

# Insight!



www.mprlexp.com

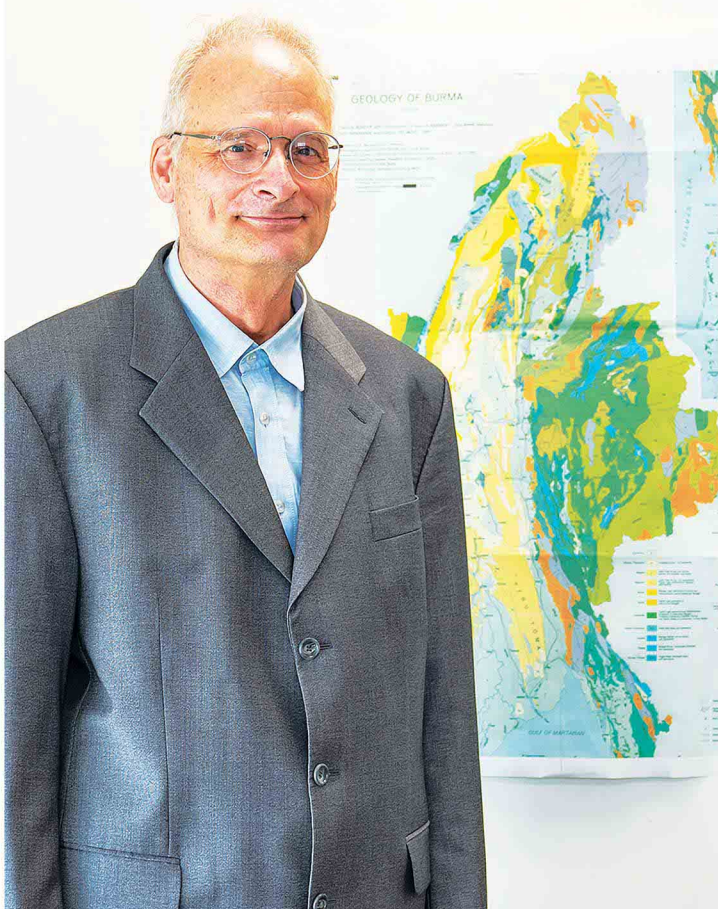
MPRL E&P Newsletter

25<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## Opportunities and Challenges for MPRL E&P as a Family-owned Petroleum Company in Myanmar

**Brian L. Logan & Dr. Eloi Dolivo (OGDR)**

*This article only reflects the thoughts and ideas of its authors and does not necessarily mirror the company's business lines.*



Brian and Dr. Eloi, both ferociously and technically competent with extensive professional backgrounds in the oil and gas industry, hold responsible positions at MPRL E&P. The industry itself is challenging, volatile, and competitive, but for the duo, every day is an exciting adventure. Holding a special place in their hearts for the country with a genuine interest in the development of the upstream energy sector in Myanmar, Brian and Dr. Eloi offer unique perspectives based on their experiences at MPRL E&P. Let's see what they have to say about working for an independent family-owned and oriented company in Myanmar!

Page 16 ➤

## Executive Spotlight

**Brian L. Logan, Development Team Leader & Deputy Country Manager**

Brian Logan started at MPRL E&P as the original Project Manager for the Mann Field PCC Project in 1996 and within two years, he became the Country Manager when MPRL E&P assumed complete ownership and operatorship of Mann Field. In 2002, when the project became fully operational with all local staff, Brian pursued his other endeavors and returned in 2019 as the Development Team Lead for the Pyitharyar Integrated Project and since then, he has been the key player in expanding the company to offshore development and production operations.



Graduated in 1983 as a Petroleum Engineer from the University of Missouri-Rolla, formerly known as the Missouri School of Mines, Brian has extensive experience and knowledge in the oil and gas industry. What sparked his interest in pursuing a degree in this field is quite a story. Like many high school graduates, Brian was not certain what subject to study in college, and landed upon a petroleum engineering career more by chance than by design. It all started when he met with the football and wrestling coach to discuss the possibility for sports scholarships. During that meeting, the coach asked what major was chosen, to which he responded with uncertainty. The coach then asked about the hottest major at the time, Petroleum Engineering, and arranged on the spot for an additional US\$ 500 per semester scholarship if that major was declared. So, what started as selling his soul for US\$ 500 per semester turned out to be one of the best decisions of his life.

In this issue, Brian is delighted to share his insight on the importance of having field experience in the oil & gas industry. Remember, experience speaks volume!

Page 5 ➤



## Offshore Experiences

**Life on an Offshore Oil Platform: the HSE Perspective**

Page 20 & 21 ➤



## More Stories

## Executive Spotlight

Feature 5 ➤

Shifting Focus and Priorities:  
Community Impact Assessment

Feature 11 ➤

## Growing as an HR Professional

Employee  
Spotlight 13 ➤Opportunities and Challenges for  
MPRL E&P as a Family-owned  
Energy Company in Myanmar

Feature 16 ➤

Woman in Tech:  
The Real Game Changer

In the Group 19 ➤

Life on an Offshore Oil Platform:  
the HSE Perspective

Feature 20 ➤

Saving Vanishing Weaving  
Patterns of Mro and Taung  
Mro in Rakhine

Feature 26 ➤

From the Desk of  
the Editor

Dear Readers,

I am glad to see that office is back to normal, well almost normal, now that COVID-19-related cases are well-managed as we try to build stronger immunity in our community, at work, and outside of work. Despite all this, we still need to continue wearing face masks in crowded areas and take necessary preventative measures to minimize our risk of exposure.

Monsoon season has just begun with the emergence of seasonal flu, a very common public health problem during this time of year in Myanmar. At work, we have recently conducted a 3-day flu vaccination drive for all our staff and their family members, and for those who have not received their flu shot yet, it is never too late. Remember, both COVID-19 and seasonal flu viruses are still circulating in the community, thus, it is important that we protect ourselves and our loved ones by getting vaccinated.

We are halfway into 2022 with six months left until we ring in the New Year. Time flies faster especially when we are fully occupied; keeping ourselves busy is good for it keeps us going and focused. Part of staying resilient means utilizing our strengths, skills, and self-confidence when accepting new challenges, hitting new goals, and pushing limits. I hope the “time-off” that we had gave us some personal space for self-growth and self-awareness, and most importantly, time to nurture our mindset with positivity. Personal growth has no limit, your achievements are boundless if you have the determination and discipline to do so.

Many of our social management programs have resumed with various initiatives being carried out in Mann

“Personal growth has no limit, your achievements are boundless if you have the determination and discipline to do so.”

Field Communities. We had kick-started this year with the launch of CEO's very personal biography *Myanmar Energy Magnate : Biography of U Moe Myint*, which is now getting translated into English. I hope this version reaches a wider audience since the book contains many practical life lessons and inspirations that will surely motivate young readers to pursue their dreams and push their limits.

In this issue, we have a wide range of articles from our technical teams sharing their personal insights and experiences about what it is like working for a local energy company that is also family-owned, and the challenges and excitement of offshoring. My personal favorite is the article from M&A Telecoms on page 19 which talks about what it takes for a woman to work in a male-dominated IT field. This brings back the epic story of Daw MiMi Aung, a Burmese-American Engineer at NASA's JPL who led NASA's first helicopter flight on Mars. Her story is infectious and inspiring to both women and men, old and young.

“Stay optimistic, believe in yourself, and dare to fail and accept failures. Without failure, there is no growth.”

I would like to conclude with this note, “No matter how hard life has been for you, no matter how tired you are, there's always a reason to live” from the book *Frangrance of a Dead Rose : A Reminder of Hope* by Zaishah. Find that reason, materialize it, and live it. Stay optimistic, believe in yourself, and dare to fail and accept failures. Without failure, there is no growth. And most importantly, if you feel that you have not created your legacy yet, there's still time to do just that. ■

Hnin W. Zaw

## Insight!

Insight! is owned by MPRL E&P Pte Ltd. The title Insight! in English, its associated logos and the contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of MPRL E&P Pte Ltd.

## Editor

Hnin Wynt Zaw  
hnin.w.zaw@mprlexp.com

## Assistant Editors

Thal Sandy Tun  
thal.s.tun@mprlexp.com

Moe Thu Zar Soe  
moe.tz.soe@mprlexp.com

Pyae Pyae Phyoo  
pyae.p.phyoo@mprlexp.com

## Layout Design

Win Htun Aung, Design Team  
win.t.aung@mprlexp.com

MPRL E&P Pte Ltd.  
CSR & Communications Department

623 Pyay Road, Kamayut Township  
11041 Yangon, Union of Myanmar  
Tel : (95-1) 230 7733  
Fax : (95-1) 230 7744  
Facebook : www.facebook.com/mprlep  
Email : mprlstaff@mprlexp.com  
Website : www.mprlexp.com



**Publishing the Fourth Environmental Monitoring Report of MPRL E&P**

In April 2022, MPRL E&P successfully released and submitted its fourth Environmental Monitoring Report for the Redevelopment and Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) Program for Mann Field.

The Report provides not only the status of the regular monitoring activities but also the implementation progress activities on the project based on the Environmental Management Plan (EMP), inclusive of the social management activities and performances in Mann Field, for the period from October 2021 to March 2022.

**Publishing the Sixth Environmental Monitoring Report of M&AOSB**

In April 2022, M&AOSB successfully issued and submitted its sixth Environmental Monitoring Report for pre-construction phase in compliance with the ECC requirements.



## Your Opinion : Importance of Teamwork in Workplace



**Linn Wai Naing**  
Assistant Engineer  
Field Operations  
Department

Teamwork is essential in every workplace. The only way to accomplish a task successfully and safely is to have a good team who work together to achieve a shared goal. To my understanding, teamwork means different individuals working together to achieve a certain shared goal. And it is considered a basic need for an organization to function properly.

It is really important to have a solid teamwork in the oil and gas industry. If an organization lacks

teamwork especially in this kind of work environment, it could lead to property damage or bodily injuries. Effective teamwork makes it easier to overcome any challenges and difficulties. It can also generate healthy and happy relationships between different individuals.

At MPRL E&P, we are encouraged to have good teamwork and collective effort. And because we strive to maintain and conduct effective teamwork, we are happy and satisfied working in a pleasant environment. We are motivated to come to work, and when we see good end results and achieve measurable success at different operations and departments, it is due to our collective efforts. We are always finding new ways to improve teamwork by sharing ideas, experiences, and knowledge among ourselves. To me, good teamwork can also enhance

problem solving skills, a very important factor in an organization like this.

From my experience, a good team means having different people from different backgrounds with different perspectives. It is also crucial that we have a good and transparent line of communication in such a way that information is clearly and effectively transferred between different individuals and departments. Another important element of a good team is having a good set of negotiation and two-way communication skills, which all help in providing accurate feedback.

In conclusion, I am certainly proud of the fact that our company fosters a teamwork environment, and I am glad to be working with competent and motivating colleagues who believe in collective effort. ■



**Zaw Zaw Htoo**  
Admin. Coordinator  
Administration &  
Contracts Department

Teamwork entails bringing diverse groups of individuals with different viewpoints and backgrounds to work towards a common goal together with open communication, responsibility, and accountability. The ingredients for what make a successful team are a clear purpose, honest communication, accountability, and constructive feedback.

Throughout my experience as an Administrative Coordinator, our team's biggest responsibility was to help out with entry permits for our expatriate

employees and their family members during the COVID-19 outbreak. This was the very first hurdle we encountered during the period of travel restrictions. The process included ensuring entry in compliance with the standard operating procedures where we had to strategically allocate responsibilities among our team members. We were able to successfully arrange and complete entry requirements for the expatriates due to our collective efforts as a team.

Further, before the travel restrictions, our company would organize annual Team Building Retreat for the staff. These kinds of activities are conducted to help staff enhance their leadership skills, foster group thinking, and strengthen team bonding. I am grateful to our organization for giving us this opportunity to develop team spirit and collaboration among ourselves.

We have confidence and faith in our abilities to accomplish our goals mainly because of our strong collaboration as a team. As a result, we are motivated to keep going by further developing our problem-solving and negotiating skills including strengthening our mutual understanding and learning different perspectives. The most obvious advantage is that we gain mutual trust that is built through effective communication between the different team members who work together to achieve shared objectives.

Lastly, I believe that delegating work based on each individual's expertise is the key contributor in achieving effective and efficient results. In addition, collaboration, and recognition are crucial for successful outcomes and productivity. To me, effective teamwork is an important aspect of any organization's success. ■

### News

## MPRL E&P Conducts Second Biannual CSR Progress Update and Review Meeting in Mann Field

**Pyae Pyae Phyo**

Obtaining and maintaining a social license to operate is one of the key elements for MPRL E&P to be able to implement and execute our oil and gas projects. As a responsible business operator, we know the value of community engagement and appreciate our hosts for their efforts and support in managing the impacts of our operations. To ensure a long-term sustainable business success, we continuously conduct stakeholder engagement through a two-way communication channel.



On 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022, MPRL E&P's CSR & Communications Department conducted the second Biannual CSR Progress Update and Review Meeting with Mann Field Communities at Auk Kyaung Pagoda. A total of 40 participants including the Village Administrators, Village Development Committees, and Community Volunteers from 14 surrounding villages attended the meeting.

During the discussion, the representatives from CSR & Communications Department updated the

performance progress of CSR initiatives that were implemented for Mann Field Communities during the second biannual period (October to March) of the Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022. The meeting also covered CSR's work performance, identified strengths and weaknesses in the implementation process, offered constructive feedback, and paving a way to set goals for future performance. Our CSR Team looks forward to the next meeting with our stakeholders! ■







# Knocking out Flu at Work

Moe Thu Zar Soe

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), seasonal influenza is a global public health concern and may result in severe complications including hospitalization and death. To minimize this influenza burden, simple prevention measures are strongly advised.

Influenza (flu) is considered a common endemic virus but there can be outbreaks of flu that can change into an epidemic, with the potential to gradually evolve into a pandemic like the H1N1 flu pandemic in 2009. Moreover, the influenza virus undergoes constant but relatively minor genetic changes, and because of this, we are encouraged to have flu vaccinations every year. Not to forget that flu is a respiratory illness where symptoms include headache, fever, cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints, which are very similar to that of COVID-19.

The time of the flu outbreak differs; in the northern hemisphere, seasonal influenza generally occurs between November and April each year, and in the southern hemisphere between June and October. In Myanmar, it is from June to the end of September and coincides with the monsoon season. National health authorities urge high-risk groups such as pregnant women, children aged six months to five years, adults 65 years and older, and those who have underlying health conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular and chronic respiratory illnesses, to get vaccinated for seasonal influenza every year.

“People who are the most vulnerable to the seasonal flu are those who work in public areas and are exposed to large crowds. They can get the flu virus easily as well as transmit it to others,” said U Nay Myo Aung, HSE Manager from MPRL E&P.

Worksite flu shots help protect employees from widespread viruses, preventing the use of the sick time they would normally take to recover. With the collaborative efforts from respective departments within MPRL E&P Group of Companies (GoCs), the HSE Team proactively helps out in supporting the accessibility of the needful flu vaccines for the desired staff members and their families. Three-day workplace vaccination drive was held on 17<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 at the Vantage Tower and Mann Field where the outsourced healthcare provider named “Health4U Medical Services” provided the vaccination services to desired staff members from MPRL E&P GoCs. A total of 174 staff from Mann Field along with 118 GoCs staff members and families including the Senior Executive Management received the onsite vaccinations against



seasonal influenza. Likewise, our entire GoCs staff members had also received the COVID-19 vaccination amidst the pandemic in 2021.

