



yfs

Yangon Film
School e.V.

Annual Report 2019

Yangon Film School

Non-profit Association for the Promotion of Young Burmese Film and Video Artists

Cover picture: Min Yan Thaik, Mann Pye Phyo Aung, Myin Oo Maw, Wai Lynn Pyo, Nang Mhwe Ngin Seng, Ja Roi Aung
(during filming of the ‘True Fictions’ production *Easy Money*)

Picture opposite: Still from the documentary *The Father I Knew* (dir. Aye Chan)

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2019 at YFS – the Year in Numbers

46 students trained including 41 returning students and 5 new intakes

229 days of training and 163 individual training places provided to young Myanmar media students and professionals

12 different ethnicities in student groups / 46% of students from an ethnic minority

17% of students from a religion other than the Buddhist majority

57% female and 43% male students trained

8 international tutors – from countries including Pakistan, Finland, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, the UK and Australia

4 graduates from the School's 'Train to Teach' programme working as local tutors

8 short documentaries on the topic of 'Youth & Peace in Myanmar'

4 short 'True Fictions' films: fiction films with a documentary sensibility

6 participatory videos created in communities at three sites across Myanmar

YFS films screened at 33 film festivals in 17 different countries including the UK, Germany, South Korea, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, the USA, Armenia and Myanmar and won 2 awards with 7 nominations

Travelling Cinema screenings for 2,000 people across Myanmar

I Foreword from the Director

2019:
A Busy Year at Yangon Film School



2019 has been another busy and exciting year at YFS in which our 2018 cohort of twelve students moved up to their second year of study. This meant that, after being introduced to documentary filmmaking and learning the basics of directing, camera, sound, editing and post-production – as well as film history and analysis – in their first year, now in their second year with the School, these students had a chance to spread their wings, experiment with different film forms and discover what kind of filmmakers they really want to become.

Following a competitive selection process, the YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition saw eight second year film directors and their crews given the opportunity to film documentary material inspired by the School's 2019 focus on 'Youth and Peace in Myanmar'. Some students filmed in the country's troubled borderlands – travelling long distances to Rakhine State in the west, Shan and Kachin States in the north and Kayah State in the east – while others ventured into the factories springing up on the outskirts of Yangon itself. The young directors then spent almost two months working with their fellow student editors and two international editing mentors during the Advanced Editing Course to shape their material into eight outstanding short documentaries, four of which won prizes awarded by the Goethe Institut at the YFS annual screening in November 2019.

In 2019, second year students also had their first taste of fiction filmmaking with the School's integrated series of 'True Fictions' courses – the name YFS has coined for fiction films made with a documentary sensibility, including being filmed in real locations and with non-professional actors. The students were taken through each stage of creating a short fiction film, from scriptwriting to pre-production – where they learnt about budgeting and scheduling as well as how to shoot a fiction scene and work with (non)actors – through the shoots themselves to editing and post-production, when they were mentored to complete their films to an international standard. YFS was delighted that award-winning Pakistani filmmaker Sabiha Sumar – whose debut feature *Silent Waters* was the first Asian film to screen at the Locarno Film Festival – co-tutored the course and thus further strengthened the School's growing network of filmmakers across Asia.

With three Travelling Cinema trips – which saw YFS students facilitating the making of six participatory videos by communities in Bago Region, Kayah and Shan States – three masterclasses in sound, animation in documentary and trailer editing, and a collaboration with the EU's MyPol project to write the scripts for a police drama series, 2019 has been another highly varied and productive year for the School and its students.

Lindsey Merrison
YFS Founder & Director, March 2020



PEOPLE

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Yangon Film School has traditionally had offices in Berlin and at the School premises in Yankin Township, Yangon. At the end of 2018, the School closed its Berlin office and moved the bulk of its administrative work to Yangon in preparation for the long-term goal of handing the School over to local partners.

Berlin team



Lindsey Merrison
Director



Tina Walinda
Project & Fund Manager



Johanna Huth
Festival Coordinator and Sales

Yangon office



Aleksandra Minkiewicz
Country Director



Naw Sar Eh Paw
Finance Officer



Ei Ei Thun
Office Administrator



Soe Akar Htun
Junior Producer



Salai Samuel
Equipment Manager



Aye Ahr Marn
Project Officer
(until October 2019)

Yangon Film Services



Ta Ra
Production Manager



Aye Ni Mar
Accountant

The YFS Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the School's governing body. It undertakes constant and consistent oversight and is the main decision-making authority. It is elected by the student body represented by the Student Sub-Committee and YFS-founder and Director Lindsey Merrison who serves as Chairperson and has power of veto.

The YFS Steering Committee develops the INGO's strategy and coordinates with the Director who ensures its implementation. The Committee also ensures that all provisions of law and the INGO internal policies are abided by and works to achieve their compliance.



Lindsey Merrison
Chairperson & Founding Director of YFS



Daw Yu Lay War War
(Grace Swe Zin Htaik)
Independent Film Industry Representative



Martin Waelde
International Arts & Culture Representative



Cho Cho Hnin
(Shin Daewe)
Student /Alumni Representative



Shunn Lei Swe Yee
Student /Alumni Representative



Wai Mar Nyunt
Student /Alumni Representative



Aleksandra Minkiewicz
Local Management Representative

The YFS Student Sub-Committee

The YFS Steering Committee is supported by a five-member Student Sub-Committee which is elected on an annual basis by the entire student body and the YFS Director. In 2019 the Student Sub-Committee members were:



Sai Nyi Nyi
(joined YFS in 2011)

Thet Su Hlaing
(joined YFS in 2011)

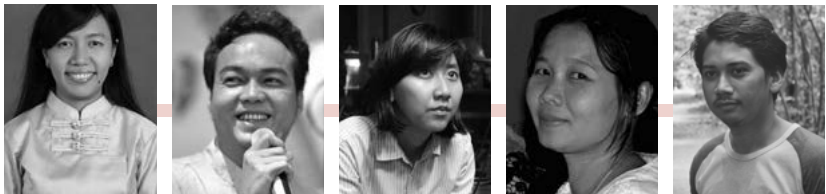
May Htoo Cho
(joined YFS in 2007)

Nwaye Zar Che Soe
(joined YFS in 2014)

Sai Naw Kham
(joined YFS in 2014)

YANGON FILM FOUNDATION

In May 2017, the Yangon Film Foundation (YFF) was founded as a local NGO with an all-Myanmar board. Initially operating alongside YFS in order to build capacity, YFF will eventually steer and have oversight over all the School's activities. Its formation represents another key step towards realising the School's long-term goal of handing over operations to a Myanmar administration. The Yangon Film Foundation board members are:



Kyi Pyu Shin
Film Director

Diramore
(Maung Maung Zaw Htet)
Musician & Film Composer

Khin Myanmar
YFS editor / trainer

Thet Su Hlaing
YFS student since 2011

Soe Arkar Htun
YFS student since 2014



Yangon Film School draws upon a pool of international and Myanmar filmmakers to tutor its courses. In 2019 the School's tutors were (in alphabetical order):



Aung Min / Screenwriting & Film Analysis

Myanmar writer, filmmaker and medical doctor, wrote the script for *The Monk* (dir. The Maw Naing) which premiered at Karlovy Vary in 2014.



Regina Bärtschi / Fiction-Editing

Swiss editor of award-winning fiction and documentary films including *Blue Skin*, which won the Berlinale's 'Dialogue en Perspective' award.



Ivan Horák / Sound Design

Czech sound recordist and postproduction sound designer who won the 2014 Czech Lion Award for Best Sound on *The Way Out*.



Kyaw Ko Ko / Sound Recording and Sound Design

YFS-trained filmmaker, one of the first graduates of the Train-to-Teach programme who has now joined the School's roster of tutors



Rachel Mathews / Screenwriting / Fiction-Directing

UK writer and director of award-winning shorts, storyliner and script editor on season 2 of *The Sun, The Moon & The Truth* Myanmar TV series.



Tuula Mehtonen / Documentary Editing

Finnish editor of award-winning documentaries including *Father to Son* (2004) and *Daughters of Palna* (2007).

Melanie Sandford / Documentary Editing

Award-winning Australian editor of both fiction and non-fiction films who has edited many high-profile TV series in Australia.

Slyne Tong Lumh Mon / Sound Design

Musician and YFS-trained filmmaker, a graduate of the Train-to-Teach programme who has now joined the School's roster of tutors

David Smith / Post-Production

UK editor, designer and visual VX expert working for clients including the BBC, ITV, C4, Apple and Quantel; also lectures at UK film schools.

Fiona Strain / Post-Production

Australian editor of documentaries, TV dramas and children's series, winner of an Australian Screen Editors' Award.

Sabiha Sumar / Fiction Production & Directing

Pakistani filmmaker whose debut feature *Silent Waters* (2003) was the first Asian film selected for Locarno where it won the Golden Leopard.

Tin Win Naing / Cinematography

YFS-trained DOP who has shot projects including multi-award-winning feature documentary *Nargis: When Time Stopped Breathing* (2008).



Alumni Case Study – Saw Eh Doh Poe

Saw Eh Doh Poe (28), also known as Aero, was born in Yangon and grew up there and in Thandaunggyi in Kayin State. His father is the pastor of a Baptist Church in Yangon's Thaketa Township, his mother is a retired kindergarten teacher who now helps her husband. Before joining YFS in 2014, Aero describes himself as 'a computer degree course drop-out' who was working at Eleven Media Group as a graphic designer while also volunteering to help build libraries at IDP camps in conflict zones in Kachin and northern Shan states.



You've studied with YFS on and off for six years. What have you learnt at the School?

I've learned what I always wanted to do with my life, which is animation based on the art of documentary filmmaking. It now means everything to me – thank you!

What is your main focus in your career at the moment?

Trying to be a remarkable animator/filmmaker – I don't want to be famous, but I do want people to recognise my work – and to survive while doing the work that I love.

How do you mainly earn your living?

Honestly, I get most of my income from translating film-related texts and from the graphic design of film posters, event branding, and so on. This has helped me a lot in my English language skills and in creative thinking BUT I really want to be a good filmmaker who can earn their living from film alone.

How has the training at YFS helped your career?

YFS has changed my life. It's that simple. The School has been super helpful and a great source of guidance for me, and it also gives me a lot of my translation and design work. I'm very grateful.

You worked on a number of YFS projects in 2019. Can you tell us a little bit about them?

Firstly, I worked on my third YFS docu-animation, *Our Town*. This is the most difficult animation I've made so far, especially when it came to building the set. It uses stop-motion animation, working with miniatures to show how a town in the Delta overcame the ethnic divisions and riots that were taking place in Myanmar.

Then I had the opportunity to participate in the short 'True Fictions' film, *The Other Side of the Tracks*, about a teenage runaway who experiences a night on the streets in Yangon. The story is partially based on my life but it was the same for everyone in our team: we used pieces from each of us. It was fun and very challenging to create a film within such a tight timeline, but we did it!

Then I worked on a Yangon Film Services (the School's production arm) project made for the Safe Hospital Initiative. I was originally just the animator but then I also took on the role of director. I think I've done a good job on it: I had good communication with my film crew and, for the animated part, Australian animator and filmmaker Marisa Martin (see details about her Masterclass on p.??) mentored me.

Do you enjoy this kind of work?

This is the kind of work I dream of doing! I'm starting to do it step-by-step and I really enjoy it.

What are your ambitions for the future?

I want to be remembered as the kind of filmmaker that makes people say: 'That guy's films are crazy but they've got a certain style and are somehow good'.

What are your plans for 2020?

I'm trying to push myself to achieve more and different things. At the moment, I'm working for Yangon Film Services on a COVID-19 graphic design project with the Ministry of Health & Sport that is being funded by UNICEF. I'm also hoping to finish another of my passion projects: a graphic novel.

YFS has changed my life. It's that simple.

Table I: YFS Alumni Destinations /

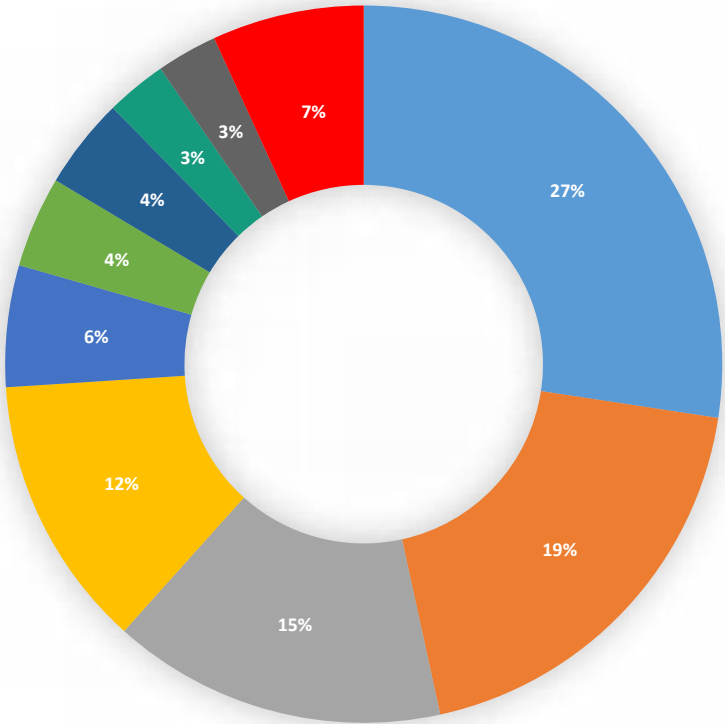
In early 2020, YFS undertook a survey of 73 alumni to discover how they were employed in 2019.

