

Changing Role of Public Library, Htantabin, Hlaing Thar Yar Township

Among 8 townships of Northern District of Yangon, Htantabin Township is far from Yangon and transportation is difficult compared to other townships. It takes about 3 hour driving away from downtown area to the library in suburban area. It is underdeveloped and has poverty. It is found that only a handful of people who have siblings and relatives in urban areas can join IT classes, language classes, computer classes and other classes.

Introducing Beyond Access Myanmar Project

Htantabin Township Library situated in the town wanted to fulfill the needs of the community but is lacking resources. One day they were introduced to Sayarma Daw Myat San Nyein by Taikkyi Township Administrator. They were given a chance to participate in a program called Beyond Access Myanmar Project and a staff member from the public library of Htantabin Township was invited to Library Education and IT class. In the class, they received three tablets with the BAM project.

After receiving the tablets and continuous library education and IT training, they did cascade IT training to the students at the library. One of the students passed the Military Computer University Exam. Another one from the Htantabin township public library was selected in the list of Best 20 TAG girls and invited to the workshop of TAG girls held in Yangon. The improvement of the library earned the trust of the library users.

Then the township office library hired 5 tablets from MBAPF and 3 tablets from Mingalardon office to teach basic computer skills to 20 children from 5th Grade to 9th Grade during the summer holiday. While the computer training is being conducted, they plan for the children who regularly visit the library to see videos and play games on tablets so that they do not feel disappointed.

Since the number of children interested in the tablet-based training is increasing, a volunteer teacher was hired to open basic English speaking class. 30 children were enrolled for the class in the first time, and 45 in the second time. The third batch of the class with 35 children will take three months starting from 9th July, 2017. They found that the children enrolled for the class come to the library early to use the tablets.

As the staff members from the public library had a chance to join MBAPF and MIL trainings, they can share the knowledge with people from their community. In the past, library staffs need to get up at 4

am or 5 am to deliver important letters to the head office in Yangon and Naypyitaw. Thanks to their skills in IT, they can now deliver important letters through email. They saved their time and human resources.

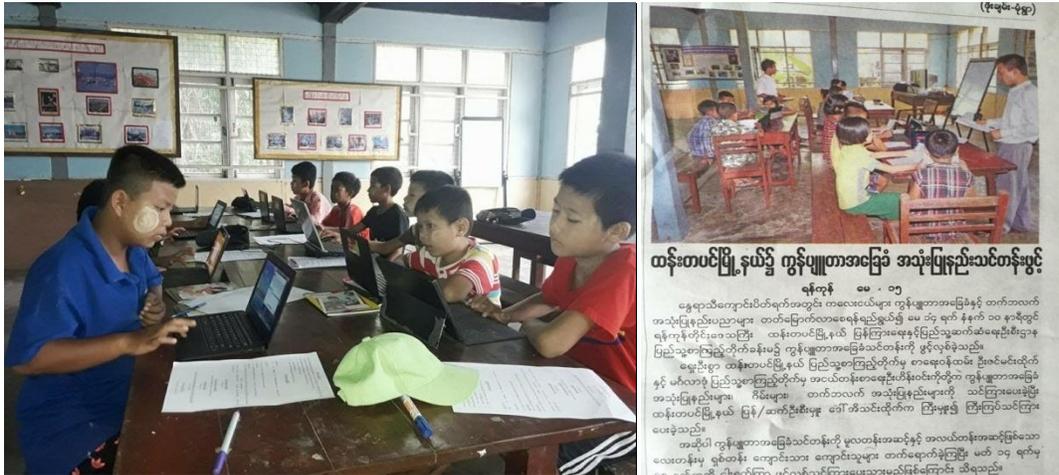
MBAPF donated two laptops for the MIL skills training. On 23rd June, 2017, 6 ebook readers were donated. The Htantabin township public library now has 6 tablets, 2 laptops and 6 Easybook laptop in total.



