



Magic Bus Myanmar

Newsletter Q2-2018

At a glance

Registered children
1,462

Girls
758

Boys
704

Team (staff/volunteers)
41

Full-time employees
4

Youth mentors
6

Community coordinators
31

Townships
2

Communities (villages)
9

Monasteries (schools)
3



Magic Bus celebrates Mother's Day ¹

Magic Bus staff organised Mother's Day events across nine communities in May to encourage children to reflect on their relationships with their mothers, and to express their feelings of appreciation. During two-hour sessions led by Youth Mentors, children made Mother's Day cards and contributed to 'gratitude tree' posters by drawing individual pictures in celebration of their mothers to attach as 'leaves'. The activities aimed to foster creativity among children, as well as develop their communication skills.



1. Magic Bus children proudly display their completed Mother's Day cards **2.** Programme participants with their mothers

British Ball raises funds for Magic Bus

The second annual British Ball was held at the Strand Hotel, Yangon on May 19th. The event was co-organised by Dulwich College Yangon and the British Chamber of Commerce, with Magic Bus selected as the main beneficiary of the charity raffle and auction. Magic Bus founder Matthew Spacie shared the founding story, mission and impact of the organisation with an audience of over 360 guests. Magic Bus International CEO Patricia Mathias, and Head of Myanmar Programme Cho Cho Latt Tun, were also in attendance to encourage support for the cause among the Yangon community. Magic Bus is grateful for the generous contributions which raised a total of \$16,500 towards the programme – enough to sponsor 220 children for a full year.



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1. David Hall (Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy), Daryl Orchard (Headmaster, Dulwich College Yangon) and Peter Beynon (Chairman of Board of Directors, British Chamber of Commerce Myanmar) address the crowd 2. Tables set with information on the charity raffle and auction 3. Cho Cho Latt Tun and Patricia Mathias attend the event as Magic Bus representatives 4. Magic Bus and Dulwich College Yangon staff enjoy dinner 5. Matthew Spacie shares the story of Magic Bus

“ Magic Bus is extremely grateful for all the support! We look forward to working with you to take the children in Myanmar from childhood to livelihood. — Matthew Spacie Founder, Magic Bus ”



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1. Parents recite the Magic Bus slogan which calls for collaboration among the community to ensure a brighter future for all children 2. Staff discuss the importance of education 3. Parents share feedback on the programme

Magic Bus parent meetings

The fifth series of quarterly Magic Bus parent meetings took place across communities between May 12th and May 21st. Group discussions provided opportunities to reflect on the perceived impact of activities and consider ways to further improve sessions. Staff also raised wider social issues and stressed the importance of allowing children to complete secondary education and delay marriage, particularly among girls. Overall, parent feedback was very positive – some were so happy with the work of Magic Bus that they requested more sessions each week!



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Stories from the field

In Myo Haung West, the Magic Bus team found it challenging to find a site to run the sessions. Locations for the programme require a certain amount of size but must also be free of charge due to budget restrictions, and therefore identifying spaces is not always an easy task. The team approached the local monastery where the management finally agreed to let them use the grounds at no cost. After the first year, staff at the monastery were so impressed with the improvement in communication skills among the children – some of the poorest in the community – that they requested Magic Bus to continue to use the monastery for the programme.

In Kon Chan Kune village, a boy with vitiligo found it difficult to integrate with the group during the weekly Magic Bus sessions; he felt that the other children often excluded him from activities. The Youth Mentor, together with the boy's mother, encouraged him to continue to attend despite his initial feelings of isolation. The Youth Mentor also discussed issues of respect and acceptance with the other children, educating them on the skin condition and emphasising the importance of inclusivity and celebration of diversity. To demonstrate, he held the boy's hand and asked each of the other children to do so in turn. Eight months on, the Magic Bus team is extremely happy to see the boy fully participating in all sessions as a central member of the group.

Magic Bus and Dulwich College leadership visit Thanlyin communities

On May 20th, Magic Bus founder Matthew Spacie and Magic Bus International CEO Patricia Mathias visited Htan Pin Seik 7 and Mya Yar Yoe 6 villages in Thanlyin township to observe the summer sessions taking place, and to speak to parents and other members of the community. Joining them were Dulwich College Yangon Headmaster Daryl Orchard and Project Director Michael Barry, who enjoyed the opportunity to see some of the activities first-hand, meet staff and volunteers, and consider the wider social context within which the Magic Bus programme operates.

During the visit, parents raised ongoing challenges including early marriage and failure of children to complete secondary school due to financial difficulties. The Magic Bus team expressed their ongoing commitment towards addressing these issues, acknowledging the need to involve entire communities. There were also initial discussions on the potential value of health and hygiene sessions, as well as community clean-up programmes to remove litter strewn near homes and outdoor playing areas.

1. Matthew Spacie and Training & Monitoring Officer Van Hmun Nawl interact with children completing a poster making activity 2. A Magic Bus participant rides her bicycle home in Htan Pin Seik 7 village



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Training course prepares Myanmar team for the coming year

A five-day residential training course was conducted in Thanlyin township in late May, led by colleagues from Magic Bus India. A total of 32 staff from the Myanmar team attended the course, including full-time employees, Youth Mentors and Community Coordinators. Participants discussed objectives of the Year 2 programme and practiced new activities to conduct with the children during the upcoming year. The annual internal training course ensures that the work in Myanmar is aligned with the broader Magic Bus programme, and that best practice is shared across teams.



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1. Youth Mentors and Community Coordinators learn new activities at the training course to share with the children during their weekly sessions 2. The Myanmar team with their India-based trainers, Swapnil and Shiffana

The Magic Bus drivers

Meet the people who make it happen

Kyi Kyi Than, a mother of three, was a Community Coordinator (CC) for one year before being promoted to the role of Youth Mentor (YM) in May 2018. Congratulations Kyi Kyi, and thank you for all your hard work!

Why did you decide to join Magic Bus?

Magic Bus visited my village and I became very interested after I heard about what they do. I wanted my children to participate in the programme, and as the team was looking for a CC at the time, I decided to apply.

What do you enjoy the most about your job?

As a YM, I have increased responsibilities. Previously, as a CC my role was mainly to engage the local community, but as a YM I actually run the weekly sessions and feel directly responsible for the children's development. For instance, we teach an activity called 'Sit, Breathe, Think' that I really like, which helps children to reflect on their feelings and actions.

What achievement are you most proud of?

When I first joined Magic Bus as a CC, there were 20 children in my village who were enrolled in the programme. I began conducting home visits to encourage parents to register their children, and in a short amount of time we managed to grow the number to over 50. We became the village with the most rapid increase in the number of participants.

Kyi Kyi Than
Youth Mentor



Upcoming events

Clean Community Campaign

Last week of July

Rubbish collection in schools and communities to commemorate International Friendship Day, reinforcing the value of collaborative action and mutual respect

Tree planting

Mid-August

Planting of trees to celebrate International Youth Day and encourage the development of sustainable, supportive communities that nurture children as well as the natural environment

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 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 2016 and has successfully expanded across Thanlyin and Hlaing Thar Yar townships in Yangon. Youth mentors conduct over 30 weekly sessions targeted at 11 to 13-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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