The survey reveals the high impact of the School's trainings, with almost 93% percent of its alumni working in the media.

The equivalent figure for UK media graduates is estimated to be around 30% (<https://stephenfollows.com/how-many-film-students-are-there-in-the-uk/>)

- Freelance Filmmaker / Director: 20
- Sound (Recordist / Post-Production): 14
- Camera: 11
- Editor: 9
- (Screen) Writer: 4
- (Graphic) Artist: 3
- Media NGO: 3
- Producer: 2
- TV / Production Company: 2
- Other: 5

Yangon Film School
Alumni Destinations 2019



TRAININGS





Travelling Cinema Trips & Participatory Video Facilitations

March, May and October 2019 (34 training days in total)
Kyauk Gyi in Bago Region, Ho Seit in Kayah State and Tachileik in Shan State

The Travelling Cinema Project is an outreach programme of film screenings and discussions presented by YFS students in remote rural areas. During their trips, the students also deliver a short training in participatory video (PV) to enable local people to use simple camera, sound and editing equipment and facilitate the making of PVs on issues affecting their community. These PVs are used as advocacy tools to transmit knowledge about issues to decision and policy makers and to encourage the community to find solutions to problems for themselves. In addition, YFS students

use the Travelling Cinema trips as a way to scout for young people who they believe have the talent, interest and potential to join the School's three-year training programme in Yangon.

In 2019, there were three two-week Travelling Cinema placements during which four-person YFS crews travelled to locations in Bago Region, Kayah State and Shan State, as well as one follow-up trip to Bago.

Trip to Kyauk Gyi Village in Bago Region, 7-16 March 2019

YFS Trainers:

Shin Thandar, May Myat Noe Aye,
Seint Yamone Htoo and Moe Kyaw
Thu (3 female and 1 male).

their PV projects. The training culminated in a public screening for the participants to present their PVs and lead a discussion with the community.

PV Training Participants:

12 young adults (8 male and 4 female, 11 Kayin and one Pa-O) from Kyauk Gyi village and the surrounding area recruited by the Wisdom For Life organisation which promotes reading and critical thinking amongst communities across Myanmar.

Outcomes: Two PV films:

- *Hear Our Voice* addresses what young people need and hope for in order to remain and have fulfilling lives in their village.
- *Rubbish* looks at environmental issues, especially the damage caused by the inappropriate disposal of rubbish.

Description: For the Travelling Cinema, the students selected five YFS films – three documentaries and two PVs – which they screened to an audience of around 40 people, the majority of them Kayin with a minority of Pa-O and Kachin ethnicities. The films led to a lively post-screening discussion, particularly about the documentary *Seeds of Sadness* which features people affected by landmines in Bago Region.

Follow-Up Trip: From 27-29 April, two students from the original group, May Myat Noe Aye and Seint Yamone Htoo, undertook a follow-up to see how the participants were progressing with the action plan they had helped draw up at the end of the facilitation. The trip included an open-air screening to 200+ people of the PV films they had facilitated on the placement plus four other YFS films. The PVs are now being screened by the 'My Community is My Responsibility' NGO in villages around Bago and by 'Wisdom For Life' at orphanages and monastic schools as well as on Facebook groups and to church youth groups, the Karen Youth Network, the Pa-O Youth Generation Network and the Pa-O Youth Network.

In the PV training, all 12 participants were trained in the roles of director, camera and sound as they filmed practice exercises and

Trip to Ho Seit Village in Kayah State, 12-23 May 2019

YFS Trainers: Aye Mya Hlaing, Mi Mi Lwin, Su Su Hlaing and Zaw Lar (3 female and 1 male).

PV Training Participants: 13 adults (10 female and 3 male, Kayan, Kayah, Kayin and Bamar), mostly between 18 and 23 years of age.

Description: For the Travelling Cinema, the students selected six YFS documentaries and three PVs as well as YFS docu-animation films on the subject of domestic violence which they screened to an audience of around 170 people (approx. 100 women and 70 men) from the Kayan, Kayah, Kayin, Shan and Bamar ethnicities. In the post-screening discussion, the YFS students placed a particular focus on domestic violence and drug issues and gave the audience information about women's organisations and how and where people could report domestic violence.

In the PV training, the 13 participants were trained in camera, interviewing techniques, how to research and collect information, equipment management, transportation, transcription and preparing for a screening as well as how to encourage survivors of domestic violence to speak about their experiences and communicate with the authorities.

Outcomes: Two PV films:

- *Deadly Dependency* is about the high incidence of drug use in the community, interviewing drug users themselves as well as recovering addicts and family members.
- *Don't Hit Mum!* Discussions in the PV group revealed that a great many women in the village are being beaten by their husbands. The film tries to find out why this is happening and looks at ways women can survive domestic abuse.



Trip to Hway Kai Village, Tarlay Township, Tachileik, eastern Shan State, 5-15 September 2019

YFS Trainers: Aye Chan, Chit Moe Pio, Sai Naw Kham and Shunn Lei Swe Yee (2 female and 2 male).

PV Training Participants: 14 adults (7 female and 7 male, all from the Akha ethnicity) ranging from 16 to 50 years old.

Description: For the Travelling Cinema, the students selected three YFS documentaries and two PVs and also screened a rough-cut of *The Forgotten Voice of Mekong*, made by PV facilitator Sai Naw Kham. Shot in the village, the film caused great interest and amusement as the villagers watched themselves and their friends and relatives onscreen. Around 70 people from two neighbouring villages attended the screening, around a third of whom were from the Lahu ethnicity. The post-screening discussion focused on the

issues of drugs and education as well as seeing the two filmmakers present field a lot of questions and interest about how their films were made.

In the PV training, all the participants gained experience of directing, camera, sound and editing. Those who were more familiar with video equipment helped those who were less so and gave them priority to learn, with older participants encouraging the younger members to take a leading role.

Outcomes: Two PV films:

- *The Muddy Road to Education* shows the importance of having proper facilities and equipment in schools.
- *Coming Home from Addiction* is designed to raise awareness about the consequences of drug addiction and to advocate for more drug rehabilitation centres.



Student Case Study – Aye Mya Hlaing

Aye Mya Hlaing (23) was born and grew up in Yangon where her father was a manager of a textile factory and her mother a housewife. Before joining YFS as a student in 2016, she worked as a video journalist for a local online media company, creating video reports on politics, social affairs, business and food. In February 2020 Aye Mya Hlaing joined our Yangon management team in the newly created position of Travelling Cinema & Outreach Coordinator.

Tell us about the Travelling Cinema (TC) project – what do YFS students do?

We facilitate local communities to make participatory videos (PV) and help them to organise a screening of their PVs to the rest of their community. At the screenings, we also show YFS films and discuss them with the audience.

How many TC placements have you done and where?

I've helped facilitate three PV trainings: at Myitkyina in Kachin State, Kyaukpadaung in Mandalay region and Ho Seit in Kayah State. I've also participated in various Travelling Cinema screenings in Loikaw in Kayah State, Hakha in Chin State and Maubin in the Ayeyarwady region.

What do you enjoy about the TC?

As a filmmaker, watching how people react when they see my films is one of the most exciting moments I can have. I love it! It is really interesting to discover what local people around the country think about our films. Previously, YFS only screened our films at film festivals. The Travelling Cinema is a great chance to show our work to our own people. They love the films and not just the ones filmed in their region but also ones made elsewhere in Myanmar. It gives the audiences different insights and knowledge.

YFS students sometimes travel long distances on TC, is this difficult?

We often travel and stay in places far from Yangon but the placements are only short, usually just two weeks, so it's not that difficult. When I travelled to Chin State, the road was really rough along the side of a mountain. On the way to Hakha, whenever we looked out of the car window, it was a sheer drop. I became quite travel sick, but then I thought about the local people and how they have to use these roads all the time. It's much worse for them than me.

Where do you stay during TC?

We usually stay at a guest house. When we go to very remote areas, we stay in local people's houses or offices.

At the TC screenings, what do people think about YFS films?

It depends on where the screening is and the audience. When we screened YFS films in Kayah State, the audience was very interested in documentaries about peace and political topics because a lot of Kayah people are activists. They gave us a lot of feedback and were grateful to be able to watch these kinds of films. When the TC screens films to armed groups, they usually don't give comments and just watch them silently. But when we do open screenings in villages, people talk and state their opinions much more freely. Sometimes there are people who have never heard about documentary films before. They ask us where the actors and actresses are in our films!



[The participants'] eyes sparkle and they actively participate when we discuss the local issues in their communities

Aye Mya Hlaing, YFS Participatory Video Facilitator

Which YFS film or films are audience favourites, and why?

Audiences really like *Sugar and Spice* by Mi Mi Lwin. We screened that in most states last year. People hadn't seen daily life in the dry region and how people make a living there, so they were happy and interested to watch the film. *Mother at Arms* by Nu Nu Hlaing has a strong and active female protagonist. People love to watch this story about a person who can inspire them. *The Peacekeeper* is a short documentary I made. The protagonist doesn't say who is right and wrong in the civil war, she just does what she can to help. The film has a positive outlook and audiences respond well to it and say they like my protagonist. *Seeds of Sadness* by Thae Zar Chi Khaing shows very openly the effects of civil war. It has very touching scenes where, for example, many people in the village have been injured by landmines and have to wear prosthetic legs.

Do people enjoy the PV training? If so, what do they like about it?

Yes, of course! Most people want the training to last for longer than two weeks. We teach them many games and energisers and also get them thinking about their situation. Everyone likes to handle the camera even if they don't dare to interview people. Their eyes sparkle and they actively participate when we discuss the local issues in their communities. We keep in touch with our participants, sometimes for years after the trainings.

Do you enjoy being a PV facilitator?

Yes. I love sharing information and facilitation because it actively helps people.

What is difficult about it?

The most difficult thing is probably the age difference. That can be a challenge. I've been a facilitator in three different places and it is really rare to have participants who are younger than me. Maybe it's our culture, but people don't always like to listen to what a person younger than them has to say. But I try my best to facilitate and to always be by their side to give them support. Another thing is that some participants are afraid to work on a story that mentions the local authority, army or sensitive issues. We need to listen to them and encourage them to make a video without causing any trouble for them.

What is your most memorable TC experience?

I always wanted hold a screening at Mai Na AG IDP Camp in Kachin State where I filmed *The Peacekeeper*, because I wanted the people in the camp to see the film they appear in. And the children in the camp have a real lack of entertainment. But I couldn't afford to travel back to Kachin State. Then the TC placement in September 2019 to Kachin gave me the chance to show my film in the camp. Everyone loved to watch themselves in the film! They were whispering, laughing and pointing out each other on the screen. Unfortunately, after screening it and another film, there was a power cut. But the audience didn't want to leave the screening place and made shadow gestures on the screen!



'True Fictions': The Art of Screenwriting for Beginners

27 May – 8 June 2019 (12 training days) – non-residential course at the YFS school premises in Yangon

YFS Tutors: Rachel Mathews (UK); Dr Aung Min (Myanmar).

Participants: 10 women and 10 men *of mixed ethnicities and religions including Shan-Buddhist, Kachin, Kayan and Kayin Christian, Shan-Indian, Rakhine, Shan-Pa-O and Bamar Buddhist, with three students self-identifying as LGBTI.*

Objectives: To train 20 YFS students with little or no screenwriting experience in the fundamentals of creating short fictional screenplays inspired by real-life events and/or situations. The resulting scripts were then made into short films during the 2019 True Fictions course.

Description: On Day 1, the students were instructed to go out within walking distance of YFS – to the nearby market, railway station or traffic police compound – and find a person who they thought looked interesting. They made a mental note of this person, their appearance, possible job, family situation, personality, and then returned to YFS to 'write them up' as a character. Following further character development work, including questionnaires and dramatic monologues, the students were divided into four groups of five people each. Working in their group, they were asked to introduce 'their' character to the other students and work together to develop a story featuring all five characters. To fit in with the focus of YFS work in 2019, stories should be based on the topic of 'Youth and Peace in Myanmar'.

The students were then tutored in how to create a short screenplay – looking at aspects including story structure, characterisation, locations, dialogue – and worked together in their group of five to write a 15-minute script. This group work was supported by a series of short film screenings and analysis as well as a screening of the feature film *The Monk*, written by tutor Aung Min.

The students completed their first-draft scripts by the end of the two-week course which culminated in a script reading and group discussion/evaluation of the four screenplays-in-progress. They then received e-Mentoring (from tutor Rachel Mathews) and face-to-face meetings (with Dr Aung Min) to take their scripts through to fourth-draft stage and prepare them for filming.

Topics covered included:

- The Recce – how to use a real location as inspiration for a fictional screen story
- Character – the value of using real people as inspiration to create complex, engaging and three-dimensional screen characters
- The Seven Basic Plots (after Christopher Booker) – the Jungian interpretation of narrative structure with a discussion of the plots of 'overcoming the monster', 'rags to riches', the quest, voyage and return, comedy, tragedy and rebirth
- 3-Act Film Structure – the beginning, middle and end of a story
- Theme – its importance to the emotional resonance of a story and how to identify it
- Prose Documents – the pitch/log-line, synopsis, treatment and step outline
- Dialogue – how to write it and how to ensure visual storytelling by keeping it in check
- Script Format – how to format scripts to an international standard (one minute/page)
- Rewriting – how to handle feedback and use it to inform the rewrite
- Presenting Yourself and Your Work – writing a Director's and Producer's Statement and applying to script development schemes, etc.

