**LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

*Education to strengthen women’s roles and voices*

By We women Myanmar

Strategic plan: 2020 / 2024

**Keywords:** women leadership, personal and professional development, leadership coaching, leadership qualities, formal education opportunities, academic scholarships, ethnic diversity.

**Assumptions:**

* More women in leadership positions will lead to a more stable country where the rights of all citizens are protected, particularly rights related to Women’s Peace and Security.
* Women leaders are essential in forging effective solutions for Myanmar’s problems, because women have long term vision, bring a variety of empathetic skills to the problem solving area and often consider issues of inclusion to be important in working out solutions. Women also bring a more open and negotiative style to the arena of problem solving.
* Diversity of thought leads to better problem solving, so Myanmar’s women leadership community should reflect the diverse nature of the country’s ethnic and gender composition.

**The project in short**

For decades the military dictatorship decimated the education system in Myanmar in order to keep citizens in their place and quash any rebellion. As a result the country is now facing an enormous shortage of empowered women leaders on every level of society. Our research has shown that women name a lack of higher level education and qualifications as the biggest challenge for them in making their voices heard. Therefore, We women is implementing a number of education projects for emerging leaders to gain access to different education institutes:

1) Intermediate and high level English classes and tutoring,

2) Leadership workshops and skills training,

3) Leadership and career coaching,

4) Student support troubleshooting,

5) Academic and vocational scholarships.

As a part of this project, We women has made it its mission to provide as many of our students with scholarships for advanced vocational training and academic education institutes. Throughout their education, the women will receive financial support, career coaching and practical guidance. Those who choose not to go to university will get other educational opportunities. The path of each students is unique and needs-based.

**History of the project:**

The Leadership Academy is a continuation of a project originally developed by the We women foundation, our sister organisation from the Netherlands. This project, called the We women from Burma project, was running in Northern Thailand from 2009 until 2016. Aiming to build the leadership capacities of women refugees from Burma, aspiring women leaders were offered opportunitie s for personal, professional and academic development.

Because of the changing situation in Myanmar it was decided to move the project activities to Yangon. It already was a long term aim of the We women foundation to hand over control of the project to local women, so We women alumni Num Aye took over operational control after the move to Yangon. Planning to continue to offer aspiring women leaders with opportunities for personal development, the reshaping of the We women from Burma project into the Leadership Academy began.

Utilising a lot of the already existing resources and drawing from years of experience, the Leadership Academy applies a proven successful method to catapult women into positions of leadership. With her official registration as a local NGO, We women Myanmar is ready to take on full responsibility, operating as a totally independent organisation. This document is a detailed description of how we will help 25 young women to become leading members of their community over the next five years.

**Project goal:**

We women supports extraordinary women who understand the deeply complex and diverse needs of their community. We support them in realising the potential they have to change their lives, their families’ lives, the lives of people in their communities, and to guide Myanmar through these first tentative steps on its journey to become a fully fledged democracy.

To achieve its mission, We women works with ethnic minority women leaders to offer a carefully honed mosaic of educational and leadership interventions, driven and developed by and for our participants. The ultimate goal is **an established, self empowered and influential community of women leaders**.

**Project objectives:**

* To minimise the gender gap on all levels of leadership (community, regional, national) in all fields of Myanmar’s society; e.g. politics, business, academics or civil society.
* To raise the number of women leaders with ethnic minority backgrounds.
* To prepare women for and grant them access to educational opportunities that contribute to their personal and professional development as upcoming women leaders.

**Project components:**

* English language training / TOEFL training

Since Myanmar has very little to offer in the way of higher education, the vast majority of our students need to go abroad to attend college or university. Women in pursuit of higher education abroad are always confronted with English language tests before they are admitted to the university or institution of their choice. A certain test score is required to prove their level of English is adequate (often according to the TOEFL standards). Within the Leadership Academy students can attend a variety of activities to improve their understanding of the English language and increase their TOEFL-scores.

A TOEFL-instructor gives two classes per week, lower-intermediate for scores 380-450 and higher-intermediate for scores 460-550, each comprising six hours of TOEFL-training. Students that require more training and advanced students can enroll in tutor groups for intensive training (3-4 students). To improve students’ fluency, a weekly conversation club is organised, where students discuss or debate current affairs in an organised setting.

