



## BRAD HAZLETT

A letter from the Chief Operating Officer



The winds of change are blowing across Burma. You can hear about it. You can read about it. And for many in Burma, you can even experience it. This is hardly an Asian example of the Arab Spring, as transition in Burma is being carefully carried out on the conditions set by the military and not by the citizens. With the decision to free Aung San Suu Kyi from years of house arrest and by allowing her to take a leading national role, it seems that those at the top no longer see her as a threat to national security. Regardless, many believe the military will not relinquish their control anytime soon. What we hear in the news is encouraging but we know that these changes have yet to reach everyone in Burma. While the situation has improved for many of the ethnic minorities, and there are ceasefire negotiations with the Karen and the Shan, the Kachin are still in conflict with reports of attacks by the Burma Army.

Since 1994, Partners' mission has been to work at or very near the front lines. Initially, we worked with those living in the refugee camps along the Burma border but soon expanded to work with the internally displaced persons suffering attacks along the front lines on their own land. Our willingness to do what very few others would do made us uniquely qualified and our work developed into an effective response for those in some of the most remote parts of Burma. For close to two decades our primary purpose has not changed. Now, because the front lines have changed, we must evaluate our work and adjust our methods to meet those changes. Until there is active involvement by the government to implement programs, there will be a need for us to provide assistance, particularly in the area of development, where knowledge, learning materials, food security and medicine are desperately in short supply. The front lines have changed as many former battlegrounds are now quiet. We are committed to adapt to those changing front lines. We will continue to provide relief where necessary, improve lives where possible, and speak out for those who are unable to speak for themselves. Until lasting restoration comes to those who have only known hardship, we at Partners are committed to provide for them from the resources granted to us. It's what Christ has commissioned us to do. Our prayer is for hope and restoration, just as in Isaiah 35:8-10. That Burma will have "a road go through it and will be named the Highway of Holiness. Evil-hearted people will never travel on it. It will be only for those who walk in God's ways...there will be no other dangers. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be overcome with joy and gladness." Years of building relationships and trust is bringing about a spiritual harvest we can only acknowledge as a result of following God's leading. We aspire to reflect Jesus in all that we do.

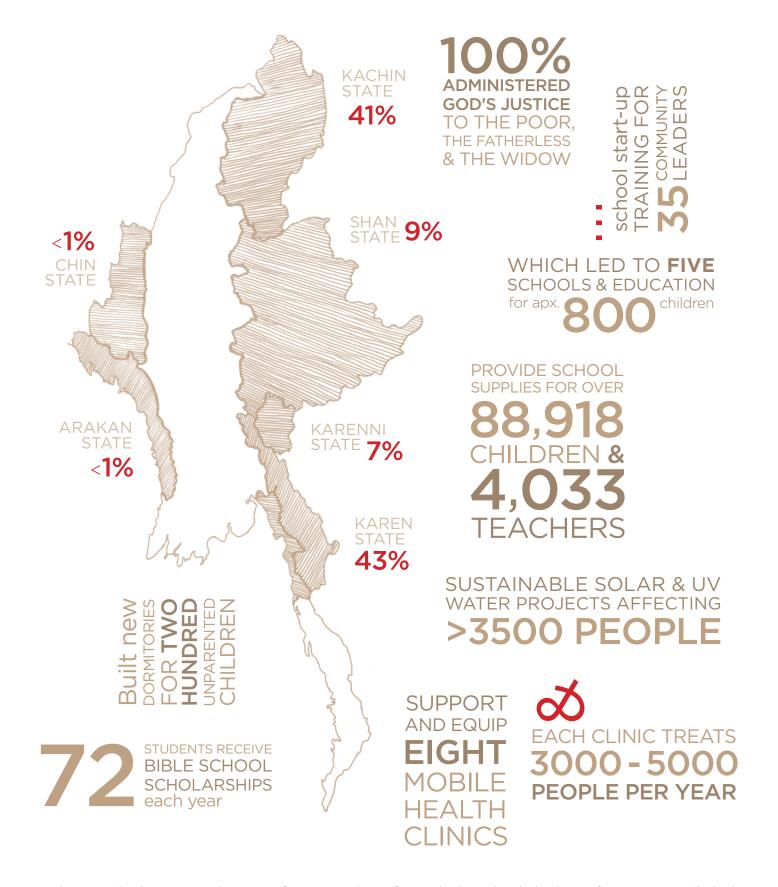
So it's on behalf of those who have no voice that we thank you for giving them a reason to feel hope! They rely on us. We rely on you. Thank you for making it all possible. It's because of your continued support that empowers Partners to effectively meet these needs. May the wind of the Holy Spirit continue to blow across all of Burma.

Bless you,

Brad Hazlett

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CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER — PARTNERS RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT



- + JUNE 2011 ceasefire broken
- + 50,000 ETHNIC KACHIN
  DISPLACED apx. since fighting began\*
- + We have conducted **TWO COMMUNITY RESILIENCE** trainings to local Kachin
  volunteers who have since been able to
  train others to help in IDP camps.
- Other trainings included teaching 15 people to do HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION, three of which were given intensive media training.