Since influenza is a community-based infection that is easily transmitted in closed and community settings, we must collectively encourage each other to get vaccinated every year. It is a vaccine-preventable disease and flu shots are easily accessible at many clinics.



All these preventive measures, including immunizing the workforce against the virus, are important so that we can resume our daily activities safely. Last but not least, it is still a must to wear a mask and follow the health safety guidelines in our day-to-day life and operations. Be socially wise and stay safe! ■





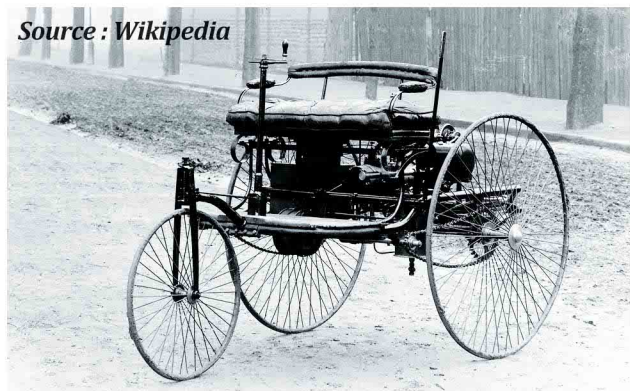
## From Cover Page

## The Value of Field Experience in the Oil &amp; Gas Industry

As we build MPRL E&P capabilities to develop and eventually operate the ultra-deepwater Pyithar-yar Integrated Project, many of the most important lessons will come from hands-on field experience. The value gained from the field is not limited to only technical and operational understanding, but also includes equally important skills such as management, communication, and a much broader understanding of the multi-dimensional dynamics related to efficient offshore operations.

The ability to acquire hands-on knowledge drives a deeper level of understanding and a different perspective. For example, consider **how difficult it would be to design a car if the person has never driven a car**. Although the basic functions may be achieved, there would be no understanding of how the features would feel to the driver, whether it provides ease and comfort, or whether it would be cumbersome to maneuver.

Source : Wikipedia



*The first ever Mercedes car (patented January 1886), note the steering crank, not even the steering wheel had been invented then; the gas stick is also the brake (there was no driving license at the time either)*

I was very fortunate during my career to have the opportunity to “drive the car”. In my case, the “car” was drilling rigs, production platforms, offshore vessels, and various other oilfield operations. In this article, I will share some of my professional background and why I feel so strongly about the need for all engineers and geoscientists to get some field operations experience.

## The Importance of Field Experience

Since my start in the oil and gas industry in the early 1980s, there has been a dramatic change in the employment philosophies for entry-level engineers. To help frame the purpose of this article, let me first explain the status of the oil industry at that time. The late 1970s was the height of the oil boom. When I started college in 1979, and during my years of summer internships with oil companies, most major companies in the USA were operating 5-10 offshore rigs simultaneously. There was a shortage of staff, so employees were immediately thrust into areas of responsibility even when lacking experience. Promotions occurred much faster than normal, often without technical merit. It was truly a “**sink or swim**” environment, which was arguably not the most efficient for the companies but **offered tremendous learning opportunities to anyone willing to learn**.

“*If the engineer has not actually “walked in the shoes” of the field staff and personally experienced the subject firsthand, it is difficult to communicate with full understanding.*”



*The Mann Field Team in 1996 discussing opportunities for production enhancement*

At that time, nearly all engineers started their careers by working in the field. After gaining some level of experience after five or so years and demonstrating good performance, a chosen few then were assigned to office duties. In that environment, everyone in the organization, from top to bottom, had a common understanding of field problems and challenges and were all equally qualified to offer solutions.

In those days, field experience was not only a basic requirement, but given preference over formal education in many instances. Many managers at that time, especially those in operational roles, had no college education. My first boss in 1983, a Drilling Manager for a large oil company, had a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education but had been working on drilling rigs for more than 40 years, initially working as a roughneck at age 13, then working his way up to Driller, Toolpusher, Superintendent, and ultimately his then-current role of Drilling Manager. He was a guy who knew every nut and bolt on a rig, and provided a very different perspective and wealth of knowledge that is not taught in classrooms. I was very fortunate to have benefited from his mentorship and teachings in my early years.

I was also fortunate to have worked on my first job for one, if not the only, company that offered a combination of field and office responsibilities. The rotation schedule was 3 weeks in the office, followed by 6 weeks of 7/7 rotation (7 days offshore and 7 days off). This allowed the unique opportunity to plan a well, prepare a drilling program, then go offshore and execute the plan that you generated. This provided true “start to finish” involvement through every phase of the planning and operation.

## The Importance of the “Right” Field Experience

The maximum value doesn’t come from simply going to the field and observing, but from having full responsibility and accountability for an operation. As a new graduate in 1983 and starting my first job as a Drilling Engineer at the age of 22, I was given less than three months of training and then assigned as the “Company Man” on an offshore rig. For those of you who may not know, the “Company Man” is the oil company’s representative who is responsible for managing the rig contractor and all service providers who perform work on the well, and is the person who has the ultimate responsibility for the well operations that may cost hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars per day. I never knew who was more afraid in that situation; me as a new engineer in that role, or the person who had to pay the bills if I made a mistake.

Being a new Company Man with limited experience, and surrounded by people mostly twice my age, taught me very quickly how to encourage and rely on the experience of the senior, and much wiser people who surrounded me on the rig. It taught me to **ask questions and seek opinions rather than pretend to have answers**. It taught me to empower others to perform their roles without micro-managing their efforts. That was not because I had mastered man-



*The entire MPRL E&P office staff in the late 1990's*

agement skills, but because I had no choice. I didn’t know enough about their job to offer an opinion, so had to rely totally on their knowledge and experience. Further, it taught me to have effective meetings with all involved parties, to discuss options and seek team consensus, but only after listening to everyone’s input. It taught me to accept responsibility and accountability, not only for my actions but the actions of all others under my direction. Most importantly, it taught me that everyone, especially me, will make mistakes, and that **learning from mistakes is a fundamental part of growth and development**.



The fact that I could succeed as a new engineer, supervising rig operations with minimal experience, was less of a credit to me and more of a credit to my supervisors. As I previously explained, all of my supervisors had also

been in the same position in the past, and had extensive understanding of my position. It was that understanding which allowed them to effectively manage offshore operations, even when run by inexperienced field supervisors, because they knew what questions to ask, what advice to offer, and how to provide support and instill confidence to those in the field.

There is a big difference between 20 years of experience compared and one year of experience repeated for 20 years. It is easy to fall into a particular specialty whereby one becomes an expert in one specific technical subject or geographical area, but lacks a broader understanding of the overall business objective.

In my early years, as a summer hire Drilling Engineer working offshore between college semesters, I was fortunate to have worked for some very supportive companies who were willing to invest in my development. During that time, I was given the opportunity to determine my own schedule and move between rigs depending on the operation being conducted at the time. Any time there was a significant operation or problem, I would go to that rig to witness the operation. There were times that I visited three to four rigs per week as a way to get maximum diversity.

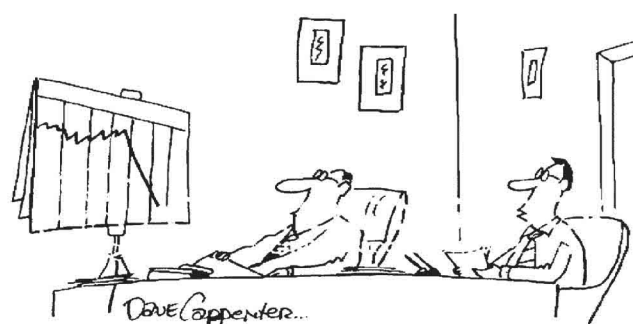
In two short summers, I was exposed to drilling, completion, and workover operations using many different types of rigs; jack-ups, submersibles, barge rigs, tender rigs, and workover rigs. It also allowed me to work with many different engineers and contractors, each who offered different perspectives and insights. Such diversity is only possible in companies with active and diverse operations.

Smaller companies and international operations sometimes offer increased opportunity for diverse experience simply because of the limited number of people, which requires staff to “wear



many hats". A personal example of this happened to me while working in Indonesia. I originally was hired to conduct jungle drilling operations. When that campaign was completed, there was an opportunity to assist with offshore development drilling and completion. Later, there was an urgent need for a project manager for a marginal field subsea development and Floating Production Storage and Offtake Vessel (FPSO) refurbishment. Because I was already present and immediately available, I was given the opportunity to lead that project. During my four short years in Indonesia, largely due to the fact that I was physically present, I was provided opportunities in jungle operations, offshore drilling and completion, subsea development and shipyard refurbishment.

**Opportunity is often the result of being in the right place at the right time**, as was certainly the case for me. The same applies to the Pyitharyar Integrated Project, which is one of less than 20 ultra-deepwater projects in the world and the first of its kind in ASEAN. Being part of MPRL E&P during this exciting and challenging project will expose many staff to unique opportunities for development and learning.



### What Lessons are Learned through Field Experience

I was once on a job interview, after just five years of experience as a Drilling Engineer, when the interviewer asked me if I had any management experience. I responded "yes", and then explained my management role on offshore rigs, which required not only management of the 50+ people of the rig at any time, but also logistics management, vendor management, and upward management of the office-based company staff. To my surprise, the interviewer then responded, "No, I mean real management". Her comment totally reinforces the point of this article; unless you have been there and done it, you don't fully appreciate what is involved. It was her lack of field experience which denied her the ability to relate to the complexity of field operations, and deprived her of the appreciation for the skills involved. Needless to say, I did not accept that job. If the interviewer had worked in the field, perhaps she would have understood the many skills that are developed through field experience. Let's explore a few.

**Accountability and Responsibility:** As already mentioned earlier in the article, having full accountability and responsibility for an operation is likely the biggest benefit gained through field experience. The expectation placed by management to succeed, and the confidence that they have placed on that individual, elevates and inspires that person to perform at their highest level. It forces the person to develop other skills, such as communication, planning, scheduling, delegation, and coordination to overcome the challenges and achieve the objective.

**Teamwork:** It forces one to rely on other people, who are experts in their field, to complete their respective task toward the end goal. Like assembling a puzzle, each piece plays a role, but the leader has to communicate the overall objective



and direct the team so that the pieces are placed at the right time, in the correct order.

**Management of Diverse Skills and Personalities:** Managing field operations requires interaction from the "rig floor to the boardroom", and the communication style and content is very different for each of those interactions. While management sets the broader objectives and goals and is less concerned about the details, the field workers are inundated with the details in how to align the realities of the situation with the expectations. Being able to empathize, and effectively communicate at all levels is a learned skill that pays huge dividends when mastered.

**Logistics Coordination, Planning & Scheduling:** These skills are all related so are listed under the same heading. Field operations require careful planning to make sure that all equipment and services are available at the right time; not too early such that wasteful spending is incurred, but not so late that operational delays occur. This requires effective communication with contractors, suppliers, and logistics staff while at the same time considering the weather, physical capabilities onsite for handling and storage, and overall resource availability.

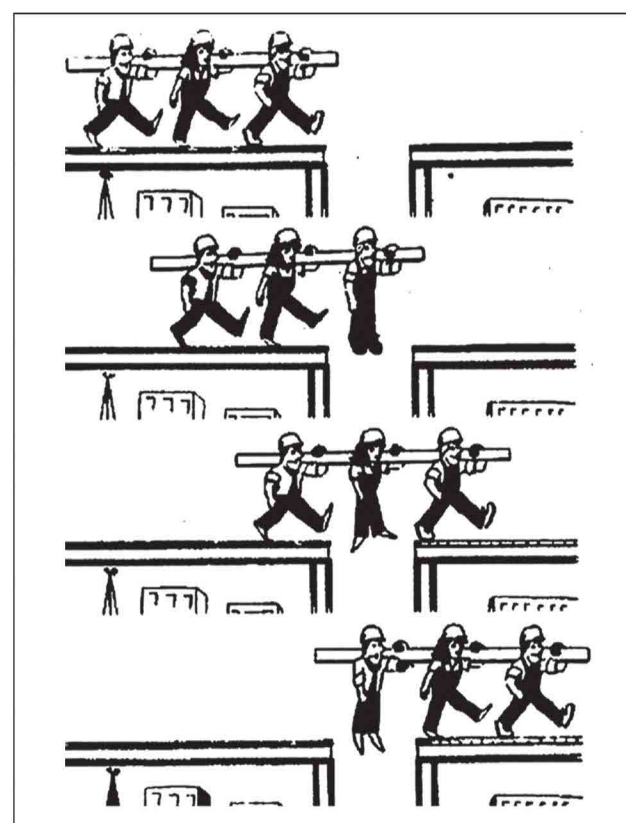
**Crisis Management:** Things don't always go as planned, so overseeing field operations sometimes comes with surprises. Two examples that I personally experienced in my early years of rig supervision was a boat strike to the rig (and the well that was attached to the rig at the time) which collapsed the well which was in the process of being drilled, and crews stranded on a rig during a hurricane which

moved the rig off location. Both of these incidents, which thankfully occurred without injury, provided much insight into the management of different personalities and emotions during times of stress.

**Combine Engineering with the Real World:** Just because you can write it or draw it on paper does not mean that it is possible or practical to implement "nice to have" from what is absolutely required and results in engineering plans and procedures that are much more practical and achievable.

**Effective Communication:** I am not referring to the ability to speak and write eloquently, but to **the ability to speak the right language when communicating with the operations staff in the field.** Effective communication requires understanding on both sides. In the case where an office-based engineer is talking with field operations staff, this means that the engineer needs to understand not only the terminology but also the unspoken issues surrounding that topic. It requires a full understanding of the issue, from the perspective of the other person. If the engineer has not actually "walked in the shoes" of the field staff and personally experienced the subject firsthand, it is difficult to communicate with full understanding.

One of the most rewarding examples of effective communication came 20 years later when I returned to a Drilling Engineering role in the US in 2002. As explained earlier, I started my career as a rig site supervisor (Company Man) working offshore rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. During my summer internship and initial training, I worked alongside some senior staff who mentored my development, whereby we developed a strong mutual respect and friendship. Nearly two decades later, after working for other companies and in other international locations, I returned to work in the US and found myself as the office-based supervisor of the same guys who once were my mentors. The working relationship that we had and the success that we shared in those roles, were largely driven by great communication. Not only were we able to understand each other's position, because we had all been in the other person's role previously, but we also communicated from a position of trust and respect. That level of communication would have not been possible without a common understanding of field operations.



### The Challenge ahead for MPRL E&P

The challenge lies ahead for MPRL E&P to develop a field organization capable of operating an ultra-deepwater development, as well as an office staff capable of supporting the field operations. As we pursue the training and development of our employees, we should consider the lessons learned by people like myself from prior generations, and take advantage of every opportunity to include office staff in the field operations, not only as observers but in every function and capacity possible. It should be our goal to fill every critical office-based position with people who have benefitted from meaningful field experience. Only then will we achieve the most effective communication, founded on a mutual understanding of the challenges that will be encountered on a daily basis. ■



## MPRL E&P Collaborates with Myanmar Red Cross Society to Strengthen Emergency Response Capacity

Pyae Pyae Phyo



MPRL E&P is a responsible energy company dedicated to developing skills and competencies in the communities where the business operates. Since our very first days as an oil and gas operator, responsible business has been at the heart of what we do. We believe that with great business operations, come great responsibility.

