

WE

. Storybook .

Climate Adaptation Championship



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.Storybook.

Climate Adaptation Championship

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(Globular)**

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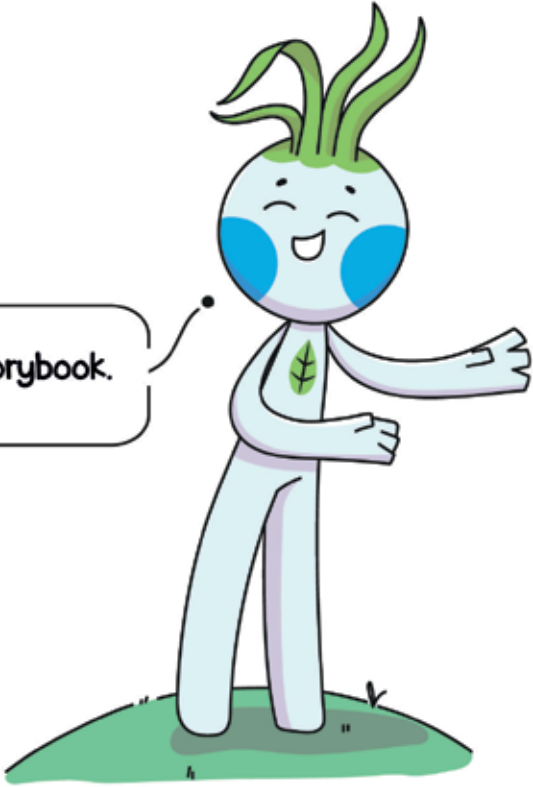


Lone Pauk (Globular)



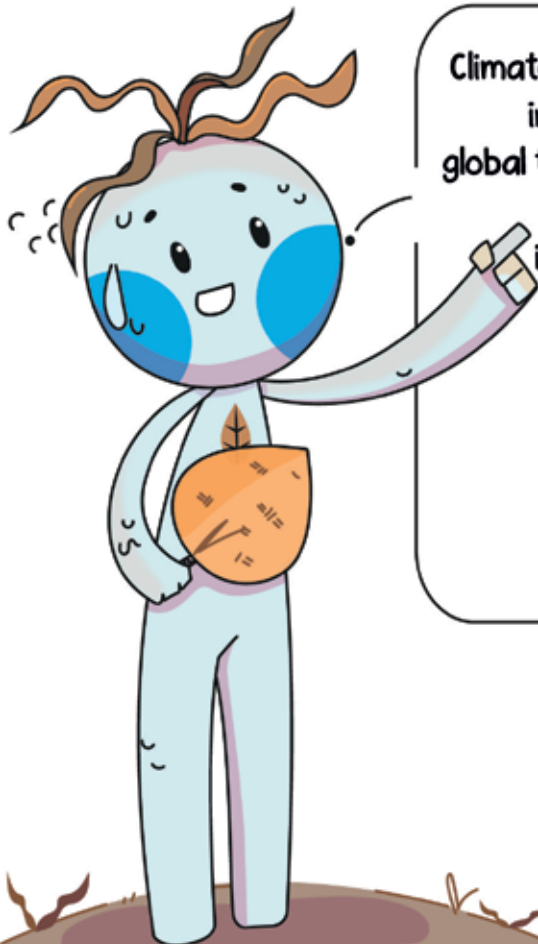
Hey there!
It's Lone Pauk (Globular),
the one passionate about
climate adaptation efforts.

I'll be your guide through this storybook.





Understanding Climate Change

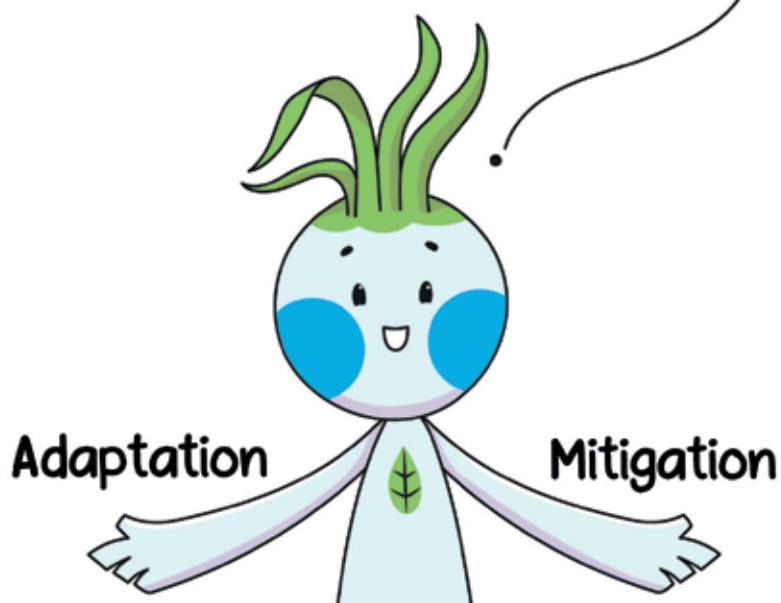


Climate change refers to the long term changes in weather patterns due to the rising global temperatures caused by human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels including kerosene, diesel, and petrol.

The impacts include flooding, water scarcity due to droughts, and extreme weather events, all of which intertwine with public health concerns.


Addressing Climate Change

When addressing the changing climate, the terms "Adaptation" and "Mitigation" are crucial. Mitigation involves addressing the causes of climate change, such as transitioning to sustainable energy instead of relying on fossil fuels. On the other hand, Adaptation entails adjusting to the impacts of climate change, like raising house levels to mitigate flooding risks.



Given the ongoing climate changes, it is essential not only to mitigate its causes but also to adapt to its impacts.

Exploring Climate Adaptation

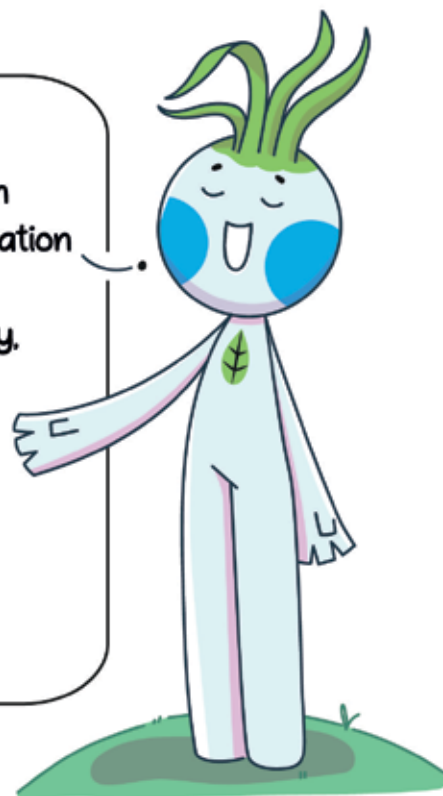


Let's talk about climate adaptation particularly. Regarding climate adaptation, both reactivity, i.e., immediate responses to climate-related events, such as deploying sandbags during floods caused by heavy rain, and proactivity, i.e., preventive measures, like raising house levels before the rainy season in low-lying areas, are really important.

