guide who attended a tourism-training course in Bali, Indonesia.

*Places of These Project Activities –*

Spreading the information about the traditional Myanmar Marionette and about these four small projects of Myanmar Marionette at

- Mandalay Hill, Mandalay
- U Bein wooden bridge
- University of Development for the Union of National Races in Sagaing
- Via Social media Facebook

*Media Impact of this Project –*

- Several Myanmar TV stations made interviews and documentary films which were broadcasted on 13.06.2016.
- In addition, newspaper interviews were held Democracy Today, Myanmar Light and by Government New-Paper.
- Over 5000 viewers on the Facebook who showed their interest in information about the traditional Myanmar marionette and about these four small projects of Myanmar marionette.



Figure 4. Team members performing in various Mandalay locations.

*C. Activities of the Performing Art Project –*

This group associated with the media and creation project groups. They shared information with Myanmar marionette trained beginners. In their performances, they used new characters and innovative puppets. They installed new strings on the traditional Myanmar marionette and performed in a new way. Performances were held on nine different locations in Mandalay and surroundings.

*Places of these Project Activities –*

Performances of the traditional and modern Marionette took place at

- Mandalay Hill, Mandalay
- U Bein wooden bridge, Mandalay
- Phaung Taw Oo Monastic Education, Mandalay
- Aung Thuka Monastic Education, Mandalay
- Yaung Talone village, Sagaing Division
- Kantet-Kone Monastic Education, Mandalay
- MyinThar and Kone-Tan village, Mandalay

*Media Impact of this Project –*

- There has no media coverage on those above activities.
- Estimated audiences for those above performances – 4300



Figure 5. Team members performing in various places in Sagaing.

*D. Activities of the Education Project –*

This group

- provided curricula for their trainees and collected related stationery about Myanmar puppetry for educational purpose;
- motivated trainees by using methods of awarding, competition, examination and evaluation of daily training sessions. The trainees were taught about Myanmar Marionette not only by lecture but also practically by how to manipulate the puppets. They used teaching aids and course timetables.
- used the educational video clips of how to carve and how to build the professional Myanmar Marionette;
- visited workshops and performances of India-Myanmar Puppet Festival together with the trainees;
- held their project (teaching about the history and manipulation of Myanmar marionettes) in 3 private schools. Two at the monastic education and ethnic orphanage school in Yangon and one in Pegu Private high school.

*Places of these Project Activities –*

- Myot Oo Monastic Education, Myinthar Quarter, South Okkalar Township, Yangon – for 9 days
- EC private high school in Pegu – for 5 days
- Ethnical Orphanage school in – for 2 days

*Media Impact of this Project –*

- Interviewed by the press media 'Democracy Today
- Estimated students who learn for those above activities – 300

**Activity 3: Two Days Symposium on Awareness Raising in Safeguarding of Traditional Myanmar Marionettes (2-3 April 2016)**

A two-day Myanmar and international marionette festival at Mandalay national theatre (with keynote sessions and panel discussions) was organized in collabora-

tion with MMO and the NUAC - Y/M on awareness raising in safeguarding traditional Myanmar marionettes and performing arts.



Figure 6. Team members working with the students.

All stakeholders were represented, like representatives of the ministry of religious and cultural affairs, leading academics, historians, famous Myanmar authors and researchers, professors and lecturers from NUAC - Y/M and international experts on puppetry.

- Two international foreign puppet groups (the ‘Baby Mime’ Puppet Troupe from Thailand and the Indonesian ‘Paper moon Puppet Theatre’) not only performed but also gave training sessions and joined discussion about the sustainability of these art forms.
- Two local outstanding Myanmar Marionette groups (one from Yangon and one from Mandalay) performed together with the Myanmar traditional live orchestra in the traditional way.
- Outdoor performances of four groups of trainees, Baby Mime Human Puppet troupe from Thailand, traditional Kyauk Se’s elephant dance and the dance of “two body one soul” took place.
- During the Myanmar and International Marionette Festival, there were exhibitions of MMO together with Myanmar Traditional art and crafts.
- Four groups of trainees presented their projects with the Myanmar orchestra.



Figure 7. Left – performance by Indonesia’s “Paper Moon Puppet Theater.” Right – Performance by the project’s Myanmar trainees.

