



CONFERENCE REPORT

Thandaunggyi Community Tourism Development

27th Oct 2016 | Hpa An | Myanmar



ABOUT

About PeaceNexus Foundation:



The **PeaceNexus** core mission is to provide peacebuilding-relevant actors – multilateral organisations, governments, non-profit organisations and business actors – with expertise and advice on how they can make best use of their peacebuilding role and capacity to help stabilise and reconcile conflict-affected societies. Our tailored advisory services and advocacy activities are complemented by a grant mechanism that promotes innovative ideas and organisational development for peacebuilding agents of change. PeaceNexus specializes in identifying relevant and cutting-edge expertise, making it available to actors for peacebuilding, and structuring, sequencing and accompanying the advisory process. The support we provide is demand- driven, whilst we seek to engage with influential and innovative peacebuilding actors to boost our own impact.

About Hanns Seidel Foundation:



The **Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF)** aims to contribute in an active and effective way to international cooperation and understanding with its programmes and projects in Myanmar. Our first involvement to provide development assistance in Myanmar dates back to 1994 with capacity building activities for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the time when Myanmar was preparing to apply for membership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Since October 2012 the HSF has a representative office in Yangon. The HSF was the first German political foundation with a representative office in the country.

About Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute:



The **Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute (MRTI)** is a local non-profit organisation aiming to support responsible tourism development in Myanmar through knowledge sharing, training, and research. The MRTI envisions Myanmar as a quality responsible tourism destination, which empowers local communities, strives for livelihood creation and respects environmental sustainability. The mission is to create a knowledge sharing and training centre that works towards responsible tourism in Myanmar. The MRTI identifies the need to raise awareness about responsible travel, community involvement in tourism, livelihood generation, and environmental sustainability.

Summary of the Conference on Thandaunggyi Tourism Development

More than 100 participants took part in the conference on Thandaunggyi Community Tourism Development, held in Hpa An at Zwekabin Hotel on the 27th October 2016. The audience, consisting of members of the public and private sector, NGOs, governmental authorities and 20 members from Thandaunggyi, discussed the main opportunities and challenges faced during the development of community tourism. The conference focused on the experiences and achievements in Thandaunggyi, which is located in the hills of northern Kayin State.

Thandaunggyi, one of the pilot projects of community tourism in post-conflict areas in Myanmar, has a successful history in the participative organization of tourism, including the establishment of a local specialized working group (Thandaunggyi Tourism Development Working Group – TTDWG).

The conference was organized by PeaceNexus Foundation (PNF) and Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), with the support of Ministry of Hotels and Tourism Myanmar (MoHT) and the Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute (MRTI). These actors are working together closely with the TTDWG and support them by giving technical advice and human resources throughout the whole tourism development process.



Opening remarks were given by the Kayin State Minister of Planning, Finance and Development, U Tha Naing, P'Do San Mya Ma from Kayin National Union, U Zeyar Myo Aung, the Director of Tourism Promotion Department Kayin State and the chairman of TTDWG Sayardaw Bo Thar. These speeches highlighted the importance of Thandaunggyi as a pilot project of community involvement in tourism and mentioned opportunities and challenges of the implementation of tourism in Myanmar.

Furthermore, the key note on MoHT's viewpoint towards CBT was presented by U Zeyar Myo Aung.

The members of the TTDWG, which was founded in 2014 by local community members, shared their experiences with the participants on B&B licensing, the importance of trainings and exposure trips. They also presented main achievements in topics such as tourism and peace building, tourism development through B&B and service development, working with the community, tourism infrastructure development and knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, emphasizing limitations and challenges faced during the process were an important part of the conference as well. Additionally, current developments of the working group, lessons learned and future activities were discussed.

The presentations were followed by working group sessions, focusing on the integration of the communities in tourism development, private-public partnership, safety & security, environmental impacts and waste management.



Major outcome of this conference can be found in the recognition, that community tourism is a long term project and that every community has its own story. Thus, it is the diversity that makes tourism projects, embedded in different destinations, unique and attractive for tourists.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The conference was introduced by three speeches of high level representatives. As a representative of the Kayin State, the Minister for Planning, Finance and Development, U Tha Naing, talked about the rising tourist arrivals and the increasing importance of tourism in Myanmar, for the Kayin State and for local areas. Therefore, it is important to have qualified and trained staff, to take serious actions in waste management and to implement rules and regulations concerning safety, hygiene and sanitation. A proper system to license hotels is needed, too. The interaction with neighbouring countries is important. It is necessary to make travel easier and safer, as well as trade regulations and governmental approvals for infrastructure development, especially in the border region to Thailand.

