



Trishaw Driver Union members in Yangon

UnionAID Annual Report 2016



Our vision

We believe that all men and women in our Asia-Pacific region should have decent work that enables them and their families to live in dignity and free of poverty.

Trustees Report

The Annual Report is a good opportunity to acknowledge the support which has enabled UnionAID to work with local partners in six countries in the Asia-Pacific region on projects which provide education and training on labour rights and health and safety, and build unions and cooperatives.

The work has provided the opportunity for workers and their families to learn about their rights, to gain skills and confidence and most importantly to increase their incomes and reduce family debt.

We are indebted to many organisations and individuals who provide UnionAID with the financial and other support which enables us to give substance to the union principle of solidarity and assist thousands of workers in our poorer countries in our region.

There are many individual supporters who committed to monthly direct debit payments when we began our international development work more than five years ago, and have since been joined by many others. I would like to say a very special 'thank you' to these UnionAID Solidarity members.

I hope that reading the stories and reports from our projects makes you feel as proud as we do of the work which you make possible. These projects simply could not happen without your support.

Union support has also been vital. UnionAID began in 2010 with foundation grants from unions totalling more than \$70,000 and these funds have not only assisted with project work but have been an important source of funding for the inevitable costs of managing the organisation.

I would also like to acknowledge the continuing support for our fundraising activities from unions, but also 'in kind' support from the CTU with Sue Windsor's sterling work with our accounts, and NZEI Te Riu Roa for providing UnionAID with an office and numerous other services. This year NZEI has also funded our children's night school project in Tamil Nadu which has been an overwhelming success.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank our UnionAID volunteers who give countless hours to UnionAID project management and fundraising. You truly are the heart of UnionAID because without you we could not function. This includes the Trustees, the Action Committee, and dozens of committed activists who generously give their time in so many ways, and in many parts of the country.

There are some individuals who give hundreds of hours to UnionAID work, most notably to the Myanmar Young Leaders Programme which is heavily reliant on volunteers contributions of time. Again I hope you are able to take some satisfaction from the acknowledged success of this programme.

Support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for our Myanmar Young Leaders Programme is also gratefully acknowledged. 2015 was the sixth year of the programme and it has been a very successful partnership between UnionAID, Victoria University and MFAT.

I will conclude by also acknowledging the contribution and very sad passing during the year of Peter Conway. Peter was a foundation Trustee and very committed to international development work being also concurrently Chair of Oxfam New Zealand. We miss Peter's wise counsel but mostly we miss him as a friend.

Ross Wilson Chair

Current Trustees: Nanette Cormack, Sam Huggard, Mary-Jane Rivers and Ross Wilson (Chair).

Summary of Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Performance

For the Year Ended 31 March 2016

Income	2016	2015
Kiwi Solidarity Donations (monthly)	65,436	62,335
General Donations	17,802	42,450
Fundraising Income	21,442	10,115
Grant Income	279,125	363,617
Revenue from providing services	80,980	31,500
Interest	13,404	17,744
Total Income	478,189	527,761
Expenditure		
Project Expenditure	457,714	498,296
Operational Expenditure	42,265	40,844
Fundraising/Promotional Expenditure	7,136	2,181
Total Expenditure	507,115	541,321
Surplus/(Deficit)	-28,926	-13,560



Notes to the summary of financial statements

This summary has been extracted from the 2016 Audited Financial Statements. A copy of the Audited Financial Statements is available on request from the UnionAID office or on the Charities Services website.

UnionAID's income from donations dropped slightly in 2016 with the cessation of the Morgan Foundation grants for the project in Tamil Nadu. Grant income from MFAT for the Myanmar Young Leaders Programme also dropped slightly in accordance with the funding agreement.

Expenditure on overseas projects increased in 2016 with several new projects commencing in Myanmar and the Solomon Islands, this resulted in a small overall deficit for the year. Current liabilities of \$227,512 are tagged funds for the MYLP. UnionAID has accumulated funds of \$204,567.

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2016

Assets	2016	2015
Current Assets	426,157	743,913
Fixed Assets	-	-
Total Assets		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	227,512	514,244
Total Liabilities		
Represented by:		
Current year surplus	-28,926	-13,560
Accumulated Funds	233,492	247,052
Equity	204,567	233,493



Wut Hmone Phyu at Parliament

Myanmar Young Leaders Programme (MYLP)

Another group of eight young leaders from a range of different backgrounds, ethnicities and organisations completed this successful programme in August 2015. Bringing our total MYLP alumni to 39, all eight have returned to Myanmar to make practical and valuable contributions to a more democratic Myanmar. Seven of these students were also funded to run small fieldwork projects in their communities, reaching dozens – and in one case, thousands - of peers, colleagues and ordinary citizens. Evaluations showed positive outcomes and in addition, students identified new learning from the project management experience. We also held the inaugural Young Leaders Alumni Conference in Yangon over 3 days in September 2015. Thirty alumni came together to network, learn, and debate a range of ideas including a federal democracy for Myanmar. Participants surveyed all hoped to attend again in 2016. We are grateful for the work of alumni Moe Min Thaw who was indispensable to the conference planning and organisation.