3000 PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH MEDICAL CARE

WE HAVE GIVEN SHELTER TO 1500 PEOPLE

& 333 CHILDREN

IN IDP (internally displaced persons) CAMPS



# BIG HOLES

The weather is cool but not cold. Not really cold enough for the warm hat and scarf I was wearing. Truth be told, the hat, scarf and long sleeved jacket are not really for the cold but rather, to try and cover up my white, tanless skin. My colleagues and I are somewhat disguised in case people on the road see us and report to the authorities that there are foreigners there whom they think might be reporters. We hop in an old van which doesn't have any seats in the back, so we balanced on a small wooden bench. I soon come to appreciate my scarf, as the road is so dusty I needed it to breathe through.

We arrive at the camp and it looks very simple — long tents with families all crammed together. Through a translator we talk to the village leader to learn about life in the camp. In this particular one there are about 700 people, mainly the elderly, women and children, as many of the men have gone off to help defend against the Burma Army. He shares how they all had to flee the attacks of the Burma Army, leaving everything behind: belongings, their houses, their farms, and their livelihoods. To him it all feels like a bad dream, and his heart is broken for his people who have had to endure so much. Many of the displaced people talk about how much they miss their homes, and even their cows. They have not only lost their belongings but also their sense of identity, their routines and way of life. Many of the men are farmers but in the camps they are unable to farm and provide for their families. They just sit idle most of the day. The children were used to going to school each day and helping their families on the farm or at home. But now, for most of these displaced children there is no school, no routine and nothing to do. It's heartbreaking seeing such profound sadness and hopelessness in what was once a proud people.

As we talk further, we ask him about some of the current problems they are facing. One of the most pressing is that the tents are made of thin plastic sheeting that is now badly ripped and will not be much use when the rains and strong winds descend. When the wind goes through the holes in the tarpaulin it makes a lot of noise at night and scares the children. Needless to say they do not have any money to replace the plastic or make a proper roof, so there is nothing that they can do except wait and hope for help to come from somewhere.

After talking with the camp leader we start to blow up some balloons and do some simple balloon modeling for the kids. We are soon surrounded by children (and some adults) wanting a balloon. I realized we had underestimated the number of children in the camp as it seemed like there was an endless number waiting for a balloon. With sore, tired fingers we managed to make one for every child in the camp. It was all worth it getting to see the big smiles on the children's faces as they ran around playing with the balloons, having sword fights and putting them on their heads.

During our short time at the camp we were able to bring a small amount of joy to the children, but I imagine that shortly after we left, the balloons would soon pop and life would have gone back to normal. For me the balloons were great but they were not enough, as the needs are so much greater – for one, proper shelter that will last and not rip after a few months or pop like the fragile balloons. Ultimately though, our desire is that one day soon, their hope, identity and livelihoods would be restored.

Doug Gibbons



to show where all the money went in 2011

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

#### **CONTRIBUTIONS & REVENUE**

Income & Contributions Revenue	\$1,804,825 \$11,265
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,816,090
EXPENSES	1 . 14
Field Programs	\$1,577,678
Resource Development	\$19,404
Field Office Administration	\$142,302
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,739,384
BALANCE OF FUNDS	\$76,706

<sup>\*</sup>All figures are in US Dollars using a fixed exchange rate \$1 USD = 30.49 Thai Baht

## FIELD PROGRAMS

RELIEF 41%

DEVELOPMENT 10%

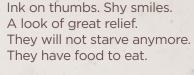
CHILDCARE PROJECTS 12%

CAPACITY BUILDING 37%



**EVERY THUMB PRINT REPRESENTS 10 LIVES** 

TARGET \$84,000 RAISED \$87,605



Last March I was told about villagers who were starving. Their land had been taken away from them by the Burma Army. They had tried to grow rice on new land, but the soil was no good. Then it rained too much. At the end of the harvest season they had almost as little rice to eat as they had had before the harvest. They said they were afraid to die, afraid that their children might die from a lack of food. And would we help them?

I remember sitting on the floor looking at the men who had walked to meet me to tell their story. I remember thinking "I want to help these people. I will do whatever is in my power to get them food." Then I started doing the math and got discouraged because it would cost a lot to feed 1,050 people for eight months. Although it only costs 10 dollars to feed one person for a month, to feed all of them added up to 84,000 dollars.

I lay awake that night thinking about how to find that much money. Partners did not have it in our budget. It needed to come from some other place. So together with our staff I started writing letters and emails. When people asked what we needed, we told them about the starving villagers. We prayed.

Around the world people were moved by the need of the villagers too. It was amazing to watch people's generosity. Some asked the guests at their birthday party to give money to the villagers. Children sold lemonade. Others had yard sales.

A few weeks later, we added up the numbers and found that we had enough money to feed the villagers until the next harvest season! Partners delivered the desperately needed rice to them and did so until they were able to harvest their own.

Afterwards I received photos of the rice distribution. I saw women in line to receive their bags. Many of them were illiterate, so instead of signing the form that states they have received their rations, they used their thumbprints. The local leaders who were responsible for the distribution made sure that the whole process was well documented. It made me happy to see the villagers I had been praying for receive food. It made me happy that there were so many generous people around who responded to our appeal. It made me happy that there were children in the villages that could go to bed with full stomachs.

Thank you for your help and your prayers. You made a difference for 1,050 villagers.

Oddny Gumaer



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