As a representative of the MoHT, the director of the tourism promotion department in Kayin State, U Zeyar Myo Aung, highlighted the religious and cultural history, as well the landscape of the Kayin State. He also cited the increasing tourism arrivals over the years in Myanmar. Though, there is a need to share the benefits of this development within the community, which needs to be highly involved. There is a high potential for Ecotourism and Community Based Tourism (CBT) in the Kayin State, which has to be supported by professionals, organisations and locals.

As a representative of the Karen National Union, Minister P'Do San Mya Ma, lined out that since the declaration of ceasefire was signed it is important to work together with the local people, to make peace and to start an economic development in conflict affected areas. New government programs prioritise Small and Medium-Enterprise (SME) Development. Therefore, workshops and discussions with locals and organisations are necessary. This participatory development, as seen in the TTDWG, is a part of an important political process and as a result, people can benefit directly. The question is, whether this model can be transferred to other areas and regions in Myanmar.



What is the difference between Community Based Tourism (CBT) and Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT)?

A policy on Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT) in Myanmar was published in 2013. CIT means to create wealth for the local communities, at economic, cultural and institutional level. The core aims are to enable locals to gradually gain substantial control over the development of tourism and to enhance the community involvement in the tourism industry. The difference to Community Based Tourism (CBT) lies in the level of participation of the community. In addition, CBT is tourism in which local residents (often rural, poor and economically marginalised) invite tourists to visit their communities with the provision of overnight accommodation. The residents earn income as land managers, entrepreneurs, service and produce providers, and employees. As in CBT-projects all responsibilities are within the community, in CIT-projects the final decisions shall be made in coordination with the private sector and with the approval of the public sector administration.

For further information: <http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/pdf/resources/CIT-Policy.pdf>; www.responsibletravel.com/copy/what-is-community-based-tourism

Workshop 1 – Thandaunggyi as a Tourist Destination

After the opening remarks the first Workshop started with the presentation of Thandaunggyi as a Tourist Destination. Reverend Sayardaw Bo Thar, the head of the TTDWG, explained, why tourism development was initiated in Thandaunggyi and pointed out the activities, sights and products it has to offer.

Thandaunggyi can be seen as a pilot project for tourism development in post-conflict-areas with the main idea to support the peace building process through tourism development. In 2014, three workshops were organised with the help of Hanns Seidel Foundation and Peace Nexus. As a result, the TTDWG was founded in December 2014. Several problems, e.g. the building and licensing of Bed and Breakfasts, had to be solved. Now eight licensed B&Bs can be found in Thandaunggyi.

Many attractions can be found in the area, as Reverend Sayardaw Bo Thar pointed out: A surrounding mountain landscape and the touristic sights like the Prayer mountain, the hiking trails and waterfalls or the cultural events and the traditional lifestyle of the Karen community have a potential to fit the needs of local and foreign tourists. He explained that there are several tea plantations in the area and a tea factory, which produces tea and sells it in Myanmar. In addition, other local products are available. Coffee and honey are produced and sold in Thandaunggyi as well as local fruits and vegetables like durian or mushrooms.

Under the British rule in the beginning of the 20th century, there were plans to built up Thandaunggyi as a mountain resort. These plans had been rejected after a few years but a road up the hill was built. Though, it was difficult to access. Several checkpoints had to be passed. In this context, Reverend Sayardaw Bo Thar pointed out, that “the less something is reachable, the more interesting it is”. Today, it is possible to go there by (hired) cars as well as a motorbike or a local truck.

In Thandaunggyi accommodations for large groups (in total up to 500 people) are available, especially for pilgrims. There are tourist activities through the whole year and the arrivals of domestic tourists and pilgrims increased during the last years. There are no existing numbers concerning international arrivals yet (see: Tab.1).

Tab.1:

	Before 2012	Situation in 2014	Situation in 2016
Domestic arrivals (include daytrips)	approximately 10.000	approximately 50.000	approximately 100.000

As a result, Reverend Sayardaw Bo Thar stated that a responsible and sustainable development is needed. Therefore, the question, if the area is safe for tourists, is of great importance. He concluded that Thandaunggyi “is safe now and everybody should come and visit”.