Surely, the earthlings need to think of the synergy of both reactive and proactive measures. Recognizing this, Doh Eain launched an initiative called Climate Adaptation Championship from May to November 2023. Let's see how they address the impact of climate change in vulnerable grassroots communities!

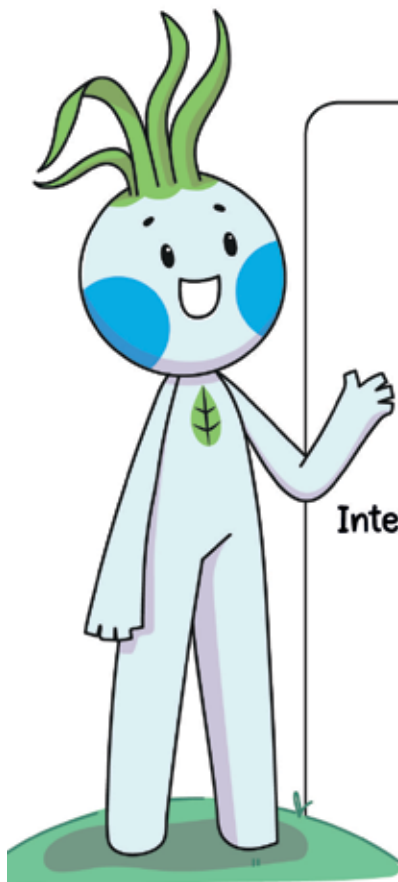
Introduction to Climate Adaptation Championship

The Climate Adaptation Championship is a community-led climate change adaptation action research project led by Doh Eain in collaboration with 4 community-based groups: Social Empowerment with Ethical Responsibility, Sharing Myanmar, Young Changemakers Community, and Zero Waste Community Myanmar. The project is funded by the Adaptation Research Alliance's Grassroots Action-Research Micro-Grant.



With the objective of empowering community members and relevant stakeholders with practical knowledge and strategies gained from the Climate Adaptation Championship, "The Community-Led Climate Adaptation Solution Toolkit" has been published. This toolkit presents 36 solutions aimed at addressing water scarcity and flooding challenges. It is available free of charge and can be requested by emailing nn@doheain.com.

Considering Gender Equality & Social Inclusion in Climate Adaptation Championship



Following the successful conclusion of the Climate Adaptation Championship in November 2023, an extended phase of the championship focusing on the integration of gender equality & social inclusion has been initiated, with the continued support of the Adaptation Research Alliance and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

Led by Doh Eain, this phase involves collaboration with Social Empowerment with Ethical Responsibility, Sharing Myanmar, Young Changemakers Community, and Yangon Kayin Baptist Women Association.

The objective is to incorporate gender equality & social inclusion perspectives into community-led climate adaptation activities.



About Storybook

The "We" storybook is a component of the extended phase of the Climate Adaptation Championship mentioned earlier. It serves to showcase local stories across diverse demographics, including females, males, the elderly, mothers with children under 7, people with disabilities, and pregnant women.

These stories were gathered through personal interviews conducted by Social Empowerment with Ethical Responsibility, Sharing Myanmar, Young Changemakers Community, and Yangon Kayin Baptist Women Association. The storybook comprises a total of 16 stories, with 6 focusing on water scarcity, 6 on flooding, and 4 highlighting the stories of the collaborating community-based groups.



The objective is to highlight how people from various demographics experience climate change challenges differently through engaging stories.

Through these stories, the incorporation of gender equality & social inclusion perspectives into community-led climate adaptation activities is aimed.





Stories



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(Part 1)

Water Scarcity



A Woman with Dreams

"I both fear natural disasters and hate discrimination against females."



1.1 A Woman with Dreams

She is a 17 years old student studying in 10th grade. She has severely suffered from the bitterness of poverty and natural disasters since she was born. Her parents, being the working class people, worked their best to provide her the minimum school education despite struggling to put food on the table. That way, she could attend education and have the opportunity to go to school, study and also learn about the impact of natural disasters in and outside of school. Back in 2021 when she turned 14 years old, she experienced the tornado with her own eyes. As a 14 years old who only learned about the natural disasters from the book, she was mesmerized by the view of an active tornado regardless of the fact that it could take her off the ground. However, her mom picked her up from the site shouting on top of her lungs, "Don't stay there, it is dangerous!"

Out of all the chaos and noises, she specifically heard a few words from people, saying "Prioritize women and girls, they cannot do anything." She refused to agree with that. "Women cannot do anything? I mean, look at my mom risking her life to save me from danger. She is a woman, isn't she?" Then the tornado was gone and everyone in the neighborhood worked hard to recover from the aftermath of the disaster. There were many activities women and girls have actively participated in and she thinks it is important to recognize the efforts made by women and she couldn't understand why people take women as weak.

Natural disasters usually wash away the lives of people and the working class people are mostly vulnerable to these losses and bring more difficulties in their day to day living. Since that day, as much as she felt threatened by the destructive power of natural disasters, she is against the unfair discrimination, against women and their ability. That turn of event encouraged her to prove her capability in the community as a young woman.