* Leadership workshops and skills training

Leadership and academic skills are not part of the curriculum in Myanmar’s education system, so when entering the Leadership Academy students need intensive training to acquire and improve their leadership qualities. Not only for them to be successful in their educational endeavours, but also to pro  vide them with the tools they need throughout their future careers.

Bi-weekly workshops are organised to familiarise students with five key leadership qualities:

1. Leadership qualities
2. Peace building / Women’s Peace and security
3. Gender awareness training
4. Management Skills
5. Civic engagement training
* Leadership and career coaching

Coaching is not something that happens a lot in Myanmar, but it is something that is greatly valued by our students and alumni. New students have a lot of drive and ambition to help change society, but they often lack focus and insight into their own values. Growing up under uncertain circumstances does not provide young women with the stable foundation needed to build a positive self-image and identify clear personal goals. The leadership and career coaching aims to explore and get insight into skills, strengths and future aims, so that students can grow as leaders and make a realistic and fitting personal development plan.

We women has developed a coaching method tailored to our students’ needs and context. We trained local coaches so that students can receive coaching in their native language from women who are familiar with their background and challenges. The coaching trajectory is determined by the coach and the student, but on average it will consist of ten session over a one year period.

* Student support troubleshooting

Becoming a leader is not something that happens overnight, so students are enrolled in our project for a long period. Throughout this period, they are pushed to explore new avenues and try new things. This automatically means that they run into practical problems and lacking resources, for example missing birth certificates for visa applications, travelling fees for interviews for university enrollment, finding a part time job to sustain themselves or internship requirement for educational purposes. The Student Support Desk helps students with practical support for all practical problems and challenges they encounter while in the Leadership Academy.

* Scholarships

Because of Myanmar’s horrifically underdeveloped education system, the country is facing a huge shortage of technocrats and trained professionals that can help rebuild the nation. Students do not have free choice as to what higher education course they study, this is determined by an administrator based on the results of their matriculation exam. And most courses are for ‘distance learners’ only, which means they only see a teacher for one month a year. Obviously, many students would like to go abroad for their higher education, but are not able to do so without a scholarship. Trained professionals who do not come from the ranks of the military are Myanmar’s highest priority for a successful peace and democratization process, so We women has made it it's mission to grant as many scholarships as possible.

**Activities:**

All activities that make up the Leadership Academy were started separately in 2018. In 2019 we integrate them into one approach. Students who are part of the separate activities will go through the official enrollment procedure and will be admitted into the integrated project.

Enrollment phase

* Entrance assessment English language skills,
* Two orientation coaching sessions (2x3h),
* Delivery of essays about hopes and dreams,
* Interviews by selection committee,
* Selection committee selects 25 candidates for enrollment.

Preparation phase

* Students attend English language training activities,
	+ Lower-intermediate class (2x3h per week),
	+ Higher-intermediate class (2x3h per week),
	+ Advanced TOEFL tutoring groups (3h per week),
	+ English conversation club.
* Students attend leadership workshops and training (bi-weekly, 3h),
* Students meet their coaching obligations (monthly, 2/3h),
* Students deliver their personal development plan.

Scholarship grants

* Students research educational opportunities and start admission procedure,
* Students apply for a scholarship (application form, essay, interview, admission confirmation from education institute),
* Granting committee selects suitable candidates and rewards scholarships.

Student Support Phase

* Students report periodically on their progress to the project manager,
* Students seek support from the Student Support Desk if required,
* Students receive in-university guidance counselling if required.

Monitoring, evaluation & tracking

* After graduation, each student completes an evaluation form and attends an evaluation interview,
* Each student delivers a testimonial about how the project advanced their development towards becoming a leader,
* A final project evaluation is drawn up by all staff involved, both financial and narrative.