Creating a positive impact on host communities and investing in them for a sustainable future together is of importance to us. In Mann Field, we strive to establish strong relationships with the stakeholders and one of the ways is through promoting the well-being of the community based on mutual trust, shared value and recognition. Recently, MPRL E&P's CSR Program collaborated with Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) of Minbu Township to enhance the intellectual knowledge of health and wellness. Through this workshop, we also helped promote community volunteerism and strengthen emergency response capacity in Mann Field Communities.

In March 2022, MPRL E&P's CSR Team organized three-day Basic First Aid Training course for 19 community members who have strong passion and interest in human welfare. The trainers from MRCS (Minbu) conducted the training course that focused on theoretical components with greater emphasis on anatomy and physiology, inclusive of detailed explanations on common physical injuries from a car or motorcycle accidents. All the trainees completed a post-training test and top three participants with the best test scores were awarded.



With coordination from the MPRL E&P's CSR Team, two MRCS's Emergency Response Teams were formed with 14 trainees (7 trainees on each team) who completed the Basic First Aid Training course for emergency disaster preparedness and response capabilities in the region. The volunteer recruitment was aimed to help those affected by natural disasters like floods, fires, and other unforeseen catastrophes and refer them to the right hospitals, if necessary.

Our CSR Program has played an important role in Mann Field Communities by providing uniforms for the volunteers, organizing team meetings and engaging in social work activities with the stakeholders. Recently, in April 2022, the CSR Team facilitated Emergency Response Team's social work activity by participating in paying homage ceremony to the Community Elders organized by Minbu Township General Administration Department for the celebration of Myanmar New Year. We look forward to many more activities with the stakeholders in Mann Field! ■





## MPRL E&P Recognizes and Appreciates Community-based Volunteers

Pyae Pyae Phyo



At MPRL E&P, we believe in volunteer recognition and appreciation because we know that our sustainable development goals for the communities depend on collaborations between the business and the stakeholders. Our long-term relationship with our community-based volunteers shows our strong corporate values and who we are as an organization.

Our volunteers are important to us and we are grateful for their active voice in our CSR initiatives and most importantly, for helping us make a difference. They play a crucial role by serving as a link between the communities and the organization through various efforts in making a positive impact in the community.

There are 14 villages in Mann Field where our business operates and we work with many community volunteers to help these surrounding neighborhoods achieve our CSR goals and missions. Their outstanding service-mindedness and dedication during the pandemic and recent sociopolitical events are highly recognized and appreciated. Our CSR Team recently conducted an assessment and

discovered a few volunteers who went beyond the call of duty to mitigate the hardships during these difficult times. This performance assessment, which occurred at the end of March 2022, included self-assessments, 360-degree feedback among the volunteers themselves, and performance assessment surveys collected from respective Village Administrators. The top five volunteers were selected for their above and beyond efforts and services.

On 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022, MPRL E&P's CSR Program organized a "Volunteer Appreciation and Recognition Event" to celebrate 14 community-based volunteers for their values and their actions in contributing time and energy for the benefit of other people in the community. Previously, the reward programs consisted of group trips to well-known places around the country, however, this year, it was a day trip to Shwesettaw Elephant Camp. The special trip was fun and exciting for everyone.

The trip included a monetary reward program for all the volunteers where the top five volunteers were presented with additional rewards. The Volunteer

Appreciation and Recognition Event at Shwesettaw Elephant Camp also enhanced team spirit through various social activities. Let us all join together in applauding these dedicated volunteers for their outstanding services and contributions to Mann Field Communities! ■





# Mann Field Community Youths Study under Educational Partnership Program

Pyae Pyae Phyio

MPRL E&P's CSR Program aims to promote self-improvement, personal growth, and livelihood skills among the young community members through the Educational Partnership Program. We know that personal development is a process and can occur in different ways; by providing vocational skills training, we hope to empower any youth to perform better in the workplace and outside of work.

MPRL E&P first introduced its Educational Partnership Program in the Fiscal Year 2019 – 2020 which entails a beneficial program that consists of partners from the government agencies and selected training institutes. Unfortunately, when the pandemic hit, the program had to be temporarily suspended, however, as soon as the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted and training centers were reopened, we immediately resumed our program with trainee recruitment.

With the support of MPRL E&P's Scholarship Program, five community youths completed a two-month Nurse Aide Training course. The graduation ceremony was held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022 where the new graduates were awarded certificates. Among the graduates, Ko Kyaw Min Thu had joined the Ayeyarwady Training Center (Minbu) where he now works as a part-time trainer.

Now that the new semester has just begun in May, the CSR Team recently conducted a meeting with the principal and trainer from No.5 Industrial Training Center (ITC - Magway) and discussed the training progress and overall effectiveness of the program. According to the meeting, all male trainees received good grades, and female trainees were in the process of preparing for the exam.



Meeting with SAI (Pwint Phyu) Scholarship Trainees

Furthermore, in May 2022, under the support of MPRL E&P's Educational Partnership Program, a total number of seven community youths: four males and three females from Kyar Kan, Ywar Thar, Chin Taung, and Mei Bayt Kone Villages started the three-year training course at the State Agriculture Institute (SAI - Pwint Phyu).

The CSR Team conducted periodic meetings with the principals from training centers, the scholarship trainees from Mann Field Communities and Noble Lamp Pharmacist Aide and Nurse Aide Training Center (Magway) as part of the Educational Partnership Program. Amongst many discussions, an announcement for a three-year Scholarship Training Program at Government Technical High School (GTHS - Magway) was made on the community noticeboards around 14 villages in



Meeting with the Nurse Aide Scholarship Trainees



SAI (Pwint Phyu) Scholarship Trainees



No. 5 ITC (Magway) Scholarship Trainees



Providing Necessities to Scholarship Trainees



Meeting with the GTHS (Magway) Scholarship Training Applicants



Announcing Scholarship Programs on Community Noticeboards

Mann Field. A total of 17 community youths from different villages applied for the training and went through the interview process with the CSR Team. A total number of three youths: two males and one female from Aye Mya, Auk Kyaung, and Lay Eain Tan Villages received the CSR Program's scholarship support to attend at GTHS (Magway) in June 2022.

We believe that our Educational Partnership Program will be a great supporting hand in enhancing the skill set of youths around the communities and we hope that our initiatives provide career aspiration and interpersonal skills for the students. ■



# Developing a Fire Safety Culture

Moe Thu Zar Soe



Fire safety culture is an important commitment that every organization should adopt. In fact, this culture should simply be a good business sense where a shared set of positive attitudes, knowledge, perception and approach about fire prevention and fire protection are prioritized and taken seriously. Additionally, establishing rules and safe work practices play a critical aspect of a fire safety culture. Employers nowadays have a statutory duty to provide fire safety induction and regular fire safety awareness trainings for their staff, particularly for those in today’s challenging and hazardous oil and gas industry.



On 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022, Site HSE Officers from MPRL E&P provided fire safety awareness sessions for many personnel from the oil and gas industry at the government training center in Mann Field. This awareness session helped provide a basis for developing a culture of fire safety and prevention in the workplace. The Site HSE Officers shared knowledge on potential fire hazards that mostly occur in oil fields and further presented best practices of fire prevention especially during the hot season of the year, followed by safety guidelines.

A total of 94 participants attended two sessions where 67 personnel were from the government

sector, 11 staff members were from Myint & Associates Co., Ltd. and 16 personnel were from MPRL E&P Pte Ltd. The attendees also participated in the practical training and demonstration of how to operate portable fire extinguishers in case of emergencies, which were conducted by the HSE Department. ■



# Keeping Workers Safe in High Heat

Moe Thu Zar Soe

Staying safe when working outdoors in hot work environment is of paramount importance. Extreme heat temperatures especially in a relatively humid environment can be dangerous to your body regardless of age or physical condition. Many heat-related illnesses such as heat rash, heat cramps, fainting, exhaustion, and heat stroke become very common during the hot summers in Myanmar.

Treatment and prevention of high heat-related illnesses must be taken seriously, and it is important that we know how to cope and stay safe in extreme heat. During this time, it is easy to become dehydrated, which can lead to heat exhaustion or even heat stroke – a medical emergency that can be fatal. While most of us know how to keep our body temperatures stable, many still do not realize the basic preventative measures and treatments when we are hit with extreme hot temperatures.

With the prevalence of this concern during the hot season in Myanmar, our company ensures that every worker exposed to high temperatures by working outdoors is knowledgeable and well-trained to cope with such extremities. Among many trainings led by the MPRL E&P, the HSE Department conducted a refresher course on heat-related illness prevention and awareness session in the months of April and May 2022. During the training, the two camp doctors, Dr. Kyaw Ye’ Htut and Dr. Hlaing Min Htet Kyaw along



with two Site HSE Officers, U Myo Thant Zin and U Thet Paing Oo, shared their knowledge and helpful tips for working under the direct sunlight including the common environmental and personal risk factors that can cause heat-related illnesses. Through these training sessions, many oil and gas personnel from Mann Field gained a better understanding of the impacts of extreme heat on our bodies including the risk factors, first-aid and preventive measures.

During the summer, MPRL E&P’s HSE Department provided six knowledge-sharing sessions and a total of 219 trainees from Mann Field attended the sessions. We hope to continue our heat illness prevention training every year in order to keep our employees safe in the heat and minimize heat-related illnesses and injuries. ■





# Shifting Focus and Priorities: Community Impact Assessment

Thal Sandy Tun

At the beginning of the current Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the CSR and Communications Department undertook a community impact assessment exercise via which effectiveness and satisfaction with CSR interventions were assessed on both quantitative and qualitative terms. The study concluded with a set of findings and recommendations to further guide MPRL E&P to rationalize and improve its CSR interventions and expenditures in the coming years.

In our community impact assessment, we aimed to understand how communities in Mann Field have been impacted by the country's new realities and identify particular areas where needs become more acute, for instance, healthcare and capacity building. We also intended to explore opportunities and best practices as observed by the community beneficiaries concerning our CSR initiatives in Mann Field. At this opportunistic juncture for CSR and community engagement, this study put forward conclusions and recommendations for moving forward and fortifying the available space.

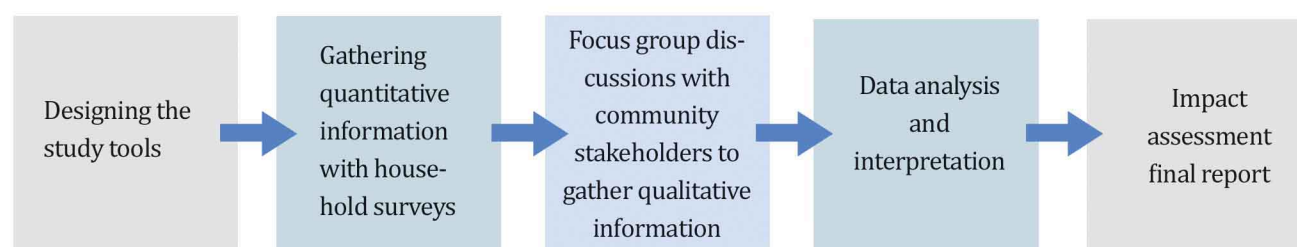
Based on the current CSR approach, policy and objectives, the followings are some of the assessment criteria that apply to each project in this study:

**Relevance:** the extent to which the objectives of the intervention are consistent with the needs of beneficiary communities.

**Effectiveness:** the extent to which the project's objectives are achieved.

**Impact:** positive, negative, primary, and secondary long-term effects of an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

To conduct the assessment, we adopted a five-step approach as explained below. The assessment methodology included designing stakeholder engagement plan and a questionnaire. One major tool for quantitative data collection was a household survey (n=15%), and the tools for qualitative data included focus group discussions followed by key informant interviews.



“There is a former vocational trainee group who faces difficulty in continuing their small business due to a rise in raw material prices and transportation costs. Some others need to enhance the packaging of their products to make them look more attractive and appealing to customers.”

Focus Group Discussion Participant

“Our waste management system is even better than the one in Minbu because it collects and disposes of waste on a regular basis at a tiny monthly fee and helps keep our homes and surroundings clean and reduce fire hazards in summer months. It is so beneficial that we are afraid that the system might not be sustainably maintained.”

Focus Group Discussion Participant

## FGD Schedule and Participants

No.	Participant Groups	Villages	Date	Number of Participants
1.	Village Administrators and Village Development Committees	Mann Kyoe Chin Taung Kywe Cha Mei Bayt Kone Aye Mya Let Pa Taw Lay Eain Tan (n=7)	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	7
2.	Village Administrators and Village Development Committees	Nan U Auk Kyaung Let Pan Ta Pin Kyar Kan Pauk Kone Ywar Thar Ma Kyee Chaung (n=7)	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	7
3.	Female Volunteer Group		28 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	6
4.	Male Volunteer Group		29 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	8
5.	Vocational Trainees: Women Group		29 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	10
6.	Vocational Trainees: Men Group		29 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	10
7.	Women Group	Lay Eain Tan Nan U Aye Mya	30 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	10
8.	Farmer Group I GAP sesame, sunflower, chickpea		30 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	14
9.	Farmer Group II Chili and tomato		30 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	14







# Passion and Self-motivation

## Key to Career Success: Junior Engineer

Thal Sandy Tun

*As the global upstream oil and gas industry is experiencing unprecedented transformations by adapting to global energy dynamics, we are now seeing a significant push in talent recruitment and retention. We expect to see a more diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment that provides a more interesting culture for any organization. At MPRL E&P, we invest in talent because we know the importance of real-world exposure and practical experiences. Here, Daw Yu Nandar Myat, a Junior Engineer in Mann Field, throws light on a career that is rewarding and fulfilling – all one needs is a strong passion and self-motivation for engineering.*

Born and brought up in Yangon in a family of four, she matriculated at No. 2 Basic Education High School in the town of South Okkalapa with flying colors. Big on becoming an engineer since her childhood, her initial attempt was to enroll in Singapore Polytechnic, which unfortunately did not go well as planned.

While reeling from the nasty surprise in life, she soon heard that the reopening of one of the most prestigious universities in Myanmar, Yangon Technological University or YTU, previously known as RIT, was underway, much to her delight. With all her determination, she went in for the university entrance exam and made the cut.

Like many other students, Yu Nandar Myat was first fascinated, impressed, and appealed by the facade of the petroleum engineering subject but remained naïve about the oil and gas industry itself. However, her feelings grew stronger after her two internships – one with MPRL E&P in her second year and another with Scomi Oiltools in her final year, where she gained hands-on experience in the oil field and most importantly, a strong passion and motivation for her future career in this industry.

During her studies, the hard-working engineer completed three intensive projects on reservoir engineering, production engineering, and drilling engineering in sequence, in an effort to balance her knowledge in all the petroleum engineering subjects. In addition, her final year thesis project was so outstanding that a journal paper on the capacities of university students was published.

Upon her graduation in 2020, Yu Nandar Myat followed a well-worn path from top Myanmar university into its oil and gas industry – she joined MPRL E&P and started working in Mann Field. She admits that life in the field operations is challenging but she believes it is equally rewarding. She explains why she is investing her youth in a tough environment.

“A building is not safe enough if its foundation is not deep, firm, or strong. Same thing with starting a career. If the foundation of starting a new career path is not firm enough, you will be wishy-washy when faced with challenges in the future. That is why I am working in the field to make myself saturated with real-world operational experiences. It is tough as old boots for a young woman but I am persisting. Also, now is the time that we see gender on a spectrum instead of two sets of opposing ideals.”

