

## **Address of Konrad Krajewski, president of Foerderverein Myanmar**

The Foerderverein Myanmar, whose president I am, is a German humanitarian NGO. The objective is the education of young people in Myanmar. We stick to the idea that a good educational training is the key for a self-determined life.

Our cooperation with PDO began in 2001. In the personality of your principal U Nayaka we found a reliable partner for realizing the objective to bring young people in qualified school training. Another important aspect for starting the cooperation with PDO was that the school doesn't charge the students with fees and so is attractive for the children of poorer and disadvantaged families.

We started in supporting computer and sewing courses and helped to build up the carpentry workshop. Greater projects were the construction of the school clinic, the dormitory for girls and the dormitory for boys.

Our idea is that besides a good education it is important to ensure the natural basis of life of the students and teachers in the form of health care, eating, living and environment. Because a lot of students, even young students suffer of a lack of vitamin, the Foerderverein offers a school meal to 550 students every day which contains much fruits, vegetables and meat. So we did a lot to improve the infrastructure of PDO and the life conditions of the students. We think: A key requirement for effective learning is that the student has enough to eat, is healthy, can sleep in his own bed with a roof over the head and so on. We tried, together with U Nayaka, that for most students in PDO these conditions are reached.

But we always were convinced that the quality of teaching is the decisive criterion for a really good school. Learning has to be effective. We had doubts that the rote learning which is practised in PDO as probably everywhere in Myanmar is the best way to educate students to critical thinking. So we discussed with U Nayaka, the school management and the teachers the question what teaching and learning methods and other pedagogical approaches should be applied for instruction in PDO.

The normal learning method in PDO was rote learning, the memorization technique based on repetition. The idea is that one will be able to quickly

recall the meaning of the material the more one repeats it. For learning facts like the vocabulary of a foreign language, rote learning is a suitable way to learn in a short time. However, only students who learn with understanding, who practise active learning, are able to transfer their knowledge to tasks requiring problem-solving abilities with greater success than those who learn by rote.

Learning shall not only convey knowledge but has to enable students to use knowledge in a variety of new situations. A very important educational goal is to promote transfer, to acquire the ability to use what was learned and so to solve new problems, to answer new questions.

Today we live in a knowledge society, a society which shares and makes available knowledge to all members of the society that may be used to improve the human condition. In a knowledge society it is not so much decisive to accumulate knowledge but it is important to use it in various situations, to apply knowledge and skills to everyday life. Knowledge is a tool to resolve problems.

Myanmar is in a change. The country opened up to democracy. In a democracy you'll find participation and cooperation, from the government structures to companies and all other institutions. Democracy needs people who are able in critical thinking and have got the ability of problem solving. So learning in Myanmar has to change and to adapt to these new conditions.

We from the Foerderverein discussed these questions with U Nayaka. He was open-minded. For a long time he wanted to educate the students of his school to become self-confident with critical thinking skills. So he decided to install the New Teacher Training Center NTTTC, a teacher training system and classes which are taught by teachers who learned and applied the new active teaching methods. The Foerderverein Myanmar offered to develop the project, to participate in the management and to organize the financing, with the support of the German government. Included was the building of a new school, because there was a lack of classrooms for smaller classes.

In the last four years the PDO management and the teachers of NTTTC, headed by Julie, did a tremendous job. They had to work hard and to convince all who didn't agree to the new system. German teachers and teachers from other countries came to PDO and trained Burmese teachers in active learning and in

English. They contributed their experiences and so helped to make NTTC successful. Thank you all. I'm also grateful to the members of the Board of the Foerderverein, to the German and foreign teachers and all experts who worked hard for NTTC and supported it, especially Marianne Granz who managed and supervised the NTTC training. I would also like to thank U Nayaka who always hold his protective hand over NTTC and the German government which generously supported the project.

Today we find 16 NTTC classes with 30 students each. In these days an evaluation of the NTTC programme is carried out. The results are not known, yet. But we are sure that the result is good and the students are better prepared for their life and their professional career. I'm convinced that the methods and ideas of NTTC will spread in other parts of PDO and other schools in Myanmar.

It's my wish that NTTC will be successful in the future, will come generally accepted in Myanmar and that all NTTC students will have a big advantage of it.