#### Activity 4: Strengthening Learning and Networking Capacity Among Myanmar Puppeteers & Artists through MMO

In this project MUL cooperated with many of the relevant MMO members, we learnt ways and means to transfer skills, worked with innovative approaches, we also exchanged ideas with a few international artists and did networking, all for the purpose of sustainable Myanmar art & culture. On many occasions, MUL and MMO strengthened their capacities to be united partners for the revival of the art of marionettes theatre in Myanmar. Some specific activities were:

- MMO members were invited to participate as trainers and advisors.
- The project supported the production of flyers for MMO as promotion material.
- The project activities were posted on the website of MMO – see [www.myanmar-marionette.org](http://www.myanmar-marionette.org)



Figure 8. Left – Training guidelines preparation meeting. Right – MMO Members.

#### 5 Project Outcomes

Through the above mentioned activities, the following outcomes were achieved as initially intended:

1. Innovative learning materials (i.e. Myanmar-Marionettes-DVD-Rom digital version and printed version on marionette history, technique, challenges and lessons learnt) were developed and distributed among private and public schools/ trainings.
2. Training sessions in two phases were conducted to train (ultimately) 20 artists/students (from different Myanmar ethnic communities and also based on gender equality).
3. Trained 20 artists/students, learnt to improve their skills not only as an artist but also as an entrepreneur through innovative approaches.
4. A larger scale training plan was initiated and a plan for regular annual International marionettes festival was developed.
5. Exchange of knowledge and experience between Myanmar, ASEAN regional and international artists was encouraged.
6. MMO's members actively participated in the project and the capacity of the MMO institution (the creation of governance structures, statutes, and operating regulations) was initiated to build in strengthening learning and network-

ing capacity among Myanmar Puppeteers Artists through participation and contribution to various planned activities and an attractive professional communication strategy (printed and website).

More specifically,

**a. Skills transfer to the trainees**

- The two rounds of training programme, including project development and awarding of the good practices, helped trainee artists to improve their professional skills, which can be used in the workplace or in their communities for social purposes.
- The steering committee members of the project developed course guidelines for the trainings. These course guidelines were based on the contents of the updated Myanmar Marionette DVD-Rom and ratio of contents were set as 35% theory and 65% practical work.
- Considering these matters, discussions are already underway with the relevant officials and academics from Ministry of Culture regarding the notion of non-specific skills alongside the development of artistic skills which are currently practice in government schools and training programmes.
- From the original 24 chosen trainees who started, unfortunately, there were four dropouts; therefore 20 trainees successfully finished the whole course of the project.
- Skills like marionette puppetry manipulation, creativity, innovative approaches on different subjects, some related to modern society, trafficking, GBV, etc, but also professional and entrepreneurial skills were taught to them (in a two phases approach) in order to revive and sustain the art form. These skills are essential for post-training employment and can be used in the workplace or in their communities for social purposes, once when they become employed or self-employed.
- Four transfer project reports including photos of their activities were presented by the 4 groups of trainees.

**b. Awareness raising**

- By implementing the project old and young artists engaged, discussed all subjects related to Myanmar puppetry thereby raising awareness about the need and possibilities for its survival.
- After the two-day Myanmar and international marionette festival, professionals, leading academics, lecturers from the Myanmar Fine Arts Schools and Culture Universities of Mandalay and Yangon, artists and trainees were more aware of the challenges facing in preserving the uniqueness of cultural traditions in Myanmar marionettes and performing arts.
- After donating and discussing the MM-DVD-Rom and subsequent book, people from the following organisations (mentioned earlier)...
  - Ministry of religious and culture affairs;
  - Mandalay University of Art and Science;
  - Yatarnarpon University of Art and Science in Mandalay;

- University of Development for the Union of National Races in Sagaing;
  - National University of Art and Culture - Yangon and Mandalay;
  - Union Internationale de la Marionnette (UNIMA) (World Marionette Organization);
  - National Libraries from Yangon and Naypyidaw;
  - Many private Libraries.
- ... became more aware of the need and urgency of sustaining Myanmar marionette art as they expressed during my conversation with them.

### c. Innovations

Through the transfer projects, the purpose is not only to promote traditional puppetry as means for ethical and aesthetic education and preserve various techniques that existed in the traditional theatre performance but also to promote the use of puppetry performance as means of advocating issues related to modern society (in schools, communities, etc.). For instance, instead of the traditional stories in Myanmar puppetry, new stories were developed, such as Creation; Media; Performing Art; Education. The transfer projects were developed by trainees and supervised by the professional artists and lecturers.