Workshop II – History of Thandaunggyi Tourism Development Group

After the tea break, the second workshop started with a presentation of the development of the TTDWG. Reverend Saw Philippo Tin Ohn talked about the actions in the beginning of the formation of the working group. They started with a narrow scope of work as a group of locals and volunteers with religious backgrounds and therefore they had very less experience in tourism. This being pointed out, he concluded that a group of locals can be compared to a seed: Like a seed they need different inputs to grow and to develop over a course of time.

The group grew over one year and formulated objectives and aims:

- To develop the tourism sector,
- to develop and sustain natural resources and cultural heritage regarding tourism,
- to get extra income from tourism,
- to promote responsible tourism and
- to satisfy the visitors.

The touristic situation in Thandaunggyi changed during the last years from overnight stays in family homes to the building of Bed & Breakfasts, from giving away local products and handicrafts to visitors as a present to an infrastructure local shops, where these goods can be sold. In the words of Reverend Saw Philippo Tin Ohn, a professionalization of selling products was needed in general, as well as a provision of clean sanitation facilities and appropriate food to satisfy the needs of the tourists. He underlined tourism development requires peace in the area and safe accommodations and that locals and tourists should become a part of the nationwide peace building process.

To fulfil the stated objectives, training workshops and exposure trips were organised and the B&B licensing process was initiated to have the possibility to provide accommodation for foreign tourists. Sonia Kaing, the owner of the B&B Kaings Villa, presented different activities of the working group: In September 2015 the first B&B in Thandaunggyi was licensed, which was also the first one in Myanmar. In 2015 and 2016 several trainings and workshops concerning hospitality training, hygiene, cooking, housekeeping, product development, waste management and training for tour conductors were held. Today, eight licensed B&Bs can be found in Thandaunggyi which offer single, double and family rooms with shared or ensuite bathrooms.



Questions & Answers Workshop II – History of Thandaunggyi Development Working Group:

Q: How many trainings have been offered and how many trainings received from community members?

A: Trainings were held for example for receptionists, B&B owners, hygiene in restaurants or for tour conductor. As a sample, 16 participants from Thandaunggyi received a Hospitality training organized by HSF and PeaceNexus (March 2015).

(Additional information can be found in the conference presentation on slide “Activities”)

Q: Does the work of the TTDWG only include the development of Thandaunggyi?

A: At the beginning of the project the work only covered Thandaunggyi. The current development also includes villages and destinations in surrounding areas.

Q: What is important when organizing community members in a local working group?

A: Involving local people is becoming more and more important; especially to get rid of misunderstandings about what to expect from CBT/ CIT. There are also a lot of challenges and difficulties, e.g. the consideration of different religious points of view. It is also important to decide how to deal with large investments from external stakeholders (e.g. hotel groups).

Q: Most important in tourism is entertainment. How do you manage the issue of serving alcoholic drinks to foreign tourists in a religious area, like Thandaunggyi?

A: Religious leaders are also involved in the TTDWG. We can't stop this process; these issues are happening in Buddhist areas as well. The important question is what kind of restrictions can be set up? Restaurants in Thandaunggyi have alcohol licences, local guides can provide information and sensitize the tourists. There are Do's & Don'ts for tourists as well.



Workshop III: Current Development of Thandaunggyi Tourism Development Working Group

The current development was presented by members of the TTDWG, in particular by B&B-, restaurant- and shop-owners, tour guides and other members.