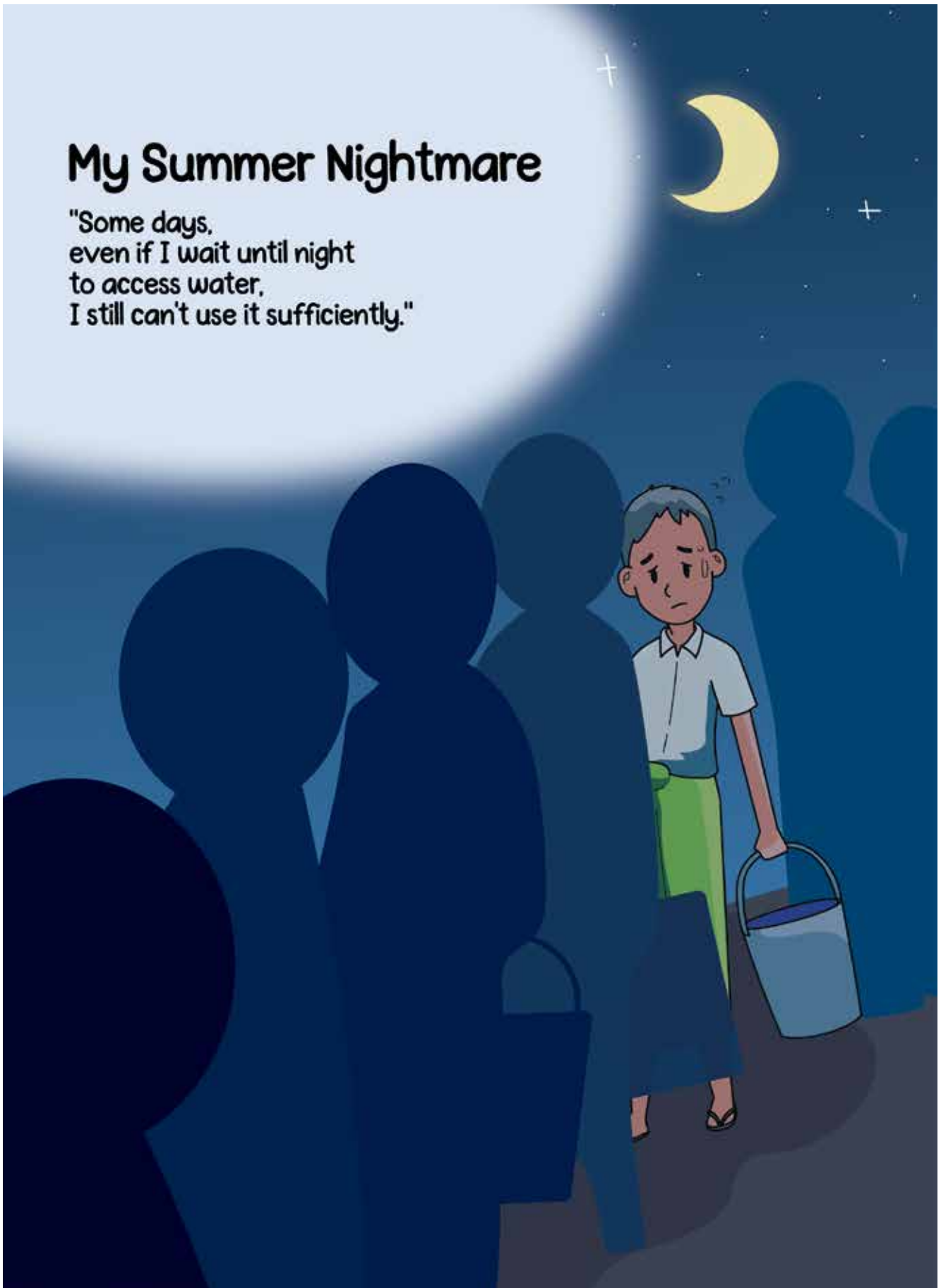
During previous years, she is determined to work hard to study and learn more about preventing natural disasters and environmental issues. It helped her to contribute in connecting people in her communities with different groups working towards improving lives affected by climate change and natural disasters. She is hopeful to speed up her work in prevention of natural disasters and make people convinced that 'women also can' not only during disasters but also in life.

_Young Changemakers Community

Translated by Physo ■

My Summer Nightmare

"Some days,
even if I wait until night
to access water,
I still can't use it sufficiently."





1.2 My Summer Nightmare

The weather was not this hot before Covid-19 pandemic. It is hotter these days. There isn't much effect on health in general because of the heat, but people in the neighborhood are suffering a lot under the hot weather.

I think water scarcity is also getting worse now.

I am worried about how we will overcome summer now! My favorite season is the rainy season. The water is overflowing for drinking and taking baths and all. Now, we can't get enough water during summer and it is very hard to bear. The hand-dug wells are also dried up in the summer. Now, the first thing I do after coming home from school is picking up the bucket and walking to where we need to wait in a long queue to get water, how long that may be. Sometimes, it is already night time when it is my turn. That doesn't even guarantee that I can get as much water I need.

The lack of discipline and reckless actions on cutting down the trees limitlessly are main reasons for the excessive heat and all these difficulties in the summer. The water scarcity is also because of that. I think people should stop what they are doing that affects climate change. But I don't see anyone is interested in finding the solution together. I don't really know how this summer turns out. This is the summer nightmare of a 16 years old student.

_Yangon Kayin Baptist Women Association

Translated by Phyo ■

Vicissitude

"To secure a place,
I had to clear away the marches
and create pathways on my own."





1.3 Vicissitude

A 70 years old woman in shabby clothes with a pale and peaceful smile is steadily coming into the hall. The age lines on her face seem to describe how she has faced and passed through a lot of obstacles in her life. She slowly but surely starts to narrate her journey of life.

Her husband passed away. Additionally, her daughter lost the connection with hers too and they don't know where he is now since after he left to go to work. It's been a long time since she's not been earning due to her health condition and her age. They are now solving the daily needs for 6 family members with her pregnant daughter's income which is just over 2 lakhs. These hardships are not new for her, but she is sad and worried about her unborn grandchild.

She takes a deep breath for the obstacles she has encountered by recalling about many barriers during 25 years after moving to Yangon. She said, "There were a lot of challenges and difficulties when I relocated to Yangon." In fact, there was no place for the settlement. She made a home among the marshes to live and she also encountered that the ward elders bullied and drove her out from these places.

Back then, not only was she distressed for the settlement but also for water. There is no clean drinking water in the ward. She always has to go to the monastery to carry water with the buckets. Even though they can buy bottles of purified drinking water, she has to be frugal making use of water due

to the rise of commodity prices. She also said that the ward elders seem to have no interest in solving the water scarcity problem. Claiming the adversity in her life, she wishes her children to get enough drinking water even if there's no sufficient water for domestic use.

_Yangon Kayin Baptist Women Association

Translated by Thadar Pwint Htet ■

The Trial of a Woman Fetching Water with a Baby

"With increasing heat, a growing belly, and scarce water, life is incredibly challenging... Um... Climate change and natural disasters indeed disproportionately affect those with vulnerable backgrounds."





1.4 The Trial of a Woman Fetching Water with a Baby

As a 40 years old housewife and a mother, my days are filled with household chores and caring for my child, relying on my husband's income. In these times of water scarcity, one of my daily tasks involves carrying water with my child on one hand while my husband is at work. It's been eight years since I married my husband, and back then, fetching water was a real challenge. The situation worsens in the summer, when I have to endure long queues under the scorching sun just to get water. It was even more difficult when I was pregnant, navigating the queues with discomfort. During the rainy season, we rely on rainwater harvesting at home, but we also have to take great care to protect important documents and clothing from leaks causing through roofs and walls.

Living near the river, whenever our ward floods, we're always tasked with cleaning up the area, so we can return to our homes. Initially, I saw these responsibilities as part of the duties of a grassroots householder, especially as a married woman and a mother. My family always comes first, so I focus on managing them one after another. However, it was until a volunteer in our ward explained it to me that issues like water scarcity and flooding are linked to environmental factors. Understanding this, I now see that these hardships are not just a consequence of my role as a married woman and a mother, but of environmental disasters.

Fortunately, the situation has improved with the donation of a generator to the monastery this year, easing the water scarcity to some extent. However, I still worry about my children's future, knowing that environmental changes could bring even more challenges into our lives. Nevertheless, I am determined to participate in environmental conservation efforts for the sake of the next generation. This resilience represents hope for my children's future, and I dream that they can grow up free from the hardships caused by environmental disasters.

_Young Changemakers Community

Translated by Thadar Pwint Htet ■

Strength Beyond Incapability

"I am committed to ensuring that my disability does not hinder my contributions to the community for as long as I am able."