Like the saying “Every cloud has a silver lining”, amid the pandemic, Yu Nandar Myat was presented with opportunities to fast-track where she ended up taking up the work of a senior engineer who is three levels higher than her current job grade in the field operations. She proudly says, “Recently, I have been able to handle the entire field data and work with minimum supervision under the tutelage of the Field Operations Management given the need to leverage minimum manpower for the operations.”

She believes that her field experience has taught her not only technical things and interpersonal relationships but also other priceless life lessons. It’s a blessing for her to be able to say she has realized her goal, and her true passion, but the even bigger prize is the journey and community that have come with it.

She has developed a strong bond with other female engineers through working together in the field operations and highlighted the importance of leaning on one another for the onslaught in a career field dominated by males.

“We have a strong sisterhood. We care for and look after one another. I understand we need to encourage one another to be independent, work smart, have a positive self-image, remain resilient, overcome difficulties and achieve our goals. Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much. In addition, we have to stand up for one another, protect and celebrate our own achievements instead of giving way to negative criticism,” says the Junior Engineer.

Furthermore, the young engineer looks up to the company’s equal opportunities and diversity policies as future career aspirations.

“Knowing intimately that the company values gender diversity and equal opportunities for women, I have been more motivated than ever as a young professional with a strong passion for petroleum engineering and to venture out into the field operations. In the long run, I want to gain more hands-on operational experience. I look forward to a more senior role in the near future by leading a team on several projects because I am excited to contribute to the continued growth and success of the company. To get there, I have to familiarize myself with the latest technologies

and applications, and better my communications skills and operational experiences along the way.”

Yu Nandar Myat keeps herself busy by participating in community service and professional support networks during her free time. In addition to her role as one of the organizers of a charity group that supports orphaned children in the country, she is a regular blood donator to the National Blood Center Myanmar. She strives to share her educational and industrial knowledge with the undergraduate students through the two non-governmental and non-profit organizations – Petrotechnical hub and MYPEA. In addition, she likes to keep herself up-to-date and deepen her own knowledge by taking certificate courses and attending various training programs in her own time. She believes that she is honing not only her hard skills but also soft skills through these activities.

“It is interesting to see how we access and utilize state-of-the-art technologies and efforts to strive for the recovery of untapped hydrocarbons in the country, which is one of the world’s oldest oil producers and estimated to have huge oil and gas reserves. I would love to be a part of the journey as the upstream sector strives to realize the opportunity,” muses the Junior Engineer as she reflects on the upstream oil and gas industry.

She sees the energy transition trend as something not to be overlooked. “If you ask me, we must look after the world and protect the environment we live in. We must work together to achieve a high level of environmental performance in terms of reducing carbon footprint in the oil and gas exploration and production activities. Certain oil companies, small, large, state-owned, and private, have already begun to engage in a phase transition, away from oil and gas by 2050. As far as I’m concerned, we have to try to keep abreast with the transition seeing it as a new and exciting turn of the industry.”

With a lot of self-care and support from her family and colleagues, the Junior Engineer is geared up for the next challenges. She says, “Everyone has been careworn these couple years and so have I. I have had to find my own motivation many times – working out, learning a new language, writing a journal, exploring nature, reading self-help books, and drawing on my religious perspectives on life. I have to thank all of my colleagues and senior staff for being supportive along the way and their camaraderie is second to none. I love this warm, friendly, and family-typed atmosphere of the workplace and this is where “Teamwork makes the dreamwork.” ■





# Growing as an HR Professional

Thal Sandy Tun

*The following is an interview with Junior HR Officer Daw K Thant Syn from the Human Resources Department as part of the Employee Spotlight series. The Junior HR Officer talks about how she is growing her career through an advanced degree and job enlargement these days.*

**Please introduce your role and responsibilities at the Human Resources Department of MPRL E&P.**

I joined MPRL E&P in January 2019 and currently working as Junior HR Officer, mainly responsible for the Talent Acquisition section.

**Could you please talk a little bit about your family and where you completed your high school and university studies?**

I was born and raised in Yangon and I am the only daughter in a family of three. I went to Practising High School (TTC), Yangon Institute of Education and received my Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from National Management Degree College. I went abroad to Australia and had my Master's Degree in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations from the University of Sydney.

**We see that you have worked for MPRL E&P before. Could you please talk about it? Why did you decide to return to MPRL E&P after your university? What motivated you exactly?**

I joined MPRL E&P back in 2015 as an HR Intern and continued working as an HR Administrator until October 2016. After that, I went abroad to further my studies and returned to MPRL E&P in 2019 after receiving my degree. The main reason is the future aspect of the HR Team at MPRL E&P. Back when I was working there as HR Administrator, I had seen numerous systems building up and growth within the HR Team, which helped me with my decision. I knew then that the HR Team at MPRL E&P would be the best place for me to grow professionally.

**What is most interesting about an M.HRM and IR? How can it help you in your career?**

My interest in HR started back when I was in university and my desire to learn about it grew stronger after working for a year at MPRL E&P. With my aim of wanting to work as an HR professional in the future, I decided that it would be best for me to

pursue a Master in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations. The interesting thing about learning M.HRM and IR back then was that I had a chance to learn different HR perspectives from different cultural backgrounds and how issues like diversity, inclusion, and equality have become more prevalent than ever for HR and the organization itself.

**What makes you most interested in HR field, specifically in the recruitment profession as your career?**

What makes me interested in HR is the more you learn about it, the more you find how diverse and interesting it can be. I have an interest in the Learning and Development section of HR but it is a coincidence that I get to work in the recruitment section and learn how important recruitment is for an organization since it is the start of each employee's career. Although recruitment is part of the HR operation process with less strategic role, it can be quite challenging when we are put in a tough spot of finding the right candidates who will fit both the company, work culture, and the job position.

**What are the most rewarding aspects of your job at MPRL E&P?**

The most rewarding aspect of my job at MPRL E&P is the job enrichment I receive in my current position. Although I am working as a Junior Officer over the past three years, my work scope has spread across other HR functions despite the fact that I am the main focal person for Talent Acquisition. And in Talent Acquisition, I get to expand my HR knowledge and participate in diverse perspectives of the candidates, and being able to connect the right candidate with the company is incredibly satisfying.

**What skills and knowledge make an excellent HR professional according to your role (Recruitment and Selection)?**

It is important for someone specializing in Recruitment and Selection to have objective judgment over candidates' skills and knowledge when choosing the suitable person for the required position to avoid unnecessary bias. At the same time, recruiters need to be able to roughly read candidates' personalities and their way of working through interview processes and body gestures to figure out whether they will be a good fit for both the organization and the job position itself.

**Do you feel you are applying your knowledge and skills at your position and that they are also beneficial for this role?**

Yes, of course! And I know my skills and knowledge are beneficial for this role and are a good match for my job position. Moreover, as HR function has been growing rapidly over the years, especially in the operational aspect of it, it is getting more interesting to learn about new strategies, tools, processes and metrics. I look forward to using my experience, and knowledge to upgrade HR processes at MPRL E&P and come up with ways to create and sustain a successful employee experience.

**What is the impact on recruitment with the pandemic and current socio-political situation?**

Nowadays, due to the high unemployment rate as a result of the economic downturn and pandemic situations, we are getting a large pool of candidates every time we advertise job announcements. However, on the downside, getting applicants with various backgrounds, whether they are relevant or not for the position, make it a bit challenging in terms of the time spent on the screening process and picking the right candidate for the position.

**What does it take for a company to find and retain top talent?**

Starting from the vacancy announcement to finding the perfect candidate for the position, it takes time and energy to screen hundreds of resumes, go through interview processes and write assessments. Further, when the candidate is recruited for the position, HR and the respective Heads of Department need to make sure that the candidate is well-engaged in the working environment, his or her capabilities are being used in the right place and the gap analysis is carefully evaluated so that we can help grow the person and retain top talent in the company for the long term.

**How do you spend your time outside of work? What are your hobbies?**

Outside of work, I like to focus on my own self-improvement. I give myself some personal time to work on myself and reflect on what I want to do in life and how I'd like my life to be in the future. My hobbies of playing golf and doing jigsaw puzzles help me with my concentration and with releasing my stress or negativity that I may have built up knowingly or unknowingly. ■





A Brief Trip Down Memory Lane

Hailed as the premium business landmark in Yangon that embodies levels of sophistication, state-of-the-art design, and security system, Vantage Tower has set a new benchmark for premium office space. Constructed by our in-house M&A Construction on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2012, the GFA mixed-use building now sits on Pyay Road with panoramic views of the beautiful Inya Lake, Shwedagon Pagoda, and the city itself. With a long list of facilities, Vantage Tower houses the first leading Uptime Institute Tier III Certified Data Center in Myanmar with high-level security systems. Emerged from one story, 12,088.51 sq ft building to an 18-story, 236,144 sq ft flagship corporate headquarters, Vantage Tower has won many awards for its design and construction. Any establishments, old and new, hold and embody memories unknowingly; there is a pleasant hidden connection between place and memory. We hope that Vantage Tower embodies our fond memories, and one day, we can look back and share our personal stories with one another.■





## From Cover Page

## Why We are Writing this Article

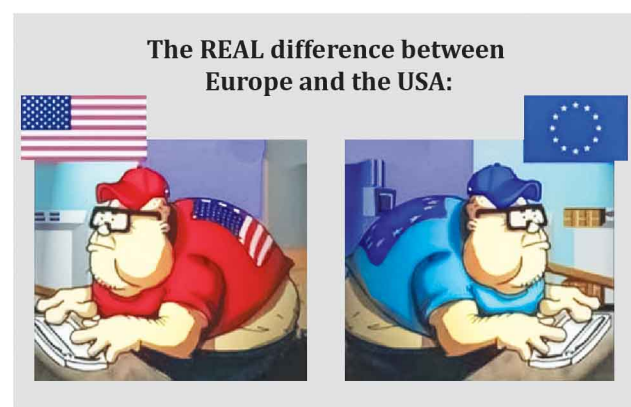
Family-owned oil companies are a rare breed in today's oil and gas industry, which is dominated by large international oil companies, especially in areas outside of the United States. Therefore, it is a unique opportunity to work for a small family-owned exploration and production company, such as MPRL E&P, which actively pursues ambitious projects, technically and logistically complex, as well as corporately and commercially challenging.

## About the Authors

We are the only two technical expats within MPRL E&P for now, and work alongside some 280 Myanmar employees. While coming from very different backgrounds and cultures, between both of us, we together have more than 80 years of professional experience in the oil & gas industry under our belts. We both have wandered the world to search for oil & gas - even sometimes finding some - and produce it from the onshore, offshore and remote jungle and desert regions of six different continents. We both worked for all sorts of corporate entities ranging from giants in the industry to small independents of less than a dozen people, from hands-on field operations to office work, in both technical and management positions, as successful employees and managers, as well as independent consultants.

We met at MPRL E&P, a business of a very rare and special breed in the world: a family-owned upstream energy company. Whilst fairly common in USA, there are only a very few dozen in the rest of the world, and quite a few are partly listed in stock exchanges or otherwise not fully owned by a single person or family.

We feel privileged and proud to be part of the MPRL E&P company, and wanted to explain the unique opportunities and challenges that face a small family-owned company in a market dominated by large international players.



## A Couple of Fundamental Reminders

Before we review these opportunities and challenges of a family-owned company in Myanmar context, let's review a few fundamentals to set the background.

- 1) Who takes the risk for exploration and development?
- 2) How do the taxes and revenues from petroleum companies benefit the people of Myanmar?

## Who Takes the Risk for Exploration and Development?

In the typical contractual arrangement, the government, as the resources' owner on behalf of the

people, grants exploration and development rights for a specific area to an oil and gas company for a fee. The oil and gas company then takes the full risk for exploring and hopefully finding resources which warrant an economic development. If the efforts are unsuccessful, then the government loses nothing. But, if the project is successful, then the government shares in the economic benefit.

For instance, MPRL E&P took the full risk on its own funds for discovering the initial gas in the Western Ayeyarwady Basin, and then partnered with International Oil Companies (IOCs) to successfully explore deep waters. Ultimately, the field will be fully developed due to the investment of this Pyitharyar Integrated Project partnership, without any investment by the government or the people of Myanmar. However, once production is successfully established, the benefits will be shared with the people, as the resource owners, through the government.



## How Do the Taxes and Revenues from Petroleum Companies Benefit the People of Myanmar?

The oil and gas contracts with any government are structured in a way that the investor takes all the risk, and the government (and its people) enjoy a majority of the benefit whenever a project is successful.

While exploring at their own risks and at their own costs, such as when MPRL E&P discovered the first gas in 2012 on its own, petroleum companies only find commercial petroleum in about ¼ of the cases. Once developed and brought to market, a very substantial share of production belongs to the resource owner. For instance, in the case of Pyitharyar Integrated Project, more than ¾ of the revenues generated by the gas before it is transported, will go back to the coffers of the State.

Of course, because the State is the resource owner, expenses associated with exploration and development are meanwhile reimbursed by the State at a reasonable rate so that the State enjoys substantial revenues right from the start of gas production. However, for any oil and gas development, the revenue is not enjoyed for many years after the initial discovery, and the petroleum company pays all expenses during those years of development. For example, the Pyitharyar Integrated Project started in 2007 and had the initial gas discovery in 2012, but neither the government nor the investors will enjoy revenues until some time after the middle of the 2020's.

Once the production revenues commence, the benefits to the people of Myanmar go far beyond the revenue received from the project. The provision of gas, which is used to provide electrical power for both residential and industrial use, is necessary for industrial growth, and is the foundation for economic growth and prosperity of the people. Therefore, the oil and gas industry plays a significant role in the overall well-being of the Myanmar citizens.

Now that we've set the stage, let's move on to the main topic, which is to review the opportunities and challenges that face a family-owned oil and gas company.

## Family-owned Petroleum Companies are Rare Outside of the USA

Within the USA, the rights to minerals, including oil and gas, belong to the landowners. This situation created a lot of wealthy individuals as oil was discovered on the family farm, and also resulted in a lot of family-owned oil and gas companies which grew out of the fortunes which were received by landowners.

In most countries outside of USA, the mineral rights are owned by the state, which makes it much more difficult and expensive to obtain rights to exploration and development. Therefore, most oil and gas projects are pursued by larger companies or a group of companies in partnership. The vast majority of petroleum companies — now re-branding as "energy companies" — in the world have always belonged to a great many people, whether state companies and their millions of taxpayers, or majors with hundreds of thousands of shareholders, or so-called independents, belonging to only a few less shareholders with a slightly larger appetite for challenges. In any of the above cases, the risk is shared by a large number of people. In a family-owned company, the sole risk lies with only a very few individuals.

## Fewer Owners Allow Swift Decisions

A key benefit of a family-owned company is the ability to make swift decisions without the need to consult other owners or shareholders. As a result, MPRL E&P has a history and track record of successfully taking on projects after many "experts" predicted failure. This gives small companies like MPRL E&P a distinct advantage over large companies because it would have been unlikely, if not impossible, for larger companies to go against the majority opinion of the experts. If it were not for companies like MPRL E&P, many opportunities such as Pyitharyar Integrated Project would not be discovered and developed.