Structure and Roles

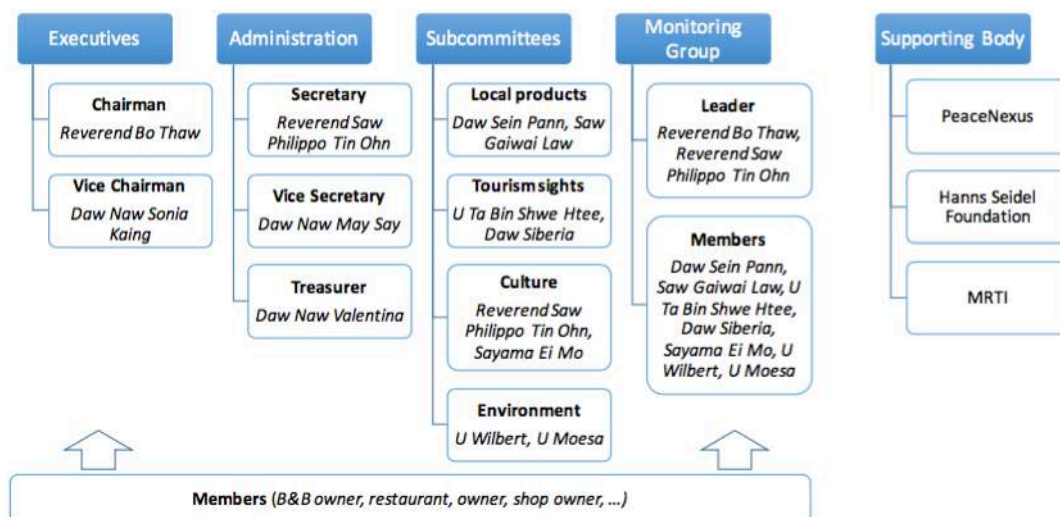
A member of the TTDWG presented the main structure and roles of the working group. Within the last two years, the TTDWG has developed a structure and defined roles and responsibilities of different committees. Three major stakeholder-groups are important: the advisory board, the support body and the implementing action body at the community level (including executives, administration, subcommittees and a monitoring group) (see figure). Each subcommittee has its roles and responsibilities. The tourism sights committee is e.g. in charge of finding new potential places within and outside the town; the collaboration with local people and the reporting of potentials to the main board. In addition, it was pointed out, that various religious organisation and several young people are included in the process.



Current Development of TTDWG – Structure and Roles



New Structure of the TTDWG:



Vision

“We aim to establish a community-based organization that promotes responsible tourism development in the Thandaunggyi region, and acts as a role model, supporting locally owned tourism-related businesses, educating the community and helping to conserve natural and cultural resources. The organization aspires to provide a model approach to peace building and help to facilitate free movement in the Thandaunggyi region.”

Objectives

As a member of TTDWG stated, the working group has developed eight objectives, related to the vision (see Box “Objectives”). Each objective is linked with particular actions points, included in the current action plan 2016.

Objective 1	To provide a platform for information exchange for locally-owned tourism-related businesses and development actors
Objective 2	To spread economic benefits among the local community
Objective 3	To educate and raise awareness of local communities about conserving natural resources
Objective 4	To provide skills development and capacity building in tourism and hospitality
Objective 5	To promote and provide guidance for sustainable principles (waste management/ hygiene/monitoring and evaluation, etc.)
Objective 6	To establish role model for CBT in the region
Objective 7	To maintain Kayin Culture and revive traditional crafts and activities
Objective 8	To share knowledge and lesson-learned on community development in post conflict area in Kayin state

Main Achievements

Following the presentation on the current structure and responsibilities, the main achievements and the limitations were presented by members of the TTDWG with support of representatives of the local and international NGOs. Firstly, Reverend Stevens talked about the main achievements in tourism and peace building. He highlighted the increasing tourist arrivals after the ceasefire between the military and the KNU in 2012 and CBT in Thandaunggyi supports the peace building process and is part of trust building between the conflict actors. His statements were supplemented by PeaceNexus, who’s representative highlighted the importance of the peace process in Thandaunggyi. He also noted that the ceasefire is not a peace contract, but that tourism activities could play an important role within this process. The next presented main achievement was the development of tourism through B&Bs and service development. The TTDWG stated that the opening of B&Bs in Thandaunggyi benefits the community. Before the B&Bs opened, there were no possibility to accommodate visitors. Now, tourists can stay during rainy season due to a higher standard of construction. The main benefit,

that young people are no longer unemployed in Thandaunggyi, was emphasized, too. These statements were supported by the commentary of Dr. Nicole Haeusler from MRTI, who commended the increased quality of B&Bs and the service development in Thandaunggyi. As a third achievement, the TTDWG presented the benefits in working with the community: The involvement of the community leads to a greater support in the implementing of (tourism related) projects. The Business Foundation Initiative (BIF) added the importance of supporting school/university dropouts to find a job in the tourism sector in Thandaunggyi. The TTDWG also highlighted the fact, that tourism development led to renovation of houses and the opening of new shops and restaurants. Another main achievement in the infrastructure development is the conception of new trekking trails, as well as the building of a basin at the hot springs close to the town. Achim Munz, representative of HSF, commended the entrepreneurial spirit in Thandaunggyi and the courage of community members to invest their own money to start a (tourism related) business. As a fourth and last main achievement, the importance of internal and external knowledge sharing was discussed. Barbara Schott, Tourism Consultant, pointed out the different levels of knowledge sharing – e.g. within the community or within the region. She indicated the ongoing process of learning and sharing at different levels.

