



ANNUAL REPORT 2016



We believe in
sustainability
and development that
helps communities help
themselves.



CONTENTS

Cash Cows for Community Care	5
Freedom Farming Co-op Banks.....	6
Silo Bags	8
Coffee for Opium Replacement.....	9
New Heaven Learning Centre	12

Programme Overviews

THIS IS OUR END OF YEAR REPORT ON EACH OF OUR FIVE NEW DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES.

“ Purpose: to provide a method of self-support for local Baptist churches doing outreach ministry development programmes in their local communities.

CASH COWS FOR COMMUNITY CARE

The first programme was requested by Loilem Baptist in May 2016, as a way to provide financial support for their elderly. A Kiwi family donated funds to cover the full cost of the programme. The programme leader Zar Chi was able to buy two Friesen cows in calf and feed for the cows. Since the funds were matched as part of our Matching Funds Month in July, Zar Chi is now in the process of extending the farm by renting more land, and buying more feed to increase the productivity of the cows. Zar Chi has completed some training provided by the NZ Government Livestock Improvement programme, who have also agreed to provide artificial insemination support as well.

You can view the before and after videos here:

BEFORE: <https://vimeo.com/176562690>

AFTER: <https://vimeo.com/190649310>

The second programme was requested by the Shwe Lee Baptist Church in October 2016 as a way to provide financial support for their new drug rehabilitation centre, and also an opportunity to train rehabilitated drug addicts in a method of self-support. This church saw the success of the Loilem Baptist programme and wanted to use that model also. While we were raising funds for this programme during our Christmas campaign, an armed conflict spilled over into the area. So the church asked us to wait for this conflict to stop before starting this project. At the beginning of 2017 the community said they were ready to start. Stu's trip in February will include meetings to plan the next steps in the programme.



One of our "cowboys" who care for the Friesians and help Zar Chi.



Zar Chi, the programme leader, and
the family who care for the cows.

**“ Purpose:
To relieve
communities from debt
slavery, the pressures
of borrowing at high
interest rates from loan
sharks, and to help
prevent them from losing
their land to Chinese
conglomerates.**

FREEDOM FARMING CO-OP BANKS

Startup funds for the first co-op bank were requested by the Man Khat community tract in May 2016, at the start of the rice season. Funds were donated by one Kiwi businessman and were loaned to the community, to buy rice seed. The funds are expected to be repaid to the bank, after harvest and sale of the rice. They will then be reloaned for the next growing season in 2017. The plan is for the interest from the loans to generate enough income, that this village tract will be able to return the start up capital within 5 years, and pass it onto another community tract to start another co-op bank.

We have the goal of starting another four co-op banks in neighbouring communities. With the increased amounts of funding being raised to send to Myanmar, the last 6 months were spent finding the safest way to transfer these funds from NZ to Myanmar. Just this January we found success using Westpac, and so we are currently in the process of transferring the funds to start the next co-op bank for 2017.

We have received funding for three of the four co-op banks already, by generous business people and family trusts.

Our implementing partner in Shan State, has been successful in registering as the Love Conquers All foundation. Circuit pays the salary of the project manager, and the rent for the office based in Lashio. Moving into 2017, it has been decided to move the office to the capital of Shan State - Taunggyi which is where most other NGOs are based. The aim is for this to happen in April, when the lease for the current office expires.

You can view the video explaining the first co-op bank here:
<https://vimeo.com/172271120>

Stu and Tun Zar (our local programme manager) after gaining registration for our implementing partner.





Stu and the community leaders from the first Freedom Farming Bank programme. Stu showed them the video that we used to raise the start-up funds, which they loved (a great example of downward accountability!).

“ Purpose: to enable corn farmers and rice farmers throughout Shan State and ultimately throughout Myanmar, to store their grain for a period of time after harvest, to wait for the price to rise. This is to combat debt slavery, and prevent loss of land to corrupt moneylenders.

SILO BAGS

Stu has been working on getting this project started for the last 4 years. Stu was in Myanmar for two weeks in December to meet with potential co-operating parties, sign partnerships and oversee the process of the machinery being imported into Myanmar. We have been given a no-interest loan from very generous Christian business owners to buy and import the machinery. As with any business or development work done in Myanmar, the process is not straight forward, so we will be continuing negotiations to see the first trial done with the machine imported from Sweden in February 2017. Stu will be making another trip to Myanmar in February along with our accountant to follow up on this programme, and to ensure there are no problems with the import of the machinery.