Outcomes: The students completed the first drafts of four 15-minute scripts which were then developed over the coming months to prepare them for being filmed on the 2019 True Fictions course at the end of 2019.

Making Films About Youth & Peace: The Advanced Editing Course /

28 June – 17 August 2019 (7.5 weeks / 42 training days) – non-residential course at the YFS school premises in Yangon

YFS Tutors: Tuula Mehtonen (Finland); Melanie Sandford (Australia) with local editing mentors Khin Myanmar, Sai Naw Kham and Khin Khin Hsu.

Participants: 3 male and 5 female directors, 4 male and 4 female editors. *The students came from different ethnicities and religions including Indian-Bamar and Kayan Christian, Shan, Rakhine, Myeik, Shan Pa-O and Bamar Buddhist.*

Objectives: The course aimed to enhance the directing and storytelling skills of the directors and the storytelling skills of the editors. It was designed to help all participants understand the importance of structure and to become familiar with the relationship between the director and editor, as well as to increase their confidence and competence in the art of documentary filmmaking. With the eight films focusing on the topic of 'Youth and Peace in Myanmar', another key objective was to make the students, Myanmar public and government more engaged in understanding and creating tolerance within Myanmar society.

For the local editing mentors who were participating in the YFS 'Train to Teach' programme, the course aimed to give them experience and confidence in teaching and guiding their peers through the process of bringing a short documentary film to completion.

Description: The course was carefully structured to create a hands-on experience for all participants. The teams were pre-selected before the course began, with one director and one editor assigned to each of the eight films. For teams with a first time editor, a local editing mentor was appointed to help them navigate the software in their own language. The two international tutors oversaw four films each.

After watching the rushes for each project, the teams created a 'paper edit' for their film and then, following discussions with their mentors, a first assembly. These were viewed by the team with their mentor and/or tutor and long discussions – with a particular consideration of the film's themes and the audience's feelings towards the protagonists – ensued.

There were group screenings and feedback sessions for every film at Rough Cut and Fine Cut stage where the students analysed how each film was progressing. These sessions pinpointed areas where there was confusion in the storytelling, as well as looking at the emotional impact of the films and how they could be enhanced. The international tutors and local mentors demonstrated editing techniques and 'tricks' and shared their experiences on past projects. This combination of work and discussion continued right through to the 'lock off' stage of each film.

Topics covered included:

- Ethics in filmmaking, not just with regard to a film's protagonists, but also to people viewing the finished story
- The filmmaker's responsibility to their protagonists and the need to represent them fairly
- The importance of being engaged and proactive whenever possible in countrywide and local politics
- Keeping an open mind when it comes to storytelling and the edit
- The importance of letting people from all over Myanmar have their voice heard and their ideas and feelings be seen and felt onscreen.

Outcomes: The locked off cuts of the eight short documentaries – each of around 15 minutes in length – that went on to be entered in the YFS-Goethe Institut Documentary Filmmaking Competition (see pp. 51 for descriptions of the individual films).



YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition Top Diamond Award Winner: Aye Chan

Aye Chan (24) was born and grew up in the town of Bilin in Mon State where her parents run a shop selling robes and other accessories for monks. Before joining YFS in 2018, she worked as an online media editor. In November 2019, her debut documentary film won the top *Diamond Award* in the YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition. Here, she tells us about the film and her experiences while filming and editing it.



What is the title of your film and what is it about?

My film is called *The Father I Knew*. It is about a woman who lost her father. He died fighting in the uprising of 1988. In the film, my protagonist traces her father's final footsteps – his last days are still a mystery to her at the beginning of the film – and how her life has been shaped by her loss. Her father's death inspired her to work with refugees in her region.

Why did you want to make this film?

One of the main reasons is because my protagonist is a woman. In the past, it has mainly been men who have been the focus of attention while women's stories have remained quite hidden. In this short film, a brave woman who has grown up without a father, who has been in mourning and is still searching for the reasons for his loss, is able to stand up and work for many people around her. I found her story about how she has endured through hard times and how her family – her mother, sister and her – are three women who have lived on after a sudden death, really inspiring. These women made me want to make this film.

Where did you film your documentary?

We filmed in Loikaw and in Shadaw village in Kayah State. I worked with my crew: cameraman Moe Kyaw Thu and sound recordist Chit Moe Pio. They worked really well as a team, were patient and hardworking. We have a good friendship.

What was the most difficult thing about the shoot?

Mainly, building up a relationship of trust with my protagonist. And transportation between the local villages was a bit challenging, which made it more tricky for us to film in the locations.

Did anything unexpected happen?

Something unexpected always happens in documentary filmmaking! While we were filming at the protagonist's house, an old friend of her father visited. Their conversation was surprisingly useful for my film, revealing the family's current social status, how these women live with dignity and how respectfully they are treated in their community. I was really delighted when my editor wanted to use some of this scene which we actually only filmed by accident.

One of the main reasons [I wanted to make this film] is because my protagonist is a woman. In the past, it has mainly been men who have been the focus of attention while women's stories have remained quite hidden.

Aye Chan, YFS True Fiction Student

Who was your editor?

Mi Mi Lwin (YFS editor and director of multi-award-winning short documentary, *Sugar & Spice*). She is very creative and determined and has great perseverance. My film is rather like a still-life painting. The emotion is gently developed from the beginning to the end. It was a challenge for Mi Mi Lwin to capture this emotion in every scene and carry it forwards. Most importantly, she used my beautiful shots in a way that lifts the emotion and creates a perfect break for viewers between the interview scenes.

Did you have a clear idea about the story and structure of your film before the edit?

Yes, I did. When I first learned about my protagonist's story, I planned three main sections: firstly, how a family's life has been impacted by the 1988 uprising; secondly, how a woman is longing for her father; and thirdly, her job with refugees whose lives have also been deeply impacted by politics. The elements were connected: the first two were mainly about emotion while the first and third looked at the results of conflict. So there was a relationship between everything and an initial structure. But while I was working with my editor, she shaped my story more much more than I had imagined.

How do you feel about the finished film?

It touches me every time I watch it, especially when I watched it again with my mum.

What was it like to win the top Diamond Award in the competition?

It was such a thrilling moment! It's something I will never forget.

What have you done with the prize money?

I've shared it with my four crew members. I also donated some to the refugee camps where we filmed with our protagonist.

Are you planning to make another film?

Yes, but this time I want to make a fiction film. It is about a girl who likes singing. It has similar themes to my documentary, going back into the past while the protagonist is in the present. The girl is still clinging to a failed romance which is the best, most beautiful moment of her life – but also the thing that has hurt her the most.

Post-Production Coaching /

19 August – 14 September (4 weeks / 24 training days) – non-residential course at the YFS school premises in Yangon

YFS Tutor: David Smith (UK);

Student Trainers: Zin Mar Oo and Sai Nyi Nyi, as part of the School's 'Teach to Train' programme.

Participants: six female and seven male students mainly from the 2018 intake *from a variety of ethnicities and religions, including Kachin and Indian-Bamar Christian, Shan, Shan-Pa-O, Rakhine and Bamar Buddhist.*

Objectives: the course was designed to provide the new intake of students with a basic knowledge of the different areas of post-production in film, ranging from technical knowledge to conceptual inspiration as a tool for creativity and self-expression.

Description: The four-week course was divided into two parts. In **Weeks One and Two**, the students were introduced to the art, craft and science of colour grading: the process of improving the appearance of moving picture images by adjusting the contrast, colour saturation, detail, black and white levels, etc. Grading is of particular importance in documentary filmmaking where footage may be shot at different times of day and in exteriors and interiors at the same location. The high contrast between the bright sunlight of exteriors and darkness of (often unlit) interiors in Myanmar presents a particular challenge. Working on iMac editing suites equipped with DaVinci Resolve software, the course combined classroom lessons with practical exercises to train the students in this essential component of a film's post-production.

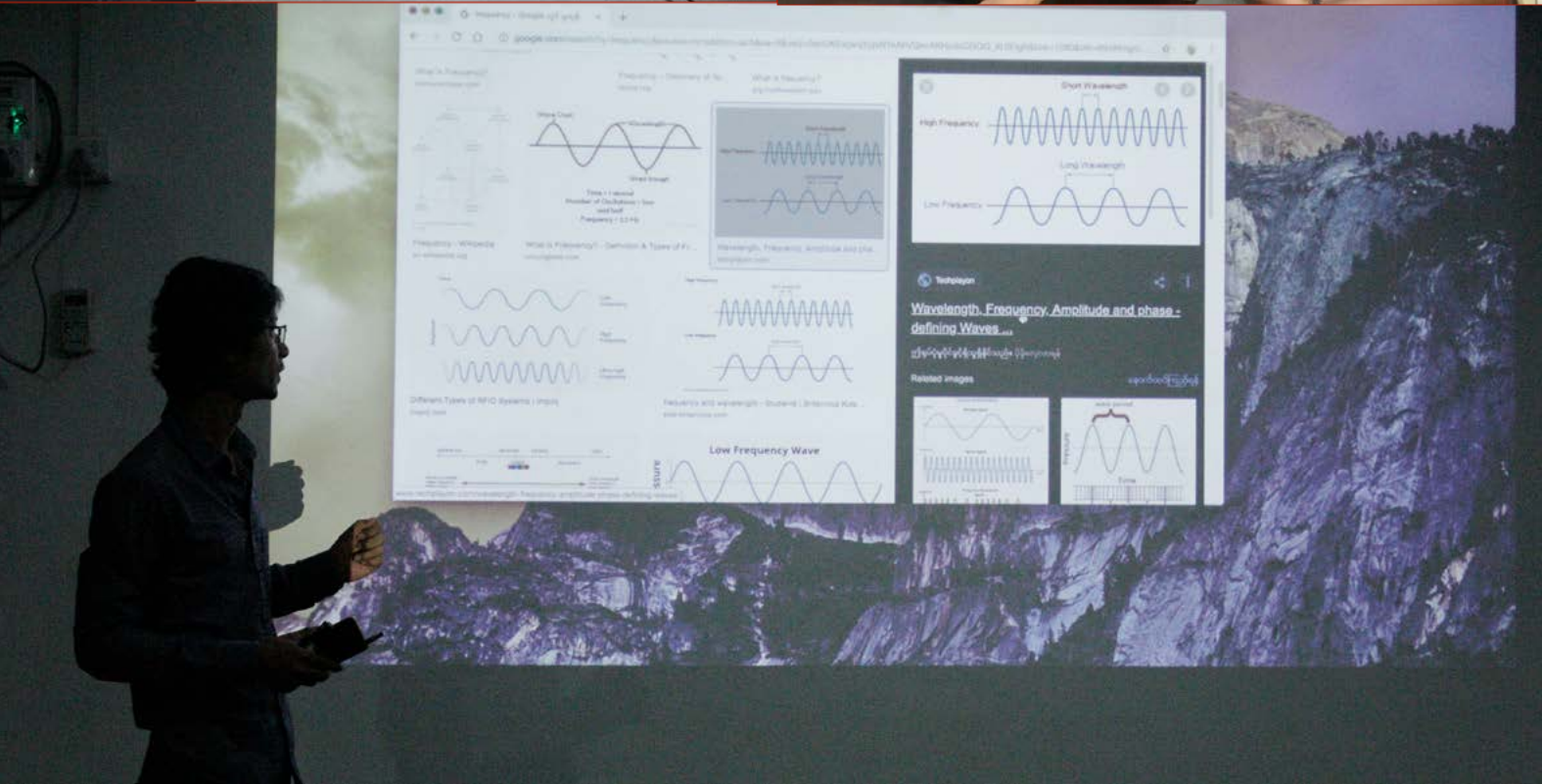
In **Weeks Three and Four**, the students worked in pairs to colour grade the eight YFS-Goethe Institut Documentary Competition films. Work began on the iMac workstations and then the students had the opportunity to screen their film in the School's specially built colour grading suite with a projector and the correct lighting conditions for professional colour grading. The international tutor gave the students real-time feedback and helped them to fix any problems with the grades in the suite. After the colour grade had been locked, the students then took the films back to the iMacs and were mentored as they finalised the subtitling and the design and addition of titles and credits.

Outcomes: The eight short films in the YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition were colour graded, completed and packaged to a professional standard and locked off ready for the final stage in their completion: the sound track-laying and mix.

YFS films are all about human stories – the struggles, triumphs, successes and failures of everyday life in Myanmar.

David Smith, YFS Post-Production Tutor





The Art of Sound Design /

16 September – 12 October 2019 (4 weeks / 24 training days) – non-residential course at the YFS school premises in Yangon

YFS Tutors: Kyaw Ko Ko and Slyne Tong Lumh Mon
(both Myanmar);
Ivan Horák (Czech Republic).

Participants: **four female and six male students**
from a variety of backgrounds and ethnicities,
including Kayin and Kachin Christian and Myeik,
Shan and Bamar Buddhist.

Objectives: To train the 2018 intake – plus four students joining in 2019 especially for this course – in the aesthetics and practical aspects of sound design and mixing with the specific intention of creating and completing the post-production sound on the eight YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition films edited over the summer of 2019.