### 6 Future Plans and Possible Spin-offs

Since Myanmar has been in a political and economic crisis for many decades, systematic conservation and safeguarding of both tangible and intangible culture heritage was an extremely difficult task to perform at the community levels. The current process of changing comprehensively in Myanmar political, social and economic structure gives good opportunities to take rapid actions, as proposed in this project, in safeguarding the tradition of Myanmar marionettes and its related tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

So far, our future plans and possible spin-offs as a result of this project are:

- The Myanmar marionette - DVD-Rom and book, which were made for sustainability of the art and for educational purposes, can be used to promote young artists and Myanmar marionette art, and related activities of it
- To organize annual international festivals with artists from Myanmar as well as from other countries, including photos exhibitions with this suggested theme: Creative Media, Arts and Peacebuilding
- To organize annual festivals to promote young artists and Myanmar marionette art and related activities of it
- Mr. Dadi Pudumjee, the Indian puppeteer considers inviting some trainees to perform in his festival in India in 2017
- Dr. Kjell Skjellstad, Editor in Chief of Journal of Urban Culture Research (JUCR) and Professor Emeritus, University of Oslo, Department of Musicology, Norway and present during the festival, is organizing a conference about urban culture management in Myanmar March 2017
- Mr. Franz Xaver Augustin, the director of 'Goethe Institut' (Myanmar) initiated the discussion regarding the future participation of 'Goethe Institut' (Myanmar) in the 2017 international marionette festival by bringing more international marionette / puppet artists



- Ms. Anne Klatt, a German modern puppeteer, who contributed a lecture to the trainees during the two weeks training (first phase) of this project, will come back to Myanmar at this coming November, 2016 and she proposed a 3 days' modern puppet training course again to the same 20 trainees
- To promote the course guidelines, especially developed for this project, to be implemented as a base for future training programmes for art students in, art schools and art universities
- To promote artists from the four projects to become trainers and after having acquired more experience a team of experts who can take a lead in innovative Myanmar art activities together with the Marionette/puppet related small projects
- To organise photo exhibitions in different states and regions of Myanmar to highlight the artist life and their learning pathways
- By using learning materials and documentations from this project, to continue training programmes at other regions and states (particularly for young people coming out of conflict trauma, providing vocational training in performing arts)
- A request from "Journal of Urban Culture Research" from Chulalongkorn University of Thailand to write an article about this project
- As a result of the visit of the UNIMA Chairman at the 2 days' seminar, the future support and collaboration from international marionettes troops and organizations are expected.

### 7 New Contacts Through the Implementation of the Project

We made many new contacts through the implementation of the project.

Some of the main contacts were:

- Mr. Franz Xaver Augustin, director of 'Goethe Institut' (Myanmar)
- Ms. Anne Klatt, a German modern puppeteer
- Lecturers from NUAC - Y/M and from other art schools
- Staff from the central department of small and medium enterprises development at Mandalay (SME Mandalay)
- Professional and traditional performing art networks
- o International cultural organizations,
- International artists: The International human-puppet troupe from Thailand and from the Indonesian 'Paper moon Puppet Theatre'

### 8 Attention of the Press

- In my country:  
During the project period, not only the core members of the project but also some participants and trainees of the project had interviews with TV-stations (like DVB-TV, MITV, MNTV, MRTV, Skynet TV) and also with outstanding national and regional newspapers (like Eleven news, Popular Journal, Mandalay A-Lin Daily, Standard Time News, a Government newspaper of Kyae-Mone and Myanmar New Light)
- Internationally:  
"Journal of Urban Culture Research" from Chulalongkorn University of Thailand requested me to write an article about this project. (My article about

the report for the course of Intangible Culture Heritage in Brunei -2011- was already published in this journal)

### 9 Sustainability of the Project

The project was successfully implemented in order to ensure 'Sustainability' referring to the continuation of the project's goals, principles, and efforts to achieve desired outcomes. During the project, we identified a short-term and a long-term sustainability strategy for achieving project goals and identified what resources (for example: experienced trainers, learning materials etc.) are needed to sustain the project beyond the SDC grant period.

Also establishing a training programme in two phases targeting for 20 trainees (Semi-professional level) from Yangon, Mandalay and other regions can be considered as a short-term sustainability strategy. Each phase of the training session took two weeks and the entire training programme included two phases, i.e.

- Phase 1 as professional level
- Phase 2 as transfer project development level by promoting four themes such as Creation; Media; Performing Art; Education.

Through these phases, the purpose is not only to promote traditional puppetry as means for ethical and aesthetic education and preserve various techniques that exist in the traditional theatre performance but also to promote the use of puppetry performance as means of advocating issues related to modern society (in schools, communities, etc).