Sri Lanka women's organising project



Men and women from tea plantations at one of the free medical clinics in Sri Lanka

This project, run by the Free Trade Zones and General Services Union (FTZ&GSEU), sought to research work conditions, wages and living conditions for women in garment factories. A clinic was also established to provide these women with much needed free health checks and advice on labour rights and maternity protection. These two goals were met with over 163 factory workers participating in the survey and the clinic serving 150 workers. Due to a challenging political environment the FTZ&GSEU was unable to meet its target of 2000 new women union members but continues to work to achieve this.

Tamil Nadu Cooperative and Union Development Project



Mariammal of the Ragpickers Co-op in Tamil Nadu

Our long term project partner, the Tamil Nadu Labour Union (TNLU), continued its tireless work with Dalit and Tribal workers from rural villages and urban slums. This year the aim was to establish two cooperatives for women tailors (152 members) and rag pickers (158 members), as well as providing vocational training and savings education. Initial baseline data for evaluation purposes was collected by TNLU staff using a survey focused on five key indicators – income, saving, debt, assets, and children's schooling.

Both occupational groups learnt how to set up and manage a cooperative, including the election of office holders and drawing up a business plan. Gains made to date include eliminating middle men, the freedom to set their own prices, and improved marketing strategies, all of which boosted incomes. Both groups have also established their own shops. In addition members have started saving, and the ragpickers have established a credit facility.

They join the 110 fish vendors and 150 forest produce collectors who had set up cooperatives over the previous year and had similar benefits from the collective activity.

Dalit and Tribal Children's Education Project

The TNLU has far exceeded expectations in delivering this project to support the out-of-school learning of Dalit and Tribal children. Eight centres have been established with a total of 443 children attending regularly (227 girls, 216 boys). In addition to the regular curriculum of maths, English, science and Tamil, the children have studied poetry, drawing, and music. Trips to local environmental and cultural sites were taken, and health and dental checks have also been provided.

We are grateful to NZEI Te Riu Roa for providing UnionAID with the funding for this particular project.

Mae Sot Occupational Training Centre

This is now the 6th year of the Mae Sot Occupational Training Centre operation in Thailand. Over this year 170 young migrant women mainly from rural Myanmar have received sewing skills training and labour rights education. The number of participants was less than the target reflecting external factors relating to job security and employers ignoring Thailand's minimum wage requirements which act as a disincentive to working on the border. The majority of trainees found work in factories either on the border or in Bangkok.

New projects commenced



Saw Kyaw Lin farming near the Bago Rural Learning Centre

Over the course of the 2015/16 year four new projects were approved for funding by the Trustees and commenced by our local partners. The outcomes of these projects will be noted in Annual Report 2017.

- A project to organise 3,000 workers from a number of different industries into the newly formed Workers Union of Solomon Islands.
- A further two year project to extend the survey of working conditions in Suva, Fiji, to 1,500 workers in other industries. This will also focus on further education of workers about their labour rights, how to enforce them and advocate for improved wages and conditions.
- The construction of a new rural learning centre in Bago, Myanmar and training 150 small scale farmers and 30 young people in new skills to help grow their incomes.
- Training courses for 250 bus, taxi, trishaw and motorbike drivers in Myanmar on basic union principles, union organising and how to access social security entitlements.

Fiji wage orders project

UnionAID's first project in the Pacific was completed in October 2015 with many positive outcomes for low paid Fijian workers. Our project leader Kuini Lutua and partner, the National Union of Financial and Commercial Workers surveyed 490 workers about their wages and conditions, at the same time providing information about their labour rights and how to enforce them. Four workshops offering in depth training and several community meetings were also run. Many workers reported increased wages as a result of underpayments being brought to the attention of employers.

Myanmar maritime workers – basic union education training

Seafarers from Myanmar are highly vulnerable to exploitation. This project, run by the Myanmar Maritime Workers Federation, aimed to give seafarers information about their labour rights and to teach them union organising skills. Over the 12 months to July 2015, six training workshops were run with 144 seafarers participating. The majority of participants agreed the training met the project aims.

Myanmar railway workers organising project 2015-17

This project run by the Confederated Trade Unions of Myanmar commenced in May 2015 is training railway workers in basic trade union organising and management, union leadership and occupational health and safety (OSH). In addition it aims to recruit a further 2000 workers into the Myanmar Railway Workers Federation.

By the end of the 2015/16 year two OSH workshops, one union organising and management training and two welding courses (as per later agreement) have been run.

Unions Aotearoa International Development Trust (UnionAID)

An independent charitable trust established by the NZ Council of Trade Unions – Te Kauae Kaimahi

P O Box 6689, Wellington 6141

Email: admin@unionaid.org.nz

Visit: unionaid.org.nz