Description: **Weeks One and Two** of this four-week course were led by Kyaw Ko Ko and Slyne Mon, two former YFS students who had completed the YFS 'Train to Teach' programme and, in Slyne Mon's case, were moving up to the role of YFS tutor for the first time. The local tutors taught the students the principals of sound design and helped them prepare the eight films for their final sound mixes.

Topics covered included:

- Which software Plug-Ins should be used to solve which acoustic problems
- How a scene can be created and enhanced via the use of sound
- The creation and use of Foleys
- The use of music in a film and where and when it is required.

In **Weeks Three and Four**, international sound tutor Ivan Horák joined the local tutors in order to mentor the students as they completed the sound mixing of the eight documentaries. Each film had different needs and required a different approach. The students decided to finish two of the films – *Mountain Camp* and *Worlds Apart* – in the multi-channel Surround Sound 5.1 sound system.

Outcomes: The sound tracks, effects and addition of music on the eight short YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition films were completed to a professional standard, readying the films for the competition judges as well as presentation at film festivals, etc.

The students are from different backgrounds. Their knowledge varies widely. Getting them to work on real-world projects is by far the best way for them to learn and grow – as I did myself before becoming a Tutor at the School.

Slyne Tong Lumh Mon, Sound Design Tutor

Surround Sound Masterclass /

14 – 19 October 2019 (6 training days) – non-residential workshop at the YFS school premises in Yangon

YFS Tutor: Ivan Horák (Czech Republic)

Participants: five men and two women – a mix of YFS students and Myanmar post-production sound professionals.

Objectives: To introduce Surround Sound (also known as 5.1, 7.1, DolbyAtmos, 5.1.2, 7.1.2) to YFS students and sound professionals working in Myanmar. This is an important element of cinematic sound that opens the gate to different worlds, such as so-called ‘extended realities’.

Description: Led by award-winning Czech sound recordist, designer and mixer Ivan Horák, the six-day Masterclass introduced graduates of previous YFS Sound Design courses and Myanmar sound professionals to how to mix documentary and fiction soundtracks using the international industry standard Surround Sound.

The Masterclass began with the tutor and students discussing and analysing various examples of Surround Sound and testing the use of multichannel sound in the School’s post-production studio. The students were then given the task of mixing two professionally released trailers from which all the sound had been removed. They adapted the trailers for Myanmar audiences, thus creating completely original pieces of work. The exercise revealed the possibilities of ‘upmixing’ or mixing stereo music into multiple channels and working with material from the editing room as well as sound effects delivered within sound design.

Finally, the students re-mixed two of the films completed during the previous Sound Design course – *Mountain Camp* and *Worlds Apart* – but from which again all the sound, and especially the panning automation, had been removed. The Masterclass students thus undertook the sound mixes from scratch, creating their own concepts and using all the channels at their disposal.

Outcomes: The Masterclass enabled students to:

- Gain proficiency in the technical and artistic aspects of mixing according to international Surround Sound standards
- Learn when to pan to surround channels; when and why ‘Center’ is used; when to make the sound too narrow and when too wide
- Apply their knowledge by working on real-world documentary and fictional projects with a deadline for finalisation.





'True Fictions': Fiction Filmmaking Course /

21 October – 16 November 2019 (4 weeks / 24 training days) – residential course at the YFS school premises in Yangon

YFS Tutors: Rachel Mathews (UK); Sabiha Sumar (Pakistan);
Tin Win Naing (Myanmar); Kyaw Ko Ko (Myanmar).

Participants: **Ten female and ten male students,**
including the 18 participants of the 'True
Fictions' Screenwriting Course held earlier in 2019
plus two replacements for students who had taken
ill/were no longer available.

*The students came from a mix of ethnicities and
religions including Kachin, Kayan and Kayin
Christian and Rakhine, Shan, Mon, Shan-Pa-O,
Shan-Indian and Bamar Buddhist.*

Objectives: To train 20 YFS students with little or no fiction
filmmaking experience in the aesthetics and practicalities of this
type of filmmaking, covering the entirety of the production process
including location scouting, casting, budgeting, scheduling,
contracts, permissions, determining the shots required to cover a
scene, directing (non)actors and camera and sound-recording.

Description: The course combined classroom teaching with
individual and group work and feedback. A highlight early on was
the screening of *Silent Waters*, the feature film written and directed
by international tutor Sabiha Sumar: the first Asian film to be
screened in Competition at Locarno Film Festival where it won the
Golden Leopard.

A key innovation in the 2019 course was that all participants gained
experience in the different filmmaking disciplines: as producer,
director, camera person, sound recordist and runner. This meant
each of the four films – produced from the four 15-minute scripts
written on the Screenwriting Course – was truly a team effort, with
all five students in each crew having the chance to direct the scenes
they had written.

The four-week course was divided into two distinct blocks.
In **Weeks One and Two**, the students were trained in the
practical and aesthetic aspects of creating a fiction film – including
workshops on directing (non) actors, setting up and blocking
a scene, and practice shoots. After receiving input on choosing
locations and casting their dramas, the students also undertook
the final pre-production of their films (some location and casting
work had been done prior to the course) and completed budgets,
schedules, shot-lists and call sheets for their shoots.

This is course is a must!

Eim Chan Thar, YFS True Fictions student

'True Fictions': Fiction Filmmaking Course /

During **Weeks Three and Four**, each student had two days to direct 'their' scenes in a shoot lasting ten days altogether. The student editors set up the edit suites at the start of Week 3 and, under the supervision of international editing mentor Regina Bärtschi, began editing the films in parallel with the shoots. Each evening, the tutors watched the rushes with each director and their crews and gave feedback on what was working and what was not. This meant the directors could do pick-up shots (or, sometimes, entire re-shoots) on their second day. These pick-ups/re-shoots became a key component in the learning process and helped the students to understand that it is not enough in a fiction film to create 'good' shots: a scene must be covered so that it will cut together in the edit and make dramatic sense in the completed film.

Topics covered in the course included:

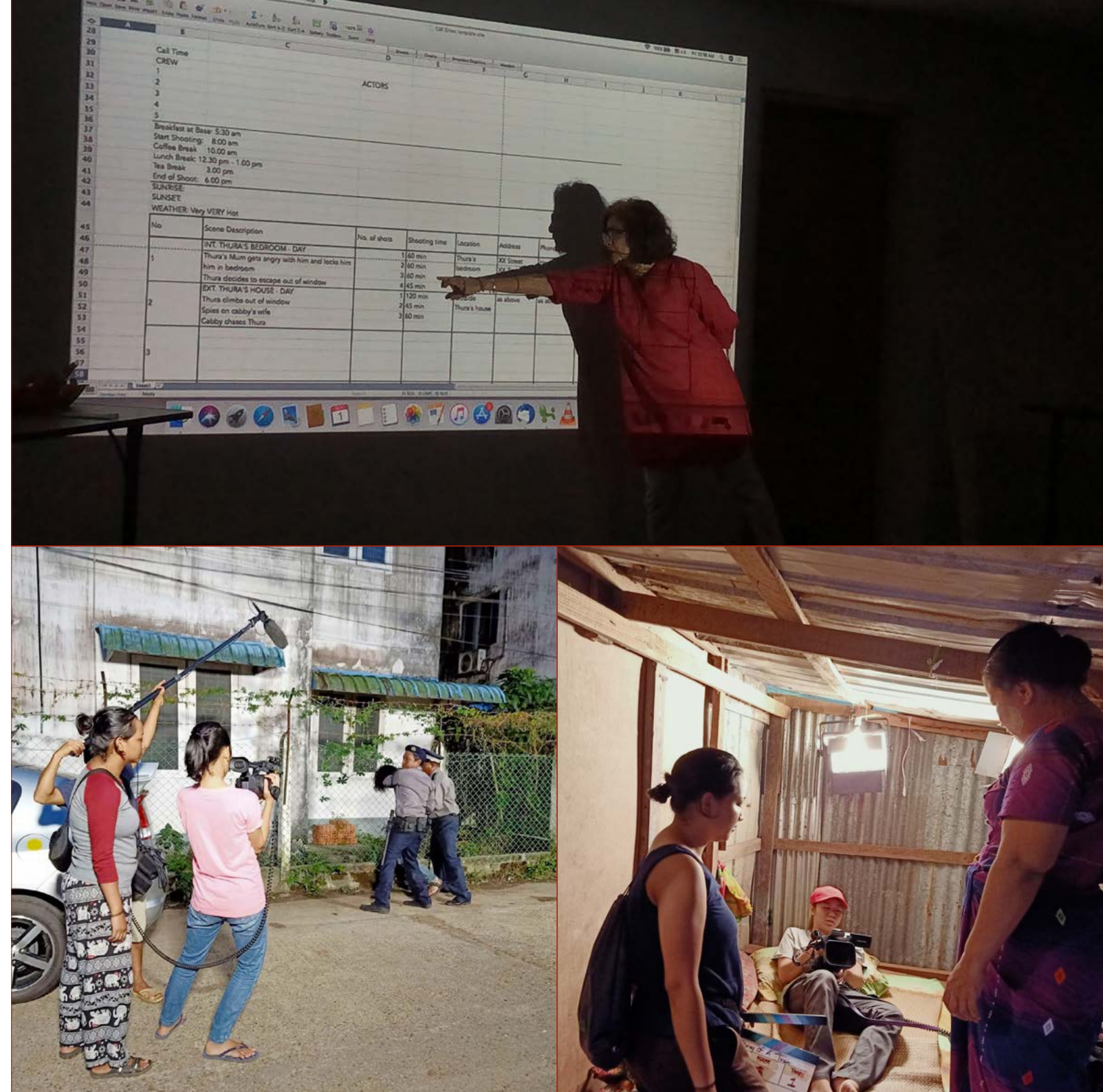
- The True Fictions 'ethos' of using non-actors and real locations to gain maximum authenticity in the films
- The technique and purpose of the Table Script Reading prior to a shoot
- Permissions required for shooting – including location release forms, contracts for paid and non-paid actors and crew members
- How to break down a script – listing actors, locations, props, make-up, costumes, etc

- The Shooting Schedule – its purpose and practicalities
- How to create a fiction film budget – including separate calculations for cash and in-kind costs
- The importance of good casting and how to run a successful audition, plus a dedicated workshop on directing non-actors
- Shot-listing and the shots required to cover a scene (including shot size, static/moving shots, POV shots, etc)
- How to shoot a scene – from the aspect of directing, camera, sound and production
- Call Sheets – their purpose and practicalities
- Rushes analysis, pick-up shots and how to go about re-shooting a scene that is not working
- The producer's and director's role in the edit.

Outcomes: Four short fiction films of between 12 and 20 minutes in length: *Midtown Yangon*, *The Other Side of the Tracks*, *Easy Money* and *The Banyan Tree* – see p. 51 for descriptions of the films.

I felt really excited to see my characters on screen and really proud of myself whenever I see my name on the cover page of the script.

Seint Yamone Htoo, YFS True Fictions student



‘True Fictions’ Case Study: Seint Yamone Htoo

Seint Yamone Htoo (29) was born and grew up in Yangon. Her father is a chief engineer in the Merchant Navy and her mother runs a restaurant that serves Myanmar food. Before joining YFS in 2018, Seint Yamone Htoo worked as a video journalist for Sky Net Broadcasting Media.



Why did you join the 2019 True Fictions course?

I wanted to think about real people’s lives and learn how to make them into a story. That’s why I joined this course.

What did you do on the screenwriting part of the course?

I wrote a short story about a gay man as part of the *Midtown Yangon* script. The overall script tells the stories of five different characters living in an apartment block in midtown Yangon; my character is one of them.

Can you briefly tell us about your story?

The story is about a young gay man who doesn’t want to come out because of his environment. He doesn’t want his mum to find out about his sexuality because he fears it will mean that she won’t be able to understand her own son.

What were the inspirations for your script?

My first idea was for a gay man to commit suicide because of bullying at work. Then I visited the location (the traffic police compound near YFS) and thought: what if a police officer is gay? Will he be able to accept his sexuality? So I started to develop the story along those lines.

Did you find it easy or difficult to develop and write your story?

This was the first script I have ever written so it was pretty hard. I only learned how to write a script on this course.

How did you feel about the completed script?

I felt really excited to see my characters on screen and really proud of myself whenever I see my name on the cover page of the script.

It was hard work directing my mum. She kept saying her own dialogue instead of the lines I had written in the script. I had to remind her to stick to the script!

Seint Yamone Htoo

What did you do on the production part of the course?

Our group (of five students) took quite a lot of time on the pre-production, trying to find the location and costumes. During the production itself, I worked as sound recordist, line producer, director, camera person and runner. I also got a chance to learn editing as an assistant editor.

You cast your own mother in your film, why?

The main reason is that I am gay myself, I’m a tomboy. So my mum has experienced the same situation with me as is depicted in the film. I wanted to get the real feeling that she felt when she found out that I am gay.

Was it easy or difficult to direct your mum?

It was hard work directing my mum. She kept saying her own dialogue instead of the lines I had written in the script. I had to remind her to stick to the script!

What did you enjoy most about ‘True Fictions’?

I really enjoyed the editing process. I learned a lot about editing and discovered that it really isn’t easy to edit a film.

How do you feel about the finished film?

I’m really happy with the final result. I think it’s really impressive mixing all the different stories together. It brings something new and unexpected to the audience.