1.5 Strength Beyond Incapability

Today, the sun felt hotter than usual, so I returned home early from the place where I used to make a living, i.e, filling lighters with gas. As I came back sweating under the burning sunlight of Yangon, I rushed to the water pot and tried to get a quick drink of water. However, I quickly reminded myself that it's not wise to drink water right after coming back from the heat. So, I made my way to the window, relaxing there as usual, and observed a group of people nearby carrying water. This scene is a symbol of the neighborhood, something we see every summer. With some generous donors giving electric generators this year, people are a little more relieved to stand in line for the water.

I was the first person to move into this neighborhood, and as I became older, I naturally transitioned into an elder figure within this community, witnessing the detrimental effects of climate change over the years, and by that, I was granted insight and understanding into certain aspects. Here, summers are dry, and when the rains come, the floods rise. Since the flood disaster wasn't as severe as the coastal storm surge, I won't overly highlight the flood we faced. How can the flooding of our small village by the river compare to the hardships faced by those living by the sea? Just consider Nargis, a situation we're all familiar with... Think about how the casualties worsen the situation for those affected. I also witnessed their suffering firsthand as I engaged in charity work immediately after the Nargis incident. For now, the heat stroke that is currently affecting our community members is also a negative impact of climate changes. It

is indeed dangerous, but we can avoid it if we live with common sense. Although I have heard about global warming, I am also unsure of where to begin or what actions to take. However, as an elder in the neighborhood and a charity leader, I am constantly trying to educate and guide my fellow community members to be safe from natural disasters.

Despite my work as such, actually, I am a disabled person who lost my eyesight in one eye when I was younger. Therefore, even though I may not be able to do as much as I expected in some communal and religious activities, I will never give up on my desires simply because of this defect of mine. I can't let people assume that I am weak just because I'm disabled. I hope that these decisions and actions of mine will bring merit in my future life. Oh... It's been a while since I shared my thoughts... Let me end my thoughts here and take a full cup of water before heading to the monastery in the evening.

_Young Changemakers Community

Translated by Auntt Phone Thar ■

Thirst, be gone...

"From two drinks to one,
all in the name of saving water."





1.6 Thirst, be gone...

It was a 39 years old pregnant woman who told us, "From two drinks to one, all in the name of saving water." So when we asked her about the water scarcity situation in the village where she lives, she told me the following:

Every year, it feels like the weather is getting hotter. I reckon it's because there is a decreased number of trees. But what's really got me sweating isn't just the heat. It's the little one growing in my belly and the struggle to make ends meet for our family of ten, with prices shooting up all around us. Here comes the summer again. I wonder if I'll face that familiar thirst I feel every year. It seems like it might be even worse this time. Last year, before I got pregnant, I could still carry water for myself and my family. But now, with the pregnancy making things tough, I doubt that I will manage it well. I'm not sure it'll be easy for my husband to carry enough water, especially since he's busy working. With the whole village depending on water from the monastery, it's going to be tough for him to gather enough for our family all by himself.

When it comes to domestic water, we've got a well for our daily needs, but it's not exactly the best for drinking straight up. If we're out of options for finding clean drinking water, all we can do is let the dirt of well water settle for two or three nights at our houses and drink it. We simply can't survive without water. I also think it will be fine if I adjust my habits to drink only once instead of drinking water twice as often as I used to. Our village elder also doesn't seem

bothered by the issues in our neighborhood. That is why the entire village relies on the water tanks of the monastery. It would be a relief if community groups could donate small water tanks for our neighborhood, helping to alleviate our water scarcity issues. I hope that this year the problem of water scarcity will be gone...

_Yangon Kayin Baptist Women Association
Translated by Auntt Phone Thar ■

Stories



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(Part 2) Flooding





My Wifey, Bote Sone

"Bote Sone, longing for her children's education, continues to collect empty bottles to make ends meet, with Thanakha on her face."



2.1 My Wifey, Bote Sone

Before delving into my wife's story, allow me to paint a picture of our early married life together. As soon as I got married to Bote Sone, we left Bago and moved to Yangon because we couldn't find any suitable jobs in Bago. Since we didn't have our own housing, we had to rent a house by working at construction sites. When we couldn't afford to pay the rent, we ended up staying in this neighborhood for years.

In our flood-prone ward, my wife, Bote Sone, and I are accustomed to frequent flooding, prioritizing safety and aiding neighbors. Amidst these challenges, with our 18 years old son as eldest, we struggle a lot for financial stability providing for their education. My wife is good at making money. She adeptly manages household tasks while taking care of our children's commute and she also takes care of an elder nearby. Despite being occupied with daily tasks, she never fails to wear traditional Thanakha on her face with evenly drawn eyeliner. If you see someone wearing traditional Thanaka and visible eyeliner, it is indeed my wife. She is truly passionate about helping whenever the community support group comes. She diligently attends workshops and now that she has already learned how to make oil soap and earning extra income by selling them. Although I work full time, my income isn't stable and she always finds ways to make money, like collecting plastic bottle waste and reselling them at a local recycling shop and many others. As much as she is busy making money, she also makes some time to plant trees

and vegetables in the backyard I prepare for her. She always tolerates being tired. When she is paid, she saves it for later so that we can manage the income for food after setting aside the school fees for our children. The hardest part of our married life is when our house's roof was destroyed by strong winds, and we had to live in other people's houses as we had no money to repair our own. It was quite memorable. By that time, our children were very young. Even though I felt down, my wife, Bote Sone, never failed to work and earn a proper income. She also encouraged me to start again and work for the children. After taking some time, we rebuilt our home. My wife is quite clever. Even though she is not well-educated, she wants her children to be educated individuals. When her eldest son decided not to go to school, she was really sad. He was no longer interested in studying and wanted to work. So, she also couldn't encourage him again. Now, that eldest son is working at a factory. Our family can also depend on his income. The educational journey of the remaining two children is hope for her and so, Bote Sone, my wife, continues collecting plastic bottles to earn money with a full application of Thanakha on her face.

_Sharing Myanmar

Translated by Kaung Htet Soe ■



He's Scared Of...

"I really don't want to experience another situation like last year, where I had to urgently move out due to flooding in the middle of the night."



2.2 He's Scared Of...

Even though my education stopped in Grade 7, it has been eight years that I have been tirelessly striving to support my family. I am not getting tired, as it is for my family's well-being. However, there is something that scares me deeply. That is the worsening weather conditions. Climate change is more serious than before. The summers are becoming increasingly hotter and we cannot bear it without a fan. Conversely, winters are no longer cool; they're even damp and wet because of the rain. I've been wishing to repair the roof of my house before the heavy rains come, but even during the cold season, unexpected downpours leave our entire house soaked. This leads to sickness among the children and suffering seasonal fevers. I am deeply concerned about these situations.