## The Challenges of a Family-owned Company

There are three kinds of challenges that face a small family-owned company are:

- (a) Classical technical challenges for which MPRL E&P is very familiar and well equipped to mitigate,
- (b) Managing risk on a limited budget and resources, and
- (c) Emerging challenges due to very rapidly changing social, environmental, and economic conditions worldwide, which require grit and flexibility by MPRL E&P to swiftly and efficiently accommodate each new challenge.

## (a) Classical Technical Challenges

Being an avid reader of Insight! Newsletter, you are already familiar with sub-surface challenges and mechanical challenges as roughly illustrated below. These illustrations are grossly oversimplified and offered only as examples, because the extensive technical challenges related to oil and gas exploration, development and production are outside the scope of this article.





**Sub-surface challenges:** such as geological imaging - on the left is how we see landscapes deep in the underground (and that is a stark improvement from 30-40 years ago), on the right is how we want to see these landscapes



extremely fast. While these challenges have impacted the entire industry, they are especially impactful on small companies with less diversity and limited assets.

### (c) Emerging Challenges

These challenges, which are very much intertwined, range from:

- sanitary and logistical restrictions related to the COVID-19 crisis, to
- environmental and social pressures in support of a “greener” world and
- economical-political challenges to provide a sustainable energy future, while balancing the desire to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, the intricacies of regional gas supply, and the inconsistent and unpredictable pricing of oil, gas, and LNG.

### The COVID-19 Crisis

The world is learning to live and strive with the COVID-19 crisis. This sanitary crisis will be more protracted than anticipated; new variants are racing against unprecedented fast vaccination campaigns, following a worldwide search for and mass production of various vaccines, an extraordinary feat that mankind still needs to fully appreciate. This new challenge has multiple impacts, from major disruptions in supply chains to a whimsical economic environment when oil price fluctuates within hours of a new variant being announced thousands of miles away.

While the impact of COVID-19 affected businesses worldwide, both large and small, the impact on small companies was especially detrimental. For example, large international oil companies, with a large portfolio of producing properties and established revenue streams, were better prepared to weather the economic impact of project delays and record low oil prices, compared to a small family-owned company such as MPRL E&P, whose sole source of revenue is from Mann Oil Field. Nevertheless, the swift and flexible nature of MPRL E&P allowed a resilience program to be quickly implemented (including vaccinating 100% of employees and families), which allowed operations to be continued without interruption, while at the same time reducing costs to maintain fiscal responsibility.

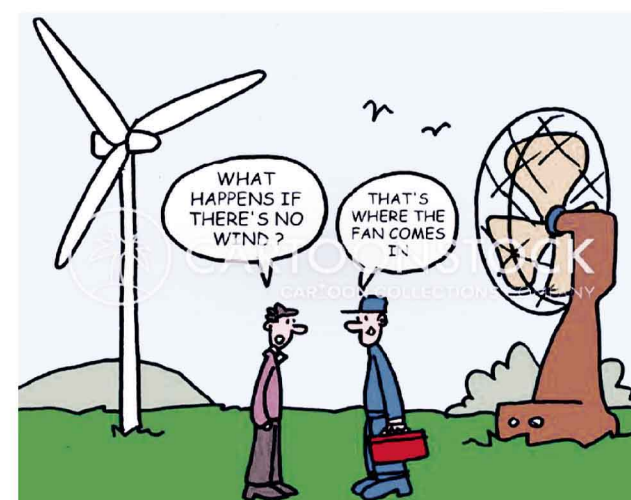
### The “Greening of the World”

Most governments are under pressure from the civil society to require greening the world by “decarbonizing” and producing ever more electrical power by “renewable” energies.

This fast-growing mindset towards renewable energies (and somewhat against petroleum companies) cannot be matched by the same fast implementation

on the ground. Such greening of the world will take time, in spite of all government promises in well-publicized conferences. We are witnessing what appears to be an industrial revolution, with multiple impacts that cannot be all tackled in such a short paper. But let us try to draw attention to a couple of points, mainly around the role of gas in this revolution.

Most renewable sources of energy are intermittent, i.e., unavailable during certain times. For example, wind farm efficiency varies with seasonal winds. Solar power is ineffective at night time and when rain prevails. Hydropower is subject to seasonal rains and negatively impacted by drought. Hydrogen is the big talk of the year but also has its own challenges. Hydrogen generation from methane—worldwide providing presently 95% of produced hydrogen—results in its own carbon generation, which requires recapture or other forms of mitigation. Hydrogen generation by electrolysis of water is a green process but requires a lot of electricity. Of course, storing electricity in batteries is a solution, however that method also has its own set of challenges, which includes the need to procure rare earth and strategic metals concentrated in relatively very few countries around the world, as resources are far less widely distributed than any other sources of energy, including gas.



By contrast, gas is relatively clean and reliable baseload energy, i.e., a source of energy whose flow can be tuned at the desired rate at all times. There is no renewable energy source currently available which has the ability to fully replace the current energy demand which is met by natural gas. Therefore, gas will play a pivotal role in facilitating energy transition. The process will progress in line with technological developments which make renewable energy sources more efficient, reliable, and economic. Meanwhile, gas is plentiful, clean, and highly efficient, which makes it the ideal fuel to replace more polluting coal or oil. And let's not forget that gas is also a feedstock for fertilizers and plastics, for which mankind has not yet found economic substitutes, as well as the fuel used to obtain metals from processing ores. Gas still has a long bright future.

Despite the obvious need for fossil fuels for many years to come, especially gas because of its multiple uses apart from fuel, there is dwindling support for projects related to fossil fuels. Banks and lenders are taking a stronger position in support of green energy, making it more difficult and more costly to secure lending for oil and gas projects. This position by lenders can have a significant impact on smaller companies, such as MPRL E&P, which have to rely on financing to execute such large-scale projects like the development of Pyitharyar Integrated Project.



**Mechanical challenges:** an Asia Drilling driller gently tagging a target with a one-and-a-half-mile long steel tube

### (b) Managing Risk on a Limited Budget

As explained above, oil and gas exploration is successful less than 25% of the time. Large oil and gas companies are successful because they have sufficient funds and resources to test a large number of areas, some which are successful and many which are unsuccessful.

The exploration business is much more difficult for small companies, especially small family-owned companies, where the risk is borne by a single investor. Because of limited funds, small companies cannot afford to test multiple areas at the same time, and typically have to put “all their (very few) eggs in one basket”, with that basket having less than a 1-in-4 chance of success. This is exactly what was done by MPRL E&P in regards to Pyitharyar Integrated Project. In what most educated people would define as a foolish bet, the owner of MPRL E&P risked a significant portion of the family's and company's wealth to drill the initial exploration well which resulted in the first gas discovery in the Western Ayeyarwady Basin.

Besides the technical and financial challenges which have always been present in the oil industry, challenges of very different nature have loomed up for the past ten years or so, and are changing the world



## The Economic and Political Pressures

**Gas as a source of power generation in Myanmar and Thailand.** In a nutshell, Myanmar gas provides well above half of the domestic electrical power in Myanmar and about 10% of Thailand's electricity; one in seven kW of electricity in Thailand comes from Myanmar gas. While half of Yangon's electricity comes from Yadana gas, this resource is on the decline in at least two major fields: Yetagun is in the terminal stage while Yadana's decline from plateau production is imminent. Nearly half of Thailand's imported gas as a source of power is presently piped from Myanmar.

**Gas price is volatile.** Similar to all resources, oil and gas prices are not within the control of petroleum companies (except for partial influence by very large entities with the support of coalitions between OPEC countries). Prices are driven by outside factors, such as political situations, emotions, speculation, and most recently by the impact of the ups and downs of the COVID-19 virus.

## MPRL E&P's Commitment to Myanmar's Future

As a family-owned petroleum company and operating the project in its early life for half a dozen years, MPRL E&P has played a decisive role in two aspects of securing this Pyitharyar Integrated Project, that no other companies could have done.

Because of its wide and deep regional geological knowledge, as well as its ability to take and implement very fast decisions, MPRL E&P discovered the first gas in March 2012, at its sole risk and with its own funds. *Pyi Thar-1* was plugged and abandoned substantially below budget—yet with no shortcut—as a basin opening gas discovery less than eight months after identifying the drilling rig, deciding on the location, and initiating the basis of the design of the well.

Gas projects found in ultra-deep waters are barely more than three dozen around the world and are challenging and expensive to develop. With its knowledge of the local business environment, MPRL E&P led the Pyitharyar Integrated Project joint venture into finding win-win solutions so that the gas production would benefit all stakeholders of the project.

MPRL E&P strives on a unique set of values hardly matched by petroleum companies listed on stock exchanges, and which have typically one single overarching priority: return on investment for the tens to hundreds of thousands of shareholders. While the profitability of the company is a requirement for sustainability, it is not the sole motivation of MPRL E&P's owners and staff. Instead, profitability is used as the necessary means to continue building a local legacy, which will provide employment and opportunities for the future generations of Myanmar.

MPRL E&P's sense of vision, determination, and long-term focus is definitely a major advantage of a family-owned company. It will take a full generation of 25 to 30 years for MPRL E&P to begin to recover the investment made since 2007 in Pyitharyar Integrated Project. Such patience and stamina are seldom found in the boardrooms of major corporations, which are largely focused on quarterly and annual gains.

## MPRL E&P's Culture and Community Involvement

Despite the COVID-19 crises aggravated by local po-



Gas flow test at Shwe Yee Htun-2

litical circumstances, the MPRL E&P family-owned company continues to show extraordinary resilience and entrepreneurial spirit, fueled by:

**Inter-team work as well as teamwork:** While teamwork is obviously a pre-requisite, working as integrated as possible is paramount to the success of any enterprise.

**Innovation & community involvement:** Innovation is not limited to technical matters, but also includes corporate innovation. MPRL E&P was the first company to apply UN's standards of social license to the onshore petroleum industry in Myanmar, by implementing such standards at the Mann Field, which includes a very active program for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the local community.



**The Mann Kyoe tomatoes of the Mann Field Communities,** one of quite a few of MPRL E&P sponsored CSR projects providing the best flavored and tastiest tomatoes in country, organic and grown with minimal drip irrigation suitable for the local climate and water resources.

**Collaborative decision making:** To avoid one of the troubles faced by family-owned companies, consultations, and participative decisions making is practiced (almost) all the time, requiring several steps of devil's advocacy exercises to take the calculated risk.

**Checks and balances:** MPRL E&P has a sound internal auditing system of technical, financial, and administrative reviews and a team whose only mission is checking compliance at all levels from company to laws, rules, and regulations. The number three of the company is the Chief Compliance Officer whom nobody will confront before being fully prepared.

## Worried about the Founder's Syndrome?

One of the challenges typical of family-owned companies is the "Founder's Syndrome", whereby "the passion and charisma of the founder(s), often

sources of the initial creativity and productivity of the organization, can become limiting or a destructive factor." (Wikipedia)

We may not worry about that one: the Founder and CEO of the company has taken great care to raise his children in his same stringent values and has guided them to take a keen interest in his business and a passion for the industry behind it. One of the sons is taking a firm grip at the helm, while the CEO now enjoys the pleasures and hurdles of being a grandfather, to possibly nurture the next generation to carry on MPRL E&P's legacy in the energy business.

## Closing Remarks

While the challenges that face a small family-owned company are sometimes difficult, it is these very challenges that make working for MPRL E&P such a unique opportunity. There is a very special pleasure that comes from building a local company that not only benefits the current generations but is building a legacy that will serve future generations to come, both directly through jobs and opportunities, but also indirectly through its contribution to the development of Myanmar.

What started as Myint and Associates Co., Ltd. (M&A) in 1988, later resulted in the start of MPRL E&P Pte Ltd. in 1996 as a minority partner in the Mann Field Project. After successful results from both M&A and Mann Field, MPRL E&P expanded into the offshore market and made several gas discoveries, while the group of companies simultaneously grew into a successful group of nine diverse entities, all owned and managed by the same family.

One of us has been part of MPRL E&P since the early days, and has seen firsthand the impact that the company has made on the staff as well as the community. What started as five engineers gathering data in Mann Field in 1996 has now grown into a company that employs more than a thousand local staff, both directly and indirectly. More importantly, it has provided opportunities for learning and growth that otherwise would not have been possible. It is an honor and a privilege, as well as a unique and interesting challenge, to be part of this team adventure with the MPRL E&P family-owned company.

By the way, for the sake of clarity, please note that this paper was not commissioned by the owners of the company. We only wanted to express respect for such a sense of long-term vision (without losing a keen – occasionally too keen – sense of details) that only family-owned companies can bring to fruition in the interest of every and all stakeholders, from employees to citizens. ■



# Myint & Associates DATA CENTER



## Woman in Tech: The Real Game Changer

M&A Telecoms Team

To make it in a world of tech as a woman may seem daunting. Globally, the number of women working in science and technology is growing, however, the female representation in the tech sector has been a sluggish growth. The biggest reason for this is the stigma that the IT and engineering fields are being seen as male-dominated sectors, reinforced by this dominance in the subject to study at school.

Nowadays, many organizations are becoming more diverse by promoting a work culture where women and minorities are in leadership positions. But to close the gender gap and help women embrace technology, we still need to make bolder changes in creating equal opportunities and a more inclusive work environment for women.

At MPRL E&P Group of Companies, we are committed to actively promoting gender diversity by creating equal opportunities and mentoring women for leadership roles. We believe that diverse opinions are important and gender equity where women work beside men, not above men or below them, is something the company actively promotes in the organization. Our goal as a local company in Myanmar, in a patriarchal society where men customarily enjoy higher positions than women, we strive to change this conservative belief by hiring more female talents. As of today, we have many aspiring female workforces in the fields of management, engineering, security, and technology at our company.

Daw The The Aye has come a long way as a female techy, with challenges and achievements that made her who she is today. She holds a Master's Degree in Computer Technology from the University of Computer Studies Yangon (UCSY). Started her career at MPRL E&P Pte Ltd. in March 2013 as an IT Support working for Management Information Systems Department, she knew that she needed to expand her knowledge and skill set, despite her educational background. With this determination, she pursued a certificate program while she fulfilled her duties at work. She now holds a Microsoft MCSE certification, a very challenging program that requires her to pass five exams and prove that she has the ability to design, install, administer, and troubleshoot a Microsoft-server-based computer and networking systems. This validates not only her professional skill set to run a highly efficient modern data center, but also her can-do spirit, motivation, and strong desire to pursue what she truly wants. Not to mention that she is also a certified ISO

27001:2013 Internal Auditor for Information System Management. What great achievements for a young Myanmar female in IT!

Currently working as a Project Executive at Myint & Associates Telecommunications Ltd. (M&A Telecoms) which owns and operates the first leading and innovative Uptime Institute Tier III Design Certified ICT (Information Communications Technology) Data Center in Myanmar, she holds many responsibilities. While tackling everyday challenges in the Department, Daw The The Aye has been working hard towards her certification in the Project Management Professional (PMP), furthering her knowledge, leadership experience, and expertise in the field. Her best efforts are admirable and endless just like her goals.

Her efforts are now bearing fruit, bringing a new transformation to the organization. Under her coordination and co-operation, M&A Data Center has established a Data Center Physical Security Policy, which she carefully devised. This policy is needed for M&A Data Center to get access to PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard) system because we are holding sensitive cardholders' information at the payment and processing levels set forth by credit card and payment organizations. Her main task included collaborating with third parties for the required assessments in order to get the PCI DSS certification in a short time. She also makes sure that M&A Data Center complies with PCI DSS accreditation standards by conducting monthly, quarterly, and yearly assessments.