‘True Fictions’: Fiction Editing Course /

4 November – 7 December 2019 (5 weeks / 30 training days) – residential course at the YFS school premises in Yangon

YFS Tutor: Regina Bärtschi (Switzerland).

Participants: Four editors and four trainee editors
(one per film): five women and three men
from various ethnicities.

Objectives: To mentor the editors and trainees who already had some experience of documentary-film editing as they learned the new techniques and approaches required to edit fiction film material.

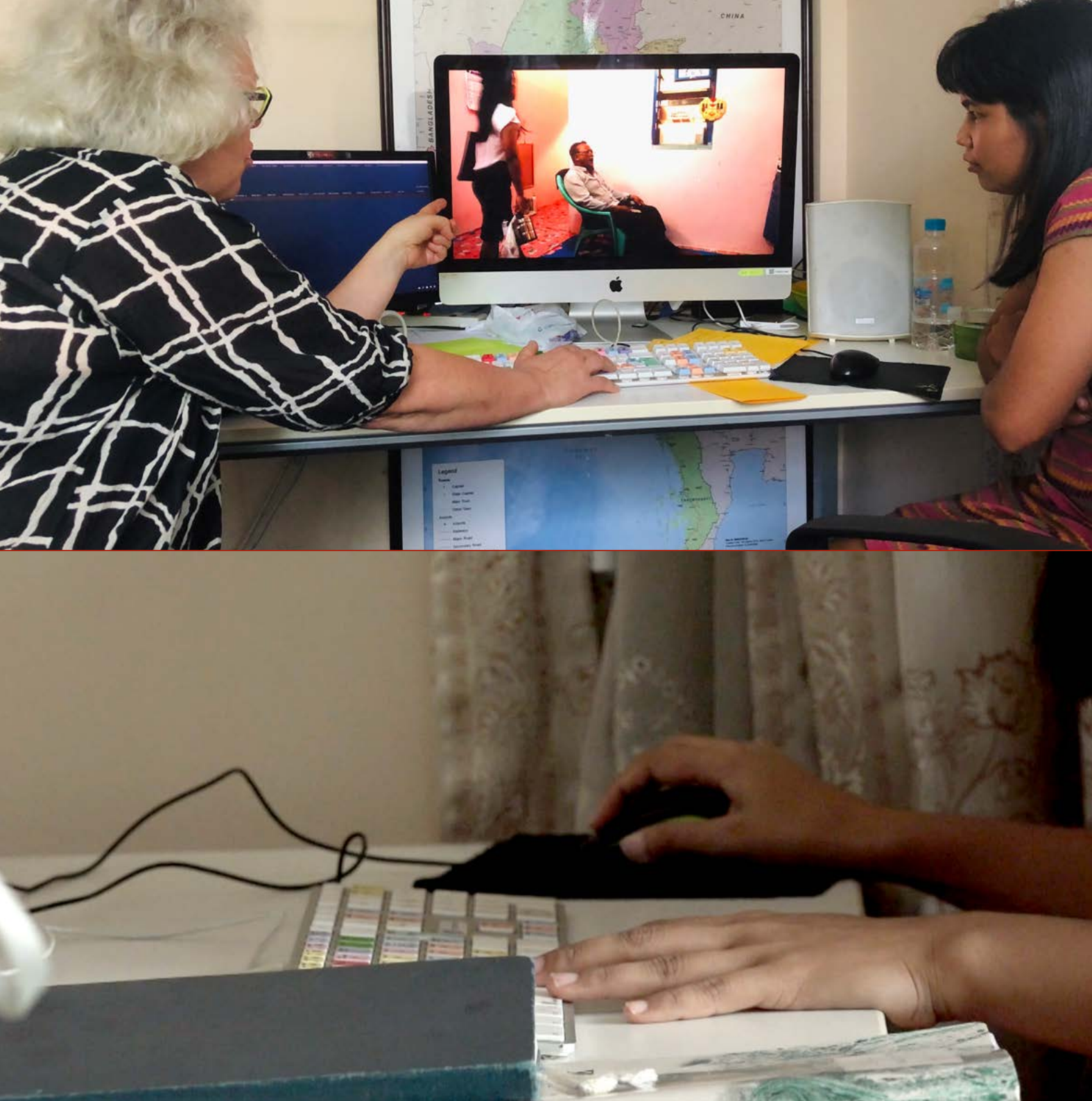
Description: Documentary film editing focuses on finding the narrative thread and developing the dramaturgy of the material. In fiction film, in contrast, the main requirement is to edit the filmed material in a way that effectively brings out the pre-existing story and protagonists. The script may work well on paper, but if the scenes are not filmed in the best way to serve it, then the fiction editor has to be bold and create the film anew in the edit room by following the emotional action and content in a way that will ensure the story makes sense to the audience.

The ‘True Fictions’ edits began simultaneously with the filming. Since the sound was recorded separately from the images in the films, the editors spent some time each day synchronising the material received from the crews and preparing it for the evening rushes screenings. During these screenings – which involved all the film crews and tutors – the crews, editors and tutors analysed the material and discussed anything that was missing or needed to be re-shot the following day. The editors then put together assemblies and rough cuts of the scenes, giving the crews the chance to see their work in progress and adjust their approach to the actors, camera and sound recording as necessary.

At first, the editors and assistants (who also had the chance to practice editing some scenes) found it difficult to choose the best material from the multiple takes in the filmed material: this is something that was new to them, since documentary films do not tend to have multiple takes of the same moments and scenes. However, the more familiar the editing students became with the stories and their protagonists, the more confident they grew in selecting the best and most effective takes.

By halfway through the course, each of the four films could be screened to their film crews and the tutors as a full rough cut. The film shoots now being over, the editors settled down to finesse their work and create a fine cut. Although there were some issues with one of the films – *Easy Money* – all the editors met the deadline for the fine cut and were able to achieve the all-important picture lock by the end of the course.





'True Fictions': Fiction Editing Course /

The editors' tasks included:

- Organising the rushes arriving from the shoots in a way appropriate to fiction editing
- Synchronising the images and soundtracks (the sound was recorded via a separate mixer and recorder)
- Preparing and screening the rushes to the tutors and film crews and noting down decisions about the best shots to be used
- Evaluating and analysing the filmed footage in terms of drama, image quality and ability to be edited with other shots
- Creating the first rough cut
- Giving feedback to the crew of the film they were editing about changes required because of staging or technical issues, and informing them which shots were missing to be able to tell the story in a coherent and effective way
- Communicating with the directors, camera, sound and other crew members and learning how to give them constructive feedback
- Finishing the fine cut in collaboration with the directors
- Adhering to a tight editing schedule

The assistant editors' tasks included:

- Editing a 'making of' film for their project
- Sound editing, including cleaning up the original soundtracks, filling in gaps and adjusting jumps in the sound
- Creating quick-time movies of the films for translation and the addition of subtitles
- Adjusting and customising the subtitles
- Preparing the project for hand over to the sound designers and for the colour grading and title design.

Outcomes: The four 'True Fictions' films were edited to picture lock stage, ready to be handed over to the students undertaking the final post-production on the projects.

In Myanmar, there are a lot of voices that need to be heard. With our 'True Fictions' skills, we can tell a story based on the real lives of people by writing a script that has a chance to be heard here in Myanmar and around the world.

Aung Htet Myet, YFS True Fictions student

Now, I understand more about the process of fiction filmmaking, including scriptwriting, discussions with the producer, camera and sound people and so on ... and I've gained more confidence. Teamwork is the key!

Shin Thandar, YFS True Fictions student

‘True Fictions’: Fiction Post-Production & Trailer Editing Course /

6 – 25 January 2020 (3 weeks / 18 training days) – non-residential course at the YFS school premises in Yangon

YFS Tutors: Fiona Strain (Australia) with support from local tutors Slyne Mon and Kyaw Ko Ko for sound post-production and Zin Mar Oo and Sai Nyi Nyi for colour grading.

Participants: A total of 27 students
from varying ethnicities, religions and backgrounds including Kayin, Myanmar-Indian, Shan and Kayan Christians and Mon, Kachin, Shan-Pa-O, Rakhine, Shan-Indian and Bamar Buddhists.

Objectives: This intensive training actually comprised three courses – **Sound Post-Production**, **Colour Grading** and **Trailer Editing** – with the overall objective of completing the post-production on the four ‘True Fictions’ films. In addition to creating a one-minute trailer for these films, the Trailer Editing Course also aimed to create trailers for the eight YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition films.

Description: For the **Sound Post-Production Mentoring**, the international and local tutors mentored the students as they worked on all aspects of the ‘True Fictions’ film soundtracks to build soundscapes that were imaginative, enhanced the characters moods and emotions, established a sense of place embodying the unique sounds of the location, people and activities nearby, while also helping the audience to gain a sense of a back-story for the characters. The focus was not merely on cleaning up the soundtracks: the students were encouraged to be creative in using ambience, Foley, ADR (automated dialogue replacement) and music to add substantially to the sound textures of the films.

For the **Colour Grading**, the international tutor mentored the students as they worked on the four films’ grades to ensure that all the scenes were consistent internally and to repair any colour or saturation issues in the original footage, such as overly light or dark shots. The students also focused on ensuring that all the characters’ skin tones looked natural. Faces and important objects in each film were highlighted in a subtle way to draw the audience to these key elements. The students learnt how to build atmosphere and a sense of emotion in the films, for example, by enhancing and emphasising sunsets in shots that led into the evening, and casting shadows in certain areas to help with the mood. This involved the use of both primary and secondary grading skills in the DaVinci Resolve and Premiere Pro editing suites.

In the **Trailer Editing Course**, the students were encouraged to move beyond the narrative storytelling methods they had learned when editing complete films and to think more laterally in order to create an engaging and energetic one-minute trailer. The students were encouraged to use the images and soundtracks – including music – from their chosen film and select shots that created a snapshot of the film, giving a good sense of the characters, story and mood without giving away the actual storyline or any important





‘True Fictions’: Fiction Post-Production & Trailer Editing Course /

resolutions. As trailer editors, the students were prompted to break away from the film’s chronological order and to think more thematically, making use of the inherent movement within shots and the energy of music to drive a sequence and build a montage with a separate meaning to the film itself – for example, using a run of three or four close-ups of faces, landscapes or vehicles to create a sense of the people, places and actions contained within it.

Topics covered in the three courses included:

- Group analysis of films to discuss technical and creative ways of enhancing a film by the soundtrack and colour grade
- Closely identifying who the audience is to help create a film or trailer to suit them
- Discussing the director’s intentions and how best to realise them
- Methods employed to build the mood of a scene with the colour grade and sound post-production
- Creating continuity within a scene by the use of colour and atmosphere
- Creating scene changes with the use of colour and sound effects
- The importance of continual review and adjustment during the post-production process
- The importance of subtlety in the creative process, from sound through to colour enhancement

- Focusing on cross-checking all the elements in a film, including sound levels, subtitles, scene intent, pacing and the grade
- Understanding how pace and story can be changed by the addition of sound elements
- Preparing the sound mix and the finished film so all the elements are in place for editing a trailer
- Being open to working with a different mindset when editing a trailer
- The importance of standardised naming conventions and processes
- The correct methods of handing over a film to other departments.

Outcomes: The post-production of the four ‘True Fictions’ films – including the soundtracks and mixes, addition of music, colour grades, subtitles, titles and credits – were completed to an international standard. In addition, four one-minute trailers for the ‘True Fictions’ films and eight one-minute trailers for the YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition films were completed.

In ‘True Fictions’ we learnt about many of the roles in a short film. Now we know the entire fiction film production process. I will use this experience to make my own films and for my career. I want to work in the local and international film industries and I will use the skills I have learnt during ‘True Fictions’.

Thae Zar Chi Khaing, YFS True Fictions student

YFS-MyPol Scriptwriting for a Myanmar Police Drama Mini-Series /

6 November 2019 – 28 February 2020 (15 days in total) – at the YFS school premises in Yangon

YFS Tutor: Rachel Mathews (UK).

Participants: **four women and one man**
Su Su Hlaing, Cho Wutyi Lwin, Shwe Pyae,
Mal Khaing, Cham Myaye Kyaw

Objectives: To mentor five YFS-trained scriptwriters as they researched, developed and wrote six ten-minute scripts in the ‘edutainment’ genre focusing on the Myanmar Police Force (MPF). The scripts should use drama to illustrate how a police station in a fictional Yangon township adopts a community policing model. The project forms part of the EU’s long-term MyPol project to help reform the MPF.

Description: The mentorship began with two ‘**Ideas Days**’ held at YFS and designed to inspire and inform the scriptwriters about the MPF, the typical/most prevalent crimes faced by people in Myanmar, public interaction with the police force and the problems/challenges therein. Day One chiefly focused on the police’s point of view, with panel presentations and one-to-one discussions with MyPol’s MPF advisors and police experts from abroad. Day Two moved the focus to Myanmar civil society and saw presentations and discussions with representatives from CSOs involved in women’s rights and equality, GBV, advocating for treatment for drug users, trafficking and LGBTI rights. On Day Three, the screenwriters went on **Field Trips** to two township police stations in Yangon to familiarise themselves with the lives and work of MPF officers.