During the rainy season, flooding is a frequent occurrence. We often slip and get injuries. Sometimes, when the river water level rises so high, it has reached the top of the house and we have to climb up to the rooftop. My family and I have had to flee to a nearby monastery during the darkest hours of the night to escape the floods and returned home when the floodwaters had receded. We are getting tired of living under the threat of such disasters. While we cannot control the rising river waters, we can mitigate these disasters by improving our drainage systems, for example, by removing the blocking trash and litter from the drains and water pipes.

However, it's difficult to do so without support from the local administration. Our neighborhood is planning to initiate together and take proactive steps as a solution. Unfortunately, there is no budget for such initiatives. I wish we have the necessary materials, such as rakes and shovels, and if so, we will keep them at the monastery and take them when necessary. I am eager to tackle the issue of climate change in our own way with our very own efforts and resources and implement climate initiatives in my community. He opened up about his wishes like this by looking up to the Nipa Palm roof full of holes. What I could see through his eyes and facial expression is the determination that he would never give up on these climate challenges.

_Social Empowerment with Ethical Responsibility

Translated by Kaung Htet Soe ■

A Homesick Elderly Woman

"Experiencing the same flooding in both this ward and the village, all I desire now is to return to my village."





2.3 A Homesick Elderly Woman

I'm not sure whether recounting my story would hold your interest, but here it goes. I'm a 69 years old woman, accompanied by my 70 years old husband, and together, we share our modest home with our son and grandson. My husband's livelihood revolves around driving a motorized trishaw despite his old age, while our son's employment situation is less stable, lacking a regular job. Consequently, our family's financial stability rests solely on my husband's earnings. It's disheartening to witness him toil at his age, unable to retire and enjoy his life. In addition to covering our daily expenses, there is also the cost of our grandson's education. As we struggle to make ends meet, we find ourselves caught in a cycle of borrowing money from others, only to repay it and repeat the process again and again.

In the past, I've been selling things, but now my health hasn't been good. My knees ache, which is why I decided to take a break. My home village isn't in Yangon; I'm from the Irrawaddy Region. I owned three acres of paddy fields there. We were farmers who cultivated paddy and seasonal vegetables. In the past, we used to have a very good amount of money. However, due to frequent bank erosion and flooding, the years with crop losses have become common. Consequently, our business has declined, and we've accumulated a lot of debt. Eventually, we had to sell our paddy fields to repay our debts. Moreover, as our children grew into adults, they moved to Yangon to find jobs since there aren't many opportunities in the village. Farming is no longer viable and sustainable due to the constant threat of flooding.

I only want to stay in the village. It is not possible to avoid moving altogether. After we decided to move, we reached here and now it has been over 18 years. At this point, I have to mention: it is flooded not only in my village, but also in this ward in Yangon where we currently live. Thus, it is not that strange to face flooding. It is just nature's call, and can't be interfered with. How can we? Now I am turning to my 70s, but still facing floods. When the water level rises, we go to higher places. My grandson gets a fever every year. Last year, we faced quite a big flood and we increased the height of the floor of our house this year. That's life, struggling and living. I miss my home village, especially when I'm sick. There, the air is fresh and conducive to good health, with abundant trees. Everywhere you look, it's always green. But here, it's often annoying with the constant noises from cars, and the air is filled with dust and sand. Trees are being cut down, and it's quite hot. Additionally, there's always water under our house, which is mentally unsettling. As I grow older, I find myself yearning for an easy way of life. Since both places are prone to flooding, I'd rather return to my village.

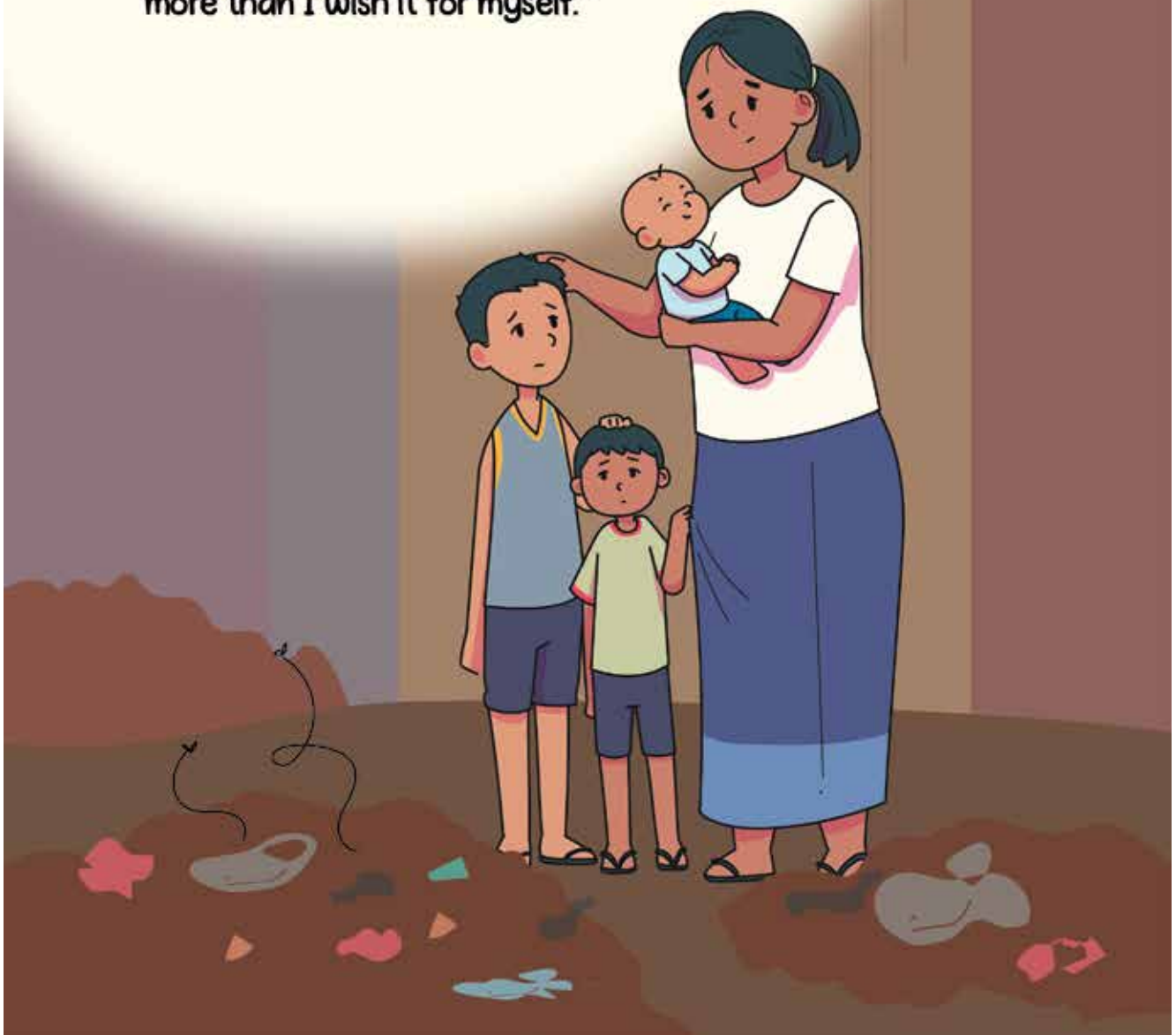
That's all of my story. Wish me to be able to return to my village.