Limitations and Challenges

Until now, the TTDWG faced many different challenges. The four following aspects were mentioned: Due to the fact, that Thandaunggyi is located in a post-conflict area and armed groups, as well as military checkpoints are present, the aspect of *safety and security* is crucial. Some areas are still restricted (not only, but also due to landmines) and telecommunication (in case of emergencies) are an issue due to the location of the town.

In terms of *administration*, it was and still is essential to e.g. clearly define roles and responsibilities, to improve the internal communication and to understand, how licensing processes work. All aspects mentioned are linked to intensive communication between different stakeholders.

Knowledge and skills, directly or indirectly related to tourism such as language skills, knowledge about product development based on tourism, skills in healthcare or service quality and general knowledge about tourism (there was no/ little former experience within the community) were mentioned.

With regard to *money and finance*, the issue of grants and the return on investment were described as difficult. Due to that, it is important to start small (esp. for B&Bs). Furthermore, the focus on tourism could lead to little diversification in incomes.

Questions & Answers Workshop III – Current Development of Thandaunggyi Tourism Development Working Group:

Q: Does the current tourism development in Thandaunggyi only benefits the B&B owners or are there also benefits for other community members?

A: It is an inclusive tourism. The TTDWG provides practical support, but not investments. Of course, most of the income and benefits will go to the private sector; but increasing tourism creates new jobs (e.g. in B&B's, restaurants, local shops, tour conductor).

Q: Is there some profit sharing from 2014 – 2016? Have you used the profits for the development of the village?

A: We have set up a treasurer in the TTDWG recently. A certain percentage will go to the village (e.g. funding for garbage disposal). But: It is starting just now.

Q: Does some of the income go to the community (e.g. income of local guides)?

A: They contribute a certain percentage to our treasurer.

A (Barbara Schott): CBT does not always mean, that everything has to be shared within the community. But: that development, ideas come from community & contribute to the local supporters involved (also: to provide more shops to the community).

A (Dr. Nicole Haeusler): CBT means to contribute to the community, but not as a whole. Apart from B&Bs, there also restaurants or tour guides. Furthermore, it is not exclusively focused on financial benefits, but also on the fact of organizing themselves. Not all, but a majority will benefit from it.

Q: How could a destination start a cooperation with local or international NGOs?

A: This is a very basic & important question. For local development (not only tourism), it needs to be sustainable. For that, we need to start at a lower level. We need to know, what people need. Than we make linkages with other organisations; but only if there are objectives that fit to the ideas/ projects of the place/ destination.

Additionally, communities need to have the right to refuse every kind of “help” that does not fit. Depending on the topic, communities have to be able to decide by themselves. Projects need to be in line with local contexts & needs.



Lessons Learned

To conclude the third workshop, lessons learned and future activities were presented by Sayardaw Bo Thar. In the case of Thandaunggyi, it is important to work together with the government and ethnic armed group representatives at a local level. Through the productive exchange between all parties and an ongoing dialogue, livelihoods in the community have improved and confidence in the future was formed again.

Therefore, it is essential to invest in greater staff time relative to the delivery of services or material goods, because all working steps take time to implement as well as understanding the situation in the area. Moreover, it is important to take time to assess whether the group is inclusive across the whole community, and whenever possible, to promote broad-based participation. Furthermore, the definition of key outcomes and indicators in terms of relationships and community empowerment are needed. To keep all stakeholders engaged, it is essential to set up high quality facilitation of consultations and community based meetings. When seeking to empower community-based organisations in conflict-affected areas, it is necessary to invest in sustainability from the beginning. The community must be included in tourism development and needs to be able to identify with the process (see: Peace Nexus

(2016): Peacebuilding and Community-Driven Tourism Development in Kayin State. Link: http://peacenexus.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/TTDWG-Case-Study-_11-08-2016.pdf).