The MIL training is now provided to the teachers, police, fire men, retirees, librarians from the village library, and ethnic people for 10 times by using the tablets. With the Wifi provided by Ooredoo, the training on how to use tablet was given to the two village libraries on July. As a result, the Pyinya Alinyaung Public Library from Aye Ywar Lay Village can open successfully with many users.

The training on how to use tablets and basic computer skills were given for four times to 112 members in total. Previously, there were only 5 or 6 children who use the Htantabin public library every day. After the training on how to use tablets and computer basic skills was provided, there are at least 25 children using the library daily basis. As the trainings are given in the school holidays, the number of children who use the library has increased more than 40. Government newspaper proudly published the news of computer training held at Htantbin public library.

As the training is provided to the children during the school holiday, the parents come along with their children increasing the number of library members who read or check out the books.



Leadership Training

The leadership trainings also enabled them to communicate effectively with other people as we are public focused center. Dealing with the users, township officers and co-workers are more comfortable after taking the leadership course.

Other Activities

The library runs a basic sewing training to provide social assistance by working together with Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association. 30 women were enrolled for the training. It gives job opportunities to some of the trainees who now work with their sewing skills. Women can make clothes for themselves and their family members so that they can save more money and time, and cover some expenses of the family.

Other Partnerships

To improve the social-economic life of women, the library provides training, Improved Performance of Women every Sunday for 7 months by cooperating with Myanmar Business Executive Association (MBE). Female government employees, female retirees, female workers from garment factories, married women, business women, female university students, and female high school students attended the training. In the training, the women are taught communication skills, sexual discriminations, and effective communication in a work environment. The training is found to be helpful for women in solving their

domestic and social issues. Those who attended the training were interested in the library and became library members.

The goal of improving the public library to be a community center is to cooperate with organization and to increase the number of library users. Therefore, the library has cooperated with the Rural Development Department and hired 20 computers from Shwe Lamin Nagar Company to provide students and government employees with training at the township office library. Although the number of students was limited to 40, there were increasing number of people who wanted to attend the training so the training session was provided from 8:30 am to 9:30 pm and 60 people were enrolled for the training. Since the library organize the training class in the area, the people can save money and time while they have an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills. Therefore, it was a successful training.

The library has also run a 15-day Diesel mechanic training course to support the livelihood of the rural people by cooperating with the Rural Development Department. The training course was designed to support the livelihood of the trainees and their family members because the library provides training to teach the people in the rural areas job skills.

Then, the library cooperated with the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association to promote traditional culture and art. The township office library led to organize events of Karen and Mon food, dress and art with the support of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association.

The library also cooperated with Myanmar Group to decrease Crimes to spread right information and hold anti-crime speeches, educational talk about narcotic drugs and impromptu speech competition in special days.

To change the library to be a community-based training center and allow people to have access to information, the library taught police, firemen and administrative staff how to open a gmail account, how to use Skype, and how to open a Facebook account. It helps them to have better and faster communication with their departments and access to the right information in a timely manner.

Children Corner

In addition, the public library has a children corner; encouraging the kids to draw pictures and make handcraft materials. The library conducted health education programs and play games with kids to improve the health of their mind and body.

In conclusion, the township public library host book club discussion for adults, vocational training and courses on ethnic languages, foreign language courses, leadership training courses, and IT courses, in addition to providing space for the community meetings and spreading information. The library listen to the voices of the people in order to fulfill their needs such as arranging training on how to use tablets for children and innovative games to train the children's minds. As a community center, the library takes suggestions from the public to improve their services.

The two librarians (Sister and brother) are very enthusiast and happy to help people. The role of the library in the community is improved as well as the services given by the library are valued more. Because of the new library services and programs, the role of the library is important in the daily life of a better community. The role of the librarians has improved significantly as the librarians and the public library from Htantabin Township are engaging in activities to improve the society in an IT age and provide knowledge and information to the public.