In order to develop a long-term sustainability strategy, we documented experiences, ways and means to transfer skills, innovative approaches, cooperation, and networking such as a close cooperation between MUL, MMO and Cultural Universities. As part of a strategy, the artists (trainees) from the four transfer projects as mentioned above could also become trainers and a team of experts who can lead the following activities in future:

- To organize international festivals annually by inviting artists from Myanmar as well as from other countries, including the photo exhibitions to promote Creative Media, Arts and Peacebuilding theme by the technique of Myanmar Marionette
- To organise photo exhibitions at state and regions to highlight the artist life and their learning pathways;
- To continue training programmes in other regions and states by using learning materials and documentations from this project (particularly for young people coming out of conflict trauma, providing vocational training in performing arts).

Through these activities, we consider ways to institutionalize and incorporate all part of the effort into existing, on-going organizational level as well as community level operations, rather than continuing the project as a separate project. We also consider to further strengthen the capacity of MMO in order to foster sustainability, such as increasing the number of MMO members and, or expanding training courses as well as innovative activities in the states and regions.

## 10 The difference Made by the Swiss Development Cooperation

... for me	<p>My organization MUL was established in 2009 with the aim to contribute to the conservation and safeguarding of traditional performing arts and cultural heritage in Myanmar not only at the field of intangible culture heritage but also in the tangible heritage. But this project goals have since long been a dream for me which I could finally realize. SDC made the whole project possible with financial support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therefore, I am deeply indebted to SDC for this opportunity.</li> </ul>
... for my organization	<p>My organization, MUL, gained a valuable experience in organizing and managing this project and strengthened its contacts with all relevant stakeholders. This will be very valuable for the continuing and lasting process of the revival of this art.</p>
... for my community or country, in the short run	<p>This was since many years the first substantial support for sustainability and revival of the Myanmar art &amp; culture, in particular involving all major players and stakeholders. Thereby contributing to the sustainability of Myanmar Marionettes culture.</p> <p>The project inspired many stakeholders. Besides, the trainees acquired valuable knowledge and expertise of Myanmar art &amp; culture, which is very useful for their work with audiences and with community members.</p>
... for my community or country, in the long run	<p>All the important stakeholders are convinced of the uniqueness and necessity of this form of art and are prepared to do all their efforts to safeguard all aspects of traditional Myanmar Marionettes and performing arts which include manipulating puppets, dancing, music, sculpture, sequin embroidery and painting. Predictions are difficult, but hopefully and thanks to this project and its outcomes efforts and sparks of inspirations will continue to glow contributing to sustain this unique art, in its present form but also embedded with new ideas and presentations.</p>

## 11 Conclusions and Recommendations

Myanmar is enriched with a great diversity of cultural forms including performing arts, like the Myanmar Marionettes Theatre. Nowadays, the 'old traditional marionette artist generation' has almost faded away. This project brought together all leading professionals from the Myanmar marionette communities and raised awareness in sustainability of this unique art form. Besides, a book and a MM DVD-Rom on all aspects of Myanmar puppetry were produced for purpose of documentation, and were donated to the NUAC - YGN/MDY and the School of Fine Arts for teaching purposes.

The project was a great success and has fulfilled all its objectives, in particular in:

- awareness raising of traditional Myanmar Marionettes and performing arts among all professionals, leading academics, lecturers from the Myanmar Fine Arts Schools and Culture Universities, artists and trainees;

- preserving various techniques as existed in the traditional theatre performance;
- improving ways of learning and teaching within the traditional theatrical performing artist communities;
- strengthening learning and networking capacity among local artists;
- exchanging knowledge and experience between local and ASEAN regional artists;
- providing innovative solutions in preserving the uniqueness of cultural traditions in Myanmar Marionettes theatrical production.

Therefore, taking into account all these achievements and recommendations in favour of the sustainability of Myanmar Marionette art I am very satisfied with the whole project and with the outcome results and the lessons that I learnt throughout the project. However, there is a room for improvement when it comes to the project implementation process, organization and financial management. In addition to that, thoughtfully selecting the themes and further refinement and continuation of the trainings will be necessary, but not sufficient. Outreach efforts must be embedded in a larger international event driven by a strong statement for promoting arts and crafts and involving a variety of communities and stakeholders from the field of arts and crafts. An international event must include diverse artists and be supported by dedicated resources. In short, an event must reach multiple audiences in creative ways, using different tools and techniques. Finally, an event of the size and duration that will have a measurable impact on the public understanding of performing arts will require significant resources, efforts and time.

Last but not least, the trainees also noted that, because of money and time constraints, they were not able to carry out a full creative process in their transfer projects development, which would have led to many more possible engagements with the communities. Although promoting Myanmar marionette in a more consistent way is an important short-term goal, the trainees concluded that a more innovative, coordinated approach is likely to yield better results in the long term.