Future Activities

Through tourism development, a regional development will be initiated as well. In the future a tourism information centre is planned, as well as several trekking routes. It is planned to implement the village of Leiktho as a new destination. A seven-mile tour around Thandaunggyi may be developed and a hot spring water basin is under construction. More local products will be offered, like honey, water, vegetables or tea, as well as merchandise like T-Shirts. In connection with these approaches, a branding and marketing strategy will be developed. To evaluate investor proposals, it is important to set up guidelines, to improve the telecommunication infrastructure a network tower will be installed.

Key Note: MoHT's Viewpoint towards CBT

After lunch, the key note about Ministry of Hotel and Tourism (MoHT)'s viewpoint towards CBT was given by U Zeyar Myo Aung, Director of the Tourism Promotion Department of the MoHT. He presented major aspects of CBT in general, the role of the government and the implementation of community involved tourism throughout Myanmar.

The core aims of community involvement in tourism can be identified as the opportunity of locals to gain substantial control over the development of tourism: Local people should have control over the development and the local population's interest should be the most important aspect. Consequently, benefits can be found in local development and empowerment, as well as poverty reduction. According to U Zeyar Myo Aung, the Ministry will provide support to reach these targets, due to the fact that CBT/CIT is a priority of the new (as well as the former) government. In addition, the six major CBT/CIT pilot projects in Myanmar were discussed: CBT Initiative Bagan (Myaing Area), Shan State B&B Pilot Project, Thandaunggyi, Community Based Eco Tourism in Indagwyi Lake, Dolphin Ecotourism Project and ITC Kayah. This presentation was followed by a discussion about different aspects of community involvement (see Q&A).

Questions and Answers to Key Note (MoHT):

Q: CBT brings great benefit to the community, creates employment... At the same time, we have to finance projects and marketing. How much does the government help with marketing?

A: First, the community has to be able to manage itself after a certain amount of time, they need to be empowered. Then, support has to be reduced and a gradual take-over should be achieved (but not "overnight").

Marketing: The main idea is to approach travel agencies, because they have customers already.

Q: What happens if somebody wants to construct big hotels in Thandaunggyi? Is there a policy?

A: In Thandaunggyi, you need approval from the township-, the district- & the state government. Especially in forestry areas, you need approval from the Ministry of Forestry. In cultural areas, approval from Ministry of Culture is needed. But there is no existing policy which forbids the construction of hotels.

Commentary from Action Aid:

To implement CBT, we faced a lot of challenges in this area (Myaing). In Myaing, we didn't start as a CBT-project, but as an empowerment-project, addressing the issue of water shortages in this area. We had meetings with 10 villages. Before success was achieved, rather than action aid, governmental ministries & departments played a major role.

Consultation with all those stakeholders are important. The success of this CBT-project results out of the transparency of actions within the community.



Working Group Sessions

Participants priorities for working group session

In feedback participants identified the following tourism development topics they would like to focus on:

1. Communication & Knowledge Sharing
2. Waste Management
3. Impacts on Environment
4. Safety & Security
5. Public Private Partnership

The workshop participants were requested to vote for five priority topics for working group sessions after lunch break. The following five topics were selected to be the most important ones: *communication & knowledge sharing, waste management, impacts on environment, safety & security* and *Public Private Partnership (PPP)*.

The audience split up into 5 small groups to discuss the main challenges and possible solutions of the respective topics. Each of the five working groups comprised about 10 participants, which met at a round table to discuss the selected topics.

Within 45 minutes every group prepared a presentation on blank sheets and presented it to the whole audience.

1. Communication and Knowledge Sharing

The integration of communities in the decision making process was identified as the main challenge in communication & knowledge sharing. If the community is integrated in tourism, collective integration is necessary. Although, all-inclusiveness is difficult to achieve (especially during the first steps) and not everybody inside the community needs to be involved at the beginning. It is better to integrate interested actors during the process.

To achieve mutual understanding, it is important to raise awareness of different ways of communication. Due to that, it can be stated that communities need to be aware of their traditional forms of internal and external communication. The organization of participative workshops and trainings with all interested community members will be a vital tool to approach this issue.