Our silo bag feeder specially designed for Myanmar conditions.



“ Purpose: to provide an alternative high value crop to opium, through growing speciality coffee, already being grown successfully on the China-Burma border.

COFFEE FOR OPIUM REPLACEMENT

Our initial challenge is getting the NZ market to accept coffee from the region, as China and Myanmar have a bad name as far as fair trade coffee goes. We have been working to develop the market in NZ, but have found we need to sell a minimum of twenty tonnes of green beans for it to be a viable commercial opportunity.

Unfortunately we believe the attitude towards coffee beans from this region, will take at least two more years to change. So in the meantime we are not importing green beans from the area at this time. We will however be working with our contacts on the ground in Myanmar to continue investigating what will be required to grow the highest quality beans in this area. This project is being considered in cooperation with our friends in China – the Yunnan coffee traders who operate on the border between China and Myanmar. We are still collecting funds for this programme but will not be using them until we overcome this challenge.

“ Purpose: to help the existing special needs learning centre find a way to self-support and enable it to expand.

NEW HEAVEN LEARNING CENTRE

Chaw Chaw, the founder and principal of New Heaven Learning Centre chose to trial the sale of educational toys to surrounding schools as her business venture. The profits of the venture enabled the school to move to a better site in August 2016. The programme has been reviewed, now that all the educational toys have been sold. Chaw Chaw was the only seller and was limited in her capacity. After meeting with Stu, her board (mostly made up of parents of special needs children) was encouraged to help her more with her business venture. The board decided to set up a soap selling business that they would help with. The soap selling business is going to be making and selling organic soap to local hotels as a way of giving special needs kids some vocational training for their future.

You can view the video here: <https://vimeo.com/172257742>

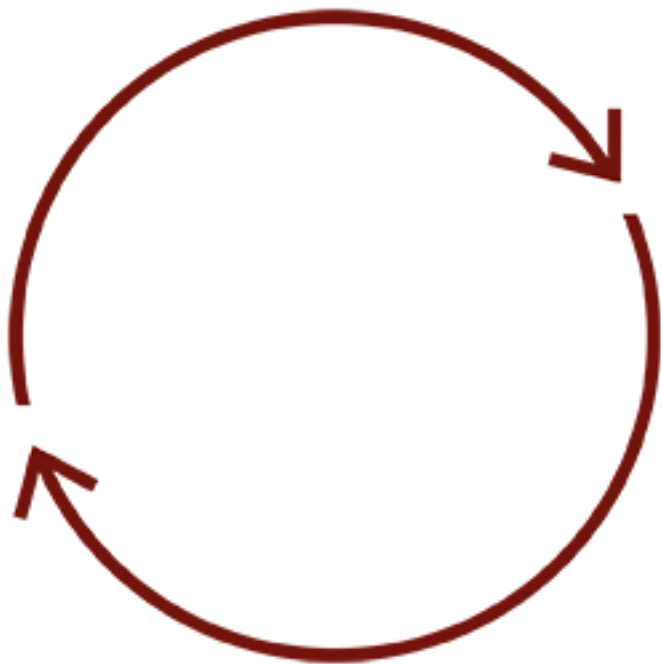
Stu with Pleasant, one of the New Heaven students during his December visit.

“She wants to be a doctor, model, and hairdresser when she grows up. I said, you are going to be very busy! She says to me, “I am busy! And walks away!”





Stu enjoying a Kachin dinner with Chaw Chaw, her husband, and one of the students.



Thank you for your generous support of one or more of these life-changing international development programmes, which under-resourced communities in Myanmar have requested.

We will be sending a longer report for each new programme every six months, to donors who have specifically invested in that programme. In addition, if you would like to receive an end of financial year summary after 31st March 2017 from our accountant please let us know.

As we dive into 2017, we want to say a big thank you for being one of our main donors, and to remind you of the hope, joy and peace you are bringing to communities in the poorest parts of Myanmar.

Blessings on you in 2017.

From Ruth and Stu and the Circuit International Team.