The screenwriters then worked with the scriptwriting mentor to identify the main characters of the series, develop the overall story arcs and break the drama down into stories for the individual episodes. The screenwriters were mentored through the entire scripting process, from writing the step outline to creating three drafts of the scripts. The work was undertaken in close collaboration with MyPol who provided feedback at key stages. The third draft scripts were read together at a **Script Reading Day** held at YFS in February 2020 to an invited audience of MyPol, MPF advisors and a serving MPF officer who all gave their final input on the scripts so that any remaining factual errors and dramatic improbabilities could be addressed. The finalised scripts were delivered to MyPol at the end of February 2020.

Outcomes: Six well-developed, factually correct and dramatically engaging ten-minute scripts which tell the story of how, by working closely with the community, a Yangon township police force solves the connected crimes of the abduction of a teenage girl and the distribution of illegal narcotics. YFS will now bid for the next stage in the project: to produce these scripts into six short films in late 2020.

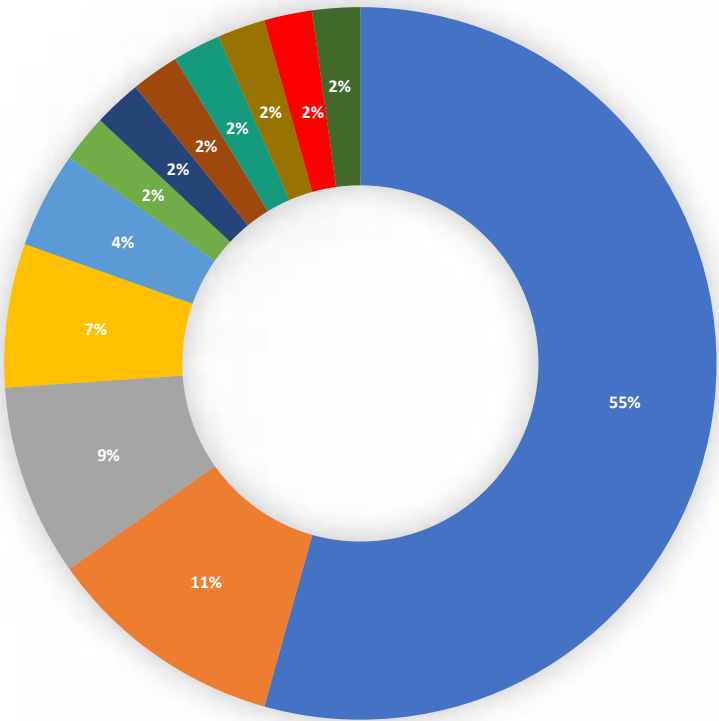


Summary of 2019 / Training Statistics

Of the 46 students trained by Yangon Film School in 2019, 46% were of an ethnicity other than the Myanmar majority, with students from a total of 12 different ethnicities trained during the year.

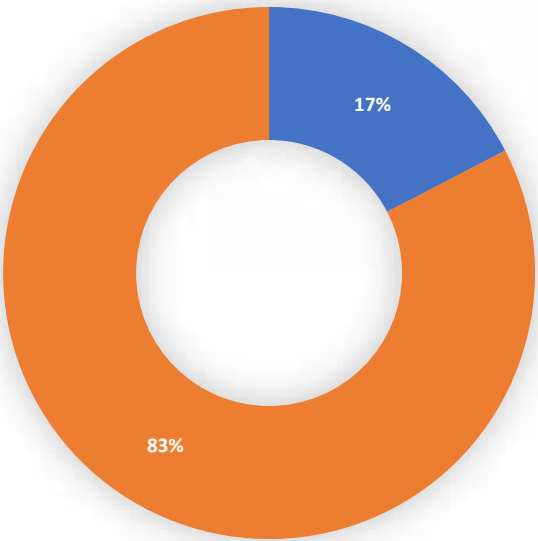
- Bamar: 25
- Shan: 5
- Kayin: 4
- Rakhine: 3
- Kachin: 2
- Lisu: 1
- Myanmar-Indian: 1
- Mon: 1
- Kayan: 1
- Dawei: 1
- Shan Pa-O: 1
- Shan-Indian: 1

Summary of 2019 Training Statistics



Religion

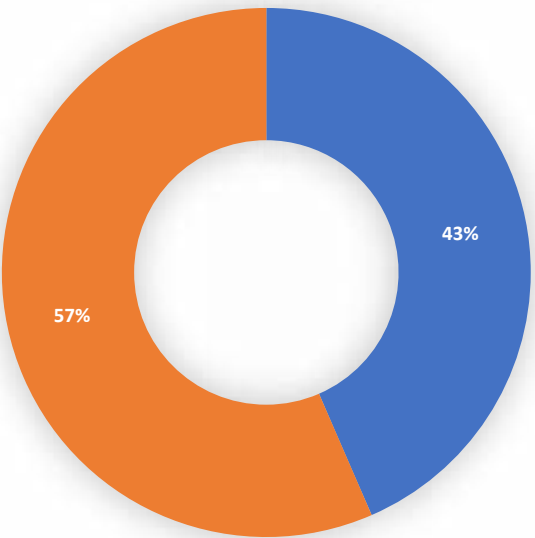
- Christian: 8
- Buddhist: 38



17% of students were of another religion (Christianity) than the Buddhist majority.
43% of students were female.

Gender

- Female: 20
- Male: 26



YFS Training Courses in 2020

In 2020, the School will have a new intake of 12 students – 6 women and 6 men between the ages of 20 and 34 – selected by School Director Lindsey Merrison and the Student Committee following interviews held in late 2019 with 64 people who had applied to join YFS. The new intake will first study the Art of Documentary for Beginners Course before learning about editing, film history and analysis, sound and post-production. The School will also support its current third year students to develop ideas for their graduation films. Almost all YFS courses in 2020 will have a 'Train to Teach' component where graduates of at least five YFS courses will have the opportunity to learn to pass on their skills to their peers and begin the process of becoming a YFS tutor in their own right.

At the time of going to press (May 2020) Yangon Film School has been obliged to reschedule a number of courses in response to restrictions on movement and other precautions designed to contain the spread of coronavirus. Dates for courses from June onwards are tentative.

1 5 February – 28 March / The Art of Documentary Filmmaking for Beginners

Residential at YFS

A 7.5 week intensive course providing an introduction to documentary via screenings, classroom sessions and practical exercises in camera, sound, interview technique, research and treatment writing. The training ends with the 'All in a Day's Work' Cinematography and Sound Training Module and a brief editing 'taster'.

2 Dates to be confirmed / Pitching Mentorship and Competition

Non-residential at YFS

An international mentor provides two days of pitch mentorship to 20 third year students and alumni, followed by a pitching competition where four projects are selected to receive funding and editing mentorship during 2020.

3 Dates to be confirmed / 'A Farewell to Arms: Filming the Peace Process in Myanmar'

Non-residential at YFS

A three-day workshop with guest experts examining the Myanmar peace process from political, gender-specific, ethnic and economic perspectives to prepare YFS crews to film a series of long-term observational documentaries.

4 17 – 27 June 2020 / Participatory Video Training for Travelling Cinema Crews

Non-residential course at YFS

This 10-day course includes a two-day PV facilitation in Yangon and prepares Travelling Cinema crews for their outreach assignments across Myanmar.

5 6 – 25 July 2018 / How Films Work: Film Analysis Course

Non-residential at YFS

A three-week course designed to give emerging filmmakers the ability to distinguish between different editing methods and to understand how editing can be used to build a film's intensity.

6 Dates to be confirmed / Editing Mentorships of projects by advanced students and alumni

Non-residential mentorship at YFS

The crews of up to four projects, plus the 'A Farewell to Arms' crews, are mentored (also remotely) for several weeks to help them sort material, develop a structure and dramaturgy and prepare them for the next phase of filming.

7 3 – 22 August 2018 (dates tbc) / Other Ways of Seeing: A History of Film Form

Three weeks, non-residential at YFS

A three-week course analysing the history of the development of camera, composition, editing, sound, etc. Film clips illustrating the topics, film form and style are screened as appropriate during the classroom based training.

8 Sept 2020 (dates tbc) / Post-Production

Non-residential at YFS

A four-week course to instil professionalism at the closing stages of the edit as students learn to lock the cut, work with directors and producers, subtitling, colour correction and organising tracks for the sound mix.

9 Sept 2020 (dates tbc) / Sound Design

Non-residential at YFS

A four-week course to introduce the 2020 intake to the equipment and software (Digital Audio Workstations, ProTools) and also the artistic aspects of sound post-production and design.

10 Tentatively scheduled for November / Introduction to Editing

Residential at YFS

A four-week training for the 12 participants from the Beginners' Course, introducing them to the School's digital editing suites where they practice editing a range of short exercises from previously filmed material.

11 Oct to Dec 2020 (tbc) / POSSIBLE True Fictions II: MYPOL drama series

Non-residential Course / Venue: YFS & various locations in Yangon

Mentored production and filming of 6 x 10-minute episodes of a drama series about the Myanmar police force. Three international and two local mentors will provide guidance for up to 20 students with prior experience in 'True Fictions' style filmmaking as they film and edit this series of short fictional films with a documentary sensibility.



FILMS

Films Produced in 2019 /

In 2019, YFS students made **eight short documentaries**, **four short fiction films** and **two evaluation films** about the YFS training courses that took place throughout the year. They also facilitated the making of **six participatory videos** and made **three participatory video case studies**.

YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition Films

During the Advanced Editing course from late June to mid-August 2019, the eight director-editor teams edited eight short documentaries addressing the School's 2019 focus on 'Youth and Peace in Myanmar'.

The films were judged by an international panel who awarded prizes to the four best films. They are now being entered into film festivals around the world and will form an integral part of the YFS Travelling Cinema screenings to rural/hard-to-reach communities across Myanmar.

The YFS-Goethe Institut Documentary Competition Panel of Judges:



Dr Yadana
Programme Analyst,
Adolescents and Youth
UN Population Fund



Mon Mon Myat
Writer and Filmmaker,
former executive director of
the Human Rights, Human
Dignity International Film
Festival



Maung Saungkha
Poet and Activist, Founder
of Athan –
Freedom of Expression
Activist Organization



H.E. Wouter Jurgens
Ambassador,
Kingdom of the
Netherlands



Dr Martin Wälde
Director,
Goethe-Institut Myanmar

YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition Films /

Winner of the 2019 Goethe Institut Myanmar 1,500 Euro Diamond Documentary Award:

The Father I Knew / 13'59"

Director: Aye Chan, Camera: Htun Tauk Moe Thu, Sound: Chit Moe Pio, Editor: Mi Mi Lwin.

Thirty years ago when Genni Khury was a child, her father left his family to join the Burmese students fighting the military dictatorship. He was never to return. Now a grown woman with a family of her own, refugee worker Genni retraces her revolutionary father's final steps and considers the impact the country's decades-long conflicts have had on her family and, indeed, a whole generation.

Winner of the 2019 Goethe-Institut Myanmar 1,000 Euro Ruby Documentary Award:

Worlds Apart / 14'56"

Director: Shin Thandar, Camera: Thae Zar Chi Khaing, Sound: Ja Roi Aung, Editor: May Myat Noe Aye.

Worlds within worlds are explored by the filmmaker, a Rakhine native, in this moving portrait of her Hindu neighbours. An alarming glimpse of the ominous effects of long-term segregation of communities in Myanmar and the toll this is now taking on the next generation.

Joint Winners of the 2019 Goethe-Institut Myanmar Jade Documentary Award, each accompanied by 750 Euros:

Kachin Reporter / 16'36"

Director: Seint Yamone Thu, Camera: Htun Tauk Moe Thu, Sound: May Myat Noe Aye, Editor: Sai Nyi Nyi.

Journalist Yann Aung Htun is determined to give a voice to ordinary people in Kachin State in Myanmar – in spite of ongoing armed conflict. This moving portrait shows how he is affected by his reporting, but also how the space in which he is able to work is shrinking.

Lashio Ambulance / 16'00"

Director: Mann Pye Pyo Aung, Camera: Tin Win Naing, Sound: Htun Tauk Moe Thu, Editor: Thae Zar Chi Khaing.

An intense ride with a Muslim volunteer ambulance crew in Lashio in northern Shan State in which their dedication to helping those in need – regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion – is palpable and radiates a powerful message for peace. From beginning to tragic end.





YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition Films /

Runner-up films in the Competition:

Angry Folks / 17'13"

Director: Aung Htet Myet, Camera: Htun Tauk Moe Thu, Seint Yamone Htoo, Sound: May Myat Noe Aye, Editor: Thant Zin Aung.

A heart-warming film about two gutsy young protest singers who put their beliefs into music in order to help Myanmar's factory workers understand their rights – and fight for them.

Mountain Camp / 19'32"

Director: Chit Moe Pio, Camera: Soe Kyaw Htin Tun, Sound: Thant Zin Aung, Editor: Moe Kyaw Thu.

Under the watchful eye of a retired general in the Kayan New Land Army, a group of men and boys from all walks of life, religions and ethnicities in Myanmar get to grips with their addiction at a remote rehab-cum-boot-camp tucked away in the hills of Kayah State.

Not Like My Father / 15'05"

Director: Nang Mhwe Ngin Seng, Camera: Thae Zar Chi Khaing, Sound: Ja Roi Aung, Editor: Htun Tauk Moe Thu.

Mong Nai Township in Myanmar's southern Shan State is studded with pagodas that hark back to ancient times. But young farmer Sai Lao Seng Mong is battling recent history: he wants to escape the long shadow his father's addiction has cast on his family and walk his own path in life.