Nothing is stopping Daw The The Aye from making a change, personally and professionally. She is currently working on implementing the System Applications and Products (SAP) software along with Workflow Management System (WMS) so that all departments can access and share common data to create a more efficient work environment. She is excited about going live with this new system in the near future as she hopes to bring more unity, collaboration, and systematic operations for each and every employee and the organization as a whole. Daw The The Aye also hopes that her journey inspires all young women to pursue their dreams and leave a footprint in the male-dominated tech field.

Katherine Johnson, a NASA Mathematician who helped put a man on the moon, once said, "Girls are capable of doing everything men are capable of doing. Sometimes they have more imagination than men". Well, she is right. We must encourage women to become more confident in themselves and be more courageous because just like men, women are capable of accomplishing anything they desire. It is of great importance that inclusive work culture is fostered and we uplift women that are hesitant to self-promote and sell their skills at work. IT is a field for every one and we must celebrate the outstanding work of these incredible women who change the tech world. ■

*"Girls are capable of doing everything men are capable of doing. Sometimes they have more imagination than men."*

Katherine Johnson

The very first Tier III Design Certified Data Center in Myanmar  
with state-of-the-art facilities and the highest standards of customer care





# Life on an Offshore Oil Platform: the HSE Perspective

Nay Myo Aung



*Working offshore has been a rewarding experience for U Nay Myo Aung, a Safe Operations Coordinator who shares his responsibilities and viewpoint with us in detail, in hopes to provide a better understanding of the role and encourage future candidates to pursue a challenging offshore career on a rig. Here, you will discover the offshore life through the eyes of U Nay Myo Aung.*

Life on an offshore oil platform is different, and it is not everyone's cup of tea. However, U Nay Myo Aung believes it is a one-of-a-lifetime opportunity that any interested employee should consider pursuing. For U Nay Myo Aung, the golden opportunity came through in December 2021 when he was given a chance to work offshore on the Ocean Monarch Rig, a semisubmersible, ultra-deep water rig under POSCO International as part of the Shwe Phase II project.

With almost 25 years of work experience at MPRL E&P Group of Companies, U Nay Myo Aung was on top of the world when this opportunity came through because this short-term commitment would be his first experience working offshore. As a Safe Operations Coordinator (SOC), he spent three months from December 2021 to February 2022 on the Ocean Monarch Rig, one of the most memorable experiences of his lifetime!

As a Safe Operations Coordinator, his role was to promote and improve the safety culture and performance on the rig through his strong safety leadership inclusive of providing assistance and guidance to all departments the areas of planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising and monitoring various operations while ensuring potential hazards and risks are adequately identified, eliminated or controlled. For U Nay Myo Aung, these goals were attainable but challenging as he looked forward to having more hands-on experience by working offshore while at the same time preparing himself to become a better leader at work.

Working offshore requires a vast amount of safety training given that it is one of the most dangerous jobs because you are working with heavy machinery, combustible materials, etc. Before getting transferred onto the rig, there were a few trainings that needed to be completed as part of the offshore standards and practices. First was the basic medical check called OGUK, a worldwide indicator of health and fitness for anyone working in the oil and gas industry, followed by Basis Offshore Safety Induction & Emergency Training (Tropical) with CA-EBS. Then he was quarantined for a period of 14 days where he went through many safety awareness training programs like Job Safety Analysis Training, CPR and First Aid Training, and Risk Management Training to name a few. In addition, during this time, he also had a chance to learn about Global Excellence Management System (GEMS), that contained all operational-related policies, practices, and procedures.

After passing the COVID-19 PCR test, the excited SOC was ready to begin work offshore. He was stationed on the Offshore Ocean Monarch Rig (Semisub) for six weeks on and four weeks off the rig. Remember, rigs and platforms operate 24 hours a day, all year, and their shifts reflect that.

One of the greatest opportunities for him was that he had a chance to work closely with a Safety Department Representative (SDR). He managed to familiarize himself with the equipment, practices, and procedures and also, he had a chance to learn more about individual safety in offshore operations. Many insights regarding HSE were shared among the teams through the participation and discussion in the Pre-tour Safety Meeting, Toolbox Talks, Job Safety Analysis (JSA), Site Inspections, and Standalone Hazard Hunts on a daily basis.

On the oil platform, it is everyone's responsibility to keep safety top of mind. And for a Safe Operations Coordinator, promoting and improving a safety culture is of top priority as part of spreading the HSE culture. The Global Excellence Management System (GEMS) is a program that is widely used to meet these HSE goals and to assure that the worksite has implemented policies and procedures that are aligned with the corporate commitment to

the environment. Apart from GEMS, U Nay Myo Aung stressed the importance of having good leadership skills in rig management that enhance no blame culture and proactive approaches for all HSE-related concerns.

Another system which is also widely implemented on the worksite as part of the Safety Observation Process is called the DODI (Diligent Observation Decisive Intervention). It is based on Behavior-based Safety (BBS), an internationally recognized, scientific approach to building safe work culture. Through U Nay Myo Aung's discourse, it is clear to see that the offshore HSE culture is a collective effort and active participation by the entire workforce on board, and the fact that the failure of an employee at many levels across the organization can contribute to a major disaster.

During his three-month experience working offshore, he observed that most local crews were hesitant when communicating with a non-local supervisor about unsafe conditions. U Nay Myo Aung believed that the Stop Work Authority (SWA) plays a crucial role in this kind of situation. This SWA usually comes from supervisors only, not from the crew members, however, Offshore Installation Manager (OIM) encourages all employees to participate in SWA because stopping an operation is better than risking a loss. As a Safe Operations Coordinator, U Nay Myo Aung was responsible for reinforcing and implementing this safety policy among Myanmar crew members, which contributed to a significant improvement among the locals to speak up without fear when they see a potential at-risk situation at work.

In addition to the language barrier and miscommunication between supervisors and the crew members was the fact that SWA, Pre-tour Meetings, and Toolbox Talks helped develop confidence and effective communication among the workforce. U Nay Myo Aung was assigned as a mediator and translator for the Myanmar crew members and in doing so, he ensured that all safety protocols, and assigned tasks were clearly discussed and understood before they proceeded with work. He made sure they were also familiar with Hazard Identification conversations before commencing work.

"I spent most of my time conducting individual discussions with the crews about their communication problems, safety concerns and personal behaviors. I had to explain to them in detail the rig practices and procedures," said the determined U Nay Myo Aung. The OIM and SDR's guidance helped him complete his other duties, including administration, weekly lifeboat inspection, and monitoring and auditing the DODI, the program he helped train.

The idea of knowledge expansion became cardinal to the personal growth and career development for U Nay Myo Aung. Through various safety trainings and routine offshore drills like emergency muster,

lifeboat launch, environmental spill, etc., he learned the true value of offshore HSE and how every drill and training must be taken seriously. With gratitude, the Safe Operations Coordinator concluded with excitement, "I achieved target zero incidents and target zero certification of completion while working on the rig under POSCO International. I am very pleased to share my knowledge and experience with MPRL E&P and my colleagues for the upcoming offshore projects." ■





# Life on an Offshore Oil Platform: the HSE Perspective

Soe Than Naing



*Through his enriching stint on a drilling rig, U Soe Than Naing, Assistant Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) Manager from MPRL E&P aims to promote crew health, safety, and environmental awareness to a higher level in the country's offshore oil and gas industry that is bound to thrive. Here, you will discover the offshore life through the eyes of U Soe Than Naing.*

Crews working in operations hundreds of miles offshore, away from the nearest infirmary, working in all weathers at sea, face more significant challenges and a potential number of hazards on a daily basis but they hold the key to taking extra precautions and control measures to avoid human fatality, according to U Soe Than Naing, who has joined the Ocean Monarch Semisub in a Development Drilling Campaign off the coast of Rakhine State in the Bay of Bengal as Safe Operations Coordinator from November 2021 to March 2022 through a standard recruitment process.

Previously employed as a Production Engineer, he worked in various oil and gas fields in Myanmar before joining MPRL E&P in 2006 as a Field Operations Engineer and later, an Assistant HSE Manager assigned to Mann Field. He became an Assistant Driller in Asia Drilling Pte Ltd., a member of MPRL E&P Group of Companies, and then a Rig Manager in 2016. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Petroleum Engineering from the Yangon Technological University. In addition, he has already amassed almost 20 years of experience in safety training and leadership areas in line with the oil and gas industry standards both at home and abroad.

U Soe Than Naing explained why it is of paramount importance to support offshore crews from the HSE perspective. "For offshore drilling operations, it is of vital importance that the health, safety, and efficiency of the highly skilled workforce remain imperative and top priority as they

engage in complex and physically demanding tasks using heavy machinery and hazardous chemicals, let alone the turbulent sea and COVID-19 today."

He further discussed his role in the drilling campaign: "My job as a Safe Operations Coordinator was quite rewarding; I had the opportunity to improve and strengthen the safety culture and performance on the rig by being a strong mentor and leader for the team." His responsibilities included providing guidance and assistance to all departments to plan, organize, coordinate, supervise, and monitor various operations and ensuring hazards and risks were adequately identified, eliminated, or controlled.

Many wonder what life is like on an offshore oil rig, a "floating city on the ocean". According to U Soe Than Naing, it was very different than the most professional environment he has been exposed to. Remember, working on a rig means working in a remote

place in the middle of the sea with unusual working shifts.

His first day at the rig was long; he vividly remembered how the day went. After getting dropped off with a helicopter on the helideck at an early hour, his day started with a new employee onboarding induction, operational activity status presentation plus an orientation tour around the facilities and offices on the platform. After sitting through many trainings and presentations from various managers and supervisors, he was discharged for the day. The newly hired U Soe Than Naing was ready to mingle and meet new colleagues. At the welcoming party, he was excited to converse with fellow co-workers and enjoy the cabin, food, gym, and most of all, the beautiful sunset from the rig!

His daily duties started with safety protocol; a temperature check before breakfast which was from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. The 5:45 a.m. pre-tour safety meeting was held every day where safety officers, department heads, and company personnel discussed everything from weather reports to upcoming operations. After the meeting, U Soe Than Naing would change into his PPE (Personal Protective Equipment): a coverall, steel-toed boots, safety glasses, impact gloves, hearing protection, and a hard hat. Then, he would find out about night shift activities and apply for a work permit at the Permit Control Room. During this time, many of his colleagues would be busy doing handovers and at 6:30 a.m., he and the senior rig personnel would hold a meeting with the Shore-based Management Team where they would discuss operational, logistic, maintenance, and safety issues inclusive of making strategic decisions. After the meeting, he would set up a daily work plan based on current operational activities and the meeting's action plan. Every day is a different adventure when working offshore.

Furthermore, while on the rig, U Soe Than Naing would dedicate ample time to study and discuss the HSE policies, documents, and systems related to offshore operations where achieving optimum operations with peaked performance and zero impact on people and the environment are the key goals. According to U Soe Than Naing, once you are well onboard, the first step is to familiarize yourself with DODI, an HSE interface where all personnel can submit their safety observations and concerns, very similar to MPRL E&P's CARE Card system, but with more specific actions to ensure mitigations or controls are adequate for job processes in the offshore work environment. This Behavior-based Safety Program, namely Diligent Observation Decisive Intervention or DODI, requires all the personnel on board to keep asking what will happen if desired or undesired behaviors go unchecked.

The Safe Operations Coordinator also underscored how important it is to practice the Step 7 Safe Work Process: (1) Plan, (2) Communicate, (3) Check Equipment, (4) Prepare Area, (5) Control Energy, (6) Final Check, and (7) Start Work. Here, he would like to point out that starting work is the final step and asking questions is important. He believed that this essential safety knowledge and pointers are beneficial for the team when conducting a safety conversation with a positive and professional attitude.

Moreover, a responsible business operator means taking care of the environment responsibly and building a sustainable future with the stakeholders. Offshore waste disposal is an international concern and a serious practice for all oil and gas companies. At his offshore job, the team put extra emphasis on a waste management plan that integrates legal requirements, risk management, other relevant international standards, and regular audits. Part of this environmental management system is the rig being ISO 14001 certified; ISO 14001 is the international standard that specifies requirements for an effective Environmental Management System (EMS).

U Soe Than Naing believed that being mindful can help save the planet. At his job, environmental awareness trainings are mandatory for all personnel despite their positions. The rig's Onshore Management Team would carry out periodic review meetings to discuss environmental matters including corrective actions, audit findings, and new legislation. He further concurred that minimizing environmental impacts and preventing pollution is part of being a responsible business operator. He added, "Because the environment is a global issue, each and every one of us has a personal responsibility to protect it. I stand firm in protecting the environment that I love and fully respect. I have seized every opportunity to protect the mother earth throughout my career and







Insight! 25<sup>th</sup> June 2022

# 2022 Celebration



## Trash Hero Gaw Yan Gyi

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Trash Hero Gaw Yan Gyi Chapter celebrated "World Environment Day" by conducting a cleanup drive and providing knowledge sharing and Q&A sessions on "Danger of Microplastics".

Our Trash Heroes cleaned up trash along the Gaw Yan Gyi shoreline. A total of 28 Heroes including 13 adults and 15 kids participated in the event and collected 65 kg of trash (13 bags). Nga Yoke Kaung Town Development Committee also joined the cleanup and shared knowledge of waste management.



Just like the theme "Only One Earth" of World Environment Day 2022, let's take care of the only one Earth we have! ■



## Trash Hero Minbu

Trash Hero Minbu Chapter celebrated "World Environment Day" by cleaning up their respective surroundings and by raising awareness on the negative impact of Microplastics.

A total of 281 Heroes, including 129 adults and 152 kids from Aye Mya, Nan U, Auk Kyaung, Kyar Kan, Pauk Kone, Let Pan Ta Pin, Lay Eain Tan, Mei Bayt Kone, Mann Kyoe, Kywe Cha, Chin Taung, Let Pa Taw, and Ywar Thar Villages in Minbu (Sagu) Township participated in this cleanup and collected 485 kg of trash (97 bags).



The global environmental issues are increasingly deteriorating because of environmental contamination and climate change. We have "Only One Earth" so let's take care of it together. Remember, small changes make a big difference. ■



## Mann Field

At Mann Field, Field Operations Team organized a plantation campaign on World Environment Day. This activity was held inside GOCS-2 and GOCS-4 compounds on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

The participants celebrated the day with horticultural farming of 47 plants around GOCS-2, 3, 4 and the warehouse. What a day of celebration for the Mann Field Operations Team! Remember, any small event at the local level can have a global impact. ■





# First Step of Outreaching to the Wider Community

Moe Thu Zar Soe



*Life is not all about what goes on within four walls. There are always new skills to learn, new people to meet, and new activities to take part in.*

Now more than ever, we are living in challenging times through newly adapted lifestyle changes at home and work. At times, we feel that we need to find new ways to socialize and do activities together to de-stress ourselves from day-to-day chores. We feel more comfortable when we surround ourselves with familiar faces in a safe and intimate environment because it feels like home. Hence, the fundamental necessity of having community centers in respective neighborhoods; they provide a common meeting spot for all ages to come together and strengthen bonds with each other and the community as a whole.