_Sharing Myanmar

Translated by Zaw Myo Htut ■

A Mother's Dream for a Cleaner Surrounding

"I wish for my children
to live in a cleaner environment
more than I wish it for myself."



2.4 A Mother's Dream for a Cleaner Surrounding

Allow me to share about Ma Ei, a dedicated housewife with three children, who possesses a warm brown complexion, a slender build, and a tall height, often adorned with a constant smile. Her remarkable commitment to community affairs shines through, exemplified by her actions during a severe flood last year. Despite recently giving birth, Ma Ei fearlessly crossed through the flooded streets to assist, until elders intervened and asked her to return home. The water level during these floods even reached close to the floor level of her house. As Ma Ei's husband earns a living as a mason, I've never had the chance to meet him. One day, I engaged her in casual conversation, during which she openly shared her thoughts and opinions, "As there are five of us in total in the family, there is always debt. As you know, grocery prices escalate day by day. To get regular food, we rely on rice and cooking oil provided by my mother. Originally, we are from a village in the Irrawaddy Region. Due to the lack of job opportunities there, we moved to Yangon to earn a living, and it has now been over 15 years. We ended up here because we couldn't afford the rent elsewhere. Every year, there are floods, and the water levels rise to the floor level. If there's no place left to stay, we have to move elsewhere. I have a strong desire to work and earn, especially when days without work and money are quite frequent. However, there have been cases nearby where children have drowned, which worries me about my own children, as they are so young. This is why I can't bring myself to work. My children are more important to me than anything else. They look so pitiful whenever there's a flood because there's no place left for them to play.

After a flood, what is often left behind is a large amount of garbage and waste. This debris can be found in the lake and scattered throughout the streets, and I think they outnumber the local population. The smells emanating from the waste are unpleasant and foul. I want my surroundings to be clean. My children are quite young. I am deeply concerned about the health of my young children. I fear that they may become ill from the odors. This is why I greatly appreciate your efforts to plant trees nearby. And I also like digging a well nearby. This would help reduce the amount of waste disposed of in the lake. Currently, the situation is dire. As we live on the downwind side, garbage and waste from the lake consistently drifts towards our area, which is distressing. Therefore, it should be top priority to renovate the ditches and implement systematic waste disposal measures in order to prevent further flooding in my community."

I listened to what she said for quite a long time. She emphasized the importance of involving everyone in the community. "I prioritize my children living in clean surroundings over myself. Therefore, I am committed to joining any plans and implementations you propose in the future."

On my way home, I was overwhelmed by what she said and the systems she wanted to get implemented.

_Sharing Myanmar

Translated by Zaw Myo Htut ■

Cinematic Life

"Having survived
the waves of Nargis
by the refusal to accept the Lord of Death,
I find it hard to take
the flooding in Yangon very seriously."





2.5 Cinematic Life

He reflects, unsure whether to say it with pride or bitterness. “Having survived the waves of Nargis by the refusal to accept the Lord of Death, I find it hard to take the flooding in Yangon very seriously.”

His life story reads like a cinematic script. Once a farmer with his own land and cattle, everything was lost to the storm, leaving him jobless. Despite a limited education, he holds fast to his integrity and dignity. With a strong will to work ethically, he led his family away from the Irrawaddy Region to Yangon.

Tragedy struck again when his right hand was severed in an accident while fixing a sand truck. Unable to find employment due to his disability, he turned to selling water spinach to make ends meet.

In his current neighborhood, floods are a regular occurrence, but he no longer fears them. Life has taught him resilience. He has built bamboo shelves near the roofs to protect his belongings during floods. Clothes are kept in large plastic buckets, ready to float if needed.

Despite his resilience, he hopes to prevent floods from occurring annually. He dreams of gathering his neighbors to clean drains and collect garbage, ensuring water can drain away even during the worst floods. Though he sees himself as a follower rather than a leader, his spirit remains unbroken. I notice lines etched on his face, aged beyond his years, perhaps a testament to the storms he's weathered

in life. His eyes portray the hardships he endured, lacking the sparkle of poetic existence. Yet, he insists he can still handle a load of ten bricks despite being over sixty and having only one hand.

_Social Empowerment with Ethical Responsibility
Translated by Aung Zaw Paing ■

For My Son

"A condition where a child could easily drown if left unattended for even a short period..."





2.6 For My Son

In her youthful innocence, everything seemed beautiful through her imagination. Like other children, she used to find joy in the annual floods, unaware of fear or concern. But those carefree days are now a distant memory.

Married off at a young age, she now finds herself at 17, expecting a child in just two months. She reflects on her life experiences with a smile. Now in her eighth month of pregnancy, she finds herself confined indoors, unable to work and earn an income. Her days are spent at home, lost in thoughts. Her perspective has shifted unlike the past two years. While she used to enjoy the floods with the other children, she now sees them through the eyes of an adult and a soon-to-be mother.

She dreams of a better future for her child. Water is an ever-present danger, a constant threat to her son's safety. It is a condition where a child could easily drown if left unattended for even a short period. The thought fills her with worry, causing her to hold her belly. She indeed longs for her son to grow up in a safer environment, free from the constant threat of flooding.

She is happy today. She heard that people in her ward are planning to come together to clean drains and collect garbage to reduce flooding during the rainy season. The drain will even be upgraded. She can't sit by any longer. Despite lacking financial resources, she knows she can contribute with her physical efforts. With a clear sense of purpose, she casts her

gaze around the house and spots a rake.

Without hesitation, she sets out, one hand gripping a rake while the other cradles her belly, determined to make a difference for her son.