The Campaigner / 14'49"

Director: Nang Chan Myayt Aye, Camera: Aye Chan, Sound: Moe Kyaw Thu, Editor: Zin Mar Oo.

An inspiring portrait of one young activist's tireless efforts to promote peace and equality in Shan state and engage ordinary people in the national peace process.

‘True Fictions’ Short Fiction Films

As part of the substantial ‘True Fictions’ training in 2019, comprising modules in screenwriting, film production, editing and post-production, YFS students made **four short fiction films** with a documentary sensibility, plus four one-minute trailers to advertise the films which are now being entered into international and national film festivals.

The Other Side of the Tracks / 16’17”

Written and filmed by Aye Chan, Chit Moe Pio, Htun Tauk Moe Thu, Saw Eh Doh Poe and Thae Zar Chi Khaing; edited by Sai Nyi Nyi.

Schoolboy Thura runs away from home and meets three street kids. They play football and suppress hunger pangs by sniffing glue. But the freedom of life on the street has its drawbacks. Will Thura realise there’s no place like home?

Easy Money / 13’10”

Written and filmed by Eim Chan Thar, Ja Roi Aung, Nang Mhwe Ngin Seng, Min Yan Thaik and Mann Pye Phyo Aung; edited by Thae Zar Chi Khaing, Zin Mar Oo and Khin Warso.

Min Min quits working for his bossy aunt and falls in with a drug dealer. He enjoys the freedom of his new job and the cash certainly comes in handy. But ultimately he discovers there’s no such thing as easy money.

The Banyan Tree / 16’24”

Written and filmed by Aye Nilar Kyaw, Khine Minn Soe, Maung Okkar, Myat Minn Khant and Nang Chan Myayt Aye; edited by Zin Mar Oo.

Young Shan woman Mo Kham arrives in Yangon to work at Daw Ngwe’s shop. She is hoping for a fresh start but the trauma of war isn’t so easy to put behind her. Can she find a way to start living in the present?

Midtown Yangon / 19’37”

Written and filmed by Aung Htet Myet, May Myat Noe Aye, Moe Kyaw Thu, Seint Yamone Htoo and Shin Thandar; edited by Mi Mi Lwin

A multi-storey housing block is filled with stories, from a street hawker struggling to fix his TV to a lonely girl who longs for a playmate; from one young man hiding his sexuality to another who simply wants to visit his girlfriend. As frustration builds in a young woman’s overcrowded household, her heartfelt cry adds to the cacophony of lives in this little piece of the city.





Travelling Cinema Participatory Videos /

On three Travelling Cinema placements across Myanmar in 2019, twelve YFS students facilitated as communities made the following **six participatory videos**:

Kyauk Gyi Village in Bago Region:

Hear Our Voice addresses what young people need and hope for in order to remain and have fulfilling lives in their village.

Rubbish looks at environmental issues, especially the damage caused by the inappropriate disposal of rubbish.

Ho Seit Village in Kayah State:

Deadly Dependency is about the high incidence of drug use in the community, interviewing drug users themselves as well as recovering addicts and family members.

Don't Hit Mum! A great many women are being beaten by their husbands in the village. The film tries to find out why this is happening and looks at ways women can survive domestic abuse.

Hway Kai Village in Tachileik Township in eastern Shan State:

The Muddy Road to Education shows the importance of having proper facilities and equipment in schools.

Coming Home from Addiction is designed to raise awareness about the consequences of drug addiction and to advocate for more drug rehabilitation centres.

The PVs will form part of future YFS Travelling Cinema screenings. In addition, **all YFS participatory videos are uploaded to the YFS YouTube channel** and other social media, including those of partner organisations, and are **distributed on DVDs to the communities who made them** where they are used as advocacy tools for decision and policy-makers and help communities to find solutions themselves for the issues raised.



Yangon Film Services: Commissioned Films /

Yangon Film Services is the production arm of Yangon Film School. Established in 2006 to train local talent to produce films in the context of humanitarian service and development in Myanmar, this social enterprise has to date produced around 70 tailor-made films for a wide range of local and international organisations, as well as providing meaningful and sustainable work for YFS students and graduates. The company also provides skilled local crews for international production companies filming in the country.

In 2019, a total of 21 YFS students and alumni (12 women and 9 men) were able to earn income working as freelance crew members and filmmakers for six commissions negotiated and produced by Yangon Film Services. The School's production arm worked with national and international NGOs and other organisations including Save the Children, Nokia, the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the European Union's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Directorate.

Play! Learn! Develop! Early Childhood Care and Development

(11'51" and 3'45"; Burmese with English subtitles)

Save the Children is currently implementing education programmes in 15 townships across Myanmar with a focus on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), Basic Education and Education in Emergencies. This lively and entertaining short film presents the experiences of children, parents and teachers from community-based ECCD centres in Hsipaw Township in Shan State and Oktwin Township in Bago Region.

Made for Save the Children Myanmar as part of the 'Making Change Happen Together' project funded by NOKIA

Safe Hospital Initiative - Let's Prepare Together!

(5'40"; Burmese with English subtitles)

Humanity & Inclusion Myanmar has been implementing the Safe Hospital Initiative in Yangon General Hospital and Mandalay General Hospital since 2016. Funded by the European Union and the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the project focuses on making the hospitals more resilient to disasters and mass-casualty incidents. Targeted at the Myanmar consortium for community resilience, this short film provides key messages about the disaster preparedness programmes in the hospitals and the achievements of the project.

Made for Humanity & Inclusion Myanmar; funded by the EU and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

YFS Films and Students at Festivals in 2019 /

Screening YFS films at national and international festivals helps raise the School's profile and promotes the work of its filmmakers. Screenings also give YFS the opportunity to convey the information about democracy and diversity contained in its films and raise international awareness about the lives and concerns of people living in Myanmar, including the urban and rural poor and marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

In 2019, 30 different films made on YFS film courses in recent years screened at 33 film festivals in 17 countries including in Myanmar, South Korea, Pakistan, USA, UK, Germany, Armenia, India, Columbia and Nepal. A total of 63 film festival screenings took place during the year. YFS films were nominated for seven awards and won two:

Lovely Bones, directed by Nwaye Zar Che Soe, won the We Care Film Festival Second Prize Award in New Delhi, India. Produced in 2016, the short documentary tells the story of a disabled man who, despite lacking structure of support for people with disabilities in Myanmar, manages to earn a living for his family by working as a ferryman over the Ngawon River in the Delta.

Opium Farmer, directed by Su Su Hlaing, won the Best Documentary Award at the #9 Wathann Film Festival in Yangon, Myanmar. The documentary was co-produced with the Myanmar Opium Farmers Forum (MOFF) and the Transnational Institute (TNI) to raise awareness about the difficult situation of indigenous farmers in Kachin and Shan states who are being affected by the government's forced eradication programme to reduce opium production without sufficient consideration of the farmers or their welfare.

Other YFS films popular at festivals in 2019 include **Mother at Arms**, a documentary directed by Nu Nu Hlaing about a female revolutionary combining activism with being a mother of a disabled daughter; the docu-animation **Limbo**, made by Nwaye Zar Che Soe, Saw Eh Doh Poe and Nann Win May Aye, about a 19-year-old girl raped by her uncle who fights for justice; and **Lost Boy**, directed by Shin Thandar, about a boy brought from his village to work in Yangon who is unable to find his way back home. One of the seven festivals to screen *Lost Boy* was the Fillmschoolfest Munich in Germany. Director Shin Thandar was invited to attend the festival and present her film in person.

As a filmmaker, watching how people react when they see my films is one of the most exciting moments I can have. I love it!

Aye Mya Hlaing, YFS student since 2016



Film Festival Case Study: Khin Myanmar



Khin Myanmar (32) was born in Mandalay and grew up in Yangon. Her father was a famous film editor in the Myanmar film industry; her mother is a housewife. Before joining YFS in 2011, Khin Myanmar took a computer studies course in the UK. Having participated in the YFS Train to Teach programme, she now works at the School as a mentor – for example, on the Beginners’ course – as well as an editor.

In 2019, you travelled to the World Village Festival in Helsinki to present the film Warmer Days. What is the film is about?

It looks at sharing knowledge about changes in climate and developing an awareness about them for our future generations in Myanmar.

What was your role in the film?

I was the director.

Have you been to an international film festival before?

Yes, I attended the Women in Film Festival in Seoul, South Korea in 2013, the Visual Documentary Project in Kyoto and Tokyo, Japan in 2014, the IAWRT Film Festival in New Delhi in 2015. I also got the chance to attend the Berlin International Film Festival in 2015.

What was it like when you first arrived in Helsinki? Did someone meet you and show you around?

I met Auli Starck, Executive Director of (YFS-funder) VIKES and Tuula Mehtonen, my editing mentor. It was also great that YFS student Wai Mar Nyunt was in Helsinki as well. They all showed me round the city and accompanied me at the festival. I was really very thrilled and honoured to see how fantastic the festival is.

Where did you stay?

I stayed three nights at Scandic Hotel in Helsinki and then had a one night sleepover at Tuula’s house.

What was it like to present your film at the festival?

By presenting my film, I felt that I could share an important message about how Myanmar people are being affected, especially in rural areas, because of climate change and show how it is being made worse by a lack of social responsibility and business policies.

How did the audience react to the film?

They cheered and supported me and said they would like to have more films like this that discuss other topics in environmental issues.

Did you do a Q&A after the screening? What kind of questions did people ask?

Yes. The questions were mostly about what kinds of obstacles and challenges I encountered during the filming. People also asked when there will be more films like this about environmental topics from Myanmar.

Did you go to lots of other film screenings? What was the most interesting film you saw?

Yes, I had the chance to go to lots of screenings, a lot of them of films made by Helsinki-based film students. *Woman at War* (dir: Benedikt Erlingsson), a film about how activists can help to combat climate change, was the most interesting film that I saw.

What else did you do at the festival?

I really enjoyed the cultural displays, performances – and the delicious food!

Did you have any time to visit Helsinki?

Yes, I had a little bit of time to hang out in Helsinki. I visited an art performance event, a museum and the countryside outside Helsinki. I love Helsinki: it’s a very pleasant city and the best place to relax your mind.

Is it important for YFS students to go to international festivals? If so, why?

I think it is absolutely essential for YFS students go to international festivals because it will really broaden their knowledge and give them unique experiences. They can also exchange culture between people in Myanmar and the rest of the world which is a very important way to help people get to know each other.



EVENTS



YFS 'Women and Peace' Film Screenings in 2019 /

In 2017, Yangon Film School launched a programme of trainings, mentorships and outreach focusing on the topic of 'Women and Peace in Myanmar'. The programme resulted in the creation of a number of short documentaries and docu-animation films which aim to increase understanding of gender-based violence amongst public and policy-making audiences, challenging the perception that violence against women is a private domestic issue and situating it instead in the broader social landscape – exploring the intersections and entanglement between gender-based violence on one hand, and conflict, human rights and precarity on the other.

A key part of the programme was to screen the films to audiences across Myanmar, as well as internationally. The 'Women and Peace' film screenings, panel discussions and Q&As were initiated by the School in 2018 and continued throughout 2019 as follows:

1. Institut Francais in Yangon / Date: 5 March / Films Screened: *Mother at Arms*, *The Go-Between*, *Limbo*

Audience: 400+ including journalists, youth peace activists, representatives from CSOs and NGOs, diplomats and women's groups

The screenings were followed by a panel discussion with Ban Seng Bu, Co-ordinator of the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process (AGIPP), Lway Poe Ngeal, Secretary General of the Women's League of Burma, Khon Ja, Co-founder of the Kachin Peace Network, Aung Ling, Peace and Dialogue Technical Advisor of the Gender and Development Institute-Myanmar and YFS filmmaker Nu Nu Hlaing, who directed *Mother at Arms*, one of the films featured in the screening. The panel was moderated by *Frontier* journalist Su Myat Mon and discussed the ways in which women are affected by conflict and their involvement in the Myanmar peace process.

2. Dry Zone / Dates: 23 & 25 March / Films Screened: *Limbo*, *Home*, *Kayah Lily*, *Sugar & Spice* and two 'Women and Peace' documentaries /

Audiences: 300 people in Nyaung U, over 500 in Meiktila

The two open-air screenings – at Taung Shae Village near Nyaung U Township in Mandalay Region and at Thapay Wa Village near Thar Zi Township in Meiktila District – played to audiences including young people, monks and village authorities from three different villages as well as 70 pupils from a local private school.

I would like to remind the many men in this audience that domestic violence is not normal. It is a crime.

*Female audience member, after viewing *The Peacekeeper**

We need more films like *Mother at Arms*. We can get strength and inspiration by watching how women are working for peace.

Female audience member, Travelling Cinema screening in Hakha, Chin State

I believe that women, their perspectives and their experiences, are essential for the country's peace process (...) more women should be brought to the negotiating table for peace to have a chance.

Nu Nu Hlaing, director Mother at Arms at the International Women's Week screening

3. Chin State / Dates: 27-29 March / Films Screened: *The Go-Between, Mother At Arms, Solomon, The Peacemaker* and YFS docu-animations

The screenings took place at the following locations: Victoria Camp to an audience of 250 soldiers from the Chin National Front; at a workshop for small and medium businesses in Hakha to 17 entrepreneurs; at the Chin State Hluttaw (parliament) to 25 MPs, including five representatives of the Tatmadaw (Myanmar's military); and at a workshop for people living with disabilities to 40 adults and children – making an audience of **382 people overall**.