2. Waste Management

The second working group concentrated on the main characteristics of waste management. They mentioned the importance of the 3R's (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle). In terms of waste management, it is furthermore essential to start education from primary school and continue with knowledge sharing and awareness within the community. The group recognized the necessity to integrate behaviours concerning waste management to Do & Don't manuals. Additionally, issues such as absent local awareness of pollution and omnipresent problem of plastic water bottles were discussed.

3. Impacts on Environment

Inherent to waste management, another working group considered the problems of environmental impacts. They mentioned the issue of increasing amounts of garbage and litter due to tourists in the destinations. The working group focused on the upcoming challenges regarding the climate change, like global warming, more migration and loss of biodiversity. Additionally, aspects such as deforestation and urbanization were mentioned. All in all, it is important to handle the challenges of climate change on a local level as well. Strategies need to be developed in a dialogue with all stakeholders within the community.

4. Safety and Security

The fourth working group approached the question of safety & security. The group highlighted the significance of tourist's safety in post conflict areas like Thandaunggyi. Every destination should develop a coordinated management plan in case of an emergency. These emergency plans should include topics like weather emergencies, land slides and earthquakes or food safety (allergic reactions). Furthermore, issues such as human trafficking or medical infrastructure in rural areas and cities must be considered. The importance of local guides and their knowledge of the respective destination, flora and fauna was highlighted as well. To communicate these matters to tourists, Do's and Don'ts for visitors and local should be developed.

5. Public-Private Partnership

The last working group identified the main challenges of public private partnerships (PPP). It is necessary to build trust between the public and private sector, so that both sides have enough time to get to know and to understand each other. A future plan needs to be developed together, which includes chapters on goals, missions, visions, responsibilities, as well as rules and regulations. A future plan must be developed in a transparent way and conclusions should be taken by all participants.

The communication between the community and the private sector is a first important step to reach the goals of public private partnerships. It is essential to appoint a moderator for the communication between community, government and businessmen. This moderator should be able to “translate” / to understand local and official ways of communication, such as terms, wording and phrases.



Wrap up & Closing Remarks:

Mr. Achim Munz, Resident Representative Myanmar of Hanns Seidel Foundation summarized the story of tourism development in Thandaunggyi, as well as the community development during this period. He highlighted the defining roles within the community and the TTDWG. Community members became leaders and entrepreneurs and participated on the tourism development. Mr. Munz considered the importance of community involvement and democratic structures within the TTDWG. A lot of diverse CBT models are existing in Myanmar, all of these destinations have different conditions and different histories. The model of the TTDWG, including local governance, is a structure which could be transferred to other destinations in Myanmar. Nevertheless, the individual community needs to become active: “Don’t wait till the government come”, Mr. Munz stated. He addressed the community’s entrepreneurship: “Be innovative” and “Just try to do it”.

Moreover, the necessity of transparency and the exchange of information in the decision making process were underlined. Mr. Munz further stated the essential role of communities to develop initiative programs to protect and save the environment. The increase of health infrastructure in the whole country is in his opinion a primary task for the future. It is necessary to train local nurses, so they don’t hesitate to treat tourists as well, especially in rural areas. He also underlined the significance of safety and security, especially in post-conflict areas. The accurate handling of safety and security issues could also benefit the local communities (e.g. clearance of land mines). At the end of the speech, Reverend Saw Philippo Tin Ohn from TTDWG took the opportunity to thank the audience for participation in the conference on Thandaunggyi Tourism Development. In his closing remarks he described TTDWG as a growing project and mentioned that it takes time to work up a holistic structure for the tourism development in Thandaunggyi. He invited everyone to take part on this development.

Conclusion & Next Steps

Peace Nexus, the Hanns Seidel Foundation and Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute welcomed the active input and discussion at the workshop, and have considered the feedback received. The discussions during the conference have proven, that a bottom-up approach is of great importance: The forming of a group, such as the TTDWG and the enhancement of

community involvement in tourism development can and should lead to democracy at the bottom. This process could spread on many other levels. Like Mr. Munz stated: “The Government can only do so much”.

Additionally, communities and external stakeholders should be aware of the significance of the long-term nature of the process. To achieve outcomes which benefit the communities as well as other stakeholders involved, mutual understanding is essential. Reverend Saw Philippo Tin Ohn: “Our working group is less than two years old, it is like a child learning to speak. Although this baby talk is sometimes difficult to understand, we are happy to improve”.

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