Secondly, these hubs not only foster feelings of community and unity, but also provide many volunteering, learning, and social opportunities for young and old. Public recreational hubs can range from community libraries to parks and senior centers. The social bonds created at these places help build strong, safe, and inclusive communities through social interaction and information-sharing. In rural neighborhoods, community centers are important, especially for school children. In other words,

out-of-school youth is prevalent in many parts of the country, especially in poorer neighborhoods. So to keep them out of trouble, these centers have become vital; they offer new learning opportunities through physical, creative, or social activities.

Many organizations are now proactively supporting the growth of these recreational hubs as part of their community outreach programs. At MPRL E&P, our objective is to bring benefits to the communities where we operate as part of our corporate social responsibility. We listen to the needs of our stakeholders because we believe in the importance of engagement and fostering community growth which all play a role in the prosperity of the country.

MPRL E&P began its community needs assessments in late 2021 by checking out several community libraries in Mann Field that were due for an upgrade. Leading in towards the first quarter of the Fiscal year 2022-2023, MPRL E&P initiated its first ever project called Community Center Pilot Project for the small existing library in Aye Mya Village which will eventually evolve into a Community Center. Our initiatives include the provision of well-furnished, equipped, and ample spaces for educational and social activities. We hope that this project



will bring a conducive learning environment and a better lifestyle for the youth and local communities.

Meanwhile, our CSR Team is in discussion with a multinational corporation called iGroup's Mangosteems Pte Ltd. about a potential collaboration in providing digital education solutions for our communities. At the same time, we have been conducting minor restoration and renovation projects for the existing libraries in Mann Field including regular checking of the status and accessibility of current books and periodicals. In addition, we are providing necessary furniture for the library and setting up sports and recreation equipment outside of the library.

Aside from these developments in our communities, we are in discussion with Regional Information and Public Relations Department to provide Library Management Training which will benefit the existing librarians with locating resources for reading, teaching, learning purposes, and managing the database of the books and catalogs. Last but not least, it will help in running reports and doing basic housekeeping functions of a library.

We are excited about our first initiative in Aye Mya Village and we hope that this Community Center Pilot Project will be a sustainable program for other surrounding villages in Mann Field. ■

## From Page 21

will continue to do so." With a strong belief in a sustainable future and the responsibility of a professional and dutiful citizen, U Soe Than Naing imparted a checklist regarding environmental mindfulness.

- Use JSA (Job Safety Analysis) for environmental issues.

- Follow all procedures and good housekeeping techniques properly.

- Maximize energy efficiency.

- Work to eliminate all accidently spills and reduce discharges.

- Follow the waste segregation and spill response procedures.

- Don't hesitate to report anything that you think may lead to an environmental incident. ■

## STEP 7 Safe Work Process

STEPS	ASK for VERIFICATION	OBSERVATION & ASK	ASK for LEARN & VERIFICATION
1. Plan	✓ Work Instruction & Hazard Assessment ✓ Verify Understanding / Competency	✓ Written Plan? ✓ Where is it? ✓ Details? ✓ Plan followed? ✓ Key Hazards? ✓ Controls?	✓ Supervisor explain - PTW / SSP / Sequence / Procedure / Manual / Checklist / Isolation Certificate / Drawing / Picture / P&ID etc. - <b>plan must be something on paper</b>
2. Communicate	✓ Transition to work, ask open Question ✓ Pre-tour / Handover / Toolbox ✓ Radio / Hand signals / Signage	✓ TBT: What Qs were asked? ✓ HSE Alert? ✓ Radios? ✓ Hand Signals? ✓ Signage	✓ "Ask" - TBT with crew. Crew explain the hazard - ask for specific example, relate it to Essential Knowledge - Focus on *Hands Safe Pointers, **Slip & Trip Tips, ***Work at Height Principles - Know it. Ask it. Apply it.
3. Check Equipment	✓ Certified / Tested / Rated ✓ Fit for purpose / Calibrated ✓ No Damage / Backup ready	✓ How did you check the equipment? ✓ PPE? ✓ All OK? ✓ Certified? ✓ Rated? ✓ Calibrated?	✓ "Ask" - Crew check and Supervisor Verify - rated, certified, fit for purpose, sufficient #
4. Prepare Area	✓ Flat and Level / Housekeeping	✓ Housekeeping? ✓ Slips, Trips or Falls? ✓ Level / Solid? ✓ Barricaded? ✓ Red Zone?	✓ "Ask" - Crew access the work area and Supervisor confirm no SIMOP - walk the line if plan has changed or condition has changed - Slip & Trip - LUNCH checked?

STEPS	ASK for VERIFICATION	OBSERVATION & ASK	ASK for LEARN & VERIFICATION
5. Control Energy	✓ Isolate (Lock-out, Tag-out, test) ✓ Drain Stored Energy (Gauge?) ✓ Line of Fire / Escape Route	✓ How was LOTO verified? ✓ Stored Energy? ✓ Trapped Pressure? ✓ How to identify? ✓ Line of Fire? ✓ Above? ✓ Below? ✓ Beside? ✓ Human Energy - using 100% force?	✓ "Ask" - Crew explain / identify LOF, Isolation, Control Movement, Stored Energy, Tension Line, Pressure, Escape Route etc.- Supv verify isolation and perform physical test if there is LOTO (Log Out, Tag Out)
6. Final Check	✓ 100% Ready to Go? ✓ Contingencies in Place / ER ✓ Walk in line with P&ID	✓ All OK? ✓ People Ready? ✓ Walk the line? ✓ Contingencies in place? Barriers?	✓ "Do" - Supervisor do final walk the line - check line-up, confirm plan, verify crew understanding.
7. Start Work	✓ Comply/Interne/Respect ✓ Follow the Life Saver Rules ✓ Follow the Plan, Work Defensively ✓ If Change occurs, pause the job	✓ When would you stop the job? ✓ How can you identify change? MOC?	✓ "Ask" - When to STOP? Be specific? What? When? How? Refer to the Manage Change Pointers



From Page 11



Amidst a decreasing COVID-19 positivity rate across the country, consultations with beneficiaries including Village Administrators, Village Development Committees, former vocational trainees, farmers, horticulturalists, female group, male group, and Community Volunteers were carried out at a community function hall with mask mandate in place. Required prior appointments were sought from the stakeholders by the two coordinators in Mann Field. To ensure impartiality in the assessment exercise, the Communications Team conducted focus group discussions and key informant interviews on behalf of the CSR Team.

Household interviews were conducted to measure the effectiveness of these projects, and satisfaction levels among beneficiaries and site visits were also made in Mann Field. Under the primary research, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected during 28-31 March 2022 in Mann Field. Proper recording, such as signatures of stakeholders, meeting minutes, photographs, audio recording, survey forms, and data entry sheets were collected.



“We are aware that the PCC for Mann Field will expire by 2024 and we wish MPRL E&P can secure an extension so that the communities continue to benefit from its CSR projects.”  
Household Survey



Household Survey Key Statistics Table

Characteristics	Frequency (#)	Percentage (%)
Village		
Auk Kyaung	40	9%
Aye Mya	31	7%
Chin Taung	9	2%
Kywe Cha	43	10%
Kyar Kan	15	4%
Let Pan Ta Pin	42	10%
Let Pa Taw	29	7%
Lay Eain Tan	22	5%
Makye Chaung	5	1%
Mann Kyoe	58	14%
Mei Bayt Kone	65	15%
Nan U	21	5%
Pauk Kone	23	5%
Ywar Thar	20	5%
Age Group		
18 Years and Below	5	1%
19-34 Years	72	17%
35-44 Years	96	23%
45-54 Years	108	26%
55-64 Years	75	18%
65-74 Years	50	12%
75 Years and Over	17	4%
Occupation		
VDCs	3	1%
CBO/NGO	2	0%
Staff (Public/Private)	28	7%
Farmers	238	56%
Tailoring/ Shopkeepe	44	10%
Dependent	56	13%
Daily Wages	21	5%
Retired	10	2%
Others	21	5%
Education		
University	32	8%
High School	64	15%
Middle School	113	27%
Primary School	197	47%
Monastic Education	13	3%
No Education	10	2%



“I wish MPRL E&P continues to support us with many other socially beneficial activities.”  
Key Informant Interviewee

The impact assessment study of the CSR projects in Mann Field has yielded some major findings, in light of which recommendations and a way forward plan were subsequently developed.

- The communication and information sharing with communities were effective in enabling the communities to understand how the CSR Program addresses their needs and create a positive attitude toward co-existence. Many cited CSR Field Staff, Community Volunteers, noticeboards, and community meetings as their main sources of information regarding the CSR projects implemented by MPRL E&P.
- The recorded responses clearly indicated that CSR Program is well-perceived among the communities and brought many visible benefits and advantages for the communities. They also cited that the waste management program, Mobile Clinic program, water filtration units, hand-wash stations in schools along with the seeds loaning program have improved their quality of life.
- The beneficiaries were in favor of a CSR Program that continues to help tackle their social and economic challenges. They showed a strong interest in the CSR initiatives and desire to have an active voice in the CSR Program to ensure the initiatives are sustainable and their continuing needs are effectively addressed.

The full report is now available on the MPRL E&P website.■



“The Mobile Clinic is very effective in treating patients due to its high-quality medicines and its compassionate and friendly doctor.”  
Key Informant Interviewee





From Page 28



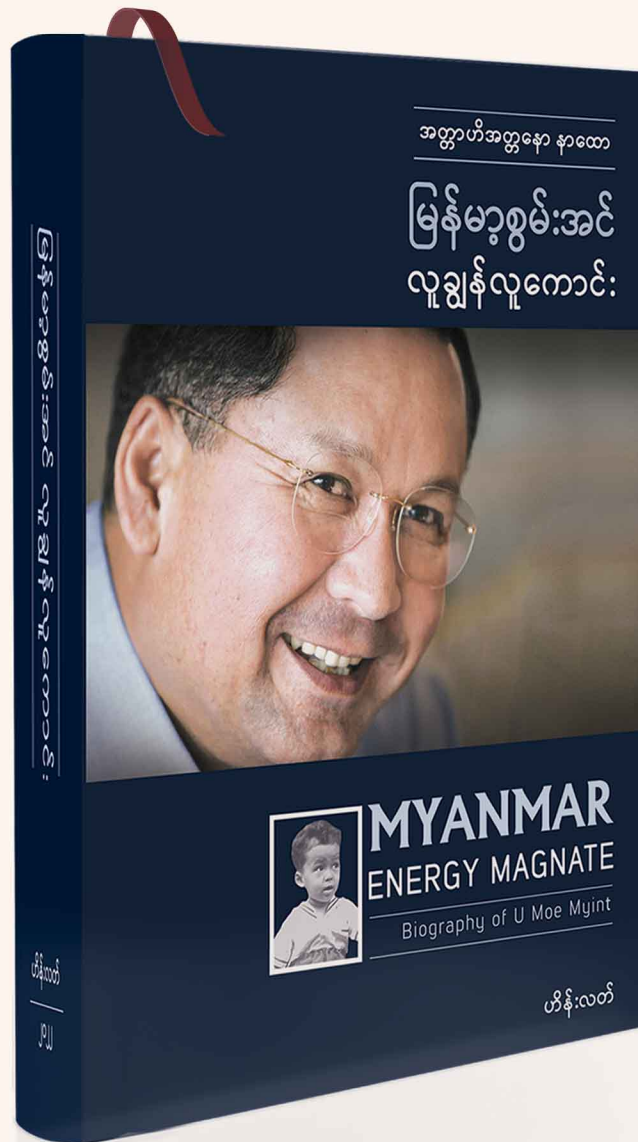
**Khin Mar Thu**  
Treasury Manager

I learned so much from this book! What left me thinking after is the fact that if you want to be not only clever but also smart, these six quotients (IQ, EQ, PQ, MQ, CQ, and SQ) are very crucial. Another important lesson I learned from the book is that everyone has the right to freedom of personal thought and faith, this makes me feel equal and free.



**Thet Lwin Ohn**  
Assistant Material & Logistics Manager

I gained so much valuable knowledge from reading our CEO's biography book, starting from his childhood to becoming an influential founder of an oil and gas company in Myanmar. I thought I knew so much about our CEO but after reading this book, I realized there's so much more! Not only did I learn more about this personal life but also many values surrounding culture, health, politics, morals, and society. For me, one of the life mottos mentioned in this book that is worth remembering is "Who Dares Wins".



**Thal Sandy Tun**  
Reporting Coordinator

It is hard to imagine a more intimate and compelling account of an entrepreneur in Myanmar's oil and gas industry, highly susceptible to global geopolitics, national political affairs, and western economic sanctions. Doing business the only way he knows, the entrepreneur feeds many mouths and drives the national economy. He also serves as a rare and needed connect between post-independence and present-day Myanmar. Further, riffling through the pages and following his life story seems like a soul-searching journey for oneself. ■



**Yin Thant Aung**  
Executive Secretary

When I read this biography, the best lesson I got from it is that we all need to try our very best and use the best of our abilities and experiences to surpass all obstacles in life.

As staff working at MPRL E&P Group of Companies, I am so proud of our CEO and his accomplishments and learned so much from him; how he stopped at nothing and strived to do his best to become a successful person in this challenging industry. The parts where it shows his struggles to overcome crises and solve complex problems are important and worth discussing.



**Chit Su Su Thwin**  
Deputy Finance Manager

When I read the book *Myanmar Energy Magnate*, I see a nobleman who dares to win. Throughout his life, CEO had many broad visions and surpassed all

his goals and visions with self-discipline and a valiant heart. I also realized that hard work makes dreams come true especially when you put effort, stay committed, and be confident in yourself.

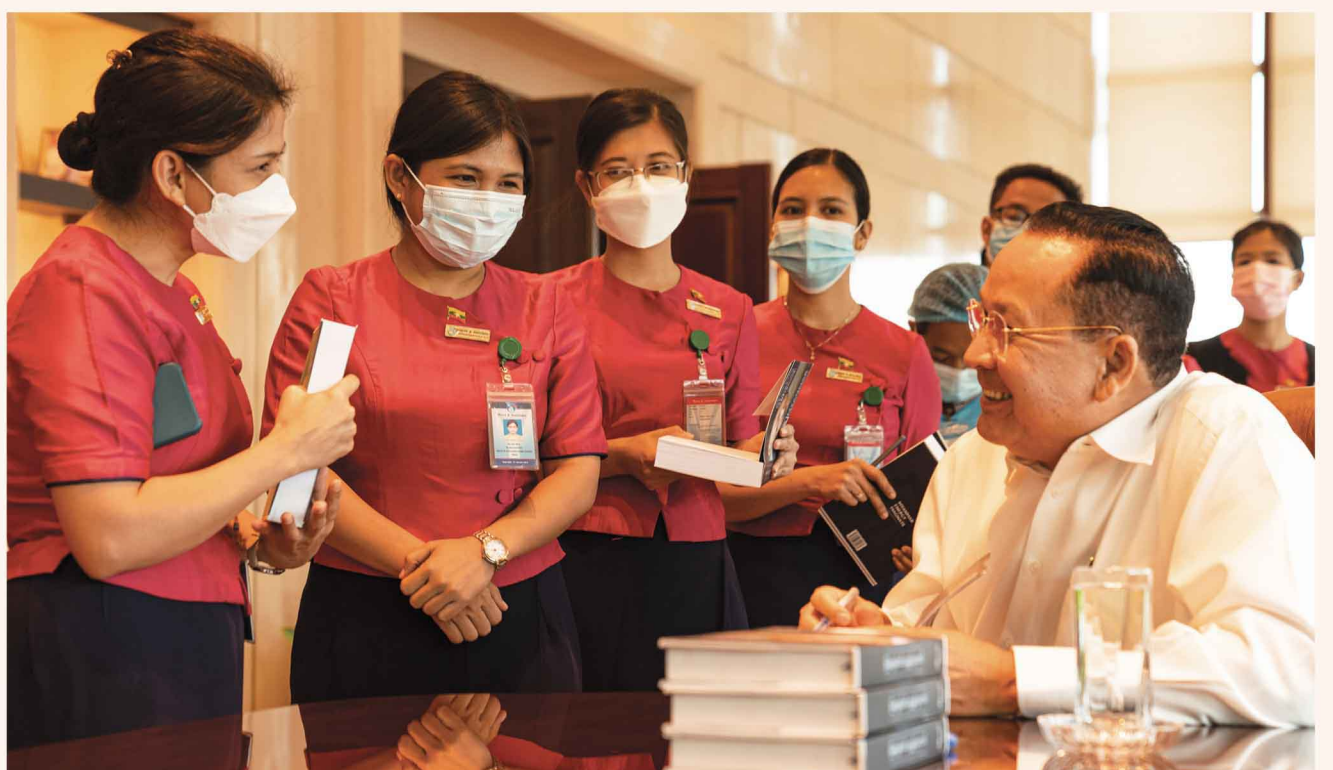






Image Courtesy by SONE-TU Traditional Textile Arts

# Saving Vanishing Weaving Patterns of Mro and Taung Mro in Rakhine State

Thal Sandy Tun



Many people tend to associate the phrase “Rakhine State in Myanmar” with events which grabbed the attention of world media outlets back in 2017. But it is not a complete picture and does not describe all the communities living side by side in the region. The country’s westernmost state has a population of 3.22 million with many different and diverse communities. Poverty, conflict, and fear have affected them all.