4. Maubin, Ayeyarwady Delta / Date: 9 June / Films Screened: *Child of the Revolution, The Peacekeeper, Far From Yangon, Kayah Lily*

The screening to an audience of **480 townspeople** was co-organised with the Maubin Community Development Centre and the Maubin Department of Information and Public Relations whose director gave the opening speech.

5. Dawei, Tanintharyi Region / Dates: 26 & 27 June / Films Screened: *Child of the Revolution, The Good Woman of South Dagon, Mother at Arms, Our Town, Riding through the Waves, Beyond the Hatred*

The two screenings, which took place at Dawei Technological University and Dawei Art Space, drew audiences of 150 and 50 people respectively. The event at the university was co-hosted by the Dawei Student's Union. The audiences included local townspeople, social activists, NGO workers and young people who all participated enthusiastically in the Q&A sessions held with the filmmakers following the screenings.



Masterclass on Women's Cinema in South Asia /

22 February 2019 at the Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department's Film Development Centre, Yangon

In February, Yangon Film School organised a Masterclass in its ongoing series of events run in coordination with the Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department's Film Development Centre in Yangon. The events are open to filmmakers, artists and other interested people as well as YFS members.

Held by **Dr Valentina Vitali**, Professor of Film Studies and Director of the Moving Image Research Centre at the University of East London, the Masterclass was attended by students from YFS and the National University of Arts and Culture (NUAC) as well as local filmmakers and members of the public. Its purpose was to analyse and discuss the conditions under which women in South Asia are making films today and the kind of films they make. The event also helped Professor Vitali to progress her research into the work of women filmmakers in Myanmar.

The Masterclass began with a historical overview of the presence and role of women in cinema to show that, contrary to what most histories of cinema would suggest, women have always played important and often central roles in the industry – as screenwriters, producers and directors. It then moved on to examine films made by women in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The audience watched film clips and Professor Vitali presented specific films by South Asian women filmmakers as case studies to highlight the different modes of production, distribution

and exhibition depending on local conditions. In each case, the film was discussed with the audience and comparisons drawn with the situation in Myanmar.

The Masterclass concluded with a lively discussion during which the audience considered questions such as: Why is it important to speak of women's cinema today? Is there a place for women's cinema in Myanmar? What role can such a cinema play in Myanmar society? Which incentives, support and facilities do women filmmakers need to survive and who can or should provide such support?

The discussion was held in the Myanmar language and facilitated by an interpreter provided by YFS. The opening and closing of the event were filmed by the local media.

On her return to London, Professor Vitali wrote an article about women filmmakers in Myanmar which will be published in a forthcoming special issue of the journal *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies* devoted to women's cinema in South Asia. Copies of the journal issue will be sent to the YFS so they can be added to the School's library.





Animation in Documentary Masterclass

14 June 2019 at the Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department's Film Development Centre, Yangon

In June 2020, Australian Marisa Martin held an Animation in Documentary Masterclass at the Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department's (MMPDD) Film Development Centre in Yangon. Marisa is an award-winning filmmaker and animator based in Canberra, Australia, where she is the director of a small production house called Enemies of Reality Films. She has fifteen years' filmmaking experience and is highly skilled in various types of production including animation, production design and illustration. The Masterclass took place as part of a research trip undertaken by Marisa to Myanmar, funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Australian Embassy in Myanmar, Screen Australia and the international Australian short film festival, Flickerfest.

The aim of the Masterclass was to take a close look at how documentary films can utilise animation in a variety of ways, including to show things for which there is no footage, to enhance the emotional impact of the storytelling and to bring still photographs to life. It was illustrated with plenty of film clips – many courtesy of Flickerfest – and Marisa also gave an overview of a number of different animation methods.

Open to Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation (MMPO) members, local filmmakers, students from the National University of Arts and Culture (NUAC), as well as YFS students, the Masterclass was well attended with an engaged and knowledgeable audience who were eager to ask Marisa questions and share their own experiences.

In a special side class for Yangon Film School, Marisa analysed infographic (i.e. information laid out in an attractive and easy to digest graphic format) animation with a select number of YFS students, looking at the various styles and possibilities filmmakers can use to make information more accessible on screen and how animation can make these infographics even more revealing and visually interesting.

The Masterclass is one of a series of events organised by Yangon Film School to foster closer connections with the government's MMPDD and the local film industry and to give Myanmar filmmakers who are not YFS members the opportunity to meet some of School's roster of international tutors and visiting film professionals and benefit from their advice and expertise.



YFS Annual Screening /

27 November 2019 at the Goethe-Institut Myanmar, Yangon

Continuing what is now a 14-year tradition, in November 2019 YFS held its Annual Screening showcasing some of the work made by its students during the year. The 2019 screening also featured the announcement of the winners of the biennial **YFS-Goethe Institut Myanmar Documentary Competition** – with cash prizes sponsored by the Goethe Institut Myanmar – featuring the eight short documentary films on the topic of ‘Youth and Peace in Myanmar’ that were made earlier in 2019.

Hosted by YFS Founder and Director Lindsey Merrison, the Annual Screening opened with two short docu-animations adapted by the School from the book *Of Peaceful Days* for the Paung Sie Facility NGO: *Beyond the Hatred* and *More Than Skin Deep*.

Lindsey then introduced the Yangon Film School’s Travelling Cinema programme in 2019. This was followed by the YFS facilitated participatory videos *Don’t Hit Mum!* made by villagers from Ho Seit in Kayah State and *Hear Our Voice*, made by the community in Kyauk Gyi village in Bago Region. Naw Dee Lar Htoo and Saw Jones Frazer Dee, from the PV facilitation in Kyauk Gyi, were introduced and shared their experience of making *Hear Our Voice* and how the film is being used to raise awareness about the lack of opportunities for young people in their region.

Then the eagerly awaited announcements of the YFS-Goethe Institut winning films were made, with each presentation being followed by a screening of the winning film. First up were the joint-winners of the 750 Euro Jade Award, Seint Yamone Thu for *Kachin Reporter* and Mann Pye Pyo Aung for *Lashio Ambulance*, with jury members Maung Sangkha and Mon Mon Myat presenting the awards respectively. The 1,000 Euro Ruby Award was presented to Shin Thandar for her film *Worlds Apart* by jury member Dr Yadanar. Finally, the top prize of the 1,500 Euro Diamond Award was presented to Aye Chan for *The Father I Knew* by the Ambassador for the Kingdom of the Netherlands Wouter Jurgens and the Director of the Goethe-Institut Myanmar Dr Martin Waelde.

Around 250 students, alumni and guests from Myanmar’s Motion Picture Development Department (MMPDD) and Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation (MMPO) and the media, as well as the arts and development sectors and civil society in Myanmar, attended the screening and following reception which gave YFS students and alumni the chance to socialise with the audience and no doubt hatch some more potentially prize-winning film projects for the future.



Trailer Editing Masterclass

20 January 2020 at the Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department's Film Development Centre, Yangon

While overseeing the completion of the School's 2019 'True Fictions' films, Australian editor and YFS post-production mentor Fiona Strain held a half-day Masterclass on one of the essential components for advertising and promoting a film: the trailer. **The Masterclass was open to all Myanmar filmmakers and was held at the Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department's (MMPDD) Film Development Centre in Yangon.**

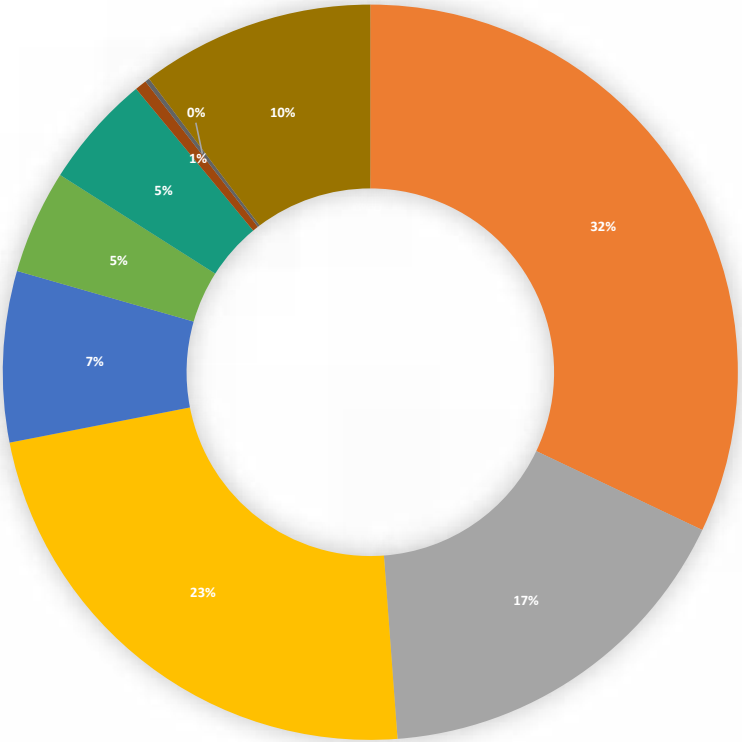
In a dynamic presentation, Fiona began by screening various trailer examples from current Hollywood films such as *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* and *Knives Out*, followed by documentary trailer examples from films she had worked on including the True Crime series *Barrenjoey Road*. An ensuing discussion involved a detailed breakdown of the trailers' pace, style of shots and positioning, and the use of montage and surprise elements. A close examination of the various trailers was undertaken, including the individual shot lengths and choices of shot for the purpose of revealing plot, demonstrating character and placing the film in a certain genre or location. The use of music was also closely discussed, as was the use and placement of sound effects, text and graphics.

The Masterclass then focused on identifying the audience at which a trailer is aimed and how this affects the type of trailer created, as well as how much of a film's plot points and development should be revealed. This was followed by a demonstration of the process of actually editing a trailer where Fiona used a YFS documentary to 'live edit': selecting shots for an assembly, selecting music, re-arranging the shots into thematic selections, building a first edit, reviewing this based on feedback and then adjusting the edit to create greater complexity and reflect the premise, mood and story of the film, without giving away any 'spoilers'.

The Masterclass ended with a fun, tongue-in-cheek clip that gave a demonstration of how to build a blockbuster trailer – which also served as a nice summary to the class itself. Following this, the floor was opened for questions from the audience.

VIKES - The Finnish Foundation for Media, Communication and Development / Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs	180,685 €
Human Rights Fund / Embassy of the Netherlands	94,463 €
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	130,268 €
Bread for the World	42,321 €
UNFPA	25,760 €
PSF	28,137 €
Goethe Institut	2,912 €
SOAS (London, UK)	1,100 €
Donations and membership fees	57,955 €

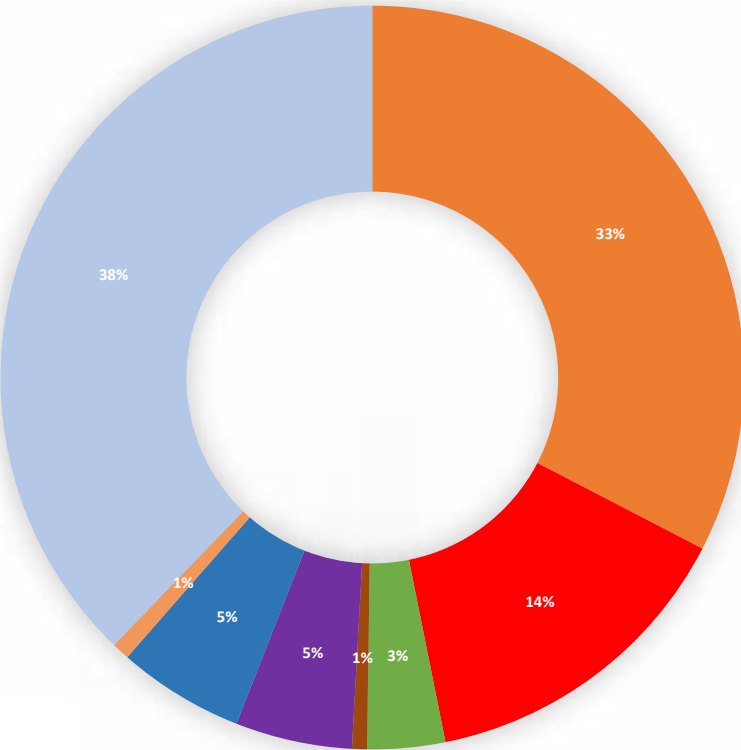
Yangon Film School Funding in 2019



Total funding in 2019:
563,601 EUR

Course delivery costs	183,774€
Office and Training Venue Rentals	80,246 €
Equipment and Supplies	19,052 €
Post Production	3,654 €
Production Grants & Scholarships	28,631 €
Festivals, Visibility and Outreach, Travelling Cinema	31,001 €
Monitoring & Evaluation	4,324 €
Fundraising and Administration	212,919 €

Yangon Film School Expenditures in 2019



Total expenditure in 2019:
563,601 EUR



In 2019,
61 YFS films screened at 33 festivals in 17 different countries
including the UK, Germany, South Korea, India, Spain, Columbia,
Pakistan, the USA, Armenia and Myanmar



YFS Partners in 2019 /

The Yangon Film School
would like to thank all of its partners in 2019 for their support



Anne-Marie Schindler



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