



# Magic Bus Myanmar Newsletter Q2-2019

## At a glance

### Beneficiaries

Registered children  
4,000+<sup>1</sup>

### Team

Fulltime staff<sup>2</sup>  
21

Management team  
5

Youth Mentors  
16

Volunteers<sup>3</sup>  
11

### Locations

Townships  
2

Schools<sup>4</sup>  
11

1. Estimated number of children at current stage of engagement with government schools; we will confirm exact figures over the coming months as we roll out the programme
2. Includes 12 new staff members who have been hired in preparation for the expansion of the programme across government schools
3. Community Coordinators
4. As of this year, we will be working with ten government schools and one monastic school in the two Yangon townships of Thanlyin and Hlaing Thar Yar



## Summer programme

The Magic Bus summer programme is held between March and May, when Myanmar schools close for the holidays. We aim to keep children engaged and active during this period, continuing to develop the five core life skills of communication, teamwork, problem solving, managing self and learning to learn.

This year's programme focused on football, with weekly training sessions held in March and games organised in late April and early May where teams competed for prizes. Over 160 girls and boys participated in the games, which took place in communities in Thanlyin and Hlaing Thar Yar townships.

We also conducted a number of dancing and art sessions to foster creativity and provide opportunities to learn new skills. Children practiced dance routines and made photo frames and other items from recycled material.

Magic Bus staff were thrilled to see so many children enjoying themselves!



Summer programme photos



Football, art and dancing sessions





## Expanding our work with support from Manan Trust



Manan Trust, a Hong Kong-based charitable organisation focusing on healthcare and education projects across Asia, will be supporting the Magic Bus Myanmar programme as of this year. We are grateful for the additional funding which will enable us to expand our work, particularly in Hlaing Thar Yar township. Combined with ongoing support from our programme partner, Dulwich International Schools Foundation, the grant from Manan Trust will ensure that we effectively engage government schools and enrol over 4,000 children.

In preparation for our expansion, we have hired additional staff including one Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Officer and 11 Youth Mentors who will be based in Thanlyin and Hlaing Thar Yar townships. An M&E Officer plays a critical role in capturing data and assessing progress, while Youth Mentors interact directly with registered Magic Bus children through weekly activity sessions and build rapport to become trusted programme ambassadors.

Our recent recruits come from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from NGO work to football training. We are also happy to report that there were two internal promotions.

All new staff members have participated in an extensive induction programme involving hands-on training to understand the Magic Bus curriculum, as well as observation sessions to learn how experienced colleagues interact with beneficiaries.

We are very excited to continue our work in Yangon with our growing team!



1. HR training at the Magic Bus office



2. Practicing the curriculum activities



3. Observing a community-based session in Thanlyin

## Stories from the field

This year, we conducted our summer programme – focusing on football, art and dancing – at eight communities in Thanlyin and one monastic school in Hlaing Thar Yar. During the dancing sessions, in which Youth Mentors taught participants dance routines, the children of Mya Yar Yoe 6 village in particular made an effort to attend and engage in the experience. Although many of the children from the village were shy at first, by the end of the session they were fully participating, smiling and laughing as they moved in time to the music. They all commented that they thoroughly enjoyed the session, and even performed the dance at their community's preschool graduation ceremony a week later!

## Residential training

The entire Magic Bus Myanmar team – including our recent hires – took part in a week long training course in late May, led by colleagues from India. The sessions involved discussions, group work and games, providing the opportunity to learn about the Magic Bus programme and approach. Important issues such as gender equality, community building, mentoring and safeguarding were also covered. Since June, the team has begun putting their newly acquired knowledge and skills into practice.



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1. A group session covering the new curriculum 2. The team with their trainers Shiffana and Prashant 3. Practicing an activity to share with Magic Bus children



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## Showcasing the Magic Bus curriculum: Example of an activity

Dodgeball is a game that is used during the initial engagement of a school or community to build rapport with beneficiaries. The activity provides an opportunity for children to be physically active while managing emotions and, most importantly, have fun.

<b>Time required</b>	35 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	Balls, markers and cones
<b>Preparation</b>	Draw a circle on the ground with a 10m diameter
<b>Instructions</b>	<p>1) Assign numbers to participants from one onwards; to begin, participants one, two, three and four should step into the circle.</p> <p>2) The rest of the participants must try to hit the participants inside the circle with the ball (below the knee). If the ball hits the participant inside the circle, that participant must leave the circle and take the next number's place. The person with the next number up (starting with number five) then steps into the circle and tries to dodge the ball.</p> <p>3) Participants standing inside the circle must dodge the ball to avoid being hit; this continues until everyone gets a chance to be in the centre. Add another ball if participants are dodging the ball too easily.</p>
<b>Sit – Breathe – Think (Reflection)</b>	Did you enjoy the game? What did you enjoy the most? Do you like playing in a group? Would you come every week if we play team games like this?



## The Magic Bus drivers

Meet the people who make it happen

**Zin Me Me Htet**

Training & Monitoring Officer

Zin Me joined Magic Bus in 2017 as a Youth Mentor before being promoted to the role of Training & Monitoring Officer in September 2018. Magic Bus is her first job since graduating from university with a degree in Industrial Chemistry. In her spare time, she likes to support the children in her home village by providing tuition.



### **Why did you decide to join Magic Bus?**

*I decided to join Magic Bus because I enjoy working with children. I really liked the idea of an organisation that provides life skills training.*

### **How have you changed since joining Magic Bus?**

*I have learnt many skills to apply to my own life, in particular the resilience to face problems. Previously, I would have felt like giving up when experiencing challenging situations, but now I feel that I can tackle issues head on. I have also improved my communication skills, as well as ways to manage my own actions and emotions.*

### **What do you enjoy the most about your work?**

*I love every minute of working with children. I really enjoyed Games & Fun Day this year, which brought together all Magic Bus beneficiaries.*

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## Upcoming events

### **Home visits**

*July 2019*

Home visits to meet family members of Magic Bus beneficiaries who are at risk of dropping out of the programme

### **Parent meetings**

*August 2019*

Meetings to engage parents, discuss their children's development and consider wider social issues

## About us

Magic Bus is an international NGO working towards a world in which children break out of the cycle of poverty, leading fulfilling lives and contributing positively to their communities. By using a Childhood to Livelihood approach and delivering programmes based on an activity-based curriculum, Magic Bus aims to ensure that children complete secondary education and are equipped with the life skills and knowledge they need to eventually transition to employment.

Magic Bus has been active in Myanmar since 2017 and has successfully expanded across Thanlyin and Hlaing Thar Yar townships in Yangon. Youth Mentors conduct weekly sessions targeted at 11 to 14-year olds, providing a range of activities to develop children's communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills. Contact us to learn more.

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