_Social Empowerment with Ethical Responsibility

Translated by Aung Zaw Paing ■



Stories



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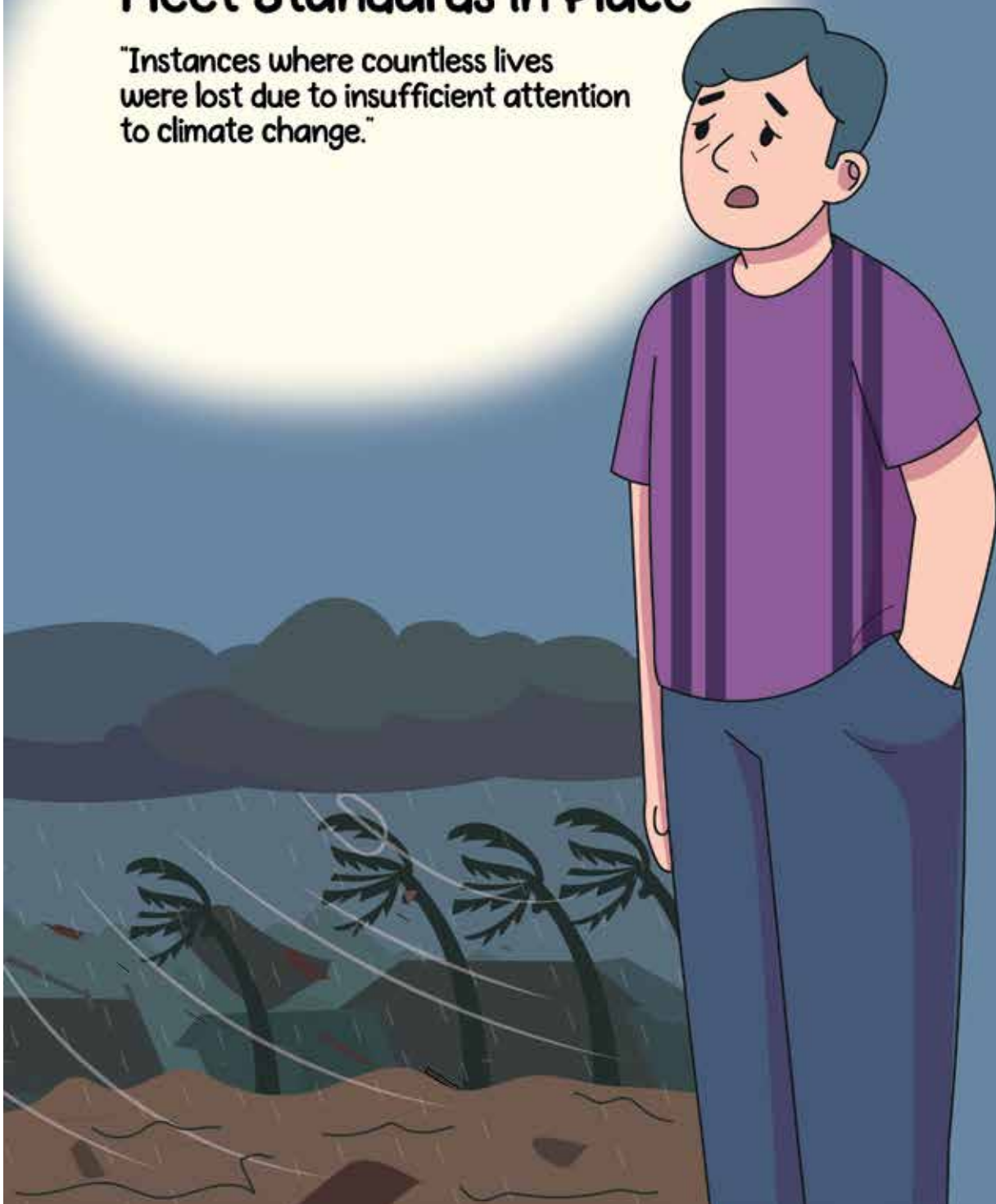
(Part 3)

Community-Based Groups



Manage Tasks with Grace, Meet Standards in Place

"Instances where countless lives were lost due to insufficient attention to climate change."



3.1 Manage Tasks with Grace, Meet Standards in Place

As time goes by, Ko Aung transitions into U Aung. Despite growing older, U Aung remains dedicated to his lifelong mission: serving his community.

A significant part of his work involves addressing the challenges posed by climate change. One particularly touching memory for him is the devastating Nargis storm. Countless lives were lost due to insufficient attention to climate change. He still recalls the moments of burying bodies with his own hands, witnessing the array of red-brown bodies on land, contrasted with the white ones in the water. U Aung still feels loads of sadness when he reflects on these experiences, regardless of the age or gender of those laid to rest.

Despite living in the urban landscape, U Aung and his neighbors face flooding annually. The city's inadequate solutions for water flow management and lack of proper waste disposal exacerbate the situation. Despite the limited fatalities, many are unaware of the broader impacts on health, society, and the economy.

Given the challenges posed by difficult livelihoods, gaining interest in climate actions proves challenging. However, it is empirical that we adapt to climate change in our own ways. In the case of flooding, the collective efforts of residents are paramount. When united, disciplined, and equipped with climate awareness, he believes that we can

implement effective solutions for both mitigating and adapting during such disasters.

All in all, U Aung remains committed to dedicating further efforts to addressing these pressing issues. When implementing actions, he always adheres to the guiding principle by the proverb, "Manage tasks with grace, meet standards in place."

_Social Empowerment with Ethical Responsibility
Translated by Aung Zaw Paing ■

Nature Lovers

"It was fascinating to observe the use of what we brought along, including dry leaves, old vegetables, eggshells, and leftover rice, for planting and composting during the training session."



3.2 Nature Lovers

In the neighborhood where I live, there's a buzz of phrases that have become commonplace: "Don't burn dry leaves" and "The ladies have made a request." Whenever someone decides to burn dry leaves, you'll often hear shouts echoing through the streets, warning of the health risks associated with the smoke. These days, I also refrain from burning leaves. Last year, a group opened our eyes that those leaves can be used for planting and composting. Now, what I would love to share is about them. We fondly call them the "Plant Lovers" and the "Planting Group." Whenever they come to our ward, they bring plants, seeds, and compost. I vividly recall attending their composting session, a request from our ward leader for environmental awareness. It was there that I learned composting, turning kitchen scraps like eggshells, dry leaves, and even leftover rice into nutrient-rich soil for plants. But their influence doesn't stop there. They've introduced innovative water-filtering pots for our households. Now, I no longer worry about drinking water. When lake water is poured into them, clean drinking water is readily available, making life much easier, especially during hot weather when water scarcity is a challenge. There were days when there was no water to drink, which is worse during floods. Now, everything is better. I collect lake water and drink it through the pots. It is cold and refreshing. Speaking of floods, last year was particularly challenging for our ward. Amidst the chaos, I couldn't help but question the wisdom of trading liquid soaps for garbage. It was then that I realized the group's intentions were far more profound than they were teaching

us the importance of responsible waste disposal. Additionally, I also remember moments when the group was setting up the floating garden despite the heavy rain and flooding. Furthermore, plants grown last year beside the lake for air purification are now lush and beautiful. Chili plants, generously provided by the group, have flourished under care. I feed my growing plants with onion and eggshells, resulting in a harvest of red chilies. I am planning to give those as gifts when the planting group visits. However, these days I don't see them often. I miss and eagerly await their visits. Please inform me when the group comes. I really want to give them my red chilies as gifts.

_Sharing Myanmar

Translated by Aung Zaw Paing ■

This is the Reason

"Life becomes more fulfilling
as I survive for the betterment of
the world and the environment."