Sumtu is an ethnic Chin sub-group, concentrated in Minbya Township of Rakhine State. They primarily rely on oral history; songs, dances, and chanting, for passing down their culture over generations. Sumtu culture is the product of decades of isolation from outsiders, but the modern world is forcing them to interact, sometimes at the expense of their own way of life. Their literacy rate is low, and young people are increasingly moving to urban areas to work. As a result, Sumtu traditions are struggling to survive, and they are on the brink of being lost forever.

Almost all of Myanmar’s diverse ethnic groups have their own weaving traditions. Chin weaving art is becoming endangered because of a lack of economic incentive to continue the practice, forcing weavers to undertake other work to survive. To make things worse, there is no written language to record and preserve this intricate and complex art form. Saving this art form helps to save Chin culture. By making weaving economically sustainable, and keeping it culturally relevant, SONE-TU helps to connect Chin identity with the modern world.

This is the story of a social enterprise named “SONE-TU Traditional Textile Arts,” which is dedicated to supporting Chin women living in Rakhine State. SONE-TU trains these women to weave professionally and to earn a living while at the same time keeping their endangered weaving patterns alive for generations to come.

The following interview reveals the origin, culture, conservation efforts, and latest initiatives of SONE-TU Traditional Textile Arts.

**SONE-TU is a social enterprise. Could you please explain what a social enterprise is?**

Social enterprises are businesses that aim to make a profit, but it is what they do with their profits that sets them apart – reinvesting or donating part of these profits to create positive social change. Social enterprises create employment and reinvest their profits back into their business and the local community. This allows them to address social problems, improve people’s lives, provide training and employment, and help the environment. Like traditional businesses, they aim to make a profit, but it is what they do with their profits that sets them apart. When a social enterprise makes a profit, society profits.

**Please talk a little bit about the Sumtu people and their culture.**

Sumtu is one of the fifty-three Chin sub-groups; the Chin people are considered the most diverse of the eight major ethnic groups in Myanmar. The Sumtu live across Rakhine State, but are primarily found in Minbya, Myebon, and Ann Townships. Currently, the Sumtu population consists of approximately 45,000 individuals. Sumtu do not have a written language but instead rely on oral history which has been passed down over many generations.

**Do Sumtu cultural preservation efforts reflect a general trend among ethnic minority cultures in the country? Why do we need to save the cultures of Myanmar’s ethnic minorities?**

Ethnic minority cultures are disappearing at an alarming rate in Myanmar. Sumtu history and traditions are just one example of a culture that is in danger of being lost. Across Myanmar, there are many minority groups with populations in the thousands that have been forced to break up due to political and economic reasons. Many of these groups have no written language which is vital in recording histories and elements of culture.

The disappearance of cultural heritage is synonymous with losing resources, ancient wisdom, material knowledge, and social values which contribute to wider social cohesion and a society’s identity. If there is no appreciation of culture or value placed on a culture, the culture fails.

**How has the SONE-TU come into existence? Who are the founders and their vision? What are some of its successful initiatives to save the Sumtu traditions?**

The founder of SONE-TU Traditional Textile Arts is from the Sumtu community, and her late grandfather was a famous Sumtu shaman. While working on documenting Sumtu history and its archaic language used in ritual performances, she discovered that only a handful of elderly shamans could recite and chant the Sumtu history. Fortunately, she was able to record and document this ancient language before the last surviving Sumtu shaman passed away.



ular and defining feature of the Sumtu are the unique, intricate patterns found in their traditional costumes. Like the ancient Sumtu language, the designs in these fabrics and the weaving techniques required to produce them were in danger of being lost as the older generation of women weavers passed away. To safeguard these ancient weaving techniques and revitalize traditional skills, SONE-TU Traditional Textile Arts identified nearly one hundred unique Chin designs and trained hundreds of young women to weave these patterns using both backstrap and traditional hand looms.

SONE-TU’s vision is to preserve Chin cultural heritage through education and employment opportunities so that Chin people can develop economically and preserve their traditional cultural identity and heritage. SONE-TU’s successful initiatives and activities include: The Endangered Language Documentation Programme, The Oral History Programme, The Education Programme, and the Weaving Heritage Programme (preserving weaving patterns and techniques of the following Chin sub-groups: Sumtu, Laitu, Khamau, Taung Mro, Mro groups), as well as the revival of the art of weaving *sarsikyo*, the binding ribbons used for Buddhist manuscripts. All Weaving and Education Projects are currently based at our compound in Minbya.



**What is backstrap weaving training project? Who are the trainers and trainees? Where is it located and why are you undertaking the training project?**

The title of this weaving training programme was “Weaving Masterclass”. Originally, a one-month training programme was planned, but conditions necessitated that it be extended to six weeks. The programme took place at SONE-TU’s weaving centre in Minbya. The goal was for older master weavers to teach younger master weavers about endangered and complex weaving techniques, including unique Mro breast-cover designs known only to a few elderly Mro women. The five trainers were women in their 70’s from Ponnagyun and Kyauktaw Townships in Northern Rakhine State. The trainees, also master weavers in their 20’s and 30’s from Minbya, Myebon, Kyauktaw, and surrounding Chin Villages, were unfamiliar with the designs and techniques of the elderly Mro and Taung Mro weavers.



Are there any challenges in conducting the training given the current situation of the country?

Although they enjoyed the training sessions, as tensions in Northern Rakhine escalated, the participants grew increasingly uneasy during the training period. Because they feared for their own safety as well as that of their families and villages, we had to bring some teachers and weavers with children from Kyauktaw back to their villages after five weeks. Fortunately, most weavers stayed at the centre to continue weaving and finish their training pieces without their teachers being present.

Another challenge was the cost of transporting and feeding the participants. Over the past two months, the price of commodities nearly doubled making it difficult for the management team to manage daily expenditures; budget adjustments and compromises had to be made regularly throughout the session. An unexpected expense was the cost of feeding children who accompanied the young weavers, as well as some primary school level children who joined their mothers after finishing exams.

What are some of the outcomes of the training that you would like to see?

The immediate result of the programme was that each trainee acquired the skills needed to produce complex Mro and Taung Mro patterns to the standards required by museums and collectors and for the high-end commercial market. Each weaver who finished the training completed three pieces containing different weaving techniques. Each successful trained artisan acquired increased confidence in her ability to generate an income from weaving high-quality products that meet museum quality standards. This was their first piece using unfamiliar weaving techniques so they will need further practice until they reach the level required for the high end commercial market.

Tangible and intangible results were that seventeen young master weavers from SONE-TU Traditional Textile Arts became the keepers of a collection of endangered designs and learned the skills to produce these designs on backstrap looms. They in turn will be able to share their knowledge of this art and the ancient wisdom associated with it to future generations. As a result of the training, communities living in four different townships will benefit and will have access to enhanced incomes from the production and sale of high-quality traditional textiles.

Does SONE-TU have any comment on the funding provided by MPRL E&P?

Despite all the difficult circumstances and challenges in the region, and the effect these conditions have had on the livelihoods of the local populations, the training gave us the opportunity to save an endangered Mro weaving technique previously known by only a single elderly master weaver. It boosted the morale of our staff and weavers and was a glimmer of hope in these challenging times.

The training helped us bridge the gap between two generations, past and present, and created the capacity



to train future generations. With the generous financial support from MPRL E&P, the techniques and beautiful intricate patterns have now been revived and can once more become part of a living culture. Without funding from MPRL E&P, none of this would have been possible.

The name Rakhine should not be all about the communal violence that made headlines of world media outlets over the past few years. Instead, it deserves attention for its diversity and richness in resources and cultures, celebrating and saving them. What is your opinion on this?

Rakhine must not only be known for communal violence. Rakhine is the home of a multi-ethnic society whose rich cultures and skilled craftsmen and artisans are a human resource that should be celebrated not squandered. The loss of an ancient art is a loss, not only for ethnic Chin, but all of Rakhine, all of Myanmar, and for all of humanity.

We are proud to live in the region surrounding the ancient city, Mrauk U, soon to be recognized as a UNESCO world heritage site. The intangible culture of those who live in the area is equally as valuable and important as the magnificent temples and ancient structures of this fabled city. Only when we preserve, understand, and celebrate the diverse cultures we share will those of us in Rakhine gain the respect and admiration we deserve.



Voice of a TRAINER

I think this kind of training is quite good. Our Mro people want to weave easy designs, not ones that require porcupine needles to create patterns, this is because weaving these patterns is time consuming and requires concentration. I am very pleased with the fact that I was able to teach the skill to the young women.

If the trainees we passed the technique down to are able to acquire this skill, I now will have to go home and teach my own granddaughters. If you continue to preserve and revive the technique, there is a possibility that even my great granddaughters can learn and weave these patterns. Back in the village, girls are not willing to learn as they can be lazy. Even my own



granddaughters do not want to learn the technique taught by their grandmother.

If you provide the skills training, as well as compensate them for their time spent during the training, young girls will be willing to learn. Now that I know that the girls from this current training can be taught, I am convinced other young women will also be willing to learn. (The younger generation think the technique which requires porcupine needles is too difficult to learn.)

The benefits of this training are that we are now able to pass down our skills to many trainees with a new skill. The trainees from this year can then become trainers to share their skills with new trainees next year. In addition to getting paid, we feel proud to participate as trainers for this training. A few out of the seventeen trainees will be skilled masters after the training. I encourage them to continue weaving to improve their skills. And I am convinced that the trainees are now able to weave by just viewing old pieces and enlarged photos.

Voice of a TRAINEE

Since I was told about the training that would focus on Mro weaving techniques and patterns, not Sumtu and Laitu weaving patterns, I was very interested in participating in the training. Because I was ill, I was only able to join the training a week after it began.

This weaving training was designed to introduce unique patterns that we had never seen before, with new skills and advanced weaving techniques to already skilled master weavers. We were so fortunate to have the opportunity to learn new techniques and patterns that were unfamiliar to us. Also, we were given compensation for our work for which I am very pleased and grateful.

The benefit of the training is that we are now equipped at using the Mro breast cover weaving techniques which can be compared to the most difficult patterns in our Laitu and Sumtu weavings, but the technique used in creating the Mro patterns is completely different. We are very satisfied and grateful for the opportunity to learn new weaving techniques that we have not seen before. ■







မြန်မာ့စွမ်းအင်  
လူချွန်လူကောင်း

MYANMAR  
ENERGY  
MAGNATE

Published March 2022

# Staff's Reflection

## on Myanmar Energy Magnate : Biography of U Moe Myint



**Hnin Wynt Zaw**  
Communications Consultant

*Myanmar Energy Magnate* is a candid story about an ordinary man who not because of luck but due to hard work, perseverance, and determination, surpassed all obstacles before achieving his goals. It is an informative personal history written in such a way that made it hard for me to stop turning the pages because of its unique way of storytelling. It is a book for everyone because so much is conveyed about life experiences and valuable lessons that we all can relate to and get inspired by. Another biography that proves successful people started from scratch. You will walk away with a new set of mindset and purpose about the importance of hard work (and smart work), failure, and a "can-do" spirit. I remember this quote by Bob Marley, an iconic Jamaican musical artist, "The greatness of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires, but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively." Definitely, a must read!



**Moe Ma Ma Myo**  
Jr. Officer

After reading our CEO's biography *Myanmar Energy Magnate*, I learned so much about his family dignity, education, attitude towards the business and staff members, and milestones, both personal and professional. I also found out interesting detailed in-

formation related to his work, discipline, and continuous endeavors that make MPRL E&P Group of Companies a successful business. The biggest lesson I learned from reading this book is how to live life as a good person and how to support our surroundings.



**Su Myint Myat**  
Auditor

The book is marvelous. You will find some inspiration and strength through CEO's experience as an ordinary businessman. After reading the book, the words "Little Knowledge is Dangerous" were engraved in my memory. These words inspired me to put an extra effort into learning new things that we do not know. It is truly inspiring.



**Hla Yin Nyein**  
Sr. Administrative Assistant

I would like to express big congratulations on the launch of our CEO's biography book. After reading his book, I learned so much about how to become a successful person in life. I also took note of the importance of having mutual respect for each other while working as colleagues, especially among young staff members. It is a really interesting book, and my favorite part of the book is "Be as Brave as a Lion, but be as Gentle as a Lamb".



**Nang Khin Win**  
Office Medic

I was so excited about the book when I heard about it, way before it was launched officially. After reading it, I have a deep admiration for him and his two hard decisions that exemplified his success. The first point was the solid desire and determination of his grandmother for her sons to be well-educated and the second point was the CEO's hard-nosed decision to resign from his pilot life.



**Moe Thu**  
Reservoir Engineer

The book *Myanmar Energy Magnate* is a great display of stories that show us many motivating parts of our CEO's life, from which we, especially the young generation, should learn. For example, his way of thinking and attitude towards relationships, doing business, the country, and the contributions he made towards the younger generation. For me, the inspiring points are to never give up and to make your dreams come true.



**Htoo Suzan Lin**  
HR Administrator

*Myanmar Energy Magnate* is a very impressive book. After reading it, I gained a lot of valuable knowledge and skills on how to build a successful life with full passion and how to become a good leader. I can say this book is not only a biography but also an essential guidance for young people like us. I am very proud of our CEO.



**Nilar Han**  
Supervisor (Mapping)

After reading the biography of our CEO, I feel as if I watched a biopic movie of his whole life. Since childhood, he has lived with discipline and studied and worked hard for his future. He also established a warm family lifestyle by achieving a good work-life balance. He overcame all the obstacles he encountered throughout his life with a good attitude and despite all those hardships, he still keeps going, making sure MPRL E&P Group of Companies continue to be successful. His well-disciplined behavior and time management skills really inspired young and middle-aged people like us.