**Planning:**

| **Activity / Quarter and year** | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Enrollment process | Entrance assessment English language | Q1 |  |  |  |  |
| Two orientation coaching sessions | Q1 |  |  |  |  |
| Delivery of essays about hopes and dreams | Q1 |  |  |  |  |
| Interviews by selection committee | Q1 |  |  |  |  |
| 25 candidates enrolled | Q1 |  |  |  |  |
| Preparation phase | English language training activities | Q1-4 | Q1-2 |  |  |  |
| Leadership workshops and training | Q1-4 | Q1-2 |  |  |  |
| Leadership and career coaching | Q1-4 |  |  |  |  |
| Delivery Personal Development Plan | Q4 |  |  |  |  |
| Scholarship applications | Research educational opportunities |  | Q1 |  |  |  |
| Admission process educational institute |  | Q1 |  |  |  |
| Scholarship applications |  | Q1 |  |  |  |
| Award scholarships |  | Q1 |  |  |  |
| Student support | Enrollment in higher education institute (depending on possibilities of institute) |  | Q1-4 | Q1-4 |  |  |
| Progress report from students |  | Q2+4 | Q2+4 | Q2+4 | Q2 |
| Student Support Desk | Q1-4 | Q1-4 | Q1-4 | Q1-4 | Q1-4 |
| In-university guidance counselling |  | Q1-4 | Q1-4 | Q1-4 | Q1-4 |
| Monitoring and evaluation | Progress evaluation by project manager | Q4 | Q4 | Q4 | Q4 |  |
| Students’ final evaluation (form + interview) |  |  |  |  | Q3-4 |
| Delivery students’ testimonials |  |  |  |  | Q3-4 |
| Final project evaluation |  |  |  |  | Q3-4 |

**Staffing and responsibilities:**

* Num Aye - director / project manager
	+ 0.6 full time
	+ Duties: staff management, communicate with project advisors and selection committee members, overall project management, financial management, M&E and reporting obligations, tracking students’ progress, troubleshooting.
* TO BE HIRED - TOEFL instructor
	+ 1.0 full time
	+ Duties: deliver entrance and final exams, deliver English classes, TOEFL tutoring groups and English conversation club meetings, track students’ progress, report to project manager, keep own administration.
* TO BE HIRED - Workshop facilitator
	+ 0.6 full time
	+ Duties: develop and deliver leadership workshops and training, track students’ progress, report to project manager, keep own administration.
* Leadership and career coaches - flexpool
	+ 20h per students
	+ Duties: plan and deliver coaching sessions, keep personal files on every student, report to project manager, keep own administration.

**Budget:**

| **Item** | **Unit / monthly** | **Quantity** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Salaries** |
| Project manager | 750 | 60 | 45,000 |
| English teacher | 2500 | 18 | 45,000 |
| Workshop facilitator | 700 | 14 | 9,800 |
| **Overhead** |
| Office + classroom | 500 | 60 | 30,000 |
| Laptops | 600 | 3 | 1,800 |
| Telephones | 600 | 3 | 1,800 |
| Office supplies | 25 | 60 | 1,500 |
| Utilities | 25 | 60 | 1,500 |
| **Enrollment** |
| Stipends coaches (per session) | 20 | 50 | 1,000 |
| Travel costs selection committee members | 10 | 30 | 300 |
| **Preparation phase** |
| TOEFL-test | 150 | 25 | 3,750 |
| Workshop requirements (per workshops) | 50 | 20 | 1,000 |
| Stipends coaches (per session) | 20 | 200 | 4,000 |
| **Scholarships** |
| Scholarship grants (15,000 per student) | 15,000 | 25 | 375,000 |
| Student Support Desk | 250 | 25 | 6,250 |
| In-university guidance counselling | 20 | 75 | 1,500 |
| **Total costs** | **529,200** |
| **Total costs excluding scholarships** | **154,200** |

**Budget by year:**

| **Year** | **Amount needed** |
| --- | --- |
| 2019 | 67,650 |
| 2020 | 160,000 |
| 2021 | 142,350 |
| 2022 | 142,350 |
| 2023 | 16,850 |
| **Total** | **529,200** |

The Leadership Academy project has been designed in such a way that each component runs independent of the others. Even if not the entire required budget has been raised, elements of the project will start running. For instance, it is especially hard to raise funds for scholarships, but there are other ways for women to go to university. And there are other opportunities for students to raise their TOEFL score to the required number. In the past, We women has led students towards other means of receiving scholarships than granting them ourselves. Even if students receive scholarships in other ways, they are still entitled to the support that is offered to in-university students.