3.3 This is the Reason

Every day, I hear my parents' words echoing in my mind: "You need an education. Only with education, you can live a good life. If you don't study, what will you do for a living?" Growing up, this pressure to excel in academics was all I knew. Yet, I couldn't quite grasp why I needed to study so hard. Still, deep down, I longed for answers. Driven by my parents' expectations, I studied hard and sought knowledge from various sources. Eventually, I uncovered three wishes that ignited a fire within me. Firstly, "I aim to live in a way that won't have a negative impact on the environment." Second, "I want to contribute as much as I can to the betterment of our planet." And lastly, "I aspire to sow seeds for sustainable development even after I'm gone." These wishes became my guiding light, moving me forward through the challenges of academics. Additionally, I believe that with knowledge, I can contribute to making the world a better place.

After completing high school, I actively sought opportunities to engage in volunteer work related to the environment. Currently, I am involved in environmental projects at Transform With Me, working for informal settlement residents. Through these experiences, I've gained valuable insights into the struggles faced by grassroots communities. My goal is to alleviate their hardships, whether it's dealing with flooding, water scarcity, or the rising heat.

The belief that a better world and environment can alleviate our (their) problems fuels my

determination. I also recognize that the actions, decisions, and wishes I have made so far are not in vain. I am committed to becoming someone who can contribute even more to the environment.

_Young Changemakers Community

Translated by Aung Zaw Paing ■

Stepping Forward with Beliefs

"I believe that one day,
I will be able to provide
sufficient water
to all grassroots members."





3.4 Stepping Forward with Beliefs

Stepping forward with her beliefs, a member of YKBWA shares her journey.

To her, the most striking concern among community members is the impact of climate change. However, year after year, instead of addressing climate change, she observes grassroots communities having to prioritize livelihood problems. She perceives these issues as complex, like the case of the egg and the hen, unsure where to begin to solve them. Nevertheless, she acknowledges the importance of both for grassroots communities. Yet, given the current circumstances, with people prioritizing livelihood issues and lacking interest in climate mitigation actions, she first hand witnesses communities having to adapt to climate changes.

In her eyes, the most urgent and basic issue is water scarcity. It deeply saddens her to see hardworking grassroots members unable to access enough clean drinking water. She believes that community leaders also lack attention to these pressing needs. Driven by compassion, she tirelessly works to extend a helping hand to these communities. Moreover, she actively seeks to raise awareness about the consequences of climate change within these communities.

Her vision is clear - to construct a drinking water storage pond that will be easily accessible to all grassroots communities in the neighborhood. However, she knows she can't achieve this alone.

She advocates for the participation of communities and firmly believes in the possibility of providing sufficient water for all grassroots members. With each step she takes towards this belief, she infuses hope and determination into her journey.

_Yangon Kayin Baptist Women Association

Translated by Aung Zaw Paing ■

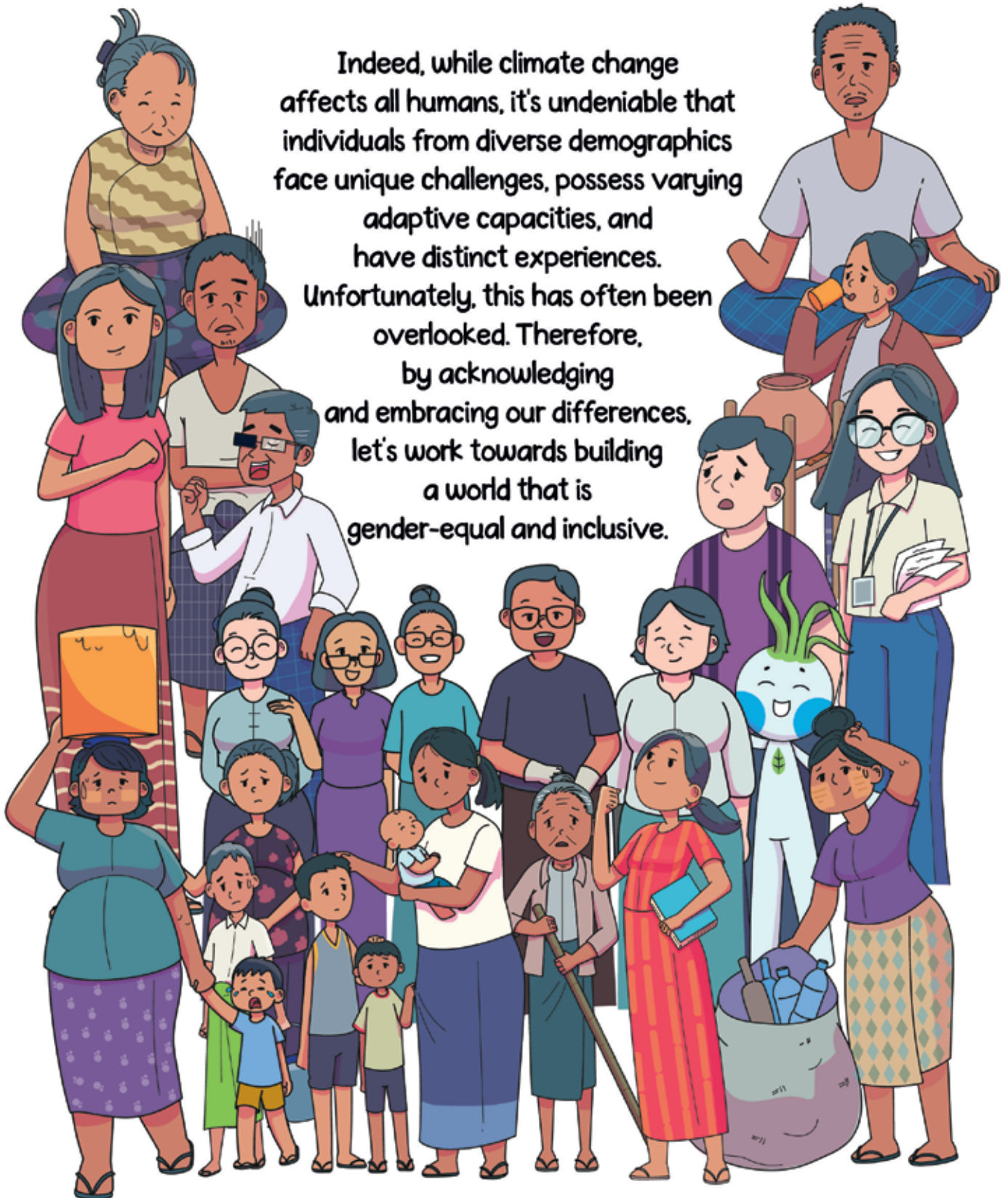
As we come to the end of the "We" storybook, I hope that the stories shared within its pages have given you pause for thought and sparked questions about the intersection of climate change, gender equality, and social inclusion. I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your dedication and engagement throughout this journey.

As last words, remember that climate change is a challenge we all face together, and it is vital to tackle it with a collective spirit of inclusivity. Let's create a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Have good days ahead!



Our World is Made Up of Differences.

Indeed, while climate change affects all humans, it's undeniable that individuals from diverse demographics face unique challenges, possess varying adaptive capacities, and have distinct experiences. Unfortunately, this has often been overlooked. Therefore, by acknowledging and embracing our differences, let's work towards building a world that is gender-equal and inclusive.



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